

Environmental Policy in the Romanian Public Sector

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Abstract

Romania has very extensive legislation dealing with environmental issues. Romania's accession to the European Union on 1 January 2007 played a significant role in the drafting of this legislation. Thus, both before and after the date of accession, Romania has taken steps to transpose EU and European Community legislation on the environment and to implement them at national level. Transitional periods have been obtained for the implementation of the specific environmental provisions established by EU legislation through the Accession Treaty of 2005. This paper represents an overview of the actual status of the public policy for environmental protection is or was developed by the Romanian government in the last 15 years.

Keywords: environmental protection, public sector, public policy, durable development.

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Introduction

Despite its EU membership, Romania continues to struggle with the development and implementation of comprehensive environmental regulations (Profiroiu, A. et al., 2019). In the period under review, progress has been made in combating illegal logging and waste management, the central focus of the Romanian environmental policy (Bodislav, D.A. 2011, 2012). The National Environmental Guard (NMH), the Romanian Environmental Protection Agency and its waste management subcontractors have collaborated to develop an information exchange application aimed at improving waste traceability and improving the implementation by Romania of EU strategy and legislation on waste dangerous substances and chemicals. In the first seven months of 2017, GNM made 10% less control raids than the same period in 2016. The efficiency of the public sector, the quality of services and the relationship with the business environment can also be enhanced through E-Government. (Fulga, T.; Profiroiu, M.C., 2019).

1. Presentation of the legal framework for the implementation of environmental protection policy

The National Environmental Protection Action Plan (NPAP) is a planning tool addressing the most important issues identified according to well established criteria. Problem-solving solutions should be based on a mix of institutional and investment strategies and capabilities, so that the national financial resources available are used as efficiently as possible (Jianu, I. et al., 2019). PNAPM is a dynamic process with a continuous evolution due to the development of economic and social factors in time, which is why it needs constant updating and monitoring (Ionita, F. et al., 2009a,b).

In 1992, the first official document setting out the national objectives in the field - the "National Environmental Protection Strategy", updated in 1996 and 2002, was elaborated. The strategy is structured in two parts:

1. Review of the main natural resources, elements regarding the economic status and the quality of the environmental factors,
2. the strategy itself, ie the general principles of environmental protection, priorities, short, medium and long term objectives.

There are three main authorities with competences in the field of environmental protection, each covering a specific area of activity:

1. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) is currently the central environmental authority with policy-making and coordination responsibilities as well as supervisory responsibilities with other environmental authorities. The MESD also acts as a link with the European Community to meet Romania's reporting obligations under different EU directives.
2. The National Environmental Protection Agency (ANPA) is the authority with implementation responsibilities. It is mainly responsible for coordinating the various authorization procedures through its regional and local agencies. This authority also took over the duties of the former National Agency for Dangerous Chemicals, which was dissolved in December 2007.
3. The National Environmental Guard (NEG) is the main enforcement authority, having competence primarily in verifying compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

2. What does environmental policy mean?

Environmental policy assumes all environmental priorities and objectives, regulatory methods and implementation tools designed to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and to prevent environmental degradation (Bran, F. et al., 2018)

Objectives of environmental protection policy:

1. Sustainable development of the country in the context of public health: public health, consumer protection and harmonization of legislation in the context of the creation of the single market.
2. Less impact on the environment as a result of economic activities.
3. Improving, protecting and preserving the environment, to achieve these goals, some actions are taken, such as environmental education, technology promotion, information campaigns.
4. The use of natural resources such as wood, water, fauna, flora, minerals with as much care and ration so that the reproduction of resources is compatible with the development of economic activities and diminishing the risk of natural resource depletion.
5. Some measures have been proposed at international level against regional or world-wide problems with respect to energy resources for each state.

Environmental protection includes several activities aimed at better maintenance or restoration of a clean environment by collecting, recycling and treating waste, preventing emissions of pollutants, noise, or reducing the presence of pollutants in the environment.

Environmental cost analysis allows an assessment of the effort made to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution resulting from the production or consumption of goods and services. Expenditures for environmental protection include the current investments and expenditures made by public administration, non-specialized and specialized producers (Rădulescu, C.V. et al., 2018a,b)

3. Principles of environmental policy

The principles of environmental policy are:

1. *The polluter pays* - this principle assumes that the polluter has to pay the measures that the public authorities have on an acceptable level of environmental protection, so this cost appears in the cost of the goods and services that produced the pollution.
2. *Preventive actions* - it is based on the premise that it is better to prevent than to treat.
3. *Precaution* - represents measures taken to prevent what threatens human health or the environment.
4. *High-level protection* - refers to environmental policy aimed at protection at the highest possible level.
5. *Integration* - refers to measures that help to protect the environment are implemented in all sectors of the EU's protection policy.
6. *Proximity* - involves assuming responsibility for the communities that produce the waste.

3.1. Applying environmental policy tools

Over the years, due to the evolution and the envisioned environmental policy, we have highlighted the objectives, their priorities and the continued growth of the implementation tools.

Instruments:

- *Legislative* - represents the entirety of legislation in this area, creating the legal framework of environmental protection policy.
- *Technical* - meets environmental quality standards using the best technologies available: emission standards and limits, best available technologies (BAT), eco labeling, environmental inspection criteria in Member States.
- *Financial* - as the main financial instruments for environmental policies are the LIFE programs, but also the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

4. Environment pollution in Romania - investments and expenditures

To move on with this study, we need to clarify the term underlying our pyramid, that is, what pollution means. Pollution is the contamination of the environment with materials intersecting with human health, but also with the quality of life or the natural function of ecosystems (living organisms and the environment in which they live).

Environmental pollution also occurs naturally, such as volcanic eruptions, but most often the biggest pollution comes from human activities. We can classify polluting materials into two categories: biodegradable pollutants and non-degradable compounds. Complex pollution and environmental protection processes require that all principles be respected in order to achieve their goal.

4.1. Double environmental standards

It is well known that northern European countries have, over time, extremely high environmental standards compared to those in the South and more recently in the Central European region. While the Nordic countries negotiated treaty changes to allow them to overcome the environmental norms set by Brussels, the poorer members of the South have endeavored to meet these standards. This is likely to lead to ruptures in the development of environmental policies and to reduce the coherence that is so necessary to achieve effective results. The existence of this cleavage between the rich northern and the southern poor was more evident during the southern enlargements of 1981.

After 1993, with the emergence of the Cohesion Fund, important funds were directed to reduce these gaps. However, the Nordic states continue to be avant-garde when it comes to environmental standards. The opposition between industrialized and developing countries on environmental norms leads to difficulties in making decisions, with specific needs being generated by problems specific to each type of state, which creates bottlenecks in the adoption of common rules. Thus, if the group of industrialized countries needs measures aimed at reducing airborne nuisances, waste treatment or noise reduction, developing ones, with an extended rural and agricultural sector, emphasis is placed on improving soil quality, water quality and protection nature. The enlargement process and the costs that this expansion represents. Enlargement is one of the most ambitious projects of the European Union. Appeared on the backdrop of the idea of reunifying the European continent following its division, following the wars that took place in Europe, the enlargement process is complex and aims at reunifying the continent. Pollution and environmental risks have been important areas in the accession process. It should be noted that this does not take into account the specific national issues, but rather the common European ones. Environmental protection and climate change are important issues on the European agenda (Burlacu, S. et al., 2018, 2019). Over the years, the European Union has set high standards for the protection of the environment, the marine environment and nuclear safety. The accession process is an effective tool to help export these European standards to the candidate countries. The level of environmental standards has sometimes been higher than that existing in the old Member States.

Thus, corroborating all of these considerations, we can state that enlargement is an increase in environmental protection. Renewable Energy Resources Ensuring energy sources has become an indispensable element of our society, a key element of the economic and social development of all countries. A world without energy resources cannot be conceived, energy generation systems are a necessity in people's activity. The energy resources currently used are limited, exhaustible, and their distribution across the Earth's surface is uneven. Quantities and reserves of fossil fuels have been considerably reduced, and issues such as climate change, dependence on fossil fuels, consumption growth, demand and prices have led to rethinking the way energy is produced and consumed, and reorienting to alternative and renewable energy sources. "Renewable Energy" is the energy that derives from resources that are renewable or inexhaustible. Thus, the energy of sunlight, wind, flowing waters, biological processes and geothermal heat can be captured by humans using different processes (Costache, G., et al., 2015). Renewable energy sources are resource alternatives for fossil fuels. Their use may include a reduction in carbon dioxide, a diversification of energy generation, and a reduction in dependency on fossil fuels markets. The new Renewable Energy Directive establishes that the European Union will increase its share of renewable energy by 20% by 2020 and increase the level of biofuel used in transport by 10% by 2020. "Renewable energy" promotes the safety of its own energy production in Europe, greenhouse gas emissions, provides support to the European economy by developing new technologies and innovations in the European economy.

Conclusions

In conclusion, as the World Health Organization (WHO) says, air pollution is the highest environmental health risk in the EU and the EEA estimates that it causes around 400 000 premature deaths each year, the most exposed being inhabitants of urban areas. Suspended particles, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and ground-level ozone are the most harmful among atmospheric pollutants. The 2008 Air Quality Directive is the cornerstone of EU clean air policy as it sets the limit values for pollutant concentrations in the air we breathe.

As measures to prevent these losses, all people should take action and combat environmental pollution by organizing and participating in activities such as tree planting, water cleaning, waste collection, etc.

We can confidently say that Romania still has many problems to solve in terms of environmental protection, and that it still does not fit into an ecological Europe. However, it is important that the first steps have been taken to achieve this goal by accepting the ecological challenges of EU accession and integration and that the commitments of the EU Accession Treaty in the field of environmental protection have been respected, taking steps in this direction.

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