

# EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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## **Abstract:**

*European integration implies a transfer of powers and responsibilities from the national to the community level, transfer that allows the development of public policy and common, respectively, of provisions, common rules across the EU.*

*Environmental Policy in the European Union is seen as a horizontal policy, based on the principle of integrating the environment into sectoral policies of the Community and the Member States.*

*The Sustainable Development Strategy adopted by the European Council in Göteborg in 2001 was formalized model of sustainable development with its three axes: economic growth that provides the prerequisites of social progress and environmental protection, social policy for stimulating economic growth policy environment focused on specific instruments market economy.*

*The establishment of a European environmental policy came on the agenda of the Communities in 1971 and has experienced many moments of evolution, marked by the objectives contained in the six Environmental Action Program (WFP) conducted from 1973 to 2010.*

*The 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP 7 called "Better implementation of EU environmental legislation" designed for 2014-2020 comprising the Europe 2020 objectives of sustainable, smart and inclusive growth and a vision of the direction that should be oriented EU environmental policy term.*

**Keywords:** *public policy, European environmental policy, environmental policy frameworks, instruments of environmental policy, European institutions*

**JEL Classification:** K00, K3

## **1. The introduction of the environmental policy in the area of community public policies**

Actuality and relevance of environmental problems both nationally and internationally and community can not be ignored. But their diversity and complexity as well as costs involved, do not allow an efficient management, than in an integrated approach in conjunction with economic policies, financial administrative and legislative public policies (Dye Thomas, p. 4, Anderson, James, p. 5. Miroiu, A., p. 9. Profiroiu M.C Iorga,E, .17)<sup>3</sup> in the matrix of protective nature (Birkland, Th A., cit după Profiroiu,M.C Iorga, E, p.32)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of public policy experiences a series of definitions starting from the most simplistic - what governments choose to do or not to do - ( Thomas Dye , Understanding Public Policy ( 7th ed.) , Englewood Cliffs , NJ, Prentice Hall, 1992 , p.4 ) to the instrumentalist one : a course of action for a particular purpose , followed by an actor or group of actors in addressing a problem ( James Anderson , Public Policy Making (2nd ed.) , Princeton , NJ , Houghton Mifflin , 1994, p 5 . ) the Romanian sense of the term policy refers to a policy network of interrelated decisions on the choice of objectives, of the means and the resources allocated to achieve the objectives in specific situations " ( Miroiu , A., Introduction to policy analysis, Paideia Publishing House , Bucharest, 2001 , p 9) from the point of view of other authors, public policy is a set of measures taken by a legal and responsible authority to improve the living conditions of citizens or design measures to stimulate economic growth . Marius Constantin PROFIROIU Elena Iorga : Manual for Public Policy, Public Policy Institute Bucharest, October 2009, page 17 ) .

Protective regulatory policies are those that seek to protect the general public from the adverse effects of private activities, such as pollution, consumption of counterfeit products, fraud of business transactions. Thomas A. Birkland, An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts and Models of Public Policy Making, Second Edition, 2005, ME Sharpe Inc., As well as Profiroiu, Iorga, op.cit. page 32

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The transfer of competences and attributions from the national level to the communitarian level in the sphere of the environmental protection, implicit the inclusion of this area in the European public policy<sup>1</sup> was fully realized only in the last decade of the last century, after a period of about thirty years. The determining factor of the transfer of competencies (according to the subsidiary principle) is the assumption of the EU of the sustainable development model.

But the process was not founded for ecological reasons, as we would be tempted to believe, but started from the preoccupation to correct certain distortions of the common market generated by the national environmental policies. This type of approach is justified by the neoliberal philosophy that was the base for the Treaties, according to which the intervention of the community in a certain area was conditioned by the necessity for keeping market balance. It generated for a long period of time, multiple difficulties in the process of conciliation of the economical objectives with the environmental ones.

We could say that the transfer of competences and attributions from the national level to the communitarian level in the sphere of environment protection, had a rough start also because of the significant differences between environmental standards of the member states (countries such as Austria, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands have always had much higher environmental standards compared to others such as Greece, Portugal and Spain), but we must not omit that in that specific stage, environmental standards mattered only as non-tariff trade protection instruments.

## **2. Strategies and programs that define the objectives of the environmental communitarian policy**

If today environmental protection represents a policy of the European Union, based on the principle of integrating the environment in the sectorial policies of the community and of the member states, this is due to graduate renunciation of the functionalist conception and replacing it with another approach, imposed mainly by the new realities with which the communitarian construction has confronted in time (Pascariu, G.C, p.27)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Public policies are performed by various methods, procedures, mechanisms, depending on the following aspects: a) the powers it holds in various areas (exclusive, shared or complementary) b) regulatory nature areas (hard or soft) c) the nature of relations between the EU and the Member States in various policies (policies intergovernmental or supranational policies) d) the impact on European integration. As had written to some authors, Union there is no standardized procedure for achieving public policy, one of the main existing frameworks in relation to public policy being the White Paper on Governance.

The first step is to determine whether or not the EU has powers to intervene in solving a particular problem. We recall that the EU has competence in a particular field under the following conditions:

- Firstly, it must be possible to make a connection between the subject in question and at least one item of the EU Treaty, as the EU can only act within the powers conferred on them;
- Second, if a particular problem is so competences of the European Union and the Member States, it is necessary to demonstrate that the problem can not be handled adequately by the Member States (ie the first condition set subsidiary principle, known as the "necessity test").

<sup>2</sup> The Treaties establishing the European Communities (Paris, 1951, Rome 1957) were not included Community environmental skills. Following the more obvious signals of environmental pollution occurred in

The idea of instituting an articulated European environmental policy, started defining at the Ministry Council from the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1971, when they agreed for the first time, on the idea that the economical policy of the Communities can not be limited only to the economical growth objective. At the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1971 the European Committee formulated the first Communication regarding the environmental policy of the European Communities.

In 1972, on the occasion of top meeting in the European Council in Paris, state leaders and member states' governments, boosted also by the duties taken by their countries at the UN conference for the Human Environment at Stockholm(1972)<sup>1</sup>, (Stockholm Conference on Human Environment) requested the Committee to elaborate an environmental program and to adopt the necessary measures for its implementation. In realizing this action there can be distinguished two stages:

2.a. The first starts with the adoption in 1973 of the First Environment Action Program for the (EAP), program with a mainly sectorial approach, of the environment problems, for the period 1973-1977. Two other programs followed for the periods 1978-1982 and 1982-1986, that circumscribe the same characteristics. (Dogaru, L. p.16)

EAP 4 was launched in 1987 for the period 1987-1992 and has the merit of having enunciated the principle of integrating the environmental communitarian policy with other policies at the communitarian level, but its approach remained mostly sectorial.

The legal prerequisites for linking the environment policy with economical dynamics and social cohesion in a long-term vision are offered by the Treaty of Amsterdam. In this context at the European Council in Luxembourg in 1997, the question of amplifying the integration arose, both vertically (between levels of decision) and horizontally (between policies) and also was launched the idea of developing a sustainable development strategy.

From that moment on, the principle of environmental integration horizontally and vertically, became key principle.

Applying the principle was not consistent until the program's sixth environmental action. However we can say that in the first stage (of the four EAP programs) are structured its major components of EU environmental policy, principles, objectives, instruments and institutional structures, and that the environment policy is raised at the status of Community policy.

The delay time of the integration of the environmental policy with other EU policies in the first stage was due to some legal and institutional impediments, such as:

- the treaty limits and application limits of the subsidiary principle which did not allow community involvement in the management of environmental issues in member countries, except to the extent necessary to ensure the functioning of the Community market;

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the 60 Member States agreed joint action at EU level, but these measures have long been limited to issues off and were implemented only if they are necessary to establish and functioning of the common market. See: Carmen Gabriela Pascariu: European Policy Support Univ AI course Cuza Iasi, 2011

<sup>1</sup> At the first UN Conference in Stockholm, 1972 on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference on Human Environment) have been addressed a number of issues of common humanity, such as pollution, destruction of resources, damaging the environment, extinction of species, etc.. It was then also discussed and the increase of the gap between rich and poor and finding solutions to increase the standard of living, ensuring full access to vital resources and creating equal opportunities for development. After the conference resulted:

- Stockholm Declaration containing 26 principles;-Action Plan for the Human Environment, with three components: global environmental assessment program (Earthwatch) environmental management activities, support measures.

- United Nations Environment Program (United Nations Environment Program - UNEP), whose board of directors and the Secretariat were established in December 1972 the UN General Assembly
- Voluntary Fund for the Environment (Environment Voluntary Fund) established in January 1973 in accordance with UN financial procedures.

All these are considered to be the cornerstone of the first international framework for handling environmental issues. These issues were taken up by the World Commission on Environment and Development, established by UN in 1985.

- the reduced impact of the guidelines on national laws considering that they represented a predominant legislative community instrument of the essence of the environmental law, but also the procedure for unanimous voting to adopt environmental legislation;
- the lack of a precise identification of environmental issues and the lack of studies on the long-term impact of environmental degradation, of the intensive use of resources and the reduction of biodiversity;
- the classical opposition between the economic and the environmental objectives (the idea that the establishment of strict criteria regarding environmental protection, limits the access to resources, determines the increase of costs and affects competitiveness);
- the high costs for implementing an environmental policy: eco-technologies, extensive agriculture the sustainable type, involve high costs that some member countries could not afford;
- the low level of results in the environmental research field and of the development of eco technologies; not coincidentally, one of the measures adopted by the Committee later, towards sustainable growth is consisted by the research and technological development.

2.b. The second stage of the development of EU environmental policy begins with the application of the Fifth Environmental Action Program, EAP 5 (1993 - 1999), adopted in 1992 and the development of the European Sustainable Development Strategy.

EPA 5 (1993 - 1999) makes the transition from the command and control based approach, to a proactive approach consisting in the use of economic and fiscal instruments and consulting the parties that are interested in the decision process. During the course of this program there have been significant changes in community decision making process, the role of the European Parliament being expanded and becomes a factor of co-decision, therefore gaining an important role in the communitarian environmental policy.

On the occasion of analyzing the Commission's environmental report and evaluating the progress in the implementation of the Fifth Action Program at the European Council in Helsinki(1999) the Commission was invited to develop a long term strategy for sustainable development and to ensure immediate takeover of the principle of integration of the European environmental policy in the integration strategies adopted once they have been defined.

There were targeted nine key areas, rated as having a high level of complementarity with the environmental protection policies: energy, transport, agriculture, industry, internal market, development, fishing, general business, economic and financial affairs.

The adoption of the Convention in Aarhus in June 1998 (Denmark) concerning the access to information and public's participation in the decision-making process and environmental justice, was meant to create a favorable environment for a better transparency of the environmental policies and improved access to information on the environment.

As a result of the received mandate the Committee designed a program that aimed towards developing a strategy for integrating the environment in sectors with significant environmental impact, identification of performance indicators and implementation of procedures for evaluating the strategies in the idea of sustainable development.

In 2001 European Council from Göteborg adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy of the European Union. In its essence, this strategy meets the objectives enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), according to which member countries aim "to promote a harmonious and balanced development of economic activities throughout the Community, a sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment, a high degree of convergence of economic performance, a high level of employment and of social protection, and increase quality of life, economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States"<sup>1</sup>. The strategy has gotten improvements over time in relation to emerging issues.

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<sup>1</sup> It is actually an addition to the specific objectives of sustainable development , social protection model , convergence of economic performance , environmental, economic and social cohesion , solidarity

Currently there are two lines of development of this strategy:

- first, with an European dimension corresponding to the Cardiff Process and aims the integration of environmental policies into other Community policies;
- second, with a global dimension, represented by the Declaration of Göteborg -also called "A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: a European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development" - expressing the need for activation of the external dimension of sustainable development by the Union's contribution in sustainable development worldwide.

EU Sustainable Development Strategy "adopted at the Göteborg European Council confirmed the central scheme of Communitarian action: the environment as the third pillar alongside the economic and social one.

It also defines some reference objectives for the development of EU environmental policy on the long term, such as:

- climate change and 'clean' energy use
- public health;
- the responsible management of natural resources;
- improving transport and land-use;
- improving communication, by emphasizing the importance of a systematic dialogue with consumers.

We can say that the time of 2001 marks the start of a new approach to developing the communitarian policies, consisting first of all, in more coherence by the horizontal application of some principles, the principle of integration of environmental considerations as a primary principle and secondly by the flexibility of their implementation by enshrining the idea of a regular review of the sustainable development strategy<sup>1</sup>.

The new approach to the environmental policy is making changes in the characteristic style of accomplishing EU public policies in terms of their orientation towards consensus and anticipation of problems instead of style of reacting and imposing decisions. In this matter, it is to be noted that since 2001 the EU has developed an interactive system of policy development (Interactive Policy Making - IPM)<sup>2</sup> in order to facilitate the process of consultation with interested parties in the implementation of Communitarian policies including the bonding of institutions<sup>3</sup>.

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contribution model promoted by the World Commission on Environment and Development ( Brundtland Commission ) in 1987, and essentially means " to meet current needs without compromising future generations a chance to meet their own needs " . In subsequent years, the concept of sustainability has been embraced by environmentalists , economists, sociologists differently , specific without an effort to integrate the principles and objectives . Including the institutional aspects of sustainable development were often reduced environmental issues in a unilateral approach . It's World Commission on Environment and Development , headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland , former Prime Minister of Norway , whose findings led to the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992.

<sup>1</sup> In this regard it is noted the adoption in 2005 of a declaration on sustainable development and publication by the Commission in 2005, the list of indicators for assessing of the sustainable development (155 indicators grouped in 3 levels, depending on the objectives and measures for the application) , structured in 10 priority themes: economic development, poverty and social exclusion, aging, public health, climate change and energy production and consumption patterns, natural resource management, transport, good governance, global partnership

<sup>2</sup> IPM is intended to contribute to policy development, providing faster responses and better suited to questions and new problems, improving impact assessment policies (or lack thereof) and ensuring greater accountability to cetățenilor. Acest sistem was introduced to facilitate stakeholder consultation process through the use of online questionnaires clear and very affordable, which makes it both participation in the consultation and analysis of results. IPM is financed by the ISA (Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations), which was implemented to improve electronic cooperation among public administrations of the Member States. See [http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm//index\\_ro.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm//index_ro.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Although, until now, there has been developed a common model for public administration - co-existing within the Union several administrative culture, the role of twinning programs was to provide learning

In accordance with the directions of action and objectives contained in the strategy, was developed the 6th Action Program - 6th EAP (2001-2010), which in turn defines four priority areas of environmental policy in the next decade:

- climate change and global warming;
- protection of nature and biodiversity;
- health in report to the environment;
- conservation of natural resources and waste management.

These priority areas are completed by a set of measures that lead to the achievement of their objectives and aim to: improving enforcement of existing legislation; the integration of environmental concerns into other policies; collaboration with business fields; citizen involvement and modification of their behavior; ensuring that the environment is taken into account in decisions regarding the management and planning of the territory.

Also EPA 6 requires the development of 7 thematic strategies which correspond to important aspects of the environment, such as: soil protection, protection and preservation of the marine environment; use of pesticides in the context of sustainable development; air pollution; urban environment; recycling waste; management and use of resources for sustainable development<sup>1</sup>.

The approach of these strategies is a gradual one, being structured in two phases: first, the description of the situation and identification of problems; the second one, of presentation of the proposed measures to solve these problems.

Another innovative aspect of the 6th EAP is adoption of an "Integrated Policy of Products (Integrated Product Policy - PIP)", aimed at reducing environmental degradation by various products throughout their life cycle and facilitating the development of a market for organic products. The program was subject to an intermediary evaluation in 2005, in order to review and update itself according to the latest information and developments in the field.

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solutions and sources of joint practice of exchanging experience in solving problematic issues inherent in finalizing reforms initiated.

<sup>1</sup> Until the moment the first six strategies were initiated, as follows: Air Quality - Strategy initiated by the "Clean Air for Europe" (Clean Air for Europe - CAFE), launched in March 2001 and has the development of an integrated set of strategic recommendations in order to combat the negative effects of air pollution on the environment and human health, they must be submitted to the Commission in late 2004 or early 2005 and will be based strategy combat Air Pollutants. Protection of soil - the first step in this direction was made in April 2002, with the publication by the European Commission of a communication entitled "Towards a Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection" (Towards a Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection) in its, problem soil protection is first treated separately and are existing problems, functions and distinctive features of an environmental policy in this direction

*Pesticide use in the context of sustainable development - a strategy that starts in June 2002, the Commission Communication "Towards a Thematic Strategy on pesticides in the context of sustainable development" (Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides) - communication are established following objectives: to minimize health and environmental risks from the use of pesticides, improve control over the use and distribution of pesticides, reduction of harmful active substances by replacing them with safer alternatives, encouraging obtain crops without using pesticides, establishing a transparent system for reporting and monitoring progress, including the development of appropriate indicators; Protection and preservation of the marine environment: this strategy is initiated by the communication homonymous Commission (October 2002), in order to promote the use of the seas in the context of sustainability and conservation of marine ecosystems, including the bottoms of the oceans, estuaries and coastal areas, paying special attention areas with high biodiversity. Recycling and waste prevention - launched in May 2003, this is the first treatment strategy separate aspects of waste prevention and recycling, and the accompanying communication are investigated ways to promote recycling products (where applicable) and are analyzed the most appropriate options in terms of cost-effectiveness. Urban areas - this strategy has already identified four priority themes within the meaning of the sustainable development through their influence on the evolution of the urban environment: urban transport, sustainable urban management, construction and urban planning / urban architecture. and by the end of 2003 will be released accompanying communication, followed environmental strategies to be completed by July 2005.*

The 7th Environment Action Program (EPA 7 also called "Better implementation of EU environmental legislation") sets goals for 2014-2020, and a vision of the direction that the EU environmental long-term policy should be oriented to, in accordance with the Europe 2020 Strategy's objectives of a sustainable, favorable to inclusion and smart growth.

This Environmental Action Program should guarantee the achievement of the following commitments: better implementation and compliance with EU environmental standards; ensuring that other EU policies also meet their objectives on climate and environment; providing access to solid evidence also in latest scientific knowledge and completion of significant strategic gaps.

### **3. Tools used for the implementation of EU environmental policy**

The evolution of EU environmental policy, as well as its progress over time is reflected not only by its goals and priorities, but also the number - still growing - of the tools for its implementation.

Thus, we can speak of the development of three types of instruments: legislative, technical and economic-financial instruments, at which is added a set of "supporting tools" rather responding to new trends and strategies for environmental protection.

A. Legislative instruments are those that create the legal framework of EU environmental policy, namely the existing legislation in this area, which includes more than 200 acts (directives, regulations and decisions) adopted since 1970.

B. The technical tools are designed to ensure compliance with quality standards of environmental factors and the use of best available technologies. In the category of technical tools, there are:

B.1. Standards and emission limits set out in the specific legislation which aim to limit the environmental pollution level and identify the big polluters.

B.2. The best available technologies (BAT- Best Available Technologies), assessed according to the criteria laid down in Directive 2008/1/EC - IPPC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (International Plant Protection Conversion)<sup>1</sup>. Exchange of information regarding BAT Best Available Technology is made by the European Bureau IPPC, a body appointed by the European Commission, based in Seville.

B.3. The term 'eco' - a tool to promote products with a reduced environmental impact compared to other products in the same group and provides consumers clear information and scientifically based on the nature of the products, directing them with options. The criteria on which the eco denomination is made, established and reviewed by the European Union for Eco Denomination (European Union Eco-Labeling Board - EUEB) -. Products that met the criteria for the award of this denomination can be recognized by the "daisy" (specific logo).

B.4. The applicable criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States designed to ensure compliance with EU environmental law and its uniform application. In practice these

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<sup>1</sup> Directive provides for the application of 'best available techniques' (BAT ) in all new plants and existing plants since 2007 . It defines the best available techniques as " ... the most effective and advanced stage in the development of activities and their methods of operation, the specific techniques being considered appropriate and practical, mainly as a basis for emission limit values generally to prevent emissions and impact on the whole environment or , if not possible , then be reduced "• " techniques " and applied technology and the way and manner the planned facility , constructed, operated and decommissioned ; • "available" - techniques developed on a scale which , considering the relationship cost / benefit , they facilitate the economic and technically feasible under the relevant industrial sector , whether these techniques are used or manufactured in the Member State concerned , as are available for operator on reasonable terms ; • "best " - most effective in achieving a high general level of environmental protection as a whole . " Each bat is not material resulted in the IPPC Directive . the purpose of harmonization at European level best available techniques (BAT ) IPPC Directive provides for an exchange of information on best available techniques. results of this exchange of information will be included in the so-called BAT documents that will be published by the European Commission, is taken into account in setting permit conditions.

criteria have minimal character and relate to organization, deployment, monitoring and dissemination of results of environmental inspections in the Member States.

- Measuring and control networks of air pollution, ground water, etc.. and databases on the pollution level, alert limits, pollutant emission inventory, etc.. These are technical tools which help to continuously monitor the environmental situation and provide necessary information for the initiation of restorative and preventive actions.

### C. Financial Instruments of the European environmental policy

The main financial instruments used to achieve the objectives of EU environmental policy are the LIFE program + and the Cohesion Fund.

C.1. The LIFE+ program is the financial instrument for the implementation, updating and development of the environmental policy and legislation by co-financing projects that add value to the European space.

The LIFE program started in 1992 and now it has completed three phases: LIFE I (1992-1995), LIFE II (1996-1999) LIFE III (2000-2006). Between 1992 and 2006, LIFE has co-financed 3,104 projects across the EU, with a contribution of approximately 2.2 billion euro for environmental protection.

The current phase of the program is LIFE + (2007-2013) has a budget of 2.143 billion euro and its performance is provided by Regulation (EC) no. 614/2007 of the European Parliament and the EU Council regarding the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE +)<sup>1</sup>. Romania has received substantial financing on this program<sup>2</sup>. At this stage it develops two new components:

- Governance and Environmental Policy by which co-finances projects that have innovative policy approaches, technologies, methods and tools, basic knowledge on the environmental policy and legislation, monitoring of the pressure on the environment (eg long term monitoring of forests and environmental interactions). Maximum co-financing rate will be 50%.

- Information and Communication: designed to co-finance projects that run communication and awareness campaigns (including trainings) nature protection and biodiversity conservation as well as projects relating to forest fire prevention. The maximum co-financing rate will be 50%.

C.2. The Cohesion Fund as a financial instrument has been designed to provide financial support for Member States whose GDP per number of inhabitants is below 90% of the Community average. The establishment of the Cohesion Fund was determined by the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) and became operational in 1994.

In the case of environmental projects, financial support is limited to co-financing those in the fields of environmental protection and the development of trans-European transport networks.

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<sup>1</sup> published in the Official Journal of the European Union no. L149 of 9 June 2007

<sup>2</sup> The first projects where Romania has achieved LIFE co- funding was in 1999. Up to now , our country is the recipient of 65 of LIFE . In session 2010 Romanian six projects were selected for co- financing under LIFE + . Applications must be eligible on one of the three components of the program LIFE + : Nature and Biodiversity : Nature and Biodiversity component continues and extends the original program LIFE- Nature . This component co- finances projects that promote best practices , demonstration projects, which contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives. Will co- finance innovative or demonstration projects that contribute to the objectives DEPLOYMENT Commission Communication ( COM (2006 ) 216 final ) " Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond" . At least 50 % of Biodiversity . 9LIFE + Nature co- finances projects that promote best practices , demonstration projects, which contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives. Maximum co-financing rate is 50 % , but can be and 75 % for projects focused on species and / or priority habitats . 9LIFE + Biodiversity co- finance innovative or demonstration projects that contribute to the objectives DEPLOYMENT Commission Communication ( COM (2006 ) 216 final ) " Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond" . Maximum co-financing rate will be 50 % . In Romania , the Ministry of Environment and Forests National Authority acts as LIFE + .



In the political agreement of the Member States on MFF 2014-2020, conducted at the European Council of 7 to 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 provides the allocation for the cohesion policy approx. 325 billion euro (down by approx. 35 billion from the current programming period) representing 34.24% of total EU spending volume for the next 7 years. The amount Romania deserves for the cohesion policy is 21.8 billion (in 2011 prices), up to 10% from the 2007-2013 allocation (located in the 19.8 billion euro). At this European Council have also been validated some changes in the procedure for accessing<sup>1</sup>.

## Conclusions

The European environment policy is a part of public policies of a protective nature.

Before reaching a level of development and at a significant impact it has traveled and experienced different stages and different formulas.

The moments after the adoption of the European Strategy for Sustainable Development, at European Council in Göteborg 2001 transformed European environmental policy into a key policy, particularly because of the consecration of the principle of integrating it with other policies, both horizontally and vertically, allowing insurance of economic convergence, social and political in any project.

It also brings a reconsideration of the decision-making process to enable a wider participation of the civil society and decision factors at various levels; creating and developing an information system on the consequences of policies and actions in order to facilitate reversing the current, non-sustainable trends; development of public market's goods and environmental goods and services; development of research towards technologies using less natural resources, less polluting, with a low risk to the environment and the individual; the development of a system of education and training /

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<sup>1</sup> The main changes agreed under the Cohesion Policy / PC:

- Creating a common strategic framework for all structural funds, which provides for the conclusion of partnership agreements with each Member State
- Create a category of intermediate regions " transition regions ", with between 75 % and 90% of the average GDP of the EU is phasing -out regions in ( towards convergence , which will complement the two existing categories already - regions of convergence and competitiveness regions )
- Capping cohesion allocations ( " capping " ) to 2.35 % of GDP ( 2.59% differential capping for HU and Baltics ) allocation by Member State / SM but can not be less than 110 % of the total allocation for current period;
- Improve the quality of spending and benchmarks against which funds will be awarded ;
- The principle of conditionality ( ex -ante and macro ) and implementing rules align cohesion policy with the Stability and Growth Pact and the excessive deficit procedure . Results will be defining incentives to implement reforms , enabling COM to suspend part or all of the payments when the Council decides that a MS has not taken the necessary measures .
- Applying the un-commitment rule - n +3 for all Member States.
- Maintain co -financing rate of 85 % for cohesion policy .
- It is provided as a general rule , a pre -financing rate of 3%. However, for countries that have received financial assistance since 2010 (Romania ) pre -financing rate is 4% .
- *Keep on top -up provisions, the increase by 10 percentage points in the rate of co -financing for countries that receive financial assistance programs under Article 136 and 143 TFEU.*
- *Introduce provisions on additional allocations for regions where there is youth unemployment.*
- *The new EU financial perspective 2014-2020 provides a new approach to strategic planning for the cohesion policy under the Europe 2020 objectives , approach involving :*
- *Common Strategic Framework ( CSF ) adopted by the Commission (Cohesion Fund , European Regional Development Fund , European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund);*
- *Contract / Agreement for Development and Investment Partnership applied to the cohesion policy , which is a national strategic document prepared by each MS and negotiated with the Comity, and sets the thematic objectives underlying the development and indicative allocation of EU funds in 2014-2020 ;*
- Subsequent programs that will transpose elements set out in the Contract / Partnership Agreement which will contain firm commitments of MS regarding the fulfillment of EU objectives by programming funds.

communication to create premises for social dialogue , of a transparent decision-making process under the conditions of individual and collective responsibility and a move towards sustainability in consumer behavior and production; the horizontal application of sustainability criteria, on all economic policies; the development of a system of indicators that allow a regular and effective evaluation of the sustainability policies and actions .

For this, the European environmental policy has developed a number of legislative instruments (over 200 community papers), and technical tools such as: standards and emission limits, the best available technology (BAT-BAT Best Available Technologies) the "eco" denomination, the applicable criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States; networks for measuring air pollution, ground water, etc.. and databases on the pollution alert levels, emission inventory, and financial instruments: LIFE + Program and the Cohesion Fund.

They are designed to ensure the fulfillment of the internal objectives which the Union took by the Sustainable Development Strategy adopted by the European Council in Göteborg in 2001, and the external dimension of sustainable development of the Union's commitment to contribute to sustainable development worldwide.

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