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European Union environmental security: the only achieving strategy

Abstract

The article deals with the main environmental policy stages in the EU¹. The principles of environmental protection are given. The legal environmental protection framework is considered. The features of regions with natural and common resources, industrial and human potential that has its own action plan for achieving common EU environmental safety strategy are considered.

Keywords: *environmental protection, safety strategy, European Union, natural resources*

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Introduction

The stable scientific and technological progress creates conditions for the developing the global environmental crisis. The fast approach of which we can feel today: food and demographic problems, desertification, deforestation, greenhouse effect, ozone screen, shortage of natural resources and especially drinking water, oceans and freshwater pollution, biodiversity reduction, acid rains, etc. Human existence threatens self-destruction! Environmental issues cover almost the entire planet. They can't be solved separately in a particular country; their solving requires the joint efforts of many countries aimed at maintaining a balanced environmental policy. Today the global ecological crisis liquidation is the most important mankind task (Gusev 2012). Under these conditions the forefront environmental security problem is one of the global challenges that are directly related to its survival.

One of the best experiences of solving environmental problems and environmental safety has European countries. Today the European Union environmental policy formed distinct approaches to solving environmental problems, and it, in its turn, promoted the EU establishment as an international environmental policy player. Ukraine is a part of Europe and should take into account the extensive European Union experience in ensuring environmental safety.

The European countries environmental policy history began over 100 years ago. In 1875, Austria-Hungary and Italy adopted the Declaration on birds' protection.

The first international convention on protection of birds, useful to agriculture, was signed by several European countries in 1902 in Paris. Unfortunately, this Convention was giving permission to kill some species of "harmful" birds. And only in 1950 in Paris was signed a new Convention on protecting all birds' species. In 1922 the International council for bird protection (ICBP) was established, which became an effective international organization and which launched all the later created organizations. Now the EU member countries have more than 140 international organizations on nature protection.

In general, the activities of the European Community in the field of environment are divided into five stages: 1957-1972, 1972-1986, 1986-1992, 1992-2001, 2001-present (Kachuriner 2013, p. 327).

The first stage (1957-1972) begins with creating the community. However, the agreement on forming the community does not contain rules on environmental protection. The community measures were aimed at achieving other economically and socially important purposes and only indirectly touched the environmental sphere; environmental

protection was implemented optionally. The concept of environment was considered by the Rome agreement in 1957 as the European integration sphere. Although in general, EU institutions were prepared to expand its environmental area activities despite the common policy absence in this area during this period.

The second stage (1972-1986) launched targeted environmental policy in European countries, primarily due to the manifestations of rapid environment degradation.

The beginning of the second stage marked the decision on developing the organization in the field of environmental protection. This was due to the development of legislation in the participating countries, due to environmental disasters and international environmental cooperation intensification. Almost simultaneously in all EU countries and beyond began the development of living environment quality standards. The public realized that humanity has common global interests, without which country's stable development is impossible.

In 1973 the first program of community actions on the environment, which defined the goals, objectives, principles and priorities for the environmental organization activity was accepted. Separately it expected to hold the specific environmental protection measures in the coming years. The first program should be analyzed as a turning point in the EU environmental policy evolution. It marked the beginning of a real politics and had a significant impact on future similar programs in the field of environmental protection.

It should be noted that the community action program in the field of the environment is a political and legal document defining priority actions for the near future and sets specific goals and objectives which can be achieved and accomplished by the community based on the current situation. While realizing the community environmental policy there was adopted seven programs: in 1973 (1973-1976), in 1977 (1977-1982), in 1983 (1983-1986), in 1987 (1987-1992), in 1993 (1993-2001), in 2002 (2002 - 2012), in 2013 (2013-2020) (Bízek 2013, p. 10-13).

During the second stage the Community adopted a number of important directives-acts to identify the ways of harmonizing member-countries environmental law. EU joined a number of major international conventions on environmental protection. The second stage was marked by forming the Community in relation to the environment and developing basic regulating methods.

The third stage (1986-1992) was associated with completing the Community environmental policy, consolidating in memorandum respective powers. The purposes and principles of environmental policy, the international cooperation authorities were fixed.

In relations between the Community and member-countries in the field of environmental protection was established the principle of subsidiarity, which, after the Maastricht Agreement in 1992 was extended to all of the shared Community and member-countries competence.

During the third period the environmental monitoring, environmental certification, collecting and processing environmental information mechanisms were laid, were held the first measures on creating funding mechanism and protecting environmental rights.

A characteristic feature of this period was vertical and sectoral approach to ecological problems, based on its first EU action program in the field of environmental protection.

The fourth stage (1992-2001) began with adopting the Maastricht Agreement on European Union in 1992. The Agreement on EU was amended by the environmental organization objectives, the environment protection was recognized as one of the EU activities. Also, the environmental policy purposes and principles were supplemented.

The horizontal approach, the main feature of which is the considering the whole range of industries that cause pollution was implemented to the EU activities. The amendments, made by the Amsterdam and Nice agreements, although it did not contain special environmental section but, for the first time, based on the coexistence of the EU put the principle of stable development based on a balanced environmental management.

The fifth stage (since 2001 to present) adopted a new Nice Agreement in 2001, which provided a significant EU expansion by 12 countries in central and southern Europe. Laeken Declaration of 15 December 2001 *The future of the EU* provides more accurate directions and practical measures timetable on reforming and improving the EU environmental strategy with the new geopolitical and environmental realities. In accordance with the EU founding agreement provisions, the environmental strategy is based on the action program in the field of environment, defining priorities and urgent measures for the nearest future.

In particular, in 2002, the sixth program of Community action in the field of environment 1600/2002 / ES1 entered into force.

The difference between this program from the previous is that this program has a legal status. On the political and legal spheres, the so-called soft law, the program moved to the status of "solid". In general, the program was aimed at providing the three conditions of EU environmental measures: integrating the environmental requirements in different areas of the EU and the implementing the principle of the EU ecological

conditionality; continuing measures aimed at ensuring sustainable development; holding environmental measures with the expectation of current and future expanding the EU, namely joining the EU new countries. It was important that the program was coordinated measures in the field of environmental protection not only the EU member-countries, but also candidate countries and other countries in Europe and European international environmental organizations.

Although the duration of the program was released in July 2012, but implementing many measures and actions launched under this program continues.

In 2013 the seventh action program in the field of environment came into action, designed up to 2020, it fixed the specific requirements of climate change, biodiversity, natural resources, health, forcing the market to work for the environment (Prokhorenko 2012, p. 73).

The main purpose of the seventh environmental programs is to secure a 50% reduction in “ecological footprint” of the EU countries over the next 20 years.

At the present stage in the EU improving the legal regulation of environmental protection is carried. In particular, the acts that lay the legal basis of collecting and processing environmental information, environmental monitoring, environmental certification, assessment of environmental impact, the mechanism of financing environmental measures were updated (Directive 2001/42/EC, 2001). The attempts to many forms of codification in environmental standardization and certification are being made. The most complex problems are being solved and specific projects, which include joint engineering and technical developments on protecting the atmosphere from industrial emissions, preventing pollution in agricultural work, conserving wild flora and fauna, creating reserves etc. are being implemented. These projects deal with various international specialized organizations both governmental and non-governmental (Gusev 2012, p. 95).

An important element in the implementing environmental policy in Europe is the perspective of including environmental issues in the draft EU Constitution.

From the abovementioned we can see that today in the EU there is a clear environmental strategy and a common understanding that none of the EU country is unable to solve its own environmental problems fully. Clearly coordinated actions of the EU and their coordination on international legal basis are needed. Although, it should be noted that there is the only strategy, but there cannot be the only one plan of action that could be as template applied to each of the EU country. Each country is unique

and has unique natural resources, industrial and, ultimately, human potential, and this should be taken into account.

EU regions environmental policy

Now the EU is divided into four major regions, differ in environmental policies which they conduct, although they have the only common strategy.

The first region is the southern EU countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, and Croatia). Regions environmental problems predominantly caused by the agrarian orientation of manufacturing and tourist infrastructure: soil erosion, air pollution, water pollution, especially in coastal areas. But over the past 10 years, these countries have made a huge step towards greening production. They have already reached such a level of economic development that allows financing and implementing not only local measures to protect the environment in areas with the most severe environmental conditions, but also to form the long-term national environmental policy.

In addition, the countries of the southern region are getting investments, and loan programs directed to:

- intensifying production of ecologically clean agricultural products without chemical fertilizers and pesticides;
- developing tourism infrastructure, through optimizing ecological and landscape coasts, opening national parks and reserves, spreading eco-tourism;
- encouraging the development of clean production and increasing enterprises orientation of high-tech industries on optimal environmental conditions.

Today Portugal, Italy, Spain, Croatia economy have significant changes focused on quality growth and rational use of natural resources.

The second region contains the EU eastern part (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia), which are characterized by high levels of industrial pollution. Heavy industry that contains coal, steel and chemical industries had made a devastating impact on water, air and soil condition in these countries.

In terms of reducing negative results of mistreating the environment the process of accessing eastern European countries to the European Union became the driving force towards addressing the most serious environmental problems inherited from the past. Over the past ten-fifteen years the situation has considerably improved, thanks to the coordinated countries efforts and the most significant financial support from the EU.

In particular, in 1991, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Romania organized a joint company on improving region's situation, funded by the EU PHARE program. Today one of the most effective mechanisms for financing environmental measures in the eastern EU countries is "environmental debt exchange", namely canceling country's external debt in exchange for environmental costs in country's national currency. Using this mechanism only in Poland since 2005, was implemented over 250 environmental investment projects.

Huge efforts were made to renew forests. Thanks to significant investments in sewage technologies treatment in the EU eastern region there is almost no acid rains, reappeared rivers salmon and the quality of air that is constantly measured don't disagree with many parts of western Europe. However, despite this, some regions will need several years of rehabilitation for indicators to come in line with modern EU standards, not only because it requires large investments. For example, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia should reduce the number of municipal landfills and develop mechanisms for processing recyclable materials. They should also develop a classification system for regions stained to implement more effective measures for their rehabilitation.

The third region contains the EU northern part (Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden), the countries of which differ by the most harmonious development and rational use of natural resources.

In general, the northern Europe is not experiencing such significant anthropogenic pressure as some other European countries. In solving environmental problems these countries rely on traditional environmental outlook of the wide population range. Sociological researches show that about 90% of Danes, Swedes and Norwegians include environmental protection tasks to the most urgent and important socio-political problems of the country, which should be resolved by joint society efforts. These countries use alternative energy sources, strictly protect nature biodiversity and implement innovative recycling technologies most actively.

Among the countries of this region most problematic are the Baltic countries that inherited hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic chemicals from the Soviet times, especially jet fuel and outdated explosives that were dropped on land and in coastal and inland waters by the USSR army. Governments of these countries allocate huge funds for restoring damaged upper layers of soil and clean water, because they understand that the problem can be overcome only through the European approach and stringent rules and requirements.

Today the northern region environmental problems associated with:

- marine waters pollution through active producing oil on the Norwegian shelf, Barents and North Seas;
- acid rainfall as a result of chemical, refineries, power plants activity. For example, Estonia for several consecutive years is a leader in the world in producing sulfur dioxide per capita.
- decreasing ozone layer thickness through transboundary air pollution by the chlorofluorocarbons.

To solve these problems legal framework for environmental protection is consistently being improved (e.g. Danish standards in the environmental area far outweigh the majority of parameters of average European standards), forcing businesses to quickly adapt to new requirements. There is an active implementing of new, environmentally friendly technologies and producing processes, and also further researches and developments in this field are conducted.

The effectiveness of environmental protection system of northern region measures is largely ensured by serious attitude to environmental problems as government officials, business leaders and the majority of countries population. This attitude is stimulated by economic measures system that makes more profitable use of clean technologies in business and economical resource management in man's life (Directive 2011/92/EC, 2011).

The fourth region consists of the central and north-western EU parts (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom) that have a high industrial potential, which causes a number of environmental problems.

In 60-70 years the economic development of central and eastern European countries took place under the influence of two conflicting situations. The research in manufacturing technology has contributed to developing and implementing new technologies and new synthetic materials. Their use in the industrial and manufacturing sector helped to reduce consumption of certain types of natural resources, but leads to waste, characterized by high toxicity. As the result there were increased especially harmful substances emissions (karbofos, benzopyrene), which led to appearing environmentally "dirty" areas in the region. The loss of west European countries from harmful environmental industries was estimated in 60-ies years of the last century at a rate of 8-15% of DNP.

The major industrial giants of the region are the United Kingdom and Germany that for long have been at the center of international environmental conflicts as the main pollution culprits of transboundary territories of other countries. Because of the prevailing transfer of air masses from the west, from the Atlantic to the east and north-east, Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, especially in 60-70 years, in the period of active industrialization, felt the direct pollution impact of Ruhr, Birmingham, Luxembourg factories. According to scientists estimates from 70 to 90% of dirt fell on the territory of these countries through cross-border transfer.

Today in Germany and the UK the last coal mines are being closed and the industry is moving to renewable energy resources. Switzerland actively uses hydroelectric power stations; France is trying to reduce the percentage of energy received from introducing nuclear power stations gradually implementing wind generators, solar panels of biogas plants. Although a significant part of Norway's GDP is still consists of oil and gas production, the country is now considered to be the world leader in technological innovation in the industry and mining sector that allows to minimize the effects of these enterprises to the environment. The Austrian economy is traditionally occupies a leading position among the EU member countries on producing environmentally friendly equipment. Austrian companies' total turnover, specializing in this area is up to 4%.

Gradually, western and central Europe countries take priority position in the global market of green technologies. The principle of using the so-called end of pipe technologies, namely compensating the damages caused during the manufacturing process post hoc changes to the precautionary principle. On the basis of the total EU model of stable development, these countries are developing their policies for the following areas: agricultural policy (soil and landscape protection), forest policy, water policy, biodiversity preservation, environmentally friendly transport system development, safe renewable energy development.

EU: today's environmental situation

Numerous measures on protecting the environment, taken by the central and western EU regions, together with the increasing level of environmental awareness became the result of the fact that over the past decade the environmental condition has considerably improved (Pugachev 2014, p. 110). Countries of this region have enough means and

resources to implementing their own environmental policies and conduct vigorous environmental policies helping in solving other EU countries environmental problems.

Thanks to the active position of the central and north-western Europe significant improvement of environmental indicators throughout the EU have been achieved during the last 20 years. These countries with the sufficient financial resources and developed mechanisms for implementing nature preserving programs actively fighting for the efficient and economical use of natural resources, implementing environmental technologies, reducing cross-border pollution.

According to the Center for Environmental Policy and Law at Yale University, which calculates the environmental efficiency index, EU countries are included in the list of countries with high levels of environmental conditions and the effectiveness of natural resources management. The index measures 19 indicators in nine categories that reflect different environment aspects and the ecological systems viability, preserving biodiversity, combating climate change, public health, the practice of economic activity and the extent of its impact on the environment and country's policy efficiency in the field of ecology. While making the ranking the air and water quality, the environment impact on human health, greenhouse gas emissions, forest areas etc. are taken into account.

The research methodics is developed by the Centre for Environmental Policy and Law at Yale University, together with the group of independent international experts, along with statistics reports takes into account national institutions and international organizations. In 2016, among the 180 countries that participated in the evaluation, 28 EU countries came in the top 50.

Conclusion

To summarize all the above mentioned, it should be noted that for the time of Community's conducting environmental policy was adopted seven important programs in the field of environmental protection. Today, the environmental policy is supposed to use the most effective and the least expensive economic instruments. The efficiency attributes are the joint planning and the only one legal basis for common evaluation methods and principles of their allocation, competition and investment circumstances. The principle of the polluter pays was established in practice of using economic instruments (Decision No. 1386/2013/EU).

Thus, thanks to the EU for more than half a century Europe lives in a world that is ahead in the development of other developed countries, including the environmental

achievements. During this period, the environmental strategy legal framework was established, the methods of environmental protection are being improved, the environmental quality improvements were initiated. The EU, as a leader of environmental cooperation in Europe, is actively involved in global activities to protect the environment under the UN auspices.

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