

WHERE DOES ROMANIA STAND AT IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?

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Abstract

A progressive view upon environmental policy highlights the role of the state, which, together with other institutions (from the private or civil society areas), fights against the risks and disadvantages, such as inequality and poverty, both locally and regionally. In this context, it is undeniable that an important condition for reaching sustainable development objectives is the simultaneity of action across, within and between several dimensions. For this reason, states, regions and institutions need to come together and synchronise their objectives and actions according to commonly agreed priorities (Socol *et. al*, 2009). In other words, there is a stringent need to correlate economic policies with environmental ones, as well as with policy areas such as investments, labour force, education, health and research-development (R&D). Therefore, this paper will present a study-case upon climate change policies – how they can be defined, what are they typologies and what Romania's position among European Union's states is.

Keywords: environmental policy, sustainable development, climate change, Romania

Introduction

How can we define environmental policy? In the work of scientists, policies reflecting the concern for environment are mainly catalogued in two discourses: the one for sustainable development and the one for climate change. For example, within United Nations, there is a Commission for Sustainable Development and also a Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 2011). Within the European approach, there is a Sustainable Development (SD) policy, as well as other general development policies (such as Europe 2020) and climate change initiatives representing constituent elements within them (European Commission, 2011)

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No matter the definition, ideally, sustainable development must simultaneously ensure a multitude of elements, such as economic development, social wellbeing and environmental protection. Golusin and Munitlak Ivanović (2009) present an interesting approach, stressing the importance of measuring the role of the institutional system for sustainable development, apart from the other three aspects usually evaluated.

A series of methodologies also include this fourth, very important component: the institutional or governmental element (it is, for example, included in the set of sustainable development indicators designed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Commission). It promotes societal needs and also helps implement sustainable development programmes.

Of course, inside these four main elements, a variety of themes, components, documents and indicators taken into consideration can be found. These will be explored in the next section, when analysing different academic and policy documents, as well as the status of implementation of environmental effectiveness.

This definition of SD will be accepted as the most valid and used for the research within this paper.

The typology of environmental policies and framework for the study

Traditionally, environmental policy was implemented only by applying taxes and the use of regulations; an approach that was essentially not effective in reaching its overarching scope (Bran, 2002). As a response, objectives such as environmental protection, education and conservation are often integrated together with the social and economic targets inside sustainable development initiatives, strategies and action-plans at a local, regional, national and international level.

Modern approaches are based on linking conservation or protection to development. Most of the countries have implemented this new view, especially under the pressure issued by the European Union or similar international bodies or conventions. In this respect, the EU has been described as “having the most progressive environmental policies of any state in the world although it is not a state” (Jordan, 1999: 1).

In this context, research on how the European Union influenced Romania’s environmental policymaking evolution could bring to light important knowledge regarding the transition to cooperation and better regulation.

As stated by Peter Self (2000:189), the most important thing to acknowledge for the reform of capitalism is “a more effective state and a more active and egalitarian democracy”. There is no right or wrong course of action, instead, policy decisions rely deeply on the amount of time and resources available, and sometimes the achievements cannot be easily allocated to the public, political or economic factors (Hague and Harrop, 2001;284).

Relating the matter of exploring the role of governments to environmental policy, we consider it is useful to identify the main typology of mechanisms used by the states to exercise power. Therefore, the table below summarises the main compliance mechanisms’ typology, as reflected in the work of specialists.

Table 1. The typology of compliance mechanisms

Typology	Categories and their brief description
Etzioni	<p>Coercive means (such as police and jails): “the weapons, installations and manpower that the military, police or similar agencies command” (Etzioni, 1961:87, 2001:38). This mechanism may be used to ensure compliance of all the individuals involved, but also to cover those who do not represent a majority.</p>
	<p>Utilitarian means or remunerative instruments (economic incentives generated by public expenditures or subsidies): imply manipulation upon the targeted population or market actors, so that the decision-maker persuades them to go in the direction set by the Government (Etzioni, 1961:87). <i>Remunerative power</i> is based on “control over material resources and rewards through allocation of salaries and wages, commissions and contributions, working conditions, “fringe benefits”, services, and commodities. It is based on the control of instrumental relationship, activities, economic incentives and goals.” (Sissaye, 2006:118)</p>
	<p>Normative means (appeal to moral values, moral education) (Etzioni, 1961:87) <i>Normative power</i> encompasses “the allocation of “symbolic rewards”, “esteem and prestige symbols”, and the use of rituals and norms to facilitate positive response.” (Sissaye, 2006:116-117) This view relies on creating leaders, manipulating the mass-media and creating a sense of legitimacy.</p>
Bemelmans-Videc <i>et al.</i>	<p>Economic means or “carrots”: change people’s behaviour when they consider that it worth to take the given advantages. Economic policy instruments are characterized “as involving the handing out or the taking away of material resources while the addressees are not obligated to take the measures involved.” (Bemelmans-Videc <i>et al.</i> 1998:10, 30)</p>
	<p>Regulation or “sticks”: are “measures taken by governmental units to influence people by means of formulated rules and directives which mandate receivers to act in accordance with what is ordered in these rules and directives.” (Bemelmans-Videc <i>et al.</i> 1998:10, 30)</p>
	<p>Information or “sermons”: similar to Etzioni’s normative power; mainly refer to information and cultural implications. They concluded that by normative instruments, Etzioni also meant the “transfer of knowledge, moral suasion, exhortation, and other persuasive action as well as nonverbal symbolic performances.” They “are regarded as modern forms of intervention, with an emphasis on prevention of wrong or stimulation of the right conduct by offering insights into consequences of behaviour”; they are defined as “attempts at influencing people through the transfer of knowledge, the communication of reasoned argument, and persuasion.” (Bemelmans-Videc <i>et al.</i> 1998:30, 2003:11, 28-29)</p>
Hill and Hupe	<p>Authority – where rules are laid down in advance (Hill and Hupe, 2002; Hill, 2005:142)</p>
	<p>Transaction - where certain outputs are expected, often as specified in contracts (Hill and Hupe, 2002; Hill, 2005:142)</p>
	<p>Persuasion – where the essential mode of operation involves collaboration or what may be called co-production (Hill and Hupe; 2003, Hill, 2005:142)</p>

As outlined in the table, the main categories of mechanisms employed are: regulation, economic means and information. In a more recent view, the European Environmental Protection Agency (EEA) uses an extended and more detailed framework to categorise policy mechanisms: economic, fiscal, regulatory, education, information, planning, research, voluntary negotiated agreements and other (EEA, 2011). This is the framework

that we will also use within the study of progress measurement in policy effectiveness. However, as a short methodological note, we consider that these 9 types are only a detailed vision of the three evidenced in academia and were developed to highlight policies that initially came in-between the 3 categories and were harder to define.

Romania's position for implemented climate change policies (Table 2.)

Romania is positioned on rank 22 from 26 member states, together with Slovakia. This is a very weak positioning, even in comparison with its neighbouring country Bulgaria. Moreover, most of the policies included in the database are well-established; therefore they should have been implemented so far.

Conclusions

Concerning climate change policies, EEA groups policies depending on their status of application: planned, adopted or implemented.

The EU country with the largest number of planned policies is Germany, followed by Ireland and Greece. Romania has only three planned policies, holding rank 15 from 23 countries. These relate to two actual documents: a greenhouse gas emissions reduction and an administrative capacity building plan.

In terms of adopted policy measures, the top three EU level countries are Estonia, Italia and Lithuania. Romania is ranked almost at the middle – on rank 14 from 22 countries. This is quite satisfactory news, although it was expected; since Romania elaborated quite a number of environmental policy documents, and also ratified and negotiated several international treaties.

Overall, for all three types of statuses, with a total of 15 policies, Romania is situated almost at the bottom line among European States. Its neighbouring country that acceded to the EU in the same time, Bulgaria, holds a total of 27 policies.

Other former communist states also do better. For example, Poland has a total of 64, ranking among best states, after Belgium and the UK. But this is also one of the old member-states. Comparatively, Slovakia, also one of the former communist block members, is situated below Romania.

Table 2. Implemented policy measures

Country	Measure type									
	Economic	Fiscal	Regulatory	Information	Education	Planning	Research	Voluntary	Other	Total
Austria	16.91	1.5	12.08	2.41	1.08	1	-			36
Belgium	13.29	8.68	15.9	19.28	11.7	10.97	3.44	7.2	5.8	97
Bulgaria	10.66	0.58	2.5	2.08	0.25	-	0.58	3	-	20
Cyprus	3	1	5	-	-	1.5	-	2	0.5	13
Czech Rep.	16.41	0.5	9.58	1.08	1.08	-	-	-	2.33	31
Denmark	12.83	11	17.5	5.33	-	-	1	1.33	-	49
Estonia	5.24	0.58	5.49	1.75	-	0.5	1	8.31	1	24
Finland	5.16	2	16	2.99	0.33	2	0.66	5.83	-	35
France	15	3.5	4.5	9.5	1	1	2	2	0.5	39
Germany	17	2	8	5	-	-	1	1.5	1.5	36
Greece	12.58	0.58	6.08	1.25	-	3.5	0.5	2	1.5	28
Hungary	21.5	1	8	0.5	0.5	7.5	1	-	-	40
Italy	6	0.5	9.5	0.83	0.33	-	-	0.83	-	18
Latvia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lithuania	2.83	-	-	0.5	-	1.33	-	-	0.33	5
Luxembourg	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Malta	10.5	-	2	0.75	1	0.25	0.5	1	-	16
Netherlands	5.03	4.19	5.86	1.16	0.5	-	2.03	5.2	-	25
Poland	19.33	1.83	18.83	2.5	2	1	3.5	1	4	54
Portugal	19.5	4	8.5	0.5	-	1	-	1.5	-	35
Romania	3	1	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	9
Slovakia	0.5	-	8.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Slovenia	6.44	3.4	6.44	3.61	0.58	-	-	1.2	2	24
Spain	1.84	0.2	19.84	22.14	0.14	9.34	0.14	0.34	-	54
Sweden	11.3	8.83	14.83	-	1.5	-	-	2.5	-	39
UK	17.66	8.03	13	11.53	0.2	4.03	2.2	3.83	-	60
Total (EU-27)	257.51	66.9	220.93	94.69	22.19	48.92	19.55	50.57	19.46	804

*Ireland has no implemented policies

Source: processed after EEA (2011), [http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/climate/pam/output?any_word=&normal=SEARCH&id_status\[\]=1](http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/climate/pam/output?any_word=&normal=SEARCH&id_status[]=1)

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