

HUNGARY – “TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY”

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Abstract

Ideology of sustainable development was created for solving the conflict between economic growth and environment. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. [1] In order to implement sustainability it is required common action of the countries all over the world. The European Community undertook fulfilment of requirements of sustainability in the Fifth Environmental Programme. Harmonizing with it Hungary created its special programmes, plans and legislation concentrated to protection of natural and built environment. [2]

Key words

sustainable development, requirements of sustainability, implementation of sustainability by organisations, programmes, plans and legislation

Sustainable development

Report of Rome Club [3] created a great international stir by presenting steady growing environmental damaging, overusing of natural resources and giving out of non-renewable resources as “aftermaths” of economic development. It started a bitter controversy over the conflict between the economic growth and the environment. [4] Searching after the solution for resolving of the conflict didn’t stay in the frame of scholarlies and representatives of green movements, it was transferred to the international forums of economy and politics.

The solution for saving the Globe for the future generations was “found” by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1972, and it became known the ideology of sustainable development. The Commission’s Report on “Our Common Future” emphasized the requirement of sustainability in all human activity and stressed that “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development”. [5] “To consider as sustainable a

development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” [6]

Based on the definition sustainable development has three main characters are the following:

- preservation of general quality of life
- ensuring available of natural resources
- avoidance of steady environmental damages.

In order to implement sustainable development it is required to manage economy, society and environment as a unit, dependent system. [7] Since resources of raw materials, that forms bases of economical development are limited, its movement is required to direct in different phase of processing, consumption and use to promote the best use and recycle. In this way waste can be avoid and giving out of raw materials can be prevented, there will realise economic development that meets the needs of the present and future generations as well. Moreover to implement sustainable development there is essential required to rationalize energy production and use, besides that to change the society’s consumption and behaviour costumes.

Fifth Environmental Action Programme of EU: “Towards Sustainability”

The first significant common action for implementing sustainable development was the European Union’s Fifth Environmental Action Programme “Towards Sustainability”. [8] The Programme determines European Community’s policy for environment and sustainable development particularly, and promotes implementing of Rio Ideals as a part fulfilment of Agenda 21. [9] The Action Programme defines as fundamental requirements maintaining of natural resources and avoiding of environmental pollution on the interest of living quality. The plan determines factors and activities that can cause environmental damages or giving out of natural resources: such as agriculture, industry, energetic, traffic and tourism. The Programme initiates changing of present trends damaging for environment and promotes changing of society’s customs.

National organizations for sustainable development of Hungary

Implementing of sustainable development started in Hungary in the last decade following the European trends. Special instruments, programmes and legal means are introduced for sustainable development, special bodies are established as well. At national level there are

two bodies that may influence on the sustainability aspects of the decisions: Sustainable Development Committee of Hungary and National Council of Environment.

- Sustainable Development Committee

In order to define the domestic duties deriving from the programmes and plans for sustainable development in Hungary the Government established the Sustainable Development Committee in 1993. The Committee also has the main duty of working out of sustainable development's domestic concept with its special national tasks and promoting of preparing for national exercises arise from sustainable development strategy of European Community. The body also works as a consultative organisation, it makes opinions on different plans and programmes in the aspect sustainable development, and promotes information for professional and civil society. All the ministries are represented in the inter-ministerial committee as well as the representatives of several agencies of national competence and NGOs are included in the committee.

- National Council of Environment Protection [10]

The National Council of Environmental Protection is special advisory organ in order to establish wide social and scientific, professional bases for environmental protection. The body also "protects" the environmental "side" of sustainable development. It takes a stand on the matters of principle of various environmental programmes, on the legal rules, all decisions and other issues related to environment. The Council consisting of up to 22 members has representatives of public organizations registered with environmental goals, representatives of organs representing professional and economic interests, representatives of the scientific communities and the Chairman of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in equal proportions.

Legislation for sustainable development of Hungary

The main legislative framework for implementing sustainable development in the aspect of environment is the Act of 1995 on the General Rules of Environmental Protection and the Act XXI of 1996 on Regional Development and Land Use Planning.

- Act LIII of 1995 on the General Rules of Environmental Protection

The centre legislation of environmental protection in Hungary has the object developing a harmonious relationship between humans and their environment, protecting the components and processes of the environment, after that providing for the environmental conditions of

sustainable development. Sustainable development is determined as a principle of all use of environment and defined as a required [11]: system of social and economic conditions and activities, which preserves the natural values for the present and future generations, uses the natural resources economically expediently, and ensures the improvement of the quality of life and the preservation of diversity in the long run from the aspect of ecology.

The Act of environmental protection provides basis for more specialized rules that are regulated in further acts and decrees. [12] These special statutes regulate the given field of speciality in accordance with the enforcement of environmental requirements.

- Act XXI of 1996 on Regional Development and Land Use Planning

The purpose of the Act is to establish the fundamental objectives and rules of regional development and land use planning, and to define its institutional system. The goal of regional development and regional planning is to promote the development of the social market economy in all regions of the country, to create conditions for sustainable development, [13] to promote the spatial spread of innovation, to develop a spatial structure which is suitable for the social, economic and environmental goals. For strengthening sustainable development – became decisive element of regional development policy – the biological activity-value defines the impact of characteristic vegetation for settlement's ecological condition and human health condition in given area. The sustainable development requires the land sparing, appropriate rainwater management and creating of green rings. [14]

National programmes and plans towards sustainable development of Hungary

Implementation of requirements and instruments of sustainable development are found in strategic programmes and plans mostly: the New Hungary Development Plan, the National Environmental Programme II, the National Development Policy Concept and National Spatial Development Concept determine the required development trends with its implementing for sustainability of Hungary.

- New Hungary Development Plan [15]

The New Hungary Development Plan has the main objective of expanding employment and creating the conditions for long term growth. [16] In order to achieve above objectives, developmental efforts will concentrate among six special areas on Priority of Environment and Energy development. The Priority contributes to the achievement of the long term growth

objective by reducing influences damaging the environment, by preserving the natural environment and with prevention, efficiency as well as an integrated approach to complex problems.

The strategy included in the Priority supports the following guidelines:

making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work by strengthen the synergies between environment protection and growth, moreover by address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources.

In order to these objectives the Plan determines two main special developments: developments improving the environment and environment friendly energy developments.

Developments improving the environment, the elements of which include:

- achieving healthy and clean settlements including waste management; waste water management and improvement of drinking water quality;
- wise management of our waters including protection against floods; protection of quality and quantity of our waters; prevention of further pollution of waters state measures of its implementation;
- wise management of our natural assets;
- promotion of sustainable production and consumption habits, raising awareness of environmental and climate issues;
- regional dimensions of environment developments.

Environment friendly energy developments, the planned tools of which are:

- the promotion of developments aimed at energy efficiency and saving and at
- the production and utilisation of renewable energy;

The implementation of the strategy defined in Priority of Environment and Energy Development is ensured mainly in the frame of the Environment and Energy Operational Programme, financed from the Cohesion Fund, but the Economic Development Operational Programme and the regional operational programmes also contribute to its implementation.

- National Environmental Programme II [17]

The centre plan of sustainability development in the aspect of environment is the National Environmental Programme 2. The Programme is the basis for environmental planning. It also defines the environmental policy objectives of Hungary with its implementation for 6 years.

The Plan requires taking into account the principles of sustainable development in all use of environment that is according to Herman Daly, “progressive social betterment without growing beyond ecological carrying capacity.”

The Programme determines main purposes for trend of the environmental management and protection of Hungary in conformity with the 6th Environmental Action Programme of the European Union [18] harmonising with the national environmental characteristics. The document also identifies four priority targets:

1. Protection of the ecosystem implies consideration of the sustainable development’s principles in management of natural resources, protection of the natural environment for the on-coming generation, preservation of the biosphere.
2. Ensuring of harmonic connection between society and environment tends to improvement of society’s health status, preservation of appropriate environment state required to life conditions, reduction and decreasing of dangerous effects.
3. Ensuring of environmental aspects aims at economical development involves decreasing environment load. It requires sustainable using of resources and areas, prevention and reduction of environmental damages.
4. Stressed is the information related to environmental progresses, effects, natural- and environmental protection, the environmental awareness and strengthening of co-operation.

In these special management required areas the second National Environmental Programme delineates concrete interventions, thematic action programmes: [19]

1. Action Programme for Increase of Environmental Awareness
2. Action Programme against Climate Changing
3. Action Programme for Environmental Sanitation and Food-safety
4. Action Programme for Municipal Environment Quality
5. Action Programme for Protection of Biodiversity and Land Protection
6. Action Programme for Rural Environment Quality, Leasehold and Land Use
7. Action Programme for Protection and Sustainable Use of Waters
8. Action Programme for Waste Management
9. Action Programme for Environment Safety

The Programme based upon prevention principle requires choosing and applying of instruments, that prove to be the most effective in environmental, social and economical

aspects, at the same time that means are clear, simple and concerted applicable, and can successfully contribute to environmental structure changing and developing of environmental sensitiveness. [20]

The contents of the Programme shall be enforced during the drawing up of the social and economic plan of the country, [21] the development of the decisions on economic policy, regional and locality development, regional planning, [22] furthermore, the planning and execution activities carried out in any sector of the national economy by the state. [23]

- National Development Policy Concept [24]

The National Development Policy Concept provides that Hungary should become one of the most dynamically developing countries of Europe by 2020. The living standards and the quality of life of people should improve, there should be more and better jobs, higher incomes, safe, clean and quality environment providing healthier, longer and more complete life. The key objectives of Hungarian development policy also target the implementation of sustainable development in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability alike.

A development is considered sustainable based on the Concept, if the development takes environmental and human resource criteria into account (including natural resources, areas, landscapes, biological diversity, human health, social cohesion and demographic factors), and moreover, protects the built environment, cultural heritage and creates economically sustainable production. In addition, it takes the capacity of the ecological system of a given area into account (including the residents of the area) as a criterion regulating development. [25]

Priorities of sustainability are therefore:

- conservation of natural assets and resources;
- clean settlements, safe environmental protection;
- general validation of preventative, cautious environmental protection and innovation effective in terms of the environment.

- National Spatial Development Concept [26]

The goal of the creation of a spatial concept is to bring to life a harmonized and sustainable social, economic and environmental spatial structure and regional system. According to the

principles of sustainability in the Concept, the development and resource management that is taking place today does not jeopardize future generations' ability to securely fulfil their needs. The development process does not increase the threat to the local natural- and built environment, cannot lead to the depletion of resources or the disappearance of cultures rich in value, and at the same time ensures the conditions for a high standard of living for society.

The document also aims at sustainable territorial development and protection of heritage that ensures besides the safeguarding of environmental, natural and cultural value the safe utilization of the resources necessary to economic functioning, while taking into account the intrinsic qualities of the area. For implementing sustainability in the aspect of environment in spatial development it is required:

- the use of working methods during development that are appropriate to the intrinsic landscape, environmental and natural qualities of the area; giving preference to environmentally friendly production and transport systems;
- ensuring the preservation of traditional land use, the town/village system, and the archaeological and folk heritage;
- cessation of existing environmental pollution, the safe disposal of sewage and waste using modern technology.

According to this the Concept states that regions and areas must be turned into sustainable systems whose value, heritage, resources and integrity are not merely safeguarded, but further strengthened. The harmony of society, the economy, and the natural-environmental and cultural components within their local territorial system is ensured by comprehensive environmental management and integrated environmental planning.

„Person” responsible for implementation of sustainability of Hungary

For implementation of sustainable development of Hungary is required concerted action of all participation of all „person” in the country. The public administration has the duty of realization of the aimed middle-range policy in compliance with the environmental requirements and interests of the social. The environment policy involved in the national plans and programme is required to bring in harmony of economical conception and other plans for development. The local government has enlarging function in environmental management and protection. It has the primary duty of participation in local implementation of sustainability and promoting it by working out of regional environmental plans.

Non governmental organizations, professional groups and representations are required active co-operation in environmental information, PR activities, in deepening of social relationship and in consultation as well. The institutions and professionals are desirable to be initiated in planning, preparation and realization progresses in environmental working.

For elimination and prevention environmental problems there is required the partnership with the economical actors. Promoting of environmental friend action in economic that can serve essential the environmental interests.

Scientists, scientific institutions for research and educational institutions play stressed role in research and strategic work in realizing environmental purposes. These scientific partners are responsible for changing of the social environmental attitudes in the direction of environment consciousness and sensitiveness.

„By environmental protection is invested all the society with rights and liabilities as well.”
[27] All the nationals have right to healthy environment and are obliged to consider sustainability in ordinary activity.

Literature

[1] Our Common Future, Report of United Nations, 1987

[2] FAZEKAS I.: *Environment policy of the European Union and the Hungarian integration*, Debrecen: University of Debrecen Kossuth University Press, 2001, p. 11, 22, 23, 79, 84, ISBN 963 472 552 X

[3] Meadows Report, 1972

[4] There were some stand points that considered economic growth favourable for environment also, some in contrast with views held growth among main causes of degradation of environment.

[5] World Conference on Environment and Development organized by the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Sustainable development became basic, fundamental principle of the environmental protection by the World Conference.

[6] Our Common Future, Report of United Nations, 1987

[7] Our Common Future, Report of United Nations, 1987

[8] BÁNDI, Gy. – ERDEY, Gy. – HORVÁTH, Zs. – POMÁZI, I.: *Legislation of environmental protection of the European Union*, Budapest: KJK – Kerszöv Press, 2004, p. 30, 52, 54, 342, ISBN 963 224 790 6

[9] BÁNDI, Gy.: *Environment Law*, Osiris Press, Budapest, 2006, p. 276

[10] The detailed provisions of National Council of Environmental Protection are regulated in the Act LIII of 1995 on the General Rules of Environmental Protection, Chapter III, Section 45.

[11] The Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Conservation includes also the principle of sustainable development in the objectives of the Act, and it defines the notion of sustainable development among the basic concepts.

[12] The Act includes the most essential definitions, and based upon its authorization, the norms of the sector are detailed in further legal sources.

[13] Sustainable development is prioritised in the Act among the separate rules on land use planning.

[14] green areas, rings of natural environment

[15] National Strategic Reference Framework of Hungary 2007–2013, Employment and Growth

[16] The objectives of the sustainable use of the environment are to be realised in line with the priorities of the Community Strategic Guidelines and the 6th Environment Protection Action Programme of the European Union.

[17] Parliament Resolution No. 132/2003 (XII.11.) OGY on the National Environmental Programme for 2003-2008

[18] The 6th Environmental Action Programme identifies four priority areas:

Climate change

Nature and biodiversity

Environment and health

Natural resources and waste.

[19] Besides the thematic action programmes the Programme involves the National Nature Conservation Master Plan.

[20] The National Environmental Programme 2 commends the applying and developing of following instruments:

- integration of environmental standpoints into legislation and special policies

- direct and indirect developments in environmental protection

- economical, legal and official instruments

- innovation and research
- improvement of environmental achievement of local governments and institutions
- environmental qualifying of products, services and firms
- social participation and obtaining environmental information
- environmental information, education, training and changing environmental attitudes.

[21] See: Hungarian Constitution, Section 19, subsection (3), paragraph c)

[22] Regional and county environmental protection programmes are required to harmonizing with the Programme.

[23] Act LIII of 1995 on the General Rules of Environmental Protection, Chapter III, Activities of the Government Aimed at Environmental Protection, Section, Section 41, subsection (4)

[24] Parliamentary Decree 96/2005. (XII. 25.) OGY on the National Development Policy Concept

[25] See in connection of Natural and environmental protection key priorities of Water management, Cultural heritage protection, Housing policy, Energy policy of the National Regional Development Concept.

[26] Parliamentary Decree 97/2005 (XII.25.) OGY on the National Spatial Development Concept

[27] The National Environmental Programme 2, Government Decree No. 1117/2001. (X. 19.)

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