NÁSTROJE ENVIRONMENTÁLNEJ POLITIKY
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY TOOLS
Recenzovaný zborník z X. medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie, 17. I. 2020, Bratislava
Proceedings of the 10th International Conference, Bratislava, January 17,2020
Bratislava: SSŽP et Strix, Edition ESE - 52, ISBN 978-80-973460-6-5

CURRENT LEGAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUMENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Dušan BEVILAQUA - Miroslav RUSKO

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY TOOLS ´2020

In 2017, more than 100 billion tons of materials entered the global economy to produce energy, build infrastructure and homes, produce food and provide consumer goods such as clothing and telephones. There are currently more telephones on the planet than humans, and by 2030 the amount of clothing purchased is expected to reach more than 92 million tonnes. Some estimates suggest that 99 % of the items that people buy are thrown away within six months of purchase without the material being recovered. This is because we have what you might call a linear economy. It works by extracting resources and producing products that are sold to people and then become waste after a short period of use.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the global economy into what could become the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Instead of trying to revive a system that is essentially prodigal, the European Commission is committed to building a post-pandemic sustainable circular economy.

The idea of a circular economy is simple: make better use of resources, i.e. direct the flows of raw materials and resources from sources to their full recovery. This means that instead of wasting raw materials and matters (and related environmental pollution), it is necessary to focus production, logistics and business processes from environmentally sound design (so-called ecodesign) of products to their long-term use and then to the best and most effective valorization.

Protecting the environment and moving towards a development of society that enables economic development, raising standards of living while preserving nature and resources for future generations requires knowledge of the current situation. Knowing the causations that cause environmental problems and how to prevent this, or how to remedy environmental burdens, can contribute to changing the attitude not only in production but also in consumption. Such knowledge should result in a qualitatively more environmentally acceptable approach to resource drawing, production and consumption, that would not be based on orders or prohibitions but on the basis of natural human knowledge.

The importance of environmental problems is currently increasing. In addition to the impact of human activity on nature and the economy, we are increasingly noticing the impact on quality of life and the social environs. The complex problem of combining the growth of the material well-being of people with nature conservation has several basic moments:

- continuously increasing impact of economic activities on the environment;
- we are increasingly aware of the scarcity of natural resources;
- the scarcity of resources puts an imaginary limit on the burden of economic activity, exceeding of what may cause undesirable irreversible changes in the balance and functioning of nature;
- the role of environmental protection in economic life is increasing;
- interpenetration and coherence of managerial approaches and methods applied in the economy and in environmental protection are strengthened.

The development of organizations' approach to environmental protection has gone through several stages from the passive approach, what relied on the power of nature to dispose of waste by its own assimilation capability, through the so-called reactive approach based on a control and management strategy, mainly following legislative measures, up to the precautionary principle applied since the 1990s in developed countries. It is based on the fact that it is cheaper and more effective to prevent the occurrence of environmental pollution than to subsequently remove it or bear its consequences. Instead of focusing on control and management (especially end-use or separation technologies), it is better to focus on finding ways rather than preventing negative phenomena (waste-free technologies, cleaner production, BAT, etc.). Modern environmental management systems from the original British standard BS 7750, later ISO 14001, EMAS, emphasize the principle of continuous improvement. This modern principle of management is based on the Deming cycle.

Environmental management has its particularity. In management, for example in the area of quality or financial management, the resulting effect can be seen at several levels of management and the output of this effort is a specific improvement of one of the parameters, product quality or a reflection in the financial prosperity of the organization. In environmentally oriented management, the resulting environmental effect is sometimes hardly “visible” by the employee. The air is still breathable, the water is flowing, “something” is growing on the soil, the hills are green and even “something” is flying in the air. Unless there is an accident, often only a professional in the field of nature and environment protection will notice qualitative changes in the environment. Therefore, it is important to process data and provide adequate information to increase knowledge. It is only through such a procedure that a change of attitude is possible, and an employee at different levels of management, perhaps sometimes against his or her will, will have to behave in a way that does not endanger the environment, regardless of material or financial demands.

The application of environmental management tools creates a positive approach to environmental protection in all aspects of business. There is a trend towards the proliferation of indirect environmental instruments, based not least on voluntary producers' activities and increasing environmental awareness among citizens. The application of such instruments results not only from the efforts and requirements of national environmental authorities, but also from the interests of producers and the consumer public.

The aim of environmentally oriented management is to minimize negative impacts on the environment, optimize the use of raw materials and energy resources, minimize waste generation and create conditions for sustainable development.

The objective of the "Environmental Policy Tools 2020" conference was to provide a proper platform for informing the technical and scientific community, self-government and government officials, the exchange of experience and the presentation of some new issues of the environment management.

CONTACT ADDRESS

Ing. Dušan BEVILAQUA, PhD.
Slovak Society for the Environment, Bratislava | Spišská Nová Ves, Slovak Republic

Assoc. prof. RNDr. Miroslav RUSKO, PhD.
Slovak Society for the Environment, Koceľova 15, 815 94 Bratislava, Slovak Republic