

Preface

In the past decades science and politics have been devoting more attention to the relation between nature and culture. Many new trends have appeared such as environmental protection, the conception of sustainable development and lately global climate change. Massive debates envired the developing of all trends, which are still ongoing.

30-35 years ago many people doubted the importance of environmental protection, namely that the deterioration of the natural and environmental values could become the sources of social and economical problems. Today we know that these doubts were baseless and the importance of environmental politics is beyond question.

The concept of sustainable development evolved in the 1980s. Many scientists and politicians did not predict long future for this trend. Now we are at a point that the majority of the industrialized countries and several developing countries have already created their own national strategy for the execution of sustainable development.

The possibility of climate change realized 15 years ago. Here also great debates took place, not so much about the fact of change but about the generating cause. The majority of the scientist in the world agrees that the period of climate change have begun. According to international data between 1950 and 2003 the average temperature of the Earth increased from 13.87°C to 14.52°C. From the fossil energy sources in 1950, 1612 million tons of coal whereas in 2003, 6999 million tons was emitted. The debates today focus on whether global warming is only a natural phenomenon, or the cause of anthropogenic effects. It is likely that both factor jointly predominate and mutually strengthen the warming. Experts give high possibility to the increased level of anthropogenic effects for the previous years' change.

The consequences of global warming are the increasing number and intensity of extreme weather events, which could cause changes in the global and regional climate. According to the precaution principle, the most effective action would be if each country develops its climate policy and also launch or continue those measures, which could help the implementation process.

Climate policy covers many areas. It incorporates all functions, which

- serve the protection of the Earth's atmosphere from the emission of anthropogenic greenhouse gases;
- help the excess gases to exit from the atmosphere, for example by deforestation and by using of engineering and technological methods for the protection of atmosphere;
- aim the adoption of the use of old and new methods from water management, agriculture, energy management, road construction technology, human sphere;
- aim to raise quickly useable financial resources for mitigating damages and solving serious human problems in according with the principle of solidarity.

Substantial amount of resources are being spent on climate research world wide. Different global and regional models are being prepared. The results of these could primarily be utilized for developing long-term climate strategies. Such researches and development of precise and reliable weather forecast call for additional substantial financial support. The cooperation is very essential both on global and regional levels. The International Conference on Climate Change: Impacts and Responses in Central and Eastern European Countries served as a good example of such cooperation. We hope that similar meetings will take place in the future too.

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