

Environmental Policies, Strategies and Programmes of the EU Accession Countries in Central and Eastern Europe

of the countries:

Czech Republic
Slovak Republic
Hungary
Slovenia
Poland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2002

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **environmental situation** in the investigated EU Accession Countries has **notably changed** in the last decade after the political turn in Central and Eastern Europe. In certain environmental sectors, such as sewage disposal or reduction of the “classic air pollutants” (e.g. acid rain), significant improvements have been achieved. In other sectors however, such as transportation, solid waste generation (packaging waste) or climate protection, the economic revival induces new, “Western-like” environmental problems.

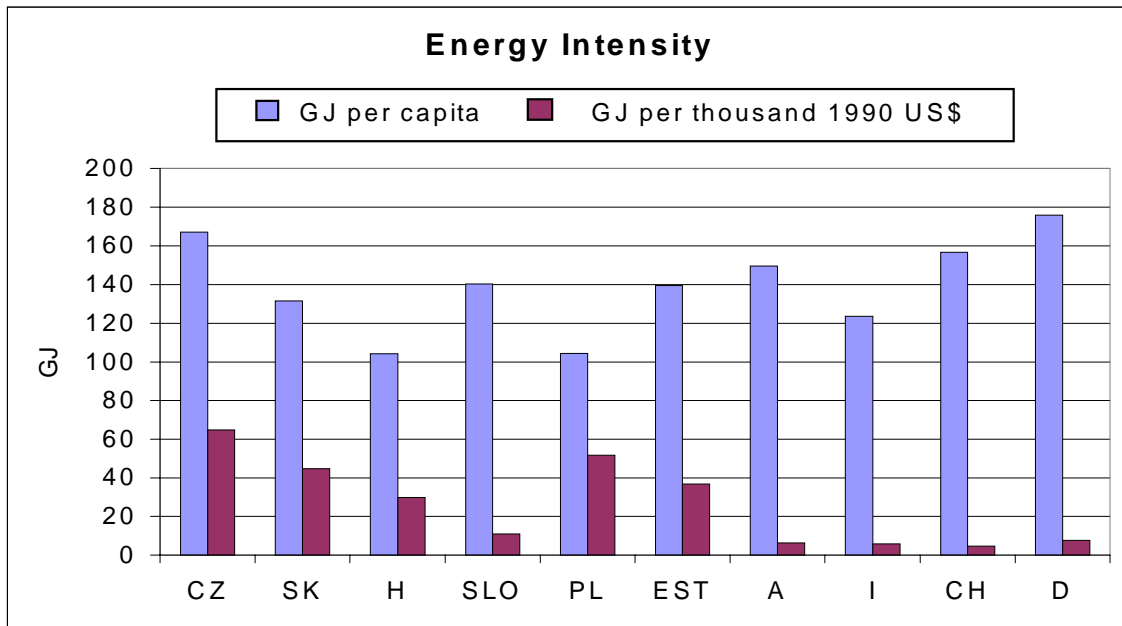
The environmental policies planned are driven by the **EU environmental legislation (Environmental Acquis)** having been an object of preparatory work for the EU Accession Countries for years. Based on the different

- geographical and climate conditions
- economic structures (sector distribution)
- economic situation, per-capita income
- consumption habits and
- social and political values

of each EU Accession Country, the single national environmental strategies and programmes differ as well. So for instance, the varying urban structures and geographical background result in **different strategies and pace** when upgrading the sewage disposal. In addition, an entire spectrum of **similarities within the solution approach** exists, like the energy efficiency in the buildings, emphasised on in all Accession Countries.

1 Energy and Climate Policy

The energy systems of the investigated EU Accession Countries are characterised by a **high energy intensity**, that is, a high energy consumption per 1000 USD GDP, being twice to three times higher than the EU average. This problem of both economical and ecological aspects has been recognised by the Accession Countries in the recent years and has been considered within the national energy and environmental policies. Whereas the modernisation of the industrial sector has proven fast progress thanks to the participation of foreign investors, the energy **rehabilitation of buildings** is following only a very low pace.



Source: Environmental data of selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe (ÖGUT 2001)

In the sector of **transportation**, intermediately linked by the fuel consumption with the sectors of energy and climate protection, the environmental policies of the EU Accession Countries have registered **no success** yet. Similarly to the EU Member Countries, the policy here emphasises primarily on “damage limitation”; national transportation plans assume motorised individual traffic, truck freight traffic and air traffic all further increasing, and thus an emission augmentation is presupposed as well.

All investigated Accession Countries have signed the **Kyoto Protocol** aiming at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions. In the beginning of the Nineties, most Central and Eastern European Countries in Transition were still below the reduction targets fixed; but due to the economical growth and the changed consumption behaviour (transportation intensity, consumption goods), in the recent years the emissions have begun to rise again.

A framework of relevance with regard to encouraging electricity generation from **renewable energy** is given by the EU Directive 2001/77/EC. The latter provides the increase of the electricity rate gained from renewable energy in the EU Members. Some Accession Countries, such as the Czech Republic, have already adapted their national programmes for encouraging the rate of the renewable energy to the EU directive cited and have legislated attractive feed-in tariffs for electricity originating from renewable energy.

In the recent years, **specific support tools** for funding of energy-saving projects and the use of renewable energy have been developed. Their application is being enhanced. Since these projects address cost-efficient but long-term goals, the funding instruments are often designed as „beneficial loans“, „project risk sharing“ or „project co-operations“.

2 Waste Management

The waste management sectors of the investigated Countries in Transition are characterised by an **increasing of residual wastes quantities** within the municipal solid wastes and by stagnating or decreasing industrial wastes. A crucial framework for the waste disposal infrastructure is defined by the EU Directives on:

- „Landfill“ (99/31/EC) claiming for a stepwise reduction of the organic fraction in the wastes to undergo landfilling,

and

- „Packaging“ (94/62/EC) fixing the minimal limits for material recovery and thermal utilisation of the packaging components.

Whereas the **infrastructure for separate waste collection and utilisation** has been gradually built up in Austria and Germany in the last 20 years, such systems are to be operating in a significantly shorter terms (within the next 10 years) in the EU Accession Countries. Most progress has been achieved at the restructuring of the collection and recycling / utilisation infrastructure in Slovenia where regional waste centres are nationwide arranged.

Most countries give effort to meet the requirements defined in the EU Landfill Directive by encouraging **waste incineration**. Here, emphasis is set on the energy utilisation over off-heat and electricity generation. Several incineration plants being currently in use do not correspond to the EU environmental standards and thus are due to reconstruction. New facilities, respectively, modernisation of existing incineration plants is however related with impressive expenses. Furthermore, new incineration plants and landfills, for instance in Slovenia, are facing an increasing civil opposition, with the citizens being concerned about the life quality in their regions.

The units in charge of the waste management implementation are, as in Austria, usually presented by the municipalities. Since public finance sources in the EU Accession Countries could subsidise only a minor part of the investments needed, and the contribution of the EU accession programmes (ISPA, PHARE) will support just 5 to 10% of the investments required for the waste management sector, waste disposal costs will notably increase in the next years. Also, all investigated countries have adopted the **„polluter pays“ principle** as a measure of environmental policy in their environmental concepts and as an additional process support.

3 Sewage Disposal

Sewage disposal progress in the Accession Countries is particularly induced by the EU **Directive on Urban Wastewater Treatment** (91/271/EEC, complemented by 98/15/EC). Sewage disposal restructuring is quite advanced in greater cities. Main attention will be paid in the next 10 years to the sewage disposal systems of middle and small towns over 15.000 PE. In the Czech Republic, new sewage connecting will concentrate on settlements between 2.000 and 15.000 PE.

The project priority focuses on recognised **sensible and particularly sensible regions** in each country. Similarly to the Seventies, as the Carinthian Lakes region in Austria was declared a priority zone with regard to sewage disposal, sensible regions have been now defined in the Accession Countries as well. Sensible regions are e.g. **catchment areas for drinking water**, such as the carst regions in Slovenia, regions of intensive **tourism**, such as the Balaton Lake in Hungary, or the surroundings of the Bled Lake in Slovenia. Also water resources or regions of distinct nature quality or water recourses of low self-rehabilitation potential, due to their specific water flow, are provided for sensible regions.

Similarly to the waste disposal, sewage disposal restructuring in the Accession Countries is to occur in significantly shorter terms compared to the implementation in e.g. Austria in the last decades. In the Czech Republic, all agglomerations >10.000 PE are to be enclosed by constructing 100 wastewater treatment plants by 2010. In the Slovak Republic, 90 facilities are foreseen for this purpose in the same term. In Hungary, all agglomerations up to 15.000 PE are to be supplied with wastewater treatment plants by 2010 within the "National Sewage Collection and Treatment Implementation Programs". Poland has planned a reduction of the pollutant freight input from the industry by 50% and from the municipal wastewater by 30%, both compared to the situation in 1990 and both to implement by 2010.

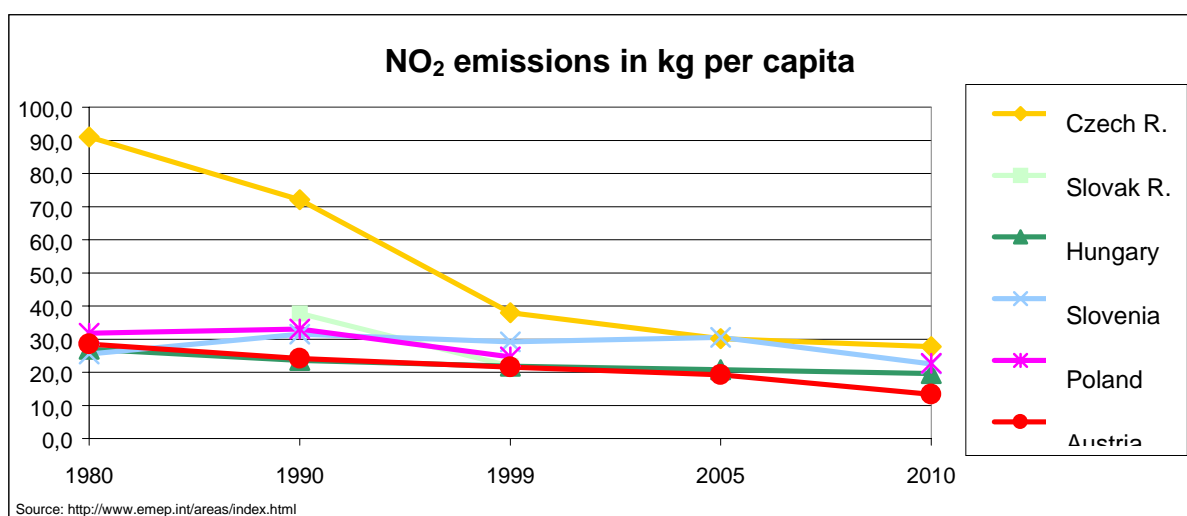
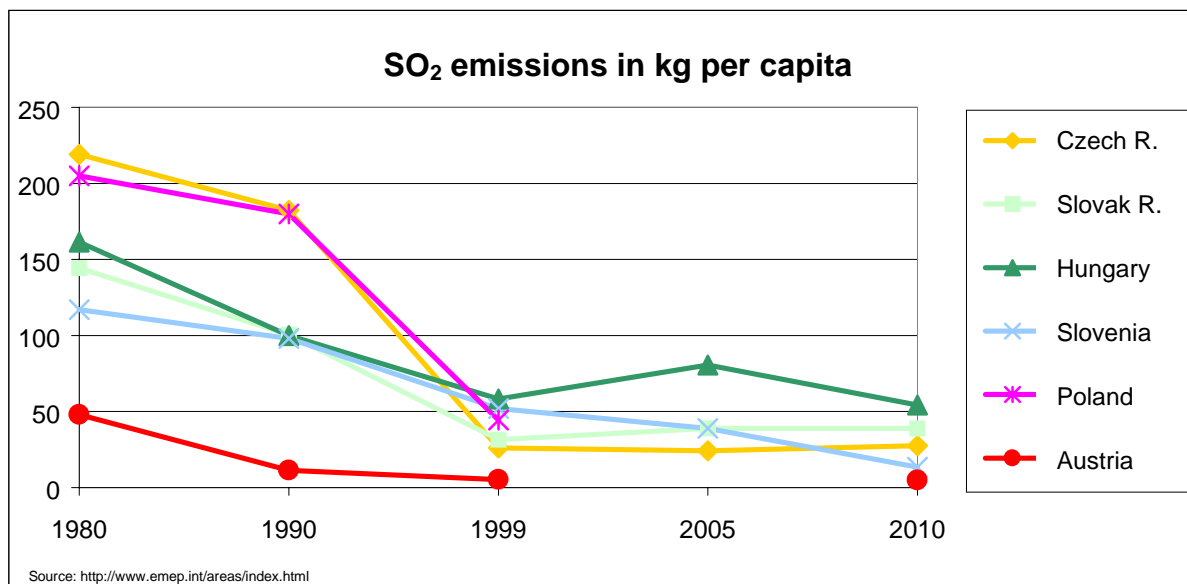
| Relevant Sewage Disposal in the Accession Countries | | |
|---|--|---------|
| Czech Rep. | Disposal in all settlements >10.000 PE | by 2010 |
| Slovak Rep. | Disposal in all settlements >10.000 PE | by 2010 |
| Hungary | Disposal in all settlements >15.000 PE | by 2010 |
| Slovenia | Disposal in all settlements >2.000 PE | by 2008 |
| Poland | Reduction of pollutant input by the industry by 50% and by municipalities by 30% | by 2010 |

Another pollutant source is presented by the agriculture. In some of the countries, **Action Programmes for Reduction of the Water Pollution by Nitrates and Pesticides** are being currently elaborated where corresponding measures are set. These programmes contribute in particular to meeting the targets of the EU Directive for Drinking Water (98/83/EC).

4 Air Quality Protection

The emissions of the “classic air pollutants”, such as sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), dust or soot, have been significantly reduced in the recent decades thanks to technical and organisational measures in all investigated Accession Countries. So for instance, the SO₂ emissions in the Czech Republic were reduced by about 90% between 1980 and 1999. For the next years, further emission reductions for larger stationary sources have been planned with regard to these pollutants, such as for coal-fired power stations in Slovenia; at the same time, a notable augmentation of pollutant emissions originating from the transportation sector is expected. The total balance forecast assumes thus only marginal emission changes by 2010.

The Accession Countries have committed themselves in a number of protocols within the “UN Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (UN/ECE CLRTAP)” to a reduction, respectively, restriction of a variety of air pollutant emissions.



Source: emep-program data base, graph: ÖGUT

With regard to the **ozone layer protection**, systems for collection and utilisation, respectively disposal, of ozone depleting substances are being arranged in the Accession Countries, with 2008 as deadline. In particular, coolants from existing cooling aggregates as well as ozone depleting agents from fire extinguishers are to be disposed this way.

5 Transition Deadlines Agreement for the Accession Countries in the Environmental Sector

Within the accession negotiations between the European Commission and the Accession Countries, transition terms and corresponding deadlines have been settled addressing the implementation of the EU Standards. The deadlines agreed upon so far are listed in the following table.

| Transition Deadlines for the Accession Countries for Meeting the Requirements of the EU Directives on Environmental Protection¹⁾, Situation on 28th June 2002 |
|--|
| Czech Republic |
| Utilisation and recycling of packaging materials - Directive 94/62/EC by 2005 |
| Urban wastewater treatment - Directive 91/271/EEC (complemented by 98/15/EC) by 2010 |
| Slovak Republic |
| VOC emissions from petroleum storage - Directive 94/63/EC by 2007 |
| Urban wastewater treatment - Directive 91/271/EEC (complemented by 98/15/EC) by 2015 |
| Hazardous substances discharge into surface water - Directive 76/464/EEC (2000/60/EC) by 2006 |
| IPPC Directive 96/61/EC by 2011 |
| Air pollution from large incineration plants– Directive 88/609/EEC (2001/80/EC) by 2007 |
| Hazardous waste incineration - Directive 94/67/EC by 2006 |
| Metal and all-over recycling rate as to the packaging directive - Directive 94/62/EC by 2007 |
| Hungary |
| Utilisation and recycling of packaging materials - Directive 94/62/EC by 2005 |
| Urban wastewater treatment - Directive 91/271/EEC (complemented by 98/15/EC) by 2015 |
| Air pollution from large incineration plants– Directive 88/609/EEC (2001/80/EC) by 2004 |
| Hazardous waste incineration - Directive 94/67/EC by 2005 |

| |
|---|
| Slovenia |
| Utilisation and recycling of packaging materials - Directive 94/62/EC by 2007 |
| Urban wastewater treatment - Directive 91/271/EEC (complemented by 98/15/EC) by 2015 |
| IPPC Directive 96/61/EC by 2011 (instead of 2007, as for EU Members) |
| Poland |
| Sulphur contents of liquid fuels - Directive 99/32/EC by 2006 |
| VOC emissions from petroleum storage - Directive 94/63/EC by 2005 |
| Utilisation and recycling of packaging materials - Directive 94/62/EC by 2007 |
| Landfill Directive 99/31/EC by 2012 (instead of 2009, as for EU Members) |
| Waste shipments - Regulation 93/259/EEC by 2007 |
| Urban wastewater treatment - Directive 91/271/EEC (complemented by 98/15/EC) by 2015 |
| Hazardous substances discharge into surface water - Directive 76/464/EEC (2000/60/EC) by 2007 |
| IPPC Directive 96/61/EC by 2010 (instead of 2007, as for EU Members) |
| Recycling goal for glass by 2003 |
| All-over recycling rate - Directive 94/62/EC by 2007 |
| Health protection of individuals against the dangers of ionising radiation in relation to medical exposure - Directive 97/43/Euratom by 2006 |

^{*)} In the Agreements with the Accession Countries, the EU Directives are pointed to as titles but without numbers, since the Accession Countries are committed also to an ongoing accordance of their legislation with the EU updates. For this reason, the table presents on first position the EU Directives valid at the time of the Agreements. In the brackets, the corresponding update of the same Directives is given, status August 2002.

Sources: Enlargement of the European Union - Guide to the Negotiations S. 62,
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/chapters/negotiationsguide.pdf>

Key Documents related to the Enlargement Process,
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/index.htm>

Communications of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, <http://wko.at/up>