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EFFORTS MADE IN REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMY IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF HUNGARY

Introduction

Human interferences damaging the environment can be diverse concerning the spreading of their effects. The deterioration of the ozone sphere and the hot-house effect, a potential danger as a result of the imbalance of CO₂ in the atmosphere (the flora cannot balance the increased CO₂ emission because of the cutting-down of woods involving continents are usually mentioned as a global example of dangers threatening life on Earth. The number and the importance of the changes affecting larger areas are also increasing: we more often talk about acid rains and the pollution of waters "disregarding" frontiers, and accidents in nuclear power stations, as the Chernobyl catastrophe has shown, also belong to this category. All this, however, does not mean that measures aiming at the prevention of environmental damages should be overlooked.

The subject of environmental studies within COMECON is mostly areas rather too profoundly deteriorated. That is why at the Varna-Devna Convention in 1977 we recommended that a less deteriorated, agri-

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cultural area in Békés County should be appointed for a control region. Research here has already been reported on at several sessions, some relation has been published in the "Álföldi Tanulmányok", and we can mention the "Békés megyei Természetvédelmi Evkönyv" series, which is a unique initiative in Hungary, as a regular platform of publications. It has been published since 1976.

Findings and environmental problems becoming typical of agrarian regions, too have urged the state directorate of the region, too. This resulted in an agreement between Békés County Council and the National Office of Environment and Nature Preservation in May, 1986. In line with this agreement Békés County will be turned into a sample county from the point of view of the protection of the environment. Steps planned to be taken are not meant to be a hurriedly-made action, they are rather a long-term activity that ranges from the economic background to the way of thinking.

Assessing the Present Situation

As the first part of the program, a sum-up of the environmental constituents has been made. The findings have proved that

- in spite of a late economic development there are considerable damages in the environment,
- each branch collects data independently, penalties are imposed in case of considerable pollution, but data are only examined on the level of branches, therefore their relation cannot be observed,
- as a result of the facts mentioned above and a faulty mechanism of penalization there is not any possibility of promoting regional interests,
- chaotic authority and the intricacies of economic rules do not provide effective means of protecting the environment.

A detailed presentation of the concrete environmental problems of the region is not the aim of the present study. All we should like to do is to mention some of the most typical problems.

1. Waters

Nearly 70 per cent of the territory in the county is a low flood-plain, a territory threatened with floods and excess waters which involves important tasks in environmental management.

The regional spreading of under-surface waters utilized at 5 per cent at present is uneven (much of the store can be found under areas the most intensively cultivated), and several problems of natural origin concerning quality also make utilization difficult. From among the surface waters rivers are clean and less polluted, the Sebes Körös and the Fekete Körös, however, often carry extremely polluting floods from beyond the frontiers and generally short-term, which means that the utilization of water is temporarily stopped. They are especially unfavourable in summer, when, because of artificial floods, most of the rivers are like lakes. In contrast with the general condition of the rivers small currents carrying sewage are of very poor quality.

For lack of drainage one-third of the sewage produced oozes into the soil. One-fourth gets into surface waters untreated. Only the remainder is treated. (The quantity treated biologically does not amount to one-third of the whole quantity).

2. The Air

Emission is measured at 9 places in 3 towns of the county, and its value is recorded on the basis of personal information and local measuring. All this does not make an exhaustive assessment possible. According to the data recorded the degree of air-pollution is not critical; a relatively bad condition can be seen if we study sedimentating dust.

3. Soils

As far as the utilization of the territory is concerned Békés County can be characterized by two extremities: it is the first among the counties arable soil considered (75,5 %) and it is the last

forests considered (3,7 %). Moreover, if we study the spreading of the areas that need recultivating we can see that it is the second behind Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, which is considerably larger. Because of the lack of woods deflation is becoming apparent in more and more areas.

Studies on the soil since 1978 have shown the qualitative changes of the soil. They have unmistakably proved that the soil of the region has gradually become acid. Owing to the studies concerning nutrients there is no over-manuring in the region. That is why exploring the causes of the changes must be carried out.

4. Nature Protection

There are seven nature reserves of national importance in the county (this means 8000 hectares) and there are eleven of local importance (this means more than 4000 hectares). This ratio is well beyond the national average (5.07 %). In spite of the smaller proportion protection has not been worked out. It is a problem of utilization that nature reserves are not parts of tourism.

5. The Environs of Settlements

A problem threatening the environs of settlements is that the long-term disposal of waste materials has not been worked out. The capacity of disposals is low, waste materials dumped potentially threaten under-surface waters, manure has to be hauled to faraway places and the disposal of the so-called "dangerous" waste has not been worked out yet, either.

In the settlements the ratio of paved roads is low (sedimentating dust), channelling is rather backward and in addition the few covered channels are supplemented with unhealthy uncovered ones. The settlements are not abundant in monuments. Still in the course of town reconstructions aesthetical aspects are hardly taken into account.

Steps Planned

As the evaluation of the present situation has made it obvious we have to set up a more coordinative and elaborate data-collecting system so that we will be able to render a more precise regional evaluation of the changes taking place in the environment. A system like this will enhance the effectiveness of a system of information to be set up.

The conservationists' activity based on the data collected should be improved and the interests of the region should also be taken into account. Economic activities closely related to the preservation of the environment should be prompted. The protection of waters, for example, can be well coordinated with the application of technologies involving only small amount of or no chemicals. Steps have to be taken as far as social attitude of mind is concerned. The system of data-collecting should be open enough to be regional-ly enlarged thus serving the national utilization of experience. At the present stage of research we have found a mere listing of the major tasks justified.

International Relation

Environmental economy to be carried out in the regions has international relation, too. Research fits well in with that of COMECON. The region as a sample region is suitable for comparisons but, at the same time, important and new items of information can be expected as a result of the information system. If it works well, knowledge gained can be adapted to research of similar importance abroad, too. The working system might meet international needs for research places as was proposed at the editorial meeting of COMECON's 1. 2 theme in Gyula, October, 1986 and fortified in Cottbus. As the region studied is one along the frontier internationalism in environmental economy will have to play a part sooner or later.



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DOSEŽKI V REGIONALNEM GOSPODARJENJU Z OKOLJEM NA JUGOVZHODNEM
MADŽARSKEM

Povzetek

Ureditev okolja, ki se izvaja v regiji, vsebuje tudi mednarodne
relacije. Raziskave se skladajo z raziskavami SEV - a. Regija,
kot vzorčna regija je primerna za primerjave, vendar lahko istočas-
no pričakujemo pomembne in nove informacije kot rezultat informa-
cijskega sistema. Pridobljeno znanje lahko tudi prilagodimo razi-
skavam podobne pomembnosti v tujini. Sistem dela se lahko ujema z
mednarodnimi potrebami po raziskovanju krajev, kot je bilo predla-
gano na uvodnem sestanku SEV - a 1. 2. tema v Gyula-i oktobra 1986
in podprto v Cottbus-u. Pri študiji regije bo slej ko prej igral
pomembno vlogo mejni internacionalizem v ureditvi okolja.