

DURABLE DEVELOPING

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Abstract: Nowadays, durable developing is considered to be a global objective. The European Union has adopted an integrative strategy to be able to assume an active role in the efforts of adopting the durability principle in the economic politics, considering the commitments taken at Rio (1992), so as an evolution towards a “more prosper and more fair society, assuring a cleaner, more secure environment, and offering a higher quality of life” be possible.

Key words: durable developing, environment, durability, integration

1. INTEGRATING THE DURABLE DEVELOPING PRINCIPLE IN THE COMMUNITARY POLITICS

The most well known and accepted definition of the durable developing principle is the one suggested by the World Environmental and Developing Commission (the Brundtland Commission) in 1987: “to respond to the present needs without compromising the chance of the future generations to satisfy their own needs”.

The durability concept was assimilated in a different, specific manner by the ecologists, sociologists, economists, without the effort to integrate the principles and the goals in their own line of expertise. From the industrial operators point of view, taking into consideration that pollution means loss of more or less important substances because of the used technologies, durable developing can come down to environment. A conceptual clarification of the term is needed to be able to use it in a correct, strategic way at all the different political decision structures, so as to facilitate the integration of the social – economical and ecological dimensions that belong to the durability principle.

2. ABOUT THE DURABILITY PRINCIPLE

At least at the political, declarative level, durable developing has become an objective of the whole society, and thus a principle that can be related to all the components of the economical – social life. Still being controversial, without a theorization according to the present economical – social system values, the principle is being said to be built of three components: economic developing, social developing and environmental protection.

Beginning with the definition of the environment given in the law nr.137/ 1995, which is all-embracing, both the economical and the social aspects are related to the environmental protection aspects.

The roots of the durable developing theory are found in the welfare economy and in the social market economy. The welfare economy is based on the distinction between the private costs and the social costs or between the private marginal productivity and the social marginal productivity (Arthur Cecil Pigou). The difference is given

by the impact of an economical activity over the environment (generally speaking), meaning the effect that a consumptive or a productive action has over an external to the transaction, to the market agent. The effect is called externality (external effect), and can be a positive or a negative one, depending on the manner in which it produces utility or lack of utility. The externalities depend on the nature of the activities and on the environment (economical, social, cultural, and ecological) where they are taking place. The theory distinguishes between the individualized externalities (neoclassical), when it can be established over what third parties the external effect is transmitted upon, and the collective externalities, when the effects are transmitted upon the environment. According to that theory, every time such an effect is produced it has to be internalized [Pohoată, p.208], so as to get the private cost close to the social cost.

Therefore, the internalization of the externalities is very important to the realization of the durable developing principle.

Another important notion used both in the welfare economy and in the social market economy, is that of the *paretian best*: that well-balanced state in which the welfare of one can only be increased by diminishing the welfare of others. A certain philosophical and political conception about the organization of the human society has to be taken into consideration here, this conception being synthesized by making the social welfare an objective of the welfare maximization of all the consumers. Because the social welfare (determined by the society on the political criteria) isn't only a sum of all the individual welfares (determined and optimized by the free markets), the issue is whether the distribution of the production factors through the competition mechanisms can assure reaching the *paretian best*. If we take into consideration the externalities, the market's imperfections, the non-economical effects of the free markets, we can conclude that creating a maximum efficient production to optimize the social welfare isn't enough. The political economy is important to be able to combine the efficiency of the market economy with the non-economic objectives (solidarity, cohesion, equity) – as essential features of the social progress values.

The production and consumptive model which characterizes the contemporary society is seen as non-durable based on the above reasoning. Caused by the efficiency principle and based on material values, the model promoted a short term behavior having as primary results the excessive use of the natural resources, the accentuation of the social differences and the increasing of the developing differences between nations.

The negative externalities (the exhaustion of the resources, biodiversity reduction, pollution, poverty, social alienation, inequity, developing differences) have been continuously increasing the social costs, both internally and internationally. The impact over the social welfare must not be considered regarding only the present time but also the future generations' time. By keeping the present tendencies regarding production and consumption, we risk compromising the chances of the future generations to satisfy their needs.

Being aware of these risks has determined, starting with the second half of the ninth decade, an important international cooperation movement to integrate the durability principle into the economical politics. This would mean the embracement at the principle level of the "magical triangle" in the economical politics – economical growth, social cohesion, environmental protection.

In the present economical policies, the main issue is macro economical stability and the well functioning of the markets. The social and ecological externalities, having a negative impact on the social marginal product and on the economical efficiency, are based on the poor integration of the social and ecological field in the macro economical policies field. It is true that some progress in the social policies field were made, foremost in the social market economies, and even in adopting and enforcing of some environmental policies. But so far the three aspects were likely to be seen in a regional manner. Adopting the durability principle requires all the policies to be drawn up and enforced based on the economical, social and environmental impact. Moreover, internationalizing the economies raises some demands in this principle's enforcing when it comes to internal policies and external cooperation relations. Thus, durability would become an accelerator for the internal and external political decisions, for the economical actions and for the public opinion to be able to promote structural, institutional reforms and to modify the production and consumption behavior.

To be able to achieve this goal, the coherence of these three elements (economical growth, social cohesion and environmental protection) should be ensured, although they are seen as opposites. The pursuit of social cohesion requires a policy to redistribute the incomes which reduces the growth sources; environmental protection requires some restrictive measures regarding the use of the natural resources and of the technologies, which causes distortions in the distribution of the factors based on economical efficiency. Reconciling the three durable developing coordinates would mean: economical growth by ensuring the social progress and the environmental protection pre-requisites; a social policy stimulating for the economical growth; an environmental policy based on the typical market economy instruments, both effective and economical.

Secondly, enforcing the durability would suppose enforcing some structural and institutional reforms which would enable the internal and external cohesion of the policies and would ensure the convergency of the economical, social and political goals within a certain project. The most important measures to be taken in this field are:

- the settlement of a system of economical instruments to ensure the integration of the social and environmental protection goals in the economical policies (prices, ownership rights, taxes, negotiable broadcasting rights, subventions, negotiable agreements);
- the reassessment of the decisional process to permit a wide participation of the civil society and of the decisional factors in different levels;
- setting up and developing a system to inform on the consequences of some policies and actions to facilitate the reversal of the present non – durable tendencies;
- developing the public goods markets and the ecological goods and services markets;
- the developing of the technologies that can permit the use of less natural resources, less polluting technologies being a smaller risk to the environment and to the people (the use of the best available techniques BAT);
- developing an educational and communicational system which could create the beginning of a social dialog, of a transparent decisional process connected to the individual and collective responsibility and to an evolution towards durability regarding the consumption and production behavior;
- the horizontal enforcement of the durability criteria over all the economical policies;
- developing a system of indicators to help us make a periodical and effective assessment of the policies and actions' durability.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Developing (CNUED) that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, meant taking a political commitment to enforce the durable developing in the whole world. At the concrete measures level, although some successes were obtained, the achievements are far from the participant expectations, because the tendency to non-durable developing remains. Yet, the European Union has promoted a series of actions and policies that leads the economical process towards durable developing. The gained experience, related to the inefficiency of the international institutions and organisms, justifies considering it an example, a promoter of the durable developing world wide.

3. DURABLE DEVELOPING – A HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

According to art.2 in the Maastricht Treaty, the member states make the integration main goal “promoting a harmonious and well-balanced developing of the economical activities in the whole Community, a durable and non-inflationist growth that respects the environment, a high degree of economical performance convergency, a high degree of employment and social protection, the growth in the quality and standard of life, economical-social cohesion and solidarity between the member states”. This means that the member states are taking into consideration both traditional goals – growth, employment, price stability, equilibrium, and durable developing essential features – a high degree of social protection, the convergency in the economical performances, environmental protection, economical and social cohesion, solidarity. Also called a second degree best, the model is in fact a compromise between the competition mechanisms and the interventions through economical policies in different levels, based on the subsidiarity principle. The Community takes a role in promoting this model by enforcing common policies, and by harmonizing and coordinating the national policies. Endorsing the social and environmental policies, reinforcing the economical and social cohesion is tied to the community decision level responsibility and has gradually become a primary policy in the integration process.

One can say that social protection, environmental protection and economical – social cohesion are nowadays horizontal integrative principles. All the European policies, both national and community, are subordinated to these three principles. To enforce them as coherent and effective as possible, the European Commission has tried in the last few years to define a durable developing strategy. Although the Union has adopted policies compatible to the durability principle in its different components, an integrative approach of the three coordinates can't be taken into consideration. Considering the present threats on the durable developing, the Union has established as primal goal, in all the fields and decisional levels, to enforce the durable developing exigency.

The European Council in Helsinki (December 1999) asked the Commission to elaborate a proposal for a strategy to ensure the concordance of the policies having as a goal an economical, social and ecological durable developing. The strategy would create the grounds for the European economy to become more competitive and dynamic, capable of a durable growth together with a qualitative and quantitative improvement of employment, a high level of social and environmental protection cohesion. The strategy was proposed by the Commission and approved in 2001 and includes a series of principles and actions towards integrating the durability in the European policies.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Considering Romania's desire to integrate in the European Union, it has successfully transposed in its own legislation a great part of the European Council Directives in the environmental field.

Enforcing the 22 Chapter meant that Romania has established a strategy in the environmental protection field according to the durable developing principle.

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