

„National Activities towards Changing Consumption and Production Pattern“

NGO Country Report Bulgaria

1. Is there a National Consultation towards Sustainable Consumption and Production Pattern?

Yes, there are actions taken but there is no official National Consultation on these topics.

In Sofia, January 2001 the National Association of the UN Youth Clubs organized the official Bulgarian launch of the UNEP Global Youth Campaign for Sustainable Consumption. The Ministers of Environment and Waters and Youth and Sports and some 90 media, academy and NGO representatives attended the event. Information materials were distributed and a short movie was shown to initiate public discussion on consumption patterns.

In September 2001 in Sofia at the invitation of the Bulgarian Minister for Environment and Waters, the UNEP National Committee- Bulgaria organized a meeting for UNEP RoE experts and local stakeholders.

This was the very first UNEP Pilot workshop “Sustainable Consumption Opportunities for Europe” (SCOPE). The meeting aimed to review the “UNEP Consumption Opportunities” report and comment its relevance to the situation in Bulgaria and if possible to establish the basis for an ongoing commitment to multi-stakeholder action on sustainable production and consumption.

Despite a few technical issues, the partial preparation of some delegates, non-appearance of some delegates in particular industry representatives, lack of background material on Bulgarian production and consumption behavior the workshop was well attended and productive.

The Minister, Mrs. Dolores Arsenova, presented the role sustainable production and consumption might play in the context of Bulgarian sustainable development efforts. Mr. Frits Schlingemann, Director of UNEP Regional office for Europe, then presented the historical background and challenge of sustainable production and consumption, indicating how a strategic approach to sustainable production and consumption represented a set of opportunities to be grasped by government, industry and civil agents. Mr. John Manoochehri then gave a detailed summary of the “Consumption Opportunities” report.

Feedback on the report, in particular from those who had studied it closely in advance, was very positive: with at least three major NGO networks committing themselves to distributing among their partners, and the representatives from the Ministry keen to circulate the report among other colleagues and across the government.

The delegates suggested potential actions in Bulgaria and Sofia on sustainable consumption and discussed the challenges and opportunities represented by sustainable consumption, and plans for future use of the report, in particular a resolution on sustainable production and consumption and plans for developing a sustainable consumption council.

2. Does it have a structure/agenda?

The UNEP SCOPE Pilot workshop that was held in Bulgaria in 2001 also aimed to provoke the establishment of a “Bulgarian Sustainable Consumption Council”. Unfortunately due to the short time of the meeting, the new topics that were discussed and the non-translated background material, the “Consumption Opportunities” report, the workshop did not meet this target. Despite of this the meeting provided a set of insights for future development of the SCOPE workshops, in particular for the second UNEP pilot in Tallinn.

Since 2001 the UNEP RoE did not have the necessary financial resources to assist with further development the Bulgarian activities on sustainable production and consumption and support the establishment of the coalition.

In January 2002 in connection with the preparations for the forthcoming WSSD in Johannesburg, the UNEP National Committee- Bulgaria implemented a co-operation project with the UNEP DTIE, Consumers International and the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters. The project aimed to make a survey based on the implementation of the UN Guidelines for Consumers Protection and Sustainable Consumption.

In 2003 on the occasion of the EU „Green week 1-7 June“, the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters invited the National Association of the UN Youth Clubs to develop and publish information materials on Sustainable Production and Consumption. The materials were distributed through out the network of the Regional Inspectorates on Environment and Waters and the NGO networks.

3. Which goals were identified?

Because of the UNEP RoE role as an initiator and moderator of the SPAC discussions in Bulgaria the three major goals identified so far are:

- to translate the background material “Consumption Opportunities” report in local language for further circulation in Bulgaria;
- to develop a detailed background material on Bulgarian production and consumption behavior;
- to establish and make alive the “Bulgarian Sustainable Consumption Council” and to develop a strategy for raising the public awareness on the consumption patterns and call the industries for cleaner and safer technologies;

4. Are there other national (governmental or non-governmental) activities that can be seen as part of a Programm towards Sustainable Consumption and Production?

The Bulgarian government is developing and implementing the following policy and actions:

The National Strategy on Environment 2005- 2014 calls for:

- Respect the principles of sustainable development;
- Prevention and minimizing of the risks for human health and environment;
- Prevention and minimizing of the risks for the biodiversity;
- Minimizing the harmful consequences on the components of the environment results of nature processes;
- Optimal usage of nature resources and energy;

Integrated Product Policy ('IPP')

- Integrating the policy of protecting the environment into the policies for developing other economy sectors and regional development;
- Insuring more effective management and monitoring on the environment;

Consumer Policies

The accession of the country to the EU requires the establishment of number of transparent mechanisms to guarantee the safe and healthy production of goods and supply of services with complete information of their content.

Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility ('CSR')

Raising the public and business awareness on protection of the environment through campaigns and education for sustainable development and responsible attitude and respect to nature.

Public Procurement Policies

The Ministry for Energy and Energy resources has established a National Agency on Energy Efficiency and a special fund to support state and private business projects on the use of renewable energies.

Economic Instruments and State aid for environmental purposes

Special fund under the Ministry of Environment and Waters collects the money from the paid fines of polluters and provides funding to municipal, NGO and business environmental projects.

Emissions trading systems

The political, economic, and legislative developments in Bulgaria after 2000 in view of the forthcoming EU membership, as well as the progress in the international climate change policy required the updating of the First National Action Plan on Climate Change, developed in 2000.

The process of updating of the National Action Plan on Climate Change started in January 2003 and was supported by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through PSO (2003–2004)pre-accession program.

The Second National Action Plan on Climate Change contains activities, policies and measures for the period 2005-2008, concerning all sectors of Bulgarian economy: energy, industry, transport, agriculture and forestry, and services. It includes also a range of financial instruments to achieve the objectives set – the Green Investment Scheme and the EU Emission Trading Scheme.

The successful implementation of the Plan will contribute to the fulfillment of the international commitments of Bulgaria under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The Second National Action Plan provides an opportunity for attracting the general public support to the efforts of the Government for limiting the greenhouse gas emissions. The Plan will also contribute to the sustainable development of Bulgaria.

Education, awareness raising and public information

- Insuring easy and broaden access to all public registers and documentation on environment related issues through the implementation of the Aarhus convention;
- Increasing public participation in the decision- making process on environmental related topics through the implementation of the Aarhus convention;
- Increasing public awareness on the environmental and sustainable development related issues through organizing national wide campaigns and projects on the occasion of the Earth Day, World Environmental Day, EU Green Week and the EU Mobility Week;
- Developing the knowledge of the school students and public on the nature protection topics through out pilot projects on Education for Sustainable Development;

Eco-label

Developing a Bulgarian Eco-label scheme to motivate the business and raise public awareness on environmental friendly productions and products.

Consumer information

- Developing legislative initiatives to establish mechanisms and monitor the quality of products and services provided to people.
- Insuring the production and supply of healthy products to consumers;
- Publishing information materials on sustainable consumption of nature resources and use of biodegradable products and alternative energy resources.
- Developing strict legislation on GMO food and agricultural products.

Pollutant emission register

The Environmental Executive Agency takes daily measures and publishes daily reports on the state of the fresh air and radiation.

Analytical tools

The analytical tools are still not well known and used in the decision making process.

Recently a few questionnaires were prepared and used to interview the public about the awareness on environmental projects. This was a pilot tool used in the preparation of the new legislation on Waters in 2004.

Research and development

The 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development: offers technological responses to changing industrial approaches to: Sustainable natural resource use, innovative production mechanisms, consumer behavior, minimizing waste production, product change etc.

Industry/cleaner production and Regulatory framework on air and water pollution

New legislation has been developed and introduced recently in order to ensure good water quality and enough quantities of water for various needs.

This requires complement of the infrastructures for the collection and treatment of wastewater, eliminating the hazardous elements in the water objects and reducing the water loss during irrigation and water supply.

Achieving the common EU standards for fresh air quality in the cities and those for industrial zones. Increasing the consumption of cleaner fuels and renewable energies.

IPPC

In connection with the forthcoming EU accession of the country, Bulgaria should set common rules to promote sustainable production in large industrial installations. This will take into account emissions to air, water and soil, generation of waste, use of raw materials, energy efficiency, noise, prevention of accidents, risk management etc.

Greening Product Standards

The Ministries of Environment and Waters and on Health are developing mechanisms and legislation to integrate rules and encourage the production of safe goods and service supply.

Biotechnology

The government is encouraging and providing attractive credit conditions for foreign investors who are interested to set up biotechnology business in Bulgaria.

Housing and construction

The government has introduced a new legislation and tax reduction to those construction companies and private owners who take actions to reduce the energy loss of the buildings.

Energy

Introducing new complex instruments for prevention and control of the industrial pollution and energy powers according to the EU standards.

Encouraging the consumption of renewable energies and improving the energy efficiency

Agriculture and forestry

Preservation and regeneration of the biodiversity and eco systems and ensure the sustainable use of forests, herbs and agricultural lands.

Promote and encourage the organic farming and other environmental friendly agricultural practices and strict control on the use of GMOs.

Fisheries

Sustainable use of water species and preservation of the water eco systems.

Transport

Development of eco friendly transport systems with reduced impact on environment. Increase the use of train and combined ways of transport. Decrease the impact of auto transport on environment through improving the quality of fuels.

Support the cities and municipalities to develop metro and tram systems and reduce the age of the auto fleet in the country.

Tourism

Development of sustainable tourism practices and deduction of the impact and pressure of all seasonal forms of tourism on nature.

Establishing conditions for management of protected areas and implementation of the new National Strategy on Eco- tourism as a instrument to protect the environment.

Waste

Improving the management of household waste and including the hazardous such as from hospitals and construction sites.

Development of the necessary infrastructure for the waste treatment by 2009 and eliminating the existing illegal land fills by 2010.

Introducing the system for separate collection of household waste and recycling of waste products and dismantling of old cars.

Chemicals

Terminate the use of chemicals that destroy the ozone layer according to the Kyoto protocol.

5. Are the following key elements¹ dealt with?

	Ecological fiscal reform	Clean and eco-effective production	Education for sustainable consumption and production	Corporate responsibility and accountability	Information and public participation
Action made	X				X
Action mentioned		X	X	X	
Generally addressed					
Not part of the process					

¹ Key elements developed in the NGO consultation process towards the European Regional Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production. <http://www.anped.org/PDF/NGO%20Ostend%20Statement.pdf>

6. *What do you require to be done from your national governments and other national stakeholders?*

The Bulgarian government has the opportunity to be the first in South Eastern Europe to establish a Council on Sustainable Production and Consumption, to develop and start implementation of a strategy on SPAC. The experience and the knowledge that will be gained could be shared with the neighboring countries through out partnership projects.

The representatives of business and industry should attract foreign investors and implement ecologically clean, hi-tech biodegradable and recyclable technologies, which will improve the state of environment and the image of Bulgaria in Europe.

7. *What do you require to be done from international actors like EU, UNEP, UNECE, ANPED?*

- Information;
- Access to other networks;
- Political support at the international level;
- Access to and presence in international political forums;
- Seed funding;
- Access to fundraising possibilities on the international level;
- Expert and administrative support for project development.