

Polish-Ukrainian Border's Significance for the Region and Europe

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Ecological Education of Self-Governing Communities in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland

1. Introduction

The spatial and functional structures within the Polish-Ukrainian border land, in order to be rational and to foster their future economic, spatial and cultural development, should be open, diversified, multi-industrial, and adapted to the needs of a transit zone. Cooperation space should be developed within the area in order to ensure a concentration of production and development of technological innovations in hubs of economic growth, balance the development through mutual penetration of creative developmental features, make the most of local economic and social developmental opportunities, and effectively manage the natural environment, especially areas of great natural value.

Environmental management has been spreading through human and all spheres of its organisation. Social and economic organisations set their aims and, where possible, determine numerical indicators. Environmental policy, i.e. declaration of organisations defining their intentions and principles concerning environmental activity¹, should cover the following issues: natural environment, work quality and safety, cooperation with customers and external institutions, and abiding by the law. Environmental policy constitutes the framework for stabilizing human, social and intellectual capital. Some aspects of the environmental management system, e.g. technical infrastructure for utilizing municipal waste, present problems which are yet to be solved.

Taking the above into consideration, this paper signals the importance of the following issues: society's access to environmental information, the role and function of the territorial government and self-governing communities, and, finally, instruments which can be used to protect the natural environment. The paper also presents selected results of a study on ecological awareness of the local communities, based on research conducted in the 2003-2005 periods in the Sub-Carpathian Voivodship.

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¹ PN-EN ISO 14001 Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use PN-ISO 14001 Environmental management systems – General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques.

2. Environmental information

In Poland, the access to information on the environment and its preservation is regulated by the following normative documents: Convention on the Access to Information (...); Convention Ratification Act (...); Act on the Access to Public Information; Nature Conservation Law Act; and Council directive on the freedom of the access to information (...)². The Constitution of the Republic of Poland³ (further on referred to as CRP) provides the legal basis for the obligation to provide the access to information on the natural environment. Article 74. of the CRP states that "Everyone shall have the right to be informed of the quality of the environment and its protection", and Article 61. says that: "The citizen shall have the right to obtain information on the activities of organs of public authority as well as persons discharging public functions. Such a right shall also include receipt of information on the activities of self-governing economic or professional organs and other persons or organizational units relating to the field in which they perform the duties of public authorities and manage communal assets or property of the State Treasury". The contents of Art. 61. are limited to the right of the citizen and information on the activities of public authority organs. Further on, Article 74. specifies the right of "everyone" to all information on a specified subject the quality of the environment and its protection. It means that public authorities are obliged not only to ensure ecological safety for the present and future generations, but also to guarantee free access to information on the quality of the environment and to support the citizens' activities aimed at the preservation and improvement of the environment.

Section 4, Chapter 1, Art. 19., Paragraph 1. of the Nature Conservation Law Act specifies the administrative organs obliged to facilitate the access to information on the environment and its preservation to "everyone" (as long as the organ possesses the information). The Access to the Public Information Act guarantees the access to such information to everyone, calling it "the right" to public information. According to Articles 2. and 3. of the Act, the abovementioned right is a title to obtain public information, including information processed to the extent to which such a processing is essential for the public interest; the access to official documents; the right to be present at meetings of public authority bodies chosen in general elections; and the right to obtain, without undue delay, non-qualified information on current public matters.

² Ustawa - Konwencja o dostępie do informacji, udziale społeczeństwa w podejmowaniu decyzji oraz dostępie do sprawiedliwości w sprawach dotyczących środowiska (Dz.U. z 2003 r. Nr 78, poz. 706). Ustawa o ratyfikacji Konwencji o dostępie do informacji, udziale społeczeństwa w podejmowaniu decyzji oraz dostępie do sprawiedliwości w sprawach dotyczących środowiska z dnia 21 czerwca 2001 r. (Dz.U. Nr 89, poz. 970). Ustawa o dostępie do informacji publicznej z dnia 6 września 2001 r. (Dz.U. Nr 112, poz. 1198 z późn. zmianami). Ustawa Prawo ochrony środowiska z dnia 27 kwietnia 2001 r. (Dz.U. 2001, nr 62, poz. 627 z późn. zmianami). Dyrektywa Rady w sprawie swobodnego dostępu do informacji na temat stanu środowiska (313/EEC) z dnia 7 czerwca 1990 r.

³ The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April, 1997, Dz.U. Nr 78, poz. 483.

Regulations on the access to environmental information was specified by the Aarhus Convention (1998). As concerns free access to information, these regulations converge with the requirements of the Directive, but in some respect they broaden the scope of the accessibility of environmental information and the duties of public authorities. The most important changes in relation to the Directive concern the reasons for denying information: the Convention stresses the need for applying a narrow interpretation of such reasons. According to the Directive, these reasons result from the formulation of the principle of openness and from exceptions to this principle. The Convention contains a clear interpretation hint: the reasons for the access denial should be a subject to a narrow interpretation, taking into account public interest in disclosing the information and depending on whether the information required pertains to environmental pollution (Article 4, paragraph 4). The Convention states, however, that denying access to information should respect the public interest in revealing it (Article 4, Paragraph 3, subparagraph c); information pertaining to environmental pollution and vital for the protection of the environment, which fulfills the above conditions, should be disclosed even when it means breach of industrial or trade secrets (Art. 4, par. 4., subparagraph d.).

The EU legislation have direct influence on gmina and powiat public authority organs in the possession of environmental information.

3. The functions of the territorial government

The territorial government was re-established in Poland in 1990⁴. This form of government is crucial for the process of transformation of an authoritarian, centrally-governed state into a democratic and decentralized one. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland set a new direction for the development of local government within the state. Art. 15., Paragraph 1. says that "The territorial system of the Republic of Poland shall ensure the decentralization of the public power", and Art. 164., Paragraph 2. provided for the forming of regional or local self-governmental units other than the commune. The Act of 24 July 1998⁵ introduced a three-tiered administrative division of the state consisting of voivodships, powiats and gminas. In line with this division, the territorial self-governmental units are as follows: self-governing gminas, self-governing powiats and self-governing voivodships. An exception is made for cities with powiat rights, which carry out both gmina and powiat tasks. Smaller auxiliary administrative units, i.e. city district, subdistrict and village administration may also be established.

⁴ Ustawa o samorządzie gminnym z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. (tekst jedn.: Dz.U. z 2001 r., Nr 142, poz. 1591), dalej: UoSG.

⁵ Ustawa o wprowadzeniu zasadniczego trójstopniowego podziału terytorialnego państwa z dnia 24 lipca 1998 r. (Dz.U. Nr 96, poz. 603 z późn. zmianami).

The basic unit of the territorial government is made up of two components: the territory within the state boundaries and its inhabitants, constituting, by the virtue of law, a self-governing community. The procedures of the establishing, uniting, dividing, canceling and demarcating the gmina and powiat boundaries have been unified by an amendment act⁶. According to Article 15. of the Constitution, the local self-government unit possesses legal personality, rights of ownership to municipal property, separate administration and funds, which makes it an economic entity acting in the public utility sphere. Therefore, the local self-government unit can make administrative decisions on its own behalf and for its own account and is solely responsible for these decisions, which should aim at performing public duties within the competence.

Apart from holding public authority, the territorial self-government is an economic entity. The economic position of territorial self-government was partially defined by the Act on Municipal Management of 20 December 1996⁷, which specifies the rules and forms of municipal management within the territorial self-government. The units perform their own tasks, thus fulfilling the common needs of the self-governing community. The municipal management involves public utility tasks, whose aim is to fulfill the collective needs by offering publicly available services.

In order to adequately perform their duties, public administration bodies should include environmental protection issues in the regional and local socio-economic programmes implemented with the help of the state and European legislations. One of these duties is to maintain tidiness and order in the communes⁸, including reliable waste management. Hence, the communal self-government performs its executive function using the tools for balanced development, i.e.: creating developmental strategies, planning spatial development, issuing location decisions and concessions to use the environment and its resources as well as to introduce changes. The aim of these tools is to balance political, economic, social and cultural processes on both regional and local levels.

The tasks of the territorial government concerning municipal waste management was defined in detail in the Nature Conservation Law Act and the Act on Waste⁹.

⁶ Ustawa o zmianie ustaw: o samorządzie gminnym, o samorządzie powiatowym, o samorządzie województwa, o administracji rządowej w województwie oraz o zmianie niektórych innych ustaw z dnia 11 kwietnia 2001 r. (Dz.U. Nr 45, poz. 497).

⁷ Ustawa o gospodarce komunalnej z dnia 20 grudnia 1996 r. (Dz.U. z 1997 r., Nr 9, poz. 43 z późn. zmianami).

⁸ Ustawa o utrzymaniu czystości i porządku w gminach z dnia 13 września 1996 r. (Dz.U. Nr 132, poz. 622 z późn. zmianami).

⁹ Ustawa Prawo ochrony środowiska z dnia 27 kwietnia 2001 r. (Dz.U. 2001, nr 62, poz. 627 z późn. zmianami). Ustawa o odpadach z dnia 27 kwietnia 2001 r. (Dz. U. 2001, nr 62, poz. 628 z późn. zmianami).

4. The self-governing community and performing of self-governmental tasks

The inhabitants of a commune form by virtue of law a self-governing community (The Constitution of the RP, Art. 16., paragraph 1; Act on Communal Self-Government, Art. 1.), meaning a corporation with legal personality. A self-governing community is an individual or collective consumer of goods and services offered by the communal in three forms:

1. the access to goods and services in their spatial and economic dimension,
2. providing goods and services on appropriate (standard) qualitative and quantitative level,
3. providing goods and services at the lowest possible costs or free of charge.

Simultaneous fulfillment of the three above conditions by the territorial government in the market economy is very difficult but possible. Moreover, the attitudes of community groups with different material and cultural backgrounds towards fulfilling their needs may vary substantially. Still, the three forms listed above suggest that the way in which a communal organizes and deals with the process of providing services matters greatly.

The communal self-government acts in the interests of its inhabitants, aiming to fulfill the community needs. Its activities may pertain to daily living conditions or have an economic, social or cultural character. The duties concerning services offered are listed in Art. 7. of the Act on the Communal Self-Government. They pertain, among others, to supporting and popularizing the idea of self-government (Art. 5 b., paragraph. 1.). "The idea of self-government" is a derivative of Prigogine's idea of self-organisation¹⁰, consisting in a synchronisation of the communal self-government's activities in such a way as to reach an agreement and the highest possible level of cooperation between the communal administration and the community. This includes waste management. The implementation of the cooperation would mean the acceptance of the obligation of an EU member state to undertake measures aimed at lessening pollution of the environment, e.g. with waste materials.

In the process of integration with the European Union, planned management of municipal waste, in line with the bottom up approach¹¹, is one of the main tasks of the communal authorities. Therefore, it is necessary to work out a modern technical and organisational waste management system, which, apart from technological novelties, should incorporate the creativity and innovative spirit of local communities and ensure conformity, both the communal by self-governments and local communities, to the domestic and European legal regulations. The change in attitude of the local communities requires a long-term, deep, widespread and consistent educational process.

¹⁰ PRIGOGINE I., STENGERS I.: *Order out of Chaos*. Warszawa, Biblioteka Myśli Współczesnej PIW, 1990.

¹¹ Directive 75/442/EEC of 15 July 1975 on waste.

5. Instruments for the system of environmental management in the commune

The theory and practice of managing communal natural environment covers the organisational structure, planning processes, responsibilities, rules, procedures and measures necessary for working out, implementation, reviewing, and maintaining environmental policy. These allows improvements by the communal authorities. The scope of the improvements is decided upon by the communal, that defines the limits of its activity, i.e. decides if the system is to cover the whole organisation, selected units or only specific functions.

The communal is obliged to define its ecological situation, which includes the specification of legal requirements, identification of environmental aspects, verification of procedures concerning environmental management, defining the priorities of measurable goals and accordingly the adjustment its activities and adapting to changes in the environment. The communal defines its ecological situation by an appropriate component policy in its environment protection, waste management and spatial development programmes that should remain congruent. The integration of developmental, economic and social policy of the communal means that the environmental management system should cover all areas vital for the locality.

The necessity to manage waste, as one part of environmental protection, results from the statutory objectives of the state and self-government on all its levels, as well as from the ecological policy of the state and governmental regulations, i.e. directives, strategies and plans for development. Coordinated with these documents are strategic and sector documents for the voivodship; the same applies to the directives for voivodship institutions, communal associations and the priorities of the Voivodship Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, as well as the self-governmental administration programmes at the powiat and gmina levels. These tasks are presented to the National Coordinator for Waste Management.

The instruments for managing waste can be divided as follows¹²:

1. legal and administrative instruments; these are direct regulations in the form of domestic and European legal acts, introducing general standards of waste management, monitoring, and reporting, the protection and quality standards for specific components of the environment and tools to control conformity with these standards (e.g. proceedings of the evaluation of the environmental impact of plans, programmes, and investments) and the emission limits;
2. economic and market instruments, enhancing the legal and administrative tools; these instruments are the result of market mechanisms which foster environment-friendly market actions, which involves a change of behavioural patterns of consumers, producers and the authorities;

¹² *Program ochrony środowiska dla Województwa Podkarpackiego*. Rzeszów, Zarząd Województwa Podkarpackiego, 2003.

3. financial instruments, built up by public-private institutions, as well as rules and regulations concerning the methods and procedures of collecting and disposal of funds for pro-ecological enterprises;
4. organisational, marketing and management instruments; their aim is to introduce environmental management systems based on international standards;
5. informational and educational instruments, i.e. the crucial tools for attaining the goals of environmental protection policy; these instruments can be divided in two groups, i.e. the tools facilitating cooperation and building up partnerships between self-governments and the community, and the tools facilitating the access to information.

6. The ecological education

The issue of the ecological education of communal organs and self-governing communities is not adequately presented in Polish literature. Most of the available materials are limited to summarizing the educational efforts undertaken during the last five or ten years and do not try to evaluate or present a clear picture of the existing environmental protection system concerning, for example, waste management in communes; neither do they propose a system that would be commonly feasible. There are no studies on the subject of waste management as an integrated and consistent process, congruent with the Polish and EU legislation, specifying duties and privileges of communal authorities and self-governing communities, and stating the level of their ecological consciousness. The existing studies lack descriptions of the legal, administrative and educational activities designed to facilitate cooperation of a communal institutions with self-governing communities. They also ignore the concept of the commune as common good, i.e. one based on shaping a balanced consumption model, which is a vital element of ecological awareness of the society. Although, in its legal aspect, the system of the consumer protection in Poland does not diverge from the EU legislation, consumers' decisions result in a degradation of the environmental and educational activities are necessary to enhance the knowledge of the consumer rights and shape the correct – from the environmental point of view choices.

The basic educational tasks, subjects responsible for carrying them out and the sources of financing are specified in a governmental paper the National Programme for Ecological Education¹³. It is an executive programme, developing in details the regulations included in the "Strategy for the Ecological Education"¹⁴. The documents

¹³ *Narodowy Program Edukacji Ekologicznej. Program wykonawczy Narodowej Strategii Edukacji Ekologicznej oraz warunki jego wdrażania*. Warszawa, Ministry of Environment, 2001.

¹⁴ *Strategia Edukacji Ekologicznej „Przez edukację do zrównoważonego rozwoju”*. Warszawa, Ministry of Environment, 1999.

state that the system of ecological education should be inspired by society's life. In another document, the Ecological Policy of the State for 2007-2010 plus prospects for 2011-2014¹⁵, mid-term goals, extending to 2014, were accepted for the process of enhancing the ecological consciousness of the society. These goals are elements enhancing the acceptance level of pro-ecological activities undertaken by public institutions. The policy aims at providing space for the cooperation with and support for the activities of non-governmental ecological organisations, who are a natural ally of the state in implementing the ecological policy. Hence, the mid-term goals of the ecological policy include the continuous enhancement of the society's ecological consciousness, securing wide access to information on the environment and its protection, increasing the number of conscious consumer decisions, taking into consideration the necessity to protect natural resources, the provision of space for the cooperation with non-government ecological organisations and supporting their activities.

The education of self-governing communities is the first and indispensable stage of the environmental management and also a vital part of the concept of active social partnership.¹⁶ The implementation of widespread ecological education and its introduction to social life should be done at the regional level (consistently with the policy of the Ministry of Environment¹⁷). The material base should be provided by regional education centres, particularly in powiat cities. Local initiatives should meet the national and European programmes (as the Ministry of Environment points out¹⁸). The task of local self-governments is to define the goals and forms of environmental education, taking into account the unique features of the region, local national identity and cultural tradition.

6.1. Ecological consciousness in the border land

The scope of the actual ecological education (its forms, level and needs) was the subject of research conducted in the Sab-Carpathian Voivodship, 2003-2005. The research surveyed 159 gminas of the region and 229 of its randomly chosen inhabitants. The information obtained showed the thinking patterns and ways of functioning of the environmental management and waste management systems in a specific gmina, powiat and the region. One question in the survey concerned training courses on

¹⁵ *Polityka ekologiczna państwa na lata 2007-2010 z uwzględnieniem perspektywy na lata 2011-2014*. Warszawa, Ministry of Environment, 2006.

¹⁶ LIPIŃSKA E. J.: *Gospodarka odpadami w gminie w świetle standardów europejskich*. Doctoral Thesis, Kraków, Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie, Wydział Geodezji Górniczej i Inżynierii Środowiska, 2006.

¹⁷ *Wytyczne sporządzania programów ochrony środowiska na szczeblu regionalnym i lokalnym*. Warszawa, Ministry of Environment, 2002; *Strategia zrównoważonego rozwoju Polski do 2025 roku. Wytyczne dla resortów opracowujących strategie sektorowe*. Warszawa, Ministry of Environment, 1999.

¹⁸ *Wytyczne sporządzania programów*, op.cit.

planned municipal waste management, organised by the gmina for its residents. About 27% of the communal officials said they had organised appropriate training courses, but only about 7% of the inhabitants admitted taking part in them. The lack of training was pointed out by 73% of the officials and 93% of the residents.

The date of the training was given by ten officials (about 11% of the respondents), and its subject by 19 officials (about 20 % of the respondents). The officials gave the following reasons for the lack of the appropriate training courses: waste disposal management is in its preliminary stage (there is no garbage dump in the commune); **the trainings are not necessary**; low attendance at the training courses means little interest in the community; a lack of financial resources; the information is circulated at village meetings; the information was delivered in written form to every member of the community by the village head; regulations for maintaining tidiness and order was introduced in the commune. However, the above answers stand in a contradiction to the belief of the residents that training is necessary. 74% of the inhabitants of the Sub-Carpathian communes declared their interest in environmental protection issues. The hierarchy of the interest subjects is as follows: 67% of the respondents were interested in the European legislation; 65% in shaping the environment they live in and affect, mostly unconsciously; and the impact of man upon the environment (both positive and negative) was interesting to 63% of the respondents. Planned waste management disposal scored the fifth position on the list and the last, sixth position was taken by the results of chemicals on the environment (57% of the respondents). Moreover, about 44% of the population were conscious of civil-law responsibility, resulting in administrative penalties for, e.g. mishandling of waste, and 44% of them knew the responsibility also pertains to the environmental damage. Another sequence of questions concerned proper handling of household waste, 50% of the answers were correct, but only 31% of respondents answered correctly the questions regarding the proper handling of particularly dangerous waste like asbestos, often contained in the old construction materials.

The subjective evaluation by the respondents of modern forms of waste neutralisation (composting, dumping, incineration) was graded on a 5-point scale: I - unsatisfactory, II -below average, III - satisfactory, IV - above average and V - excellent. The statistical distribution of the grades can be seen in Figure 1. The greatest number of respondents evaluated the process of municipal waste disposal by dumping (83%), a slightly lower number took a stance on incineration (80%), and the smallest group graded composting (72%). Note that out of the three methods, the disposal by dumping has the widest range of responses while the incineration received the greatest share of unsatisfactory grades.

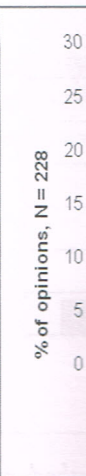


Fig. 1. A... mu... Ho... sults. If... the me... ing 3,1... opt for... or was... Ap... metho... collecti... contain... there w... taken a... technol... dents a... given m... Th... and the... graded

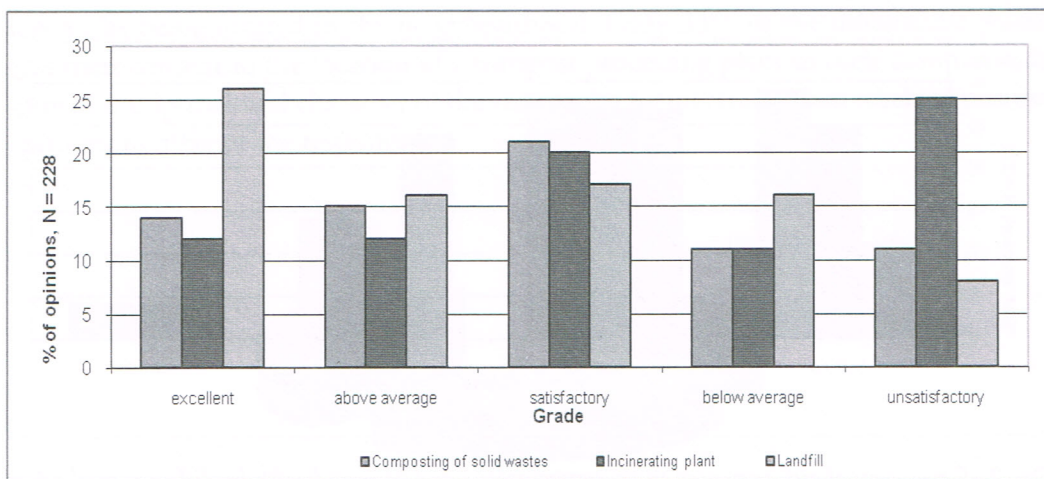


Fig. 1. Distribution of grades between three methods of waste neutralisation, as graded by the communal residents (source: author's studies).

However, the comparison of the mean statistical grade yields more interesting results. If one assumes that verbal grading is proportional to the number of points given, the mean grade for dump disposal is 2,381; for incineration 2,698, and for composting 3,122. The order follows the hierarchy recommended by the EU directives, which opt for composting the biodegradable waste, incineration of the waste that cannot be or was not processed by composting, and the final disposal of waste by dumping.

Apart from the described evaluation, the respondents proposed the following methods of removing waste from the natural environment: the storing of metals and collecting them at scrap yards in order to be further processed; introducing garbage containers; segregation and recycling; utilisation; and processing of waste. Although there were only nine such answers given (representing 4% of the total), they could be taken as a starting point for a discussion on new waste neutralisation methods and technologies. The discussion is much needed, as the opinions of the communal residents are not yet set. This could be observed in the surveys where a method could be given more than one grade, e.g. I and III simultaneously.

The respondents were also asked to evaluate the danger presented for human health and the environment by a municipal waste treatment plant. Each of the methods was graded on a 5-point scale.

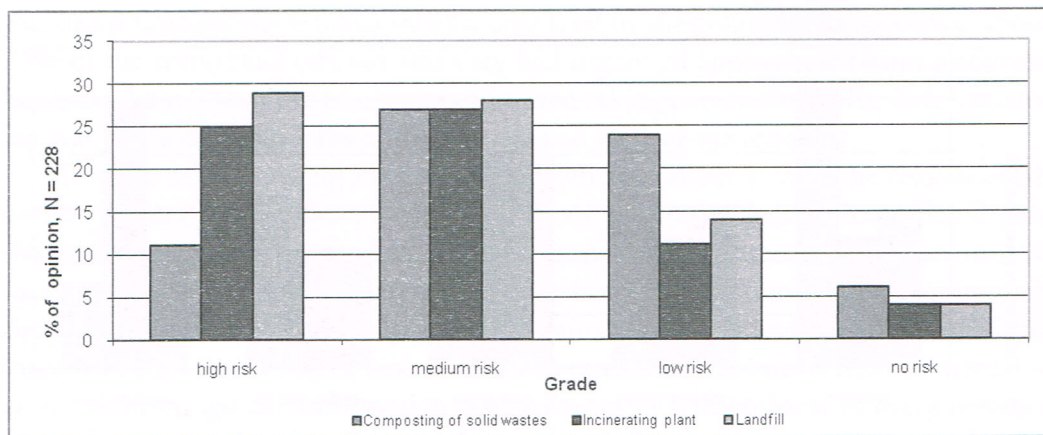


Fig. 2. Estimation of risk presented to the environment and human health by different methods of waste neutralisation, as perceived by the communal residents (source: author's studies).

I – no opinion, II – no risk, III – low risk, IV – medium risk, V – high risk. In this case, 92% of the respondents took a stance on the dumping process, 95% on incineration and 93% on composting. The evaluations of the environmental and human health risk presented by the three methods of waste neutralisation vary substantially. Most respondents labelled the risk as medium. The high risk of dumping and incineration of waste materials received the second number of opinions. The fewest respondents chose the “no risk” answer, which proves that in common consciousness no method of waste neutralisation is harmless for the environment. Most importantly, the survey proved that composting is the safest method in the common consciousness and dumping is the most risky, slightly more than incineration. Thus, common consciousness reflects the hierarchy included in the EU directives.

The next questions pertained to five aspects of the activity of municipal waste neutralisation plants which can endanger the environment and human health. The factors regarded as the most dangerous were (the mean % of the respondents is given in the parentheses): waste dump leachates, compost plant leachates and rainwater (72%); odours from the compost plants, incineration plants and waste dumps (70%); poisonous compost plant, incineration plant and waste dump vent (69%); the dust coming from incinerator furnaces, waste dumps and compost prisms (58%); the effects on the environment of dumped cinders, slag and ashes (55%). Only 16% of the residents are not concerned about the quality of their lives and the disadvantages resulting from these processes.

Was the last analyse of a municipal waste utilisation/neutralisation plant issue the attitude of the local communities towards potential location in the commune, Fig. 3. The landfill is considered to be the most appropriate form of freeing the environment of waste materials, but only 37% of the communal inhabitants would potentially con-

sent to its being located in the neighbourhood. Only 33% of the inhabitants would give their consent to the location of a compost processing plant in their commune, in spite of the agricultural character of the region. An incineration plant received positive opinions of 30% of the respondents.

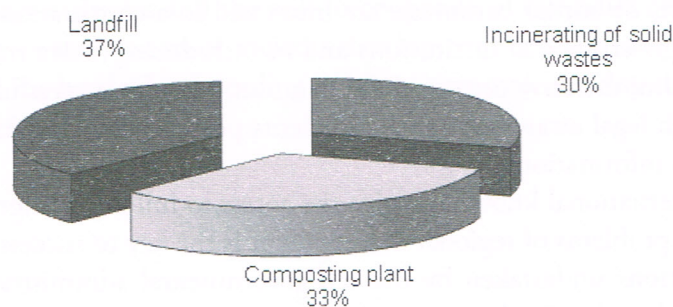


Fig. 3. Percentage of inhabitants' potential consent to localtion of a waste neutralisation plant in the commune (source: author's studies).

The acceptance level is similar to each of the three processes (30-37%). As many as 59-66% of the respondents did not have any opinion about the location of any type of waste neutralisation plant in their gmina. None of the three described types of waste neutralisation plant finds clear acceptance as far as its location in the respondents' proximity.

Generally, it can be said that residents show reluctance to accept the idea of a waste neutralisation plant being located in their commune. Not answering questions and low acceptance of each of the processes may result from a lack of general knowledge concerning the technological processes and methods and their results on the natural environment. The Sub-Carpathian realize their knowledge gaps and are willing to remedy them. They are not fully conscious of the extent to which they are personally responsible for the present and future condition of the natural environment in which they live and work. Appropriate forms of education, attractive and adapted to the interests of the potential participants could bring palpable results in the growth in ecological awareness and responsibility for the environment. Moreover, it is worth stressing that ecological education as an element of the cooperation of officials with the local community is still not regarded by self-governments as their duty.

7. Conclusions

The self-governing communes of the border land lack the tools (or system) for enhancing ecological awareness among the local inhabitants. On the other hand, there exists a close correlation between the activities undertaken in a given area by the com-

munal officials and those carried out by the residents. The community acceptance for these undertakings is an indispensable condition for reaching attained goals and arriving at expected results.

The development of new forms of waste management and the pace with which new technologies are implemented requires a simultaneous growth in social awareness. The residents of border commune are interested in a cooperation with environment protection governmental institutions and in introducing waste management in their area. The administrative organs of the commune can be successful only if its officials have enough legal awareness and its residents possess ecological knowledge and have an access to information.

The international know-how plus the access to full knowledge about present and anticipated problems of regional development is the key to success in these efforts is.

The actions undertaken by the self-governmental administration of the border lands, aimed at the development of the local systems of waste management, should involve a number of social factors, including:

- the activity, creativity and entrepreneurship of the communal,
- initiating activity and entrepreneurship among the residents,
- legal, technical and organisational support for the initiatives undertaken,
- search for new solutions vital for a given locality in a cooperation with the local community,
- international cooperation, including its regional and local forms.

The resident of a gmina (locality) is affected by the structure, organisation and functioning of its social system. Supporting local development enhances the communal inhabitants' and self-government's self-appreciation concerning the preparation and implementation of the environmental protection policy.

The participation in the life of the community is not an automatic activity so individuals need to be prepared to perform a given function. One form of such a preparation is inspiring joint efforts and realizing that it is necessary to create, through the will to work together, value frames of reference for oneself and for others.

Shaping the best possible living conditions for the local community is related to the attainment of local and regional goals. If a territorial government wants to arrive at palpable results, it must not only attract attention of the local community, but also direct its behaviour so as to guarantee a good adaptation of the residents in the locality. It does not mean direct control over the behaviour of the community, but simply creating frames for mutually explicit actions.

The research presented in this paper shows the possible directions for the improvement of the environmentally crucial areas and undertakings, based on lasting tendencies and accepted international standards of the organisation and management of waste in communes.

Summary

The ecological education is one part of the general system of environmental protection management. The organs responsible for it are administrative institutions in charge of the execution of public tasks. The ecological education brings about changes in behaviour patterns, attitudes and the will to cooperate of the residents of a given area and is one step in the process of society's development and the improvement of living conditions in the border land, leading to better economic development of these regions.

** Translation from the Polish language by Alina Patkowska



Cooperation of Universities supporting the development
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