



**THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, PHYSICAL
PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION**

PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION

Pursuant to Article 44 of the Environmental Protection Act (Official Gazette 110/07), the Croatian Parliament at its session on 20 February 2009 adopted the

STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

I Introduction

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the needs of future generations. Sustainable development achieves a balance between the requirements to improve the quality of life (economic component) and achieve social well-being and peace for all (social component) and the requirements to protect environmental components as a natural resource upon which present and future generations depend. Adherence to the principles of democracy, gender equality, social justice and solidarity, rule of law, respect for fundamental rights and the preservation of natural resources, cultural heritage and human environment, contribute to safeguarding the Earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. Sustainable development is thus achieved through a dynamic economy with full employment, economic, social and territorial cohesion, high level of education, health protection and environmental protection.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the global public's attention was focused on the increasing problems related to developmental and environmental issues at the local and global level. The Declaration and the Programme of Action for the 21st Century (Agenda 21) adopted at the Conference give strong support to the principle of sustainable development. Chapter 8 of Agenda 21 calls on countries to adopt national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS) that should build upon and harmonise the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and existing national plans.

The General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000 adopted the Millennium Declaration, a United Nations political document for the 21st century, which defines development goals in areas of interest for the overall international community as well as activities required for their realization. The Declaration, *inter alia*, gives support to the principle of sustainable development which becomes a key element in ensuring environmental sustainability – one of the eight Millennium Development Goals that the member states of the United Nations have undertaken to achieve by 2015.

The principle of sustainable development received strong political support at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002. At the Summit countries were called upon to adopt regional and national strategies for sustainable development and to begin their implementation. Furthermore, the integration of the principle of sustainable development into national policies and plans is one of the goals of the Millennium Declaration for the purpose of achieving the millennium goal of environmental sustainability.

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 as well as the later Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 provided encouragement for the strengthening of regional cooperation in promoting and implementing the principle of sustainable development. Within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), at the 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention held in Portorož in 2005, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development was adopted.

The Amsterdam Treaty made the promotion of sustainable development one of the key tasks of the European Union. After careful review of the 2001 EU Sustainable Development Strategy adopted in Göteborg, in 2006 the European Union accepted the revised Sustainable Development Strategy for an enlarged European Union. The Strategy is directed at gradually changing the current unsustainable consumption and production patterns and the non-integrated approach to policy-making. At the same time, it reaffirms the need for solidarity and strengthening of partnership.

One of the first documents passed by the Croatian Parliament in which the importance of sustainable development is mentioned is the Declaration on Environmental Protection in the Republic of Croatia adopted in 1992. At the international level, the Republic of Croatia supported Agenda 21 and its Action Plan adopted in 1992 at the conference in Rio and assumed the obligations arising from the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. To that end, the Republic of Croatia prepared the National Report on the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration which was adopted by the Government in August 2004 and submitted to the United Nations in September of that year. All relevant stakeholders contributed to the preparation of that report – competent ministries, government offices and bodies, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations. In 2006 the Republic of Croatia submitted to the United

Nations the Progress Report on the Achievement of the Nationalized Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Croatia (for the period from August 2004 to December 2005).

In the Environmental Protection Act, which entered into force in November 2007, the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia (hereinafter: the Strategy) holds a key position as the document which directs long term economic and social development as well as environmental protection towards the sustainable development of the Republic of Croatia. The Environmental Protection Act prescribes that the Strategy will establish guidelines for long term actions by defining objectives and determining measures for their realization, taking into account the present status and undertaken international obligations. The Strategy integrates different development policies by trying to find solutions suitable for all three components of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

The Strategy contains fundamental principles and criteria for determining the objectives and priorities in considering the long term transformation towards sustainable development of the Republic of Croatia. Taking into account the realization of sustainable development of the Republic of Croatia, the Strategy sets basic objectives and measures of economic sustainable development, social sustainable development and environmental protection and identifies key challenges in their realization. The analysis of the most important challenges provides a description of the current situation from the economic, social and environmental aspect, thereby contributing to sustainability. The Strategy also lists the institutions involved in its implementation and the method of implementation, responsibility for the implementation and the method of monitoring the implementation.

II Republic of Croatia and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development implies the realization of three general objectives: stable economic development, social equity and environmental protection. These objectives, while recognizing the state's responsibility for global issues at the international level, may only be accomplished by mutual cooperation of all stakeholders. The realization of the aforementioned objectives should:

- safeguard the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity, respect the existing limits on the use of natural resources and ensure a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, prevent and reduce environmental pollution and promote sustainable production and consumption to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation;

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- respect national specificities;
 - promote an economy based on prosperity, development changes, spirit of competition and social responsibility, an economy that ensures the quality of life and full employment;
 - promote a democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, safe and just society with respect for fundamental rights and cultural diversity that creates equal opportunities and combats discrimination in all its forms;
 - apply scientific and expert knowledge to develop a system for the protection of human health, including the remediation of existing environmental burdens;
 - encourage the establishment of democratic institutions across the region and the world and defend their stability, based on the universal right to peace, security and freedom;
 - actively promote sustainable development in the region and the world;
 - strengthen partnership among all segments of the society.

Principles

The following general principles will direct the Republic of Croatia towards sustainable development:

- (a) protection of human health;
- (b) promotion and protection of fundamental rights;
- (c) solidarity within and between generations;
- (d) open and democratic society;
- (e) involvement of citizens;
- (f) involvement of businesses and social partners;
- (g) corporate social responsibility;
- (h) integration of economic, social and environmental components into the development of all policies (guidelines);
- (i) education for sustainable development;
- (j) coherence of policies at all government and self-government levels;
- (k) use of the best available technology;
- (l) renewal (for example, by reuse or recycling) of natural resources;
- (m) promotion of sustainable production and consumption;
- (n) precaution and prevention;
- (o) "polluter pays" for damages caused to the environment.

Sustainable Croatia

The Republic of Croatia will achieve stability and progressive development with balanced policies within the framework of general objectives provided that it:

- builds a stable economy;
- ensures energy security and efficiency;
- increases and equalizes the level of regional development and realizes good internal cohesion;
- ensures full gender, ethnic, religious and age equality;
- builds a quality public health system;
- builds an efficient social welfare system;
- enables a high level of education of the population;
- builds a system of specific measures for the socially vulnerable part of the population;
- achieves the management and rational use of all natural resources;
- achieves good monitoring of the state of the environment with an efficient emission control system;
- efficiently protects parts of nature and environmental components;
- undertakes measures to mitigate climate change i.e. adapts to climate change and minimises its effect on causing climate change.

Current Situation

Sustainable development of the Republic of Croatia must be put into the context of its geopolitical environment and existing situation which includes the assessment of available human and natural resources.

The economic and social progress in Europe and the world is currently based on knowledge, use of scientific results and information and communication technologies as well as alignment of the state's involvement with the needs of entrepreneurs. The Croatian economy, which until recently showed an increasing growth trend, is strongly affected by the events in the global market that constantly generate changes in key economic relations. The effects of negative trends in global financial markets reflect on the real sector through slowing down and, in some of the developed countries, even a negative trend in global economic growth. At the same time, oscillations in energy and food prices have additional negative effects on economic growth as well as on inflation. Projections of the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predict a slow-down of economic growth in the European Union which is the main Croatian foreign trade partner. This also implies a significant unfavourable impact on current economic events in Croatia in the following short-term period. This also

changes the recent positive image of employment and unemployment trends and places it into the context of negative trends.

The efforts to achieve economic growth are supported by fiscal policy while the stability of the exchange rate, low inflation and further reduction of the budget deficit represent positive macroeconomic factors. The costs of social infrastructure and security are in balance with the sustainability level in the current national and global economic conditions. However, there are certain problems that slow down the overall economic development. For instance: dependence on imported energy, corruption, slow and inefficient judiciary, decline in the population and average ageing of the population, economic disparity between the regions, pressures concerning irrational management of national land resources, etc. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to achieve a significantly larger GDP than the present one which may be accomplished by raising the general level of education of the workforce, primarily because of demands for the use of new technologies and orientation towards more complex production processes. Where natural resources are concerned, in addition to the beauties of the landscape and geographic and climatic diversity, the Republic of Croatia also has large verified freshwater reserves, sufficient areas of unpolluted agricultural land for which melioration drainage or irrigation measures need to be implemented, own energy reserves sufficient to meet at least one fourth of its needs. Significant areas of the Republic of Croatia are still covered by quality forests and the sea quality permits different forms of mariculture.

III Key challenges to sustainable development of the Republic of Croatia

Based on the aforementioned, and considering the ever-increasing environmental pressures, the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, while respecting the assumed international obligations, is focused on long-term action in eight key areas: 1. encouraging population growth in the Republic of Croatia; 2. environment and natural resources; 3. promoting sustainable production and consumption; 4. ensuring social and territorial cohesion and justice; 5. ensuring energy independence and increasing the efficiency of energy use; 6. strengthening public health; 7. interconnectedness of the Republic of Croatia; 8. protection of the Adriatic Sea, coastal area and islands. In those areas it is necessary to redirect the existing processes towards a more sustainable behaviour. These are the eight key challenges of sustainable development that also serve as the basis for strategic directions of the development of the Republic of Croatia.

Analysis of each of these areas begins by considering the basic features of the current situation in order to define the overall objective according to which the direction of

systematic and long-term action is determined. Likewise, for each area different forms of action (adoption of policies, sectoral strategies, implementation of plans and projects) are proposed that contribute to realizing the overall objective. The proposed measures are followed by specific objectives, bringing the overall objective into sharper focus and making its realization measurable.

The realization of the overall objective needs to include institutions and state administration bodies responsible for implementing specific segments of the Strategy in all strategic and development documents within their competence. Their action is manifold: they maintain dialogue with other stakeholders and prepare and propose policies and strategies; implement plans and projects for the realization of the overall objective and specific objectives; supervise the implementation of plans and projects carried out by others, and monitor the realization of objectives.

The local self-government bodies play a vital role in the realization of overall objectives at the local level. They promote sustainability in their own Agendas 21 that are used to define their local objectives which in turn direct the economic and social local community projects, environmental protection or adaptation to climate change in order to strengthen the community's sustainability through the implementation of such projects.

The business community contributes to sustainable development by opening new work posts through developing new technologies while accepting environmental protection measures and, in particular, by exercising corporate social responsibility.

Citizens with their activities directly shape basic types of behaviour and contribute to public participation in democratic development. The Government of the Republic of Croatia manages and, through its bodies, coordinates and ensures harmonisation of all forms of action associated with implementing the principles of sustainable development.

1. Population

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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_10307

