

REALITY AND PROSPECTS IN GREEK INDUSTRY

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Greece has signed, as a member of the European Union two hundred directives issued on the environment. However, Greek legislation has adopted fewer than 10% of these directives and this delays compliance with European law and creates problems for the transfer of funds from European Union programs.

Environmental issues have been treated in Greece as a low priority; in addition, there is a negative impression of the initiatives and actions of ecological organizations, since their interference always comes after a problem has developed, and their attitude is strongly resistant to any development that creates problems for the achievement of sustainable development. The creation of a market supply of environmental services has been delayed, and the existing potential is considered negligible in relation to the needs and obligations of both private and public sectors.

Today, while 5,500 sites of uncontrolled waste dumping are in use while the Greek state has not yet formulated a strategy for this matter at national level, which is particularly necessary after the new landfill directive. Hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of untreated sewage and industrial waste water are discharged into the water depositories. The control and enforcement services of legislation are non-existent. Industries barely cover their legal obligations with regard to issues such as emissions into the atmosphere, disposal of solid and liquid waste and noise pollution.

Environmental impact studies are low quality and do not have clear targets, such as identifying the adverse impacts and taking adequate measures for their mitigation. The existing practice in Greece, and particularly in the sector of public works, opposes the philosophy of the 85/337 directive. There is an excess supply of scientists who are specialists in various environmental areas, a disproportionately large number, relative to market demand since the majority of firms cannot justify hiring a specialized scientist whose sole responsibility would be environmental issues. Firms acting exclusively in the field of environmental protection are few and small, with limited personnel; as a result, they lack the capacity to employ specialized scientists.

The implementation of the Directive for the Environmental Audit of Businesses will come as a surprise and a shock. Therefore, an immediate updating is essential in order to ensure the necessary awareness among businesses. The following are provisions which a business must undertake to protect the environment:

- an update on the obligations enforced by the applicable European Union Directives on environmental issues;
- representation of its obligations and the procedures for compliance;
- cooperation with a reliable environmental consultant;
- commitment of the management of the firm to minimizing the impact on the environment caused by its operation;
- monitoring of the environmental efficiency;
- conducting internal environmental audits;
- information for employees and the creation of an environmental 'conscience' for each employee in his or her respective sector of work;
- minimization of waste production at source.

Business management and environmental concern must be combined, since in the near future it will be impossible to separate the two. Basic principles should be:

- decrease resource use;
- improve environmental management;
- prices of resources and products should increasingly reflect both the cost of their production and the cost of their environmental impact.

The current message from every direction is that sustainable development goes through continuous processes of constant adjustment and, although the details of the route may not be clear, the way forward is obvious.

Dr. **Alexis Paraskevopoulos** is a Mechanical Engineer, a Sanitary Specialist and an Environmental Studies Consultant. As a researcher of environmental protection projects, he has completed fifty studies on environmental effects for large-scale development projects of Greece, as well as management studies on a regional level. He has also completed studies on a national level for the recording of toxic and dangerous wastes and waste-management. Dr. Paraskevopoulos has participated in the organization of seminars and has held an advisory position in the Ministry of National Economy on the evaluation of European Union Programs. Until today, he has cooperated with over 1,600 regional administration organizations with the aim of solving environmental problems, with many research and project leaders, Governors, the Public Electricity Company, the Hellenic Industrial Development Bank (ETBA) and other organizations.