

# Policies and Practices Regarding the Protection of Flora and Fauna in Europe and in Romania

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## Abstract

Because of the negative effects of pollution, of urban area's development, of the wild territories fragmentation and of the anthropic impact on the environment, in the early 90s was observed an alarming decrease of flora and fauna in Europe. So they were took a series of measures, directives to protect the habitats and birds. Today in Europe is found the largest interconnected network of protected areas from the world, fact which led to slowing or even stopping the degradation of some territories affected, and in some cases was also observed the recoveries of habitats. After Romania joined the European Union and adoption of directives that aims the protection of birds and habitats it was, also, observed a significant increase of protected areas.

**Keywords:** flora, fauna, protection, Europa, Romania.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development has appeared in 1987 in the Brundtland Report and is formulated as "Sustainable development is the development that aims the satisfaction of the present needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs".

This concept has appear after public awareness of the fact that environment is increasingly affected by human activities. Pollution, deforestation, desertification, extension of urban area, habitat fragmentation are only some of the adverse effects caused by entrophic impact[1,2].

To preserve habitats or some species of plants and animals were designated the protected areas. The protected area represents: "A clearly defined geographic area, recognizable, destined and managed, through legal means or other effective means, in order to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, and also of ecosystem

services and of cultural associated values", according to I.U.C.N (International Union for Conservation of Nature) [3].

In the 1992, as a consequence of mobilization of a growing number of governments in order to find solutions to environmental problems, the European Union has established a network of protected areas, Natura 2000, which has on base the directive "Habitats" (Directive 92/43/EEC regarding the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild plants and animals) and the directive "Birds" (the Directive 79/409/EEC regarding the conservation of wild birds) - a set of rules designed to protect habitats and species of plants and animals threatened with extinction on the European Union territory.

Thus, after two decades from the initiation of the Natura 2000 network, the area occupied by the protected areas in all 28 countries EU members includes 18% from the land area and 6% from the maritime and coastal territories, offering ideal areas for living and reproduction for most species of plants and animals threatened with extinction - according to the European Commission [4,5].

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## 2. Materials and methods

To achieve this scientific approach we conducted a study regarding the environmental policies regarding to the protection of habitats, flora and fauna in Europe and in Romania through bibliographical studies from the analyzed field.

## 3. Results and discussion

The idea that was at the basis of Natura 2000 was the desire to create a connection between affected areas by anthropic action or areas of an outstanding natural value endangered from the European territory. So, habitats and wildlife species benefited by an ecological network that followed the survival of species of plants and animals, leaving at the same time the possibility of peoples to carry out their activities without endangering wildlife.

So, the purpose of the Natura 2000 network is not to limit peoples to undertake various anthropic activities, but to find a middle way between them and nature conservation.

Comparing the Natura 2000 network with other conservation initiatives from the past of certain areas it can be seen the fact that today the European Directives follows not only the conservation of endangered species of animals or plants but focuses mainly on habitats preservation and conservation. Their purpose is to create such a close interdependence between protected areas across the entire continent and to provide the European fauna and flora the opportunity of survival in an era of industrialization. According to European Commission statistics, are protected over 230 habitat types and over 1,000 species of plants and animals located in over 23,000 protected areas Natura 2000 across Europe territory [6].

The Natura 2000 network includes:

- Special bird protection areas (SPA - Special Protected Areas) - that follows the protection of birds species;
- Sites of Community Importance (SCI - Site of Community Importance) – have as purpose preservation of habitats and

species of plants and animals of community interest;

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC - Special Area of Conservation) – has as purpose maintenance of habitats in favorable conservation status [7].

Besides the benefit brought to the conservation of biodiversity, it can be deduct the fact that both people benefit through ensuring a cleaner environment, untouched by pollution. Another advantage of people, this time of economic order, is the emergence of a growing number of jobs in environmental protection, thus coming in meeting one of the European Union priorities - reducing unemployment among the young.

At our country's level, before accession to the European Union, the area occupied by protected areas was only 8% from Romania's territory and contained 15 natural parks, 13 national parks and Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation. At the end of 2007, after accession, was a significant increase in the number of protected areas - 17.84% from Romania's territory. [8,9].

Today protected areas occupy over 20% from our country's territory, fact which contributes to the development of the Natura 2000 network on Europe's territory.

One of protected areas from Romania, located in the west of the country is Lunca Muresului Natural Park, with an area of 17455 ha, falls into the V category by the I.U.C.N. classification (International Union for Conservation of Nature-U.I.C.N.) protected area managed for landscape conservation and recreation. It was designated a wetland area of international importance – RAMSAR sit.

The administration of Lunca Muresului Natural Park takes part of Natura 2000 network being the the area protection of bird due to birds (over 200 bird species) that lives or transiting the area, from witch some of community interest: kingfisher, lesser spotted eagle, eagle field, winter hawk, gray kite, white-tailed, etc.

Also Lunca Muresului Natural Park is the site of Community importance for the species of plants and animals threatened with the extinction: river clam, pond turtle, newt, otter, gopher, etc.

#### 4. Conclusions

However, many species of plants and animals are still in danger of extinction and for this the objectives for the year 2020 targets are more ambitious than those from today. However, unlike the 90s, today civil society takes increasingly attitude towards environmental issues, fact which could be the key element in long-term protection of biodiversity.

Protection of the environment and the desire to offer to future generations at least the same living conditions exhorts the people to express their views, to take a stand against big polluters and to join forces hoping rehabilitation of ecosystems and habitats. So, the European Union supports the initiatives of those interested (associations, foundations, action groups) and provides fundings for nature conservation projects.

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