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The Review of International Regulations in the Field of Sustainable Tourism Development

Abstract

The conception of sustainable development applies to all spheres of human activities since natural environment, which undergoes changes all the time, constitutes space of life for human race. One of human activities which integrates many spheres of socio-economic life is tourism. This paper is committed to the analysis of regulations concerning the issue of sustainable tourism, beginning from 1993 until the publications of 2005. The author made the attempt of identification of changes in the approach to the problems of sustainable tourism in international context. The other aim was to indicate the main problems which impede the realization of the concept of eco-development in relation to tourism.

1. Introduction

The 20th century passed into the history of mankind as one of the most expansionary periods as far as exploitation of earth's natural resources are concerned. In the last thirty years, pursuing the raise of quality of their lives, men consumed 30% of our planet's natural wealth. Profiting not only from energy of water and wind, they decided to go deeper, exploiting such resources as carbon, gas and oil.

The effects of damage done by humans through wasteful exploitation are distant in time, which means that the scale of this occurrence is visible in global context, whereas it is hardly detected in an individual's local surroundings. It is

estimated that every 18 minutes one species of wildlife dies and negative effects of such state of affairs are difficult to estimate, even by ecologists.

The danger of depletion of resources has become a fact and progression in pollution of the environment led to disorder in nature. One of the conceptions which enables the reverse of this trend is, created in the late eighties of the 20th century, the idea of sustainable development. Originally this term referred to forestry and represented the way of forest management based on the idea that you can cut only such an amount of trees that can easily be replaced by new ones, so that the ability of community to regenerate will not be harmed. In the international dimension, the conception of sustainable development was expressed in 1987 in Brundtland Report, according to which *at the level of present civilisation the sustainable development is possible, which is such a development in which the needs of present generation can be satisfied without lessening chances of future generations for satisfying them, too*. Though twenty years passed since these events, the relation between economic growth, protection of environment and human health is still valid as it was proposed in Brundtland Report.

In subject literature many definitions of sustainable development can be encountered, each of which emphasizes different dimension and sphere of this term. In theory of economy most of them concentrate on three forms of capital: economic, human and environmental, but very rarely on the relations between those three. In this context it can be quoted after F. Piontek that the essence of sustainable development is the assurance of lasting improvement of quality of life for present and future generations through the shaping process of the right proportions between three forms of capital: economic, human and environmental (Piontek, Piontek, Piontek 2000). It is worth remembering that this and many other definitions exclude institutional, spatial, moral and spiritual dimension of eco-development. The overall definition of sustainable development is composed of the following elements:

- management of economic resources,
- management of natural resources,
- management of human resources,
- institutional solutions,
- space,
- shaping of awareness and choice of life model,
- moral dimension and
- spiritual dimension (including cultural development) (Piontek 2002, p. 15).

The conception of sustainable development applies to all spheres of human activities since natural environment, which undergoes changes all the time, constitutes space of life for human race. Thus agriculture, transport or service market in broad meaning are the areas in which there is a strong need for implementation of eco-development idea for maintaining biological balance in the world. One of human activities which integrates many spheres of socio-economic life is tourism. Containing an element of translocation it has become not only the catalyst which drives the flow of information and capital but also determinates the development of many regions of the world.

This paper is committed to the analysis of regulations concerning the issue of sustainable tourism, beginning from 1993 until the publications of 2005. The selected documents are divided into two parts concerning global and European level. The author made the attempt of identification of changes in the approach to the problems of sustainable tourism in international context. The other aim was to indicate the main problems which impede the realization of the concept of eco-development in relation to tourism.

2. Realization of eco-development in tourism at global level

In subject literature three key terms are very often confused: sustainable development, sustainable tourism and eco-tourism. The below juxtaposition shows the proper relation between these terms.



Graph 1.

Source: Author's own compilation.

Sustainable tourism applies to a broad conception of environmentally oriented tourism development in all reception areas and concerns all known forms of tourism. Eco-tourism is a more narrow term constituting one of the forms of travelling closely related to nature and indigenous culture of areas which have high natural values (Zaręba 2006, p. 36). However, sustainable development (also known as eco-development) constitutes the foundation and leading idea of sustainable tourism. It means new philosophy of global, regional

and local development, which includes and harmonizes the action of four kinds of orders: ecological, social, economic and spatial. The integrated order, which came into existence in this way, allows to satisfy the needs of both present and future inhabitants of planet earth.

One of the most important documents of international rank concerning the issue of sustainable tourism is *Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development*, created by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and Earth Council (EC) in 1996. It sets priority objectives, in global meaning, which are supposed to bring tourism sector closer to the rules of eco-development. The most important are:

1. Travelling and tourism should be based on sustainable models of production and consumption.
2. Travelling and tourism should support the preservation, protection and renovation of earth ecosystems.
3. There is a need of promotion of open market system in tourism, free exchange of tourism services subjected to the rules of sustainable development and respecting international law of environmental protection.
4. There is a need of creation of new incomes for local inhabitants by involving them in decision making and planning processes in particular regions.
5. Tourism sector should be directed on the reduction of the amount of waste and on saving the energy and water, elimination of substances which are dangerous to the environment and on stimulating pro-ecological behaviour among tourism personnel, tourists and local community (*Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry...*).

The *Agenda* also proposes three main tools for the realisation of the mentioned goals. First of all, it notices the need of strengthening of the existing law means in relation to environment and health protection. What is more, pro-ecological direction of the development of tourism may be strengthened by means of market mechanisms and by reflecting the outcome of using a particular natural resource in the prices of goods and services. What is also important, it was proposed to organise (on private sector initiative) programs providing the proper and ethical management of tourism products.

In this document nine priority areas of activities for government administration at different levels were set. It is emphasized that a creation of special tax system in relation to tourism business, which enables the improvement of environment condition (without lessening economic benefits coming from tourism), is crucial. Economical encouragements, which motivate

tourism industry are also important. Generally, assumption of the cooperation of private and public sectors supported by economic solutions (encouragements) for entrepreneurs and activities aimed at raising the ecological awareness of all tourism market actors is pertinent. In this way, *Agenda* has become a formal expression of the assumption concerning the integration of four orders which is the core of the conception of sustainable development. The document confirms that nature and environment are the main resources for tourism - most tourists acknowledged them as the most important tourism products in certain region. This approach also shows that the inexorable subordination to commercial model of tourism development is no longer possible.

In 1999 WTO underlined the possibility to bring together sustainable and responsible tourism with growing liberalization in service trade. The organization presented its own point of view at sustainable tourism in *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. The third chapter is fully devoted to the discussed issue. This paper constitutes a universal set of rules which are addressed to authorities (both central and local), local communities, enterprises and organisations in tourism sector. In accordance with this document, there are certain conditions which should be fulfilled by tourism sector to get it closer to eco-development idea. What is important, it is stressed that all participants (not only public and private sector) of tourism development should protect natural resources and environment to sustain economic development (Kiryłuk, Borkowska-Niszczota 2006, p. 59). It is also connected with acknowledging common responsibility for this task. Attention is also concentrated on promotion aspect and the necessary support for all environmentally friendly forms of tourism and for protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, which should be given by local authorities. Attention is also paid to respecting the cultural heritage and interests of local community. *Global Code* is therefore a general recapitulation of conceptions of sustainable development of tourism sector, which had been elaborated before 1999.

In 2004 a new approach to sustainable tourism development at international level was presented. The WTO organisation in collaboration with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development elaborated the document *Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST~EP)* which shows how important for poorest countries tourism industry is in terms of their economy. Unfortunately, this sector is still not fully recognised as an instrument for poverty reduction. This publication is an answer of tourism industry (under the leadership of WTO) given to the Millennium Development Goal to halve extreme poverty by 2015 (Sofield, Bauer, De Lacy, Lipman, Daugher 2004, p. 5.). Authors mark that *ST~EP* is not a new form of tourism or a new kind of tourism product. It is an approach to tourism in which the benefits are

specifically directed towards the poor. Tourism has to be seen as a complex system – not only as a private sector undertaking. Similarly, like in previous documents, it is stressed that without pro-active role of Government and its interventions, sustainable tourism and its positive influence on poverty will not be achieved. Activities at this field must be backed by legislation (legal framework).

This document presents totally different way of conceiving sustainable tourism development. In the development assistance programmes elaborated by donor countries this idea was seen by various actors in tourism sector only in environmental or cultural way, limiting at the same time full range of its impacts on world's poverty. Sustainable tourism, especially in poor countries has a tremendous role to play. It is a catalyst for the whole economy. If this sector succeeds, other linkage sectors will also be successful. If that is to happen tourism should be conceived as a complex system. It is better to speak about tourism system rather than tourism industry, which in turn demands a sustainable management processes. In this way, by giving local communities the chance to benefit from tourism development in a particular area, the process of their marginalisation from global economy can be stopped. By realisation of sustainable development idea, cultural and natural capital may be utilised for tourism, which from economic point of view is vital. On the other hand, one thing has not changed in this document's approach to the above mentioned problem. There is still a strong need for close collaboration between private sector and tourism authorities which is not yet achieved. It has to be improved in order to implement effective strategies for sustainable development in tourism sector.

The table below presents other crucial international documents concerning the issue of sustainable tourism. All of them contrary to the mentioned above have form of declarations (and one charter) of various subjects of international tourism market.

Table 1. International declarations concerning sustainable tourism

Date	Name of the document	Authors	Main content
1995	Charter for Sustainable Tourism World ¹	Participants at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tourism should be approached with a global methodology, – tourism should be ecologically bearable in long term and ethically and socially equitable for local communities, – tourism should participate actively in the sustainable development strategy, – the sustainability of the resources on which tourism depends must be guaranteed, – tourism should be integrated with the natural, cultural and human environment, – sustainable development of tourism should be based efficient cooperation mechanisms at all levels: local, national, regional and international.
1997	Berlin Declaration On Biological Diversity And Sustainable Tourism ²	International Conference of Environment Ministers on Biodiversity and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tourism activities should be environmentally, economically, socially and socially sustainable, – tourism activities which use environmentally sound technologies should be promoted to the fullest extent, – tourism activities which encourage the use of public and non-motorised transport should be supported wherever possible, – the private sector should be encouraged to develop and apply codes of conduct for sustainable tourism, – the general public should be informed and educated about the benefits of protecting nature through sustainable forms of tourism, – economic instruments should be used to encourage private sector to eco-friendly behaviours.

¹ *Charter for Sustainable Tourism World*, 1995, Lanzarote, available online at <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/charter.html>

² *Berlin Declaration On Biological Diversity And Sustainable Tourism*, 1997, Berlin, available online at <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/berlin.html>

Table 1 – continuation. International declarations concerning sustainable tourism

Date	Name of the document	Authors	Main content
2000	Statement of Commitment to Sustainable Tourism Development ³	Initiative of tourism agencies and touroperators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – creation of awareness and active involvement among customers towards the natural, social and cultural environment of the places they visit, – responsible use of natural resources – reducing pollution and waste – involving and co-operation with local communities and people, – using local products and skills – encouragement of partners, suppliers, and sub-contractors to contribute to sustainable tourism
2002	Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism ⁴	UNEP, UNWTO, International Day of Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – governments should formulate national, regional and local ecotourism policies, – develop regulatory mechanisms for internalization of environmental costs of the tourism products – ensure support to micro, small and medium-sized firms – promote and develop educational programmes, – private sector should make increasing use of local materials and products, – generate awareness among all management and staff – formulate and implement company policies for sustainability.
2005	Declaration Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals ⁵	UNWTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tourism is an effective tool to realise the poverty alleviation, – large multinational companies should act in the most sustainable manner, – increase the co-operation between public and private sectors, – integrate tourism in current and future actions regarding climate change and water resources.

³ *Statement of Commitment to Sustainable Tourism Development*, 2000, available online at <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/berlin.html>

⁴ *Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, UN International Year of Ecotourism*, UNEP, UNWTO, 2002, available online at www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/quebec-declaration.pdf

⁵ *Declaration Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals*, UNWTO, New York, 2005, available online at www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/decla-ny-mdg-en.pdf

Table 1 – continuation. International declarations concerning sustainable tourism

Date	Name of the document	Authors	Main content
2005	Declaration Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals ⁶	UNWTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tourism is an effective tool to realise the poverty alleviation, – large multinational companies should act in the most sustainable manner, – increase the co-operation between public and private sectors, – integrate tourism in current and future actions regarding climate change and water resources.
2005	Vienna Declaration on the Future of European Tourism ⁷	European Travel Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sustainable tourism should preserve and promote the identity of Europe's regions, – protect regions from unbalanced tourism development, – promote socio-cultural integration and environmental compatibility.

Source: Author's own compilation based on chosen documents.

3. Realization of eco-development in tourism at European level

The fifth EC Environmental Action Programme Towards Sustainability was one of the first actions taken by European Union which concerned the sustainable tourism issue. The Programme was created in 1993 and it laid out the long-term objectives, focusing on global approach to ecological problems. Tourism, as well as industry, energy sector, transport and agriculture, was recognised as a area which demands the integration of environmental dimension with the most important policies of this sectors. What is more, to realise fully this aim the paper assumes common responsibility of all participants of economic life (government, industry, society) for implementing commonly agreed goals and means of their realization.

The fifth Acton Programme underlined that tourism is the sector where the bond between economic development and natural environment is mirrored very clearly. That is why a proper planning and integrated management of tourism,

⁶ Declaration *Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals*, UNWTO, New York, 2005, available online at www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/decla-ny-mdg-en.pdf.

⁷ Vienna Declaration on the Future of European Tourism, ETC, 2005, available online at www.etc-corporate.org/resources/uploads/ETC_ViennaDeclaration.pdf.

regional development and environment protection is needed. This approach is the foundation for sustainable and remunerative tourism sector.

The Programme stresses that effective realisation of the accepted plan of actions demands certain steps from regional and local authorities. Among others, these are:

- regular spread of tourism occurrences in time and space,
- cataloguing tourism resources of the member states,
- formulating practical guides for tourism sector and pilot projects for environmental tourism,
- the exchange of information and experiences in the field of visitors management and
- the introduction of awards for environmental tourism⁸.

In 1996 the report concerning the progress made due to *The fifth EC Environmental Action Programme Towards Sustainability* was ratified. Unfortunately, it shows that in tourism sector and in agriculture the progress in integration of environmental elements into policy concerning these areas was the least visible. At the same time the report shows the main steps which should be taken to realise the goals of previous programme fully. The guidelines were divided into four areas over which member states should take immediate actions to improve the situation in tourism sector. It appears that the main obstacle on the way to implement the idea of sustainable development is the fact that tourism sector is dependent on linkage sectors. In this case the main condition to improve the situation is effective implementation of pro-environmental solutions in concomitant sectors, which compose tourism sector.

In 1998 *European Community Biodiversity Strategy* was publicized and a new approach towards sustainable tourism can be found there. This paper is an attempt to lay out the strategy frames which are supposed to help in all actions taken towards sustaining biodiversity. Tourism can be a good motivational factor and can promote behaviour aiming at maintaining natural resources and protecting environment. In this field the most important goals which were expressed are as follows:

- the exchange of good practices among public and private units in tourism sector,
- the assessment of touristy capacity of ecosystems and natural environment,
- promotion of international guidelines for sustainable tourism.

⁸ The fifth EC Environmental Action Programme Towards Sustainability, 1993, available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/actionpr.htm>

At the same time, the document underlines that in longer perspective the implementation of the mentioned strategy is impossible without acknowledging the problems of biodiversity by all the actors in tourism sector (*European Community Biodiversity Strategy*)⁹. It is a key factor to success and the effective instruments to achieve this are educational programmes and education of personnel which is responsible for the implementation of the strategy at international, national and local levels.

The next edition of Environmental Action Program – *The Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community 2001-2010: Our future, Our Choice* – was published in 2001. It does not concern the issue of tourism in the direct way but it refers to the main problems and challenges which the main sectors of world economy have to face. In this group we can include tourism industry. According to this paper, there is a great hope and chance in harmonious economic development which takes into consideration the needs of environment. Success can be guaranteed when the environmental matters are put in the centre of all decision-making processes of various economic sectors.

The European Union puts itself in the position of a leader which elaborates the international agreements concerning environmental protection. Collective international efforts are crucial to this matter. The Programme focuses on four problematic areas and it has been decided that the outlined goals should be realised within ten years' period. The areas are:

1. Tackling climate change.
2. Protection of nature and wildlife.
3. Action for the environment and health.
4. Natural resources and waste.

The main idea of this programme focuses on the search for new ways of improving the quality of life without doing any damage to the environment (*The Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community 2001-2010...*)¹⁰. This is only possible when the philosophy of the sustainable development is followed closely.

The paper introduces the so called *new approach* to environmental issues. Its essence is presented in five points, which are expected to facilitate the realisation of the planned goals.

First of all, the legislation processes should be accelerated which in Europe proceeds very slowly. To solve this problem a transparency is needed, which relies on spreading information. This in consequence will increase public

⁹ available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/docum/9842sm.htm>.

¹⁰ available online at ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pdf/6eapbooklet_en.pdf.

pressure and will result in solving urgent environmental problems quickly. The responsibility for introducing legal solutions into socio-economic practise lies on national governments. What is also needed is the systematic monitoring of the implementation processes of European law and presenting successes (or failures) in this field.

The environmental goals should be taken under consideration in the early phase of creation of policies in different economic sectors. The European Commission obligates itself to keep to this rule. To make this, it is important to develop series of environmental indexes and to issue regular reports which illustrate the improvements within the undertaken actions. It will help to indicate if the road taken is effective and if it brings expected results.

A separate point is devoted to the market issues. The paper suggests that it is necessary to create such market conditions which will make private sector and customers interested in environmental issues. Today, there is no doubt that the industry or transport have led to many serious losses in environment. The reverse of this negative trend necessitates the engagement of entrepreneurs in the issue of environmental protection. The European Union commits itself to support various economic sectors so as to reduce their negative impact on nature. One of the solution in this field is encouraging financial sector to invest its capital into environmental friendly undertakings. The business should also be stimulated to measure of its environmental achievements and to cooperate with financial institutions so as to work out criteria of *green investments*.

The fourth point of the *new approach* takes up the problem of access to credible information about the natural environment condition for United Europe citizens. Through the thorough knowledge, consumers will have the opportunity to influence companies in various sectors so that they will develop new, innovative and environmentally friendly products or services. Once again it is stressed that the promotion of various educational programs and systematic raise of ecological awareness is the key factor. They can be helpful in everyday pro-ecological behaviour of European society.

The summary of *new approach* is devoted to the better usage of space, which has a important implication for mass tourism. The aggressive expansion of tourism industry resulted in chaotic and harmful management of precious land resources, sometimes in areas of high environmental assets (costal and mountain areas). Therefore, it is advisable to create a special web site for architects, town-planners and developers which will facilitate sustainable space planning in Europe.

In 2001 The European Commission also published a second document concerning the issue of sustainable development - *A sustainable Europe for a better world: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development*. It was

accepted at United Europe Summit in Goteborg and the paper was a part of preparations on the side of UE for Earth Summit, held in 2002, which concentrated on sustainable development. This event was accompanied by presenting the complete strategy for sustainable development. This document does not concern the sustainable tourism issue directly but it still sets guidelines which are essential in development planning process for tourism sector.

Similarly to *The Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community 2001-2010: Our future, Our Choice*, United Europe once again puts itself in the position of a leader and main coordinator in all actions aiming at full realisation of sustainable development not only in Europe but also in the world. It is therefore a global goal, which fulfils assumptions of Lisbon Strategy, by implementing environmental dimension within its structure. This time, European Commission focused only on the priority problems which can be seen as a threat for the realisation of sustainable development idea (*A sustainable Europe for a better world...*)¹¹. These, which can be applied to tourism sector, concern the vanishing of biodiversity in Europe and also the traffic congestion, which in recent years increased rapidly coming to a critical point (*gridlock*).

The strategy shows that the results of undertaken actions and initiatives (implementing of local Agenda 21), which were aimed at realising the vision of sustainable development are limited meaning that they did not bring expected results. It also points out to difficulties in changes in various policies, models of behaviour and also the lack of proper coordination in actions of subjects which positively answered to the realisation of sustainable development model. The most important solutions, which according to European Commission will enable the elimination of the mentioned problems, are presented in the table:

¹¹ available online at europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0264en01.pdf.

Table 2 Suggested solutions for reversing the trends contradictory to sustainable development

Urgent action is needed	Many current problems are result of past choices and their effects are difficult to reverse in short time (production technology, patterns of land use and infrastructure investments).
Political leadership is essential	Strong political commitment is needed to make difficult choices and trade-offs between conflicting interests.
A new approach to policy making	The balance and coordination between various sectorial policies is needed. The absence of a coherent long-term perspective means that there is too much focus on short-term costs and too little focus on the prospect of longer term "win-win" situations.
Actions must be taken by all and at all levels	While public authorities have a key role in providing a clear long-term framework, it is ultimately individual citizens and businesses who will deliver the changes in consumption and investment patterns needed to achieve sustainable development.
A responsible partner in a globalised world	The leading role of developed countries in promotion of sustainable development is a must. The EU should start by "putting its own house in order", to provide international leadership as a first step towards achieving global sustainability.

Source: Author's own compilation based on A sustainable Europe for a better world: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development

The solutions concerning sustainable development issues which were proposed in further part of the document are unfortunately the repetition of ideas taken from previous papers regarding this field. The issues concerning investments in new technologies and science, promotion of ecological behaviour or the need of dialogue between public and private sectors do not contribute a lot in the discussion over sustainable development. The important point, however, regards the proposal of regular publications of *so called triple bottom line* (in reports for stockholders) by companies which employ over five hundred employees. Its aim is to measure companies' achievements regarding environmental, economic and social criteria. Once again the attention is concentrated on building educational systems, which are essential for proper understanding of sustainable development idea.

In its final decisions, the Commission of European Communities proposes for European Parliament to set up a special committee for sustainable development. The Commission also obligates itself to create a round table which will consist of panels of experts which will compose regular reports. This will

help improve the cohesion policy of United Europe in relation to environmental issues and sustainable development.

4. Conclusions

Since 1993, when for the first time the issue of sustainable tourism was approached at an international level, the assumptions concerning this idea has not been fully realised yet. As before the most popular form of travelling is mass tourism whose damaging influence on environment is the issue of various discussions among experts. Growing anthropopression is especially visible at costal areas which are strongly exploited during holiday seasons. Regrettably, the spheres which in *The fifth EC Environmental Action Programme Towards Sustainability* (1996) were identified as problematic ones did not improve seriously though ten years passed Its implementation takes place in chaotic and spatially uneven way.

Based on observations and information gained during the analysis of documentation concerning the issue of sustainable development in tourism sector, the following conclusions have been made.

First of all, although ten years passed too little attention on the side of international arena has been focused on practical ways to realise sustainable development idea, the conveyor of which may be tourism as special phenomenon functioning at a global scale. As a matter of fact, the legal solutions have not changed diametrically. New strategies, declarations or other regulations introduce similar ideas and solutions. What is very interesting is the fact that various organisations, institutions and even United Europe itself present similar point of view on problems of sustainable development in tourism sector. In different papers the same suggestions recur providing deliberations on the same obstacles impeding the introduction of the idea of eco-tourism, which may prove these undertakings to be ineffective.

Specificity of tourism sector is connected with its dependency on other economic sectors and thus we are talking about tourism industry (tourism system). Wrong or not, effective decisions concerning the implementation of sustainable development in one area influence to some degree others. In reality the solution to problems of tourism in this field may be the tourists themselves. European Union is noticing this fact very slowly by presently stressing the need of environmental education of European society, and also emphasising that aware consumer (tourist) is a demanding one. One of the best examples is the situation concerning the procedure of changing towels in high standard hotels.

Some of them offer an alternative to customers: throwing the towel on the floor is a signal for the personnel to change it, otherwise there is no need to do it. It is a simple but very practical way to introduce the rules of sustainable development because in this way savings on water, energy and also on the limited usage of chemicals (washing powders) increase significantly.

In the analysed documents the huge obstacle on the way to develop sustainable tourism were the wrong patterns of land use in reception areas. These which already exist need changes, without which the realisation of sustainable development is impossible (especially areas used for leisure tourism, coastal areas including the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean area). Tourism management compatible with the rules of sustainable development demands preparation of new plans for land use, so that new structures will not disturb landscapes, but will adequate to reception abilities of the areas.

Another common issue for various papers was the point of financing environmental actions of private sector in tourism industry. Without measurable benefits for private units the chances for implementation of sustainable tourism idea are insufficient.

The real threat and obstacle is also the slow process of implementation of various environmental legal solutions in tourism industry. Beside economic instruments, it appears that legal tools are also very effective. This problem was discussed periodically in new papers, especially those within European Union.

Sustainable tourism is therefore still not an estimated mean which aids in fighting against uneven development of reception areas, especially due to usage of local products, arts and crafts and resources of labour force.

The lack of environmental awareness among tourists contributes to vast damage in tourism penetrated spaces, and that is why the role of an individual is essential for fulfilling the aims of sustainable and eco-friendly tourism.

Another problem is that the products and services compatible with sustainable development idea are much more expensive and as a result less competitive because prices are the priority for customers. That is why, despite serious efforts of some governments to implement eco-tourism in socio-economic reality, it is very difficult to change both the models of consumption and production in tourism sector. Companies in pursuit of lowering the prices at competitive market cannot afford to implement expensive eco-friendly products. But in the long-term perspective eliminating these wrong patterns is much more desirable than constant expanding of tourism which is a real threat to natural and cultural resources. Ignoring the rules of sustainable development will result in self-destruction of tourism sector. Thus the devastation of environment and monuments will influence the pace of development of tourism sector. What is more the Treaty on European Union enumerates tourism as a important means

for the realisation of sustainable development idea within European Union (art. 2 and 3 p.u) Many discussions concerning the changes in the mentioned models of consumption and production are held recently by European institutions. The key point is to establish such patterns of behaviour of the market subjects that will enable maintaining high tempo of economic growth and employment in sector and at the same time respecting sustainable development rules and sensible usage of natural resources. This demands political actions at all levels.

United Europe has also serious problems with realisation of sustainable development idea within linkage sectors of tourism industry. One of the examples is transport sector and contradictory ideas of its development within UE. The European policy assumes that by 2010 road traffic will have been stabilised at the level of the year 1998. On the other hand, this tendency is in disagreement with the policy of building new highways and express ways. Another problem waiting for its solution is converting the road transport into railroad transport.

What is more the energy and material consumption of European industry (though decreased) is still a serious threat to environment. It is partly connected with the investments in new technologies and science. Fortunately, the tendencies in this filed in European Union are going into good direction, but still it cannot be compared with expenditures made on science in the USA.

The realisation of sustainable development requires political and social support. The degree of involvement of international politics in sustainable development was much varied during the analysed period (Kozłowski 2005). Since 1992 the interest in this field has been decreasing because political life is dominated by such issues as terrorism, unemployment and poverty. This may be well illustrated with the approach the USA holds towards sustainable development, for example, not signing the Kioto Protocol .

Another obstacle is the linear understanding of modern economics which bases too much on exploitation of natural resources. In economics there is a lack of self limiting mechanisms. That is why there is a tendency towards big scale economics and towards crossing nature's immune system against pollution. Because of this it is necessary to develop environmental and ecological economics, whose core interest is to sustain the natural capital of planet earth.

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