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CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFETY ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Poverty, increasing population growth, inefficient use of resources, high levels of consumption, generation of waste and industrial pollution are some of the key factors leading to continuous environmental degradation. Progress towards a sustainable future is too slow. Several economic, legal, educational, informational, administrative, institutional and technical tools are used to implement the environmental and safety policy in practice. There are tendencies to increase the diversity of tools, based in no small measure on the voluntary activities of producers and the growing awareness of all those involved.

Human health and well-being are closely linked to the state of the environment. The good quality of the natural environment provides basic resources such as clean air and clean water, fertile land for food production, as well as energy and raw materials for the manufacturing industry. Environmental issues have become an integral part of our daily lives and are a relentless tax on the comfort that most of the world can afford today. These problems affect all parts of the environment. The main environmental problems not only in Slovakia include air pollution, waste and water management and forest protection.

The basic condition for the transition to the sustainable use of natural resources is to set the right price for pollution and degradation of the natural environment, e.g. greenhouse gas emissions. Including the value of pollution in the final price will create incentives for more efficient production,



investment in the development of new technologies, which will at the same time achieve greater competitiveness and significant savings.

Raising public awareness of environmental issues leads the public not only to a greater understanding of the environmental context of society's economic and social life, but also to increase the quality of consumer decision-making, citizens' legal awareness and, consequently, environmental protection and quality of life.

Recently, we can observe three main trends in environmental regulation:

- a shift from order regulation and control to economic (voluntary / technical) instruments that provide incentives for operators to choose the optimal investment in environmental protection;
- the growing availability of information on the monetary value of environmental costs and benefits;
- the growing tendency to set environmental goals in international forums.

In the recent period, in the field of environmental policy enforcement, the application of a range of voluntary environmental approaches has expanded significantly. There is a tendency to increase the diversity of instruments, based largely on the voluntary activities of producers and the growing awareness of all those involved in the field of environmental protection and creation. Several procedures are gradually standardized. Simultaneously with their practical expansion, their research began, focusing not only on the study of theoretical aspects, but also on the generalization of practical experience gained from individual studies.

The importance and number of important interactions between economic and environmental regulation in the following sectors have increased:

- environmental regulations can be a critical determinant of investment programs;
- the rate setting process may affect the incentive of the regulated company to respond to economic instruments;
- the economic regulator may be particularly well placed to address certain sector-specific environmental issues.

The interaction between economic and environmental regulation raises several issues. Despite the trend of using economic incentives in environmental regulation, command and control continues to prevail, in which the government sets standards and a sanction system for enforcing standards.

The issue of environmental burdens is addressed primarily to improve the condition of damaged and endangered components of the environment as a result of long-term human activity and at the same time to create conditions for gradual elimination of groundwater, soil and rock contamination and remediation of contaminated components. The main goal is to achieve a high level of quality of human health and individual components of the environment and the associated higher level of quality of life.

There are many disasters whose risks are not negligible. Some of the disasters have a high potential to destroy the territory, not only its inhabitants, but also the landscape, ecosystems and human settlements. Therefore, the institutions organizing the life of human society must properly manage and guide the safety of socio-economic activities in the territory, especially from the point of view of environmental protection of society.

Several economic, legal, educational, informational, administrative, institutional and technical tools are used to implement environmental and safety policy in practice. The aim of the conference "Integrated Environmental Safety 2023" was to provide a suitable platform for informing the professional and scientific public, representatives of local government and state administration, exchange of experiences and presentation of new results in the field of environmental safety.