

Scientific article – Comenius Water and Environment

Water and environment is a subject that has recently become an important part of the political agenda throughout Europe. Viable development is essential in order to secure our future water supply. It has been discovered that certain factors such as chemicals used by agricultures and pollution in general are very damageable to our water environment, and in order to improve our future water quality we may need to change our routines on how we use water resources.



The environmental situation can be perceived from two different angles: The economical perception and the ecological perception.

Supporters of the economical environmental perception give priority to economy rather than a viable environment. They want to make the most of the environment for the money because they are profit-maximizing. The companies only take themselves and their economy to consideration. Economics use Cost Benefit Analysis to put a price on nature. They think we have a limited amount of resources and therefore we cannot spend all our money in order to save nature. In general they do not consider the problem as a huge threat to society compared to problems such as poverty.

Economics have faith in technology and the market which they think will regulate the balance by using supply and demand. Growth and a high GDP are essential to economics. In relation to the Water and Environment Project an economic would make a counteraction of expenses and income in order to decide whether the project would be worth spending money on or not.

In contrast to this, ecologists think that the market is responsible for the environmental problems. They are firm supporters of the ecological environmental perception which gives priority to viable environment. They want to introduce quotas in order to limit pollution, which among other things will result in a limitation of the agricultures derivation of

slurry. Ecologists think that nature has a critical load which in recent years has become more exposed as a result of the increased pollution. Therefore they suggest a “green GDP”. An ecologist would support the Water and Environment Project because of the fact that it values nature in itself.



During the Water and Environment Project we have made an examination of the routines on how water is used among youngsters in Denmark and the Netherlands. This examination involves a questionnaire including questions such as “How many m^3 of water do you con-

sume each year” and “Have you got many pollution problems in the area where you live?” In order to analyse the answers properly we have used a quantitative and a comparative method. The results of the examination show us that there is a certain similarity between these two countries. In general the Danish answers show that we are satisfied with our water supply system and the quality of the water in our country. In Denmark water is an easily accessible resource and that may be the reason why we do not think much about our water consumption which is reflected in the examination. Furthermore the answers show us that only few of the Danish students have been taught about the water situation in Denmark. The fact that we do not think much about our water consumption leads to a huge waste of resources. For example most

Danish students leave the water running while brushing their teeth. Overall, the examination shows us that in Denmark we are highly satisfied with our water supplies may be the reason why we do not worry much about our water consumption. It could become a problem in the future, because of the fact that our present routines on how we use water resources will be reflected in our forthcoming water supplies.

This is also the case in the answers from the Netherlands. As in Denmark, their water is easily accessible which results in people being unaware of their routines on how to use water resources. The Dutch are also satisfied with the quality of their water. The only big difference between these two countries is the question of pollution problems. The examination shows that in Denmark pollution is not such a huge problem as in the

Netherlands. Because of this it is marvelous that the Dutch do not receive much information about the water situation in their country. The lack of knowledge about this can lead to continued inconsiderate ways to use water resources. If pollution in the future is a huge problem in relation to water supplies, information could be a way to prevent further degradations.

Clean drinking water is a limited resource. The water we drink in Denmark right now is about 50 years old and therefore the water we will be drinking in the future reflects the society of today. If we want to secure our drinking water we have to make an effort now.

There are several ways to change the mentality of people. More information about our water situation is a step in the right direction. If people knew the consequences of their actions they might change their view on the importance of appropriate routines on how to use water resources. This could be arranged by establishing campaigns which have a clear message and are easily accessible to everyday people. Political initiatives are another way to regulate the water consumption. The European Union could establish more quotas which apply to all of the member countries. The benefits of this are that the countries can sustain each other in relation to the common goals and if some countries do not re-

spect the EU-regulations they can achieve sanctions. This will give the countries incentives to improve their effort on the water issue. From the political perspective there could be created encouragement to develop environmental technology. Moreover, environmental improvement could become cheaper and more attractive. Taxes on pollution could be increased in order to encourage people to act in a more appropriate way. To sum up we can conclude that neither Denmark nor the Netherlands seem to be very concerned about the water situation. Therefore it may be necessary to impose political regulations in order to secure the future water supply.