

The role of EU regional policy on the ethical responsibility for the development of recreation and tourism and conservation of European coastal habitats

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Abstract

Due to impending changes coming from the integration into the EU Regional Environmental Policy, the restoration and conservation of European coastal habitats and their relation to the development of the recreation and tourism business are likely to become a major area of research in the future. In accordance with the priorities of the EU Regional Policy and the Environmental Action Programme, sustainable management practices will have to be implemented in managing the coastline of the EU. The results indicate that integrating the coastal zone management process of EU into the larger EU Regional Policy Programmes must therefore be connected so that recreation and tourism, environmental restoration and development in European coastal habitats can be balanced sustainably.

Keywords: Ethical responsibility; Situational ethic algorithm; EU Regional Environmental Policy; Model integrated socioeconomic responsibility.

Introduction

In order to integrate socioeconomic responsibility into the management of coastal areas within the European economic integration, it is necessary to formulate their integrated responsibility conception. As empirical and practical evidence suggests, the bulk of ideas in modelling integrated socioeconomic responsibility into the coastal management strategies and development perspectives came up after the accession of the new EU members.

It is necessary to analyze problems and potential solutions in balancing habitat restoration, recreation and tourism development in the European coastal habitats. Additionally, there is a need to examine propositions of socioeconomic responsibility. Thirdly, environmental issues in the European Regional Policy must be projected. Lastly, there is a need to prepare a model of study to solve these problems in the future.

Methods, measures, results and discussion

Some different methods and frameworks, which may be useful to study and solve these problems, are: 1. Looking at the overall objectives of the EU Environmental Systems for Integrated Coastal Zone Management and sustainable development, which were provided to the Commission of the Communities (1992, 1993, 1994), and the European Commission (2000) in a package of documents detailing environmental issues in the European Regional Policy; 2. Studying a particular region, using three different conceptual frames provided by Ryden (2002): a) Regional development as a political process focuses on regional institution building, where a long common history of political interaction exists. A situation has finally evolved where we find much cooperation in many different fields, from regional politics and economy to culture, education and environment protection to mention but a few; b) Regional development as economic process focuses on recreation and tourism development as a process – or even progress – focusing on trade, human society, and ethical responsibility; c) Regional development as a so-called spatial process also includes recreational development, which may be seen as a spatial process focusing on resource use. The communication infrastructure, combined with the laying of roads, railroads, ferry lines, also involves the use of natural resources and the environmental impact of this resource use. The concept of developing sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities combines political, socio-economic, ethical and environmental aspects; 3. Analyzing the ethical responsibility of development according to ‘situational ethic algorithm’ proposed by Hoffman and Moore (1990), in which the basic tenet underlying situational ethics is that circumstances alter cases. According to the principles of the European Regional Policy and the EU Environmental Action Programme, which has demonstrated the need for integrating conservation of coastal habitats with sustainable development, managing coastal recreation, and the demands of the tourist industry can be negotiated by applying the EU Environmental management systems, and Situation ethic algorithm, developed by ourselves.

Conclusion

Complex and significant ethical decisions are made based on the situation at a particular moment in time. The input factors for the ‘situational ethics algorithm’ include: goals, methods, motives, and consequences. As the consequences of a decision become more complex and unpredictable, situational ethics become a necessity in the recreation and tourism industry if European coastal areas are to be conserved and appropriately managed in the future.

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