

Humboldt Kolleg

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Global Challenges of the 21st Century

1) Technological development and human health/ quality of life

2) Climate change and environmental sustainability

3) Democracy and cohesion in Europe

Local Environmental Action Plans Quality: Addressing the Rational and Communicative Perspectives

Environmental action plans are intended to provide the main guidance for environmental protection, playing a vital role in reconciling environmental protection with social and economic development. However, there is a limited understanding of the quality of such environmental plans. Therefore, this talk aims to systematically evaluate the quality of Romania's Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs). We used a theoretical framework based on both rational and communicative approaches to evaluation and an in-depth content analysis of 32 LEAPs to comprehensively assess the plans. Our results indicate that LEAP quality is moderate overall. Most of the plans identify the current environmental conditions and pressures in need of solutions, but in reality, additional urgent environmental problems often exist. LEAPs are moderate in identifying tools for implementation and monitoring provisions and ensuring the participation of the public in the planning process, and they are even weaker in establishing goals and coordination across different governmental levels. The communicative content of the LEAPs reveals a moderate ability of plans to craft an appealing policy message. Our study offers recommendations for LEAPs coordinating agencies to improve the plans in the upcoming updating processes, as they identify plan weaknesses and suggest ways to achieve high quality environmental plans.

Constantina Alina Hossu is a scientific researcher at the University of Bucharest, Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies. Her research centers on the physical, built and cultural-social realm of the environment. Dr Hossu's research links ecological knowledge obtained from the analysis of the landscape patterns and processes and decision-making processes in order to facilitate sustainable environmental planning and successful resolution of conflicts.