

ORIGINAL PAPER

Information and Practices on Resilience and Environmental Governance in the EU 8th EAP (2022): Assessment of Data Accesibility, Policy Development and Human Resources

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Abstract:

The present article is based on the research and analysis of the guidelines and principles of the European Union (EU) legislation in the field of resilience and environmental governance (EG) considering the Environment Action Programme (EAP) launched on April 2022, namely Decision (EU) 2022/591 (2022) and entering into force on May 2, 2022. The study uses complex tools addressing the areas of the: (i) the principles and conceptualization; (ii) the social outcomes (SO), social practices and public participation; (iii) the policy outcomes (PO), the access to information and environmental impact; (iv) the monitoring framework. The research uses the legal documents provided by EUR-Lex, here including: (a) the Decision (EU) 2022/591 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 on 8th EAP (April 2022); (b) the Directive 2001/42/EC (2001) and the Directive 2011/92/EU (2011) concerning the programmes and projects in environmental areas; (c) the Communication From the Commission regarding the "monitoring framework" for the 8th EAP (Brussels, July 2022). In conclusion, the study is aimed to present the new approaches to EG and resilience status ensuring a community-based perspective focusing policy developments and human resources.

Keywords: resilience, environmental governance, EU, policy, human resources, development.

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Introduction

The study on resilience and environmental governance (EG) in the European Union (EU) focuses the field of the Environment Action Programme (EAP) launched on April 2022 within the Decision (EU) 2022/591 (2022) entered into force on May 2, 2022. The research points the areas of the EU's 8th EAP (2022), namely: (*i*) the principles of equity [EU's 8th EAP Recital (33)]; (*ii*) the "precautionary principle" [8th EAP Article 1(5)]; (*iii*) the principle of "preventive action" [EU's 8th EAP Article 1(5)]; (*iv*) the principles of "rectification of pollution at source" [EU's 8th EAP Article 1(5)]; (*v*) the conceptualization of the objectives [EU's 8th EAP Article 2, Article 3]; (*vi*) the social outcomes (SO), social practices and public participation [EU's 8th EAP Recitals (3), (4), (13), (14), (18), (19), (35), (36)]; (*vii*) the policy outcomes (PO) [EU's 8th EAP Recitals (3), (4), (11), (19), (26), (27)]; (*viii*) the access to information and environmental impact [EU's 8th EAP Recitals (34), (35), (39), (40)]; (*ix*) the monitoring framework [EU's 8th EAP Recitals (3), (8), (19)].

Methodology, principles and conceptualization of "availability" and "data"

The legal research focuses on the systematic approach to: (1) the EU provisions, the priority objectives and the specific principles and (2) the concepts and legal provisions involving the monitoring procedure and the EU EG [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(ah)(ii)]. In this context, the debate over the EG priority objectives and the preventive measures (Quinlan, Berbés-Blázquez, Haider, Peterson, 2016: 677-687; Bennett, Satterfield, 2018; Cullen-Knox, Eccleston, Haward, Lester, Vince, 2017: 3-13; Driessen, Dieperink, van Laerhoven, Runhaar, Vermeulen, 2012; 143-160; Himley, 2008; 433-451) is linked in recent literature to the leadership engagement in the field of: (a) the urban resilience and EG (Therrien, Normandin, 2020: 320-341; Ruseva, Foster, Arnold, Siddiki, York, Pudney, Chen, 2019); (b) the risk encounters (Urquiza, Amigo, Billi, Calvo, Gallardo, Neira, Rojas, 2021); (c) the consequences of Covid-19 (Burlea-Schiopoiu, Ogarca, Barbu, Craciun, Baloi, Mihai, 2021; Motoi, Popescu, 2021: 135-143; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022: 38-51;.); (d) the environmental measures and policies (Jordan, Lenschow, 2010: 147-158; Vlăduțescu, 2014); (e) EG and public participation (Newig, Fritsch, 2009; 197-214; Olimid, D.A., Olimid, A. P., 2022a; 114-121); (f) the environmental objectives and practices developing a two-step analytical framework focusing biodiversity and resources (Nilsson, Zamparutti, Petersen, Nykvist, Rudberg, McGuinn, 2012: 395-423); (g) the approaches to "risk governance" (Renn, Schweizer, 2009: 174-185); (h) the research agenda of the EP integration and the objectives envisaging the framework of the "climate policy integration" (Runhaar, Driessen, Uittenbroek, 2014: 233-246).

In addition, the research tools will involve: (i) the area of research of the statutory provisions of the EU EG objectives [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(a)]; (ii) the policies and reports concerning the reference domains [EU's 8th EAP Recital (19)]; the environmental policies; the social practices and the economic strategies; (iii) the implementation of standards of "transparency" and "public participation" and the reference to "access to justice" [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(a)]. Moreover, the legal analysis is based on the following guidelines of the 8th EU EAP: (a) "intergenerational responsibility" [EU's 8th EAP Article 2(1)] and (b) "better regulation" [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(d)(iv)]. In this context, this section focuses on a review of the following concepts: "governance", "sustainability" and

"resilience" [EU 8th EAP Article 1]. All three concepts focus on the priority actions and goals including the recent advances in the monitoring framework and the "adaptive capacity" [EU 8th EAP Article 2(2)(b)]. Nevertheless. the "intergenerational responsibility" is defined using a multilateral framework applying to: (i) the conditions and measures [8th EAP Article 1(1-5)]; (ii) the main objectives and the thematic strategies highlighting "biodiversity", "ecosystems", "resilience" and the "well-being economy" [EU 8th EAP Article 2(1)(2)]; (iii) the integrated objectives of the EU policies, namely Directive 2008/99/EC (2008) and the relevant principles of "judicial cooperation" and "law enforcement" [EU 8th EAP Article 3(c)]; (iv) the monitoring policies and systemic evaluation of indicators here including the two axes of policies: the "environment-social" nexus and the "environmental-economic" nexus [EU 8th EAP Article 4(2)]; (v) the assessment of actions and indicators during the "mid-term" review" [EU 8th EAP Article 5]; (vi) the evaluation of outcomes [EU 8th EAP Article 6].

Furthermore, the other two terms ("availability" and "data") refer to the basic procedure of monitoring and evaluation aimed to apply to a range of actions namely: "systemic analysis", "systemic change" and "data collection" [EU 8th EAP Article 4].

In this context, the EG and the resilience framework focus also on the capacity to achieve the UN 2030 goals and the Paris agreement objectives [EU 8th EAP Recital (13)]. The four steps implemented by the EU's 8th EAP are the following:

- (1) the EU "environmental performance" framework [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(a)];
- (2) the "financial and human resources" allocation plan [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(b)];
 - (3) the "judicial cooperation" area [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(c)];
- (4) the "policy development" area [EU's 8th EAP Article 3(d)] here including the implementation of the objectives enabled by:
 - (4.1.) the Article 2 of the EU's 8th EAP;
- (4.2.) the Directive 2011/92/EU (2011) focusing on the environmental outcomes and processes, the Directive 2001/42/EC (2001) and the legal provisions of the 8th EAP Article 3(d)(ii)] focusing both on:
- (a) Defining the conceptual framework of the "environmental assessment" [Directive 2001/42/EC, Article 2(b)], the "environmental report" [Directive 2001/42/EC, Article 2(c)] and the "public" approach [Directive 2001/42/EC, Article 2(d)] and
- (b) Establishing the requirement for the "environmental report" and the relevant data related to the consultations procedure of the Members States [Directive 2001/42/EC, Articles 5-6];
- (4.3.) the "healthy environment" and the "people's well-being" in accordance with the provisions of the EU 8th EAP Article 3(d)(iii);
- (4.4.) the 'Think Sustainability First' initiative [according to the EU 8th EAP Article 3(d)(iv)];
- (4.5.) the new legislative provisions considering the environmental impact [according to the EU 8th EAP Article 3(d)(v)];
- (4.6) the stakeholders' contributions and evaluation [according to the EU 8th EAP Article 3(d)(vi)].

2. Social outcomes (SO): social practices and public participation

To achieve social development, the EU's 8th EAP recognizes two approaches to the environment policy (EP) and sustainable development (SD) considering the recent scientific developments aimed to ensure the role of social practices, public participation and social engagement (Olimid, D.A., Olimid, A. P., 2022b: 122-131), communication (Mitu, 2021: 134-145) and the environmental sustainability (Avelino, 2017: 505–520; Olimid, D.A., Olimid, A. P., 2022a: 114-121; Cop, Olorunsola, Alola, 2021, 671-682; Olimid, A. P., Olimid, D.A., 2022: 182-190). The two perspectives of EP & SD integrate the socio-economic and environmental factors here including the "social wellbeing" and the "health natural resources base" [according to the EU 8th EAP Recital (3)].

The nexus between social practices and public participation is underpinned using the reference to "social inclusion", "social issues" and health [according to the EU 8th EAP Recital (3)]. The three determinants are aimed to focus the SO by integrating an illustrative design of the social norms, processes and progresses. It also enables:

- (1) on the institutional level, the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 [according to the EU 8th EAP Recital (3)];
- (2) at the regional level and also local level, the focus is on EP decentralisation and coordination [according to the EU 8th EAP Recital (35)];
- (3) on public participation level, the social status acknowledges the topics of social impact [EU 8th EAP Recital (18)], social factors [EU 8th EAP Recital (37)], "social partners" [according to the EU 8th EAP Article (3)(aa)] and human resources here focusing: human rights and health [EU 8th EAP Recitals (27) and (28), Article (3)(o)] and human activities and resources [EU 8th EAP Article (3)(b)].

Furthermore, the EU 8th EAP (2022) thereby develops and helps to identify a social framework aimed to assess the strategies and resilience actions in the field of social progress and well-being. Additionally, the 8th EAP (2022) provides a social point of reference for the social objectives and initiatives following the relationship between social actors: "citizens. communities and other stakeholders" [according to the EU 8th EAP Article (3)(aa)]. Before performing this point of reference, the 8th EAP (2022) also registers: (i) the development of social practices and principles; (ii) the implementation of measures and policies used to address social factors. In this direction, the EAP (2022) also designs an illustrative framework for the cooperation between the public and private sectors across multiple dimensions: EP, EG, administration etc.

Based on this social assessment, the EU 8th EAP (2022) also guides the framework of the social strategy to focus the social determinants and partners. In the area of SO, the main goal of the 8th EAP (2022) is to provide the organizational and functional setup of "social well-being" aimed to increase the resilience status of the communities, civil society and Member States [according to the EU 8th EAP Article (3)(aa)(ac)]. On this social assessment, the EU's 8th EAP (2022) maps the framework of the social strategy approaching an innovative nexus between accessibility of policies and data, mobilization of social partners and implementation of technologies.

Moreover, the main objective of the EAP (2022) is to provide the structural setup of the action programme aimed to increase the resilience status of communities, to build new monitoring policies and to ensure sustainability (see Figure 1. 8th EAP: Conceptual framework for building resilience focusing the resilience status and the sustainability approach).

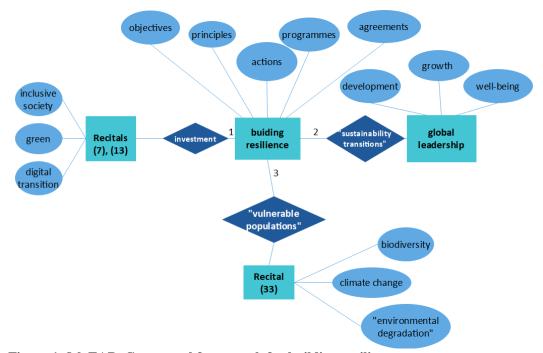


Figure 1. 8th EAP: Conceptual framework for building resilienceSource: Authors' own compilation based on the legal provisions and conceptualization of the 8th EAP Decision (EU) 2022/591 (2022)

3. Policy outcomes (PO): access to information and environmental impact

Another focus of the research is also to place on the policy outcomes (PO) as recent literature lays down the role of the integrated policies and the need to strengthen the measures for multilateral approaches: (a) the policy development and environmental conditions (Armitage, Dzyundzyak, Baird, Bodin, Plummer, Schultz, 2018: 3-14); (b) the evaluation and monitoring of EG (Bennett, Satterfield, 2018); (c) the environmental impact (Mahmoudi, Sayahnia, Esmaeilzadeh, Azadi, 2018: 567-570); (d) the documentation of the EU legislation in various areas (Georgescu, Olimid, Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2017); (e) information and institutional resilience (Georgescu, Olimid, Gherghe, 2022: 82-96). In this direction, both short-term and long-term outcomes of the EU 8th EAP point to the resilience policies and measures here including: (i) the nexus between health policies and EG [according to the EU 8th EAP Article (3)(g)(o)]; (ii) the focus on systemic changes and the need to mobilize the policy agenda [according to the EU 8th EAP Article (3)(x)]. A review of the policy indicators also highlights the multifaceted impacts on the EP in the sectors of the sector of data information and technologies ensuring public participation and cooperation at EU institutional levels: national, regional and local.

The EU's 8th EAP (2022) refers also to the assessment of policy indicators and development and the status and access to information [according to the EU 8th EAP Recitals (34)(39)(40) and Article 3(b)]. It also refers to the "quantitative and qualitative tools" aimed to identify the path for understanding the role of interoperability and accountability through the EU actions, plans and programmes [according to the EU 8th EAP Article 4(5)(g)(h)(i)].

Through considering resilience-building actions and processes from the stage of priority actions to a more advanced level, the EU 8th EAP (2022) reveals also the supporting mechanisms and policy tools, namely: (i) the governance measures and mechanisms [EU 8th EAP Article 1(1)]; (ii) the monitoring procedures and mechanisms [EU 8th EAP Recitals (3) and (8)]; (iii) the evaluation framework and tools and the "measurable" determinants [EU 8th EAP Article 3(r)]. For the implementation of the step, the EU 8th EAP (2022) resilience strategy assesses the following activities that should be considered and implemented: (i) the identification of priority goals and the environmental impact following the EU Green Deal [EU 8th EAP Recital (5)]; (ii) the achievement of the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan [8th EAP Recital (7)]; (iii) the review and development of policies in the area of the "climate-neutral", "natural capital" and "the state of the environment" [EU's 8th EAP Recital (16)]; (iv) the development of a global network based on the principles of responsibility and capability [8th EAP Recital (33)]; (v) the monitoring of the "inclusive transition towards sustainability" [EU's 8th EAP Recital (36)]; (vi) the evaluation of the "sustainability, well-being and resilience" [EU's 8th EAP Recital (36) and Article 1(4)]; (vii) the reporting of the "environmental risks" [8th EAP Article 2(1)]; (viii) the assessment of "resilience to climate change" [EU's 8th EAP Article 2(1)]; (ix) the monitoring of the nexus between "adaptive capacity"-resilience-prevention-preparedness [EU's 8th EAP Article 2(2)(b)] (see Figure 2. 8th EAP: Conceptual framework for environment policy focusing policy development, governance and monitoring).

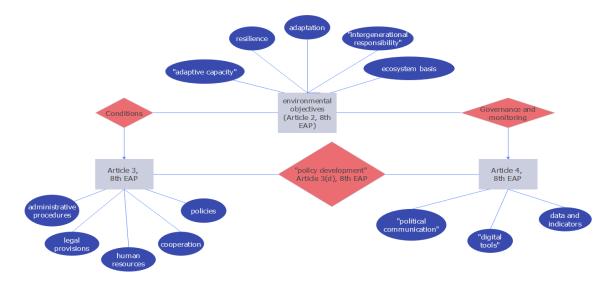


Figure 2. EU 8th EAP: Conceptual framework for environment policy Source: Authors' own compilation based on the legal provisions and conceptualization of the 8th EAP Decision (EU) 2022/591 (2022)

4. Monitoring framework for the 8th EAP

In July 2022, a monitoring framework was launched with the aim to develop a measuring instrument for the EU 8th EAP progresses and objectives (26 July 2022) within the Communication entitled "Measuring progress towards the attainment of the

Programme's 2030 and 2050 priority objectives" (COM/2022/357 final, 2022). In addition, the EU 8th EAP assesses several intermediate stages as a network of 26 interconnected indicators, here including: climate change (CC), biodiversity and living conditions (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4). Moreover, the EAP includes particular references to the indicators, targets and sources namely: (1) CC mitigation and adaptation (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicators 1-4); (2) free environment, pollution and health impact (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicators 9-11); (4) energy encounters (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicators 9-11); (4) energy encounters (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicators 17-21); (6) "environmental wellbeing" (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicators 17-21); (6) "environmental wellbeing" (COM/2022/357 final, 2022, Point 4, Indicator 26). The EAP can also be framed conveniently via the "mid-term review" [EU 8th EAP Article 5(1)(2)]. Furthermore, it also frames the relevant guidelines in accordance with the legal provisions of Article 4 enabling the monitoring and reporting phases [EU 8th EAP Article 4(1-6)].

Conclusions

In conclusion, the EU 8th EAP reflects both the priority policies and measures for the EG and policy development, and also the resilience status and human resources. It also provides tools and instruments aimed to define the policy implementation at all levels and to understand the EG as a multidimensional framework focusing on social actors, citizens, communities and institutions.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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