

EDITORIAL

While efficiency and effectiveness is being called for at all levels to social and economic problems, we witness daily the opposite: lack of implementation to all kinds of rules, policies and plans. On the other hand no government official likes to hear the words "implementation gaps", but there is no way of hiding that these exist at all levels.

Recently, at the UN level, the US permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, said that the UN "should reassure governments and the general public that it is an efficient and effective mechanism ... and this image requires more than just a public relations solution. We believe the organizations should be looking inward to the causes for the loss of faith by Member States and make a conscious and conscientious effort to strengthen their management and operations".

At the regional level, a good example of a lack of implementation is demonstrated by some Member States of the European Community, who have not brought into force the measures necessary to comply with a number of Directives and who have taken considerable time to comply with decisions of the European Court and have thus failed to fulfil their duties under various provisions of the treaty of Rome. Last month, on a parliamentary question regarding the pace of compliance with Court decisions, the Commission listed six cases (concerning 16 Directives!) in which Italy had not complied within two years, and eleven cases in which it had taken between three months and one year, to comply. France was listed twice, Belgium twice and Ireland once, for non-compliance — involving a total of 19 environmental Directives.

At the national level, it is a similar situation. As we have previously pointed out, it is usually the lack of political will, lack of expertise or incompetence of those concerned, or lack of adequate funding — especially in countries with economic difficulties and high unemployment. And at the local government level, the clash of political interests plays, perhaps, the biggest role.

Implementation gaps are the best election helpers for the Green Parties, who often see only the gaps and have no realistic suggestions of how to fill them. Especially if they call for a "small is beautiful" society without realizing that effective environmental policy cannot only be made nationally. For the quality of the environment in the industrial world is very much inter twined with that of the developing countries — and the former cannot help the latter without sufficient economic progress.

As the environmental awareness of the public increases, producers want to demonstrate that they have complied with the rules of environmental compatibility. However, institutes which carry out relevant tests and later award certificates, must handle very carefully to ensure that the consumer can be confident that he has bought the best product from the environment and efficiency point of view. Recently, a lawnmower was awarded an "environment" certificate by a government appointed jury for the low noise it produced — but the Federal German Consumers Foundation, stated that its quality tests proved it to be also a very weak lawnmower!-

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