

The New Role of the CENIA for the Czech Environmental Information Network

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Abstract

International and national environmental information management of the Czech Republic and presented the new role of the Czech Environmental Information Agency in this information management is discussed also.

1. Introduction

CENIA – the Czech Environmental Information Agency, an allowance organization of the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, was established on 1 April 2005 through a transformation of the Czech Ecological Institute (CEI). It was founded to serve as a dependable source of precise and up-to-date information about environment and to ensure that this information is evaluated and published, either in the form of text, graphic or electronic outputs. These should then provide both specific and general information on the development of the environment with regard to the citizens and legal entities in the context of the sustainable development. CENIA works both as a central gateway to the environmental department (Central registration office), and as an output port. It is a foundation stone of the Corporate Environmental Information System that is pursuant to Section 19, paragraph 4 of Act No. 2/1969 Coll. (competence law) responsible to the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic. The tangible results of its work that is based particularly on active pursuit of Act No. 123/1998 Coll., on the freedom access to environmental information, are captured in maps, translated into sustainable development indicators and published in information materials.

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One of the key points in the transformation concept is to secure further development of the Corporate Environmental Information System (CEIS) of the Czech Republic and high-quality publication of expertise. The works published by CENIA so far have been predominantly printed materials, such as its best-known publication – Statistic Environmental Yearbook – that has been published by CENIA, (or by CEI since 1991). The first innovation made by CENIA in this field is a creation of an electronic supplement of the yearbook – the Information System of the Environmental Statistics – that will include data gathered in the continuous period ranging from 1991 to these days. This system will become a central archive for other supplementary applications (charts, maps, graphs).

The Corporate Environmental Information System will be further enlarged by CENIA through an interactive **Multimedia encyclopaedia of the environment of the Czech Republic** *Encyclopaedia Bohemica*

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– *Natura rerum* that will exploit all presentation possibilities of an electronic publication, i.e. not just traditional hypertext, animation, recorded voice and sound techniques, but also virtual reality in the form of three-dimensional models. The structure of the encyclopaedia will be divided into three levels depending on the degree of technical expertise required by the end user – the lowest, elementary level will provide the users with basic information and explanation of some central issues; the intermediate level will offer them some additional graphic outputs with concise commentaries and explanatory texts, as well as references to the original sources; the advanced level will contain detailed technical commentaries, analyses, studies, surveys of the related legal regulations with references to their unabridged versions, as well as references to some related documents available on the Internet and other information sources.

Another part of CEIS created within CENIA is the **Integrated Register of the Environmental Pollution** (IRP) established pursuant to Act No. 76/2002 Coll. to regulate the prevention and reduction of the pollution and the foundation of a pollution register. In compliance with this law it is necessary to create not only an integrated register of the environmental pollution but also a widely accessible information system of public administration. It further requires the implementation of the European Commission directives that regulate the integrated prevention (96/61/EC). It is a duty of everyone who uses a registered substance to consult the register and to find out if any substance quoted in Appendix 1 of the Government decree No. 368/2003 Coll. is present on his premises in the form of radiation or emission. If the level of these substances reaches or exceeds the reporting limit, the user is obliged to report the required data in the integrated pollution register.

The data gather in IRP will be published in a printed material but the general public will also have a free access to them via a number of charts, graphs and maps that are available on the CENIA website.

3. Further Centre and Agencies on CENIA

An integral part of CENIA is also the **Environmental Impact Assessment Centre** (EIA/SEA) that is associated with running and development of several other information systems. It is the EIA Information System for the planned actions pursuant to Act No. 100/2001 Coll. as amended by Act No. 93/2004 Coll., the SEA Information System for the conceptions assessed in accordance to Act No. 100/2001 Coll. as amended by Act No. 93/2004 Coll., and the EIA Information system for the actions assessed in accordance to Act of the Czech National Council No. 244/1992 Coll.

EMAS Agency operating within CENIA deals with the system of company environmental management and audits in terms of the environmental protection, i.e. with regard to the implementation of the environmental management systems (EMS - Environmental Management Systems). These systems represent a proactive approach of a company towards monitoring, controlling and gradual reduction of its negative environmental impact, and therefore contribute to the enhancement of its environmental awareness. The EMAS Agency functions as the executive body of the EMAS Programme in the Czech Republic. It has to ensure that the agenda of the EMAS Programme Council complies with Government Resolutions No. 466/1998 and No. 651/2002, and it is in charge of running the EMAS Register including other databases related to the environmental management. Each company that is interested in being registered in the EMAS project has to carry out a preliminary environmental inspection which should identify its impact on the environment and its individual components, as well as the degree of compliance with the legislation regulating the protection of the natural (and working) environment. It is further obliged to develop an environmental policy, set its objectives, implement programmes for their achievement, implement EMS and hold regular EMS audits. The companies are also obliged to draw up a report on the state of the environment and provide it with certification from an independent certifier.

Besides its consultancy and registration activities the EMAS Agency is also concerned with publication and education programmes within the EMAS Programme and its promotion.

International and legislative context of reporting is saved in entities Legal instruments and Classification. This part of data model is fully compatible with the ROD of EEA and is automatically updated from this database.

4. Map server of the Ministry of Environment

Pursuant to Act No. č.123/1998 Coll. on the right to information about environment, and Act No. 106/1999 Coll. on the free access to information, CENIA works as a provider of technological support and as an administrator of the *map server of the Ministry of the Environment*, where the departmental information is presented in the form of map outputs with reference to detailed information provided directly by the individual departmental organizations – primary data collectors, *Map server* available at the *Portal of the Public Administration* which provides region-specific information guaranteed by the State, and the *Information System of Environmental Indicators* where various environmental data are presented mainly by means of graphs covering a continuous period of time. This enables the user to have an idea of the overall diachronic tendencies within the individual analysed areas.

All published localized data are supplemented by meta-data created in compliance with the norm ČSN ISO 19 115, Geographic information – meta-data comply with the Dublin Core Initiative.

Conclusions

CENIA represents the Czech Republic in several important projects organized by the European Union. The first to be named here is the project INSPIRE, which aims to deliver an open access to a wide range of information on the broadest environmental issues by the year 2007. Next, it is the project GMES, which has set out to interconnect the so far autonomously functioning information systems of the individual member countries in order to provide an independent cost-effective and user-friendly system that might contribute to the environmental protection, in emergencies (forest fires, floods), or landscape planning. The goal of this project should be achieved by 2008.