Short descriptions of EVS case study topics

DEC - Decoupling of Environmental Pressure from Quality of Life

When the general quality of life goes up while the environmental pressures go down, we have reached so-called 'decoupling'. The EU, for example, aims at 'sustainable growth' by decoupling economic growth from resource and energy use.
There is a large array of indicators representing environmental pressures which are suitable for decoupling analysis. The level of decoupling differs across European countries and across environmental pressure indicators due to factors such as country size, population density, economic structure, etc.
The goal of this case study is to compare and explain decoupling of several selected environmental pressure indicators from quality of life across various European countries, and to give recommendations on how to promote further decoupling in the EU.

GEO - Geoconservation in Hateg Country Dinosaur Geopark

A European Geopark is defined as a territory with a particular geological heritage, which has a sustainable development plan to help promote local development. The Hateg Country Dinosaur Geopark is located in Southern Transylvania (Romania) near the main routes to Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria. The geopark must become a catalyst for local development in the fields of environment (nature conservation), cultural heritage, traditional economic activities (agriculture, handicrafts), ecotourism, social issues, education and training, raising awareness on European integration and promotion.
The goal of this case study is to come up with innovative proposals for the sustainable development of the Hateg Country Dinosaurs Geopark, for example based on a comparison with other geoparks or regional development projects.

URB – Urban Waste Prevention

Waste is an environmental, social and economic challenge for many people in Europe. For some, it conjures up negative images: rubbish bags, litter and toxic waste dumps. For others, waste is an opportunity: Europe's drive to deal with waste in environmentally sound ways has generated jobs and business opportunities.
Waste is complex – difficult to grasp, difficult to gather good statistics on, and difficult to regulate and manage. The EU Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) intends to simplify all these processes. It aims at protecting the environment and human health through the prevention of the harmful effects of waste generation and waste management.
The goal of this case study is to determine whether the long-term goal of the Directive is being achieved for Europe, and, if relevant, to propose new solutions, based on a comparison of the application of the Directive in different European countries.

NAT – Innovation in European Nature Conservation Policy

The EU has a well-established biodiversity conservation policy that has provided major benefits for biodiversity in Europe. With the designation of the major part of the Natura 2000 network of protected nature sites, the main challenge has become the sustainable management of the Natura 2000 sites. The implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives has sparked a lot of debates and the management of Natura 2000 sites faces many challenges. It is therefore important to learn from the successful examples and study how these could be used to stimulate innovation in EU nature conservation policy, to ensure that "*European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are protected, valued and appropriately restored for biodiversity's intrinsic value and for their essential contribution to human wellbeing and economic prosperity*." (EU Biodiversity Strategy - 2050 Vision)
The goal of this case study is to identify and analyse successful planning and management practices of Natura 2000 sites in various member states of the EU, and to advise the EU about how its nature conservation policy could be made ready for the future.

RCR – Resilient Coastal Regions

Sustainability, vulnerability, risk, resilience, adaptation, governance – these are key words describing recent approaches to deal with climate change and changing socio-economic conditions. These changes will have impacts on the North Sea coastal regions. Especially in low-lying coastal regions, adaptation to the consequences of climate change is crucial, and the current societal debate is on how to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from impacts of climate change in a sustainable way.
The goal of this case study is to apply the novel *multi-layered safety concept* to one or two coastal lowland areas, for the development of a sustainable and resilient climate adaptation strategy.

UCA - Urban Climate Adaptation

Climate change is expected to result in a rise in average temperatures and more extreme weather events. Adaptation is therefore a key element in urban climate policies. Major challenges that European cities need to address in preparing for the future climate are urban heat islands and storm water flooding at local level. For urban climate adaptation to be successful, multiple stakeholders need to collaborate coherently across different sectors and levels of government. Regional, national and EU governments and organizations need to provide the political, legislative and financial framework in which local and regional implementers can act.
The goal of this case study is to analyze and compare the current situation in selected European cities (by describing anticipated climate change impacts, governmental adaptation policies, hindering and stimulating factors, multi-actor collaboration initiatives etc.), and to make concrete recommendations on how to (better) develop and implement urban climate adaptation policies.