

THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE POPULATION'S CONSUMPTION IN ROMANIA, IN THE 2009-2013 PERIOD

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Abstract

The paper “The impact of the economic crisis on population's consumption in Romania, in the 2009-2013 period” analyses an important phenomenon for Romania's economy, consumption. The economic and financial crisis determined a change in the income distribution towards the products and services necessary for everyday life. The most influential stimulus at which consumers decide to buy a product is price, and they migrate towards product segments with low prices, while the quality of life is on a downtrend. Consequently, the objective of this paper is to analyse the factors that influence Romanian consumers' behaviour in the context of the economic crisis in the 2009-2013 period.

The level of food consumption largely depends on the macroeconomic policies, which through the numerous levers influence the population's consumption behaviour. Out of these levers, we are mentioning the income policy, the credit policy, the monetary policy, the currency policy, the welfare policies, etc. In addition to the economic aspects, population's consumption also depends on other factors, variables, such as, for example: social variables (degree of urbanization, endowment with infrastructure of the rural area, access to information, access to medical assistance and medical services, etc.), demographic variables (level of education, employment rate of the population, degree of population ageing, migration flows, etc.), and other variables (geographic location, religion, dietary habits, individual preferences).

Key words: economic crisis; consumer behaviour; population income; consumer spending

Jel Classification Codes: E21

1. Introduction

J. M. Keynes said in his work *"The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money"*: "Income (Y) made by the owners of resources is dedicated to consumption (C) and savings (S)." (J. M. Keynes, 1970) Starting from this statement, the population, as decision-maker, must analyse as rationally as possible, how they distribute their income available to consumer expenditures, but also those made for spending.

The support based on which consumption and savings are made is represented by the population income which is different from wages or the gains from wages. Population incomes include both the amount of money coming from various sources (which include wages, independent activities, scholarships, unemployment benefits, etc.); the value of the goods and services purchased from traders either with a price discount, or free of charge, as well as the value of the agricultural products consumed, products obtained through own resources. On the other hand, net incomes from wages include the equivalent value of the work performed and, as the case may be, the amounts received by the distribution of part of the net profit by the company for the employees' contribution to obtaining it, from which the income tax is deducted.

2. Population incomes. Level and structure

In Romania, in the 2009 – 2013 period, the total monthly household incomes are presented in table 1.

Table no.1. **Total monthly household incomes, in the 2009 – 2013 period**

Years	Monthly household incomes (Ron)
2009	2315,99
2010	2304,28
2011	2417,26
2012	2475,04
2013	2559,05

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009-2013

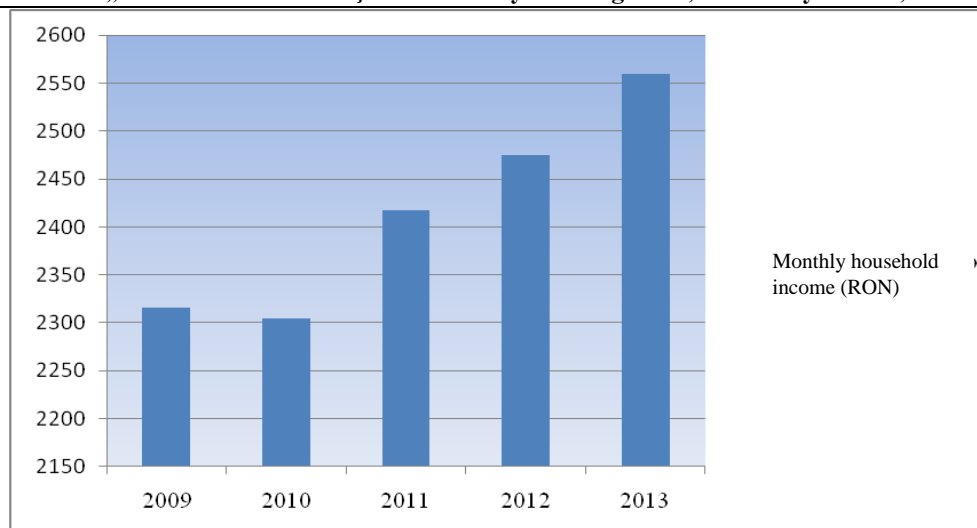


Figure no. 1. Evolution of the monthly household incomes in the 2009- 2013 period

Source: prepared based on the data in table 1.

In the figure above (figure 1) we can notice a slight decrease of the monthly household income in 2010 compared to 2009 by 0.51%, followed by an uptrend in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (4.90%, 2.39% and 3.39%, respectively).

The economic and financial crisis and the austerity measures determined the decrease of the population incomes in 2010. The decrease was felt all the more since it occurred on the background of the devaluation of the national currency: the inflation rate in 2009 was 5.59%, and in 2010, of 6.09%, according to the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics. At the same time, the salary decrease affected many categories of employees in the private and public sector, which led to the decrease of their income.

By law no. 118/2010, known as one of the austerity laws, the gross amount of wages or monthly employment allowances was decreased by 25%, including bonuses, allowances and other salary rights of some categories of employees in the public sector. The employees constituting the object of this law were town hall, police, and education and healthcare employees. "Another category of population whose financial situation worsened was that of pensioners and their households. The 2009 and 2010 inflation, which eroded the purchasing power, non-indexation of the pensions in 2010 and in 2011, the contribution to the welfare fund, in the case of pensions of more than 740 RON starting with 1st January 2011 turn this category into a group that is vulnerable to the effects of the economic crisis. In pensioners' case, they invoke income "decrease", the decrease of the pension, on the background of inflation and of the food price increases. Moreover, certain health problems impose large expenses on medicines; pensioners suffering from cardiovascular diseases declared that their treatment cost between 100 and 150 RON per month. Besides the 2009 and 2010 inflation, which affected all the categories of population incomes, the deterioration of the pension level was also caused by the fact that they were not indexed in 2010 and in 2011, as well as the contribution to the social health insurance. A segment within this category of population – namely, the pensioners' one – felt the negative effects of the economic crisis more intensely. They are elderly people, alone, sick, with pensions up to 500 RON/month and with no other financial means. The precarious financial situation of these persons drew the attention of the National Federation "Omenia" of the CAR Pensionari (Pensioners' Credit Union) in Romania, who initiated a social campaign, i.e. "Dați 1 leu pentru pensionarii săraci" (Donate 1 RON for poor pensioners), whose purpose is to "collect funds for granting non-refundable support to poor pensioners, affected by the increasing economic crisis". [8]- [14]

Although the decrease by 25% of wages in 2010 was only partially recovered in 2011, an increase was recorded that year in the total monthly household incomes. The increase in the monthly incomes recorded in 2011 could be due to the evolution of the net investments in Romania. Consequently, according to the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics, while in 2010, which was a year that brought significant decreases in the total population incomes as well as in the living standards, a higher concentration of investment funds was recorded in industry, including the electric and thermal power, gas and water, and in services, in 2011, net investments made in the national economy increased by 9.2%. The net investment increase recorded in 2011 was maintained in 2012, since they increased by 12.3%. The year 2013 was unfavourable for Romania from the point of view of net investments, as they decreased by 9.3%.

The uptrend that characterised the evolution of the total household incomes in the years 2011-2013 is due to a change in the behaviour of the Romanian population. Thus, while in the period before the crisis, the importance attached to savings was minimal, upon the deepening of the economic crisis emerged in 2008, they shifted their attention towards savings.

PhD Professor Nicolae Dănilă, in his paper "*Economisirea și perspectivele creșterii economice*" (*Saving and Economic Growth Prospects*) said: "At the level of the European Union, the saving rate decreased after the financial

crisis. Meanwhile, public debts are generally higher than the saving level nationwide. Under these circumstances, in the medium term, EU member states will be affected by fluctuations in the financial markets, and economic policies will target the saving increase at governmental sector level.

From the point of view of the national saving/public debt ratio, Romania holds a relatively good position. Thus, external pressures are not as high in our case. However, on the other hand, the economic growth prospects in Romania are negatively affected by households' behaviour in their dual hypostasis: as human capital and as financial capital generator.

Households' behaviour, however, is only the answer to economic policies, and as such, the change in how population behaves depends on the impulses that generate economic decisions related to public spending, the monetary policy and the encouragement of saving through financial products.

The economic recession caused by the financial crisis reduced the saving capacity at national level in most European Union member states. However, the gross national saving average in 2009 and 2010 compared to the 2006-2008 period is higher in a few European Union member states. I am referring to Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Lithuania and Hungary." [7]

Table no. 2. Structure of the total household incomes in the 2009 – 2013 period (%)

	Incomes from wages	Incomes from agriculture	Incomes from non-agricultural independent activities	Incomes from social provisions	Incomes from ownership	Incomes in kind	Equivalent value of the consumption of agricultural products from own resources
2009	50.9	2.5	2.8	24.2	0.2	2.6	13.7
2010	49.3	2.8	2.7	25.7	0.2	1.9	14.2
2011	48.7	3.1	2.6	23.8	0.1	1.8	16.5
2012	50,1	3,4	2,6	23,1	0,2	1,9	15,7
2013	51,2	3,3	2,8	22,8	0,1	1,8	14,7

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009-2013

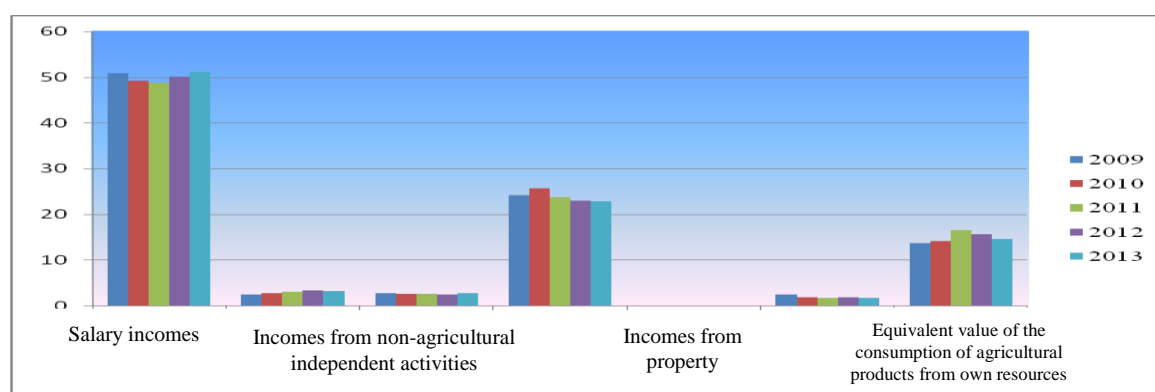


Figure no. 2. Evolution of the total household incomes in the 2009 – 2013 period

Source: prepared based on the data in table 2.

Based on the data presented in figure 2, the evolution of the total household incomes in the 2009-2013 period was due to the influences of their components. Consequently, the evolution of the salary incomes, of incomes from agriculture, incomes from independent activities, incomes from social provisions, incomes from ownership, incomes in kind and the equivalent value of the consumption of agricultural products from own resources, respectively, determined the change in the total household incomes.

We can easily notice that in the 2009-2013 period, the main source of forming the total household incomes was that of salary incomes, with a share between 50.9% and 51.2%.

On the background of the economic transition process, the Romanian labour market underwent significant changes in terms of volume and structure of the main labour indicators. This process was characterized by the decrease of the active population and of the employed population, and by maintaining the unemployment rate at relatively constant values. However, the financial crisis, which began mainly from the second half of 2008, had effects on labour, bringing, along with the decrease in the employed population, an increase in the unemployment phenomenon. In the 2009-2013 period, long-term unemployment (the share of long-term unemployed in the total unemployed) was on an

uptrend. The value recorded in 2013 was 46.4% (increasing by 1.1 percentage points compared to the previous year and by 4.5 percentage points compared to 2011).

According to the National Institute of Statistics, the activity rate of the population aged (15 - 64 years) was 63.1% in 2009, 63.6% in 2010, and recorded higher levels for the male population and for the population in the rural area. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, the values recorded were 63.3%, 64.2% and 64.6%.

The employment rate of the population 20-64 years old was 63.5% in 2009, at a distance of 11.5 percentage points compared to the 75% target, proposed for 2020 by the *Draft Strategy Europe 2020*. Decreasing compared to the previous year, in 2010 the share was 63.3% at a distance of 6.7 percentage points from the national target of 70%. Slightly decreasing compared to 2010, in 2011 this percentage was 62.8%, at a distance of 7.2 percentage points from the national target, and in 2012 and 2013 it reached values of 63.8% and 63.9% respectively.

The job vacancy rate is one of the indicators that show the labour demand present in the labour market. As an effect of the global economic crisis, in 2009, the average job vacancy rate reached the lowest value (0.88%, decreasing by 1.06 percentage points compared to 2008, and 0.90 percentage points compared to 2006). As a continuation of the effect of the global economic crisis, the average job vacancy rate reached the lowest value in 2010, from 2005 to the present (0.59%, decreasing by 0.29 percentage points compared to the previous year, and by 1.47 percentage points respectively, compared to the previous year 2007, when the job vacancy rate recorded the highest value). In 2011 the share was 0.64% (increasing by 0.05 percentage points compared to the previous year, and by 1.42 percentage points respectively compared to the previous year 2007). Even if in 2012 the job vacancy rate reached a share of 0.59% (decreasing by 0.05 percentage points compared to the previous year, and by 1.47 percentage points respectively, compared to the previous year 2007), it increased in 2013 by 0.13 percentage points compared to the previous year, but it decreased by 1.34 percentage points compared to the previous year 2007, reaching 0.72%.

While the first half of the last two decades was characterized by economic instability, strongly influenced by the level and evolution of the inflation rate, the second half was characterised by the end of the period of transition towards the market economy. "Thus, from 2003, we can notice a revival of the value of the real wages, the level reached in 2007, exceeding, for the first time after the 1990, the 1990 level by 11.8%. The peak value was recorded in 2008 (130.3% compared to the previous year 1990), while in the following years, there was a downtrend. In 2010, the real wage index compared to the previous year 1990 was 123.6%, decreasing by 4.7 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009. In 2011 the real wage index was slightly increased (by 0.3 percentage points) compared to the previous year reaching the value of 123.9%. In 2012, the real wage index compared to the previous year 1990 was 122.5%, increasing by 1.2 percentage points compared to the previous year 2011. In 2013, the real wage index increased (by 4.3 percentage points) compared to the previous year, reaching the value of 126.8%."

A significant share in the structure of the household money income is represented by the incomes from social provisions (25.7%, increasing by 1.5 percentage points in 2010/2009, followed by a downtrend). On the other hand, the incomes from agriculture, the incomes from independent activities, and the incomes from ownership represent a small share in the household money incomes.

Out of the components of the total household income, the components that are on an uptrend are: the incomes from agriculture, which reach 3.3% (increasing by 0.8 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009) and the equivalent value of consumption of agricultural products from own resources (14.7% increasing by 1 percentage point compared to the previous year 2009).

3. Expenses for food, non-food product and services

The evolution of the population spending is different from one year to the next, their change being closely linked with the change in the population incomes.

The main purposes of the expenditures made by households are the consumption of food and non-food products, services and transfers to the public and private administration and to social security budgets, as taxes, contributions, dues, as well as the coverage of needs related to the household production (animal and poultry food, labour payment for the household production, seeds, veterinary services, etc.). The investment expenses, meant to buy or build houses, to buy land and the equipment required for the household production, to purchase shares, etc. represent a very small share in the total expenses of the population households.

The evolution of the structure of the total population expenses is shown in the table below:

Table no. 3. Structure of the total household expenses in the 2009 – 2013 period (%)

Years	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Purchasing food and beverages	22.3	22.1	21.8	22.4	22.5
Purchasing non-food products	22.2	22.1	21.1	21.4	21.4
Service payment	17.8	18.2	17.6	18.0	18.3
Investment expenses	1.3	1.5	0.8	0.5	0.6
Production expenses	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1

Taxes, dues, contributions	16.2	15.7	16.1	16.3	16.6
Equivalent value of the consumption of agricultural products from own resources	15.5	15.9	18.2	17.3	16.3

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009-2013

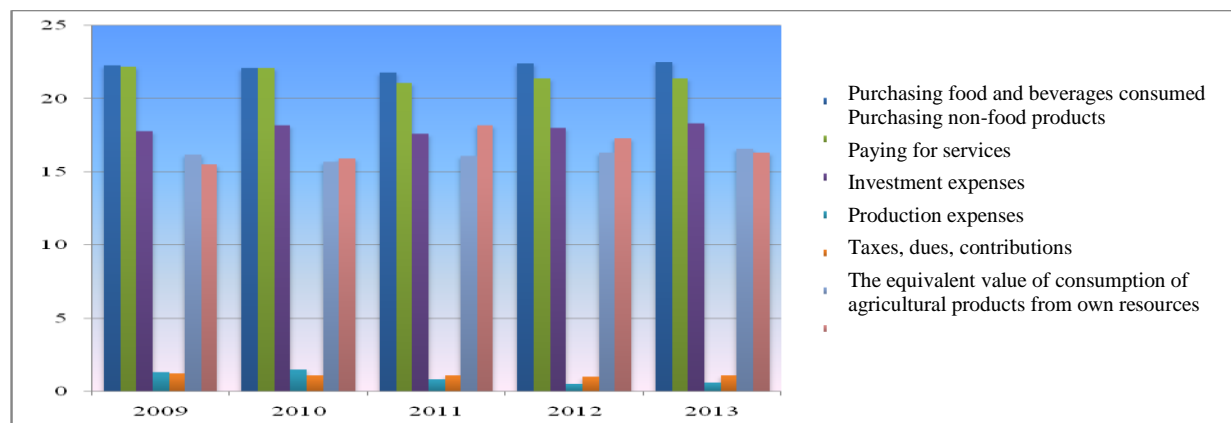


Figure no. 3. Evolution of the total household expenses, in the 2009 – 2013 period

Source: prepared based on the data in table 3.

In the 2009 – 2013 timespan, the purchases of food and beverages have the highest share in the structure of the household money expenditures, and are followed by purchases of non-food products, the payment of services, as well as payments of taxes, dues and contributions. The lowest shares are represented by production expenditures and investment expenditures. (Figure 3)

It can be easily noticed that the fluctuation of the incomes has a strong impact on the population's consumer behaviour, as incomes underlie it. "Numbers do not lie. Although we have more money in the pocket, the purchasing power of an average family is clearly lower than the one of the 2009-2010 period and much lower than in 2008. In 2008, the national average net salary was 1,282 RON. In 2010, despite the 25% cut in budgetary salaries and the comprehensive wage cuts made in the private sector, it reached 1,477 RON. Due to the years of economic growth, at the end of 2013, the average net salary reached 1,650 RON. The average pension also grew, from 682 RON at the end of 2008 (more specifically, from the end of the economic boom) to 811 RON in December 2013. Due to this fact, the average money incomes of a household also grew, from 1,917 RON in the fourth quarter of 2008 to 2,186 RON in the same quarter of 2013 (the income in kind of an average family also grew in this period; but at a slower pace - from 401 to 439 RON)." [4]

On the background of the economic crisis, being faced with a decrease of the real income value, consumers reorient the way they allocate these incomes, great part being used for the everyday life. Thus, while in the period before the crisis the share of expenses for food and beverages was reduced, currently, they allocate a higher share of their income to them.

Under these circumstances, they did not renounce services either, this category representing in 2013 a share of 18.3% (increasing by 0,5 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009 and by 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous year 2011), although they fluctuated throughout the studied period.

An important category of the total population income is allocated to pay taxes, dues and contributions. While in 2013 they reached 16.6% (increasing by 0,3 percentage points compared to the previous year 2012 and by 0,4 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009), in 2010 the lowest share was recorded, i.e.15.7%.

The lowest shares are represented by production and investment expenditures. Despite their low shares in the total expenditures, their evolution is negative, thus, investment expenditures reach 0.6% in 2013 (decreasing by 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009), while production expenditures have a value of 1.1% in 2013(decreasing by 0.1 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009).

In the analysed period we can notice that most expenses were made by the population to cover consumption.

In order to have a clear image of the evolution of the expenditures in our country, after 2009, we must resort to the analysis of the structure of total expenditures throughout the whole timespan analysed. Their situation is presented in Table 4.

Table no. 4. Structure of the total consumption expenditure of households in the 2009 – 2013 period (%)

Consumption expenditure	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	40.9	41.0	41.7	41.9	41.4
Alcoholic beverages, tobacco	7.1	7.7	7.6	7.8	7.8
Clothing and footwear	6.0	5.4	5.0	5.0	5.2
Housing and furniture	20.4	20.6	20.3	20.5	20.6
Health	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.5
Transport and communications	10.9	11.0	10.7	10.9	10.6
Culture, education and training	5.3	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.6
Other expenses	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.8

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009-2013

Consumption expenditure represents the most important component of total expenditure. Its structure includes the following categories: agro-food products and non - alcoholic beverages; alcoholic beverages and tobacco; clothing and footwear; maintenance (housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels); furniture, dwelling endowment; health; transport; telephone (communications); leisure and culture; educate; truism (hotels and restaurants); various products and services.

From the data presented, we can infer that the highest share of the consumption expenditure is represented by expenditure for food and non-alcoholic beverages, which recorded, throughout the 2009-2012 period, an upward trend, reaching 41.9% in 2012, (increasing by 1 percentage point compared to the previous year 2009), with a slight decrease by 0.5 percentage points in 2013.

The second place in terms of share of the total consumption expenditure of households, is held by expenditure for housing and furniture. Throughout the analysed period, these expenditures underwent both increases as well as decreases, they reached the highest shares in 2010 and in 2013 reaching 20.6%. It can be noticed that, although the economic crisis was at its peak, this branch of the consumption expenditure was expanded. This expansion can be seen as an effect of the successful programme referred to as "Prima casă" (First house) which was approved in the summer of 2009, by Emergency Ordinance no. 60/2009, which programme was meant to help people who bought houses for the first time and had not benefit from mortgage loans in the past. Through this programme, the government guarantees a percentage of the loan value for the purchase of the house, and this programme was a real success and is still present in the Romanian market.

Transport and communication expenditures fluctuate throughout the analysed period. These fluctuations represented in the first part by an increase, reaching the peak value of this period of 11.0% in 2011. Their lowest share was recorded in 2013 (10.6%), a decrease resulted following the increase in the fuel price. "The excise duty on unleaded petrol fuel was gradually increased, from approx. 0.30 euro a litre in 2006 to 0.38 euro at the end of 2013. Meanwhile, the excise duty on diesel was also increased, from 0.25 euro a litre in 2006 to 0.35 euro a litre in 2013." [5] In terms of communications, due to the increase in the number of telephones purchased, which became indispensable nowadays." In 2010 the share of smartphones in the sales of mobile phones in Romania was lower than 10%, and more than half of the deliveries were held by mobile phones with prices below 50 euro. However, in 2011 the smartphone market increased to 600,000 units, and in 2012 it reached a million." [4]

The expenditure allocated to health has a constant value, and in 2011 it represented the highest share of this period with 4.7%. This increase is due to the increasing aging of the Romanian population. Thus, according to the National Institute of Statistics, due to the negative values of the natural growth combined with those of the external migration balance, the population decreased, in the 2008-2011 period, by 114.8 thousand persons. Consequently, the structure of the population on ages is characterised by a demographic aging process mainly marked by declining birth rates, which determined an increase in the share of the elderly population (60 years and more). In the flowing year, 2012, they recorded a decrease by 0.4 percentage points, reaching in 2013 the level of 4.5% of the first 2 years.

The expenditure for alcoholic beverages and tobacco underwent an upward trend throughout the whole period analysed, reaching, in 2013 the value of 7.8% (increasing by 0.6 percentage points compared to the previous year, 2009). This increase could be due to the increase of the excise duty on vices ever since 2007 "Smokers also felt the adhesion shock strongly – due to the gradual adoption of the minimum EU excise level, the price of a pack of cigarettes increased on average five-six times (from 2.50-3 RON in 2006 to 13-15 RON in the present). Some used this as an "opportunity" to quit smoking, but others failed to do so". [6]

Paradoxically, the purpose of establishing the so-called "tax on vice", namely additional revenues from alcohol and tobacco, which tax is part of the set of laws in the healthcare reform, and the money coming from this tax are used for projects meant to improve healthcare in the public system and for programmes combating the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, was to decrease this consumption. Despite these efforts, the share of these expenses recorded an upward trend. As in the case of tobacco, the alcohol consumption was also on an uptrend. "Ever since the crisis, Romanians prove to be big vodka drinkers. A feature good to be used by spirits producers and importers. Imported

vodka is the most dynamic category. The amounts sold in 2013- of 1.8 million litres - were 62% higher than in 2009".[6] The evolution of the cigarette and alcoholic drink consumption seems to be a paradox, because, although the tax on vice increased, the consumption did not decrease as should have been normal, on the contrary, it grew.

Expenditure on education culture and training show a downward trend. Thus, on the background of the economic crisis, these expenditures are among the least preoccupations of Romanian consumers, reaching the lowest share of 4.4% in 2012 (with a decrease by 0.9 percentage points compared to the previous year 2009), followed by a slight increase in 2013 by 0.2 percentage points. The decrease of these expenditures is caused by the decrease of the culture degree in Romania, and of the number of people attending higher education after graduating from high schools.

The evolution of the expenditure dedicated to this segment might be explained by the numerous changes occurred in education. Education is continuously changing, the new legal provisions on education, as well as the process of restructuring the national education system led to the reorganization of the educational institution network in Romania. From the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics in the 2010-2013 period, as a result of the steps taken within the reform of the national education system, the number of educational institutions decreased to 7074, less by 514 (or 6.8% respectively). The school population decreased, becoming, in the academic year 2013/2014 lower by 9.4% than in the academic year 2010/2011. Higher education, though it continues to be extended, is slightly declining, due in particular to the private sector.

For a thorough analysis of consumption expenditures per household categories, I will present below the structure of the household consumption money expenditure as a total and on categories in the 2009 – 2013 period.

Table no. 5. **Structure of the average annual consumption per capita at certain food products, in the 2009 – 2013 period**

Years	Potatoes Kg	Vegetable Kg	Fruit Kg	Sugar Kg	Milk L	Fish and fish products-Kg	Fresh meat Kg	Eggs pcs
2009	98.1	177.3	65.7	24.8	262.8	5.1	71.2	256
2010	103.9	184.6	67.0	23.4	237.1	4.9	63.5	253
2011	103.3	191.8	74.7	23.7	241.3	3.9	59.4	264
2012	104.7	177.4	71.1	22.0	234.1	4.2	58.7	245
2013	103.0	180.7	73.7	21.1	237.4	4.3	57.5	247

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009-2013

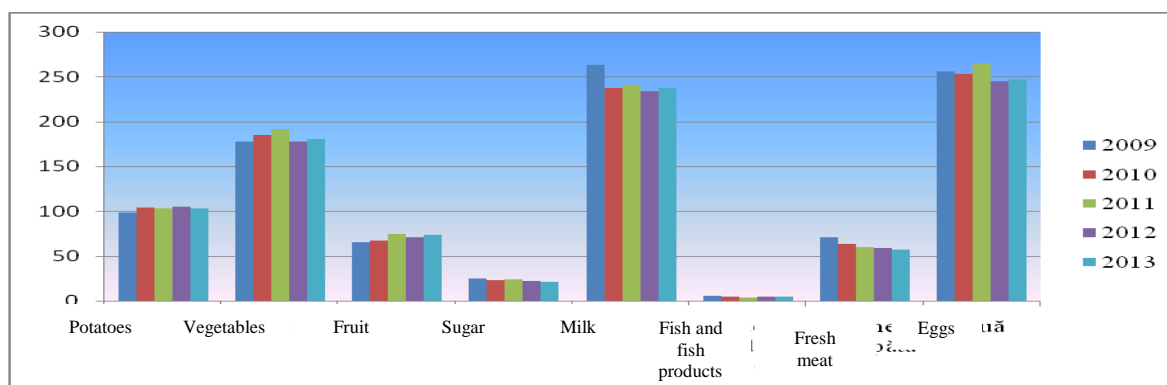


Figure no. 5. **Evolution of the annual average consumption per capita at certain food products, in the 2009 – 2013 period**

Source: drawn based on the data in Table 5.

Analysing the evolution of the annual average consumption, we can notice that the Romanian population consumes mainly potatoes, vegetables and fruit, all these having an increasing evolution throughout the analysed timespan. "Currently, more than half of the incomes of a household are allocated for the purchase of food and beverages. On the other hand, consumers migrated to the products in the segments with the lowest prices." [4]- [5]

Not only incomes have a strong impact on population's consumption, but also the purchasing power, which is strongly influenced by prices. The Romanian economy faced major unbalances due to inflation. Despite the significant decline of the economic activity recorded, in the analysed period, inflation was particularly persistent mainly due to shocks on the domestic and international markets, but also due to the oil and raw material price increase, or due to the fiscal changes and the evolution of the foreign exchange rate. "While in 2011, the first growth year after the crisis, the purchasing power was clearly higher than the one in the 2009-2010 period and, for some categories, even higher than the 2008 one, a decrease was recorded. Let's let numbers speak – adjusted for inflation rate (where 2008 is the basis of

comparison), the average incomes per family were 2,154 RON in 2011, 2,079 RON in 2012, and 2.089 RON in 2013.”[4]

4. Conclusions

Consumption decreases were recorded for the following food products: sugar, milk, fish and fish products, fresh meat and eggs. This evolution of consumption is the effect of the price increase for basic food products. "Romanians' fridges already feel that – an average family afforded, last year, to buy, from the monthly income, 415 kg of live hog, 25 kg less than at the peak of the crisis, in 2010, and 52 kg less than in 2008. Or 176 kg of cow cheese, namely 13 kg less than in 2010 and 40 kg less than in 2008." [4]

The biggest decrease in the Romanian population's consumption in the analysed period is seen at the fresh meat category. Thus, while in 2009, an average annual consumption of 7.2 kg of fresh meat per capita was recorded, in 2013 it reached 57.5 kg. According to the National Institute of Statistics, in Romania, the consumption of meat and meat products is relatively low compared to the standards in the developed countries. The average monthly consumption of fresh meat per capita was 3.2 kg in 2013. Combined with meat products, it rises to 4.2 kg per month, which means an annual consumption of 50 kg per capita.

Consequently, an average household afforded to buy 469 kg of live hog in 2009, 440 kg in 2010, with was an increase from 2011 by 29 kg, followed by a sharp decrease in 2012, where the value of 391 kg is reached, while in 2013 the value of 415 kg was recorded (an increase compared to the previous year 2012 by 24 kg).

The consumption of cow cheese, dairy products also recorded a decrease throughout the analysed period. Thus, if in 2009, a household consumed 193 kg of cow cheese, in 2010 it reached 189 kg, a slight increase being felt in 2011, when the value of 191 kg was reached, followed by a decrease in 2012 and in 2013, reaching the values of 182 kg, and 176 kg respectively.

Another product whose consumption recorded a decrease is the egg. Throughout the analysed period, reaching, in 2013, 247 pieces per capita, compared to 256 pieces per capita in 2009.

Under the influence of the economic crisis, when big part of the population's incomes decreased, the main prices of basic food products increased, and Romanians shifted towards a much healthier diet, based on vegetables and fruit.

One of the products that recorded an uptrend throughout the analysed period is the potato, which recorded an increase from 98.1 Kg in 2009, to 103.0 Kg per capita in 2013. Not only the consumption of the potato grew, the fruit and vegetable consumption grew too. The quantity of vegetables consumed in 2009 was 177.3 kg per capita, while in 2013 it reached 180.7 kg, while fruit consumption reached 73.7 kg per capita in 2013 compared to 65.7 kg in 2009.

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