

PARTICULARITIES OF RURAL AREAS IN ROMANIA IN THE EUROPEAN POST-ACCESSION PERIOD

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Abstract

The definition of the characteristics for the rural areas must be understood in accordance with the specificity of these areas, with the level of development of communes and villages. The degree of implementation of the European programs specific to these areas is also relevant in the analysis of the development of rural areas in Romania. Also, the level of development will be highlighted by specific indices determined in the specialized literature or by European Commission documents. These specific indices for the rural areas determine the level of development of the Pillar II component of the Common Agricultural Policy for Romania but also the concentration level of the branches of economic activity in the development regions.

Keywords: rural areas, agricultural activity

1. Introduction

In the context of European integration in rural reality, development directions can be identified which for Romania may have certain characteristics depending on the type of development of the localities or rural areas, the income obtained, the degree of integration in the national economy. Thus, the Economic Organization for Collaboration and Development (OCDE) proposed according to the degree of integration of rural areas in the national economy the following typology:

- a) *economically integrated rural areas*, as economically developed rural areas and located in the vicinity of developed urban areas. Their incomes are above the rural average. In these areas the secondary sectors of activity are the basis of employment but agriculture is a key element of community development.
- b) *intermediate rural areas*, are areas farther from the urban centers but which have an infrastructure that favors easy access.
- c) *peripheral rural areas*, areas located at great distances from the urban centers, with a small population, low incomes and poor integration in the national economy.

In order to maintain the viability of rural areas, the Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development has elaborated the "European Charter for Rural Space" which determines the principles of sustainable development of agriculture and European rural area.

Through the degree of integration in the national economy system, the rural economy is highly influenced by the fluctuations of the national economy, the economic policy of the national government, the European policy in the field of agriculture and rural development, market factors, and other. [1]

The rural development policy is a set of regional policies, sectoral policies, regional and local development strategies, the Master Plan for the development of the respective region for certain areas, water supply, domestic sewage, agricultural policy. As a dominant area of rural development policy, there remains agriculture which for all the countries of the European Union must integrate in the principles mentioned in the Common Agricultural Policy - (CAP), Pillar I. In the European Union, rural areas are analyzed by two relevant indicators:

- a) *the share of the rural population in the total population*
- b) *the share of the rural in the total area*

The two indicators are shown in (Table 4) and (Table 5). In the European documents on rural development it is considered that rural is a major area in the European Union economy.

A concrete analysis of the real situation of the rural areas in Romania I think will have to be done by analyzing the rural component of the eight development regions. I also consider that the development of rural areas should be analyzed in conjunction with the absorption of European or national non-reimbursable funds on each component of financing, road infrastructure, drinking water, waste water, educational infrastructure, cultural, agriculture, micro-enterprises, non-activities. agricultural, social inclusion.

Thus, by analyzing each development region of Romania on the rural component, the main socio-economic indicators of development of rural areas in Romania will be highlighted.

The development of the rural areas in Romania is dependent on the access to the European programs specific to this field and the absorption of the non-reimbursable funds to this destination.

Accessing the European programs for which activities specific to agricultural areas were and are eligible allowed the development and initiation of new or existing activities in an empirical phase at the time of obtaining the financing. Also, accessing European funding programs has allowed the modernization of road infrastructure, drinking water, sewage, educational, social, cultural infrastructure.

It is noteworthy to mention that the development of rural areas regarding road infrastructure, drinking water, sewage and school infrastructure was accelerated between 2014 and 2019 and by the boosting of government funds through the National Local Development Program, which financed and effectively implemented a number. 4,500 schools and kindergartens and 5,000 investments in road infrastructure, water infrastructure and domestic sewage infrastructure. [2]

It should be mentioned that all investments implemented in rural areas are sustainable and environmental problems have been implemented and are being resolved, management of household waste, reforestation and decontamination of polluted land.

2. The socio-economic indicators for the development regions of Romania - the rural component

In the specialized literature and in the strategy included in the rural development policy of the European Union, area that constitutes the Second Pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for analyzing the situation of the development of a certain region a series of indicators are used that define the level of implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), as follows:

- the development index of the commune IDC, [2].
- the rate of poverty risk or social exclusion, within the meaning of the Europe 2020 Program, an indicator called AROPE - At risk of poverty or social exclusion (ARPE) [3]
- indexes of concentration of economic activities at the level of territory Ic - calculate the ratio between the number of employees in the field of economic analysis and the total number of employees multiplied by 100. [2]

(Table 1) Index value IDC

Nr. No.	Name of the region	Index value IDC	Remarks
1	South-West Oltenia	46,6	
2	South-Muntenia	48,8	
3	South-East	49,5	
4	North-East	40,8	
5	North-West	53,1	
6	West	61,5	
7	Center	60,0	
8	Bucharest-Ilfov	91,0	

Source: Own data processing

(Table 2) Index of activity concentration-Index value (%)

Name of the field of activity	South-West Oltenia	South-Muntenia	South-East	North-East	North-West	West	Center	Bucharest-Ilfov
Agriculture	34,15	37	30	50	38	20	30	6
Industry	15,19	22	18	21	30	26	36	20
Construction	56,0	60	7	9	7	10	11	18
Transport	35,3	64	5	6	7	6	8	11
Services	82,9	97	5	8	16	32	10	46

Source: Own data processing

(Table 3) At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) (%)

Sud -Vest Oltenia	Sud-Muntenia	Sud-Est	Nord-Est	Nord-Vest	Vest	Centru	Bucuresti-Ilfov
46,9	43,5	51,7	52,3	29,3	19,4	28,5	31,5

Source: “Development of communes in Romania, Phd. Dumitru SANDU; Phd. Dr. Vergil VOINEAGU; Phd. Filofteia PANDURU, 2009”, EU 2020 strategy

Regional development refers both to the promotion and development of economic activities, to stimulate investments in the private sector, to improve the standard of living, to reduce unemployment, and to a large set of measures designed to harmonize sustainable actions that converge with the areas of competence of the respective region. [1].

(Table 4) Percentage of the population from rural area within development regions (%)

Sud -Vest Oltenia	Sud-Muntenia	Sud-Est	Nord-Est	Nord-Vest	Vest	Centru	Bucuresti-Ilfov
53,9%	60,4%	46,5%	58,4%	47,5%	37,9%	42,1%	9,8%

Source: Own data processing INS TEMPO-Online

(Table 5) Percentage of rural areas in the development regions (%)

Sud -Vest Oltenia	Sud-Muntenia	Sud-Est	Nord-Est	Nord-Vest	Vest	Centru	Bucuresti-Ilfov
14,26%	18,4%	12,5%	17,9%	14,1%	9,9%	12,4%	1,1%

Source: Own data processing INS TEMPO-Online

The development of the rural areas in Romania as presented by the indices determined above was possible through the implementation of European and government programs with non-reimbursable financing. Most of the investments made in rural areas were in road infrastructure, in water and sewage infrastructure, educational, cultural by preserving popular traditions in villages, environmental infrastructure through waste management, by implementing the concept of sustainable development in rural areas. The concept of sustainable development was made possible by the implementation of European documents in the Romanian legislation regarding the observance of environmental standards, of sustainable development. The European policies for environmental protection, the aspects that determine global warming through pollution are to be implemented in the near future and in the technologies that will be implemented at the level of these areas. I mention that compared to urban areas, rural areas are less polluting precisely because of the lack of a strong industrialized sector compared to urban areas. In these areas a very important role from this point of view has extensive vegetation on large surfaces. However, the policy of massive forest clearing will have a negative impact on the degree of pollution.

3. Analysis of the development of rural areas in Romania

During the programming periods 2007 - 2013 and 2014 - 2020 in the rural areas of Romania, investment projects with European and government financing were implemented both in the agricultural activity sectors and also in the processing industry of agricultural products, fruits and vegetables, agricultural products. animal origin. Rural development, a priority of the Common Agricultural Policy, Pillar II of this policy, saw a more rapid development during the programming period 2014 - 2020, both by financing some investments in the private sector but also by financing

investments in infrastructure, both by accessing European programs. as well as through the implementation of government programs.

- a) the agricultural sector is predominant in most development regions. Within the agricultural sector, the sector whose development is very carefully established in the medium and long-term European and national development strategies, the focus has been on cereal culture, vegetable cultivation, but also fruit trees but also animal and meat farming. Through the European programs of financing the agriculture and by supporting the compensatory payments per hectare or head of animal, the development and implementation of modern technologies of culture or industrialization of agricultural products was encouraged, so that the labor force employed in the agricultural field was increased. The support granted to a farmer is considered as direct payment or additional national aid for the purpose of applying the maximum levels according to Regulation 1782/2003. It is also found that the agricultural branch has a greater share in the rural areas of the east of the country, areas located in the geographical plains. [9]
- b) the industrial sector in the rural areas is attached to all agriculture through the industrialization of agricultural and animal products. It should be mentioned that the industrialization of products of animal origin, the industrialization of meat and milk in particular has undergone a marked development in the second pre-programming period 2014 -2020 precisely due to the European programs of non-reimbursable financing possible through the Agency for Financing of Rural Investments – AFIR . The rural industrial sector has a greater share in the western areas, there are areas according to the classification of the Economic Organization for Collaboration and Development (OECD) integrated rural areas. The processing industry of agricultural products, especially of fruit, meat, milk, and other, is highly encouraged.
- c) the construction and transport sectors in the rural areas experienced a fluctuating development depending on the migration of labor force both in the country and abroad. The transport sector is very much based on the transport of low traffic persons between the rural area and the nearest city.
- d) the services sector is present in the tourism, medical, educational and social assistance field. This sector is experiencing greater development in the field of social assistance precisely because of the European programs with this specific.

From the point of view of the development of the communes it is concluded that the rural localities in the western and central regions of the country are more developed, there are localities in the vicinity of the big cities as well as in the Bucharest - Ilfov region whose development is influenced by their strong economic development.

The analysis of the share of the rural population in the context of the population share is the total of the regions of creation of the country in Romania, which can be described under population weighting conditions, it is rather in the percentage of 50% in the rural areas of the east and the south of the country compared to the weight population in the regions. One explanation is that these areas have the dominant economic branch of agriculture. In general, the rural areas where agriculture is a dominant economic branch, the population density is higher than in the areas with agricultural activities it reduces. This aspect is found especially in areas with plain relief. These areas are according to the classification of the Economic Organization for Collaboration and Development (OCDE) integrated rural areas or intermediate rural areas, the intermediate rural areas being in a higher percentage.

An analysis of the evolution of the rural population after 1990 in Romania, a phenomenon found in Europe is that the rural population aged 25-54 has a lower weight, migrating to urban areas or abroad. However, another phenomenon is observed, increasing the mobility of the population by determining the use of rural space as living areas. These are the areas in which population transport, commuting, are developed. This phenomenon is more intense in the integrated rural areas, in the vicinity of the more developed urban centers.

For the period 2014 - 2020, the European Commission under the 2020 Strategy is considering proposals for sustainable growth, with emphasis being put on concrete results to maximize the impact of EU funding in these areas. Thus, changes in the cohesion policy of the European Union are foreseen, as follows:

- a) a consolidation of the efficiency and the economic-financial performance with emphasis placed on results measured by common indicators and specific to the respective programs.
- b) strict monitoring through this system of indicators of the results and performances of the implementation of the financing programs.
- c) ensuring a performance framework for all established programs are clear and measurable objectives
- d) highlighting the performance reserve in limiting 5% of the national allocations (at the level of the Member State, region, fund)

In this document, the 2020 Strategy focuses on aligning with *the new economic governance, ensuring a match between the common strategic framework, the partnership contracts and the partnership programs*. In this sense, a series of indicators are outlined that reflect the following aspects:

- a) the overall investment strategy aligned with the Europe 2020 objectives
- b) coherence with the national reform programs
- c) coordination between the funds of cohesion policy, rural development, fisheries and maritime affairs
- d) establishing performance measurement indicators and achieving Europe 2020 targets

An important objective that needs to be taken into consideration for rural areas is to support even more *subsistence farms*, farms that produce for their own consumption but which market some of the production. The support offered will be paid annually in the form of a lump sum without exceeding the eligibility ceiling.

It will be accentuated the financial support granted to producer groups to encourage the adaptation of production to market requirements, the joint introduction of products on the market.

This support is granted for a period of 5 years from the date of the group's recognition and may not exceed 5%, 4%, 3%, and 2% of the value of the commercialized production, if its value is below 1,000,000 euros. If the value of the marketed production is over 1,000,000 euros, the financial support is 7.5%, 2.5%, 2.0% and 1.5% of it.

It is in the attention of the European Commission through the Europe 2020 strategy and the concern of preparing rural communities for designing and implementing rural development strategies through the “*Leader +*” Program.. This support consists of technical support for studies on the local area, on territorial analysis, informing the population about participating in local development, financing research and developing support requests.

The *Leader* program can achieve a balanced local development by involving the local factors in the development of the respective areas. It will also contribute strongly to local governance by developing and implementing balanced development strategies with implications in areas of interest for the area or region. Local Action Groups - LAG can obtain support for integrated pilot strategies for rural rural development. These groups are eligible for national and transnational actions. [9]

Also these groups are allowed access to agricultural consultancy, public information for farms.

The European Commission provides through its programs for rural development and a Technical Assistance program representing support for:

- a) preparation, monitoring, evaluation and control for the implementation of programming documents on rural development.
- b) studii, schimb de experiență și informații desti nate partenerilor, beneficiarilor și publicului larg.
- c) installation, operation and interconnection of computerized management systems

- d) improvement of evaluation methods and exchange of information on best practices in the field

(Table 6) Financial allocation for subsistence and Local Action Groups - LAG farms

Measure	Value in Euro	allocation
Subsistence farms	1.000	The farm/year
Producer groups	100.000	In the first year
	100.000	In the second year
	80.000	In the third year
	60.000	In the fourth year
	50.000	In the fifth year

Source: Socio-economic analysis of the Romanian rural area - www.madr.gov.ro.

However, through its programs, the European Union allocates non-reimbursable funds to agriculture in the fields of activity, both in the field of investments on agricultural holdings in accordance with the regulations on rural development and in the field of investments on improving the processing and marketing of agricultural products.

In the field of investments regarding agricultural holdings, the financial support allocated is made according to the type of region in which the farm is located as follows:

- a) allocation of maximum 60% of the volume of investments eligible for the disadvantaged areas
- b) allocation of maximum 50% of the volume of eligible investments for the other areas
- c) allocation to percentages established by the regulations on rural development
- d) allocation of maximum 55% of the volume of eligible investments for young farmers
- e) allocation of maximum 65% of the volume of eligible investments for young farmers in disadvantaged areas

In the field of investments on improving the processing and marketing of agricultural products, it is granted to the companies that have benefited from a transition period after accession in order to meet the minimum standards of environment, hygiene and animal health.

The protocol of Romania's accession to the European Union stipulates in article 16 that Romania will adapt the legislation in the field of agriculture and industry to the mandatory standards for all Member States according to the protocols concluded with the European Commission. It is also mentioned the right of property or registered trademark to be validly recognized throughout the European Union.

Also, the Accession Protocol mentions in Article 18 that Romania must respect the law of companies, competition policy, agriculture and customs.

These provisions are also included in the principles of the application of the Common Agricultural Policy - CAP in both Pillar I - agriculture and Pillar II - rural development. Within these provisions, the free movement of agricultural products, whether processed or not, which is subject to the taxes provided for all the countries of the European Union is allowed. Community products are recognized throughout the European Union, are subject to an integrated quality control system in accordance with the standards in force, are subject to the same pricing policy.[9],[10]

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the rural areas in Romania from this material leads to the drawing of important conclusions regarding the stage of development of certain sectors of the rural economy or the lagging behind of others. Also the causes of lagging behind or the existence of a slow rate of development are revealed, these being either of a conjunctural nature, of eligibility of certain types of investments in certain financing programs, or because of non-involvement in these processes of local decision-makers or regional. [4],[9],[10]

- a) the development of the rural areas in Romania is closely related to the percentage of access to European or national non-reimbursable funds for both the social,

- infrastructure, educational, and for the development of the economic activities of the local economic agents.
- b) the migration of local decision-makers to the national financing programs led to a lower attractiveness to access the European funds for rural development and it was found that at rural level more investments were made in rural infrastructure through national funding than through financing. Europe.
 - c) during the 2014 - 2020 programming period, the criteria for selecting projects submitted for rural areas are still discriminatory for certain investment areas, which determine that many local public authorities no longer have access to European programs and go to the national reimbursable funds created. by political factors to capture as much political capital as possible. By political factors to capture as much political capital as possible. This is how the PNDL program - the National Plan for Local Development works, a quasi political program that funds from 2014 a wide range of investments in both the rural and urban areas.
 - d) the implementation and implementation of the European programs for agriculture and rural development through their eligibility criteria followed a balanced local and regional development according to the National Development Strategy of Romania. Thus, conditions and amounts allocated for the mountain areas are different from the rest of the zones. The same principle also applies to investment projects with differentiated European access as a percentage of different co-financing for underdeveloped regions.
 - e) the implementation of the European programs also emphasized the updating and implementation of the veterinary and phytosanitary legislation according to the European Union Regulations no. 855/2004, regarding food hygiene and no. 853/2004, laying down special hygiene rules for animal foods.
 - f) the implementation of investments for drinking water supply and domestic sewage by accessing the European financing programs envisages compliance with the standards regarding the quality of the water and the percentage of chemical compounds discharged into the waste water at the treatment plants.

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