

ASPECTS ON ENSURING LIFE QUALITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Sustainable development links environmental, social and economic policies in a coherent framework, thus contributing to the implementation of environmental legislation and policies.

The concept of Sustainable Development designates all the forms and methods of socio-economic development that focus primarily on ensuring a balance between social, economic and ecological aspects and the elements of natural capital.

Sustainable development seeks and tries to find a stable theoretical framework for decision-making in any situation where there is a human-environment relationship, be it the surrounding, economic or social environment. Although initially sustainable development was intended to be a solution to the ecological crisis determined by the intense industrial exploitation of resources and the continuous degradation of the environment, and therefore primarily sought to preserve the quality of the surrounding environment, nowadays the concept has expanded to the quality of life in its complexity, and under economic and social aspect. The object of sustainable development is now also the concern for justice and equity between states, not only between generations.

The energy sector has a major contribution to Romania's development, with a particular influence on economic growth, quality of life and the environment. To meet the long-term expectations of the population, the energy sector must become cleaner, more economically stable and more technologically modern. Romania's energy strategy for 2016-2030 with a time horizon of 2050 represents a national strategic approach that was approved and operates based on Government Decision no. 1069/2007.

The main objective of the research is the analysis of Romania's national sustainable development strategy and the objectives aimed at increasing the quality of life.

The research methodology used to achieve the above-mentioned objectives includes qualitative methods (meta-analysis of specialized literature) and quantitative methods (econometric methods - regression and correlation analysis, comparative analysis and correspondence analysis). The current focus has shifted to environmental management, which uses a broad combination of coercive and incentive measures to achieve sustainable improvements. This implies the definition of environmental policies in terms of the pursued objectives; the consideration and explicit mention of priorities; more pronounced decentralization, especially in terms of policy implementation; promoting better performance and managerial methods instead of simple emission control measures; adopting cost-effective strategies instead of adopting specific pollution control measures.

Key words: *sustainable development, quality of life, national strategy, environmental management, environmental quality*

Sustainable development links environmental, social and economic policies in a coherent framework, thus contributing to the implementation of environmental legislation and policies.

According to Romania's Department for Sustainable Development, the current institutional structure is not suitable for the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A project to create special SDG implementation structures needs to be designed and implemented.

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In September 2015, at the United Nations General Assembly, countries from around the world signed the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), together setting out a list of concrete actions to be taken for people and planet. The SDGs, together with the Paris Agreement on climate change, represent the roadmap to a better world, the global framework for international cooperation on sustainable development and the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of this framework. The EU has been one of the main forces behind the UN's 2030 Agenda, firmly committed to its implementation.

Sustainable development, i.e. development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations, is deeply rooted in the European project. European integration and EU policies have contributed to overcoming poverty and hunger and have created an area of freedom and democracy in which European citizens have been able to achieve unprecedented levels of prosperity and well-being.

The main objective of the research is to analyse Romania's national strategy for sustainable development and the objectives aimed at increasing the quality of life.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research methodology used to achieve the above-mentioned objectives includes qualitative methods (meta-analysis of the literature) and quantitative methods (econometric methods-regression and correlation analysis, comparative analysis and correspondence analysis).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We are in the midst of the fourth industrial revolution and the changes will affect us all. The question is whether we will be able to take the initiative and respond to change according to our values and interests. The EU and its Member States have significant competitive advantages that allow us to take the lead and modernise our

economies, preserve our natural environment and improve the health and well-being of all Europeans. To this end, we will need to embrace sustainable development goals while investing in skills, innovation and emerging technologies, putting our economy and society on a sustainable path.

Sustainable development goals is not an intrinsic goal, but serves as a benchmark. They provide a necessary long-term perspective that goes beyond election periods and the desire for short-term quick wins. They help us to maintain strong democracies, build modern and dynamic economies and contribute to a world with higher living standards, where inequalities are reduced, ensuring that no one is left behind, while respecting the limited resources our planet has and preserving them for future generations.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Decent work and growth. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 is about promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Sustainable development, i.e. development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations, is also one of the main foundations of the European Union. European integration and EU policies have helped to overcome post-war poverty and hunger and have created an area of freedom and democracy in which European citizens have been able to achieve unprecedented levels of prosperity and well-being.

Sustainable development encourages the separation of economic growth from negative environmental aspects and it also emphasises social aspects.

This goal implies sustainable economic growth and promotes decent work for all citizens, regardless of gender, geographical location and descent. In this context, a 'no-one left behind' approach becomes vital. This includes facilitating small and medium-sized enterprises, diversifying the economy and extending the procedure to developing regions.



Sursa: Organizația Națiunilor Unite

The UN recommends the following targets for S.D.G by 2030 and the Member States, particularly the EU and Romania, have transposed these recommendations into their national legislation:

- Sustain per capita economic growth in line with national circumstances and, in particular, increase Gross Domestic Product by at least 7% per year in the least developed countries;

- Achieve higher levels of productivity through diversification, technological modernisation and innovation, including a focus on higher value-added sectors and intensive use of labour;

- Promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and that encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services;

- Progressively improve global resource efficiency for consumption and production by 2030, and decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in line with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, led by developed countries;

- By 2030, full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including youth and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value;

- By 2030, a substantial reduction in the proportion of young people without employment, education or training;

- Immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, eliminate modern slavery and human trafficking, and ensure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, the elimination of child labour in all its forms:

1. Protect the right to work and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, especially migrant women, and those in precarious employment;

2. By 2030, develop and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products;

3. Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.

Considerations on the current situation in the European Union regarding the implementation of the 8th S.D.G.

The European Union is currently one of the most prosperous and balanced places to live in the world:

- 9 of the 27 EU Member States rank among the most prosperous/happy countries in the world, with Finland ranking 1st;

- Overall satisfaction with living in the EU, based on the subjective well-being of EU citizens, is 70%;

- 11 of the 27 EU Member States are among the top 20 countries in the world on the European Youth Forum's Youth Progress

Index. This indicator is one of the first tools to provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of life for young people today, independent of economic indicators.

Europe's recovery from the economic crisis has supported steady employment growth. Investment has almost reached pre-crisis levels and public finances are improving, although the recovery faces downside risks.

However, development is not bringing the same benefits to all citizens and the Member States, with high unemployment continuing in some countries. Trends in investment and productivity suggest that more can be done to stimulate recovery and the transition to more sustainable growth, given the long-term global challenges of demographic change and digitalisation.

In addition to continued efforts to ensure long-term sustainable public finances, the EU continues to promote investment, in particular in education, skills training and research and development, and structural reforms to enhance the efficiency of the business environment, product and labour markets. "The Investment Plan for Europe" is essential

Structural reforms to improve labour markets and social policies should enable workers to acquire the skills needed for the transition to a green economy and promote better access and equal opportunities in the labour market, fair working conditions and sustainable and adequate social protection systems. They should also contribute to increasing labour productivity and thus raising wages.

Involving social partners in the design and implementation of reforms can improve ownership, impact and outcomes. At the international level, the EU aims at sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the creation of decent jobs and the promotion of workers and human rights.

External actions to this end include the *European Consensus on Development*, the *European External Investment Plan*, the *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019*, as well as EU action through its neighbourhood and enlargement policies.

Global sustainable development policies and strategies.

The main instrument that encompasses global sustainable development policies and strategies is the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

The 2030 Agenda comprises the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), informally also known as the Global Goals. Through the Global Goals, it sets an ambitious agenda for action over the next 15 years to eradicate extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice and protect the planet by 2030.

1. Make poverty history - Eradicate poverty in all its forms and in all contexts.

2. Zero Hunger - Eradicate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

3. Health and well-being - Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

4. Quality education - Ensuring quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Gender equality - Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

5. Clean water and sanitation - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

6. Clean and affordable energy - Ensure access to affordable energy for all in a safe, sustainable and modern way.

7. Decent work and growth - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

8. Industry, innovation and infrastructure - Building resilient infrastructures, promoting sustainable industrialisation and encouraging innovation.

9. Reducing inequality - Reducing inequality within and between countries.

10. Sustainable cities and communities - Develop cities and human settlements to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

11. Responsible consumption and production - Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

12. Climate action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

13. Aquatic life - Conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

14. Terrestrial life - Protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, managing forests sustainably, combating desertification, halting and restoring land degradation and halting biodiversity loss.

15. Peace, justice and effective institutions - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

16. Partnerships to achieve the goals - Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.

17. Romania is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at national level and has revised its National Sustainable Development Strategy to integrate Sustainable Development Goals. Social exclusion is identified as a major challenge to the implementation of the Goals. In the revised Romanian Strategy, the focus is on supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities, young people and women in development policies. Eradicating poverty requires decent employment opportunities and preventing and avoiding social exclusion requires social cohesion policies.

18. As a member of the European Union, Romania contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals not only from a national perspective, but also at international level, through the support it provides to less developed countries through official development assistance. Romania's experience in the transition process can support the efforts of interested countries to benefit from such support.

19. The energy sector has a major contribution to Romania's development, with a particular influence on economic growth, quality of life and the environment. To meet the long-term expectations of the population, Romania also remains fully committed to the implementation of the SDGs at the EU level. It supports the initiatives of the Commission and the EU Council on the adoption of an EU-wide strategy for the implementation of the

Agenda. From the point of view of SDG 7, Romania benefits from a high energy potential, given its very favourable location. Wind and solar energy, water resources and mineral resources are set to make an increasingly important contribution to competitiveness indicators, particularly in the energy sector. The energy sector has a major contribution to Romania's development, with a particular influence on economic growth, quality of life and the environment. To meet the long-term expectations of the population, the energy sector needs to become cleaner, more economically stable and technologically modern.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to successfully implement the national energy strategy in the long term, Romania needs to adopt the following decisions and practical measures to increase its competitiveness within the European Union:

1. Increasing Romania's energy contribution to regional and European markets by exploiting national primary energy resources. The objective expresses Romania's development vision in the regional and European context and the desire to be a leading EU player in this field.

2. Romania, a regional supplier of energy security. The current international context of energy markets is marked by volatility and uncertainty, and the evolution of technologies may have disruptive effects on energy markets. In this context, there are prerequisites for Romania to become a regional supplier of energy security through the development of the energy sector, taking into account the availability of resources and the stability provided by the maturity of traditional technologies.

3. Competitive energy markets, the basis of a competitive economy. The energy system must operate based on free market mechanisms, with the state playing the role of policy maker, regulator, guarantor of energy system stability and investor.

4. Clean energy and energy efficiency. In the development of the energy sector, Romania will follow the best practices of environmental protection, respecting the

national targets assumed as an EU member state. Equally, the development of the energy system will ensure energy efficiency, as defined by EU directives and national legislation.

5. Modernisation of the energy governance system. In a market system, the state has the essential role of arbiter and regulator of markets. This requires a transparent, coherent, fair and stable legislative and regulatory framework. As an asset owner, the state needs to improve the management of the companies in which it holds stakes. State-owned energy companies need to become more efficient, professional and modern.

6. Ensure access to electricity and heat for all consumers. The objective is to continue the electrification programme and to develop and make cost-effective heating systems.

7. Protect vulnerable consumers and reduce energy poverty. Affordability is one of the main challenges of the energy system and is a strategic responsibility. The level of social assistance in the field of energy will ensure real protection for vulnerable consumers.

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