

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: *The EU, founded about 70 years ago (1957), to ensure the peace of Europe and the entire world; today, another mission of the European Union is “the well-being and survival of our citizens” (Fr. Timmermans - European Commission COM22 30.01.2019). Sustainable development aims to improve the life of citizens of Europe through lasting economic growth while setting the priorities related to this desire. In 2015, the UN General Meeting adopted the 2030 Agenda and in 2017 the “Declaration from Rome of the leaders of the European states that are members of the European Union” was signed. Through these documents, the necessary and obligatory steps have been established to protect the planet and to ensure the needs of future generations. The objectives set are for the long-term modification of economic development, respecting, and protecting the resources and the environment in the context of future sustainable development. Being UN and EU member and being signed by the Romanian government of the “2030 Agenda”, it launched in November 2018 “The National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania 2030”, which takes into account the present needs and those of future generations, focusing on the respect for the citizen.*

Keywords: sustainable development, environment, 2030 Agenda, equity, strategic approach

1. Introduction

According to a report of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA – a UN’s Department) from April 2019, until the year 2050 [7], the number of inhabitants of the Earth will be approx. 9.7 billion people. In this acceptance, India will be the country with the most estimated population, reaching 1.37 billion citizens, and China's population will decline slightly.

For these reasons, additional pressures will be created on ecosystems and natural resources.

Climate change experienced in recent decades has forced international bodies to

develop documents through can stop these phenomena, like greenhouse gas emissions, limiting the use of fossil fuels and pollutants, stopping the change of agricultural land, limiting deforestation.

The UN developed and adopted in September 2015 the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" [1] [9], which is a global action program that promotes the balance between the three directions of sustainable development, namely: economic, social, and environmental. The document was signed and adopted by all UN's state members [7].

2. Methodology

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [1] has 17 concrete actions which are proposed to be focused on regional and global stability, balanced societies, and own economies.

The European Union (EU) has been involved in the application and interconnection to the objectives set by the 2030 Agenda through sectorial policies and the full integration of the sustainable development [9] objectives into European policies.

It is necessary to develop regulations that allow the development of sustainable communities, to protect the planet, eradicate extreme poverty, combat inequality and injustice, and protect the planet.

The 17 objectives [1] are:

1. No poverty

Poverty also comes from inequalities of opportunity, climate change, security threats, geopolitical instabilities, the digital divide, the aging population.

In Romania, the legislation in the social field has been revised: the elements of social assistance for preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion have been reformed. Measures have been taken to support poor families, to encourage participation in the learning process, included for children from disadvantaged families. At the same time, there is a national strategy for young people with special needs, but also for encouragement and support in learning for those who come from placement institutions.

2. Zero Hunger

This objective presumes supporting of the agriculture and the farmers also; protecting of the biodiversity and the fertile soils; protecting creatures from diseases and contaminants. Also, the objective content application of a robust agriculture projects aimed at coping with extreme climate change.

Romania holds the 6th place in terms of

agricultural area and the 6th place with 0.411 ha of arable land/capita. On the 1st place is Lithuania with 0.533 ha of arable land/capita. France has 0.298 ha arable / per inhabitant, Spain 0.268 ha arable / per capita, and Malta 0.020 ha arable / per capita, being the last.

However, our agriculture is underperforming, fragmented, and aging, with low productivity.

It is necessary to adapt agriculture to climate change to increase yields, but without affecting the environment.

Organic farming, traditional products, irrigation of large areas - it is estimated that we have 300,000 ha irrigable, given that in 1990 were arranged for irrigation 3.2 million ha of land [9] - are some elements that can contribute to eradicating malnutrition.

3. Health and wellbeing

This principle refers to the prosperity of a society, which should mean efficient financing for health, increased access to doctors, and the practice of preventive medicine, but also the reduction of environmental pollution.

In Romania, life expectancy is 75.3 years compared to 81 years in the EU [8]. Access to medical care, preventive medicine, specialized staff, increasing health budgeting are some basic elements of this goal.

4. Quality Education

This goal is the basis of sustainable development, with innovative research solutions.

Access of all children to the educational activities in order to obtain professional components. Thus, they can be employed in decent jobs respecting the environment, the society, and the community to which they belong.

The financing of education, the endowment of schools, the attitude of teachers towards students, the school curriculum adapted to the needs of society are elements that develop competencies in lifelong learning.

5. Gender equality

It is a necessary element for prosperity in a peaceful and sustainable world.

Gender-related prejudices in society, the economy, and the family must be eliminated, respecting equal opportunities based on competencies. In Romania, women are over 51% of the population.

6. Clean and sanitary water

The goal refers to drinking water that must be clean, an essential component of life. Water management is part of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Romania must align with EU standards and regulations on wastewater management because the "water" resource is becoming increasingly valuable; the water deficit must be compensated with the increase of the efficiency of water treatment and reuse.

7. Clean energy and affordable prices

This objective refers to the fact that energy must be used in order to ensure renewable energy, which will contribute to sustainable development that will protect the environment and reduce climate change.

The energy-saving and energy efficiency of buildings, also the stimulation of markets by revising legislation results in consumer products and stimulating the use of the renewable sources. The increase of the share of electric energy in the industrial, cosmic, transport fields, in a well-regulated framework, leads to the protection of the environment, of the primary resources for sustainable development.

8. Decent work and economic growth

This objective promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth with coherent and stable economic and social policies.

The rapid development of technology in all fields leads to the change of the occupational share in Romania. In order to create efficient jobs, it is necessary to modernize the activities, to technologize them, and to diversify them. The development of economic activities through financial support leads to a clean business climate, generating jobs.

9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

The objective refers to the need to promote sustainable industrialization, with the encouragement of innovation and the technological process based on non-polluting activities.

Lately, Romanian research has been slower. 0.5% of GDP was allocated for this vital area, and the impact was negative, the effects being found in the economy. Research in higher education institutions must be supplemented with funds from the business environment. Thus, there will be modernization in the industrial, agricultural, medical field, resulting in sustainable development in the fields of activity.

10. Reducing inequalities

This objective presupposes the need for development within a country and between countries based on the merits and equality of sex, religion, colour, social class, with the recognition of value.

The existing differences between rural and urban in Romania, leading to poverty, disease, illiteracy. Although the EU allocates funds, Romania is codified in the supply of drinking water and sewerage to rural areas.

11. Sustainable communities and cities

3.5 billion of people, half of humanity lives in urban areas.

Human settlements must be safe, robust, resilient, durable, and protect the environment [12].

Infrastructure can increase mobility and accessibility, can help reduce pollution from transport, if well planned and designed.

12. Responsible consumption and production

Promoting the efficiency of resources and energy, sustainable infrastructure, general development plans must be made with the reduction of economic costs, and environmental protection.

Sustainable consumption and production aim to "do more and better with less".

Romania is lagging behind EU countries in

resource productivity. Although the emphasis is on global competitiveness, our economic development is slower. We must reduce the impact of production processes on the environment by efficiently using existing resources.

13. Climate action

Climate change is disrupting national economies, affecting communities and people.

Weather events are extreme, they have a global character.

It is necessary to move to clean "clean" economies.

Romania must adapt and consolidate its strategy to combat/prevent natural disasters caused by climate change. Temperature changes with extreme values, rainfall changes with periods of drought followed by torrential rains, in gusts, lead to the vulnerability of rural communities, and agricultural production.

14. Aquatic life

Water is a global resource, necessary, and indispensable for life. Proper water management makes the Earth habitable, and protecting it means a sustainable future with the preservation of biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems.

Intensive exploitation of the marine environment, pollution, and climate change must be kept to a minimum.

15. Earth life

It is imperative to protect and sustainably restore terrestrial ecosystems, responsibly manage forests, combat desertification, stop soil degradation. This ensures food security, increasing land productivity, protecting the environment.

The protection of the forests with the afferent flora and fauna will also result in the stopping of some phenomena that affect the localities, but also the soil.

Combating desertification, soil erosion through ecological reconstruction must be applied in the long run with consistent investments.

16. Peace, justice and strong institutions

Public institutions must be efficient, fair and just to deter corruption, bribery, and organized crime.

Society and citizens must feel protected from violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination.

For the implementation of the principle of sustainable development, cultural heritage is an active force that, along with learning, plays a key role.

17. Partnerships for achieving the SDGs

Achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda means partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector. It is necessary to mobilize everyone to achieve the goals of sustainable development and save the planet.

The European Union has assumed the objectives of the 2030 Agenda as European policy priorities.

The strategic approach materialized in the communication "The next steps towards a sustainable European future" [2].

It was proposed to strengthen coherence for development, develop long-term decarbonisation plans, support industrial policy, research, and education.

EU strategies provide realistic technical solutions to raise the global temperature below 2°C and keep it at 1,5°C [4].

An important role is played by the bio-economy which is based on biological resources, respectively the production of renewable biological resources and the transformation into vital products.

Through concrete examples are:

- Transformation of algae into fuel,
- Plastic recycling,
- Transformation of waste into furniture or clothing,
- Transformation of by-products into fertilizers.

In the Periodic Monitoring Report, the EU presents the progress made on the 17 items of the 2030 Agenda [3]. The EU is working on 3 scenarios to stimulate the debates on the fulfilment of the 17 items of the 2030 Agenda.

Both positive and negative evolutions of these indicators were found. For example, it has been found that the loss of forests has slowed worldwide due to the fact that sustainable management measures have been applied. Globally, 4,06 billion hectares of forest are registered, the equivalent of 0,52 ha for each inhabitant of the planet.

Every year, 10 million ha are transformed into land with other uses compared to 12 million ha before 2015, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Report [13].

Globally, virgin forests have an area of 1,11 billion ha, and 30% of all forests are used mainly for the production of wood and forest products, according to the same report.

According to the EU statistics [4], in Romania 1 tree of 20 m is legally cut every second, and illegally another one. According to experts, 30% of Romania's forests have disappeared, in the last five years, approx. 234,000 ha. Environmental security and biodiversity are threatened, with social consequences, such as floods with the destruction of houses, farms, production, and, last but not least, loss of human resources.

3. Conclusions

The assumed objectives from above must

be realistic; they must be followed and supported.

Thus, because the economic development is the primary factor in achieving the goal of the 2030 Agenda, respecting the other objectives assumed.

Romania, as a member of the EU and the UN, supports the idea of implementing the 2030 Agenda up to the level of local institutions, responding directly to the needs of the citizens.

Their needs and interests must be addressed by defining local development strategies [14]. Romania contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, but also at the international level, through the assistance and assistance, it provides to less developed countries, through official development assistance.

We are going through a period in which globalization is beginning to be questioned, the incisiveness is accentuated and the environmental problems are getting worse. That is why we consider that the geostrategy must militate for a sustainable future of Europe [6] in which Romania has a role based on the three pillars: economic, social, and environmental [10].

The state and the EU must serve every citizen in a fair, efficient way and in a clean environment [5].

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