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## **Sustainable Development Towards Globalization within Romania**

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**Abstract:** Sustainable development was first developed in order to offer a clear picture of progress in terms of ecological policies so as to harmonize both present and long-term objectives. It takes a change in the way of thinking and an active involvement of society towards public policies as far as sustainability is concerned. The relation between globalization and sustainable development is a very close one taking into consideration that activities of national markets have led to their homogeneity. On the other hand, sustainability became an important element in European economy, namely for Romania. Authorities started to pay attention to changes existent with the new environmental and economic priorities. Sustainable development within Romania requires a deep analysis upon the development indicators in order to know what the present situation is and what it may happen in the near future. Therefore, it is high time to evaluate the real situation that will influence the growth of the economy sector in the next decade. The conclusion drawn is that the strategic indicators revealed a hard path that Romania has been trying to pass recent years concerning sustainability requirements.

**Keywords:** sustainability; environment; ecology; strategic investment

### **1. Introduction**

Sustainable development has become an issue brought to attention both in literature and practice. The social – economic and geopolitical development led humanity upon a huge question: how mankind can evolve in the next future without jeopardizing the planetary balance? Nowadays, the global community passes through some rough times characterized by hunger, poverty, the great gap between the poor and the rich, accelerating environmental degradation – all these being an ecological threaten for humanity. At the very beginning, sustainable development was first supposed to be the solution to ecological crisis caused by intense exploitation regarding resources and the environment deterioration. Today, this concept expanded upon life quality from economically and socially point of view. Thus, the present paper will emphasize on how this issue has become a major priority for the European Union even since 1997, starting with its inclusion in the Maastricht Treaty.

In order to watch the dynamics of sustainable development, a set of indicators were proposed to be used while sustainable development strategies were defined under United Nation Organization, namely, European Union.

### **2. Problem Statement**

#### ***The European Union Strategy regarding Sustainable Development***

In 2001, The European Council from Goteborg adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Development. Unfortunately, the document was powerfully criticized by the European Commission. After a deep research upon the problems that would affect the Union's future development: the disappearance of

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natural resources, biodiversity erosion, climate change, threats towards public health, the EU Council adopted in 2006 a renewed Strategy for the enlarged Europe.

The present strategy that is brought to attention aims to be a model for those who develop public policy so as to change the behavior of European civil society and its permanent involvement concerning the development, implementation and monitoring the main objectives (Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development)

### **3. Concept and Terms**

#### ***The indicators set regarding sustainable development***

Achieving a common set of environmental and social indicators is a matter of primary concern for Eurostat, The Economic Commission UNO of Europe and the Organization of Cooperation and Economic Development. Therefore, the indicators developed by Eurostat are structured as follows: to each strategic area is associated an important indicator (level one), a set of indicators for operational objectives subordinated (level 2) and descriptive indicators of the necessary fields for the associated policies (level 3).

It is particularly important to take into consideration the fact that the EU member states are obliged to create and maintain a national system of indicators in order to keep a close eye on the existent situation. This procedure must be entirely in terms of EU level. Thus, it can easily be observed that there is a continuous process in which evaluation of national strategies and the one of the EU reduces the possible errors concerning the resources needed to fulfill the initial objectives.

According to the report that points out the progress within EU strategy for Sustainable Development it was confirmed that EU policies have faced with many positive developments in all seven priority areas, among the most important: energy-climate sector in 2008, the activities for greening transport, the creation of a suitable framework for an integrated maritime policy. Areas such as: health, education, research were also successful. Despite these positive developments, there are still some shortcomings: the demand for resources increases, biodiversity decreases and transport continues to consume even more energy as ever.

That is why, European Union calls member states to reflect on harmonizing national strategies and the one from Lisbon in order not only to help to an economic increase but also to a growth of an employment labor.

### **4. Solution Approach**

#### ***The sustainable development indicators in Romania***

Indicators for sustainable development in Romania are mentioned in the National Development Strategy. The document sets goals for a development model performance during a reasonable and realistic period of time. This may concern the people's quality life and their relationships in full harmony with natural environment. In this case, goals are for a: short term (2013) so as to embrace the principles and practices specific to sustainable development, medium term (2020): aligning key indicators of the current average of member countries and long term (2030): a significant closure towards the average performance of the EU countries in terms of sustainable development indicators (The National Strategy regarding Sustainable Development within Romania. Perspectives 2013 – 2020 – 2030, Bucharest, 2008).

For an objective analysis of the present situation, studies (European Human Capital Index, Lisbon Council 2007) take into account important elements such as human capital, its use (employment rate, unemployment rate), etc.

Climate change is considered to be an urgent issue, especially that Romania obligations upon this subject after 2012 are very important, namely, the greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2020 with 20% and increasing renewable energy with 20% at the same time as well as achieving a minimum consumption level of biofuel by 10% in total consumption of transport. In this case, an indicator that has a great impact on this objective appears to be the energy intensity of economy (Data base – Sustainable Development Indicators within Romania).

As it can be seen in the table below, Romania records an improvement from 2006 to 2009 as far as the energy consumption in relation to the national economy is concerned. Thus, it is the second country on the top seven EU states with the highest intensity within EU, followed by Slovakia.

**Table 1 The energy intensity of economy**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>UE 27</b>	175.5	168.7	167.4	165.2
<b>Bulgaria</b>	1057.63	977.62	910.39	842.54
<b>Cehia</b>	587.05	552.62	525.58	514.09
<b>Ungaria</b>	425.73	414.3	408.1	413.48
<b>Polonia</b>	425.38	396.84	384.01	363.72
<b>România</b>	704.78	659.09	612.76	576.9
<b>Slovenia</b>	269.65	252.55	257.31	252.28
<b>Slovacia</b>	622.67	532.93	517.89	496.57

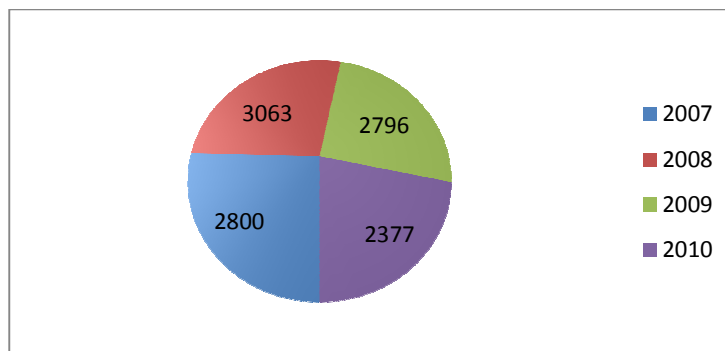
By implementing policies in order to increase energy efficiency, a reduction of energy consumption by 14% is supposed to happen by 2016. Sustainable development means ensuring the energy efficiency, upgrading the technology and restructuring the economy.

Transport is perceived as a priority, thing that is proved by its close relation with other branches of the national economy, as well as the impact that transport has upon environment. Road, rail, sea river and air service are taken into consideration so as to develop this sector. As a consequence, this area may be represented by the real value regarding the investments in transport infrastructure: according to official statistics, in 2007 the total amount allocated to this sector was about 12088 billion Euro, in 2009 the number grew to 19542 billion Euro. It is imperative to know that the largest share of this amount was directed to traffic services (roads, streets) followed immediately by investments in modernizing waterway and port construction and other hydro structures.

**Table 2 Investments in transport infrastructure**

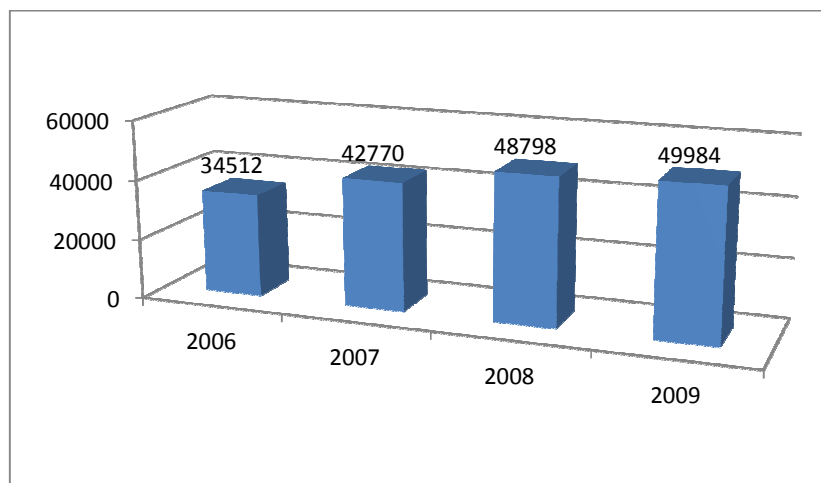
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Total	12088.2	20418.5	19541.9
Road infrastrucure	9358.6	14330.1	13165.1
Rail infrastructure	1037.2	1165.3	752.1
Airport infrastructure	139.6	33.6	26
Bridges, roads, tunnels and underground infrastructure	356.2	3084.9	3325.3
Waterways, harbor and hydro construction	1196.6	1804.6	2273.4

These investments have a positive impact on people's quality life leading to a decrease of car accidents and to a reduction of people killed in accidents, as it can be observed in the figure. Thus, the number has been reduced significantly from 3063 persons in 2008 to 2377 persons in 2010.



**Figure 2 People killed in car accidents**

In terms of investment policy, more funds are likely to be found so as to assure diversification of funding sources. Therefore, it appears that Romania has reached to the maximum level regarding direct foreign investments, the value in 2009 (49984 billion Euro) being much higher than the total amount registered in 2006 amounted to 34512 billion Euro.



**Figure 2 Direct foreign investments**

In order to act effectively on the strategic direction regarding sustainability, society and the foreign partners need to get a clear picture on the road, on the real assets of the country and also upon the great potential that Romania seems to have.

## 5. Conclusions

Sustainable development requires a long term process in solving environmental and economic problems. Some of them are generally met in each country and others are specific. Indicators represent a great project so as to align to European Union requirements and the developed countries level. After a deep analysis, we can reach the conclusion that Romania still has a rigid economy whose process is very shy in its development, facing many difficulties in becoming significantly sustainable. However, this project is a preliminary stage in building a more elaborate quantification system regarding the three areas of sustainable development. Last but not least, the current situation may be also a challenge for a wide debate and for a real action with stakeholders in order to assure a successful development within globalization.

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