

Romania's
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Strategy 2030

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Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, adopted by the Romanian Government on 9 November 2018 through Government Decision 877/2018, was drawn up under the direct coordination of the Department of Sustainable Development and with the contribution of the Editorial Commission, the General Secretariat of the Government, the ministries and other central institutions, local authorities, regional development agencies, academic and university forums, national institutes of research and development, employers' associations and trades unions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, and other bodies of civil society and interested citizens.

Thank you!

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We are constantly looking to the future, to the legacy we will leave to future generations. This year, in which we celebrate the Centenary of the Great Union of Romania, it is important for us to unite in our efforts to ensure prosperity, security and balance, and Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 is the manifestation of this endeavour.

Romanian society has evolved, and the challenges it faces today are different from those it faced 100 years ago. Global warming and the emergence of a consumer society with a powerful impact on the environment are just two examples of these new challenges. Another phenomenon that requires our particular attention is the rapid rate of urbanisation of the population. In 1930, according to the first census performed after the Great Union, the proportion of the Romanian population living in urban centres was 20%. In 2015, according to the National Institute of Statistics, this figure had reached 53.8%, and it continues to grow today. The world is constantly changing and the problems of the future cannot be solved by applying the solutions of the past. This Strategy represents Romania's response to these new challenges.

Sustainable development is an essential component of the 2018-2020 Government Platform, the principal aim of which is to "ensure the sustainable development of Romania and a significant improvement in the living standards of all the citizens of our country, including those in vulnerable circumstances". The Sustainable Development Strategy, in transposing the goals for sustainable development, envisages a Romania of the future as a powerful state capable of ensuring the well-being and security of its citizens.

This Strategy is ambitious but realistic. It can be implemented. It is a call to action to ensure the prosperity of Romania for present and future generations.

Prime Minister

Vasilica-Viorica Dăncilă

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Dăncilă". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive script.

The Department of Sustainable Development, as part of the Working Apparatus of the Romanian Government, in keeping with Government Decision 313/2017, has the role of coordinating the implementation of the set of 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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In 2015, at a meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, a historic document was adopted: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through its 17 goals, this document seeks to achieve a better future not only for us, but also for our children. Built on the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – the 2030 Agenda was also adopted by Romania and the European Union. This strategy translates the Agenda to the realities of Romania today. I am optimistic that, once the institutional framework proposed by this Strategy has been created at a national level, Romania will become a regional leader in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

For the first six months of 2019, Romania will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. We have the opportunity, but also a responsibility, to promote the values of sustainable development at a European level. Although all the goals are important to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, "Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals" is special in that it shows us how we can achieve the other goals, more precisely by involving all interested parties. While the aim of the Strategy is to implement the 2030 Agenda at a national level, the principle that "no one will be left behind" also applies on the international stage. Romania, as a member of the European family and the international community, undertakes the regional role of encouraging collaboration for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Only by working together can we ensure a sustainable future.

This strategy is the "lighthouse" that will guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in all sectoral policies able to promote sustainable development at the national level. However, this alone is not enough. It is also necessary to involve all actors in the achievement of the goals of the Agenda. The involvement of every citizen is therefore imperative to the implementation of this strategy. There's a saying of which I'm very fond: "Man maketh the place". We need to create a critical mass, to reach the moment at which these principles are assimilated by the majority of citizens so that we might achieve the change we desire. Only then will we be able to transform Romania and to ensure a sustainable future for the generations that are to come.

State Advisor

Borbély László

Coordinator of the Department of Sustainable Development

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Borbely László', written over the printed name and title.

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List of Abbreviations

AOD	Official Development Assistance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CTS	Collection and treatment system
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GCI	The Global Competitiveness Index
GD	Government Decision
GDP (PPP)	Gross Domestic Product at Purchasing Power Parity
GHG	Greenhouse gas
ha	hectare(s)
HLPF	High Level Political Forum – for sustainable development under the auspices of the ECOSOC
ITC	Information and communications technology
ML	The Richter magnitude scale
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBR	National Bank of Romania
NDF	National Development Fund
NHA	National Housing Agency
NIEP	National Institute for Earth Physics
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NPCLR	National Programme for Cadastre and Land Registration
NQFHE	National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme
NRQHE	National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education
NSSD	National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania – Horizons 2013-2020-2030
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
OPAC	Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity 2014-2020
OPFMA	Operational Programme for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
OPLI	Operational Programme for Large Infrastructure
PFA	Registered sole trader
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PPS	Purchasing power standard
RABLA	Programme to Promote Car Fleet Renewal
RAN	National Archaeological Record
RDI	Research, development and innovation
SCAP	Strategy for Consolidating Public Administration – for the period 2014-2020
SCI	Site of community importance
SDG	Sustainable development goal
SDIF	Sovereign Development and Investment Fund
SN	Sewerage network
SPA	Special Protection Area
TOE	Tonnes of oil equivalent
UN	United Nations
VAT	Value added tax
WEF	World Economic Forum



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Romania, as a member of the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), has adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit through UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1. The European Council endorsed this Agenda in "A Sustainable European Future: The EU Response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" on 20 June 2017. The Council's document represents the political document to which the member states have committed themselves, setting the direction EU member states should follow in their task of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 (hereafter referred to as the "Strategy") defines Romania's national framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, providing a roadmap for achieving the 17 SDGs. This strategy promotes the sustainable development of Romania by focusing on Sustainable Development's three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. This strategy is citizen-centred and focuses on innovation, optimism, resilience, and the belief that the role of the state is to serve the needs of each citizen in a fair, efficient, and balanced manner, all within a clean environment.

This Strategy is based on reports drawn up by government ministries and other state institutions, studies conducted under the auspices of the Romanian Academy, and other scientific and academic bodies. This strategy used the information made available by European institutions and the UN as well as suggestions and recommendations resulting from public consultations with the business community, universities, national research and development institutions, NGOs, and representatives of civil

society. This strategy also took into consideration the contributions of individual experts.

This Strategy is divided into three chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction looks at the recent history of Sustainable Development as a concept from an international, European, and national perspective, highlighting how Sustainable Development was both adopted and integrated into the UN's and the EU's policy documents as well as Romania's public policies.

Chapter 2: The Sustainable Development Goals is divided along the 17 SDGs and is structured as follows: a short introduction for each goal, the aim of each specific goal for Romania, and the current situation regarding implementing Romania's previous Sustainable Development Strategy adopted by the Government in November 2008. This review is done by highlighting Romania's shortcomings by identifying specific areas in which additional efforts and resources are needed to achieve the objective of converging with the European Union and its Sustainable Development Indicators. Chapter II also presents Romania's goals for each of the 17 SDGs through its Horizon 2020 objectives, and its 2030 Targets.

Chapter 3: Implementation and Monitoring describes the decision to be taken to establish the operational framework for implementing and monitoring this Strategy's goals and targets. The aim is to ensure consistent government action and increase the active participation of all relevant stakeholders including citizen initiatives, thus uniting Sustainable Development's three pillars to transform our society into a more sustainable one.



CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Romania must change its current development paradigm if it is to face the challenges of the 21st century. We live in an age defined by globalisation, rising inequalities, and increasing environmental degradation. The solution is Sustainable Development. Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy takes on this challenge and seeks to help guide Romania in its transition towards a more sustainable future. Based on the principles of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, this transition will be achieved as a member of a prosperous and reinvigorated European Union.

Sustainable development, for Romania, means the desire to strike a balance between the aspirations of its citizens, the society they depend upon and are defined by, and the context that enables their self-realisation. This balance begins with the individual in search of personal equilibrium and the conditions favourable to one's self-fulfilment. The presence of favourable conditions, in turn, depends on the society that should be there to support and motivate the individual, and an enabling and accepting environment in which this balance can be reached. It is within this context that the role of the state is to facilitate the finding of this equilibrium, not just for the citizens of today, but also for future generations.

Romania's previous Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted in 2008, helped overcome the 2008 Economic Crisis. With the 2020s

fast approaching, there is a need for a new approach that considers the current economic, social, and environmental issues on a global, European, and national level. This new approach requires a long-term and multi-generational perspective that addresses "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹

For the last ten years, Romania set its goals based on the performance of the global economy and in line with EU policy. Today, both Romania and the EU need to rethink their medium and long-term priorities. Achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015,² represents a guaranteed way to create a better future for the next generations.

Romania, alongside 192 other UN member states, has accepted the need to establish a national framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda which presents the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The global action plan Romania has chosen to support over the coming years has the aim of reducing poverty, fighting inequality and social injustice, and protecting the Planet. It is a plan for "people, planet and prosperity" which seeks to foster an environment of freedom and security in which "no one will be left behind."³

¹ G. H. Brundtland, 1987 – Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development – Our Common Future, UN, 1987, item 27, p. 15

² Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

³ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Declaration, Introduction/item 4 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda was the result of an extended process of international analysis that recognises that global problems can only be solved through global solutions. A change in the perception, and a growing awareness, of the unprecedented development of human society, increasing global birth rates, the rapid growth of the economies of developing countries, and rising social disparities has highlighted the limits of global growth. The increasing costs of specific resources has highlighted the fact that the Planet is at risk of exhausting both its renewable and non-renewable physical resources, leading to a catastrophic imbalance.⁴

The premise that achieving progress in environmental protection is correlated with economic development was first introduced in a document at the Stockholm Conference (1972) which established the UN Environment Programme through the adoption of the Declaration on the Human Environment. The aim of this declaration was “to defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations,” giving legitimacy to the concept of sustainable development and its three pillars: *economic, social and environmental*.⁵

The three pillars on which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rests were first defined in the Brundtland Commission (1987)⁶ report. These pillars are:

1. SOCIAL EQUITY – developing nations should be able to meet their basic needs

regarding employment, food supply, energy security, water, and sewerage

2. ECONOMIC GROWTH – developing nations should be able to achieve a quality of life close to those of developed nations

3. THE ENVIRONMENT – encapsulating the need to conserve and increase the amount of available resources through a gradual shift in the way different technologies are developed and used

This new approach was made possible by introducing the concept of “limits to growth,” which highlights the fact that rising demand of natural resources society requires are in the process of being exhausted. Unsustainable economic growth would create an ecological imbalance on a planetary scale. Only by simultaneously supporting the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental – can a global common future be achieved.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 addressed the need to reduce the importance of economic growth, thereby helping to preserve the earth’s biophysical equilibrium without compromising social well-being. The Rio Declaration⁷ and Agenda 21 focused on socially beneficial environmental themes, such as: quality of life, the use of natural resources, the protection of global goods, the management of human communities, and economic growth.⁸

⁴ Club of Rome (1970), <https://www.clubofrome.org/report/the-limits-to-growth/>

⁵ Stockholm Conference (1972), United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 5-16 June <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/humanenvironment>

⁶ Brundtland Report (1987), https://www.are.admin.ch/are/en/home/sustainable-development/international-cooperation/2030agenda/un_-milestones-in-sustainable-development/1987-brundtland-report.html

⁷ Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>

⁸ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio 1992 & Agenda 21, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

The Millennium Declaration, ratified by the Millennium Summit of 2000, was *the first international agreed framework document for combating poverty, hunger, disease, and inequality on a global level*. To achieve the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration, 8 specific development goals (known as the Millennium Development Goals), 21 targets, and 60 indicators were defined, the implementation deadline being 2015.⁹

The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 led to *The Future We Want*. This document listed the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and went on to define the Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 Agenda. This document continued to recognise the importance of the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental.¹⁰ The result was *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a document that was adopted by the highest representatives of 193 states at

the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015. The 2030 Agenda is a new and modified interpretation of Sustainable Development and its conceptual framework. It is divided into 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.

The 2030 Agenda calls on all countries, whether rich, middle-income, or poor, to act. It recognises that fighting poverty must be accompanied by a plan to promote economic growth and addresses a range of social needs. These social needs include education, healthcare, employment, and social protection. This must be achieved while also considering the issue of climate change and environmental protection. The 2030 Agenda also covers aspects such as inequality, infrastructure, energy, consumerism, industrialisation, biodiversity, and the oceans. The Agenda encourages the involvement of all stakeholders by democratising the decision-making process and highlights the role of the younger generations in the creation of sustainable development.

THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development in the European Union was introduced into the Strategy for an Enlarged Europe 2006.¹¹ This strategy was part of a unified and coherent strategic vision with the *general objective* of continuously improving the quality of life for present and future generations. Its goal was to create sustainable communities capable of managing and using resources efficiently and of exploiting the ecological and social potential of the economy with the aim of ensuring prosperity, environmental protection, and social cohesion.

In 2010, as part of the sustainable development debate in the European Union, the *Europe 2020 Strategy*¹² was adopted to promote smart growth (based on education, research, and innovation) that is both sustainable (based on a reduction of carbon emissions, energy efficiency and renewable resources) and inclusive (involving the creation of new jobs, the reduction of poverty, etc.). Together with the member states and in keeping with the principle of solidarity, *the EU committed itself to becoming a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, implicitly, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)*.

⁹ Millennium Summit (2000), http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium_summit.shtml

¹⁰ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 (2012), <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20.html>

¹¹ Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy – Commitment to Meet the Challenges of Sustainable Development, EU Council, Brussels, 26 June 2006

¹² COM(2010) 2020 final, Europe 2020: A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/Europa2021/Strategia_Europa_2020.pdf

On 22 November 2016, the European Commission published “Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future.”¹³ This document presents the European Union’s response to the 2030 Agenda, confirming the need to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into the European policy framework while highlighting the European Commission’s current priorities. The document also presents an evaluation of the Union’s current situation and identifies the most relevant concerns regarding sustainability.

The European Union declared itself in favour of a sustainable development which will ensure “a life of dignity for all within the Planet’s limits that reconciles economic prosperity and efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion, and environmental responsibility.” The EU

Council’s conclusions in “A sustainable future for Europe: the EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” adopted on 20 June 2017, represents the political document adopted by the member states of the EU regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EU response to the 2030 Agenda is to integrate the 17 SDGs into its public policies with the aim of supporting the global effort to build a sustainable future. The 17 SDGs are already being pursued in many of the EU’s policies. Romania, as a member of the European Union, is presenting, through this Strategy, its integrated and holistic approach to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

THE ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The goal of Romania’s first sustainable development strategy from 1999 was to promote the continuous improvement and preservation of the well-being of the population in correlation with the requirements of a sensible use of natural resources and the conservation of the ecosystem. This strategy was based on the premise that the benefits of economic development should outweigh its costs, including those relating to the conservation and the improvement of the environment.

The country’s accession to the European Union in 2007 led to a change of Romania’s national priorities, which resulted in the *National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania – Horizons 2013-2020-2030*. Adopted by the Romanian Government on 12 November 2008, the Strategy sought to reduce the socio-economic gap vis-à-vis the member states of the European Union.

To achieve sustainable development in Romania, and, by extension, to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda, together with the European Union’s commitments regarding the 2030 Agenda, this Strategy is built around the citizen and the needs of future generations.

Romania’s Sustainable Development Strategy is based on the premise that sustainable development requires a mindset which, once adopted by the citizen, will help create a more equitable society defined by: balance and solidarity, and the ability to cope with the changes brought about by current global, regional and national challenges, including a declining population. The state’s concern for its citizens, and the citizens’ respect for public institutions, for their peers, for moral values, and for cultural and ethnic diversity will lead to a sustainable society.

¹³ COM(2016)793 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: “Next steps for a sustainable European future European action for sustainability”

In economic terms, it is necessary to ensure long-term economic growth that benefits the country's citizens. The economy of a country is often measured in figures that do not take into account the potential of each citizen. The transformation of the economy into a sustainable and competitive one requires a new approach, based on innovation, optimism, and citizen resilience. This approach should create an entrepreneurial culture in which each citizen is able to fulfil his/her potential in both material and aspirational terms.

In social terms, it is necessary to create a cohesive society able to benefit from improvements in education and health care systems, a reduction in gender inequality, and the urban-rural divide. This will result in the promotion of a more open society, in which citizens feel appreciated and supported. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop the resilience of the public to enable citizens to realise their dreams within an equitable institutional framework. To ensure the sustainable development at the community level, the state needs to provide an enabling environment to boost the potential of each citizen by addressing issues of health care, education, and labour fairness. The aim is to achieve the highest possible standards of living for all citizens. Boosting social capital – the fostering of a civic spirit based on trust between citizens – will unlock the potential of Romania's citizens, enabling them to realise their potential.

Environmental awareness has risen significantly in recent years. Protecting our environment, be it natural or human-made, is the responsibility of everyone, given the reciprocal impacts between humans and the environment. This recognition presents an opportunity for citizens to come together in a noble pursuit by raising awareness of this responsibility. The creation of a sustainable human-made environment can only be achieved by cultivating a sense of belonging and community. This will help diminish feelings of loneliness – a risk factor which limits the individual's potential and, by extension, the functioning of one's community.

As a member of the international community and the European Union, it is in Romania's interest to implement the principles of sustainable development on a national level. By 2030, this Strategy hopes to see Romania as a member of a strong and stable European

Union in which the differences between countries have diminished and its citizens live in a country in which the state serves the needs of each citizen equitably and efficiently, while showing increased and constant concern for a clean environment.





CHAPTER II: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The first decade of implementing the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania – Horizons 2013-2020-2030, adopted in 2008, has, to a large extent, overlapped with the period in which Romania became a member state of the European Union, with all the rights and obligations this entails. From the very beginning, there has been a high degree of conceptual and operational convergence between the goals of sustainable development and European integration.

During Romania's transition period towards democracy, the concept of sustainable development was adopted through the ratification of UN conventions in this field. With the beginning of EU accession negotiations in 2000, Sustainable Development became an integral part of Romania's legislative and institutional framework, being reflected in the main directions of public policy.

It could be said that the main driver behind Romania's accelerated alignment to the principles and practices of sustainable development was the incorporation of the *Acquis Communautaire* and the implementation of the working instruments at EU level.

The first two years of EU membership were marked by the dynamic growth of the Romanian economy. This justified the adoption of ambitious strategic goals and intermediary targets for the following period. However, the country was severely affected by the economic and financial crash of 2008, with gross domestic product (GDP) and individual income levels falling drastically as a result, the effects of which were felt until 2010-2011.

The crisis brought to light several persistent structural and functional vulnerabilities that necessitated a rethinking of priorities involving the mobilisation of Romania's budgetary resources and the sensible use of solidarity, cohesion, agricultural, and rural development funds allocated to Romania through the current and future multiannual financial framework of the EU.

Despite the difficulties encountered, the assessment of the first decade of implementation of the NSSD is positive. This demonstrates the resilience and sustainability of Romanian society's strategic choices and EU membership. This is proven by the fact that Romania's gross domestic product at purchasing power parity rose from 39% of the EU average in 2006 to 63% in 2017 and, according to the Convergence Programme, could realistically reach 80% by 2020.

According to the Eurobarometer survey conducted in the spring of 2018, 65% of Romanian citizens are optimistic about the future of the European Union, compared with the average of 58% for all EU member states combined.¹⁴ This creates the conditions for the realisation of the goals and targets of the Strategy in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the relevant EU provisions.

Romania's shortcomings in terms of implementing the 2008 Strategy, and the specific areas in which additional effort and resources are necessary to achieve the convergence goals and move significantly closer to the EU average, are described in the following pages.

¹⁴ European Commission – Standard Eurobarometer 89 Spring 2018





END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

Although globalisation has helped reduce absolute poverty, it is necessary to take more action to help reduce relative poverty so that everybody can live with dignity. Through this Goal, the 2030 Agenda seeks to highlight the need to include those segments of society that have been excluded. If achieved, this will help create a fairer society where all can enjoy prosperity and live in dignity.

The Strategy aims to reduce the number of citizens living in extreme and relative poverty, in all its forms, as per national definitions. The Strategy seeks to reduce the number of people living below the poverty line, to encourage participation in the labour market by those fit to work, and to develop the system of social protection and assistance.

THE RATE OF POVERTY

In Romania there is a large number of people suffering from severe material deprivation compared with the EU average. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) from 2016, the percentage of people suffering from severe material deprivation was 23.8%.¹⁵

The rate of relative poverty (defined as income below 60% of the median equivalised disposable income) in the period 2007-2016 was calculated by the NIS to be 24.6-25.3%, compared with the average EU level of 16.6-

17.3%. According to Eurostat, in 2016, 49.2% of children in Romania aged between 0 and 17 years were at risk of social exclusion, compared with the EU average of 26.4%, which means Romania had the highest number of such cases.¹⁶ The Gini coefficient, which measures the rate of inequality in society, was also seen to be increasing for Romania.

MEASURES ADOPTED IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND TRANSFERS

The legal framework in the area of social services, preventing social exclusion and marginalisation, and promoting social inclusion through employment was revised by: adopting Law 292/2011 on social assistance (introducing reforms that establish complementarity between the two components of social assistance and integrated social assistance measures for the prevention and combating of poverty and the risk of social exclusion, for the social assistance of the child and the family, for the social assistance of people with disabilities, and for the social assistance of the elderly); approving the *National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015-2020* and the Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2020; approving the *National Strategy for the Protection of the Elderly and the Promotion of Active Ageing for the period 2015-2020* and the Operational Plan for the period 2016-2020.

¹⁵ National Institute of Statistics – Rate of severe material deprivation, by macroregion and development region

¹⁶ Eurostat – Income and Living Conditions, EU Children at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion

In the period 2009-2017, the legal framework was improved by approving a number of measures for the regulation, operation and funding of social services, such as the drawing up of new minimum quality standards for all types of social services, the approval of standard costing for social services, the creation of a Nomenclature for social services, the improvement of the procedure for the accreditation of providers of social services and the procedure for the licensing of services, the improvement of regulations concerning the organisation and operation of public social assistance services, and the continued implementation of financing programmes for social services (the programme for awarding subsidies to Romanian associations and foundations with legal personality that set up and manage social assistance entities, programmes of national interest and EU funded projects).

Moreover, during the same period progress was made with respect to the provision of state allowances for child support, family support and child placement, the provision of leave and allowances for child raising, the provision of social assistance, the provision of heating allowance and the programme to encourage participation in preschool education among children from disadvantaged families by increasing the amounts allocated and their correlation with the level of other European countries, with a view to activating people and reducing dependence on passive social measures.

Law 196/2016 on the minimum inclusion income defines this type of income as a form of social assistance benefit awarded to families and individuals in hardship with the aim of preventing and combating poverty and the risk of social exclusion.

In order to ensure a coordinated and evidence-based approach in the drawing up and implementation of policies, programmes and interventions targeting poor and vulnerable persons and poor and marginalised areas, as well as in order to improve the quality of public services, a set of strategic planning tools (interactive maps showing the regional distribution of social services and corresponding infrastructure, the need for social services and infrastructure, and the rate of relative poverty and rate of in-work poverty) was created.¹⁷

Law 219/2015 on the social economy with its subsequent changes and additions created the necessary conditions for development of the social economy in Romania with a direct impact on social inclusion through the employment of people from vulnerable groups. On 31 December 2017, there were 99 accredited social enterprises (in 33 counties) and 8 certified social insertion enterprises (in 5 counties) at the national level.

The *National Youth Policy Strategy 2015-2020*, approved in 2015, was drawn up with a focus on young people aged between 14 and 35. In order to improve social inclusion among young people, this strategy contains measures and directions for action aimed at young people who have left placement centres, young people living on the street, young people with no access to housing and with no prospect of obtaining housing, young Roma people, young people with special educational needs, young victims of exploitation, young people with HIV/AIDS, and young victims of discrimination.

In 2016, the *"A Society without Barriers for People with Disabilities" National Strategy 2016-2020* was approved together with the Operational Plan for its implementation.

¹⁷<https://servicii-sociale.gov.ro/ro/index>.

HORIZON 2020

- *Establish sustainable quality and cost standards for all social services with a special focus on those aimed at vulnerable groups*
- *Develop a national system of social inclusion indicators by integrating all existing databases in the area of social assistance in digital form that take social mobility into account; perform effective yearly monitoring of results based on these indicators*
- *Encourage participation in the employment market of people fit for work who are at risk of exclusion by developing active measures of counselling and social assistance*

2030 TARGETS

- *Eradicate extreme poverty for all citizens*
- *Reduce by at least by half the number of citizens living in relative poverty*
- *Consolidate the unified national system of emergency intervention, rehabilitation, and compensation services in the event of natural disasters, industrial accidents, or extreme weather events*



END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



While Romania has, to a large extent, overcome its problems in terms of hunger, new challenges are appearing regarding nutrition. Creating a healthy society requires the development of a sustainable agriculture sector and raising awareness of the importance of healthy nutrition. Romania ranks sixth in Europe when it comes to utilised agricultural area, which makes agricultural efficiency and the consolidation of farms and food processing enterprises a priority.¹⁸

The Strategy aims to develop a sustainable and competitive agri-food sector so as to improve quality of life in the rural environment and ensure living conditions like those in urban areas, to encourage local and ecological production, and to promote traditional and mountain products with added value.

MALNUTRITION

Cases of malnutrition identified in children of up to 14 years of age, predominantly from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds, have fallen slightly while still remaining at over 3,000 a year. The situation has the potential of improving following the introduction of a system of community medical care intended to improve access and inclusion and employing 1,100 nurses and 420 health mediators.

In 2014, 15.9% of European citizens aged over 18 were suffering from obesity, with a further 35.7% considered to be pre-obese, meaning

that more than half of adult Europeans were overweight. The rate of obesity in Romania in 2014 was lower than 10%, the lowest rate among European countries, although the trend is increasing.¹⁹

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Agriculture accounts for a significant proportion of the Romanian economy and holds considerable potential for development within a European context owing to favourable soil and climatic conditions and the potential of the ecological production sector. In the period 1995-2016, the contribution of agriculture to the GDP fell sharply, from 14.7% in 1995 to 4.7% in 2016, with the share of the workforce employed in agriculture remaining almost the same over the period.

In 2015, the share of the workforce employed in agriculture in Romania was 25.9%, the highest in the whole of the EU, for which the average was 4.4%. Of all the people working in agriculture in Romania, 84% were non-salaried, compared with an EU average of non-salaried people working in agriculture of 72%, with the gross added value per worker being approx. 50% lower than the EU average.²⁰

All of this shows that Romanian agriculture faces a major problem in terms of low labour productivity and, implicitly, a relatively low level of agricultural output. Despite its low productivity, Romania is one of the world's

¹⁸ Eurostat – Land Cover Statistics

¹⁹ Eurostat Report, May 2017, Current Status of the Sustainable Development Goals by the EU and the Member States

²⁰ Eurostat – Statistical Data on Farm Structure

leading exporters of maize and wheat thanks to the amount of available agricultural land. The challenge for the future is therefore to improve the level of productivity in agriculture, without endangering environmental factors (e.g. air, water and soil quality, and biodiversity), by eliminating the main limiting factors to productivity: the fragmentation of farms and lack of cooperation between farmers (almost 75% of farms in Romania are smaller than 2 ha and 70% have an income of less than 2,000 euros); the low level of training among farmers; the low level of capitalisation; and the lack of a clear definition for the professional status of farmer and the level of technical equipment of farms.

Romania is also a long way behind other European countries when it comes to irrigation systems, given that 50% of agricultural land is frequently subject to drought, but only 12% has viable irrigation infrastructure. In 2016, a *National Programme for the Rehabilitation of the Main Irrigation Infrastructure in Romania* was drawn up with an investment value of approx. 1 billion euros, the purpose of which being to adapt the agricultural sector to climate change and to reduce the effects thereof for agricultural production in particular, as well as for other environmental factors, such as the population, by rehabilitating the main existing irrigation infrastructure on state-owned public land.

ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

Ecological agriculture in Romania is a dynamic sector and has recently enjoyed significant growth. In 2010, the total surface area of land cultivated using the methods of ecological production was 182,706 ha (approx. 1.4% of the total utilised agricultural area), while by the end of 2017 this had risen to 258,470.927 ha with approx. 8,434 certified operators, representing an increase of 41.5%.

With the aim of increasing competitiveness, encouraging local products, and protecting natural resources, the legal framework was created for the certification of traditional products and established recipes, and to regulate use of the optional quality term "mountain product" – the latter measure is aimed at encouraging the development of mountain areas, supporting producers from these areas and increasing the added value of their products. Registering the products with national and European quality control systems is a way of promoting products whose particular characteristics are linked to their geographical origin and is beneficial to the rural economy. Quality control systems therefore place a premium on both the production of quality food products and on food safety and security for consumers.

Research, new technologies and raw materials, as well as the better use of nutrients and manure treatment, will change agricultural production as it is today with a view to transitioning to a functioning circular economy. The nutritional quality of agricultural products needs to be studied since the nutritional content of certain categories of vegetables is in decline due to the wide scale use of non-organic pesticides and fertilisers.

EUROPEAN FINANCING

The implementation of EU agricultural policies has resulted in a certain improvement in the sustainability of Romanian agriculture in terms of the adoption of EU norms and standards for quality and competitiveness, including from an ecological perspective, and the financial support of large farms through direct payments as part of the mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). However, in the 10 years since joining the EU, it has not proved possible to find any practical solutions to support small subsistence farms, with the result that 2.6 million traditional

smallholdings, i.e. around half of the total number, were deemed ineligible and remained outside of the system of direct payments based on the number of hectares farmed. This situation was corrected by making a corresponding adjustment to the direct

payments schemes in the first pillar of the CAP under the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020. Moreover, in the post-2020 MFF, improvements will continue to be made to the system of direct payments to subsistence smallholdings.

HORIZON 2020

- *Develop programmes to promote the consumption of healthy food*
- *Continue to implement the National Programme for the Rehabilitation of the Main Irrigation Infrastructure in Romania*
- *Support the production and diversification of indigenous species with a high genetic merit but lacking on the domestic market in the fields of vegetable farming, high-value species of swine, bull and buffalo, the poultry sector, the collection and commercialisation of wool, beekeeping, and fishing and aquaculture, including through the stimulation of research and development in the agri-food sector*
- *Increase the number of products recognised at European level/certified traditional products/certified established recipes*
- *Support and attract young farmers*
- *Increase the number of active farmers registered with the ecological farming system and increase the amount of certified ecological agricultural land*
- *Increase the number of applicant groups/economic operators registered with national and European quality schemes*
- *Promote good agricultural practices in order to prevent and combat soil pollution*

2030 TARGETS

- *Eliminate malnutrition and keep the rate of obesity under 10%, i.e. similar to the 2014 level*
- *Finalisation of the agricultural cadastre*
- *Double the share of agriculture in Romania's GDP relative to 2018*
- *Maintain and increase the genetic diversity of seeds, crops and farm, and both domestic animals and related wild species*
- *Increase the use of local agricultural production*
- *Increase the share of ecological agriculture in total agricultural production*
- *Preserve and capitalise on occupations and traditional uses of medicinal plants and forest fruit in mountain areas; maintain local traditions by increasing the number of products with special characteristics in terms of rules of origin*



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Improving access to healthcare and increasing its quality is essential for any truly sustainable society to function properly. It must be patient-centric and built on a suitable framework which promotes a healthy and proactive lifestyle and encourages social activities, prevention, and education. Any approach to healthcare and well-being must also address mental illnesses and disabilities.

The Strategy aims to reduce rates of maternal and infant mortality, lower the incidence of infectious and chronic diseases, and prevent and treat cases of substance abuse and mental illness.

THE HEALTH OF THE POPULATION AND LIFE EXPECTANCY

In terms of the health of population, the situation in Romania is mixed compared with other European countries. On the one hand, in terms of the incidence of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes, the figures, while rising, are comparable with those of developed countries; on the other hand, in terms of the indicator for some infectious diseases, tuberculosis, and certain sexually transmitted diseases (i.e. the so-called diseases of poverty specific to disadvantaged social groups), the figures for Romania are closer to those of developing countries. The strain on the healthcare system is increased

by the phenomenon of an ageing of the population, which is the result of unfavourable demographic trends (a decrease in the birth rate and the emigration of large sections of the active population of reproductive age).

In 2016, Romania had one of the lowest average life expectancies in the EU, at 75.3 years, compared with an EU average of 81 years.²¹ The increased ageing of the population and the health problems associated with ageing are a major concern. The Eurostat data for 2016 show that the “healthy life years” for Romanian women aged 65 was 5.6, which is significantly lower than the European average of 10.1, while the “healthy life years” for Romanian men aged 65 was 6.2, compared with the EU average of 9.8.

HEALTHCARE FUNDING

In the period 2007-2016, funding for the healthcare system in Romania nearly doubled in terms of budgetary allocations, from 1,752.9 million lei in 2007 to 4,086.6 million lei in 2016. As a percentage of the total budget, this represents 4.5% of GDP for 2018,²² placing Romania in last place in the EU, which on average allocates around 8% of GDP to healthcare spending.²³ This is in addition to the low amount of public money allocated to social assistance of 34.9% of GDP, as compared with the EU average of 49.1%.

²¹ NIS – Execution of the state budget by categories of income and expenditure

²² Law on the State Budget for 2018: <http://www.mfinante.ro/pagina.html?categoriebunuri=legea-bugetului-de-stat-pe-anul-2018,repartizare-pe-trimestre-buget-2018&pagina=domenii&menu=Buget>

²³ Health at a Glance: Europe 2016 – State of Health in the EU Cycle, OECD Publishing, Paris, OECD/EU, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265592-en>

INFRASTRUCTURE

As a consequence of the legislative (i.e. the adoption through GD 1028/2014 of the *National Health Strategy 2014-2020* and associated Action Plan), administrative and social assistance measures implemented in recent years, a certain amount of progress has been achieved in terms of the development of hospitals, polyclinics and clinical laboratories; the retention of medical and paramedical staff through better remuneration; the modernisation of ambulance and emergency intervention services; and the expansion of medical and social assistance services with an emphasis on vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of the population.

MEDICAL STAFF

According to NIS data, the number of doctors (excluding dental surgeons) increased from 48,199 in 2007 to 57,304 in 2016. However, it should be noted that while in 2007 there were 41,736 doctors working in the public sector, this number fell to 35,680 in 2016, with the private sector enjoying a 3.4-fold increase over the same period, from 6,463 to 21,624.²⁴

MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY

The rate of maternal mortality in Romania in 2017 was 12.7 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with 15.5 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2006. According to Eurostat, infant mortality had a decreasing trend, from 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 7.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017, although the number is still high compared with the EU average of 3.6 deaths per 1,000 live births.²⁵

VACCINATION

The EU report on the state of health in Romania in 2017 emphasised the fact that the rate of vaccination for children at age 1 against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, and measles had fallen by 10% over the period 2000-2017. As a possible explanation for this phenomenon, the report suggested the lack of reported cases in recent years and the growth in influence of the anti-vaccination movement.²⁶ The phenomenon is also confirmed by the statistics of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which show how measles vaccination coverage in Romania has seen a decreasing trend in recent years. In 2011, coverage fell beneath the optimum threshold of 95% (the threshold value for "herd immunity"), falling as low as 76% by 2016.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

In order to detect infectious diseases a national system was developed for the testing, treatment, monitoring, and counselling of HIV-positive patients or those susceptible to HIV/AIDS. In the period 2010-2015, an average of over 300,000 tests were performed each year, of which approx. 2,000 turned out to be positive. NIS data for 2016 showed there to be 6,672 people who were HIV-positive and 15,075 infected with AIDS.

The incidence of tuberculosis fell between 2006 and 2016 by 43.4%, from 96.1 people per 100,000 inhabitants to 54.4 people per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively. However, in 2016 Romania still occupied first place in the EU in terms of the number of confirmed cases of tuberculosis.²⁷ In Romania, 1,100 people die every year of tuberculosis and a further 16,000 are diagnosed with the disease, the majority

²⁴ NIS – Medical-sanitary staff by categories, ownerships, gender, macro-regions, development regions and counties

²⁵ Eurostat – Infant Mortality Rate

²⁶ European Commission Report – State of Health in the EU: Romania – Country Health Profile 2017

²⁷ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – Surveillance Report: Annual Epidemiological Report for 2016 – Tuberculosis.

from among the young and active population.²⁸ The appearance of resistance to the main anti-tuberculosis medication is transforming tuberculosis from a curable disease into a disease that is difficult or even impossible to cure.

Viral hepatitis is one of the main threats to public health across Europe, with an estimated 13.3 million people living with chronic hepatitis B and approx. 15 million people living with hepatitis C; hepatitis B causes 36,000 deaths and hepatitis C 86,000 deaths per year among the WHO European member states.

CHRONIC DISEASES

In terms of chronic diseases, particular action has been taken to reduce the burden of *cancer*, *diabetes*, and *cardiovascular disease*, as well as associated deaths, through the wider use of modern therapies and medication, through national screening programmes for the early detection and treatment of the aforementioned diseases, and through information and public awareness campaigns. In terms of the incidence of cardiovascular disease, the figures, although on the rise, are comparable to those for developed countries. A Eurostat study of the proportion of deaths caused by diseases of the circulatory system at EU level makes for alarming reading in the case of Romania, with 954.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015, compared with an EU average of 381.4 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.²⁹

Every year, over 3.4 million people are diagnosed with cancer in Europe and, if the trend continues, cancer will soon become the most important cause of disability in

Europe. On the other hand, we are witnessing a technological advance that may lead to an improvement in outcomes. Over 66,000 more Europeans diagnosed with cancer in 2012 will live for at least another five years after diagnosis, compared with if they had been diagnosed a decade earlier.

EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES

The WHO report of 2016 found there to be 4,297,711 smokers in Romania.³⁰ The report also found that around one third of this number were likely to suffer an early death due to smoking. According to the *European Commission Report – State of Health in the EU: Romania – Country Health Profile 2017*, while the total consumption of alcohol in Romania was the same as the EU average (9.6 litres per capita, compared with 10 litres per capita in 2014), binge drinking represented a serious public health issue.³¹

MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental health, which is a human right, occupies a special place in the EU. As an instrument to facilitate and encourage implementation of the *European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being*, in 2015 the European Commission launched the online mechanism “EU-Compass” for the collection, exchange and analysis of information about the policies and activity of the member states in the field of mental health. The level of mental health and well-being of the population represents an essential resource for Romania’s success as a knowledge-based economy and society, and one that should be actively developed and protected.

²⁸ <http://insp.gov.ro/sites/cnepss/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/analiza-de-situatie-tbc-2017-modificata-2.pdf>

²⁹ Eurostat – Statistics on Cause of Death

³⁰ WHO Fact sheet – Tobacco Control: Romania, 2016

³¹ European Commission Report – State of Health in the EU: Romania – Country Health Profile 2017

According to the National Report on the State of Health of the Population 2016, published by the National Institute of Public Health, the "data for the incidence and prevalence of mental illness are strongly underestimated in periodical reports." The report highlights the increase in the incidence of mental illness from 802.8 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2006 to 1,159 cases per 100,000 inhabitants

in 2015.³² According to WHO data, there were 931,842 cases of depression in Romania in 2015, representing 5% of the population of the country.³³ Moreover, the WHO has emphasised the correlation between suicide and mental illness.³⁴ In 2016, the rate of suicide in Romania was 10.4 per 100,000 in habitants, with the rate among men five times higher compared with rate among women.

HORIZON 2020

- *Promote health education, prevention, and a healthy lifestyle*
- *Set up a national programme to support long-term care services for the elderly and people with disabilities*
- *Modernise and rehabilitate public health infrastructure to bring it into line with average EU standards with a focus on rural areas, including supporting medical research*
- *Implement a transparent and viable system for the wide-spreading and management of medicines and medical devices, apparatus, and techniques on the Romanian market, to increase access among the population to the newest and best-performing diagnosis and treatment technologies*
- *Improve diagnosis and treatment capacity by implementing eHealth services; develop screening and early detection programmes for non-transmissible diseases with an impact on public health (i.e. various forms of cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases), as well as preconception, prenatal and neonatal screening, and screening for infectious diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases (hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis)*
- *Develop legislation in the area of mental health*
- *Legally regulate the production, import and commercialisation of food supplements*

³² Report of the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) – National Report on the State of Health of the Population 2016

³³ Situational Analysis. Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Public Health – Situational Analysis: World Health Day – 7 April 2017

³⁴ WHO Fact Sheet – Suicide: Key facts

2030 TARGETS

- *Ensure universal access to information, education, and counselling services in order to encourage prevention and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle*
- *Ensure the complete digitalisation of the health system and implicitly the elimination of documents and records printed on paper, in order to increase the efficiency of and facilitate medical interventions, thereby ensuring the population's rapid access to quality medical services, treatment and medication, and the efficient monitoring of needs*
- *Reduce the prevalence of maternal and infantile mortality and the incidence of breast and cervical cancer, and teenage pregnancies, with the primary focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups*
- *Reduce maternal mortality and neonatal mortality to below the EU average*
- *Increase vaccination coverage to the minimum level recommended by the WHO for each vaccine by developing a common platform for collaboration between the authorities, doctors, patients, international organisations with experience in the field, representatives of companies working in the field and other interested parties*
- *Promote awareness of mental illness, reduce the associated stigma and create an environment in which those suffering from mental illness feel accepted and able to ask for help*
- *Eliminate the contraction of tuberculosis and combat hepatitis and other transmissible diseases*
- *Reduce by one third the number of premature deaths due to non-transmissible diseases through prevention and treatment and by promoting mental health and well-being*
- *Reduce the death rate from chronic diseases*
- *Reduce the level of consumption of toxic substances*



ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Access to, and participation in, good-quality education is essential for a society to function properly and become sustainable. Education should not merely be a process to be completed prior to entering the workforce. It should be viewed as process through which to prepare younger generations for the challenges of the future, and one that continues throughout their lives. It should encourage innovation, meritocracy, constructive critical thinking, curiosity, good conduct, and emancipation.

The Strategy aims to achieve the following: to ensure access by all children to equitable and quality pre-school, primary, and secondary education leading to relevant and effective outcomes; to increase substantially the number of youth and adults with relevant skills; to promote employment in decent jobs and entrepreneurship; and to guarantee that every pupil gains the relevant skills to promote sustainable development.

FORMAL EDUCATION

The Romanian education system ranks below the EU average in terms of performance. According to the latest PISA survey, a standardised test run by the OECD, in 2015, Romania achieved poor results in reading, mathematics and science, with a 38.7% share of low achievers in reading, which, while almost double the EU average of 19.7%, nonetheless represents a slight improvement on the 57.2% share of 2006. Among the causes identified

by the OECD were: unsuitable infrastructure, early school leaving, a lack of awareness of the importance of continuing education and underfunding.³⁵

Another important factor in education underlined by the OECD is “student well-being”. Besides education, schools also provide pupils with their first interaction with society, and this experience has a profound influence on their attitude and behaviour. Schools teach pupils to be resilient, to socialise, and to be ambitious in terms of their aspirations in life. The 2015 PISA Results (Volume III) report emphasises the correlation between school-related anxiety, bullying in school, and low educational performance. Moreover, the pupil-teacher relationship has a major impact on a pupil’s development, with a sense of belonging to the community being a key factor in academic development.³⁶

EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Given the low salaries paid to teachers (a situation partially rectified in 2016-2017) and the sometimes-difficult working conditions, the quality of education in Romania still leaves a lot to be desired. In rural areas, 38% of schools have outdoor toilets, over 25% lack central heating, 20% do not have sanitary permits, 17% do not have authorised water supplies, and only 60% of schools have their own library. Access to mass education by people with disabilities and special educational needs is low and needs to be improved based on a more

³⁵ PISA 2015 – Romania

³⁶ PISA 2015 Results (Volume III)

sustained awareness of special needs and the supplementary allocation of material and human resources, especially in disadvantaged areas.

THE RATE OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND THE DROPOUT RATE

The rate of early school leaving of 18.1% in 2017, while lower than the rate of 20% in 2006, is still greater than the EU average of 10.6% for the same year. Analysis of the rate of early school leaving as a function of residential environment reveals a gap of 17 percentage points between the rural environment (26.3%) and the urban environment (9.3%). This difference is also observed between small and large cities, where the rate of early school leaving increased from 14.4% in 2012 to 17.5% in 2017. Analysis of the rate of early school leaving by region also shows a big difference between poor and more developed regions. In the North-East and South-East regions, the rates of early school leaving in 2017 were higher, at almost four times the level for the Bucharest-Ilfov region (5.5%) in both cases, at 23.6% and 22.4%, respectively. On an inter-regional level, the risk of early school leaving is greatest among young people from vulnerable groups, such as poor families or ethnic Roma families.

LIFELONG EDUCATION

In 2017,³⁷ only 1.1% of people in employment aged between 25 and 64 had completed a form of education or vocational training in the last four months, compared with the European average of around 10.5%. One possible explanation for this is that there is still no tradition of offering employees

the opportunity to undergo training and/or develop specific skills, such as using a computer. According to the same source, while in the EU an average 22% of companies with at least 10 employees offer their staff courses to develop their computer and internet skills (ICT), in Romania this is the case in only 5% of companies, placing Romania in last place in the EU by this metric. In the case of large businesses (with over 250 employees), at the EU level, more than two thirds were offering similar courses, while the figure for Romania was only 28%.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to UNESCO, education for sustainable development is "a key instrument to achieve the SDGs."³⁸ Sustainable development is a paradigm based on ethics and education for sustainable development and has as its goal the development of competencies that enable individuals to reflect on their own actions, taking into account their current and future social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts. This form of education should become an integral part of all quality education and inherent to the concept of lifelong learning.

FUNDING

The Eurostat data shows that Romania allocates the smallest share of its national budget to education, at almost two times less than the European average. Indeed, in 2014 Romania allocated only 2.75% of its GDP to this sector. By 2016, this had risen to 3.7% of GDP, compared with the EU average of 4.7%.³⁹

³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=sdg_04_60&plugin=1
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/data/main-tables>

³⁸ Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives – UNESCO

³⁹ Eurostat – Government Expenditure on Education

REFORMS

The National Education Law (Law 1/2011) mentions for the first time in Romanian education legislation the concept of early learning, taking into account the latest studies in neuroscience and psychopedagogy, which highlight the role of early education in the prevention of unwanted child behaviours during later educational stages and in terms of improving the rate of early school leaving, school results and employment opportunities. The law makes special provisions for the education of children capable of high performance, for the “School after School” Programme and for educational alternatives. Following adoption of these reforms, the enrolment of children in early education, in the preschool system, rose to 87% in 2016, from 76.2% in 2006, albeit it still remains below the EU average of 94.8%.

Higher education in Romania enjoys university autonomy, with the principle of public accountability being laid down in the university charter, and equity and ethics policies set out in the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The national higher education system is organised around the provision of different courses of study – degree, masters, doctorate, advanced post-doctoral research programmes, as well as graduate training and continuing professional development programmes and post-graduate programmes.

In order to improve the education system in Romania and make it more flexible, more coherent and better tailored to the needs of society, in 2009, the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (NQFHE)

was established, while in 2011 the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (NRQHE) became operational in the form of a portal-style IT application in Romanian and English.

Starting in 2014, the legal framework was created for the establishment and operation of career guidance and orientation centres in higher education. By way of example, in 2017 there were 34,883 pupils, 42,422 students and 12,216 university graduates who benefited from career guidance and orientation services. In 2017, the legal framework was created for the establishment and operation of student enterprises (SE) as a mechanism for the support, development and encouragement of the entrepreneurial spirit in the university environment with a view to increasing the competitiveness of Romanian universities.

The first strategies in the area of education and vocational training have been adopted: the *Strategy for the Reduction of Early School Leaving 2015-2010*, the *National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2015-2020* and the *Strategy for Education and Vocational Training 2016-2020*, all of which are monitored and assessed.

With a view to developing digital skills, within the framework plan for secondary education, the subjects of IT and ICT have for the first time been introduced to the common core curriculum, starting with the 2017-2018 school year, with one hour’s teaching per week. As part of the “Internet in Your School” project, 2,446 schools from rural areas and small towns were connected to broadband internet services, with 714,339 pupils and 56,203 teachers being the direct beneficiaries.

HORIZON 2020

- *Increase access to inclusive and quality education, including by improving pupil comfort and the skills-based curriculum, implementing the "guaranteed social package" and creating the legislative framework for early childhood education services*
- *Increase the rate of enrolment in the education system, and improve pupil comfort and a curriculum based on pupil development*
- *Promote entrepreneurial culture and the necessary skills throughout the education system by reopening and/or modernising school workshops in vocational and technical education; organise entrepreneurial competitions based on projects with practical applications within and between different educational institutions; encourage voluntary mentoring activities and partnerships with the local business community; expand student enterprises and encourage contract-based collaboration with economic agents by developing partnerships between universities and representatives of the entrepreneurial community*
- *Modernise infrastructure in the area of education and vocational training in keeping with EU standards throughout the entire education system, from early-childhood education through to post-doctoral studies and lifelong learning, so as to promote the acquisition of the skills and knowledge required on the labour market, to ensure equal opportunities irrespective of social status, gender, religion, ethnicity or psychomotor ability, and to boost the coefficients used in the funding formula in order to be able to support more disadvantaged schools*
- *Increase enrolment rates in pre-school and primary education by implementing the "guaranteed social package" and creating the regulatory framework for early-childhood education services*
- *Establish the regulatory framework for the running of continuing training programmes and to encourage participation in such programmes; support the establishment by the local authorities of community-based permanent education centres; involve companies in supporting employee enrolment in such programmes*
- *Support the education process through out-of-school and extra-curricular programmes in order to promote education for health, civic, cultural and artistic, scientific and ecological education, and education through sport*

2030 TARGETS

- *Reduce the rate of early school leaving in the educational system*
- *Achieve an education system based on ability and focused on the needs of the pupils, who should enjoy greater freedom in choosing what they study through measures such as introducing and increasing the amount of optional subjects*
- *Ensure that all pupils acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights and gender equality, to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, and to appreciate cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development*
- *Emphasise the role played in the educational process by civic education, by the principles and notions relating to a peaceful and inclusive sustainable society, the values of democracy and pluralism, the values of multiculturalism, the prevention of discrimination and an understanding of the point of view of the "other", and the importance of eradicating violence with a focus on the phenomenon of violence in schools and gender equality*
- *Modernise the education system by adapting the methods of teaching and learning to the use of information technology and increase the quality of education*
- *Organise vocational and technical education into specially designed and equipped campuses; train qualified teaching staff; create a curriculum tailored to the needs of the labour market by developing partnerships, including with the business community*
- *Expand facilities for lifelong continued training and learning, considerably increase participation in formal and non-formal systems of knowledge with a view to bringing Romania's performance closer to the EU average*
- *Expand the network of community-based permanent education centres by the local authorities; continue to involve companies in supporting employee enrolment in such programmes*
- *Substantially increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, so as to encourage employment, the creation of decent jobs and entrepreneurship*
- *Increase the level of financial literacy among citizens*
- *Expand the concept of sustainable development in formal university education as a principle and a specialisation, and highlight the role of interdisciplinary research in the development of a sustainable society*



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



The gender one is born into should not influence one's opportunities, dignity, or quality of life. Over 51% of Romania's population is female, and despite some progress in the field of gender equality, challenges remain in terms of public preconceptions about the role of women in society and the family, women's involvement in decision-making, the gender pay gap, and violence against women.

The Strategy aims to prevent and combat violence against women and girls in both the public and private sphere, and to ensure fair and effective participation and equal opportunities for women in terms of employment in management positions at all levels of political, economic, and public life.

Romania aged over 15 had been the victims of physical and/or sexual violence, with only 23% of cases having been reported, while 32% had suffered sexual harassment. The EU average showed that 30% of women had suffered domestic violence.⁴²

Data from the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police show that in 2014 there were 28,204 cases of violence, with 84.67% of victims being women. In terms of domestic violence, of the 28,362 cases, 83.56% were cases of domestic abuse against women. Every year there are approx. 200 reported cases of death caused by violence against women in which the perpetrator is a former or current partner of the victim.

THE GENDER PAY GAP

According to Eurostat, in 2016, Romania was well placed compared with the EU average in terms of the disparity between male and female salaries. On average, in the EU, a woman earned 83.8 cents for every euro earned by a man, while in Romania the figure was 94.8 cents for every euro earned by a man.⁴⁰ In fact, in 2016, Romania had the lowest pay gap in the entire EU at 5.2%, compared with the EU average at 16%.⁴¹

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

According to the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), in 2014, 30% of women in

WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES

In 2017, the percentage of women in senior roles was 11%, compared with the EU average of 25.3%. In terms of women in politics, the number of women in both chambers of the Romanian Parliament was only 19.1%, compared with the EU average of 29%.

MEASURES TAKEN

The principle of equal opportunity and treatment between men and women is laid down in Law no. 202/2002, republished in June 2013, which stipulates measures for the promotion of equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in all

⁴⁰ Eurostat – Gender Pay Gap

⁴¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-press-releases/-/3-07032018-BP>

⁴² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – Violence against Women: an EU-wide survey. Main results report

spheres of public life in Romania. As a signatory of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), for almost 35 years, Romania has been committed to eliminating discrimination against women and adopting legislative and other measures required to eliminate this form of discrimination in all its forms and manifestations. Romania is also signatory of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, which it ratified in 2003.

Through Law no. 30/2016, Romania also ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). The Romanian Government, through the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women and with the support of civil society, has drawn up a legislative package for implementation of the convention.

HORIZON 2020

- *Organise information and awareness raising campaigns on the equitable division of responsibilities in the home and in the family, improve the relevant social services, and balance professional obligations with private and family life, with the purpose of increasing the involvement of men in family life and the attendance of courses for young parents*
- *Legally establish the position of expert in equal opportunities between men and women and the ability to appoint people with this function in all public institutions and authorities, as well as in private companies with over 50 employees*
- *Create an integrated system of monitoring and reporting with respect to cases of domestic violence*
- *Integrate a gender perspective into school curricula and textbooks; run information and awareness raising campaigns to combat gender stereotypes among young people*
- *Monitor the implementation of legal provisions regarding sexual and reproductive health and run information and awareness raising campaigns to prevent and combat sexual abuse and to promote respect for the right to non-discrimination and identity rights*

2030 TARGETS

- *Continue to reduce the gender pay gap*
- *Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in both the public and private sphere, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of exploitation*
- *Ensure the full and effective participation and equal opportunities of women when it comes to employment in management positions at all levels of political, economic, and public life*





ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

For the Planet to thrive, its ecosystem, society, and the economy require fresh and clean water. For many years, it has been part of EU policy to protect the health of its citizens by ensuring access to quality drinking water and sanitation. This was done through promoting the connection of households to water supply and sewerage networks, especially in rural areas.

The Strategy aims to increase quality of life by developing water and sewerage infrastructure and public services, thus bringing Romania into line with EU standards and requirements in terms of drinking water, wastewater and waste management, and to increase the efficiency of water use in all sectors.

WATER USE

Romania has a decentralised water management system. The regionalisation process is almost complete and there are now 42 regional operators besides Bucharest.

According to NIS data, the greatest share of water use goes on household consumption, which accounts for 76.1% of the total. Total consumption at national level has seen a downwards trend, falling by 28.5% from 1,035.4 million m³ in 2012 to 740.7 million m³ in 2016. This occurred in parallel with the fall in the share of consumption of drinking water among other users from approx. 33% in 2012 to 23.9% in 2016. This was the result of the reduction in and

the restructuring of industrial and agricultural activity, the metering of consumption and an increase in the level of education of citizens with respect to water wastage.⁴³

ACCESS OF THE POPULATION TO WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The security of drinking water supply is an internationally recognised principle on which the production, distribution, monitoring and parametric analysis of drinking water are based. Romania has ratified the *Protocol on Water and Health of the World Health Organisation*.⁴⁴ Law no. 458/2002 on the quality of drinking water was modified in 2017 such that water security measures will become obligatory as of 2021 for all collective and individual drinking water systems that supply an average quantity of water greater than 1,000 m³/day or serve more than 5,000 people.

Romania also took other action to improve water quality and access to the water supply network in the period 2009-2017, as a result of which 317 from a total of 320 towns and municipalities and 2,189 from a total of 2,861 communes had drinking water systems by the end of 2016. However, only 65.2% of the Romanian population was connected to a public water system in 2016, placing Romania in last place in the EU in this respect. When it comes to the urban environment, the rate of connection to water supply systems in Romania is comparable to that of the other

⁴³ NIS – Waste water generation by activity sector

⁴⁴ Protocol on the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes of 17.06.1999, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, in force as of 2 September 2000

EU member states – at 94.9% compared with 96-100% for the other EU states. However, the rate of connection in rural areas, at only 30.8%, falls below the EU average.

In qualitative terms, 66.14% of the bodies of water evaluated in 2016 were awarded a 'good' or 'very good' ecological status (2,002 bodies of water) and 33.33% 'moderate' (1,009 bodies of water), with those deemed 'poor' (2 bodies of water) or 'bad' (8 bodies of water) representing under 1% (Six bodies of water were not evaluated). All 143 underground bodies of water evaluated in 2016, were awarded a 'good' quantitative status and only 15 of these were given an unsatisfactory chemical status. For the most part, the measures taken to improve the quality of the bodies of water involved a stricter application of the existing regulations regarding the gradual elimination of discharges, emissions and leakages of toxic and dangerous substances in the aquatic environment and the elimination of uncontrolled waste disposal.

In Romania, the main method of getting rid of municipal waste is disposal. In 2008 there were 239 municipal landfill sites, of which 221, i.e. 92.5%, were non-compliant. In the last ten years measures were taken to reduce the impact of non-compliant landfill sites on the soil and underground and surface bodies of water. Disposal at non-compliant landfill sites is currently suspended, with the majority being cleaned up and shut down (40 are in the process of closing). At the start of 2018, there were 41 compliant landfill sites in operation, with plans to build a further 17.

The amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfills fell to 1.85 million tonnes in 2015, representing 38.5% of the amount of biodegradable waste generated in 1995. However, Romania is lagging behind in terms

of the separate collection and recycling of waste, as well as the transformation of biodegradable non-toxic waste into compost or its incineration in waste-to-energy plants.

Programmes of measures were implemented to establish manure storage platforms at commune and individual level as part of the first phase of the *Integrated Nutrient Pollution Control Project* (2008-2015), with a total value of 39,500,000 euros.⁴⁵ Other measures to develop forested areas, forest-environmental services and climate services and the conservation of forests, as well the agri-environment-climate and ecological agriculture measure, implemented through the National Rural Development Programme 2014-2020,⁴⁶ are contributing directly or indirectly to improving water quality.

The *Medium and Long-Term National Flood Risk Management Strategy* was drawn up in the period 2008-2017, and based on this the *Plans for the Prevention of, Protection from and Reduction of the Effects of Flooding* and the *Flood Risk Management Plans* for all 11 drainage basins were drawn up. In addition to this, the flood hazard and risk maps for the areas denoted as having a high risk of flooding, accounting for approx. 16,000 km of watercourse, were also created. The early warning and emergency intervention systems also became operational, albeit with something of a delay.

Romania's considerable sources of underground water represent a special category. These produce 12 thousand m³/day of natural mineral water, 48 thousand m³/day of therapeutic waters, 19 thousand m³/day of water with carbon dioxide of volcanic origin, and 21 thousand m³/day of geothermal waters. In order to extract this water, 131 water exploitation permits have been issued.

⁴⁵ Updated National Management Plan for the National Sections of the Danube River Drainage Basin, ANAR 2016

⁴⁶ <http://www.madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/2018/PNDR-2014-2020-versiunea-VII-aprobata-10-august-2018.pdf>

Underground drinking water, industrial water and groundwater together form 101 underground deposits.

SANITATION

In 2015, Romania accounted for the largest number of people in the EU without access to a bath, shower, and flushing toilet in their homes, i.e. 30.5% of the population compared with the EU average of 2.0%.⁴⁷

While there has been progress at national level in terms of the implementation of Directive 91/271/CEE concerning wastewater treatment, during the period 2009-2015 the increase in the collection and treatment of waste water occurred mostly in urban areas. Indeed, over this period the level of collection rose from approx. 51% of the population to 63.46%, and the level of treatment from approx. 37.5% to 56.71%, in the case of agglomerations greater than 2,000 PE.⁴⁸ However, in rural areas the level of collection and treatment of waste water is still very low. One of the reasons for this is the low rate of connection to sewerage networks among the population, with in some cases the infrastructure being in place without the population being connected to it.

The proportion of the population connected to sewerage systems in 2016 was 49.2%, while

the proportion connected to treatment plants was 47.8%, which is substantially below the level of other countries in the region.⁴⁹ Throughout the 2009-2015 period, around 4.14 billion euros of financing (both national and international) was invested in the construction, rehabilitation and modernisation of the country's waste water collection and treatment systems.⁵⁰

The integrated action for the development of water supply systems and sewerage will be continued through the *Operational Programme for Large Infrastructure (OPLI)* for 2014-2020, with the related European financing amounting to 1.26 billion euros for the development of drinking water supply systems and 1.31 billion euros for household waste water collection and treatment systems for agglomerations greater than 2,000 PE.

In order to meet the quality targets for bodies of water by 2017, supplementary measures are required in terms of the building of sewerage systems and treatment plants in agglomerations of less than 2,000 PE. The cost of implementing these measures has been estimated at 537.6 billion euros. This will be partly financed by the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development as part of the measure to develop basic infrastructure in the rural environment and the *National Programme of Local Development*.

⁴⁷ Eurostat Report, May 2017, Current Status of the Sustainable Development Goals by the EU and the Member States

⁴⁸ PE = population equivalent or the biodegradable organic load with a biochemical oxygen demand over 5 days (BOD₅) of 60g O₂/day

⁴⁹ National Institute of Statistics

⁵⁰ Updated National Management Plan for the National Sections of the Danube River Drainage Basin, ANAR 2016

HORIZON 2020

- *Promote the sustainable exploitation of Romania's considerable mineral water resources (still and naturally carbonated) for human consumption as well as therapeutic use; encourage a more active use of geothermal waters both in the generation of energy and for health tourism (spas)*
- *Strictly monitor the quality of drinking water intended for consumption by the population to ensure it does not exceed accepted bio-chemical parameters*
- *Ensure access to drinking water and sewerage systems on the periphery of towns and cities; support the connection of a greater number of households to these networks with the involvement of the local authorities*

2030 TARGETS

- *Substantially increase the efficiency of water use in industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities; expand the rational reuse of treated and recycled water with a view to meeting the requirements of a circular economy*
- *Substantially increase the efficiency of water use in all sectors and ensure a sustainable process of abstraction and supply of drinking water in order to address water shortages*
- *Connect at least 90% of households in towns, communes, and compact villages to the drinking water and sewerage network*
- *Increase access to drinking water among vulnerable and marginalised groups*
- *Improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating waste disposal, and reducing to a minimum the amount of chemical products and dangerous substances, thereby reducing the proportion of untreated waste water, and significantly increasing recycling and safe reuse*
- *Provide access to adequate and equitable sanitary and hygienic conditions for all with a special focus on those in vulnerable situations*



ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



Global energy demand is constantly growing, and only by encouraging energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy can current needs and those of future generations be met. The energy sector plays an essential role in Romania's development through its profound influence on the competitiveness of its economy, quality of life, and the environment.

To meet consumer expectations in the long term, the Romanian energy sector needs to become more robust from an economic point of view, more advanced and more flexible from a technological point of view, and more environmentally friendly.

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Worth approx. 30 billion euros and employing some 80,000 people in 2017, the energy sector accounts for a large and strategically important share of the Romanian economy. It is also the main emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) and as such plays a central role in reducing global warming, in terms of both the gradual shift away from the use of fossil fuels towards sources with low GHG emissions, in particular solar and wind, and increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and vehicles and the switch to electric transportation technology.

ENERGY SECURITY

Romania is fairly well placed in a regional and European context when it comes to energy

security. Its rate of energy independence in 2016 was 78.4%, with 80.3% for coal (including coke), 33.1% for crude oil and 86.4% for natural gas. The advantage of having its own sources of primary energy is also reflected in the country's a balanced energy mix, comprising coal, nuclear, natural gas and the renewable sources of hydro, wind, solar and biomass.

However, the situation on the international energy market is dynamic and technological developments can have unforeseen effects on energy markets. Ambitious policies at the European level in the field of energy and climate change⁵¹ focused on the reduction of greenhouse gases, the growth in the share of renewable sources and the shift in public attitudes towards "clean energy" will all influence investment behaviour in the energy sector and the patterns of energy consumption.

ACCESS TO ENERGY

Current priorities in the energy sector are focused on correcting certain dysfunctions and bringing Romania into line with the EU average. These include expanding the connectivity of electricity and natural gas supply networks on a regional and European level, in order to eliminate congestion, gradually decarbonising, and electrifying final energy consumption in all sectors of the economy, including the residential environment, replacing physically and morally outdated technologies, and adopting an

⁵¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/clean-energy-all-europeans>

integrated approach to energy policies and policies in other sectors, while respecting the obligation to protect the environment and to limit the consequences of climate change.

In terms of access to energy, according to the Eurostat data for 2016, 38.8% of the population in Romania was susceptible to social exclusion, i.e. 7.6000,000 people. In absolute terms, during the period 2008-2016 the number of people who were removed from the category of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was 1,420,000.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Romania achieved the EU targets for 2020 in terms of the contribution of energy policies to reducing the impact of climate change ahead of time. As part of its commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 20% relative to 1990 levels, in 2012 Romania had achieved a reduction of 47.96%, compared with an EU average of 82.14%. In 2016, Romania saw an increase of 25.03% in the share of energy derived from renewable sources in gross consumption and a reduction of energy consumption of 41.6%, compared with the 20% it had committed to.

In order to maintain the share of renewable sources at the level committed to by Romania, a series of legislative changes were introduced to Law 220/2008 on the establishment of the system for the promotion of renewable energy production, with its subsequent modifications and additions, including, among other things, the integration of small producers into the national energy system.

Romania is in the process of implementing the *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan*

approved in 2015. Work is currently under way on the *Integrated National Energy and Climate Change Plan*, which is based on the *Draft Energy Governance Regulation* containing the targets and measures that need to be implemented at EU level in this field.

Primary energy consumption is a key indicator in the monitoring of the progress made by the EU and each member state in achieving the targets established by Directive 2012/27/EU. In 2016, Romania had the lowest level of primary energy consumption of all 28 EU member states at 1,582 tonnes of oil equivalent per capita,⁵² which was almost half the EU average for the same year of 2.997 toe per capita. The level of primary energy consumption per capita for 2016 nonetheless represents a fall of 8.3% on 2011. Romanian energy efficiency policies made an important contribution to this reduction.⁵³

While final energy consumption increased by 1.8% in 2016 compared with the previous year, with the value of GDP also being 4.8% higher,⁵⁴ the level of consumption for the period 2014-2016 was below that for 2011-2012. The household sector accounted for the greatest share of final energy consumption, at 34.5% in 2011 and 33.2% in 2016. This suggests that efforts in this sector need to be focused on increasing energy efficiency through programmes for the thermal insulation of residential apartment buildings, the labelling of electrical goods and the *Green Homes Programme*.

The amount of energy saved through the thermal rehabilitation of buildings, as part of the *Regional Operational Programme* for 2007-2013, was 348 GWh/year, with 41,311 apartments being rehabilitated. Further energy savings were achieved through the

⁵² Tonnes of oil equivalent

⁵³ Progress Report on the Meeting of National Energy Efficiency Targets, ANRE, April 2018

⁵⁴ Ibid

Green Homes Programme for natural persons, for the installation of heating systems based on renewable energy and implemented by the Environment Fund Administration, which saw the installation of 40,000 systems worth approx. 250,000,000 lei. The renovation of buildings is an excellent opportunity for the sustainable modernisation of existing architecture, resulting in multiple benefits for households, businesses, and the public sector. A strategic integrated approach in this respect would stimulate the market in a positive and different way from the current fragmented initiatives.

Through the revision of *Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings*, the European Commission encourages the use of innovative and smart technologies in buildings. Two thirds of all buildings in the EU were built before the development of building regulations, and the percentage of these that has been renovated is approx. 1%.

The act of authorising energy auditors/certifying energy managers helps promote and develop a system for the provision of audits able to highlight potential energy savings for the final energy consumer. The corresponding number of energy auditors certified each year indicates the openness of the market for energy services. At the end of 2017 there were 441 energy managers, 207 energy auditors who were natural persons, 72 energy auditors who were legal persons (of whom 19 were registered sole traders (PFA)) and 71 providers of approved energy services (of whom 20 were registered sole traders (PFA)).⁵⁵

In 2016, the *energy productivity* indicator for Romania had a value of EUR 10.30 PPP/kgoe, which was higher than the EU-28 average of EUR 9.1 PPP/kgoe.⁵⁶ This places Romania in sixth place in a ranking of EU member states.⁵⁷

The system for the promotion of electricity produced from renewable sources through green certificates has been in place since 2005. However, Romania is still at the stage of adapting to the green economy/green energy.

⁵⁵ Progress Report on the Meeting of National Energy Efficiency Targets, ANRE, April 2018

⁵⁶ Energy intensity is a measure of gross inland consumption of energy in relation to the national economy (i.e. the amount of energy necessary to produce one unit of GDP)

⁵⁷ Purchasing power parity

HORIZON 2020

- *Revise and expand the legal framework, including with respect to fiscal legislation in the field of oil and gas; monitor negotiated contracts and ensure the transparency of procedures; strengthen decision-making powers and the independence of the regulatory and supervisory authorities*
- *Liberalise and expand the energy market and work towards the interconnection of energy systems at national and regional levels with a view to creating a complementary and interactive network of services (smart grids and metering) and reducing costs for consumers*
- *Maintain an optimum energy mix by exploiting the country's own resources, diversifying import sources and export destinations, modernising and improving the efficiency of existing viable infrastructure, and promoting renewable energy sources and low-carbon conversion technologies*
- *Reduce domestic consumption of primary energy by 19%*

2030 TARGETS

- *Expand electricity and gas distribution networks with a view to ensuring household consumer, industrial and commercial access to safe sources of energy at acceptable prices*
- *Ensure the cyber security of the platforms for the monitoring of production, transport and supply networks for electricity and natural gas*
- *Decouple economic growth from the process of resource depletion and environmental degradation by substantially boosting energy efficiency (by a minimum of 27% compared with the status quo) and the extensive use of the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) in stable and predictable market conditions*
- *Increase the share of renewable energy and low-carbon fuel used in the transport sector (electric vehicles), including the use of alternative fuels*
- *Ensure a stable and transparent regulatory framework in the field of energy efficiency with a view to attracting investment*
- *Strategically support the share of electricity in total household, industrial and transport consumption by establishing performance standards for facilities and equipment*





PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Sustainable development encourages the decoupling of economic growth from its negative impact on the environment and society. This SDG seeks to promote sustainable economic growth and employment and a decent living standard for all, irrespective of one's gender, geographic location, or origins. Implementing the principle of "no one left behind" is imperative.

The Strategy has the following aims: to support per capita economic growth, to support the productive sectors of the economy and the diversification of value-added products, and to create decent employment; to promote entrepreneurship, to increase the number of small and medium-sized enterprises, to encourage technological modernisation and innovation, and to ensure decent work for all citizens, including young people and people with disabilities, equal pay for equal work, and access to financing; to promote a sustainable tourism industry that creates employment while promoting cultural diversity, local products, and respect for tradition and the environment.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS

The EU's new approach to industrial policy places a strong focus on competitiveness within a global context by ensuring the sustainability of production and consumption, increasing efficiency in the use of material resources, revitalising the high added-value processing industries and narrowing the gap

to the services sector, which has developed rapidly in recent decades. In Romania, the contribution of the industrial sector (including construction) to GDP in 2016 of 30.2%, while higher than the EU average of 22%, is part of a decreasing trend in favour of services, similar to what is occurring in the majority of European countries.

The Romanian *services sector* now exceeds 50% of GDP. The sector grew steadily between 2012 and 2016, but still lies below the EU average of 66%. In terms of contributions to gross national income, the largest share comes from commercial activities, followed by public administration and defence, education, health and social assistance. Of the 189 regulated professions in Romania, 22.2% are in the area of services, which is below the EU average. However, the proportion of knowledge-intensive and creativity-based regulated professions is relatively close to the EU average. A profession recently added to the list of registered professions in Romania is that of *expert in sustainable development*.

THE FINANCIAL AND BANKING SECTOR

Economic development depends to a considerable extent on the complexity of the financial and banking system. Capitalisation in the Romanian banking sector has been rising, in particular after the economic crisis, which affected Romania more than other countries in the EU. Even if the improvements in this indicator have not been all that spectacular, the signs are positive and reflect a financial and banking system that is growing in strength

and increasingly concerned with the quality of the capital it holds. However, Romania must continue its extensive efforts to consolidate and restructure its banking sector.

Data for 2016 show a public debt to GDP ratio of 37.4%. Romania, being in a situation of ongoing indebtedness, needs to act prudently and to avoid systemic risk and the channelling of borrowed money to areas that do not generate economic development and do not have favourable social and environmental impacts.

Romanians manage to accumulate significant capital resources during both periods of economic growth and periods of recession. The data show that the savings rate in Romania grew constantly, exceeding both the EU average and the Eurozone average in 2012 (a positive sign for capital and domestic investment). The crisis of 2007-2008 contributed massively to the growth in savings. This resulted in a change in behaviour among Romanian citizens, who began to show more prudence in situations where their jobs, income or the value of their assets were at risk.

EMPLOYMENT

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Eurostat, Romania had an employed population in 2017 of 8,670,556. The rate of employment for people aged 20-64 was 68.8%, of which men accounted for 77.3% and women 60.2%. The employment rate among people aged 55-64 was 44.5%. The unemployment rate was 4.9%. The employment rate among higher education graduates for the age group 15-64 was approximately 4 percentage points higher than the EU average, at 87.9% compared with 84.0%.

Industrial activity in Romania in recent years has been concentrated in the low and medium-tech

sectors. Low-tech industries were responsible for employing 69% of the workforce, compared with the EU average of 62%. The percentage of people working in high-tech industries was 4%, compared with the EU average of 7%. There has been dynamic growth in the area of information technology and communications in Romania, especially in the last 5-6 years, with contributions to GDP of 3.8% in 2010, 5.0% in 2015 and 5.3% in 2016. The foundations are therefore in place for Romania to make an active and substantive contribution to the realisation of the EU Agenda for the creation of a Digital Single Market.

The *Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2017-2020* has the role of facilitating integration into work and aiding the transition from education to the labour market among young people. The aim is to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive an offer of quality employment, of continuing their education, of entering into an apprenticeship or of an internship within 4 months of registering with a regional employment agency.

START-UPS AND THE BUSINESS CLIMATE

The success of a start-up is closely linked to the business climate. According to the report "Doing Business in the European Union 2017: Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania" of the World Bank, Romania has made significant progress in improving its entrepreneurial environment. The report argues that Romania has made the biggest leap of any EU member state except Poland in terms of closing the gap with global best practices in business regulation. This is particularly important for small and medium-sized companies, which make up more than 98% of all businesses in the EU and account for approx. 66% of jobs in the private sector.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ "Doing Business in the European Union 2017: Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary" report – World Bank, www.doingbusiness.org

The Ministry for Business Environment, Commerce and Entrepreneurship runs the “*Start-Up Nation – Romania*” scheme to encourage the setting up of small and medium-sized enterprises, which for the period 2017-2020 is providing funding for up to 10,000 beneficiaries per year.

TOURISM

Romania has ratified the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. One goal committed to in the Carpathian Convention is the opening of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Centre Romania in Braşov, under the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform.

The aims of the *National Tourism Development Master Plan for Romania 2007-2026*, which is currently under implementation, are as follows: to promote the optimum use of environmental resources, which play a key role in the development of tourism, the preservation of essential ecological processes and the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity; to respect the social and cultural authenticity of guest communities, and to preserve built heritage, cultural life and traditional values, thereby promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance; and to ensure viable economic activity in the long term, so as to create equitably distributed socio-economic benefits for all interested parties, including stable jobs and opportunities to earn income and social services for communities that help reduce poverty.

Moreover, the National Strategy for the Development of Ecotourism in Romania has been drawn up and the “Criteria for the Designation of Ecotourism Destinations” have been approved, with at present the following areas designated as ecotourism destinations: the Mara-Cosău-Creasta Cocoşului area – Maramureş; the Țara Hațegului-Retezat area; and the Ținutul Zimbrului area.

SOCIAL COORDINATION

Decent work is closely linked to the existence of dialogue between employer and employee. Trades unions, employers' associations, and professional associations have the role of facilitating this dialogue, which, based on the principle that “no one will be left behind,” allows for the creation of the necessary framework for the improvement of jobs.

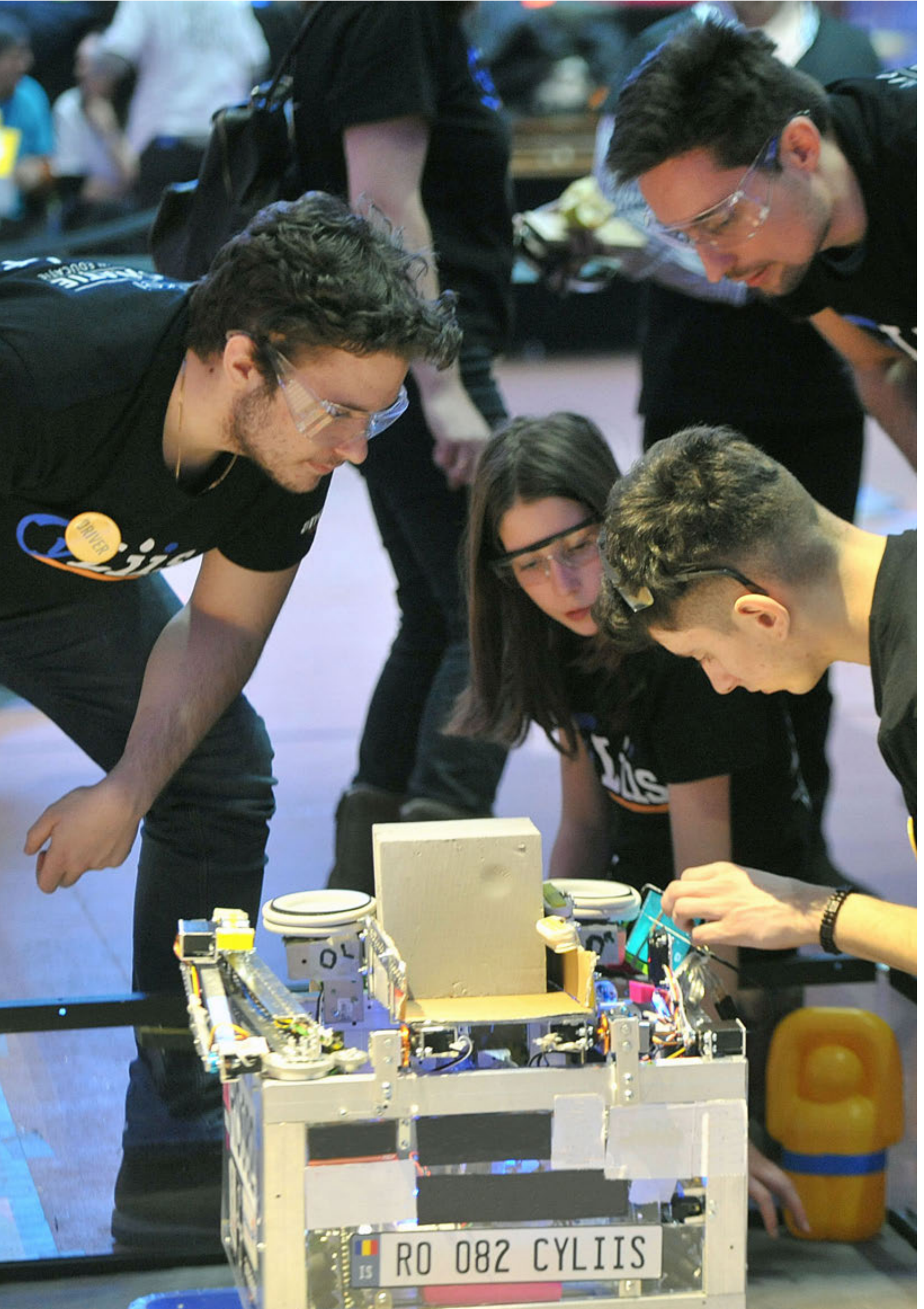
Another form of dialogue is that between state and the private sector. A first step in normalising the relationship between the business environment and the control authorities based on trust, information/education, collaborative compliance, and the autonomy of control activity was achieved through adoption of the Prevention Law of 29 November 2017. This law provides for the creation of a portal for public information, while the control authorities with powers to record and sanction offences also have the obligation to create and distribute documents and guidelines describing the rights and obligations of the parties concerned.

HORIZON 2020

- *Continue working to create the conditions for joining the Eurozone in the form of prudent monetary policies and measures to boost the productivity and competitiveness of the Romanian economy*
- *Support the activity of small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship among young people by encouraging and providing financial support for start-ups*
- *Initiate basic vocational training programmes with EU funding in keeping with the demands of the labour market, with a focus on the young and socially vulnerable sectors of the population*
- *Encourage the conclusion of employment contracts with flexible working hours/teleworking (remote working); ensure support services and facilities for the care of children and dependent family members*
- *Create and implement a coherent plan for the development of tourism, including green tourism (a considerable generator of work and income), by improving infrastructure and access ways to tourist destinations, professionalising staff and wisely exploiting cultural traditions and national characteristics*
- *Exploit the potential of capital markets and other financing instruments, including public-private partnerships*

2030 TARGETS

- *Maintain a GDP growth rate above the EU average in order to help reduce the gap between Romania and the more advanced European economies, while still respecting the principles of sustainable development and continuously improving the living standards of the population*
- *Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, the creation of decent jobs, entrepreneurship through start-ups, creation and innovation, and which encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services*
- *Achieve high levels of productivity through diversification, technological modernisation, and innovation, including through focusing on sectors with high added value and a more intensive use of the workforce*
- *Create a tourism sector that is competitive in the long time, develop agritourism, ecotourism, and rural, spa and cultural tourism, and improve Romania's image as a tourist destination*
- *Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions in order to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all*



BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALISATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Recent societal developments have resulted in a fast-paced world in which only countries that encourage innovation, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable industry are able to compete. Sustainable industrialisation means a “knowledge-based economy” built on innovation that benefits society and respects the environment.

The Strategy has the following aims: to encourage development of quality, viable, safe, and sustainable infrastructure to support economic development and well-being for all; to integrate small and medium-sized enterprises in value chains and on external markets; to modernise infrastructure and rehabilitate industries for the efficient use of resources by adopting clean and ecological industrial processes and technologies; to strengthen scientific research, by significantly increasing the number of employees working in research and development, and to collaborate with the private sector; to modernise the technological capacity of the industrial sectors and to encourage innovation.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The field of transport is considered a priority in the context of Romania’s development plans, given its interdependence with the other branches of the economy, the value of the services it provides for the population, and its considerable impact on the surrounding environment. The main forms of transport

are: road, rail, river, maritime, and air. Major deficiencies were identified in the areas of sustainability, economic efficiency, safety, environmental impact, contribution to the development of other branches of the economy, domestic and international connectivity, and obtaining financing for investments.

In terms of *road transport*, motorways and national and European roads account for only 21% of Romania’s road network. Almost 90% of the road network is made up of roads with one lane for each direction, the condition of which, according to the agreed system of classification, is 50% good, 30% medium, and 20% poor.

This situation places Romania top of the list in Europe in terms of road accident fatalities, with 94 fatalities per million inhabitants, compared with an EU average of 60; 259 fatalities per 10 billion passenger-kilometres, compared with an EU average of 61; and 466 fatalities per million motor vehicles, compared with an EU average of 126. Moreover, the number of road accidents involving pedestrians is much higher than the EU average. According to Eurostat, the number of pedestrians involved in road accidents in the EU accounted for 22% of the total number of road fatalities in 2013, while the figure for Romania was 38% in 2017.⁵⁹

The total length of the *rail network* in use was 10,774 km, of which 72% was single-track, compared with an EU average of 59%, and only 37% of lines were electrified, compared with an EU average of 52%. During the period

⁵⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Road_accident_fatalities_-_statistics_by_type_of_vehicle

2004-2017, the number of passengers fell by 30.3%, from approx. 99 to 69 million passengers per year.

Romanian rail freight transport has suffered considerably due to the decline of heavy industry. The amount of freight transported by rail fell from 67 million tonnes in 2008 to 56 million tonnes in 2017. Moreover, the growth in road freight transport saw the market share of rail freight transport fall from 19.1% in 2011 to 15.4% in 2017.

The average operating speed of passenger rail services in Romania is 44-46 km/h, which is almost half that for Great Britain and Germany, a situation which can only partially be explained by the country's mountainous terrain and which is accentuated by the many stops, long dwell times, and other technical factors. However, the safety of rail transport in Romania is quite good, albeit there is still a large number of fatalities (58 on the rail network run by CFR, the national rail company, in the period 2007-2011) in the form of suicides and road accidents at level crossings.

Water transport occupies third place in the EU in terms of the share of freight transported by inland navigable waterways and value in tonne-kilometres owing to the fact that Romania has 44% of the navigable sector of the Danube and the Danube-Black Sea and the Poarta Albă-Midia-Năvodari canals. The Port of Constanța, with a throughput capacity of approx. of 1.8 million TEUs per year (with the potential to expand to 2.5 million TEUs per year), provides further potential for developing transport via inland navigable waterways and by sea.

With a total number of 20.2 million passengers in 2017 (compared with 783,000 in 2007), *air transport services* play an important

and growing role in the area of transport.⁶⁰ Romania has 17 airports.

Intermodal transport is in its early stages in Romania, but it has a high potential, especially in transit operations. The trimodal terminals (river, rail and road) of Galați and Giurgiu have good prospects for development, especially in terms of containerisation.

SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALISATION

Romania needs an industrial sector with a minimum impact on the environment in order to mitigate climate change, address the challenges of reducing industrial emissions of greenhouse gases, energy efficiency and reducing resource use through use of clean technologies, and promote ecological industrial approaches and environmental awareness raising programmes. A competitive and sustainable industrial sector plays an essential role in accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty through productive activities, and meeting all of the sustainable development goals established in the 2030 Agenda. In light of this, and in compliance with the EU's renewed industrial policy strategy,⁶¹ there is a need to support the consolidation of value chains and implement the best performing technologies, to promote the circular economy and competitiveness, to encourage industrial trade, and to develop the private sector, agri-industries and renewable energy.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Romania belongs to the category of modest innovators, having for many years been one of the worst performers in Europe in this respect⁶² owing to the low level of expenditure on research, development, and innovation

⁶⁰ NIS – Air Transport

⁶¹ COM 479/13.09.2017: Investing in a Smart, Innovative and Sustainable Industry

⁶² European Innovation Scoreboard 2018, <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/30697>

(RDI), which has constantly remained below 0.5% of GDP. Owing to the duration and extent of this negative state of affairs, researchers from Romania currently make up the largest scientific diaspora in the EU, with a notable contingent also existing overseas. This situation is due to the low interest of the economic environment for RDI activities in general, and those carried out through one's own efforts in particular.

Given the low contribution of private capital in the financing of research, development, and innovation projects, action was taken to support research activity in the form of increasing the income of RDI workers, through GD no. 751/11.10.2017 on the basic wage ceiling and income tax exemptions for RDI employees. Measures were taken to stimulate RDI by businesses in the form of direct financing

instruments through National Programmes, financing instruments such as guaranteed loans and risk capital investment, as well as other fiscal facilities for companies.

There has been large investment in major infrastructure of international scientific importance and involving the use of advanced and emerging technologies as part of major European projects: e.g. the Extreme Light Infrastructure - Nuclear Physics (ELI-NP) facility, a very high power laser system and high intensity gamma-ray beam; and the DANUBIUS project and the Danubius RI International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Sea Systems, which will support inter- and trans-disciplinary research on river-sea systems, etc. Another project currently in progress is the RDI programme for Generation IV ALFRED reactors.

HORIZON 2020

- *Improve connectivity between municipalities and regions by increasing the proportion of modernised county and local roads to 61% by 2020 (from 39.4% in 2016)*
- *Encourage and support, under fair conditions, foreign direct investment, and investment based on local capital, with a focus on high and medium tech sectors, that generates high added value and incorporates the latest achievements in the research and development of modern technology, including in the defence industry*
- *Increase the budget for research by approx. 30% each year, ensuring a fair distribution of budgetary resources, in order to support both applied research and innovation, and fundamental and frontier research, with a focus on areas of smart specialisation/with potential for growth*
- *Develop sectoral programmes for the financing of applied research both from the state budget and by encouraging private investment and developing partnerships in this sector*

2030 TARGETS

- *Modernise and develop quality, viable, sustainable, and powerful regional and cross-border infrastructure, in order to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on fair and equitable access by all*
- *Improve road safety*
- *Rehabilitate the industrial sector in order to make it sustainable through a more efficient use of resources and increased adoption of clean and ecological industrial technologies and processes, with all countries implementing measures in keeping with their respective capacities*
- *Stimulate in particular the digital economy and investment in industries which are at the more profitable end of the value chain, which utilise the results of national efforts in the area of research, development and innovation, and which target stable and growing markets*
- *Boost scientific research and modernise the technological capacity of the industrial sectors; encourage innovation and significantly increase the number of employees in research and development and increase public and private spending on research and development*
- *Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and increase the rate of employment*
- *Increase the access of small industrial and other companies to financial services, including accessible loans, and integrate them into value chains and external markets*





REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Inequality is one of the biggest hindrances to a truly sustainable society. Inequality can come in many forms – e.g. gender, access to education, and wealth, to name just a few. Some vulnerable groups, such as women with disabilities or of Roma origin, suffer from intersectional discrimination, in which several different characteristics of a vulnerable group are subject to discrimination, which means they are particularly disadvantaged. It is only by reducing inequalities that the benefits of economic development can be enjoyed by all and the ideal of a meritocratic society, in which everybody has equal access to resources, can be achieved.

The Strategy aims to reduce disparities, to eliminate discrimination in all its forms, and to promote progressive policies for the achievement of a fair society, especially in terms of taxation, salary levels, education, and social protection.

REDUCING DISPARITIES WITHIN ROMANIA

The Gini coefficient measures the degree of inequality in disposable income among the population, with 0% representing complete equality and 100% absolute inequality. According to Eurostat, in 2008 Romania had a Gini coefficient of 35.9%, compared with the EU average of 31%, while in 2016 the coefficient was 34.7% for the former compared with 30.8% for the latter.

The Purchasing Power Standard (PPS)⁶³ highlights the existence of clear differences in the level of regional development between different regions within Romania. In 2015, when the Bucharest-Ilfov region had a per capita GDP of 39,400 PPS, which was greater than the per capita GDP for the EU-28 of 28,900 PPS, the differences between the regions were as follows: the per capita GDP in PPS of the Bucharest-Ilfov region was more than twice that of the per capita GDP in PPS for the North-East region (the poorest region in terms of per capita GDP in PPS); the per capita GDP in PPS of the North-East region was more than three times lower than the European average; the most prosperous region after Bucharest-Ilfov was the West region, with a per capita GDP in PPS of 16,500, followed by the North-West region, with a per capita GDP in PPS of 14,400.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a relevant indicator in the measurement of economic growth, especially when the free movement of capital is one of the fundamental principles of the EU. In 2016, 60% of FDI was concentrated in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, thus highlighting the disparity between the development regions of Romania.

DISPARITY BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

According to NIS data, 46.2% of Romanian citizens were living in the rural environment in 2015.⁶⁴ According to Eurostat, the EU average is 28%. The most representative indicator for

⁶³ The Purchasing Power Standard (PPS) is an artificial currency used among others by Eurostat to make international comparisons and is derived from values expressed in the local currency and using the purchasing power standard as a conversion factor

⁶⁴ NIS – Resident population on 1 January by age group, age, gender, urban/rural area, macroregion, development region and county

socio-economic inequality between urban and rural indicators is the “risk of poverty or social exclusion”. Eurostat data shows that, in 2016, in Romania, the risk of poverty was 24.3% for the urban environment and 51.7% for the rural environment. The EU average was 23.6% for urban areas and 25.5% for rural areas.⁶⁵

DISPARITY IN COMPARISON WITH THE EU MEMBER STATES

The rate of absorption of European funds in Romania, while growing, is still very slow. By the end of the EU budgetary cycle for 2007-2013, Romania had absorbed 83.44% of European funds.⁶⁶ While the total figure is not necessarily pessimistic, the rate of absorption of funds in Romania is uneven (and not necessarily as a result of any economic seasonality), with considerable volatility occurring from one month to the next. The monthly average rate of absorption for the period 2009-2017 was 1.06%, with a minimum value of 0.3% and maximum value of 3.6%. With the average rate of absorption as it currently stands, Romania is going to need 100 months, rather than the 60 months of a European budgetary cycle, to absorb all of the European funds available to it.

The rate of financial intermediation in Romania is the lowest of all the EU member states (26.4%). The share of banking assets in GDP is 50%, compared with an EU average of 255% and a Eurozone average of 288%.⁶⁷

COMBATING DISCRIMINATION

According to the activity report for 2017 of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), in 2017 a total of 682 complaints were received, of which 461 were rejected, 185 dismissed on grounds of lack of authority, and 117 accepted. The 117 accepted claims resulted in 65 fines, 47 recommendations, 51 warnings and 3 monitoring decisions.⁶⁸

The *European Commission Country Report for Romania* underlines the issue of discrimination in Romania. Indeed, it highlights the many problems still faced by the Roma population, which include: inequality of opportunity and an extremely high rate of poverty, a low rate of employment, a low level of education, a low level of health insurance coverage, and precarious housing conditions. Moreover, the report also shows that people with disabilities and children also have a higher risk of poverty. Many people with disabilities leave school early and few participate in tertiary education, which reduces their chances of employment.⁶⁹

It should be noted that Romania is contributing to the fight against discrimination on an international level. In 2016, during Romania’s presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the definition of anti-Semitism was adopted by consensus.⁷⁰ This definition was adopted by the European Parliament and the Romanian Government and represents an important step in the fight against anti-Semitism.

⁶⁵ Eurostat – Statistics on rural areas in the EU: Population distribution by degree of urbanisation

⁶⁶ The Ministry for European Funds

⁶⁷ The Romanian Association of Banks

⁶⁸ NCCD – Activity Report 2017

⁶⁹ European Commission Country Report for Romania 2018

⁷⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release – Adoption of the Working Definition of Anti-Semitism at the Plenary Meeting in Bucharest of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 25.05.2016

HORIZON 2020

- *Reduce social polarisation by ensuring the constant growth, on an annual basis, of low incomes, benefits for children, young people, the elderly and people with disabilities, pensions and social assistance for other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, by an amount greater than the national average*
- *Support the development of productive economic activities in the rural environment, other than agricultural activities, by encouraging entrepreneurship, ensuring access to the internet for remote working and through increased access to micro-financing services*
- *Increase the rate of financial intermediation in a sustainable way while ensuring the stability and credibility of the banking sector*
- *Strongly promote and continually monitor the application of existing legislation in the area of social inclusion for all categories of citizen, including those belonging to ethnic or other minorities, in all areas of political, economic, social, and cultural life*

2030 TARGETS

- *Adopt policies, especially in the areas of fiscal, salary and social protection policy, that aim gradually to reduce inequality and the percentage of disadvantaged groups*
- *Bring Romania closer to the EU average for 2030 in terms of the indicators for sustainable development*
- *Reduce discrimination by supporting non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights*



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

According to data from the World Bank, Romania's urban population grew from 34% in 1960 to 54.5% in 2014.⁷¹ According to Eurostat, in 2014, the EU average was 72.5%. The process of urbanisation continues unabated, obliging towns and cities to adapt. Urban areas must become more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable if they are to meet the challenges of socio-economic and environmental change.

The Strategy aims to ensure decent living conditions for citizens living in urban and rural communities by: ensuring access to safe and affordable housing and basic services; ensuring access to efficient public transportation at fair and accessible prices for all; promoting the concept of smart cities; consolidating efforts to protect and safeguard cultural heritage; reducing negative environmental impacts in towns and cities, including through a special focus on air quality and the quality of the environment in general

The National Housing Agency, as a public implementation body, is currently running the *Rental Units for Young People Construction Programme*. There are currently 51 investment objectives in progress, representing 1,915 housing units as of 25 May 2018.

According to Eurostat, in 2016 Romania topped the list in terms of overcrowding,⁷² with a rate of 48.4%, compared with the EU average of 16.6%.⁷³ This indicator is defined in terms of the number rooms per housing unit, the size of the housing unit, and the ages and family situation of its inhabitants.

In a bid to improve housing conditions, a *National Housing Strategy* was drawn up and implemented. This took place in close coordination with the measures included in the *National Anti-Poverty Package*, launched by the Romanian Government in February 2016, and the *National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*.

DECENT HOUSING

The issues encountered in the creation of sustainable communities have to do with the poor quality of existing building stock, the high number of buildings exposed to seismic risk, the existence of inappropriate housing for poor and vulnerable groups, the inefficiency of the housing market, and the legal and institutional framework.

SEISMIC RISK

Romania is a country with a high seismic risk where it is possible to have powerful earthquakes, especially in the Vrancea area, of over 7.1 ML occurring 2-3 times per century, the effects of which are felt over a wide area and are destructive.

⁷¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=RO>

⁷² The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)

⁷³ http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_lwho05a&lang=en

The Romanian Seismic Design Code places buildings into four different seismic risk classes, with Class 1 denoting buildings at risk of collapse following a large earthquake. In 2018,⁷⁴ in Bucharest alone there were 170 buildings in Class 1, 351 in Class 2, 101 in Class 3 and 9 in Class 4. Every year the local authorities run programmes for the consolidation of buildings with seismic risk.

Romania has networks of geophysical sensors for the monitoring of seismic activity that send real-time data back to the National Institute for Earth Physics (NIEP), the National Data Centre in Măgurele, and the Data Acquisition Centre of the Seismic Observatory in Eforie Nord Dobrogea. This network is comprised of the Network of Seismic Observatories and Seismic Stations, GNSS Stations, magnetic field sensors, an infrasound network, etc. The data provided by the networks of geophysical sensors are constantly monitored by staff at the NIEP. These data are used for the purposes of research, national security and civil defence.

RISK OF FLOODING AND LANDSLIDES

Flooding and landslides in Romania have intensified due to the way land is used, human interventions in natural processes and the effects of climate change, with more and more communities feeling the effects.

The main aim of the *Medium and Long-Term National Flood Risk Management Strategy*, approved by Government Decision 846 of 2010 was to prevent and reduce the effects of flooding on human life and health, social activities and the environment. The Plans for Prevention, Protection against and Reduction of Flooding, as well as the Flood Risk Management Plans for all 11 hydrographic basins were drawn up and adopted by Government Decision 972 of 2016 with a view to

reducing the risk of natural disasters affecting the population by implementing preventative measures in the most vulnerable areas in the medium term, i.e. by 2020. Moreover, the first Flood Risk Management Plan for the Danube river was drawn up in compliance with the provisions of Directive 2007/60/EC, including the flood hazard and risk maps for 16,000 km of watercourses with a high risk of flooding. The early warning and intervention systems have also become operational, albeit after some delay.

AIR QUALITY

Low air quality has a negative impact on human health. In order to improve air quality in Europe, the European Commission published the *Clean Air Policy Package* on 18 December 2013.

Air quality continues to be a major concern at a national level, especially in urban agglomerations. This is because of the pollution generated by the increasing number of vehicles and building sites (suspended particulates). The situation is further aggravated by the effects of massive deforestation (until 2014) and the reduction in green areas in municipalities, with the consequence of a reduced contribution of vegetation to the filtering and purification of air. That state of air quality in urban agglomerations has repeatedly resulted in the issue of warnings by the EU institutions as a response to the increased risk of death from respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

One public policy that has helped improve air quality is the rehabilitation of urban heating systems. At a national level, the total annual amount of sulphur dioxide emissions originating from large combustion plants fell from 540 thousand tonnes in 2007 to

⁷⁴ http://amccrs.pmb.ro/docs/Lista_imobilelor_expertizate.pdf

162 thousand tonnes in 2013 (compared with the target level of 148 thousand tonnes); the amount of nitrogen oxide emissions fell from 128 thousand tonnes in 2007 to 42 thousand tonnes in 2013 (compared with the target level of 112 thousand tonnes); and the total amount of dust emissions fell from 38.6 thousand tonnes in 2007 to 10 thousand tonnes (compared with the target level of 15.5 thousand tonnes in 2013). In 2015, the total annual amount of sulphur dioxide emissions originating from large combustion plants fell to 106.8 thousand tonnes; the amount of nitrogen oxide emissions fell to 38.9 thousand tonnes; and the amount of dust emissions fell to 5.3 thousand tonnes.

After rehabilitating the central heating systems in 7 of the 8 municipalities identified as critical areas, for the areas in question total annual emissions of sulphur dioxide fell from 80 thousand tonnes in 2003 to 35.4 thousand tonnes in 2015 (compared with the target level of 15 thousand tonnes); and the amount of nitrogen oxide emissions fell from 7 thousand tonnes in 2003 to 4.8 thousand tonnes in 2015 (compared with the target level of 4 thousand tonnes).

In the national record of emissions of atmospheric pollutants for 2015, the amount of emissions at national level fell compared with 2005 by approx. 28% for nitrogen oxides, approx. 21% for non-methane volatile organic compounds, 74% for sulphur dioxide, approx. 17% for ammonia and 10% for fine suspended particles (PM_{2.5})

Among measures undertaken with a view to improving the situation at a national level, the *Programme to Promote Car Fleet Renewal* ("RABLA"), which is run by the Environment Fund Administration (EFA), has, as of 2005, been used to subsidise the retirement of vehicles with high levels of polluting emissions and the purchase of less

polluting cars, including electric and hybrid. In 2010 and 2011, approx. 300,000 cars older than 10 years were removed from circulation. A separate programme of the EFA is the *Programme for the Reduction of Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in Transport*, by promoting infrastructure for road transport using non-polluting vehicles: i.e. charging stations for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. During the 2016 cycle, financing was requested for the installation of approx. 260 such stations.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF NATIONAL HERITAGE

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mentions culture for the first time within the context of the sustainable development goals, both in terms of its transversal dimension (in relation to education, food security, the environment, economic growth, sustainable models of consumption and production, and peaceful and inclusive societies) and in terms of its direct dimension in the context of the sustainable development of cities and communities.

The protection of national cultural heritage and its handing down to future generations has become an essential feature of sustainable development. The period 2008-2017 saw significant investment in more than 300 historical monuments, theatres, museums, libraries and other cultural institutions. At the end of 2010, the National Archaeological Record (NAR) of Romania listed some 10,000 sites and 20,000 archaeological objects. By the end of 2017, it contained 16,368 sites, which were indicated on a 1:100,000 scale map of Romania.

In terms of classified moveable cultural objects, in 2010 approx. 4,300 new entries were added to the list, with a further 2,150 added in 2011 and 3,784 added in 2013.

By the end of 2016, the list of national cultural heritage contained a total of 46,772 classified movable objects.

SMART CITIES

A smart and sustainable city is an innovative city which, through the use of information and communications technology, data collected from equipment used in the provision of services, and intelligent planning, all under the coordination of a “smart” administration, is able to achieve the synergy required to improve living standards, the efficiency of urban operations and services, and competitiveness, while still ensuring it meets the needs of present and future generations in economic, social and environmental terms.

The concept of a smart city is dynamic and involves a process of continuous transforma-

tion through technological, urban and managerial innovation, by means of which cities become more comfortable and resilient and able to respond quickly to new challenges. The concept comes pre-equipped with the necessary tools to solve the problems faced by cities (traffic, overcrowding, pollution, etc.) and to enhance living standards while ensuring an efficient consumption of resources.

A city, when transitioning towards becoming a “smart” city, needs to see progress and change on three main fronts: administrative, technological (innovation and technology being key elements in the transition to smart and sustainable cities and communities) and social. A smart city maximises the synergy between the city and its inhabitants, encouraging citizens to be more active and participate more in the life of the community.

HORIZON 2020

- *Increase the proportion of property recorded in the cadastre in all localities to 80% for buildings and 100% for agricultural land in receipt of subsidies allocated by the Payment and Intervention Agency for Agriculture, as a fundamental element of spatial and land-use planning*
 - *Implement existing programmes and adopt supplementary measures for early warning and emergency intervention systems and subsequent rehabilitation activities by defining the responsibilities of all persons involved in the event of natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, flooding and landslides) or accidents (toxic discharges and emissions, large fires, etc.)*
 - *Prepare contingency plans to prevent and limit the foreseeable effects of climate change*
- *Improve air quality*
 - *Increase the institutional capacity of the authorities responsible for air quality to adapt to the requirement to meet air quality targets*
 - *Increase the value of specific cultural resources at local level by protecting cultural heritage, cultural identities and traditional professions (artisanal, artistic, culinary); encourage the ongoing development of agritourism*
 - *Promote a set of local measures for urban areas with a view to developing those functions and equipment able to ensure growth in the competitiveness of cities at European and international level*

2030 TARGETS

- *Ensure access to decent living conditions for all citizens*
- *Significantly reduce the economic losses caused by flooding and landslides, improve the collective response and strengthen the capacity to adapt and return to a functional situation in the shortest time possible after occurrence of the event, reduce the impact of flooding or the pollution caused by flooding and landslides on the ecosystem, including by means of constant improvements to the legislative framework*
- *Ensure access to safe, fairly-priced, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, in particular by extending public transport networks, with a special focus on the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly*
- *Draw up and implement a general programme of spatial and land-use planning in correlation with the sectoral strategies at national level through application of the concept of polycentric and balanced spatial development in order to support territorial cohesion*
- *Educate and empower the population in respect of earthquake risk situations*
- *Reduce the impact atmospheric pollution has on human health and the environment through a special focus on air quality*
- *Substantially reduce the number of deaths and diseases caused by dangerous chemical products, pollution and the contamination of the air, water and soil*
- *Consolidate efforts to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage and landscape features from the rural and urban environment*
- *Implement the relevant legal provisions regarding the production, transport, storage, use and disposal of chemical products, including pharmaceutical products, which can be dangerous to human and animal health as well as environmental integrity*



ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation requires a new model of sustainable consumption and production. Sustainable development requires more efficient production, more sustainable waste management, and more environmental protection. Recycling is a must, and this requires the transition towards a circular economy while also raising awareness of the Planet's limits.

The Strategy proposes a step-by-step transition to a new development model through the introduction of elements of a circular economy, a boosting of resource productivity and a reduction in food loss and waste by: reducing consumption at all levels and encouraging recycling and reuse; encouraging public and private entities to adopt sustainable practices, including in the field of public procurement, and to integrate data about the sustainability of their activity into their reporting cycle; raising awareness among citizens about how to adopt a lifestyle in harmony with nature.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The new EU approach places added emphasis on competitiveness in a global context by ensuring the sustainability of production and consumption, increasing the efficiency of material resource use, and revitalising high added value processing industries in order to catch up with the services sector, which has grown rapidly in recent decades. In Romania, the industrial sector (including construction)

was responsible for 30.2% of GDP in 2016, compared with an EU average of 22%, and is the subject of a decreasing trend in favour of services similar to what is happening in the majority of EU countries.

RESOURCE PRODUCTIVITY

Resource productivity is measured in terms of the value in euros of the products obtained by processing one kilogram of raw materials. Resource productivity in Romania continues to be low and has even fallen compared to the EU average. According to Eurostat, while the EU average is 134.3 (where 100 was the value of resource productivity in 2000), Romania finds itself in last place with a coefficient of 55.6. Consequently, unlike the majority of EU member states, Romania imported a total of 44.6 million tonnes of materials in 2015, while exporting only 38 million tonnes, making Romania a net exporter of raw materials, semi-finished goods and relatively low-processed products.

While there are historical explanations for the substantially low level of resource productivity in comparison with the other countries in the EU, it should be noted that the rate of improvement in this indicator for Romania is relatively low. This situation is compounded by the unsatisfactory state of the labour cost index, which over a period of many years (2007-2015) has remained around 6 times lower than the EU average (approx. 5 euros per hour worked compared with the EU average of 32.1 euros per hour worked).

THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Transitioning to a circular economy provides an opportunity to create a more sustainable economy, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda. In a circular economy, the value of products, materials, and resources needs to be maintained for as long as possible and the generation of waste reduced to a minimum.

The achievement of a circular economy will represent Romania's contribution to the EU action to develop a sustainable economy. Shifting to a circular economy will involve the coordination of economic policies with policies aimed at increasing employment in circular economy sectors, increased investment in relevant sectors, the development of social policies and stimulation of economic innovation, and the combating of climate change and its effects.

EUROPEAN ECOLOGICAL LABELLING

Romania is in the process of implementing Regulation (EC) No. 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel. European ecological labelling was obtained for the following categories of products and services: interior paint, exterior paint, enamel, primer, lubricants, mattresses, printed paper, tissue paper, textiles, lubricants, detergents, soaps, shower gel, computers, laptops, and tourist accommodation services. Between 2008 and 2017 a number of 41 licences were awarded, and of these 38 were for products and 3 for tourist accommodation services. In total, 246 products and services were awarded an EU Ecolabel.

EU ECO-MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME

In terms of the voluntary participation of organisations in the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), Romania registered 11 EMAS organisations in 2017, compared with just one in 2008. EMAS is a management instrument designed to support organisations in the continuous improvement of their environmental performance by integrating the concept of sustainable development into a model (for organisations) that is conducive to the optimisation of production processes, the reduction of environmental impacts and the efficient use of resources.

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In the period 2014-2015, the Project for *Establishing the Legal Framework for Green Public Procurement in Romania* was implemented, resulting in the adoption, in 2016, of Law 69 on green public procurement, which constitutes the legal framework within which the market for green products will operate in Romania. Under the provisions of this law, the Ministry for the Environment, together with the National Agency for Public Procurement, drew up a guide on green public procurement containing the minimum criteria on environmental protection for certain groups of products and services which are required for public procurement.

INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT

Integrated waste management fits naturally into the vision of sustainable development and is a manifestation of the concept of the circular economy based on recycling and conservation. In this sense, any man-made product that has become unusable is treated as a raw material in the production of other products or services.⁷⁵ In the Sectoral Operational Programme Environment for 2007-2013 priority was given to the promotion of integrated waste management systems at county level. The corresponding projects are implemented by the county councils in question on behalf of the Intercommunity Development Associations established at county level, with the running of the infrastructure being delegated to waste management operators. The implementation process for this proved to be extremely slow.⁷⁶ As a result of the delays, some projects were not completed, with their finalisation now being assured under the Operational Programme for Large Infrastructure. According to Eurostat, in 2014 Romania produced approx. 176.5 million tonnes of waste, of which 90.5% went to landfill and 4.2% was recycled or converted into energy, compared with the EU-28 average of 2,494.9 million tonnes of waste produced, of which 38.8% went to landfill and 43.2% was recycled or converted into energy.

According to the National Waste Management Plan approved by Government Decision 942/2014, in 2014 Romania generated approx. 4,956,075 tonnes of municipal waste, 4,947,536 tonnes of which representing treated municipal waste. In 2016, the rate of recycling (including composting) reported by Eurostat was 13%, while the rate of disposal was 69%.

⁷⁵ National Waste Management Strategy 2014-2020, GD 870 din 06/11/2013

⁷⁶ OPLI Document, p. 10. The main problems encountered in the period 2007-2013 were also described in the Partnership Agreement

HORIZON 2020

- *Continue efforts at a national level to improve resource productivity by including precise targets and rigorous monitoring in all sectoral and regional development strategies with a view to bringing Romania into line with European standards and in preparation for the transition to a circular economy*
- *Transition from the current economic model based on production and consumption to a circular economy by changing mentalities through education, changing consumer behaviour and developing financial mechanisms to facilitate the transition period*
- *Reduce food waste throughout the entire production, transport, processing, sale and consumption chain, from harvesting on the farm to the final disposal of waste*
- *Popularise and promote sustainable models of production and consumption through information campaigns aimed at a broad public and introduce these good practices into school and out-of-school educational curricula*
- *Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and integrate sustainability data into their reporting cycle*
- *Promote instruments that lead to improved environmental performances through information and awareness raising campaigns on the advantages of obtaining EU Ecolabels for products and services, and the EMAS registration of public and private organisations*
- *Finalise the legislative framework for promoting green procurement procedures*
- *Improve the process of economic and social statistical monitoring for sustainable models of consumption and production at national, regional and local level*
- *Improve the level of preparedness of society for reuse and recycling in keeping with the waste hierarchy*
- *Introduce a sustainability code for the complex reporting of the attitudes of companies vis-à-vis the application of the principles of sustainable development*

2030 TARGETS

- *Gradually transition to a new development model based on the rational and responsible use of resources by introducing elements of the circular economy and drawing up a road map*
- *Halve per capita food waste at the level of retail and consumption and reduce food waste throughout the production and supply chain, including post-harvest losses*
- *Recycle 55% of municipal waste by 2025 and 60% by 2030*
- *Recycle 65% of packaging waste by 2025 (plastic materials 50%, wood 25%, ferrous metals 70%, aluminium 50%, glass 70%, paper and cardboard 75%) and 70% by 2030 (plastic materials 55%, wood 30%, ferrous metals 80%, aluminium 60%, glass 75%, paper and cardboard 85%)*
- *Implement the separate collection of household hazardous waste by 2022, of biological waste by 2023 and of textile waste by 2025*
- *Establish extended producer responsibility schemes for all types of packaging by 2024*
- *Implement sustainable green public procurement practices in conformity with national priorities and European policy*



13 CLIMATE ACTION



TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

The impacts of climate change, including changing climate patterns, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events, are being felt by Romania today. If we do not continue to implement measures to adapt to and diminish the effects of climate change, current threats, such as food security and water shortages, may increase.

The Strategy aims to consolidate Romania's capacity for adaptation and resilience in order to combat the dangers associated with climate change and natural disasters by integrating measures to diminish and adapt to climate change and natural disasters, both in the form of strategies and national policies, and by planning for and increasing the level of education and awareness with respect to climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change poses two significant challenges: the need for a drastic reduction in greenhouse gases and the need to transition, through sustainable development, to a low carbon economy that will ensure both good living standards for citizens and the effective protection of life and property in the context of heightened vulnerabilities and risk of natural disasters.

The integrated EU policy on climate change and energy aims to keep the rise in global temperatures below a global average of 2°C (preferably 1.5°C) compared with pre-industrial levels. The risks of exceeding the

threshold of 2°C (or even that of 1.5°C) are many, significant and unforeseeable, and is leading to an exponential rise in the cost of adapting to climate change compared with the cost of intervening to slow the effects of this phenomenon. The average annual temperature in Romania for the period 1981-2010 was 0.5°C higher compared with the 1961-1990 reference period.

The hottest year on record was 2015, while in the period 2012-2017 annual temperature deviations were greater than 1.5°C relative to the annual average for the period 1961-1990. The trend of rising seasonal temperatures is found in almost every part of Romania for both spring and summer. Winter has seen a significant trend of rising air temperatures in the southern, central and north-eastern regions of the country. As of 1961, the duration of heat waves⁷⁷ has been increasing significantly in southern and western Romania.

Moreover, in each decade from 1901 until the present day, Romania has experienced between one and four years of extreme drought/rainfall, with an increasing number of droughts being recorded after 1981. The intensity of heat waves in Romania over the period 1961-2010 has also seen a growing trend, especially after 1981.

In terms of rainfall, growing quantities of seasonal precipitation have been recorded in most parts of the country during autumn. Winter, spring and summer, on the other hand, have seen a significant decrease in the quantity

⁷⁷ Romanian law defines a heat wave as a period with at least two consecutive days on which the temperature exceeds 37°C

of precipitation for some regions in the east and south-west of the country, alternating with episodes of daily precipitation of over 20 litres/m², resulting in increasing incidences of flash flooding at local level due to the high intensity of rainfall in short intervals of time.

IMPROVING CAPACITY TO ADAPT TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATIC CHANGE

Climate change is increasingly impacting sectors such as energy, transport, the urban environment, water supply, agriculture and forestry, and rural development.

Agriculture and rural development are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the associated risks are not equally distributed. There exist regional differences both in the rate of occurrence of extreme weather events, such as drought or episodes of abundant precipitation, and in the vulnerability, resilience and capacity of rural communities to adapt to climate change. These differences are further exacerbated by the sharp divisions in terms of farm size specific to Romania. The worst affected category is and will continue to be that of farmers who practice subsistence and semi-subsistence farming.

In terms of resilience and adaptive capacity, *towns and cities* are in urgent need of careful planning in order to be able to cope with the impacts of climate change, which are amplified by the heat islands in towns and cities and the impermeability of urban soil.

The impact of climate change will also exacerbate the imbalance between the

demand for and the supply of *water* at the level of water supply basins, a situation which can be addressed either by reducing demand or by identifying new sources in Romania for the coming decades.

Adaptation to climate change needs to become an important part of national policy, for the reduction of greenhouse gases in a short space of time is a complex undertaking, given the clear growth in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Adaptive capacity means the totality of instruments, resources and institutional structures required in the efficient implementation of adaptive measures. Increasing Romania's capacity to adapt to current and potential effects of climate change presupposes the monitoring of the impacts of climate change, including the associated socio-economic vulnerabilities; the integration of measures for adaptation to climate change into strategies and sectoral development policies and their intersectoral harmonisation through the creation of synergies; and the identification of special measures for the adaptation to climate change of critical sectors in terms of vulnerability.

Romania was one of the first states to sign the Kyoto Protocol (2001) and to ratify the *Paris Agreement* on climate change. In 2012, the Romanian National Strategy on Climate Change 2013-2020 was adopted. In 2016, through GD 739/2016, the National Strategy for Climate Change and Low-Carbon Growth 2016-2020 and the National Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy for Climate Change and Low-Carbon Growth 2016-2020 were also approved.

HORIZON 2020

- *Integrate measures to adapt to climate change into the strategies and sectoral development plans and pursue their intersectoral harmonisation*
- *Raise awareness of the imminent threat of climate change both at the political level of institutions of state and among citizens, regardless of age*

2030 TARGETS

- *Strengthen Romania's resilience and capacity to adapt to climate-related risks and natural disasters*
- *Enhance capacity to react rapidly to unexpected extreme weather events*
- *Improve education, awareness and human and institutional capacity with regard to mitigating climate change, adapting to and reducing the impacts of climate change, and the implementation of early warning systems*
- *Intensify Romania's efforts to achieve the transition to a "green" economy, characterised by low carbon dioxide emissions and resilience to climate change, and to integrate measures with a view to adapting to climate change in vulnerable economic, social and environmental sectors, in keeping with EU policies*



CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS,
SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Marine life, the climate, the economy, and social well-being all depend on the existence of healthy seas and oceans. The competition for natural resources, their unsustainable exploitation, and climate change create added pressure and represent the main threats to the sea and ocean.

The Strategy aims to support the prevention and reduction of marine pollution, the sustainable management and protection of marine ecosystems, the conservation of coastal areas, and the practice of sustainable fishing.

CONSERVATION OF ECOSYSTEMS AND COASTAL AREAS

Romania has 245 km of coastline. Romanian coastal waters in the Black Sea run from Chilia to Vama Veche. The submarine relief of the Black Sea comprises a continental shelf of 144,000 km².

The Danube is a receiver and emitter into the Black Sea of all discharges/emissions of pollutants by all the Danube countries, with negative effects for the quality of the water in the Danube, the Danube Delta and the coastal areas of the Black Sea. The state of the coastal waters is therefore largely determined by the Danube River, but also by the local sources of pollution situated on the Romanian and Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea. Emissions of nitrogen and phosphorus into the Danube contribute to the eutrophication of the north-western part of the Black Sea.

The significant quantities of pollutants entering the Danube River along its entire length place significant strain on Romanian coastal waters and as a consequence they have been designated as having moderate and bad ecological status and moderate and bad ecological potential. Owing to the process of eutrophication of the Black Sea, the entire territory of Romania is designated as being a *sensitive area*. Another threat to marine waters comes in the form of accidental discharges of oil and pollutants, given the Black Sea's use as a transit route in the export of oil and natural gas.

Romania is in the process of implementing the *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* and is a signatory to the Black Sea Convention. Romania has designated within its coastal area both protected areas of national interest (nature reserves) and protected areas of European (Natura 2000) and international interest (biosphere reserves, wetlands of international importance). The amount of marine areas protected under the EU's Birds and Habitats Directive has increased in Romania 4.7-fold, from 1,252 km² in 2008 to 6,362 km² in 2016. The sufficiency of marine Sites of Community Interest (SCI) is measured by Eurostat for the entire EU using a *sufficiency index*. In 2013, values of this index ranged from 7% for Spain to 100% for Germany, Estonia and the Netherlands, 95% for Denmark, 88% for Belgium and 75% for Romania. The sufficiency index for marine Sites of Community Interest in Romania has currently exceeded the threshold of 100%.

In order to maintain and improve the favourable state of conservation of species and habitats, the marine protected area management plans will be implemented, thus contributing to the achievement of a good ecological status for Romania's coastal waters and a good status of marine environment.

A Master Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Coastal Area was drawn up as part of the *Sectoral Operational Programme Environment for 2007-2013*. The measures it contained were aimed at halting coastal erosion, protecting the value of assets and increasing the safety of housing in the coastal area, with 60.66 ha of new beach being brought into use in 2016.

As part of the OPLI 2014-2020, implementation of the measures stipulated in the *Master Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Romanian Black Sea Coast* has continued through the realisation of projects under *Priority Axis 5: Promoting Climate Change Adaptation, Risk Prevention and Management*. The purpose of the measures to be financed through national and cohesion funds is to manage the principal risks generated by coastal erosion.

Given the economic importance of the coastal area, its extensive protected natural habitats (the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, lakes and lagoons) and its geographic importance as the main transport corridor (roads, railway and waterways) on Europe's eastern border, adequate conservation and management measures with a view to sustainable development continue to be a necessity.

As a co-initiator of the *EU Strategy for the Danube Region* (EUSDR) alongside Austria, Romania contributes to the drawing up and implementation thereof together with all the

other Danube countries. The strategy contains proposals for specific action to protect the environment in the Danube region in terms of water quality and protection, flood risk prevention, the conservation of biodiversity and beaches, and the protection of soil and air quality.

SUSTAINABLE FISHING

Fish stocks in the Black Sea have deteriorated dramatically over the last three decades, while the diversity of commercial catches has fallen to 18 species, of which 16 are fish species (Black Sea turbot, sprat, smelt, whiting, flathead mullet, grey mullet, round goby, knout goby, shark, shad, mackerel, horse mackerel, red mullet) and 2 are species of molluscs (veined rapa whelk and common mussel). This is the result of eutrophication, the introduction of exotic species and illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.⁷⁸

As of 2007, Romania has taken measures to introduce fishing quotas and apply the EU regulations, being at present an active player, alongside Bulgaria, the European Commission and the European Fisheries Control Agency, in the combating of IUU fishing and involving other Black Sea countries in the implementation of a responsible and sustainable plan for the exploitation of living aquatic resources.

Sturgeon is a species of migratory fish that Romania is making substantial efforts to protect. In 2017 it was agreed with Bulgaria for the first time that the period of prohibition on the Danube would be the same in the shared border area, while in 2018 the same arrangement was agreed with Ukraine.

In Romania, the measures taken to restore and preserve the population of wild sturgeon

⁷⁸ European Environment Agency, 2015. State of the Environment Report – Black Sea Region

in natural habitats included the banning of commercial fishing for a period of 5 years (2016-2021). These measures also targeted the development of sturgeon fisheries in order to reduce, in future, the pressure exerted by commercial fishing on stocks of wild sturgeon.

Moreover, recent years have seen the drawing up of a *Multiannual National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture* and the implementation of national legislation in the field of fishing and aquaculture. With a view to the development of fishing and aquaculture, the *Operational Programme for Fisheries 2007-2013* was implemented, the strategic vision of which

being to achieve “a competitive, modern and dynamic fisheries sector, based on sustainable fishing and aquaculture activities taking into account the aspects related to environmental protection, social development and economic welfare”. This programme was followed by the *Operational Programme for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs 2014-2020*.

Fishing and maritime affairs are strongly interconnected and have a direct impact on the environment and natural resources, with the sustainable development of this sector being therefore integrated into and promoted through all OPFMA activities.

HORIZON 2020

- *Develop international collaborations with upstream Danube countries in order to improve the ecological status of the Danube River and reduce the negative impact of effluent on the marine ecosystems where it flows into the Black Sea*
- *Sustainably manage living aquatic resources through an ecosystemic approach to fishing activity*
- *Strengthen Romania’s capacity to combat IUU fishing*
- *Support research programmes for the protection and conservation of protected areas and living aquatic resources*

2030 TARGETS

- *Prevent and significantly reduce all forms of marine pollution, in particular that resulting from land-based activities, including pollution with marine litter and nutrient pollution*
- *Minimise and manage the effects of the acidification of marine waters, including by increased scientific cooperation at all levels*
- *Responsibly and sustainably manage the fishing of wild and aquaculture species in accordance with the legally-established quotas and methods, and preserve, within reasonable limits, the viability of traditional activities in this field, including recreational and sports fishing*
- *Involve other Black Sea countries in the implementation of a responsible and sustainable plan for the exploitation of living aquatic species*



PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE
USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY
MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION,
AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION
AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



Human society has left an immense “footprint” on the Planet, and this calls for greater responsibility, responsible management, and concerted action in the field of environmental protection. Forests are essential to life on earth. Their sustainable management is a fundamental element of current global challenges, alongside combating the loss of biodiversity and soil degradation, and the prevention of climate change. Moreover, forests are an important part of the ecosystem which improve quality of life and provide many environmental benefits for the environment, society, and the economy, such as enhancing food security, availability of water and protection of human settlements.

Romania joined the EU with a large, valuable, and, in some cases, unique natural capital. This contribution to Europe should be recognised, appreciated, and safeguarded, including in terms of the financial sustainability of the investment required to conserve resources and maintain the services offered by natural ecosystems at the standards set at the level of the UN and EU.

The aim of this Strategy is to pursue the sustainable conservation and use of terrestrial ecosystems and the sustainable management of forests, in order to combat desertification, to regenerate degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and flooding, to develop green infrastructure, to conserve and protect wetlands, to ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems and

support research in the field, to manage forests sustainably, to eliminate illegal logging and clear-felling, and to support the transition to a circular economy.

CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

The EU strategy in the field of biodiversity places a priority on achieving the goal of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, restoring ecosystems and related services in so far as this is achievable, as well as intensifying efforts to avoid the loss of global biodiversity. The purpose of the *Birds and Habitats Directives for the period 2007-2012, as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive*,⁷⁹ is to achieve a “favourable” conservation status for protected species and habitats.

After the designation in 2007 of 273 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and 108 *Special Protection Areas* (SPA), amounting to 17.84% of the country, the process of designating new Natura 2000 sites and extending existing sites continued in 2011 as a consequence of the infringement procedure triggered in 2008 relating to the insufficient designation of special protection areas, with a further 108 SCIs and 40 SPAs being added to the existing tally.

Moreover, 2016 saw the designation of 54 new and the extension of 29 existing SCIs, as well as the designation of 23 new SPAs, thus

⁷⁹ 20.5.2015 COM(2015) 219 final

bringing the total number of Natura 2000 sites to 606 (of which 435 were SCIs and 148 SPAs), covering approx. 23% of the national territory.

According to Eurostat, the indicators for the surface of terrestrial sites designated under of Natura 2000 and the number of protected species in Romania, in accordance with the EU Directive on Habitats, was 93% in 2013, indicating a high degree of conformity, and thus slightly above the EU average of 92%. After the designation of new Natura 2000 sites in 2016, the indicator for the surface of terrestrial sites designated under Natura 2000 was close to 100%. However, according to the most recent evaluation report by the European Commission on the conservation status of habitats and species in Romania as per the Directive on Habitats, 63% of the biogeographical assessments of habitats were "favourable" in 2013 (compared with the EU average of 16%), 28% were "unfavourable – inadequate" (compared with the EU average of 47%) and 7% were "unfavourable – bad" (compared with the EU average of 30%). In terms of species, 19% of the assessments were "favourable" in 2013 (compared with the EU average of 23%), 67% were "unfavourable – inadequate" (compared with the EU average of 42%) and 6% were "unfavourable – bad" (compared with the EU average of 18%). It was therefore concluded that the habitats in Romania have the best conservation status across the EU.

In 2016, Romania had 968 protected natural areas of national importance and, through Law no. 95/2016 on the establishment of National Agency for Protected Natural Areas (ANANP) and the modification of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007 on the system of protected natural areas and the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, the ANANP was designated

the competent authority responsible for the management of natural protected areas.

According to data from the Ministry of Environment, in 2017 there were approx. 300 protected natural areas and Natura 2000 sites with approved management plans. The creation of the management plans was financed under a dedicated budget allocation under the *Sectoral Operational Programme Environment 2007-2013*.

In order to put the EU's *Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services* (MAES) initiative into practice, the project entitled *Demonstrating and Promoting Natural Values to Support Decision-Making in Romania* was implemented through the National Agency for Environmental Protection and includes an assessment of public policies for the level of integration of the concept of ecosystems and ecosystem services into different sectors: biodiversity, climate change, fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture and sustainable development, transport, energy, regional development, tourism, the marine and forest sector, and the stimulation of the transition to a green economy for the period 2014-2020.

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF FOREST ECOSYSTEMS

Romania is committed to meeting national and global targets for the *sustainable management of forests* and the protection of forestry stock as well as increasing the amount of land covered by forest, the combating of illegal logging and ensuring transparency in the process of harvesting timber.⁸⁰

The total area of forest in Romania in 2015 was 6,565 thousand ha, of which 48.6% was the public property of the state, 34.1% the private

⁸⁰Romanian declaration regarding the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests for 2017-2030, at the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held at the UN Headquarters in May 2018

property of natural and legal persons, 15.9% public property, and 1.4% the private property of the regional administrative authorities, together representing 27.5% of the surface of the country. From 2010 to 2017, the data indicated a slight increase in the amount of forest area with 0.77%.

Owing to its particular natural conditions and socio-economic circumstances, Romania has been able to retain large areas of natural, virgin and quasi-virgin forest. However, Romania's forests, 99% of which are to be found in mountain areas, are shrinking rapidly and currently occupy less than half the area they occupied just 20-25 years ago. The natural integrity of the forest ecosystems of Romania is confirmed by the presence of the full range of European forest fauna, including 60% of the total population of brown bears in Europe and 40% of all wolves.

The sustainable management and development of Romania's forests and the strict protection of forests with exceptional conservation values are current priorities deriving from the forestry legislation and the international regulations adopted by Romania. In order to achieve the strict protection of virgin and quasi-virgin forests, in 2016 the legal framework was expanded and the regulation approved regarding the creation of a *National Catalogue of Virgin and Quasi-Virgin Forests* into which a forested area of 20.3 thousand hectares was entered. Romania has joined 10 other European countries in the project "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe", in an initiative to inscribe its invaluable beech forests on the UNESCO World Heritage List, an endeavour finalised in 2017. Romania's contribution consists of 8 sites, amounting to 24 thousand hectares and representing 41% of the surface area of the newly inscribed UNESCO properties.

In Romania, it is forbidden by law to reduce the amount of national forest, and during the last 5-6 years, the legislative and institutional framework has been improved with a view to maintaining the integrity thereof. The sustainable management of forests relies on a unified forestry management system divided into forest ranges manned by professional staff, irrespective of the form of ownership vis-à-vis the land in question. Timber harvested from forests also became traceable following the creation of the *Electronic Timber Tracking System* (SUMAL) in 2008 and the subsequent improvement thereof through the innovative "Forest Radar" and "The Forest Inspector" mobile applications.

PROTECTION OF SOIL

Romania has large areas of highly fertile soil (potentially some of the most productive in Europe), much of which is uncontaminated by chemical agents and therefore suitable for the practice of ecological (bio) farming. However, specialist studies indicate a gradual degradation of soil quality due to the doubling, over the last 25 years, of the amount of land subject to drought and desertification, erosion, excessive moisture, salinisation and acidification resulting from the improper use of irrigation systems, soil compaction from the use of heavy machinery and the impoverishment in organic matter due to the use of unsuitable technologies. A Eurostat survey to assess the use of land for the purposes of residential development and infrastructure identified the existence of an EU-wide problem:⁸¹ the (per capita) indicator for residential land development and infrastructure has slowly been rising since 2012. This phenomenon may have negative social and environmental impacts, such as increased flood risk and loss of biodiversity and natural habitats, which

⁸¹ Eurostat's Land Use and Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS).

may even contribute to global warming and a reduction in the amount of land available for food production. This situation calls for urgent measures that need to be formulated as part of a long-term vision including all the different components of agricultural and rural development policy and will require considerable investment.

In order to reduce the effects of drought, combat desertification and ecologically restore degraded land, the *Programme to Improve the Environment through the Afforestation of Degraded Land* was implemented under the coordination of the Environment Fund Administration. According to NIS data, during the period 2011-2017 the total amount of afforested degraded land was 5,686 ha.

HORIZON 2020

- *Maintain Romania's position as the country with the greatest biogeographic diversity in Europe both by continuing to integrate environmental policies into all relevant national and sectoral policies and by improving environmental infrastructure in keeping with EU standards and practices and the provisions of international conventions to which Romania is a signatory*
- *Completely overhaul and expand genetic databases, in particular those for indigenous and endemic species, as well as support scientific research activities in this field*
- *Ensure the conservation, re-establishment and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and infertile land, in keeping with the obligations deriving from international agreements*
- *Attract and involve local communities and non-governmental organisations, including hunting and recreational fishing associations, in actions that pursue the effective combating of poaching, as well as the conservation of sensitive habitats and biodiversity; compensate for loss of income among owners of forests or agricultural land located in protected natural areas*

2030 TARGETS

- *Develop green infrastructure and make use of the services offered by natural ecosystems (in particular the Danube floodplains, its tributaries and the Danube Delta) through the integrated management of river basins and wetlands*
- *Conserve and protect wetland areas, which also include the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, a unique wetland in Romania and part of European and world natural heritage*
- *Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, with a view to boosting their capacity to provide essential benefits in terms of sustainable development*
- *Support the research and development institutions and infrastructure of national and European importance in the study, management, protection and preservation of the diversity of natural heritage*
- *Sustainably manage forests, eradicate illegal logging, develop an integrated digital system for the monitoring of the exploitation and transport of timber, including at border crossings, ensure the afforestation and reforestation of forest land or land that has been degraded or subject to desertification, and implement the planned planting of shelterbelts to shield crops and elements of infrastructure from the impacts of climate change*
- *Pursue the transition to a circular economy through complementary approaches involving traditional methods and the latest technologies in order to re-establish/rebuild natural capital and reduce dependence on synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, with a view to combating soil degradation*
- *Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and flooding*



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE
ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD
EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE
INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



Sustainable development is a paradigm for how an equitable society should function. A sustainable society is based on a strong foundation, and that requires a peaceful society in which all enjoy the benefits of sustainable development. Achieving such a society requires ensuring access to justice and the establishment of efficient, responsible, and inclusive legislative and institutional structures. For sustainable development to work, society must recognise and adopt this perspective as common sense.

This Strategy aims to develop social capital, promote tolerance, eradicate violence against children while significantly reducing all forms of violence, significantly reduce corruption, develop efficient and transparent institutions at all levels, and ensure a receptive decision-making process, including the participation and representation of citizens at all levels and the ensuring of public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: THE FOUNDATIONS OF A PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Social capital comprises the links, common values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.⁸² The members of a peaceful and inclusive society, characterised by high social capital, feel

integrated, appreciated, have high levels of social and professional satisfaction, and trust in institutions. The World Happiness report measures the rate of happiness in 156 countries. In 2017, Romania was ranked 52 out of 117 countries, an improvement on the situation for 2008.⁸³ One of the indicators used to measure the *rate of happiness* is sense of community. The answer to the question, "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?", was positive in 81% of cases in 2017, compared with 74% in 2007. Another relevant indicator is *freedom to make life choices*, with 84% of respondents in 2017 stating that they have "freedom to make life choices," compared with 69% in 2007.

PROTECTION AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

A peaceful society begins with peaceful childhood. According to data from the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption, in 2017 there were 15,386 reports made, of which 11,129 were for neglect, 1,736 for emotional abuse, and 1,235 for physical abuse.⁸⁴ Although people are aware of the seriousness of violence, according to UNICEF, there exists a certain degree of tolerance towards forms of "moderate violence" such as humiliation, shouting, insults, and physical coercion.⁸⁵

⁸² OECD Insights: Human Capital

⁸³ United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network - The World Happiness Report 2018

⁸⁴ National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption - Cases of child abuse, negligence and exploitation, 21.12.2017

⁸⁵ UNICEF Romania - "It's not normal to find violence normal" & UNICEF Media Centre - Combating Violence Against Children - A Priority for Romania

According to the academic literature published between 1992 to 2012 on the impact and effect of the physical punishment of children without exception, all articles prove a strong correlation between physical punishment and a growth in aggressive child behaviour, which has detrimental effects throughout life and limits child development. Not one study found there to be any benefit to physical punishment.⁸⁶ In the knowledge that violence breeds more violence, curbing this phenomenon is imperative in laying the foundations of a sustainable society.

MULTICULTURALISM

Culture defines both the society in which its citizens can fulfil their potential as well as the contribution of its citizens to culture, the latter being essential for the citizen's self-realisation. As a result, culture plays a decisive role in the assimilation of the principles of sustainable development. From cultural heritage to creative and traditional crafts, culture is both an enabler and a driver of the three pillars of sustainable development.⁸⁷ The importance of culture in the development of a "public sphere" based on dialogue is essential in the creation of the necessary "critical mass" to create the appropriate conditions for a sustainable society.

A peaceful and inclusive society presupposes an acceptance and entrenching of the values of multiculturalism. According to the 2011 Census, excluding citizens for whom no information regarding their ethnic background was available, approx. 11% of the Romanian population belongs to a national minority.⁸⁸ Romania, as a civic nation, represents all of its citizens, regardless of ethnic group. This recognition is closely related to the recognition and acceptance of the "other" through dialogue

and education. Dialogue between citizens is emblematic of the European spirit that has been embedded in EU treaties and legislation, and is a key component in the creation of the framework for a sustainable society defined by mutual understanding and an appreciation of the cultural and ethnic diversity that enriches Romania.

An important factor in the promotion of multiculturalism in respect of local minorities is recognising of the point of view of the "other". This understanding is based on education, a knowledge of each other's histories and sensibilities, and the continuous fight against preconceptions, prejudice, hate, racism and anti-Semitism. The best way to combat discrimination and prejudice is by prevention, knowledge of the legal definitions and a legal framework that takes into account the international treaties and conventions signed by Romania as well as the culture and traditions of each ethnic group, something which can only be achieved through an assimilation of the values of multiculturalism for the creation of a peaceful and inclusive society in which no one feels left out.

An important partner in this, and one that will help generate the necessary "critical mass" for a sustainable future, is that of the religious denominations. From a historic perspective, religion has played an important role in promoting common values that go beyond individual characteristics and the principle that we can create a better and fairer world. Taking into account the importance of involving all segments of society, the involvement of the religious denominations is essential to the dissemination of the values required in the creation of a sustainable society through the promotion of dialogue and collaboration based on shared goals.

⁸⁶ Joan Durrant PHD, Ron Ensom RSW – Physical punishment of children: lessons from 20 years of research

⁸⁷ UNESCO – Culture for Sustainable Development

⁸⁸ 2011 Census – Population by ethnic group in censuses from the period 1930 to 2011 – counties

POPULATION DECLINE

Population decline represents a major problem in the creation of a sustainable society. Although according to Eurostat, the average number of children born per woman increased from 1.6 in 2008 to 1.64 in 2016,⁸⁹ according to the NIS, the rate of natural increase of the Romanian population per 1,000 inhabitants fell from 3 in 1990 to -1.4 in 2008 and -3.1 in 2017.⁹⁰

One of the variables contributing to the fall in population is the phenomenon of emigration. The *National Strategy for Romanians Abroad for the period 2017-2020*⁹¹ highlights the fact that, during the period 2005-2015, between 3.5 and 4.0 million people moved abroad, and of these, 2.8 million went to live in one of the other EU member states. According to the UN's *International Migration Report*, in 2015 Romania was placed 17th globally in terms of the size of its population living abroad. In terms of the relative growth of the Romanian diaspora over the period 2005-2015, Romania was in second place, with a rate of 7.3%, after Syria, whose diaspora grew by 13.1% over the same period.⁹²

The falling population will have a negative effect on Romania's capacity to develop, something which is already presenting a challenge. According to the European Environment Agency, although the population of Romania in 2015 was estimated at 19,511 million, for 2030 this figure is forecast to fall to 17.639 million; for 2050 to 15.205 million; and for 2100, assuming the birth rate does not change, to 10.7 million.⁹³ Although the prognosis for 2100 ignores many factors that cannot be taken into account, it nonetheless raises an alarm.

⁸⁹ Eurostat – Total fertility rate

⁹⁰ NIS – Rate of natural increase of the population, by urban/rural area, macroregion, development region and county

⁹¹ National Strategy for Romanians Abroad 2017-2020

⁹² UN – International Migration Report 2015: Highlights

⁹³ European Environment Agency – Population trends 1950-2100: globally and within Europe.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/total-population-outlook-from-unstat-3/assessment-1>

⁹⁴ GD 1,155 of 23 December 2014 to approve Development Strategy for the Justice System 2015-2020

⁹⁵ GD 282/2016 of 13 April 2016 to approve the Action Plan to Implement the Development Strategy for the Justice System 2015-2020

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Substantial institutional and legislative progress has been made in terms of the establishment of an independent, impartial, and efficient justice system. Improvements to the transparency and accountability of magistrates in the administration of justice have also been achieved.

All the instruments necessary for monitoring the optimal functioning of the courts and human resources are included in the Development Strategy for the Justice System 2015-2020⁹⁴ and corresponding Action Plan.⁹⁵ One of the factors contributing to the improvements in the administration of justice, ensuring a high degree of transparency and understanding, is the accessibility of citizens to various online information regarding the justice system.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In recent years, Romania has made progress in terms of its alignment with European standards in the prevention and combating of human trafficking, and its national regulations is now conforming to international and European standards.

As regards Romania's ongoing preparations to join the Schengen Area, assessment visits have demonstrated that Romania has been fulfilling all the technical requirements since 2011. In terms of police cooperation, Romania has been a de facto member since 2010. At the end of 2017, Romania's national enforcement authorities had entered 1,395,962 alerts on persons and objects, with the Schengen

Information System managing a total of 76,482,496 alerts entered by the 28-member states.

EFFICIENCY OF ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS

In order to strengthen the efficiency of public central and local administrative institutions, the *Strategy for Consolidating Public Administration for the period 2014-2020* (SCPA 2014-2020) was adopted, the aims of which being: to adapt the structure and mandate of public administration to the needs of citizens and to available funding; to implement high performance management in public administration; to reduce bureaucracy and simplify the business environment and public administration; and to consolidate public administrative capacity thereby ensuring the quality of and access to public services. This

strategy is in the process of implementation, with the financing for the measures stipulated in SCPA 2014-2020 being provided through the *Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity 2014-2020* (OPAC 2014-2020).

The adoption of digital technology at the level of public administration and in the banking system is the main accelerator of the Romanian economy and is leading to a reduction in bureaucracy, increased financial inclusion among the population, and a reduction in the cost of products and services. Moreover, the *National Programme for Cadastre and Land Registration* (NPCLR), managed by the National Agency for Cadastre and Land Registration, through which land is registered in the integrated system of cadastre and land registration, is also underway. This will guarantee the right to property and control over land throughout the country.

HORIZON 2020

- *Rigorously apply the existing legal provisions regarding the combating and condemnation of all acts of violence, abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and all forms of discrimination, especially with respect to children, women and people with disabilities, irrespective of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*
- *Reform the system of enforcement by modernising detention facilities, consolidating the probation system and applying the statutory provisions with respect to the social reintegration of people who have received custodial or non-custodial sentences*
- *Take measures to identify opportunities for continued inter-institutional collaboration in order to facilitate the social reintegration of persons who have been subject to criminal penalties*
- *Draw up and begin implementation of a national strategy to encourage population growth*
- *Ensure the correct non-discriminatory treatment of Romanian citizens temporarily employed abroad through official representations in support of their interests with the authorities in the countries in question*
- *Make extensive use of advanced digital technologies in the devising of development programmes and projects for the optimisation of decisions in the setting of priorities and the allocation of financial resources based on the criteria of profitability and competitiveness*

HORIZON 2020

- *Identify and implement solutions to encourage the digitalisation of the Romanian economy by introducing digital technologies in public administration and in the field of financial and banking services*
- *Combat corruption, fraud and other economic crimes using all available legal means, irrespective of the social or economic status of those involved*
- *Promote and consolidate the values of multiculturalism by including the perspective and contributions of minorities in Romanian history and culture, preserving traditions that contribute to the country's cultural wealth, and combating all forms of discrimination, racism, and anti-Semitism through application of the law, education in the spirit of multiculturalism, and raising awareness of the problems of discrimination faced by minorities in Romania both at present and in the past*

2030 TARGETS

- *Administer justice impartially and with celerity in compliance with established laws and procedures, while respecting the principle of the presumption of innocence*
- *Ensure and encourage dialogue with national minorities with a view to improving decision-making through equal access for all citizens, such that they are able to respect and express their culture, traditions and mother tongue and participate in the economic, social and political life, and with a view to combating preconceptions, prejudice and discrimination in all its forms and encouraging interethnic dialogue, common values and cultural and linguistic diversity*
- *Significantly reduce all forms of violence and the associated death rate*
- *Put a stop to the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture of children*
- *Significantly reduce illicit financial flows and arms dealing, improve the recovery and return of stolen goods and combat all forms of organised crime*
- *Ensure a receptive, inclusive, participative and representative decision-making process at all levels*
- *Develop efficient, responsible and transparent institutions at all levels*
- *Professionalise and improve the work of all central and local public administrative institutions, especially those departments that come into direct contact with citizens, in order to provide prompt and civilised services; expand and universalise online digitalised services*



UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

**STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION
AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



As a member of the international community and the European family, Romania must contribute to the common effort of promoting sustainable development. Global problems call for global solutions. This approach requires collaboration in the form of public funding (both national and international) to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

With a view to achieving this goal, through this Strategy, Romania remains committed to meeting its international obligations, to joining the Eurozone, the Schengen Area, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and to playing a proactive role at a European and international level.

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

Romania became an official development assistance donor country upon joining the EU in 2007. The amount of funds allocated from the national budget for this purpose rose from 0.11% of gross national income in 2014 to 0.14% in 2016. Through its cooperation for development policy, Romania intends to continue to fight extreme poverty and to support the development of sustainable democratic institutions in developing countries by sharing its own experience.

Bilateral assistance takes place in partnership with the public institutions and representatives of civil society of the beneficiary country in the form of loans or grants and scholarships

for high school or university education (for 80 countries), budget support, and humanitarian aid. The main beneficiaries of the official development assistance provided by Romania have been the countries of the wider Black Sea region, of the Eastern Partnership, and of the Western Balkans, as well as countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the island states of the Caribbean and South Pacific (CARICOM).

As of 2013, Romania became the principal donor of aid to the Republic of Moldova, and as of 2014, the main economic partner of said country. Among the priorities of the implemented programmes, special focus was placed on promoting good practices in the field of justice and the fight against corruption, revitalising chambers of commerce and industry, modernising the education system from preschool level (building nursery schools) to inter-university collaboration, and the optimal functioning of central institutions, local authorities and civil society organisations.

Approximately 20 ministries and public institutions in Romania contribute annually to Romania's international development and cooperation agency. The main countries benefiting from Romanian development aid in recent years have been the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine, Albania, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Syria, and Morocco.

Multilateral assistance has been provided through contributions to the specific budgets

of the EU and specialised UN organisations and agencies or through participation in common funds, such as the *Green Climate Fund*.

Founded in 2016, Romania's international development and cooperation agency, RoAid, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for implementing programmes and projects in the field of cooperation for development and humanitarian aid. The new legislative framework, adopted in 2016, is intended to improve the efficiency of awarding development aid to ODA beneficiary countries and to consolidate cooperation with strategic partners. RoAid concentrates its work in each country depending on the established thematic and geographic priorities, taking into account Romania's expertise and comparative advantages, while also reflecting the priorities of the international community, the work of other donors, and the national policies of cooperation for development.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

Together with its member states, the European Union is committed to playing an active role in accelerating the pace of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby ensuring its accountability before citizens and guaranteeing that "no one will be left behind." Based on an exchange of views and statement of national positions on integrated sustainable development policies, the EU member states have agreed common positions through the adoption of various documents, including:

- the Communication on Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future – European Action for Sustainability
- the Communication on a New European Consensus for Development
- the Communication on A Renewed Partnership with the Countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific

- the European Council Conclusions on EU Action to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – *A Sustainable European Future: the EU Response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

From the global level of the United Nations to the regional level of the EU, from political and military commitments of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the efforts of national institutions, national security involves the counteracting of a wide spectrum of threats through the implementation of coherent and integrated measures in the political, economic, societal, military, and environmental sphere. The environmental aspect of national security has three main components: environmental problems resulting from war or armed conflict; international disputes over the control, access to and possession of resources; and natural disasters and industrial catastrophes.

The Ministry of National Defence, in recognising the importance of environmental protection as a dimension of national security and a guarantee of sustainable development, has taken specific action, both at national and international level, to help facilitate Romania's fulfilment of its commitments as member of NATO. Romania currently enjoys sufficient visibility and has a real potential to improve its image within NATO in the area of environmental protection, and this circumstance could be exploited to consolidate its position and to continue efforts to become a leader in the field.

POLICY COHERENCE AT DOMESTIC LEVEL

In response to the fact that the process of implementation of the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda needs

to be coordinated by national governments, and given its scale and the fact that the nature of the issues the goals address presupposes a high degree of sectoral policy coherence and coordination as well as a level of familiarity with the examples of other countries where responsibility for this coordination is assumed at the highest possible political level, the Department of Sustainable Development, operating under the Government of Romania's Working Apparatus and in subordination to the prime minister, was established through Government Decision no. 313/2017. The department has the following duties: to coordinate the implementation activities for the set of 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, to plan and integrate the data and information

provided by the competent institutions, to report to the Government on the establishment and implementation of the set of sustainable development measures at national level, as well as to coordinate activities to localise and prioritise specific goals and targets, to monitor the sustainable development indicators, to formulate proposals and to represent the Department of Sustainable Development both domestically and internationally.

With a view to ensuring policy coherence in this area, it is also necessary to strengthen the strategic framework by drawing up an *Action Plan*, creating a suitable legal and institutional framework, as well as updating the set of specific national indicators.

HORIZON 2020

- *Support solutions that are realistic and favourable to developing countries as part of the framework of intergovernmental debate within the EU and the UN and its institutions specialised in the field of sustainable development*
- *Encourage investment and other economic activity by entrepreneurs in Romania, as well as projects based on volunteering, especially those initiated by young people, aimed at promoting the principles and practices of sustainable development in less developed countries*
- *Support Romanian communities abroad by ensuring access to Romanian language and culture courses and developing Romanian language and literature lectureships within universities in Europe and around the world*

2030 TARGETS

- *Gradually increase the quantity of official development aid granted by Romania through ODA programmes, depending on the capacity of the national economy to support this, with the goal of reaching 0.33% of gross national income by 2030*
- *Increase and diversify official development assistance in line with growth in Romania's economic potential and encourage Romanian economic agents to invest on competitive grounds in the economies of less developed countries*
- *Romania's joining of the Eurozone, the Schengen Area, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*
- *Support Romania's international commitments and proactive involvement on the European and international level*



CHAPTER III: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has introduced a new vision, and not only in terms of the fundamental essence of the established goals and their universal and interconnected nature, but also in terms of the implementation of the goals and their monitoring based on a recognition of the fact that achievement of the goals not only depends on the state, but also the other actors involved, all the way down to the citizen.

The National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2030, having taken into account the particularities of Romania and in light of the consultations performed and the feedback received from participants in the numerous public debates held with representatives from all segments of society, establishes the national priorities with respect to sustainable development. The Strategy represents a practical means of connection for Romania with the relevant national, regional, European and global partnerships. Moreover, in light of Romania's voluntary participation in the periodic reporting on the status of implementation for the 2030 Agenda, the Strategy also serves to enhance the credibility, efficacy and impact of the implemented policies.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development

A successful implementation requires a consolidated *legislative and institutional framework* with functional mechanisms and clearly defined roles. As stipulated in the Strategy adopted in 2008, it is necessary to establish an *Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development*, to be chaired by the prime minister or, in the absence of the latter, a designated deputy prime minister.

The Interdepartmental Committee is comprised of members of the government. The drawing up of legislation and representation at national and international level is the responsibility of each central public authority represented on the Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development within its field of competence and in connection with the field of sustainable development.

The Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development will be established by a Government Decision, in keeping with Art. 12, para. 2 of Law 90/2001, and will produce Annual Reports and approve the Action Plan in keeping with the law. The permanent secretariat of the Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development will be ensured by the Department of Sustainable Development as part of the machinery of government. The Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development will submit its Yearly Report to the Romanian Parliament.

The inter-ministerial committee, which is in charge of coordinating the integration of the measures of environmental protection into sectoral policies and strategies at a national level and which operates under the central public authority for environmental protection, pursuant to GD 741/2011, will continue to coordinate the environmental protection component.

Sustainable development hubs and experts in sustainable development

In order to coordinate implementation of the Strategy in an efficient manner, the existing institutional framework will be consolidated by supplementing the number of staff at the *Department of Sustainable Development*.

At the level of central public authorities and with competency in the field of sustainable

development, where they do not already exist, *Sustainable Development Hubs* will be established at the level of central public authorities with competency in the field of sustainable development. These hubs will be formed by existing staff who will pursue the implementation of the goals of sustainable development relating to the field of activity specific to their institution while also acting as liaisons between their institutions and the Department of Sustainable Development on the one hand, and the National Institute of Statistics, on the other.

In order to grow the administrative capacity of the public institutions involved, the Department of Sustainable Development will facilitate the provision of *training courses* given by experts in sustainable development for staff involved in the implementation of the Strategy.

The Coalition for Sustainable Development

In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, in order to implement the Strategy in an efficient manner, it is necessary to enjoy the support and *involvement of all actors*. Young people, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, local authorities, unions, employers' associations, research, development and innovation institutions, the academic community, mass media, the religious denominations, farmers, the elderly and families should all be involved in activities relating to the implementation of the Strategy. In order to ensure a constant dialogue, *the establishment of a Coalition for Sustainable Development*, made up of representatives of civil society, will therefore be facilitated.

Advisory Council on Sustainable Development

In order to ensure the continuous involvement of the academic community, the research

community and civil society, and the tracking of the effects of policies in the field of sustainable development, an *Advisory Council on Sustainable Development* is to be set up, by Government Decision, in keeping with Art. 12, para. 2 of Law 90/2001, and at the initiative of the Department of Sustainable Development, comprising members of the scientific and academic community, as well as representatives of the business community, of social partners and of civil society. The Advisory Council on Sustainable Development will have the role of offering advice and scientific and technical support, and of initiating and drawing up policy documents and methodologies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Moreover, the *Advisory Council on Sustainable Development* will also have the role of supporting and encouraging the implementation of good practices relevant to Romania that have produced good results on a European and international level, as part of the mechanisms available to the public authorities involved in the process of sustainable development.

The Action Plan and other initiatives

Besides a working institutional framework, the existence of concrete action plans and policy coherence in the field of sustainable development are essential to meeting the goals of this Strategy. Consequently, it is proposed that an *Action Plan* for the achievement of the goals of the Strategy be drawn up, by the end of 2019 at the latest, taking into account the proposals put forward by all organisations involved during the stage of public consultation and debate, by involving all actors participating in the implementation.

The Strategy contains the main directions for development and comprises the basis for the future sectoral, regional, and local strategies. Sustainable development, adapted

to the Romanian context by this Strategy, provides a conceptual framework within which to harmonise the sectoral strategies. The Department of Sustainable Development will ensure policy coherence in the field of sustainable development and will be consulted in the case of draft laws to be adopted by the Romanian Government with direct application to the goals defined in the Strategy.

In order to ensure efficiency and transparency during implementation of the Strategy, the Department of Sustainable Development, together with the other structures involved in the implementation and monitoring, will run *communication, information, and awareness programmes* involving all relevant institutions and citizens.

MONITORING

The National Institute of Statistics and the set of national indicators

The National Institute of Statistics will update in two years from the approval of this Strategy, the National set of indicators based on the new priority goals established in the Strategy and taking into account the set of indicators established at UN and EU level for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to measure the implementation of the SDGs.

The central and local public authorities shall support the National Institute of Statistics by supplying data and information with a view to measuring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Department of Sustainable Development will support the National Institute of Statistics in this endeavor by streamlining this process.



Reporting at EU and UN level

The Department of Sustainable Development will submit periodic reports to the EU on the progress made by Romania in terms of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the country's active participation in the new European and global consensus on development. This is due to the fact that this ambitious project, which the EU has committed itself to spearheading its implementation, addresses our Planet's challenges which, for the first time, have become universally accepted by, and applicable, to all nations.

As part of the follow-up and review mechanism established by the 2030 Agenda at UN level, the member states are encouraged to conduct *periodic progress assessments*. By 2018, 102 countries had presented voluntary reports to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, including Romania. By 2030, Romania aims to present at least two more reports.

2030: STARTS NOW...

