

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA. OPPORTUNITIES AND DIFFICULTIES

Catalin – Valentin - Mihai Lapadat

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration - University of Craiova, Romania

Introduction

The economic developments of the last two centuries have shown that with the passage of time, enormous structural changes occur in the composition of the economic system. In short, we can easily ascertain the idea that the percentage contribution of the agriculture sector to the national income has gradually declined, but in favor of industry and services.

The structural analysis of the local economic system shows that, in general terms, Romania shows obvious signs of underdevelopment.

Materials and methods

Since Romania entered the European Union in 2007, the macroeconomic indicators of the general economy have constantly improved. At the time of Romania's accession to the EU, the government's priorities were to exceed subsistence levels of productivity in the agricultural sector and improve the quality of life in the countryside, as well as encouraging the diversification of the rural economy.

The main source of the urban/rural gap in terms of living conditions in Romania comes from access to public utilities, especially water, sewage and natural gas.

By the early 2010s, the share of the population with access to water and sanitation had improved from the 1990s in urban areas. In rural areas it reached almost 38.8%, compared to 10-11% in the early 1990s, almost 3.5 times higher, according to census data. In real life, access to water and sanitation means that bathrooms, toilets and kitchens could be moved into the home. (Tabel 1).

About 46% of Romania's population lives in rural areas, compared to about 23% in EU member states. The population of rural Romania decreased from 10.6 million (in 1990) to 8.9 million inhabitants (in 2020). However, the share of the rural population in the total population increased from 40.08% in 1990 to 46.03% in 2020 (Table 2), as a much expressed decrease of the urban population was reached.

Conclusions

Rural development remains one of the most ambitious and complex topics of political strategies today. Its realization would require the perfect balance between economic, ecological, socio-cultural rural preservation and the modernization of rural life.

The Romanian countryside has a lot of shortcomings, and one reason is the discrepancy between the city and the village. The optimal solution for reducing this discrepancy is the development of a common development strategy, the starting point of which is the identification of local needs through the involvement of the local population. This process could generate dynamic development, very important in the long term.

Tabel 1. Percentage of communes with public utilities

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
Water system	50.4	56,8	67,6	75,4	79,3
Sanitation system	14.0	13.5	17.1	28.3	36.3
Natural gas	13.9	18.4	21.9	23.2	24.7

Tabel 2. The evolution of the population living in rural areas in Romania, in the period 1990-2020

Indicator	U.M.	1990	2000	2010	2020
Population living in rural areas	Residents	10,6 million	10,2 million	9,3 million	8,9 million
	% of total population	40,08%	47,15%	46,05%	46,03%