



THE IMPLICATIONS “GLOBAL OBJECTIVES” IMPLEMENTATION ON ROMANIA’S ECONOMIC SECURITY

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The 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on September 25, 2015, promotes the balance among the three sustainable development dimensions – economic, social and environmental and establishes a global framework for achieving sustainable development by 2030, having 17 sustainable development (SDGs) objectives and 169 related targets. The European Union, together with its member states, has committed to implementing these goals at EU level, as well as at other non-EU countries, most in need of support. Romania joined the leaders of the 192 UN member states at the Development Summit, adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a universal development global action program. In this context, Romania’s 2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development was drawn up and approved by the Government on November 9, 2018, and Romania’s economic security issues were included in 2020 National Defence Strategy.

Keywords: Agenda 2030; sustainable development objectives; economic security.

Introduction

The United Nations document “*Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015 (United Nations 2015). With the new Agenda, the European Union and its member states are asked to work towards achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 the latest. The EU is fully committed to being a leader in the SDGs implementation, according to its communication “*Next steps for a sustainable European future*” (European Commission 2016). As the European Commission itself has indicated, “*ultimately, sustainable development is a governance issue*” (European Commission 2016).

The plan of this paper is structured as follows: (i) the description of the UN 2030 Agenda and the Broad Sustainable Development Goals, (ii) the European context sustainable development (iii) the 2030 Agenda implementation in Romania (iv) Romanian economic security from a sustainable development perspective.

The 2030 Agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals

The first United Nations congress that addressed the environment and development issue was organized in Rio, in 1992. The debates aimed at reducing the economic weight in order to preserve the global biophysical balance, conditional on maintaining social well-being.

The Rio Declaration (United Nations 1992) and Agenda 21 highlighted analysis and action areas driven by the desire to develop the balance between environmental protection and social benefit, as follows: the global assets protection, the natural resources exploitation, economic growth, human communities management and the quality of life (United Nations 1992).

The 2000 Millennium Summit ratified *The Millennium Declaration*, the first international framework document to combat poverty, hunger, disease and inequality worldwide. In order to achieve the aspirations of the Declaration, eight specific development objectives were defined – reducing extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal access to primary education, promoting gender equality and women emancipation, reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and creating a global partnership for development – known as

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the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 21 targets and 60 indicators, with 2015 as a deadline (United Nations 2000).

The 2012 Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development produced *The Future We Want*, a document which recorded the progress towards achieving the MDGs and moved towards setting the the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda. This document is a recognition of how important the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental are (United Nations 2012).

as access to energy, resilience. infrastructure, sustainable use of oceans and inclusive economic growth (United Nations 2014). Sustainability and security are given an important place alongside the traditional poverty reduction goals that were already part of the MDGs. Considering the rather ambitious agenda, with 17 sustainable development goals, supported by 169 targets, the aspects related to the SDGs implementation and financing will be quite complex, both for developed and developing countries (Kamphof, Spitz and Boonstoppel 2015).



Figure no. 1 Sustainable development goals (European Commission 2021)

The 17 SDGs contained in the new UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Transforming our world (see Figure 1) are interrelated, aiming to eradicate poverty, address climate change and reduce inequality, and require action both in the EU and its Member States as well as in the developing countries. The SDGs must complete the agenda started by the Millennium Development Goals and leave no one behind.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a fundamentally modified version of the sustainable development conceptual framework and is structured around three main pillars as defined in the Brundtland Commission Report (1987) (United Nations 1987):

- social equity;
- economic growth;
- environment.

Compared to the MDGs (2001-2015), the “2030 Agenda” (2016-2030) is a “universal” agenda for different actors around the world and pays attention to global public goods such

The sustainable development european context

Within the EU, the concept of sustainable development has been integrated into *The Strategy for an Extended Europe* since 2006 (Council of the EU 2006), in a unified and coherent strategic vision, with the general objective of continuously improving present and future generations’ quality of life for, for the creation of sustainable communities, able to manage and use resources efficiently and harness economy’s ecological and social innovation potential, with a view to ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion.

To maintain EU’s sustainable development, the Europe 2020 Strategy (EUROPA 2020 n.d.) was developed in 2010 based on three basic pillars: smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusion. According to the document, these pillars should generate interventions in research, innovation and education, in the reduction of carbon emissions by increasing energy efficiency and the use of recyclable resources, as well as in reduced



poverty by increasing population employment rate.

More than a year after the adoption of the *UN 2030 Agenda*, the European Commission presented its implementation strategy in the “*Next steps for a sustainable European future*” communication, on November 22, 2016 (European Commission 2016) and published it together with the *Renewed European Consensus on Development* (European Commission 2018). Later on, the European Union Council adopted the document entitled *Council Conclusions on a Comprehensive Approach to Accelerate the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – A Stronger Reconstruction after the Crisis Caused by the*

the progress made in the EU and around the world.

According to the aforementioned conclusions, the Commission will prepare a comprehensive and voluntary EU level SDGs internal and external implementation review at, in cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS), with a view to examining the UN High Level Political Forum framework from within by 2023.

The European Union development objectives were prioritized and structured on six major directions of action, as can be seen in figure no. 2. The European Commission focused on actions that will lead to concrete progress in the areas of sustainable development objectives.



Figure no. 2 The European Commission sustainable development Priorities (European Commission n.d.)

COVID-19 Pandemic (European Union Council 2021), on 22 June 2021, reaffirming that the EU and its Member States strongly support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, which continue to guide their actions, both internally and externally, for a more thorough rebuilding. It is also recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that it has caused reversals in some of

Since the economic field in the context of European Union, sustainable development is the subject of this paper, one can notice that seven of the 17 SDGs are covered, namely:

- *SDG 1 No poverty* – Eradication of poverty in all its forms and in any context.
- *SDG 3 Health and well-being* – Ensuring a healthy life and promoting well-being for all, at any age.
- *SDG 4 Quality education* – Guaranteeing

quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

To these 4 other sustainable development objectives are added to address targets in the following areas: gender equality, employment and labor specialization – generators of economic growth, investment in innovation, infrastructure and sustainable industrialization, as well as reducing inequalities within and between member countries.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Romania

At the national level, the first strategic document that addressed the of sustainable development issue was adopted in 1999. It was based on increasing the of the population well-being in relation to the natural resources rational use, ensuring environmental protection.

In November 2008, the government approved *Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development Horizons 2013-2020-2030*. The document validated its content, proving to be truly relevant in addressing national realities by offering relevant recovery solutions from the financial and economic crisis, felt since 2009.

Later, after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Government of Romania approved the National Strategy for 2030 Romania's Sustainable Development, dated November 9, 2018 (Romanian Government 2018), in which a competitive and sustainable national economy development is proposed as the main objective. This, according to the document, provisions can be achieved by creating and developing a entrepreneurship and optimism culture centered on scientific research and innovation. In the *National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania 2030*, several targets were identified and analyzed for each of the sustainable development objectives adopted through the 2030 Agenda.

In the following lines, we will make a very brief analysis of two (because of the lack of space) of the SDGs aimed at the economic field, respectively our country level implementation way of.

➤ **SDG 1 No poverty – Eradication of poverty in all its forms and in any context.**

"No poverty", the first objective of the 2030 Agenda reiterates the fact that social protection

measures are fundamental for the prevention and reduction of poverty throughout the life cycle.

Although the Government developed a national strategy on social inclusion and poverty reduction in 2015, and that included policies and significant actions that had to be carried out over 5 years, current statistics show that this situation still represented a major problem in Romania at the end of the implementation period. This fact is demonstrated by a series of negative aspects faced by a large part of Romanian citizens in terms of income.

Thus, according to Eurostat, the our countrywork value was "8.1 euro/hour" in 2020 (Invest Romania 2022), being more than 3 times lower than the EU average with a value of 28.5 euro/hour, "and poverty in work"¹ it is almost twice as high in Romania, with almost 15% above the EU average of 8% (Pop 2019, 6-9): this : this remains at high levels, according to the data.

During the "2015-2019 period, percentages exceeding 23.5% of the total resident population were at risk of poverty" (Statista 2022), this means that approximately 4.5 million people were, at risk of poverty, in terms of income.

The broad poverty spectrum generates combined effects that influence human development essential factors such as unequal access to education, health care, inclusion, life expectancy and many other services, which, together with the intergenerational poverty transmission, prevent Romanian disadvantaged children or families to reach their full potential.

➤ **SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth – Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

Given the specifics of the era in which we live, defined by the increasingly advanced globalization phenomenon in which states, corporations, banking, commercial, political systems, etc. are interconnected, we pose the problem of (identifying) the exemplification of a country's economic sustainability, knowing that the UN has been promoting international economic cooperation for over 20 years, but still quite a few

¹ In-work poverty refers to a situation where families with at least one person in paid work have a household income that keeps them below the officially recognized poverty line.



countries are marked by poverty and have poor rehabilitation prospects.

Economic sustainability refers to practices that support a constant growth rate of “total national GDP of at least 2% per year” (Jones 2016, 2), a percentage that does not seem to have a negative impact on the social, environmental and cultural aspects of the community. Economic sustainability in its essence involves the conservation of resources, and the concept is used to define and explain the value that resources have today but also their possible value in the future.

It is obvious that Romania cannot develop economically outside the global context marked by the current neoliberal economy that sees competition as the human relations, defining characteristic but it must make sustained efforts at the state level, so that the country's national interests always come first place on his agenda in relations with the whole world.

In Romania, “June 21, 2021 represented the date when it consumed its quota of resources” (Ambasada sustenabilității în România 2021) generously offered by the geographical area available to the country for that year. The current neoliberal economy will lead to sustainable increases in temperature, food shortages, mass migration and sooner or later ecosystem collapse. Romania must take into account all these aspects regarding the future and find alternatives for economic development in full balance with social development and environmental protection.

Romania's energy, agri-food, natural and anthropogenic tourism potential can ensure the fulfillment of the country's sustainable development goals and provide security for future generations.

Romania's economic security from a sustainable development perspective

The economic field of sustainable development, this time from the perspective of economic security, is also addressed in the *National Defence Strategy of June 30, 2020* (Romanian Parliament 2020).

The achievement of country's sustainable development is closely related to the state of its economic security. From an economic perspective, we believe that sustainable development today is determined by the economic management models'

efficiency and rationality as well as by their economic growth.

Economic security, usually defined as one of the main national security interests, together with the protection of citizens and the state (sovereignty and integrity) must thus be examined as inextricably linked to the social and environmental dimension.

There are different types and models of economic growth in scientific research: intensive, extensive, zero, “green”, sustainable growth, and there is a concept of “steady-state economy” in ecology (Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy 2021). The national economy sustainability is also determined by the state of its security, that is, by the level of protection that the state provides against the external and internal negative factors' influence. This sphere, however, requires a certain system, which requires monitoring and evaluation.

The country's “economic system” (ro.economy-pedia.com n.d.) stability is determined by its most important property – its integrity. Changing any element of the system affects others, leading to a change in the entire system.

Some of the economic national security main risks and the effects arising, in a sustainable development context we identified are those presented in Table no.1. For this, we considered the current international economic context, the domestic economic situation, the “public administration” (Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration 2014, 33, 51, 68), deficient aspects and the criminalization high level and “corruption in the economic sphere” (Preda 2020, 64).

Considering the economic security risks that we identified as affecting sustainable development, we can thus speak, about the country's economic security understood as a resources, markets, enterprises and workplaces protection system etc. but also in terms of the national strategic assets preservation i.e. some strategic importance sectors such as: critical infrastructures; energy resources; military industry and information technology. We can also include here the elements related to demography, natural resources, education, etc.

In this sense, the Ministry of National Defence through the *White Paper of Defence 2021* mentions that “the recent years economic developments and the European level financial difficulties

have highlighted the need for rethinking the way resources are allocated, but especially used, efficiency being the main criterion" (Ministry of National Defence 2021).

Conclusions

The relationship between sustainability and national security is a special one, aimed at streamlining and coordinating the institutions and communities collective actions in order to achieve a common goal using available resources in a systematic and reasonable manner and operating in a socially responsible manner.

Economy cannot be separated from society, it is an integral part of it, but the fact that economy is only a part of a society is an aspect that has

largely been forgotten in our country. Economics and economic thought should not rule society, but rather support society in its goals.

At the country level, an economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services continuously, maintain manageable levels of public and external debt and avoid dependence on external resources as much as possible.

Following the analyses made, we can conclude that (i) *at the national level there are concerns and policies for fulfilling the of sustainable development objectives, which, however, ensure a low level of results and (ii) the relationship sustainable development – national security represents the expression of unity between security*

Table no. 1

RISKS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ROMANIA'S SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Risks related to the economic security dimension	Effects	
	Economic	Social
- Undermining some branches of the national economy	- Increasing economic dependence and the impossibility of countering or overcoming some crises; - Increasing business risk for Romanian entrepreneurs.	- Worsening living conditions; - The increase in unemployment; - The impossibility of solving some social situations.
- Proliferation of the underground economy	- Decrease in the economic state; power; - Reduction of budget sources; - Deterioration of the economic balance.	- Increasing the degree of social insecurity; - Crime, underworld.
- Damage to some strategic importance sectors (energy industry; defense industry)	- The decrease in economic potential and the possibility of a useful transition from the peace economy to the war economy; - Increasing dependence on the armaments industry of other states; - The deterioration of the condition of the Romanian manufacturer of high-performance weapons.	- Decrease in the number of jobs; - Social insecurity, feeling of national insecurity.
- Property insecurity; - Devaluation of the national currency; - The weakening of the banking system; - Increase in public debt; - Distrust of the population in the banking system; - Unrealistic and inappropriate economic policies to the circumstances and trends of the moment.	- Economic insecurity; - Decrease in production; - Inflation, serious economic effects; - Decrease in economic potential.	- Increasing the degree of individual, collective and social insecurity; - Social instability; - Decrease in purchasing power; - The increase in unemployment.
- Blocking external credits; - Blocking access to scarce sources of raw materials for the national economy; - Blocking access to modern technologies.	- Impeding the process of upgrading and implementing some national development programs; - Decrease in the efficiency of the economy.	- The increase in unemployment; - Increasing emigration; - Increasing insecurity; - Social movements.
- Decrease in sales markets	- Crisis of overproduction; - Negative trade balance; - Economic insecurity.	- Lowering the standard of living; - Unemployment; - Emigration; - Social insecurity.
- Economic globalization on a national background incapable of adaptation; - Tendency regionalization; - Economic non-integration in the EU; - Smuggling, illegal traffic of goods.	- Bankruptcy of companies that cannot cope; - Increasing the degree of economic dependence; - Loss of national control over resources.	- Increasing social risk; - Personal, collective and national insecurity; - Degradation of the value system; - Emigration; - Negative, nihilistic psychology.
SDGs affected: 1: No poverty; 3: Health and well-being; 4: Quality education; 8: Decent work and economic growth; 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure; 12: Responsible consumption and production		



policy, economy, social environment and ecology.

The COVID-19 (2020) pandemic has amplified the already existing vulnerabilities and risks, it has also created new ones, with a major economic, strategic and security impact in the coming years, followed by the by the Ukraine conflict generated risks (2022).

The EU Recovery Mechanism and related National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) must contribute to a just transition for the EU's Resource and Energy Intensive Industries.

The COVID-19 pandemic was followed by a new crisis, generated by the conflict in Ukraine with effects on economic security. It was on March 24, 2022, that The European Economic and Social Committee adopted the Resolution "The war in Ukraine and its economic, social and ecological impact" (European Economic and Social Committee 2022b), stating that the war and the sanctions applied will have a socioeconomic impact on the member states and neighboring countries, and that the EU must be ready to take them on.

In the of the European Union C 152 Official Journal dated April 6, 2022 (European Economic and Social Committee 2022a), we find a series of the European Economic and Social Committee

opinions on to sustainable development and economic security related topics, including: "Measures beyond GDP for a successful recovery and a sustainable EU economy and resilience" and "Aligning the strategies and activities of food businesses with the Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic", both on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – The strategy for financing the transition to a sustainable economy".

Romania is facing much more sophisticated and complex new threats, and the Black Sea region has acquired new strategic values, with the Crimean Peninsula turning into a real force projection platform, thousands of kilometers away, to the east and south of the Mediterranean Sea, following its annexation in 2014.

The emphasis layid on a for long-term access competition for resources (energy, water, food, rare metals, etc.), in parallel with the suppliers competition intensification for some markets control, led to an increase of states economic interdependence.

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