

IMPLICATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS" ON ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *Climate change is affecting the environment and humanity globally by increasing the average surface temperature, extreme weather events, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and acidification of the oceans. Climate change is now having an impact on all countries on every continent, disrupting national economies and people's livelihoods as resources, food and water become scarcer. To address these risks and threats to security and even the existence of life, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UN) in New York adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This document aims, through its 17 objectives, a better future for humanity, in response to the identified threats, being structured on three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The 2030 Agenda was adopted and subsequently implemented by the European Union, through the Communication "Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future" of November 22, 2016 and by Romania, through the "National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania 2030" of November 9, 2018.*

Keywords: *sustainable development; 2030 Agenda; environment; strategy; climate change.*

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the early 1970s when issues related to the state of the earth's biosphere began to be disputed globally, such as ozone depletion, global warming, biodiversity loss, acid rain, desertification, and so on.

At the *United Nations Conference on the Environment*, held in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 5-16, 1972, considerations were made about sustainable development.

The Stockholm Conference resulted in a final statement on the human environment, the *Stockholm Declaration* (Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment n.d.)¹, and the establishment of an environmental management body, which was later renamed the *United Nations Environment Program* (UNEP)².

The next step was taken in 1983, when a resolution was adopted by the General Assembly to establish the *UN World Commission on Environment and Development*, headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland³. Sustainable development is defined in the Brundtland Report as follows: "*Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Development 1987).

¹ The final statement was a statement of human rights as well as a recognition of the need for environmental protection and contains 26 principles. The first principle states that "*Man has the fundamental right to liberty, equality and adequate living conditions, in an environment of a quality that allows a dignified life and well-being*". The need for environmental conservation has not been opposed to economic development. In fact, their interdependence was explicitly mentioned in Principles 8 and 9, Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, available on: <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972>.

² This body becomes the international authority that sets the global agenda for environmental issues with the task of coordinating the efforts of all nations to promote sustainability and environmental protection.

³ Gro Harlem Brundtland, (b. 20 April 1939, Oslo, Norway), Norwegian politician who was the first woman Prime Minister of Norway, who served for three terms (1981, 1986-89 and 1990-96), and later became Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO; 1998-2003). Trained as a doctor, she identified with public and environmental health issues and women's rights. Available on: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gro-Harlem-Brundtland>.

In 1992, the Earth Summit was held in Rio, followed by „New York in 1997, 2000, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2013, Johannesburg in 2002, and Rio 2012 (a conference also known as the Rio + 20).” (Nations n.d.)

All these steps, debates and conferences were materialized in the United Nations document "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development on September 25, 2015 (Nations, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Resolution A/RES/70/1 2015).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contained in the 2030 Agenda aim to eradicate poverty, address climate change and reduce inequality. The 17 SDGs (see Figure 1) are interdependent and require action both in the EU and its Member States, as well as in developing countries.



Figure no 1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Development 1987)

Within the EU, the European Council adopted in Gothenburg (2001) the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy. It was complemented by an external dimension in 2002 at the Barcelona European Council, taking into account the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002). analysis of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, initiated by the Commission in 2004, and on the basis of the Commission Communication "Review of the Sustainable Development Strategy – A Platform for Action" of December 2005 and the contributions of the Council, the European Parliament, the European Social and Economic Committee and other bodies, the European Council adopted a revised Sustainable Development Strategy, ambitious and comprehensive for an enlarged Union, based on the one adopted in 2001 (UE 2006).

Since 2006, the concept of sustainable development has been integrated into the *Enlarged Europe Strategy, in a unified and coherent strategic vision*⁴ with the general objective of continuously improving the quality of life for present and future generations, to create sustainable, capable communities to manage and use resources efficiently and to exploit the economic and social innovation potential of the economy, in order to ensure prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion.

In 2010, as a continuation of the EU's sustainable development, *The Europe 2020 Strategy for Promoting Smart Growth* (COM 2010) (based on: education, research,

⁴ *Ibidem.*

innovation), sustainable (based on reducing carbon emissions, energy efficiency, renewable resources) was adopted, and inclusive (creating new jobs, reducing poverty, etc.).

The adoption of the *2030 Agenda* was followed by a period of elaboration of strategies for its implementation at the level of the Member States and the European Union. Together with the Member States and respecting the principle of EU subsidiarity, it is committed to becoming a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, implicitly, of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The implementation strategy at EU level was presented by the European Commission in its Communication "Next steps towards a sustainable European future" of 22 November 2016 (European 2016). This Communication was published together with the *Renewed European Consensus on Development* (The new European consensus on development 'our World 2018).

The document sets out the European Union's response to the 2030 Agenda and confirms the integration of sustainable development goals into European policy and current European Commission priorities, assessing the situation and identifying the most relevant sustainability concerns. Through this communication, the European Union is committed to sustainable development by "*ensuring a dignified life for all while respecting the limits of the planet, bringing together prosperity and economic efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion and environmental responsibility*". The EU's response to the 2030 Agenda is to integrate the 17 SDGs into the Union's public policies, in order to support the global effort to build a sustainable future in collaboration with its partners. The 17 SDGs are already being pursued by many of the European Union's policies.

The development objectives at the level of the European Union were prioritized and structured on 6 main directions of action as it results from figure no. 2.



Figure no 2. Sustainable development, a global approach. The European Commission's priorities (Sustainable development n.d.)

As can be seen, 12 of the 17 SDGs belong to the European Green Deal, but only 7 of them are in a direct connection with the environment, respectively: 6. *Clean water and sanitation* – ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for

all; 7. *Clean and affordable energy* - ensuring that everyone has access to affordable energy in a safe, sustainable and modern way; 11. *Sustainable cities and communities* – the development of cities and human settlements so that they are open to all, safe, resilient and sustainable; 12. *Responsible consumption and production* - ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns; 13. *Climate action* – taking urgent measures to combat climate change and its impact; 14. *Aquatic life* – conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and 15. *Terrestrial life* – protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and repairing degradation soil and stop biodiversity loss.

On 11 December 2019, the European Commission presented a Communication on the *European Green Pact*, a new growth strategy aimed at transforming the Union into a just and prosperous society with a modern, competitive and resource-efficient economy. Where there will be no net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and where economic growth will be decoupled from resource use. *The European Green Pact* also aims to protect, conserve and strengthen the Union's natural capital and to protect the health and well-being of its citizens against environmental risks and related impacts. At the same time, this transition must be fair and inclusive, leaving no one behind.

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. To counter it, the *European Green Pact* will transform the EU into a modern, competitive and resource-efficient economy with zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with economic growth dissociated from resource use, and no person or place shall be left behind.

The *European Green Pact* is at the same time a lifeline for a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it will be financed with a third of the € 1.8 trillion investment from the NextGenerationEU Recovery Plan, as well as funds from the EU's seven-year budget (Pact n.d.).

Subsequently, the European Parliament, in its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Environment Pact, called for the necessary transition to a climate-neutral society to take place by 2050 at the latest and become a European success and declared climate and environmental urgency. He has repeatedly called on the Union to set a more ambitious 2030 climate target and to be part of a new regulation.

To this end, the *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the achievement of climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) no. 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ("European Climate Law")*, thus completing the adoption procedure and transposing into legislation the goal of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 (Law n.d.).

European Climate Law sets the following goals for the European Union: climate neutrality, negative emissions after 2050, net greenhouse gas emissions (emissions after deduction of emissions) to be reduced by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990. In order to ensure that sufficient efforts are made to reduce and prevent emissions by 2030, the European Climate Law introduces a limit of 225 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent to the contribution of emissions to that target. The Union also intends to achieve a higher volume of net carbon absorbers by 2030.

It should also be noted that on 15 September 2021, the European Commission adopted a Communication setting out the concept of the *New European Bauhaus* (Bauhaus n.d.). This includes a number of policy actions and funding opportunities. The project aims to accelerate the transformation of various economic sectors, such as construction and the textile industry, in order to provide all citizens with access to circular and lower carbon goods.

The new European Bauhaus brings a cultural and creative dimension to the *European Green Pact*, with the aim of demonstrating how sustainable innovation provides concrete and positive experiences in everyday life.

In Romania, starting from the idea that the benefits of economic development must outweigh the costs, including those related to environmental conservation and improvement, Romania's first Sustainable Development Strategy in 1999 aimed at progressively improving and maintaining the well-being of the population in correlation with requirements for the rational use of natural resources and the conservation of ecosystems. Thus, in 1997, only a few years after the historic event represented by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Romania began the process of developing a sustainable development strategy. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania (SNDD) was finalized in 1999 by a working group set up by Government Decision no. 305/1999. Although developed in a participatory system, SNDD did not provide adequate implementation monitoring mechanisms on the basis of which its periodic review could be carried out.

Following Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, national priorities were adjusted through *The National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Horizons 2013-2020-2030* (SNDD) (National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Horizons 2013-2020-2030 n.d.) approved by the Romanian Government on November 12, 2008, aiming to reduce the socio-economic gap compared to that of the member states of the European Union. For sustainable development to succeed in Romania and, therefore, the 2030 Agenda, together with the commitments of the European Union, this strategy is built around the citizen and the needs of future generations. The strategy starts from the premise that sustainable development presents a framework of thinking that, once mastered by the citizen, will help create a more equitable society, defined by balance and solidarity and able to cope with the changes brought about by current global, regional problems and national, including population decline. The care of the state for the citizen and the respect of the citizen for the institutions, for his neighbor, for his moral values and for his cultural and ethnic diversity will lead to a sustainable society.

Romania, along with 192 other states, has undertaken to establish the national framework to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. The global action plan, which Romania chooses to support in the coming years, is aimed at alleviating poverty, combating inequality, social injustice and protecting the planet by 2030. It is an action plan for people, planet and prosperity, through which aims to strengthen a climate of security and freedom, in which "no one will be left behind" (Transforming our world: the 2030. Agenda for Sustainable Development n.d.).

In order to contextualize the Romanian 2030 Agenda, the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030* was elaborated (SNDDR 2030) under the direct coordination of the Department for Sustainable Development, a strategy that was adopted by the Romanian Government in the meeting of November 9, 2018 and approved by *Government Decision no. 877/2018* (Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 n.d.).

This new strategy analyzes the international, European context and Romania's perspective on sustainable development as well as the implementation at national level of each objective of the 2030 Agenda.

Referring now to the third pillar of the 2030 Agenda, environment, respectively to the objectives directly related to this field, the *National Strategy for the sustainable development of Romania 2030* sets the following targets for 2030:

➤ *SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation*: Substantially increase the efficiency of water use; expanding the rational reuse of treated and recycled water • Substantially increasing the

efficiency of water use in all sectors • Connecting households in towns, communes and compact villages to the drinking water and sewerage network by at least 90% • Increasing access to water drinking water for vulnerable and marginalized groups • Improving water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating waste storage and minimizing hazardous chemicals and materials • Achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all;

➤ *SDG 7. Clean and affordable energy:* • Expanding the transmission and distribution networks for electricity and natural gas • Ensuring the cyber security of the monitoring platforms for the production, transmission and distribution networks of electricity and natural gas • Decoupling the economic growth of resource depletion and environmental degradation • Increasing the share of renewable energy sources and low carbon fuels in the transport sector (electric vehicles), including alternative fuels • Ensuring a stable and transparent regulatory framework in the field of energy efficiency • Strategic support for the share of electricity in total domestic, industrial and transport consumption;

➤ *SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities:* • Ensuring access to adequate housing conditions for all citizens • Significantly reducing economic losses caused by floods and landslides • Ensuring access to safe, fair, affordable and sustainable transport systems for all • Development and implementation of a general program of spatial planning and spatial planning • Educating and making the population responsible for seismic risk situations • Reducing the effects of air pollution on human health and the environment • Substantially reducing the number of deaths and diseases caused by hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil contamination • Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, landscape elements in urban and rural areas • Implement legal provisions on production, transport, storage, application it and the elimination of chemicals, including pharmaceuticals;

➤ *SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production:* • Staged transition to a new development model based on rational and responsible use of resources • Halving per capita food waste at retail and consumption level and reducing food losses - along the production and supply chains • Recycling of 55% of municipal waste by 2025 and 60% by 2030 • Recycling of 65% of packaging waste by 2025 (50% plastics; wood 25 %; ferrous metals 70%, aluminum 50%, glass 70%, paper and cardboard 75%) and 70% by 2030 (plastics 55%; wood 30%; ferrous metals 80%, aluminum 60%, glass 75%, paper and board 85%) • Separate collection of hazardous household waste by 2022, bio-waste by 2023 and textiles by 2025 • Establishment of mandatory extended producer responsibility schemes for all packaging by 2024 • Implementation sustainable green public procurement practices;

➤ *SDG 13. Climate action:* • Strengthening Romania's resilience and resilience to climate and natural disaster risks • Improving the ability to respond quickly to high-intensity extreme weather events • Improving education, awareness and human and institutional capacity to mitigate change Climate change, adaptation, mitigation and early warning social and environmental issues, in line with EU policies;

➤ *SDG 14. Aquatic life:* • Prevention and significant reduction of marine pollution of all types • Minimization and management of the impact of acidification of the marine water environment • Responsible and sustainable development of fishing activities for wildlife and aquaculture • Attracting other Black Sea states in the act sustainable management of living aquatic resources;

➤ *SDG 15. Terrestrial life:* • Development of green infrastructure and use of services provided by natural ecosystems • Ensuring the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity • Supporting research and development research institutions and infrastructures of national and European interest • Sustainable forest management, elimination of illegal logging development of an integrated computer system for monitoring logging and transport of timber, including at border crossings, infrastructure • Transition to a circular

economy through complementary approaches involving traditional methods and state-of-the-art technologies for restoring/restoring natural capital and reducing dependence on fertilizers synthetic and pesticide, to combat soil degradation • Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soils, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods.

Successful implementation involves a strengthened legislative and institutional framework, with functional mechanisms and the establishment of clearly defined roles. As foreseen in the Strategy adopted in 2008, an Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development was set up under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. In 2022, the Department for Sustainable Development developed *The National Action Plan for the implementation of SNDDR 2030* (National Action Plan for the implementation of SNDDR 2030 n.d.), a key document guiding the implementation of SNDDR 2030, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and EU strategic documents in all policies sectoral, for sustainable development at national level in the period 2022-2030.

This document shows that *Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030* contributes to the implementation of the *2030 Agenda*, by addressing the global objectives for sustainable development in the national context, being guided by Romania's values and interests in all policy areas identified in 2018. The National Action Plan provides the necessary elements to support possible recommendations for the revision of the SNDDR 2030 targets during implementation, as a result of the mid-term evaluations. The National Action Plan for the implementation of SNDDR 2030 aims to facilitate inter-agency cooperation to strengthen policy cohesion and the governance framework for sustainable development and to ensure the inclusive participation of all stakeholders, for a forward-looking, transparent, agile and innovative governance.

The National Statistics Institute is responsible for monitoring the implementation process, which will update, within 2 years from the approval by normative act of SNDDR 2030, the set of national indicators in order to measure the implementation of sustainable development objectives, based on the new established priority objectives. Through the Strategy and taking into account the set of indicators set at UN and EU level for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Awareness of the importance of the environment has increased significantly in recent years, both in terms of the natural and anthropogenic environment. Protecting nature is everyone's responsibility due to the unequivocal human-environmental impact, but also an opportunity for citizens to unite in a noble cause, by being aware of this responsibility.

Climate change is affecting the environment and humanity globally by increasing the average surface temperature, extreme weather events, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and acidification of the oceans. Climate change is impacting all countries, disrupting national economies and people's livelihoods as resources, food and water become scarcer. These effects have an impact on other goals and often make it difficult to achieve them. The costly effects of climate change on humanity, communities and countries in general will continue to escalate if they are not carefully monitored, verified and measured. Without drastic action today, adapting to these effects in the future will be more difficult and costly, and the poorest and most vulnerable populations will bear the brunt of climate change. The impact of climate change is a reality that is felt by rising temperatures, affecting ecosystems and communities around the world, producing negative effects on the things that depend on humanity - water, energy, transportation, wildlife, agriculture, ecosystems and human health.

At the same time, we consider it important to mention that at the level of the European Union the European Environment Agency (EEA) was established by *Regulation (EEC) no. Council Regulation (EC) No 1210/90*. The same regulation also established the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet), a network of partnerships

between 33 Member States⁵ and six collaborating countries⁶. Through its mandate, the EEA is tasked with working with Eionet to provide knowledge so that relevant stakeholders in the EU institutions and Eionet countries can make informed decisions on improving the environment in Europe and the transition to sustainability. Within this mandate, one of the main tasks of the EEA is to publish a report every 5 years on the state of the environment, trends and environmental prospects. These reports, published since 1995, assess the state and prospects of the environment in Europe and underpin the development and implementation of EU policies. The assessment is based on past trends, progress towards future targets and the chances that EU policy will contribute to the achievement of long-term goals.

A report published by the European Environment Agency in December 2019, which analyzes the impact of global warming in Europe, explains that "*Europe faces unprecedented environmental challenges and urgency*", including the decline of biodiversity, how resources are used and the impact of climate change on health.

In early April 2020, the European Environment Agency published the report "*The European Environment – State and outlook 2020 (SOER 2020)*" (European Environment - Status and Outlook 2020 Report n.d.). stop the alarming rate of biodiversity decline, the growing impact of climate change and the excessive consumption of natural resources. It also provided some key solutions that would help get Europe back on track to achieve these goals (NMA report n.d.). This report is the 6th SOER report published by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the 2020 edition identifying serious gaps between the state of the environment and the short- and long-term targets set in existing EU policies.

In Romania, within the National Meteorological Agency (NMA) there is a climatology section. ANM is the national authority in the field of meteorology in Romania, carrying out a continuous activity since 1884 and provides operational meteorological services, as well as current administrative activities, studies and research in its sphere of competence. According to the data presented by ANM about the evolution in the last 60 years, the average annual temperature of Romania has increased by 2.4°C. The places where the temperature has risen the most in the last 60 years are Bistrita, where the temperature has risen by 3.47°C, and Slobozia, where the temperature has risen by 3.08°C. On the other hand, the slightest increase in temperature was made by the meteorological station in Bucharest – Baneasa, where the temperature has risen 1.53°C in the last 60 years. Instead, the Bucharest-Filaret station recorded a temperature increase close to the national average of 2.37°C.

NMA together with the Romanian Waters National Agency (RWNA) – responsible at national level for monitoring surface water, groundwater and water quality and the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (GIES) – with the role of coordinating, preventing and managing emergencies, monitoring the climatic parameters, respectively the imminence of emergencies.

Climate change is the biggest threat to sustainable development everywhere, and its unprecedented widespread impact is disproportionately burdening the poorest and most vulnerable. Urgent action to stop/combat climate change and cope with its impacts is essential for the successful achievement of all goals. Romania is committed to combating climate change and pursuing a low-carbon development model by creating the framework and resources needed to move towards a greener and more competitive, low-carbon economy. resources and be resilient to climate risks (Sustainable Romania. Sustainable development indicators. Horizon 2020 n.d.).

⁵ The 28 EU Member States together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

⁶ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo (in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and in accordance with the Opinion of the Court of Justice on the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo).

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