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Ecosystems evolution as source of sustainable development

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Abstract

Rural development by regions can be materialized through the elaboration and implementation of sectoral strategies. The design of a development model in the territory according to the fundamental sectoral domains can be achieved following the rural cohesion principles. The rural area, in its multiple diversity, is subject to complex challenges coming from the macroeconomic and macrosocial processes: a). demographic and social challenges from the territorial point of view, segregation of vulnerable groups – the diminution in number of the rural population and the strong demographic ageing on the rise have an impact upon rural cohesion starting from the type of public services, their supply and ending up with the rural labour market; b). challenges of the climate changes – the environmental risks are felt in the territory at different degrees, and vulnerabilization is regionally selective; c). challenges in relation to the loss of biodiversity, through the vulnerabilization of the natural, landscape and cultural patrimony – the regional character of the rural area can be so drastically modified that the territorial identity is lost.

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1. Introduction

The design of a development model by regions according to the fundamental sectoral domains can be achieved following the rural cohesion principles. A harmonious and more balanced situation of rural Romania imposes

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strategic orientations focusing on the increase of economic, social and territorial cohesion. “The territorial cohesion completes the solidarity mechanisms through a qualitative approach and guarantees that the development opportunities are the best adapted to the particularities of a given area....the diversity of territories represents a development potential and the distinct identities of the local and regional communities are extremely relevant in this respect.” [Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020:3-4]. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion published by the European Commission considers that the objective is to encourage the harmonious and sustainable development of regions on the basis of their territorial resources and characteristics. The following elements are proposed for this objective materialization: concentration (reaching the critical mass while the negative externalities are approached), connection (strengthening the efficient connections of the vulnerable areas with growth centers through infrastructure and access to services), complementarity (working together within administrative limits to reach synergy targets). Social cohesion construction in the rural communities is a difficult process, as these are subject to complex challenges from the macroeconomic and macro social processes: a) demographic and social challenges from territorial point of view, segregation of vulnerable groups – rural population diminution, strong demographic ageing on the rise have an impact upon rural cohesion coming from the type of public services, their supply and ending up with the rural labour market; b) challenges linked to climate changes – the environmental risks are felt in the territory in different degrees and vulnerabilization is regionally selective. “*The increased risk of drought increase, of desertification, flooding and other natural hazards require different responses from the territorial point of view. The regions have different possibilities to include adaptation and attenuation in their strategies...adapting their socio-economic systems.*”(Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020:5); c) challenges in relation to biodiversity loss, through the vulnerabilization of the natural, landscape and cultural heritage – the regional character of the rural area can be so drastically modified that the territorial identity is lost: “*The excessive exploitation of resources can bring about serious damages and can endanger territorial development. ...the intensification of agriculture and fisheries, transport and other infrastructure development types can cause serious environmental problems, mainly in the cases when they take place in a non-coordinated modality from the territorial point of view....The land utilization modifications, mass tourism threaten the cultural resources and landscapes, leading to the fragmentation of natural habitats and ecological corridors.*” (Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020:6). The adequate response to these multiple challenges can be materialized into the design and implementation of regional sectoral strategies.

2. Material and methods

The materials used for investigating the complex relations between ecosystems and regional development: statistical documents and studies on ecosystems; scientific literature on biodiversity and ecosystems; statistical materials and studies on the investigated regions; regional and local strategies on the investigated rural area; legislative documents, standardized norms and rules referring to the investigated regional area governance. The methods used for the identification and quantification of the existing multiple relations between the ecosystem services and the regional communities consisted of: socio-economic transverse and longitudinal analysis; diagnosis analysis; SWOT analysis; institutional analyses; strategic analyses. The investigated universe was divided on two layers: development region and related rural area.

3. Regional exposure and vulnerability

Romania’s regional evolution was subject to the internal structural dynamics as well as to the ***problems induced by globalization***; from the regional point of view, Romania had to face the world structural changes, to manage the social consequences, in parallel with solving up its own crisis situations determined by the new economic and social trajectory initiated in the early 1990s.

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