

ASPECTS REGARDING THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN THE SOUTH MUNTENIA REGION OF DEVELOPMENT, ROMANIA

Ionut Daniel PETRE

University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest, 59 Marasti Boulevard, District 1, 011464, Bucharest Romania, Phone: +40213182564, Fax: +40213182888, Email: ptr_ionutdaniel@yahoo.co.uk

Corresponding author: ptr_ionutdaniel@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The study had the purpose to analyze the evolution of the rural population and its living standard in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2016. The data were collected from the National Institute of Statistics and the fixed basis index and comparison method were used to establish the evolution of the following indicators: rural population, rural population dealing with agriculture, human resource, civil occupied population, GDP and GDP/inhabitant, average monthly income and expense per household, and poverty rate. The results showed that rural population represents 58 % of the region population, and is in a continuous decline due to the low birth rate, high mortality rate and migration. Most of the people work in agriculture. The living standard is low as GDP/capita, average income and expense per household are much lower than the average in the country. In this context, the authorities both at the national and local level should establish a corresponding strategy for the sustainable development of the South Muntenia region for improving the living standard of the local population.

Key words: living standard, rural population, South Muntenia region, Romania

INTRODUCTION

The South Muntenia region is one of the 8 micro regions of development existing in Romania. It is situated in the South part of the country, and has 34,453 km² surface, representing 14.5 % of Romania's area [29].

From an administrative point of view, its surface includes 7 counties: Arges (19.8%), Calarasi (14.8%), Dambovita (11.8%), Giurgiu (10.2 %), Ialomita (12.9%), Prahova (13.7%) and Teleorman (16.8%). Within the counties there are 2,019 villages and 519 communes, but also 32 cities and 16 municipalities [28].

The economic development of the South Muntenia region is based on its natural resources of the subsoil (natural gases, petroleum, coal, salt, sulphur, gypsum, and buildings materials which contributed to the development of industry. About 71 % of the region surface is represented by agricultural land, of which about 81 % is arable land suitable for cropping [18].

The variability of relief including branches of mountains belonging to the Southern

Carpathians, the Subcarpathic hills, and the plains in the South, as well as the climate favor the development of agriculture, a large variety of crops being cultivated and large range of farm animals being grown.

From an economic point of view, the South Muntenia region is among the less developed regions having a GDP/inhabitant smaller than 75 % of the EU average.

The urbanization rate is 41.4 % at the region level reflecting that rurality is dominant, as confirmed by the share of 58 % of the rural population in the total population of the South Muntenia region, which accounted for 3,394,547 inhabitants on July 1st, 2017 [5, 24, 27].

Even if it is dominant, the rural population is in a continuous decline due to the decreasing birth rate, the need for jobs of the young population who migrates to cities and the weak institutional infrastructure, public utilities and services [2].

In the South Muntenia region most of the population living in the rural area is dealing with agriculture, and this is a specific feature in the rural Romania where the diversification

of the activities is weak, and the dependence of agriculture always led to low incomes per household and a low living standard [6].

The rural workforce is mainly engaged in agricultural activities, self-employed people and contributing family worker having the highest share. Also, in the rural area, population has a lower education level, farmers and skilled workers being dominant among other professions and also low productivity is another characteristics [8, 12, 14, 21].

In the South Muntenia region farm structure is not homogenous having a mixed profile in most of cases. Farm size is small and very small, and performance in agriculture is very low, characterizing subsistence and semi-subsistence farming which does not compile with the market oriented production [15].

The low technical endowment and investment, and weak business management, besides the low infrastructure are also other specific features in the rural areas of the South Muntenia region as well as at the country level, being the main restraining factors of the sustainable development of the economy at the national and regional level [11, 16].

Taking into account the situation of the economy and of rural population, the national and local authorities established a smart specialization strategy based on innovation and investments destined to assure a sustainable development of the South Muntenia Region [25, 30].

The aspects mentioned above are the reasons which stayed at the basis of this paper. The goal of the paper was to analyze the evolution of the rural population in the South Muntenia region, in the last decade, 2007-2016, in close connection with its living standard expressed by the economic development characterized by GDP and GDP/capita, income and expense per household, and poverty rate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The indicators used in this study have been: rural population, rural population dealing with agriculture, forestry and fishing, GDP at the region level and GDP per capita, income per household and income of the agriculturists,

expense per household and agriculturist, poverty rate.

In the study it was analyzed the evolution of these indicators in the period 2007-2016 according to the data collected from the data base Tempo online of the National Institute of Statistics.

The dynamics was interpreted based on the results of the fixed basis indices, the reference term being the 2007 level in most of cases. Comparison method served to establish the position of the South Muntenia region versus the average at the country level for each analyzed indicator.

All the data and results were presented in tables and analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The population of the South Muntenia Region of development was 3,394,547 inhabitants in 2007, and during the analyzed period it decreased by 4.89 %, reaching 3,228,630 inhabitants in the year 2017.

The decrease of the population is justified by the negative evolution of the demographic indicators such as: the birth rate in decline and the growing mortality rate, and also the migration rate continuously higher [2].

This decreasing trend of the population in the South Muntenia region is similar with the descending trend of Romania's population from 22,562,913 inhabitants in 2007 to 22,201,702 inhabitants in 2017 (-1,61%).

If we compare the decrease rate, it is easy to notice that the decline rate of the population is 3 times higher than at the country level.

Under these conditions, the share of the population of the South Muntenia region in Romania's population declined from 15.04 % in 2007 to 14.54 % in 2017 (Table 1).

The rural population in the South Muntenia region represents an important part of the population. Its evolution was also a decreasing one from 1,929,086 inhabitants in 2007 to 1,845,886 inhabitants in 2017, meaning by -4.32 % less.

The trend of the rural population of the South Muntenia region was similar to the descending trend of the rural population at the country level. If in 2007, Romania had

9,743,693 people living in the rural areas, in 2017, there were only 9,690,464 inhabitants, by 0.55 % less than in 2007.

Therefore, in the South Muntenia region, the decline of the rural population is more severe than at the country level.

As a result, the share of the rural population of the South Muntenia region in Romania's rural population decreased from 19.8 % in 2007 to 19.05 % in 2017 (Table 1).

Table 1. The evolution of the population and rural population in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2017 (No. of persons)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Romania's population | 22,562,913 | 22,542,169 | 22,520,477 | 22,492,083 | 22,441,740 | 22,401,865 | 22,359,849 | 22,299,730 | 22,260,158 | 22,236,059 | 22,201,702 |
| Romania's rural population | 9,743,693 | 9,758,152 | 9,749,431 | 9,737,074 | 9,732,730 | 9,739,334 | 9,723,610 | 9,714,936 | 9,697,725 | 9,708,759 | 9,690,464 |
| Share of rural pop. in Romania's population (%) | 43.18 | 43.29 | 43.29 | 43.29 | 43.37 | 43.48 | 43.49 | 43.57 | 43.57 | 43.66 | 43.65 |
| Population of the South Muntenia region | 3,394,547 | 3,384,932 | 3,373,155 | 3,360,408 | 3,343,770 | 3,327,723 | 3,309,182 | 3,289,404 | 3,269,867 | 3,252,112 | 3,228,630 |
| Rural population of the South Muntenia region | 1,929,086 | 1,927,190 | 1,920,166 | 1,912,871 | 1,906,025 | 1,899,724 | 1,889,251 | 1,878,293 | 1,866,548 | 1,859,209 | 1,845,886 |
| Share of the rural pop. in the population of the South Muntenia region (%) | 56.83 | 56.93 | 56.92 | 56.92 | 57.00 | 57.09 | 57.09 | 57.10 | 57.08 | 57.17 | 57.17 |
| Share of the population of the South Muntenia region in Romania's population (%) | 15.04 | 15.02 | 14.98 | 14.94 | 14.90 | 14.85 | 14.80 | 14.75 | 14.69 | 14.63 | 14.54 |
| Share of the rural population of the South Muntenia region in Romania's rural population (%) | 19.80 | 19.75 | 19.70 | 19.65 | 19.58 | 19.51 | 19.43 | 19.33 | 19.25 | 19.15 | 19.05 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The decline of the population is explained by the decreasing fertility rate, the low birth rate, the high infant mortality rate, the negative natural increase, caused by the low living conditions, and health assistance [7, 19].

The labor resource in the South Muntenia region has registered a continuous decline from 2,049.3 thousand persons in 2007 to 1,884 thousand persons in 2016, meaning by - 8.07 % less than in the 1st year of the analysis.

The evolution was similar to the evolution of the workforce in Romania, where in 2016,

labor resource was 12,562 thousand persons, by 9.82 % less than in 2007.

In consequence, the share of the labor resource of the South Muntenia region in Romania's labor resource registered a slight growth from 14.88% in 2007 to 15 % in 2016 (Table 2).

Rural population is an important human resource of labor force in the South Muntenia, where its share in the total population accounts for 58 %. In fact, as long as Romania is a "rural state", rural population is of high importance in the country development [20].

Table 2. The evolution of the labor resources in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2016 (Thousand persons)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Romania's labor resource | 13,772.7 | 13,747.4 | 13,875.9 | 14,047.6 | 14,047.7 | 14,033.7 | 13,997.9 | 12,597.7 | 12,481.1 | 12,562.00 |
| Labor resource in the South Muntenia region | 2,049.3 | 2,043.2 | 2,063.00 | 2,087.8 | 2,085.6 | 2,078.8 | 2,068.8 | 1,899.4 | 1,875.4 | 1,884.00 |
| Share of South Muntenia region in Romania's labor resource (%) | 14.88 | 14.86 | 14.87 | 14.86 | 14.85 | 14.81 | 14.78 | 15.08 | 15.03 | 15.00 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The civil occupied population in the South Muntenia region declined by 9.79 % from 1,214.8 thousand persons in 2007 to 1,095.9 thousand persons in 2016.

Table 3. The evolution of the civil occupied population in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2016 (Thousand persons)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Romania's civil occupied population | 8,725.90 | 8,747.00 | 8,410.70 | 8,371.30 | 8,365.50 | 8,569.60 | 8,530.60 | 8,431.70 | 8,340.60 | 8,317.60 |
| Romania's civil occupied population in agriculture, forestry and fishing | 2,462.40 | 2,407.40 | 2,410.70 | 2,439.90 | 2,442.00 | 2,510.00 | 2,380.10 | 2,304.10 | 2,003.10 | 1,726.80 |
| Share of the civil occupied population in agriculture in total civil occupied population in Romania (%) | 28.22 | 27.52 | 28.66 | 29.15 | 29.19 | 29.29 | 27.90 | 27.33 | 24.02 | 20.76 |
| Civil occupied population in the South Muntenia region | 1,214.80 | 1,201 | 1,159.90 | 1,154.80 | 1,154.50 | 1,182.60 | 1,168.80 | 1,146.50 | 1,117.70 | 1,095.90 |
| Civil occupied population in agriculture, forestry and fishing in the South Muntenia region | 434.7 | 424.3 | 424.9 | 428.3 | 429.6 | 442.8 | 419.1 | 404.4 | 351.9 | 303.7 |
| Share of the civil occupied population in agriculture, forestry and fishing in total civil population occupied in the South Muntenia region (%) | 35.78 | 35.33 | 36.63 | 37.09 | 37.21 | 37.44 | 35.86 | 35.27 | 31.48 | 27.71 |
| Share of the civil occupied population in the South Muntenia region in Romania's occupied population (%) | 13.92 | 13.73 | 13.79 | 13.79 | 13.80 | 13.80 | 13.70 | 13.60 | 13.40 | 13.18 |
| Share of the civil occupied population in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Romania's civil population occupied in agriculture (%) | 17.65 | 17.62 | 17.63 | 17.55 | 17.59 | 17.64 | 17.61 | 17.55 | 17.57 | 17.59 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The trend was similar with the descending evolution of the civil occupied population in Romania, -4.68 %, but it is easy to notice, if the two figures are compared, that in the South Muntenia region, the decline rate was doubled than at the country level. This shows that in the South Muntenia region, it is a much higher lack of jobs than at the country level.

The share of the civil occupied population in the South Muntenia region in the civil occupied population in Romania also declined from 13.92 % in 2007 to 13.18 % in 2016 (Table 3).

The civil occupied population in agriculture, forestry and fishing in the South Muntenia region accounted for 434.7 thousand persons in 2016, that is by 30.14 % less than in the 1st year of this analysis. This deep decline was caused by the lack of jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing and also by the migration to cities or abroad looking for jobs or for better paid jobs.

The decrease of the civil occupied population in agriculture in the South Muntenia region is similar to the decline of about 30 % at the country level in 2016, when only 1,726.8 thousand persons were occupied in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Romania.

The civil occupied population in agriculture in the South Muntenia region represents 17.59 % of Romania's civil occupied population in these fields of activity in the year 2016 compared to 17.65 % in 2007 (Table 3).

Besides the civil occupied population, an important part of the population is unemployed, the young people of 15-24 years old being the most affected. Unemployment was very high during the economic crisis and continue to be a problem in the South Muntenia region as well as at the country level, where the unemployment rate is about 24 % for the youngest age category, 3 times higher than the average unemployment rate in the country [13, 22, 26].

Because of the high importance of the rural population in the economy, an action plan was established to assure employment of labor force and social inclusion [23].

The economic development of the South Muntenia region

The economic development of the region is in close relationship with the living standard of the population. For this reason, in this part of the paper it is presented the evolution of some specific indicators characterizing the economy in the South Muntenia region.

(a) The evolution of GDP and GDP/inhabitant

Table 4. The evolution of GDP in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2015 (Lei million)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Romania's GDP | 428,979.0 | 538,049.9 | 526,345.3 | 529,623.5 | 562,062.4 | 595,367.3 | 637,456.0 | 668,143.6 | 712,658.5 |
| GDP of the South Muntenia region | 53,486.1 | 67,581.7 | 69,362.1 | 66,193.0 | 73,612.8 | 71,087.1 | 77,804.3 | 86,814.7 | 86,647.2 |
| Share of GDP of the South Muntenia region in Romania's GDP (%) | 12.47 | 12.56 | 13.18 | 12.50 | 13.10 | 11.94 | 12.21 | 12.99 | 12.16 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The GDP/inhabitant increased by 24.76 % in the South Muntenia region and by 21.15 % in Romania.

Despite of the higher growth rate, the GDP/inhabitant in the South Muntenia region is smaller than the country average. In 2007, in the South Muntenia region, it was

In the period 2007-2015, the economy of the South Muntenia region has continuously developed so that in 2016 the GDP of the region was by 61.99 % higher than in 2007. In 2016, it reached Lei 86,647.2 million in comparison with Lei 53,486.1 million in 2007. This reflects a positive economic aspect with a deep impact on the social situation, more exactly on the living standard. This positive evolution kept pace with Romania's GDP whose level increased by 66.12 % in the analyzed period. (Table 4).

registered Lei 22,792.9/capita while the country average was by 23.2 % higher, accounting for Lei 29,679.1/capita. In 2015, in the South Muntenia region, the GDP/capita reached Lei 28,436.4 being by 21.92 % smaller than the average GDP/capita in Romania (Table 5).

Table 5. The evolution of GDP/capita in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2015 (Lei/inhabitant)

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Romania's GDP/capita | 29,679.10 | 31,890.80 | 33,547.30 | 35,957.10 |
| GDP/capita in the South Muntenia region | 22,792.90 | 25,120.00 | 28,240.80 | 28,436.40 |
| Share of GDP/capita in the South Muntenia region in Romania's GDP/capita (%) | 76.80 | 78.77 | 84.18 | 79.08 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The agricultural production value.

Taking into account that over 57 % of the population of the South Muntenia region is represented by rural population and that over 90 % of the rural population is dealing with agriculture, forestry and fishing, it is important to know how agricultural production value has performed during the analyzed period.

The agricultural production value in the South Muntenia region increased by 72.28 % in the analyzed period from Lei 7,697,601 thousand in the year 2007 to Lei 13,261,487 thousand in 2016. This growth rate is much higher than the increase rate of 45.3 % of Romania's agricultural production value. This aspect is

justified by the fact that the South Muntenia region is one of the most important areas for agriculture in Romania, due to the soil quality and climate conditions which favor cereals and technical plants cropping.

The positive evolution of the agricultural production value was supported by the continuous development of the vegetal sector in the South Muntenia region. The vegetal production value was 2.13 times higher in 2016 than in 2007. As a result, the vegetal sector increased its contribution to the value of agricultural production at the region level from 57.11 % in 2007 to 70.78 % in 2016.

Therefore, the South Muntenia region has an important contribution to Romania's

agricultural production value, and its weight increased from 16.14 % in 2007 to 19.12 % in 2016. Also, the contribution of the vegetal sector of the South Muntenia region to

Romania's vegetal production value raised from 15.30 % in 2007 to 20.79 % in 2016 (Table 6).

Table 6. The evolution of the agricultural production value in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2016 (Lei thousand)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Romania's agricultural production value | 47,699,916 | 66,993,906 | 59,928,386 | 64,452,571 | 76,508,656 | 64,259,474 | 78,464,416 | 74,524,454 | 68,749,578 | 69,348,614 |
| Romania's vegetal production value | 28,723,475 | 45,742,175 | 35,735,477 | 43,488,480 | 54,179,772 | 40,169,144 | 53,843,812 | 49,058,330 | 43,574,128 | 45,155,180 |
| Share of vegetal production value in Romania's agricultural production value (%) | 60.22 | 68.28 | 59.63 | 67.47 | 70.82 | 62.51 | 68.62 | 65.83 | 63.38 | 65.11 |
| Value of agricultural production in the South Muntenia region | 7,697,601 | 12,164,295 | 10,768,676 | 11,575,621 | 14,604,812 | 12,534,763 | 15,613,379 | 13,753,306 | 13,373,646 | 13,261,487 |
| Value of vegetal production in the South Muntenia region | 4,395,721 | 8,416,882 | 6,319,534 | 7,999,378 | 10,973,585 | 8,613,675 | 11,539,817 | 9,656,827 | 9,343,874 | 9,386,852 |
| Share of vegetal production value in the value of agricultural production in the South Muntenia region (%) | 57.11 | 69.19 | 58.68 | 69.11 | 75.14 | 68.72 | 73.91 | 70.21 | 69.87 | 70.78 |
| Share of agricultural production value in the South Muntenia region in Romania's agricultural production value (%) | 16.14 | 18.16 | 17.97 | 17.96 | 19.09 | 19.51 | 19.90 | 18.45 | 19.45 | 19.12 |
| Share of vegetal production value of the South Muntenia region in Romania's vegetal production value (%) | 15.30 | 18.40 | 17.68 | 18.39 | 20.25 | 21.44 | 21.43 | 19.68 | 21.44 | 20.79 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The total average monthly income/person in the South Muntenia region is another important indicator reflecting the living standard of the population. In 2016, the level of this indicator was Lei 1,004.02 per person, by 25.39 % higher than in 2007, which is a positive aspect.

But, if we compare this level with the average monthly income per person in Romania, Lei 1,112.22 in 2016, we may easily draw the

conclusion that in the South Muntenia region the level of this indicator is just 90.27 % of the average at the country level. More than this, it has a tendency to diminish its share from 95.27 % in 2007 to 90.27 % in 2016 (Table 7).

These findings characterize in fact the general situation in Romania, where the income of a household member represents the lowest share of the salary in the GDP/inhabitant [3].

Table 7. The evolution of the total average monthly income per person in the South Muntenia region in the period 2011-2016 (Lei/person)

| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| Total average monthly income per person in Romania | 839.53 | 861.15 | 895.85 | 937.65 | 1,010.67 | 1,112.22 |
| Average monthly income per person in agriculture in Romania | 603.72 | 583.73 | 608.1 | 629.98 | 648.48 | 632.21 |
| Share of the average income in agriculture in the average income per person in Romania (%) | 71.91 | 67.78 | 67.88 | 67.19 | 64.16 | 56.84 |
| Average monthly income per person in the South Muntenia region | 800.67 | 835.46 | 839.66 | 896.02 | 911.3 | 1,004.02 |
| Average monthly income per person in agriculture in the South Muntenia region | 634.28 | 690.85 | 623.88 | 657.97 | 553.17 | 594.29 |
| Share of average monthly income in agriculture in the average monthly income in the South Muntenia region (%) | 79.22 | 82.69 | 74.30 | 73.43 | 60.70 | 59.19 |
| Share of the average monthly income per person in the South Muntenia region in the average monthly income per person in Romania (%) | 95.37 | 97.02 | 93.73 | 95.56 | 90.17 | 90.27 |
| Share of the average monthly income per person in agriculture in the South Muntenia region in the average monthly income per person in Romania's agriculture (%) | 105.06 | 118.35 | 102.59 | 104.44 | 85.30 | 94.00 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

The average monthly income/person earned in agriculture, forestry and fishing is much smaller the South Muntenia region than the average monthly income at the country level. In Romania, this sort of income registered Lei 632.21/person in 2016, being by 4.71 % higher than in 2007, while in the South Muntenia region, it accounted for Lei 594.29/person being by 6.31 % smaller than

in 2007. This reflects that work in agriculture, forestry and fishing in the South Muntenia region is less paid than at the country level, despite that the contribution of agricultural production of the South Muntenia region to Romania's agricultural production value have been continuously increasing.

This aspect is also confirmed by the share of the average monthly income in agriculture,

forestry and fishing in the South Muntenia region in the average income in agriculture at the country level. If in the period 2011-2014, the average income in agriculture of the South Muntenia region exceeded the average income in agriculture in Romania by about 2-18 %, in 2015 and 2016, it decreased by 6-15 %. The income decline reflects, of course, a decline of the living standard of the agriculturists too (Table 7).

More than this, despite this disparity regarding the income per household, in case of the income coming from agriculture, other authors found that there are differences regarding the income obtained by agriculturists depending on the farm size, agricultural production value and subsidies [1].

Also, while in the urban area, the households incomes are coming mainly from the salary of

the employees, in the rural areas incomes are coming mainly from agriculture and in the total revenues self-consumption prevails in the peasant families. The gross or net average earnings are very low, as in general in Romania, a country which is situated on the penultimate position in the EU from this point of view [4].

For farmers, subsidies are very important to help them to balance their income and costs and to get profit [17].

The total average monthly expenses per household is another indicator reflecting the living standard. In the South Muntenia region, the average monthly expenses increased by 23.22 % from Lei 1,889.46/household in 2008 to Lei 2,328.35 in 2016. However, the growth rate in the analyzed period is smaller in comparison with the growth rate of 31.78 % in Romania.

Table 8. The evolution of the total average monthly income/household in the South Muntenia region in the period 2008-2016 (Lei/household)

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Average monthly expense per household in Romania | 1,915.19 | 2,047.33 | 2,062.95 | 2,183.76 | 2,244.47 | 2,317.40 | 2,269.25 | 2,351.53 | 2,523.99 |
| Average monthly expense per household in agriculture in Romania | 1,501.31 | 1,723.39 | 1,618.49 | 2,002.30 | 1,965.74 | 2,038.26 | 1,999.90 | 2,020.63 | 1,960.41 |
| Share of the average monthly expense per household in agriculture in the average monthly expense per household in Romania (%) | 78.39 | 84.18 | 78.46 | 91.69 | 87.58 | 87.95 | 88.13 | 85.93 | 77.67 |
| Average monthly expense per household in the South Muntenia region | 1,889.46 | 2,013.58 | 2,120.07 | 2,090.72 | 2,209.00 | 2,189.64 | 2,240.33 | 2,180.10 | 2,328.35 |
| Average monthly expense per household in agriculture in the South Muntenia region | 1,488.57 | 1,864.28 | 1,802.82 | 1,905.71 | 2,171.93 | 1,937.00 | 1,826.47 | 1,864.81 | 1,860.05 |
| Share of average monthly expense per household in agriculture in the average monthly expense per household in the South Muntenia region (%) | 78.78 | 92.59 | 85.04 | 91.15 | 98.32 | 88.46 | 81.53 | 85.54 | 79.89 |
| Share of average monthly expense in the South Muntenia region in the average monthly expense per household in Romania (%) | 98.66 | 98.35 | 102.77 | 95.74 | 98.42 | 94.49 | 98.73 | 92.71 | 92.25 |
| Share of average monthly expense per household in agriculture in the South Muntenia region in the average monthly expense per household in agriculture in Romania (%) | 99.15 | 108.18 | 111.39 | 95.18 | 110.49 | 95.03 | 91.33 | 92.29 | 94.88 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

As a result, the share of the average monthly expense/household in the South Muntenia region in the average monthly expense/household in Romania declined from 98.66% to 92.25 %, reflecting that the reduction of the income has led to the diminishing of the expenses, therefore to a reduced living standard in the South Muntenia region.

If we analyze the average monthly expense/household in agriculture of the South

Muntenia region, we may notice an increase by 24.95 % in 2016 compared to 2008. However, this growth rate is smaller than +30.57 % at the country level for this indicator.

Also, the average monthly expense/household in agriculture of the South Muntenia region has recorded a smaller share in the average monthly expense/household in Romania, from 99.15 % in 2007 to 94.88 % in 2016. This indicator confirms again the reduction of the

living standard of the agriculturists in the South Muntenia region (Table 8).

The poverty rate in the South Muntenia region was 24.8 % very close to the poverty rate in Romania, 25.3 %, in 2016. The lowest

rate of poverty in the South Muntenia region was registered in the years 2010 and 2011, about 21 %, but since that time, the poverty rate increased in the coming years (Table 9).

Table 9. The evolution of the poverty rate in the South Muntenia region in the period 2007-2016 (%)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Poverty rate in Romania (%) | 24.6 | 23.6 | 22.1 | 21.6 | 22.3 | 22.9 | 23 | 25.1 | 25.4 | 25.3 |
| Poverty rate in the South Muntenia region (%) | 26.8 | 22.9 | 22.4 | 21.2 | 21.1 | 22.1 | 22.7 | 25.5 | 30.6 | 24.8 |

Source: Own computation based on the data collected from NIS, 2018 [31].

Rural poor population represents 1/3 of the total poor population in the country, and taking into account this proportion, it is more exposed to poverty and social exclusion than the urban population. The relative poverty risk is about 42 % in the rural areas than in the urban ones (18%) [9, 10].

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained in this study allowed to draw the following important conclusions:

- The South Muntenia region has an important human resource for the economic development.
- Rural population represents the majority of the population and is dealing mainly with agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- In the last decade, the main trends refer to the continuous demographic decline caused by the low fertility rate, low birth rate, high mortality rate and migration to cities.
- The population in the rural areas has a low living standard as reflected by the low GDP/inhabitant, the lower income and the low expense per household in comparison with the average in the country.
- The living standard of the rural population is in a continuous decline.
- The poverty rate is high, determined by the economic status, low infrastructure, low education level, population aging, migration of the young people, the lack of jobs, and low income.
- Agricultural activities are almost the main source of existence, but being practiced in small farms mainly subsistence and semi-

subsistence farms, self-consumption is dominant and the obtained products are not market oriented. This means a low productivity and low income finally.

For these reasons, the South Muntenia region should be in the attention of the authorities at the national and local level and rationale programmes for its sustainable development are required. Investments in a modern infrastructure could create jobs, special educational programmes could be helpful for improving the education level, the measures of the National Programme for Rural Development are also important tools sustaining young farmers, modern technologies, a high a higher productivity and competitiveness of farms. All these could definitely contribute to a better living standard of the rural population of the South Muntenia region.

REFERENCES

- [1] Brinaru Aurelia Ioana, Dona Ion, 2016, Analysis of the support mechanism of the pillar I and the results in the Romanian agricultural exploitations South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 16, Issue 2, 2016, 43-48
- [2] Busega Ionuț, 2014, Demo-economic restructuring in South-Muntenia development region. Causes and effects on the regional economy, Theoretical and Applied Economics Volume XXI (2014), No. 9(598), pp. 83-92
- [3] Chivu Luminita, Ciutacua Constantin, Georgescu Laurentiu, 2015, Household income in Romania. A challenge to economic and social cohesion, 2nd International Conference 'Economic Scientific Research - Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Approaches', ESPERA 2014, 13-14 November 2014,

Bucharest, Romania, Procedia Economics and Finance 22 (2015) 398 – 401.

[4]Cismas Laura, Miculescu Andra, Oțil Maria, 2010, Income and expenditure of households in Romania, Annals of Craiova University, pp.1-8, http://feaa.ucv.ro/annals/v1_2010/038.02.pdf, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[5] Condei Reta, Alecu Ioan Nicolae, Popescu Agatha, Ciocan Horia Nicolae, 2016, The analysis of the human resources involved in the rural tourism in Romania, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 16, Issue 2, 2016, 85-93

[6]Condei Reta, Popescu Agatha, Balan Aurelia, Tudor Valentina, 2015, Aspects of employment in agriculture in the main development regions of Romania, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2015, 67-73

[7]Costaichie Georgiana Melania, Nicolae Ioana, 2014, Sustainable development in public health in the South Muntenia Region and South West Oltenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 14, Issue 1, 2014, 67-70

[8]Dinculescu Corina-Georgeta, 2016, The influence of education on rural population employment: Regional disparities, Agrarian Economy and Rural Development - Realities and Perspectives for Romania, 279-286, https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/163386/1/IC-EADR-2016_p279.pdf, Accessed April 3, 2018.

[9]Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2017, Statistics on rural areas in the EU, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[10]Gherghinescu Oana, Poverty and social exclusion in rural areas Romania, Final Report, Annex I, European Commisison, ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4436&langId=en, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[11]Grigoras Mircea Adrian, Popescu Agatha, Holeab Cosmin, Chedea Veronica, Merce Emilian, 2007, Bridging the innovation gap and the management of interdisciplinary project for sustainable development, XXXVII Annual Meeting of European Society for New Methods in Agricultural Research, ESNA, 10-19.

[12] Herman Emilia, 2012, Rural employment in the context of Romanian Regional Development, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series, Issue 3/2012, 131-140.

[13] Iorga Adina Magdalena, 2017, Characteristics of the Romanian agriculture workforce, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 17, Issue 2, 2017, 183-186.

[14]Lascar Elena, 2013a, Specific conditions and forms for the development of the rural area in South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 13, Issue 2, 2013, 209-212

[15] Lascar Elena, 2013b, The structure of the farms in South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 13, Issue 1, 2013, 205-208

[16]Lascar Elena, 2014a, The analysis of the rural infrastructure development in South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 14, Issue 3, 2014, 135-138

[17] Lascar Elena, 2014b, The role of subsidies in the rural development of South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 14, Issue 1, 2014, 179-182

[18] Lascar Elena, 2015, The analysis of the economic development of South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 15, Issue 1, 2015, 255-258

[19] Lascar Elena, 2017, Aspects regarding the house, education and health infrastructure in South Muntenia Region, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 17, Issue 1, 2017, 273-276

[20] Popescu Agatha, 2013, Consideration on the rural populartion as a resource of labor force in Romania, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 13, Issue 3, 2013, 229-236

[21]Popescu Agatha, 2015, Research on labor productivity in Romania's agriculture, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2015, 271-280

[22] Popescu Agatha, Condei Reta, 2015, Research on Romania's employment in agriculture and its position in the European Union, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2015

[23] Regional Action Plan for Employing Labor Force and Social Inclusion and the Implementation Plan of the Regional Action Plan 2006 – 2008 South Muntenia Region, Labor Ministry, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Domenii/Management%20fonduri%20europene/SM.pdf>, Accessed March 20, 2018

[24]Romania's population by residence localities (Populatia Romaniei pe localitati dupa domiciliu), INSSE, 1 iulie 2016, http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/populatia_romaniei_dupa_domiciliu_la_1_iul_2016_0.pdf, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[25]Smart specialization Startegy of South Muntenia Region, Innovative instrument devoted to regional economic development South Muntenia Region, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/164072/regioengfinal.pdf/eb02665f-256f-460f-9ab1-2260a918d588>, Accessed April 3, 2018.

[26] Social trends, 2016, INSSE, http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/social_trends.pdf, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[27] Socio-economic analysis of the South Muntenia Region of Development, (Analiza socio-economica a regiunii de dezvoltare Sud Muntenia, ADR Sud Muntenia), https://www.adrmuntenia.ro/.../analizasocecpdr20142020draft3revizuit110213_am_encr..., Accessed March 28, 2018.

[28] South Development Region (Regiunea de Dezvoltare Sud), http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/regiuni/3.S_ro.pdf, Accessed March 20, 2018

[29] South Muntenia Region, General Presentation, PPT, <http://www.provincia.fe.it/download/traian.pdf?server=sd2.provincia.fe.it&db=/intranet/internet.nsf&uid=F960872228EDA0C0C1257507002A59CD>, Accessed March 20, 2018

[30] Study regarding the actual development statement of the South Muntenia Region of development (Studiu privind stadiul actual de dezvoltare al ... - ADR Sud Muntenia) <https://www.adrmuntenia.ro/...file/.../studiu-infrastructura-adr-sud-muntenia-final-abc.pd...>, Accessed March 28, 2018.

[31] The National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Data base, 2018., www.insse.ro, Accessed April 3, 2018.