

TRENDS AND ACTUAL ISSUES CONCERNING SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA, STUDY CASE: THE NORTH EAST REGION OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The European Union Regions of Development are characterized by substantial social, economic, and territorial disparities. There also recorded large economic disparities between rural and urban areas. The Romanian rural areas includes: 2860 communes, 12,956 villages, representing around 90% of the Romanian territory and 45 % of its population. It has the main agricultural and forestry resources and over 9.6 million inhabitants. Of these, 506 communes and 2414 villages are located in the 6 counties of The North East Region of Development, one of the poorest regions of development within European Union. This paper is focused on the regional development issues in the rural areas of this region and is aimed to evaluate the resources that haven't been enough capitalized in this region and to indentify solutions to improve the socio- economic situation in the next years, through a balanced development strategy.

Key words: North East Region, regional development, sustainable

INTRODUCTION

Each region has its own characteristics and specific economic trends of development. The notion of region has evolved as a unit of innovation, economic growth and an appropriate scale to resolve the challenges of sustainable development [1]. Imbalances between Romanian regions are a major issue which affect the national development. According to definition from the report 'Our Common Future' [2], "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs". As Chai Ning and Dong Hoon [3] said, in order to meet continuous human needs, sustainable development has become the theme of today's world in different fields, and some renewable resources as tourism, should be continuously developed and utilized to contribute to the sustainable development. In the view of Berke PR [4] the sustainable development can be reached by a balance among the three 'E's: environment, economy and equity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper is based on Sustainable Development Indicators used to monitor The European Union Sustainable Development Strategy, in relation with socio-economic development, sustainable production, demographic changes and social inclusion. The data are provided by Eurostat, National Institute of Statistic Romania and have been statistically processed and interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

First we analyzed the demographic changes. In 2012 the population of North East Region of Development represented 17.3% of national population. The population of the North East region was concentrated most in the rural areas, representing 56 % of total population. From 1990 to 2012 the total population of the region decreased by 2.2 %, from 3.78 millions to 3.7 millions. In the rural areas in 1990 were 2.19 millions inhabitants, representing almost 58 % of total population.

So we can affirm that population decrease in North East Region was below national decrease which was by 8 % per total and by 12 % in rural areas.

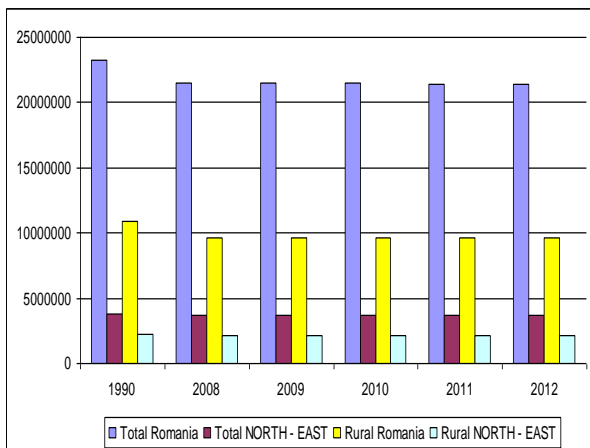


Fig.1. Demographic changes between 1990 and 2012 in The North East Region of Development, comparative with Romania, Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The indicator economically active population shows a decrease between 2005 and 2010 in the North East Region comparative with national level, from 18.1 % to 17.9 %, but in absolute terms there is an increase of region level, which means that if this trend will continue in the next years, there will be no shortage of labour supply for the production of economic in the region.

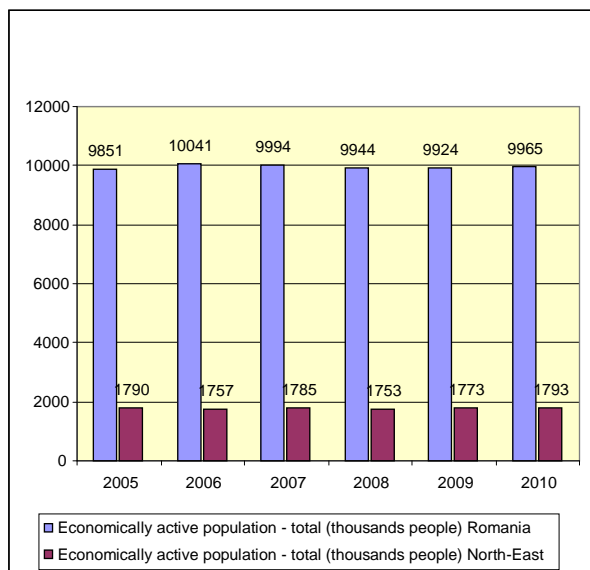


Fig.2. Economically active population trends in the North East Region comparative with Romania between 2005 and 2012, Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The evolution of economically active population by working age in the North East Region of Development, comparative with Romania indicates the same ration of 17.5 % in 2005 and 2012 that can be associated with stability.

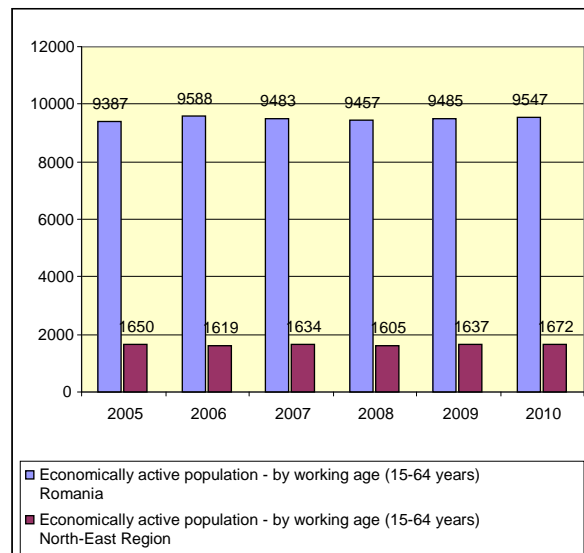


Fig.3. Evolution of economically active population by working age in The North East Region of Development, comparative with Romania (15-64 years) between 2005 and 2012 (thousands people) Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The indicator employment rate recorded in 2010 the highest level of employment in the North East Region of Development, between 2005 and 2012.

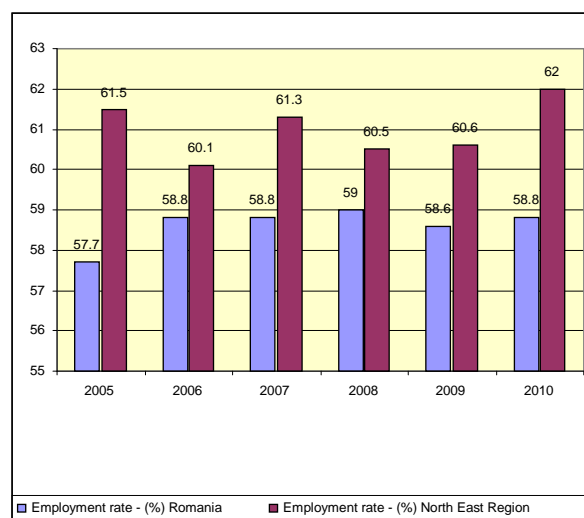


Fig.4. Employment rate evolution in the North East Region comparative with Romania between 2005 and 2012 (%), Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The level of average monthly nominal gross earning indicates why the North East Region of Development is considered one of the poorest regions of development in Romania. The population wages are situated well below national average.

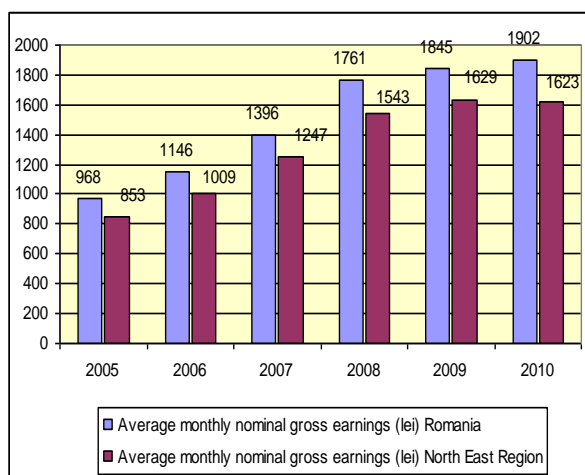


Fig.5. Average monthly nominal gross earning level in the North East Region comparative with Romania between 2005 and 2012 (lei)

Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

In 2009 the GDP per inhabitant reached the highest period between 2005 and 2012 in the North East Region Development but the average GDP per inhabitant in this period represented only 63 % from national GDP per inhabitant. This represents another indicator that revealed barriers to the region development.

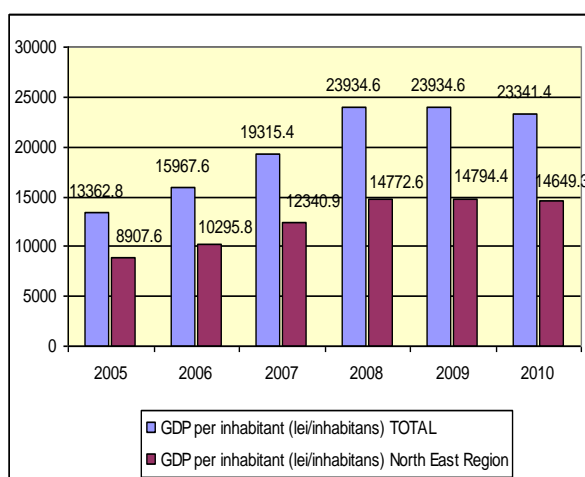


Fig.6. GDP level in the North East Region comparative with Romania between 2005 and 2012 (lei)

Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The SMEs sector is a key indicator of a region stage of development. The SMEs have the most

significant role for economic growth, employment and social integration. In the North East region of development the role of SMEs in research and development is difficult to quantify, less than 0.4 % representing R&D expenditure.

Per total, at region level the number of active entrepreneurs in the North East Region didn't reach more than 11.1 % from national total number. In 2008 was recorded the highest number of active entrepreneurs but the largest share from total at the national level was achieved in 2005.

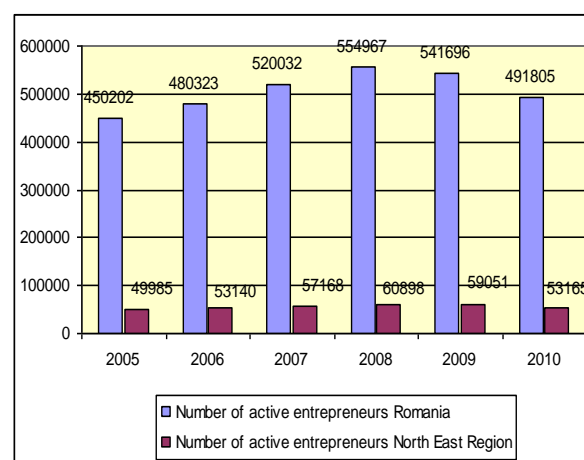


Fig.7. Number of active entrepreneurs in the North East Region comparative with Romania between 2005 and 2012, Data source: NIS Romania, 2013

The agriculture is one of the most important fields of activity of the North East Region. In the rural areas lives more than half of the region population. The non agricultural activities in the rural areas are insignificant, so the population incomes are directly depending on agricultural results.

CONCLUSIONS

In the North East Region of Development, the sustainable development targets challenged social and economical issues but the economic growth in a safety environment and peaceful social climate is rather linked with the future than present. The indicators of sustainable development showed large disparities between national and region level, in terms of GDP per inhabitant and average monthly nominal gross earning. But the

region was well situated comparative with national level in terms of employment rate and trend of economically active population. The number of entrepreneurs decreased in the last years in the context of global economic crises, and the SMEs sector didn't produced the expected economic growth. The R&D activities are bellow national and EU targets and aims related with this "engine" sector of the economy and the turnover from innovation is negligible.

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