

ORIENTATIONS REGARDING THE SUPPORT OF ROMANIAN MOUNTAIN AREA BETWEEN 2014 - 2020, THROUGH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Dănuț UNGUREANU

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Abstract

From the perspective of the proposal for a Regulation (EC) on the support for rural development 2014-2020 granted from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), in order to fundament the programming process for 2014-2020 was considered an analysis regarding the support for mountain areas and the priorities to be included in the future policy, in accordance with the stipulations of the proposed regulation, was considered. The objectives aim at sustainable development of mountains, through the capitalization of resources, population stabilization, maintenance of cultural identity, increasing local economic power, while maintaining the ecological balance and the protection of the natural environment.

Key words: mountain areas, rural development, specific objectives

INTRODUCTION

Delimitation of less favored mountain areas is conducted under art. 18 of Regulation (EC) no. 1257/1999 regarding the support from the European Agricultural Guidance [1] and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) for rural development and for amending and repealing certain Regulations. Financial support is granted as specified in Annex 4A of the NRDP 2007-2013 [8], which includes the list of administrative territorial units (ATUs) included in less favored areas (LFAs), according to Regulation (EC) no. 1698/2005 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - Article 36 (a) (i) and (ii) [2]. Thus, LFMA – Less favored mountain areas (measure 211 from the NRDP) include: Administrative-territorial units located at altitudes higher or equal to 600 m, the limits of which are those of physical blocks (identified in the Integrated Administration and Control System) that belong to the ATU; Administrative-territorial units located at an average altitude between 400-600 m and an average slope equal to or greater than 15%, the limits of which are

those of physical blocks (identified in the Integrated Administration and Control System) that belong to the ATU [6],[9].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article proposes to consider a few specific elements of the mountain area, the evolution of some indicators of recent years and the main directions followed in the next programming period.

The study aims to highlight and present the followings:

- Analysis of the current state of mountain agriculture;
- Present the situation of the mountain population and the main economic activities in the mountains areas;
- Identify the main needs of mountain economy;
- Several main directions of development in the new programming period for the economic development of mountain areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to delimitation, Romanian mountain areas cover 657 ATUs (NUTS 5),

representing 20% of ATUs existing in Romania and a total area of 71.341 square kilometers and 30% of the territory (238,391 square kilometers) [8],[10].

The representation of the mountain area at county level, depending on the number of ATUs that are found in the mountains and its surface, is shown in the diagrams below:

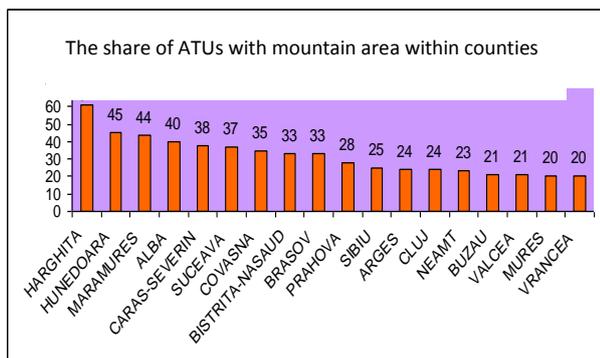


Fig. 1. The share of ATUs with mountain area within counties

Inside the mountain counties the mountain area include a smaller or larger surface. The Counties with the highest mountain areas are: Harghita, Suceava, Hunedoara, Caraș - Severin, Maramureș, ș.a [3],[10].

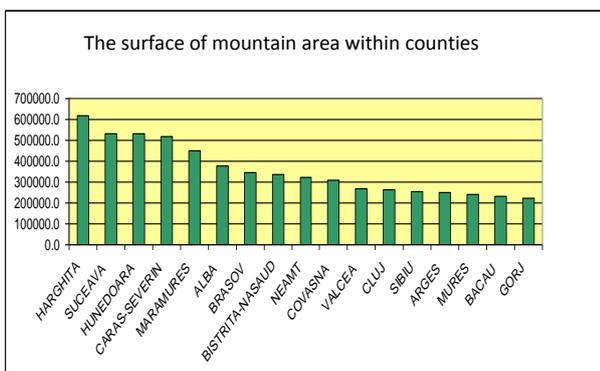


Fig. 2. The surface of mountain area within counties

The agricultural surface of the mountain areas represents 18.63% of the total agricultural surface of Romania, 37.41% of the total area of the grasslands, 59.47% of the total surface of hayfields. The surface covered by forests and other forest lands in the mountain area is of 4,003,417 ha (59.24% of the surface covered by forests and other forest lands - Romania)[3].

In the Romanian mountain areas, according to the latest RGA data, 22% of cattle are currently bred, 19% of sheep, 15% of goat population and 16% of country's horses, which use the valuable areas of natural grasslands and produce large quantities of products with high biological value [3].

Table 1. The use of agricultural lands in the mountain area (hectares)

	ROMANIA	Mountain areas	OTHER AREAS	%
Agricultural surface	14,684,963	2,748,270	11,936,693	18.71
Arable lands	9,422,529	549,940	8,872,589	5.84
Orchards and nurseries	205,221	45,032	160,189	21.94
Vineyards and nurseries	215,382	3662	211,720	1.70
Grasslands	3,313,785	1,240,252	2,073,533	37.43
Hayfields	1,528,046	909,384	618,662	59.51

The agri-zoo-pastoral activities in the mountains have preserved the centuries-old traditions which even today are reflected in management and products, constituting a living cultural heritage [10].

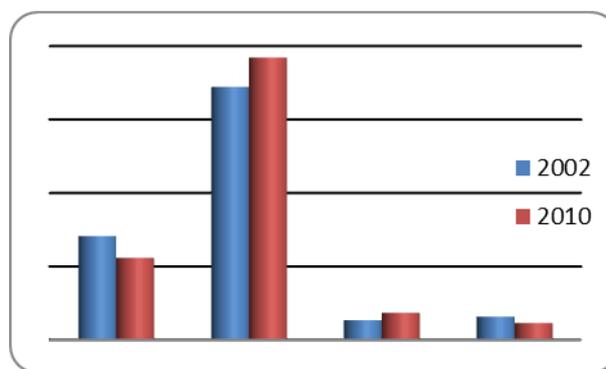


Fig. 3. Evolution of livestock in the mountains

A first analysis of livestock regarding the breeds that are representative for mountain areas shows that in the period 2002 - 2010 the downward trend was significant, except for sheep, where there was a slight increase in the number.

In the mountain areas 19.7% of the utilized agricultural area can be found, 18.5% of the labor force directly involved in agriculture, 17.6% of the total number of farms and 19.5% of animals. The average farm size is of 3.9 ha (third lowest of the mountain countries).

Farming is mostly (65%) practiced in small and very small farms (less than 2 ha), animal husbandry (cows, sheep, goats), for milk and to a smaller extent meat, being the main activity [3].

Table 1. Mountain population

In the mountain areas 3,293,654 people are registered (15.36% of Romania's total population), of which 1,728,383 live in the rural mountain area (52.47%). In recent years, in the mountains of Romania, there has been recorded a negative natural increase and migration. 17.66% of the total unemployment is registered in the mountains. [7],[10].

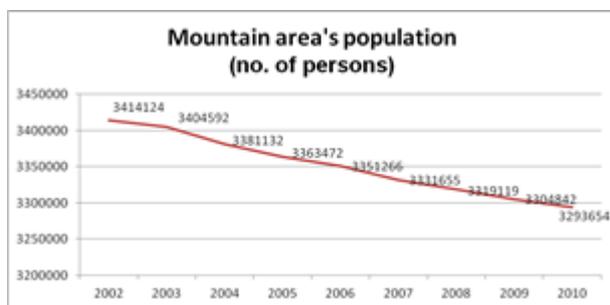


Fig.4. The population of mountain areas

The rural population of mountain areas

The rural population of the mountain areas represents 52.47% of the total population of mountain areas while Romania's rural population represents 44.94% of country's total population. The share of rural population in less favored areas is of 51.55% (2,663,851 persons).

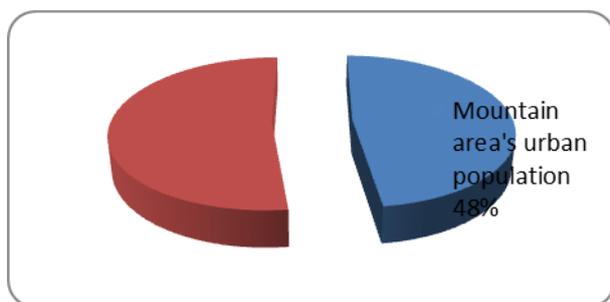


Fig.5. Mountain area's population - by areas (%)

Mountain area's economy

Considering the specificities of mountain areas, the followings can be considered as having a significant impact [4], [10]:

- small agricultural farms, due to fragmentation of property;

- aging population and the risk of depopulation;
- high natural value of farmlands, ensuring a high quality of agricultural products;
- high potential for animal breeding;
- extensive forest areas with high value and the existence of forest by-products (berries, herbs, mushrooms, etc.);
- low level of labor productivity, low value-added for agricultural products and underdeveloped entrepreneurial culture leading to low incomes;
- low level of knowledge and skills and limited access to information, counseling and consultancy;
- cultural heritage (eg crafts, gastronomy, traditional architecture) and high tourism potential;
- limited access to basic services and inadequate infrastructure.

Specific objectives for mountain development

Reviving the Romanian mountain villages and preserving the cultural heritage [5],[9], [11]

- Ensuring the infrastructure and access to basic services (complementary with FEDER financing – roads for valorising areas potential, water supply, sewerage, electricity)
 - Valorising natural and cultural heritage of the villages (preserving the local traditional architecture, cultural sites, for promoting Romanian villages values, traditional art, local traditions, as well as local cultural and natural heritage)
 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas
 - Diversification of economic activities in rural area (handicrafts, agro-tourisms, support services for agriculture, information centres for tourism promotion and promotion of mountain traditional values)
 - Business start-up aid for non-agricultural activities, micro and small enterprises
 - Investments in non-agricultural activities for micro and small enterprises
- Farms development and competitiveness increasing [5],[9], [11]*
- Facilitating market access for farmers in rural areas (small farms): Young farmers scheme; Small farmers scheme; Farm

investments (small projects for building and/or farm modernisation); Processing, marketing or/and diversifying the range of agricultural products – the support shall be conditioned by applying to quality schemes – traditional products, „mountain products” or organic products; Training and advisory services for farmers; Short supply chain (from production to market)

- Increasing the competitiveness in agro – food sector: Farm investments (shall be conditioned by research, innovation or cooperation actions for added value by ensuring a better linkage between research and practice); Investments in infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture including access to farm , land consolidation and improvement, energy supply, water management;

- Improving the processing and marketing of forestry products: Investments in new forestry technologies, in processing and marketing of forest products; Investments in necessary infrastructure for development and adaptation of forestry including access to forest land, land consolidation and improving energy supply, water management;

Sustainable management of natural resources and maintaining traditional landscape [5],[9], [11]

- Encouraging the use of agricultural land by compensatory payments for mountain areas facing natural or specific constraints;

-Promoting the extensive agricultural practices with reduce impact for environment by agri-environment payments and organic farming (management of HNV areas, traditional agricultural practices, species and habitats protection, water and soil protection)

Promoting local initiatives targeting the development of mountain communities (LEADER) with accent on developing the entrepreneurship [5],[9], [11]

- Diversification of economic activities and decreasing the population dependence of agricultural activities

-Financing specific initiatives for socio-economic and environment development of mountain area by prioritization specific

actions without correspondence in classical actions of RDNP

- Increasing the attractiveness of mountain area by creating local brands

-Encouraging the initiatives based on innovation and cooperation

CONCLUSIONS

The existence of human settlements characterized by a rich cultural heritage (crafts, gastronomy, traditional architecture), the potential of tourism, high nature value land in mountain area which provides high quality products and the environmental benefits for the whole society, justify an integrated approach for these areas. Through an integrated approach in the measures financed by the EAFRD, the strategy for sustainable development of rural mountain area in the period 2014-2020, should be based on the implementation of specific mechanisms that contribute to reducing disparities, compared to other areas.

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