

Costică Mihai * Constantin-Marius Apostoaie * Alexandru Maxim
(editors)

THINK GREEN, ACT GREEN
BOOKLET

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**Think Green, Act Green:
Enviornmental Protection
in a United Europe**

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FOREWORD

The “Think Green, Act Green: Environmental Protection in a United Europe” (TAG-EU) Jean Monnet Module, developed by CERNESIM Environmental Research Center of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza Univeristy of Iași (UAIC) and supported by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union, provides a set of tailor-made courses on European Integration (EI) and Environmental Protection and Policies (EP). The primary beneficiaries of TAG-EU are students from the UAIC faculties, who do not have access to EI and EP studies in their standard curriculum.

The TAG-EU Booklet represents a compendium of the students’ team assignment reports. Over the course of the two lectures and over the three years of implementation, the students were assigned study topics that they worked on in teams.

For the first course of the Module (on the topic of *European Integration*) the teams had to prepare a project with the title: “Steps in the accession process of potential member states” (challenges and approaches in meeting the political, economic, judicial and other criteria). They were able to choose a country from a list of potential EU member candidates, such as: Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Albania, Iceland, Macedonia, Turkey and others. With regard to the core issues that remain key priorities in the enlargement process (rule of law, fundamental rights, strengthening

democratic institutions, economic development and competitiveness), students had to analyze what the status is in these countries.

For the second course of the Module (on the topic of *Environmental Protection*) teams had to prepare an essay with the title: “Mitigating environmental issues and challenges in the EU”. They had to tackle a ‘hot’ EU environmental issue from a predefined list, such as: sustainable agriculture, recycling domestic waste, renewable energy, sustainable forestry and others.

The works within this booklet were selected from the complete pool of assignments handed in by all the TAG-EU students over the three years. They were evaluated by the teaching staff and the best projects on each of the sub-topics of Section I and II were included in the booklet.

The main objective of this booklet was to create and instil interest in ardent EU topics by disseminating the research and the views expressed by the attending students. We believe that this material provides valuable information that is useful for those interested in studying the topics of *European Integration* and *Environmental Policy*. In addition, we hope that, by making this work openly available to the public, we will help get the views expressed by the young authors across to those parties who are able to shape the future policies of the European Union.

We express our appreciation of the work performed by all the participants in the TAG-EU Jean Monnet module (classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018) whom we are confident will be promoters of the “Think Green, Act Green” motto as active citizens of a United Europe.

Costică Mihai * Constantin-Marius Apostoaie * Alexandru Maxim

(editors)

SECTION I

**STEPS IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS
OF POTENTIAL MEMBER STATES.
CASE STUDIES**



**Think Green, Act Green:
Enviornmental Protection
in a United Europe**

CASE STUDY ON GEORGIA

Mădălina ZAPALIA, Iulia CONSTANTIN,
Emanuela HUIAN, Alexandru COMAN

1. Country description

Georgia, or as they call it there, Saqartvelo, is a country of Transcaucasia located at the eastern end of the Black Sea. Its neighbors are Russia in the north, Azerbaijan in the east, Armenia and Turkey on the south and it has direct access to the Black Sea which facilitates the commerce with the western side of Europe (*see Figure 1*).

Figure 1 *The geographical position of Georgia*



Georgia and the European Union have maintained relations since 1996 in the **INOGATE** framework, and in 2006 a five-year "Action-Plan" if reconciliation was implemented in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). A more comprehensive Association Agreement entered into force on 1 July 2016.

However, **Georgia dealt with political conflicts**. From those we would like to remind the **Adjara crisis** which began in 2004. The leader, Aslan Abashidze was forced to resign in May 2004 following the Rose Revolution. Georgia's post-revolutionary government of President Mikheil Saakashvili managed to avoid bloodshed and with the help of Adjara opposition reasserted its supremacy. EU CFSP Chief Javier Solana indicated in February 2007 that the EU could send troops to Georgia alongside Russian forces.

In July 2006 the European Union referred to then recent developments in South Ossetia zone of and to the Resolution of the Georgian Parliament on Peacekeeping Forces Stationed in the Conflict Zones, which was adopted on 18 of July 2016. The European Union emphasized the importance of ensuring freedom of movement of goods and people, by keeping the border crossing at Zemo Larsi open.

Georgia **does not have any official status as a candidate for future enlargement of the European Union**, but in 2011 Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili expressed a desire for his country to become a member state of the EU. This view has been explicitly expressed on several occasions as links to the United States, EU and NATO have been strengthened in an attempt to move away from the Russian sphere of influence.

The Georgian **economy** includes diversified and mechanized agriculture alongside a well-developed industrial base. Agriculture accounts for about half of the gross domestic product (GDP) and employs about one-fourth of the labor force; the industry and service sectors each employ about one-fifth of the labor force.

The benefits of joining EU are considerable: economic growth entailing higher living standards, safer consumer goods, lower prices and greater choice in sectors such as telecommunications, banking and air travel, to name but a few. These benefits have been shared among an increasing number of people as the EU has grown in size.

By joining EU, Georgia would have great benefits, but instead of waiting what benefits it could gain – Georgia should work things out in its internal markets, produce more, work less. Wine and mineral waters are great there, but does Georgia produces anything else here?

2. The fundamental adherence criteria

The rule of law is one of the founding principles which results from the common constitutional traditions of all Member States and is one of the fundamental values upon which the European Union is based. Respect the rule of law is a premise for the protection of all fundamental values listed in the Treaties.

Fundamental rights are at the heart of EU values and an essential element in the accession process. The EU is based on the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Economic development and competitiveness. Entering EU and enjoying its benefits it's not all about meeting some requirements pre-

established by some fancy people; it's more than that. The country that wishes to join the EU must contribute to the growth and prosperity of the EU economy. From this perspective we could say that EU "doesn't want to be dragged down" by "weak" countries.

Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform. The evolution of the New Public Management movement has increased pressure on state bureaucracies to become more responsive to citizens as clients. Without a doubt, this is an important advance in contemporary public administration, which finds itself struggling in an ultra-dynamic marketplace. However, together with such a welcome change in theory building and in practical culture reconstruction, modern societies still confront a growth in citizens, passivism; they tend to favor the easy way of the customer over the sweat and turmoil of participatory involvement.

3. Status and challenges in meeting the criteria

The Copenhagen Criteria are the rules that define whether a country is eligible to join the European Union, which means that to join the European Union, Georgia must meet certain criteria such as: complying with all the EU's standards and rules, having the consent of the EU institutions and EU member states, having the consent of their citizens either expressed through approval in their national parliament or by referendum. If all the above criteria are met, the country becomes a candidate, afterwards starting the negotiations of adherence with EU Council. These membership criteria were laid down at the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. Although currently Georgia does not have any official status as a candidate for future

enlargement of the European Union, but in 2011 the Georgian president expressed his desire of becoming a member state of EU.

3.1. Rule of Law

The first issue, the rule of law, which is also one of the core principles which the European Union is established on, implies that law should govern a nation and it also implies that every person is subject to the law, including lawmakers, law enforcement officials, and judges.

The European Commission defined the rule of law via certain principles, including legality, which implies a transparent, accountable, democratic and pluralistic process for enacting laws; legal certainty; prohibition of arbitrariness of the executive powers; independent and impartial courts; effective judicial review including respect for fundamental rights; and equality before the law.

This also means that before adhering to the EU the country must ensure that not only that the laws are impartial and fair which also means that all citizens are equal in front of the law, including the political leaders and the lawmakers and they must be held accountable if they commit crimes such as corruption or abuse of authority. Also, the process by which laws are prepared, approved and enforced is transparent, efficient, and just. The laws must be clear, fair, publicized and focused on protecting fundamental rights.

To facilitate the process of adherence the President of the Republic of Georgia officially requested the help of the EU to bring the country closer to western European standards by strengthening the rule of law. Soon afterwards the European Union launched on 16 July 2004 an EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia under the name of EUJUST THEMIS. In the

framework of EUJUST THEMIS, senior and highly experienced personnel supported, mentored and advised the Ministers, senior officials and appropriate bodies at the level of the central government in Georgia.

There are also threats to the rule of law like corruption or undermining the judicial system by political interference, the lack of independence of certain institutions which should be impartial. These are some of the threats that the EU intends to tackle by strengthening the rule of law.

Corruption in Georgia has been a significant obstacle to economic development since the country gained independence. Its pervasive nature and high visibility have seriously undermined the credibility of the government. Entrenched corruption, strong patronage networks and a lack of clear separation between private enterprise and public office significantly challenge democracy and good governance in Georgia.

After the “Rose Revolution”, the new Georgian government committed to tackle corruption at the highest levels, as visibly displayed by arresting and prosecuting several former government officials. That is why in recent years Georgia has also been among the best performers in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union region according to Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index ranking 44th out of 176 countries in terms of corruption in 2016.

An independent judiciary without political interference is the cornerstone to guaranteeing human rights, free elections, independent media, and sanctity of property and contract rights. That is why the rule of law is closely interlinked with democracy and respect for human rights.

3.2. Fundamental rights

The fundamental rights are another adherence criteria and also a cornerstone that the European Union is built on. Human rights are those rights which every person holds because of their quality as a human being which means that human rights are inalienable, and they cannot be taken away or limited and should be respected. The fundamental rights include the right to life, the right to be prosecuted only according to the laws that are in existence at the time of the offence, the right to be free from slavery and the right to be free from torture. There are also some freedoms incorporated such as: freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association and of peaceful assembly.

Even though Georgia has an independent human rights public defender to ensure that the human rights are enforced there are still a lot of issues. The main issues in Georgia are the infringement of the right to privacy, minorities rights and the freedom of expression and media, which is often breached by political interference.

In Georgia the right to privacy has been compromised by the state security service's unrestrained access to the telecom operator's networks. Also, the law enforcement bodies of Georgia continued to inadequately address the human right violations of religious minorities and LGBTQ individuals. The different facts of violence committed against these groups are left unpunished that goes contrary to the positive obligation of state of Georgia to ensure adequate protection and security of minorities.

Even if during the past year Georgia made significant steps in terms of improving the state of rights of women, however ensuring rights of persons with disabilities still remains to be one of the most challenging

issues for the government. Different obstacles hinder the integration of persons with disabilities in society, including the inadequate and ineffective legislative framework, environmental barriers, stereotypes and prejudices and lack of access to education and rehabilitation.

There have been several instances in which the representatives of the government allegedly exercised their powers against the media outlets leading in an infringement of the rule of law.

Ensuring that the fundamental rights are respected remains one of the main concerns both of Georgia and of EU.

3.3. Economic development and competitiveness

Another key priority, along with the rule of law and fundamental rights described above, is economic development and competitiveness. This factor remains one of the most important standards of the EU integration, as being economically fit to the EU benefits both the Union and the said country.

Some of the challenges which come with economic development and competitiveness are economic reform, job creation, fiscal consolidation and inclusive growth. Even if all enlargement countries have largely maintained overall macroeconomic stability and modest recovery is continuing, all Western Balkan countries face major structural economic and social challenges, with high unemployment rates and low levels of revenues. In these countries, there is the need of improving sectors such as infrastructure, education system.

In order to make progress concerning this issue, there have been some actions taken alongside Europe. Therefore, in early 2015, all enlargement countries submitted Economic Reform Programs addressing both the

medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal policy framework as well as, for the countries of the Western Balkans, structural reforms.

Similar to the situation in the past, the possible need for and nature of transitional measures and/or a safeguard mechanism on the free movement of workers will be addressed in the course of accession negotiations on future enlargement, taking into account a future impact assessment.

In what Georgia is concerned, before the 20th century, it has had a largely agrarian economy.

Georgia's modern economy has traditionally revolved around Black Sea tourism, cultivation of citrus fruits, tea and grapes; mining of manganese and copper; and the output of a large industrial sector producing wine, metals, machinery, chemicals, and textiles.

Being one of the post-soviet countries, Georgia has faced a severe decline in economy during the 1990s, which has brought problems such as high inflation and large budget-deficits, due to persistent tax evasion. Due to these, Georgia's budget deficit rose to as much as 6.2%. During that period international financial institutions played a critical role in Georgia's budgetary calculations. Multilateral and bilateral grants and loans totaled 116.4 million lari in 1997, reaching a worrying number of 182.8 million lari in 1998.

Economic recovery had been hampered by the separatist disputes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Under the leadership of President Shevardnadze (in office 1995-2003), the government nonetheless made some progress on basic market reforms: it liberalized all prices and most trade and introduced a stable national currency (the lari).

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Georgia's gross domestic product fell sharply, only to recover in the mid-2000s, due to the economic and democratic reforms brought by the peaceful Rose Revolution. Georgia's economic progress continued, "moving from a near-failed state in 2003 to a relatively well-functioning market economy in 2014". Also, another economic achievement is that the World Bank named Georgia the World's number one economic reformer, and has consistently ranked the country at the top of its ease of doing business index.

Since 2014, Georgia is part of the European Union's Free Trade Area, with the EU continuing to be the country's largest trading partner, accounting for over a quarter of Georgia's total trade turnover. Following the EU trade pact, 2015 was marked by further increase in bilateral trade, whereas trade with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) decreased precipitously.

3.4. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

The last issue of the enlargement policy is evolving around democracy and its institutions. It is known that the functioning and stability of democratic institutions are highly important aspects. A well-functioning public administration is necessary not only for having fair elections, but also for democratic governance and accountability, and fighting against corruption.

“A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.” (John Dewey)

Since the Rose Revolution of November 2003, when thousands of protestors took to the streets of Tbilisi to demand fair elections and to

demonstrate against the attempt by President Eduard Shevardnadze to seat an illegally elected parliament, Georgia has become increasingly important for the United States. This led to George Bush visiting Georgia in 2005, addressing Georgians in Tbilisi's Freedom Square, and to Mikhail Saakashvili, who led the Rose Revolution, making several trips to the United States to secure more aid and discuss ongoing military and economic cooperation.

In an article about Georgia's development on a democratic level, we found that under the leadership of Saakashvili and the late Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania, who died in February 2005, the government has been more efficient and less corrupt than it was under Shevardnadze. Saakashvili and his colleagues can point to real success in areas such as defeating Abashidze and reducing police corruption. However, on democracy-related issues such as building democratic institutions, ensuring government accountability, and cultivating a strong civil society, the new government's record has been uneven.

In addition, fair elections were now the rule, but in many other respects democratic consolidation has stalled. The constitutional reforms which occurred shortly after President Saakashvili was elected in January 2004 resulted in a great deal of power being concentrated in the president. Although, the process by which the new constitution was passed is equally disturbing. It was rushed through parliament in the two weeks between Saakashvili's election and his taking office. Also, Saakashvili's ruling United National Movement (UNM) party has made little effort to strengthen the distinctions between ruling party and government that are essential in a democratic state. Support for the ruling party, albeit a new

ruling party, is still viewed as a prerequisite to any position of power in Georgia.

3.5. Other key obstacles in European Union accession for the country

EU seems to suffer of „fatigue for enlargement” because the countries who want to be part of the Union don’t seem to accomplish the requirements for adherence economically speaking, although they are trying this for a long time.

EU is also suffering due to possible future crisis and upcoming possible exits. There are some obstacles in EU accession for Georgia such as Russia's military support and subsequent recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia independence. Tensions within the EU, however, might create some hurdles for Georgia. The EU has its share of internal disputes over membership and vision for the organization.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The integration in the European Union, is a political, legal and economic process. There are many countries which want to join in the EU. One of those is Georgia, which is a country in the Caucasus region of Euro-Asia, located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Asia.

Georgia want to join in the European Union because would have many advantages from adherence process: citizens would get a life much better, would have access to information, here referring to the Internet, but also in political terms, it would go any better. Although Georgia's geographical position isn't very favorable to join the EU, due to problems with Russia, though this motion is desired.

Georgia dealt with some political conflicts with other countries, for example the Adjara crisis. The country is famous for diversified agriculture and a developed industry.

There are many benefits of accession Georgia in the European Union: economic growth entailing higher living standards, safer consumer goods, lower prices. The fundamental adherence criteria are based on the rule of law is the founding principles stemming, fundamental rights are the heart of EU values and is essential for accession process, economic development and competitiveness and functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform.

Economic development refers to benefits for EU and for the country in the accession process. The countries which join in the European Union must contribute to the prosperity of EU economy.

For a country to be eligible to be part of European Union, she must follow some rules, named The Copenhagen Criteria. Georgia must meet certain criteria like: complying with all the EU's standards and rules, having the consent of the EU institutions and EU member states, having the consent of their citizens either expressed through approval in their national parliament or by referendum.

Real benefits of closer cooperation between Georgia and European Union are the following: EU support to agriculture is about raising the income of Georgian farmers, substantial improvements to the living conditions of prison inmates have been achieved thanks to EU funding, with better healthcare and premise, the EU is working hard to ensure that Georgians have proper access to justice, the EU is supporting the Government in making its finances more transparent and accountable to its

citizens, the EU is helping local communities to have more of a say in Government investments in their regions and more.

In conclusion, we believe that Georgia has big chances to adhere to EU because she changes in a better way, to respect the EU requirements.

CASE STUDY ON ICELAND

Bianca POENARIU, Stelian PIRAU, Bogdan STRATULAT

1. Country description

1.1. Geography

Iceland is one of the most wealthiest and most developed countries in the world, as well as one of the cleanest, with more than three quarters of its energy consumption derived from hydroelectric & geothermal sources. (livefromiceland)

Iceland is the least populated country in Europe with a population of cca. 330000, out of which two thirds is living in Reykjavik. Due to its location on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (which separates the European and the North Atlantic tectonic plates), Iceland has broad volcanic and geothermal activity; almost 80% of the country is uninhabited. (visiticeland)

1.2. History

Iceland was settled in 874 AD. The first settler was Ingólfur Arnarson, who settled in Reykjavík and many of the early settlers of Iceland were small lords and kings from Norway.

The Icelandic settlers did not form any central government for their new country, they instead relied on a group of equally powerful lords, the

so-called goðar to regulate their domains, and to regularly meet to solve major problems. These meetings of the goðar were called þings. In the year 930 the settlers established their central parliament or þing.

One of the major decisions to be made there was made in the year 1000 when, after hearing both sides of the story, the Alþing voted to adopt Christianity as the Icelandic religion.

In 1262 the number of people that had the status of goði had been greatly reduced, and therefore each goði was far more powerful. Then, in order to claim all control for himself, one of the goðis made a pact with the Norwegian king, that gave the king limited influence in exchange for his support. This was the end of Iceland's early independence and the beginning of nearly seven centuries of foreign control.

In the year 1550 Iceland was forced to disown Catholicism, which had been its Christian faith, and adopt Lutheranism, which, being a state religion, gave the Danish monarch greater power.

In the 19th century a long battle for independence was fought with the Danish government, mostly in the political arena of Copenhagen. Iceland's most prominent champion was Jón Sigurðsson, a national hero, who was both a statesman and a scholar. Although Iceland kept gaining ground from the late 19th century, it was not until the 17th of June, 1944, that Iceland regained its full independence and established the current Republic of Iceland.

1.3. Economy

Iceland currently has a prosperous economy. According to Eurostat in June 2015 Iceland had a gross domestic product of 17.7 billion USD, an inflation index of 1.8% in October 2015 and a 4.3% unemployment index in

September 2015 that State's main trading partners are the EU, EFTA, the US and Japan.

Even if the Icelandic economy 'is flourishing', after a few years it has suffered greatly due to bad decisions they managed to affect the entire state.

In 2008 the Icelandic people passed from bad times when the crisis began. With different efforts and motivation they managed the situation and put their country out of crisis. Then the EU process started but in 2013 this process was stopped.

1.4. Reasons for joining EU

Iceland it is clearly a European country, with a Scandinavian Christian heritage, a stable liberal democracy and a developed economy.

For Iceland, EU membership would provide it with a welcoming home and a source of economic stability and will be able to adopt the Euro currency. As a member of one of the most powerful international blocs, Iceland would also be in a stronger position to participate in future global efforts on climate change, financial and trade reform, and international security and development initiatives.

2. The fundamental adherence criteria

Iceland is in relations with the EU since the 70's when both sides signed a bilateral free trade agreement, but the act stipulated trade only with some of the member states. Later, in 1994, the European Economic Area (EEA) was founded, an association between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway which gave Iceland access to the EU's common market and included other agreements ensuring fair competition, environment policies, consumer protection and others. The EEA agreement did not, however, cover fisheries and agriculture.

2.1. The Rule of Law

For adherence in the EU, the rule of law is set out in the so-called Copenhagen criteria. Two specific negotiating chapters are meant to assist enlargement countries to establish a society based on the rule of law: Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security.

For join to the EU one country have to make sure that fulfill the next criteria:

- “their judiciary is independent and impartial. This includes, for example, guaranteed access to justice, fair trial procedures, adequate funding for courts and training for magistrates and legal practitioners.
- their government and its officials and agents are accountable under the law and that political leaders and decision-makers take a clear stance against corruption.
- the process by which laws are prepared, approved and enforced is transparent, efficient, and fair. Laws must be clear, publicized, stable, fair, and protect fundamental rights.” (ec.europa.eu).

2.2. Fundamental Rights

The two most important highlights of the EU enlargement policy regarding the basic human rights are the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. One decisive element on this matter is the freedom of expression and media, a key indicator of a country’s preparedness to become part of the union. “Accordingly, no country can join the EU without guaranteeing freedom of expression as **a basic human right**”. (ec.europa.eu)

The European Commission, on the latest ‘strategy paper’ (2015), acknowledged that is needed a more robust institutional structure for the protection of fundamental rights and to support the work of NGOs and human rights defenders.

The EU supports the process of transposition of the regulations, the behavioral and cultural changes in politics, judiciary and media by providing legal assistance and guidance in drafting the legislation, monitoring thoroughly the policies of a candidate country and providing financial support through IPA programmes.

2.3. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

The quality of administrative system has a straightforward impact on governments' capacity of well-serving their own citizens, to prevent and counter corruption and to ensure a democratic governance.

As stated in the enlargement strategy paper related communication from the European Commission on November 10th of 2015, democratic institutions are fragile in some candidate states and there is a need to strengthen the participation of the citizens in the democratic process as civil society is a fundamental component of any democratic system.

Public administration reform represents a essential part in the implementation process of the EU rules and standards which tends to improve the conditions for the decision making process along with meritocracy and effectiveness of the governments. (EU Commission Communication, 2015, p. 9)

3. Status and challenges in meeting the criteria

3.1. The Rule of Law

Stable institutions guarantee Iceland's well-functioning democracy and sound governance, at both national and local levels. The public administration is overall effective, transparent and independent. Respect for the rule of law is ensured in particular by an efficient judicial system and the high quality of the judiciary and the law enforcement forces.

The advisory constitutional council completed a comprehensive review of the Constitution and, in August 2011, presented its proposals to the parliament, which has since been reviewing them. The amendments proposed are aimed at increasing democratic safeguards, strengthening checks and balances, improving the functioning of the state institutions and better defining their respective roles and powers. The parliament would see its powers broadened while direct democracy through referenda which will be held on held on 20 October 2012.

At the presidential election of June 2012, the incumbent President of Iceland was re-elected for a fifth term in office.

The law amending the parliament's rules of procedure is being implemented after its entry into force in September 2011. The government was reshuffled in December 2011: the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture left the Cabinet. The two ministries were taken over by the Minister of Finance, who was in turn replaced by the leader of the major coalition partner's parliamentary group.

Good progress can be reported in further implementing the recommendations of the Special Investigation Committee (SIC) and improving the already generally efficient public administration. The

restructuring of ministries was decided by the government and a relevant resolution was adopted by the parliament in May 2012. The number of ministries was reduced from 10 to 8 in September 2012. The new ministries are the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Industries and Innovation and the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. The government's working methods have been streamlined. The cabinet has overhauled its working methods to increase efficiency. Rules on transparent recruitment procedures for the central government were adopted in April 2012, whereas rules for mobility within the civil service are under preparation.

In April 2012, the Court of Impeachment found the former Prime Minister at the time of the financial crisis guilty of one of four charges against him, namely that he had failed to hold dedicated Cabinet meetings ahead of the 2008 financial crisis. No sentence was passed.

3.2. Fundamental Rights

Currently, Iceland is not an EU member, as requested by the country's government in March 2015, but is strongly linked with the EU through the membership in different agreements, such as the European Economic Area (EEA), the Schengen Area and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Iceland applied for EU membership in July 2009 and received a favorable opinion from the European Commission in February 2010, followed by a decision of the Council to open the accession negotiations in June. (ec.europa.eu, n.a)

At that time 33 chapters were opened for negotiation out of which, in 29 of them Iceland presented its position. 11 chapters were preliminary

closed in the same day they were opened. However, 16 chapters were still open when negotiations were put on hold after a new government took over in May 2013.. Therefore, six chapters remained unopened: concerning fisheries, agriculture and rural development, food safety and veterinary and phytosanitary policy, right of establishment and freedom to provide services, free movement of capital and justice, freedom and security. (Assessment of the EU accession negotiations, 2014)

The Judiciary and Fundamental Rights chapter was one of the 11 chapter that were closed and, therefore, we don't have a solid basis for discussing whether or not there were difficulties on an agreement on this matter. Instead, we acknowledge that Iceland ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1953.

3.3. Economic development and competitiveness

As some European countries, Iceland is a developed country but not part of the organization called the European Union.

We can ask, "Why? And this state takes part of Europe!"

For this question we can find many answers, some more or less complex. But still, what are the factors involved? Crisis in 2008 may be one of the factors influenced the government's decision not to try to enter the European Union?

On 6 October 2008 decided the fate of Icelanders, three of the most important banks announcing bankruptcy as easily trigger a crisis much harder than had existed until then in the rest of Europe. According to estimates investigation Parliament, that three banks -Glitnir, Landsbanki, Kaupsing- owned an external debt of 50 thousand euros compared to GDP

that was worth about 9000 million. So, we can tell more easily what passed tough situations Icelandic economy.

The entire state financial system was about to collapse, but none of Iceland's leaders did not give any indication how it would react in any way to prevent its dissolution or danger. Their condition was immediately jammed in October 2008 crisis when suddenly "knocked on the door. "Without the possibility of making a short or medium-term measures, one week was enough for the entire financial system to collapse.

Following the incident Icelanders had taken many important decisions. Proving a good independent organization managed by protests not to pay the debt to the UK and the Netherlands, the banks were nationalized, and the capital was put strict control. Iceland has its own currency that was an advantage. Income population decrease was due to the depreciation of the Qu'ran (ISK). Compared with the value before the crisis period 2008-2010 devalued in a proportion of 50%. Such value exports growing, but imports were becoming increasingly expensive.

Stringent measures taken do not bring a smile to the faces of citizens, but this policy was and what he managed to pull the country out of the impasse.

Currently Iceland is an example for other EU countries who have come in such a situation, due to its rapid economic market recovery.

Its economy is thriving, but it was refused because of this termination internship for EU accession? Some sources say that the main reason is that Icelanders are unhappy with the criticism came from Brussels about banning imports of herring and mackerel in Faroese.

Thus, the crisis last experienced by Icelanders was to start a momentum by the European Union (in 2009 starting accession

negotiations), but with the passage of time and change management made in Iceland, European state surrounded by ocean, no longer wanted to associate with the European Union (answer given after the elections in 2013 by people in power).

3.4. Iceland Economic Growth

The removal of capital controls should have a positive impact on growth this year as the country returns to international financial markets Focus Economics Consensus Forecast panelists expect GDP to expand 3.5% in 2016, which is up 0.1 percentage points from last month's forecast. For 2017, the panel expects GDP to grow 2.8%.

3.5. Gross domestic product (GDP)

“The Central Bank revealed the first set of measures that it will implement prior to removing capital controls later this year. In order to stem a potentially destabilizing flow of foreign currency rushing into Icelandic banks, the Bank plans to impose taxes on foreigners who purchase bonds and to remove certain interest rate privileges.

The Bank fears that the country's significantly-higher interest rate of 5.75% compared to European countries near-zero rate could compel foreign investors to flood the country's financial market. It is taking all measures necessary to avoid a repeat of the 2008 crisis. Meanwhile, Fitch credit ratings agency affirmed Iceland's BBB+ rating and stable outlook. Fitch commented that the fiscal balance of the country will improve notably going forward as the country starts to remove capital controls.” according to the site Focus Economics.

The main natural resources are: fishing, renewable energy and water.

3.6. Fisheries

The mainstay of the Icelandic economy are the fisheries because the most prolific and richest fishing grounds surrounding the Iceland in the North Atlantic Ocean. Fish is responsible for 40% of the country's export revenues, and employs 7% of the workforce.

3.7. Renewable energy

Iceland is a world leader in the use of renewable energy. Geothermal steam has been used directly for a number of industrial processing applications in Iceland for decades, such as vegetable farming in greenhouses.

3.8. Water

Icelandic water is pure, and plentiful. Iceland has a growing industry of exporting bottled water to the premium bottled water market. With no additives or strong mineral flavor, Icelandic water is becoming increasingly popular around the world.

3.9. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) about everything referring to public administration has been drastically reformed in the last 20 years, after the Public Management reform grew into a political priority in the 90's, its focus being on the efficiency and flexibility of the system and it was done by privatization and by using a market-like structure for the government. (OECD, n.a)

Following the 2008 recession, the reform depicted even more decentralization and changes were made to support bilateral benefits for both the government and the public agencies.

3.10. Other key obstacles in EU accession for the country

According to a report EU report regarding the adherence process, Iceland's accession negotiations were advancing well, especially comparing to other applicant states. Despite that, the process was slowed down by 5 factors:

- The accession negotiations became more difficult after the joining of 12 states in 2 waves of enlargement in 2004 and 2007, which led to a delay of the process by one year.
- The international financial crisis which created difficulties for both negotiating parties.
- Disagreements within the Icelandic government that slowed down the process and resulted in the negotiating position for certain chapters not being submitted.
- The decision of Icelandic authorities to put the negotiations on hold created uncertainty within the EU regarding the continuation of the negotiations.
- One of European adherence criteria is about fisheries, which calls for conservation and limitation of the environmental impact of fishing, by limiting the amount of fish taken from the sea. By joining the European Union, Iceland must renounce the legal control of its fisheries. The fishing industry is Iceland's most important export industry that makes Iceland one of the biggest fisheries nations in the world. The mackerel dispute which led to the fisheries chapter not being opened before the accession negotiations were put on hold.
- Agriculture - if Iceland would become a member of the EU it would be obligated to trade freely with agricultural products with other EU member states. This would most likely lead to a

downturn and income loss for the domestic agricultural industry, since increased competition would lead to a loss of market share for domestic production. The Icelandic state supports agricultural production in the form of subsidies.

4. Conclusions

After several applications for EU membership and as many abandons, Iceland's future regarding the European Union is still uncertain.

The relations with the EU date back to the 1970's when the first agreement between the sides was signed, followed by a more comprehensive one in 1995. Iceland applied for the first time in 2009, after years of debates and oppositions.

Several factors were involved in Iceland's indecision in EU accession, such as fisheries restrictions that were supposed to be imposed, the intense market competition which could harm the fragile Icelandic economy and others. The disagreements within the governments did not help either. Besides, Iceland has an alternative in the form of the EEA agreement which has some of the benefits of the EU membership but does not demand so much from the country and it will, probably, be the solution preferred until the criteria regarding accession will be renegotiated in a manner more favorable to Iceland.



**Think Green, Act Green:
Environmental Protection
in a United Europe**

CASE STUDY ON MACEDONIA

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1. Who is Macedonia?

Well, if there is a tough question to ask the people of Macedonia, I think this is one of them. The country has been torn up by so many wars, disputes, territorial claims and name issues that even the Macedonians themselves find it difficult to answer.

Geographically, FYROM is situated in southeastern Europe, bordering 5 countries, with a total border length of 766km, out of which the longest is with Greece (228km) and it was marked with the Treaty of Bucharest on 10 August 1913. Various mountain ranges cover the country, offering stunning views from over 2500m altitude, the highest peak being Mount Korab(2764m), situated near the border with Albania. One of three major lakes that lay on Macedonian grounds, Lake Ohrid, is considered to be one of the oldest lakes and biotopes in the world; it is also the deepest in the Balkan area, with a maximum depth of over 280m, making the area quite an attractive place for tourists. In fact, the city of Ohrid, better known as the tourist capital of Macedonia, has been listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. Flora and fauna are quite abundant in Macedonian forests, the country also having three major national parks in which can be found over 60 animal species protected by the Bern Convention.

With a population of just over two million and a total area of around 25.000 square km, Macedonia, just like other countries in Eastern Europe, has a developing economy, mostly due to its former affiliations with Yugoslavia, which have built many factories, especially ones needed in the construction industry such as cement and various metals.

Due to many historical and cultural sites as well as other leisure activities, the country is experiencing a constantly increasing influx of tourists, capping at close to a million every year. The National Gallery of Macedonia, which is built on the premises of an old Turkish bath dating 15th century, the Old Bazaar, which is the largest in the Balkans, and the numerous castles and historical surroundings are just a few of the attractions that Macedonia has to offer.

DID YOU KNOW?

- *Mother Theresa was born in Skopje in 1910, living there for 18 years.*

One of the major advantages that Macedonia has comes from its strategic position in the center of the Balkan area, being an international trading hub between neighboring capitals such as Athens, Sofia, Tirana and Belgrade as well as a transition corridor between the Adriatic and the Black Sea. One of the EU efforts was directed towards consolidating Highway E75, which connects the country to the rest of Europe.

2. Why EU?

Currently, FYROM is one of the candidates for ascension to the European Union and has been one since 2005, when their application form was granted by the European Council after a positive review and recommendation from the European Commission.

History tells us about the “abuse” that the people of this country have suffered, mostly due to its lack of organization both from a political and ethnical perspective, so it’s easy to understand why they want to affiliate. Unfortunately this process has taken more time than anticipated, the main objection being put up by Greece in regards to the usage of a certain word within the country name. A similar situation is with Bulgaria in regards to the different opinions when it comes to the shared history of 18th and 19th century. In spite of all this, the European Commission recommends that membership negotiation should be launched, and it’s doing so for the past decade.

3. How to?

One of the principles that the EU applies when it comes to enlargement policy is “fundamentals first”. With that they have in mind the benefit of the Union as a whole and ensuring that any newcomer will be facing the same challenges in meeting the criteria. At the base of these fundamentals lie important aspects such as rule of law, fundamental rights, economic development and competitiveness as well as functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform.

Strengthening the **Rule of Law** is a key challenge for most of the countries in the enlargement process, EU putting a heavy price on this aspect, underlining that the principle is not only the base of democracy but also crucial for a stable business environment. Selective justice and corruption are just a few of the problems that EU faces when trying to apply this principle. Progress requires political will, and although developments have been made towards this direction by putting in place legal frameworks and institutional structures, is slow. The current approach towards ascension process, introduced by the Commission in 2012, prioritizes

reforms in this field, ensuring countries a maximum time to deliver on this issue.

Another key aspect is represented by the **Fundamental Rights**. Amongst these is good to mention freedom of expression and media, which has been in particular a concern mainly through intimidation of journalists and in some cases, false prosecutions. In 2015 The Commission held the third edition of Speak-up Conference in an effort to address these challenges and support freedom of expression in the region. Discrimination and hostility towards minorities of all kind, racism and other forms of hate speech is also a serious problem, giving the current context with the arrival of migrants. In this direction more work is needed and future institutions need to be established in order to enforce this fundamental principle.

Democratic institutions remain fragile in many countries, meaning that the **functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform** remains unclear from many aspects. Parliament boycott, violence against the government, fraudulent elections, are just a few of the issues that engulf the situation. For success in political and economic reform the public administration sector needs to be aligned with EU standards. A well-functioning public administration paves the way to better public services, less bureaucracy and prompt delivery to citizens. More needs to be done in regards to active involvement in policy-making as well as develop dialogue between decision makers and stakeholders.

In regards to the **economic development and competitiveness**, becoming part of the EU unveils the biggest advantage it can offer: economic balance while seeing an upward trend from the markets and in the same time contributing to EU as a whole and ultimately making the entire mechanism work and prosper. Other issues such as unemployment

rate and low revenues in combination with unattractive job opportunities is creating instability in regions such as the Balkans. Infrastructure and education also needs to be addressed. In the absence of a good legal system, rights such as property rights are creating a swirl which has as an effect a weak/moderate investor. With no public administration reform and a well implemented rule of law, the investors are not able to stimulate growth and create jobs because the system doesn't offer security and safety, and the market becomes quickly monopolized by the one who bids the highest. The support the Commission is offering to Western Balkan countries is particularly important, since none of them is yet to be considered a function economy.

DID YOU KNOW?

- *approximately a personnel of 25,000 persons is full-time employed by the Commission;*
- *Greenland, which is an integral part of Denmark, decided on a referendum (1979) to leave all the European institutions in 1985;*
- *with over 508 million inhabitants, EU has the third largest population after China and India.*

4. CURRENT SITUATION

In 1993, at The European Council in Copenhagen, three basic criteria for accession to the European Union were mainly defined. The countries wishing to join need to fulfill one of the most important requirements that European Union promote: stable institutions guaranteeing democracy. Taking the simplest definition of democracy, politicians and authorities must do whatever is necessary to maintain the separation of powers(

Executive Power- Government, Legislative Power- Parliament, Judicative Power- Courts of Law), to respect the human rights, freedom of opinion and religious liberty and to create a good governance focused on absence of corruption and public interest. Nowadays, the Republic of Macedonia is a parliamentary democratic republic, in which the popularly elected president is head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces.

4.1. Fundamental rights

In the evaluations which are made by the European Council, the country's human rights record is considered as generally satisfactory, with remarks that they must improve on a daily basis in the field of ethnic issues, Albanian language education (which has practically been achieved), minority representation in the police and Defense Ministry and the need to design policies that promote ethnic tolerance and integration following European standards. As is stated in the National Human Development Report, "the pragmatic West anyway keeps the positive evaluations despite the weak institutions and no transformations within the system, thus being completely aware that it can be much worse than just having a formally democratic country".

The European Commission has already made some conclusions discussing the political criteria and has evaluated the political institutions of the country as stable and democratic, functioning properly, respecting the limits of their competence and co-operating with each other. In relation to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, it considers further effective implementation as crucial for confidence and consolidation of achievements. Rule of law is seen as gradually consolidated, however the police reforms should progress further in order to prevent possible

escalation of incidents, while the efficiency of the judiciary needs to be improved.

The protection of fundamental rights shows no major problems and specifically the area of minority rights, encompassing both changes to legislation as well as their implementation, is on a high level. In relation to regional cooperation, the name issue with Greece requires sustained efforts as it should be resolved in the interest of good neighborly relations.

On 24.02.2016 the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) held a workshop on fundamental rights in the Republic of Macedonia, with representatives from the civil society organizations participating. They analyzed the national institutional arrangements in the area of fundamental rights. The result of this analysis is the mapping of all national stakeholders involved in the field of fundamental rights, their responsibilities as well as identifying the existing coordination structures in this area. This analysis forms the basis for commencement of due diligence to determine the level of compliance with the EU. They have also given the importance of fundamental rights and the fact that the new approach to the negotiations focuses on chapters 23 and 24, and also the fact that it is a large material which is defined in many laws, strategies, responsibilities are portfolios of many institutions, and there is often a shared responsibility.

The purpose of this workshop was to present the results of the current activities aimed at identifying national structure for fundamental rights, as well as exchange of information, opinions, experiences and suggestions to improve the coordination structures and monitoring mechanisms. The end of this debate marks one step closer to the second phase of this project, when it will be possible to proceed with the due diligence in all these areas

of fundamental rights, or selection of those areas that you need to keep the focus on in the future.

4.2. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

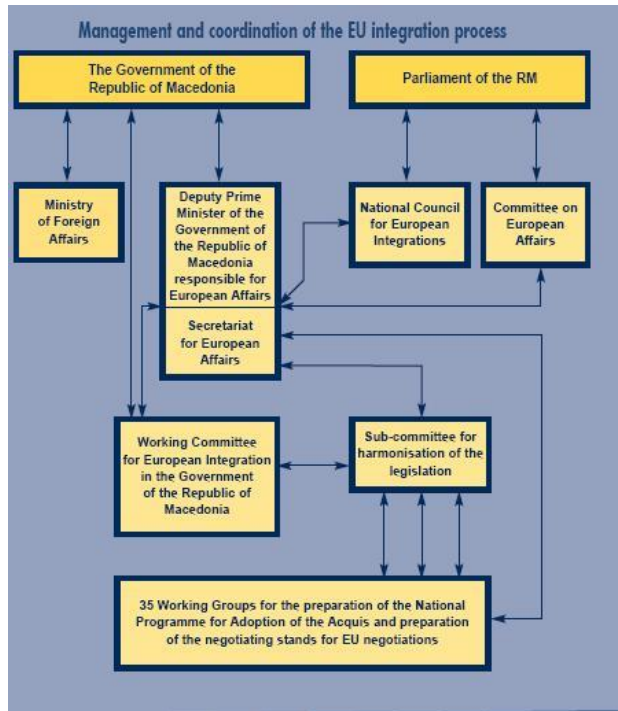
Regarding Macedonia's capability to assume obligations of EU membership, it can be assumed that the country is moderately prepared in most areas. References were made to the country's starting point, where major and difficult adjustments were needed especially in the areas of free movement of goods and intellectual property law, competition policy and financial control, as well as the state of the environment. Citing its ability to assume the obligations of membership, the country is moderately prepared in most areas including the areas of competition, transport and energy. Even so, further efforts are needed in areas such as the freedom of movement of workers while focusing on the administrative capacity and effective implementation.

Regarding its change to a more EU compatible structure, The Macedonian government established a management infrastructure of the European integration process. There are several institutions which are part of the infrastructure. First, the Committee for Euro-Atlantic Integration which plays the central role in decision-making of the country's policies in the European integration process. Second, the Working Committee for European Integration of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (WCEI), chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers in charge of EU Integration (deputy-The Minister of Economy) The Committee itself is an operational, inter-ministerial body establishing the methods and dynamics for implementation of strategic decisions, political guidelines and priorities of the Government while also monitoring the realization of stated tasks.

The Deputy to the President of the Government is responsible for the European Integration which represents the center in the management and coordination of the operational part of the integration process. Its role is the service in the Sector for European Integration within the General Secretariat of the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Sector of European Integration within the Republic's government has the task to organize, coordinate and synchronize the EU integration process. The sector itself is organized in seven units in charge of the approximation of the national legislation with that of the EU, translation of the EU legal acts, institution building, and support to the WCEI, coordination of foreign assistance, and information to the broader public on EU and the European Integration process (*see Figure 1*).

Making reference to the severe political crisis from 2001, the country's democracy and rule of law have been constantly challenged, the impact being mostly captured by the functioning of the democratic institutions and key areas of the society. The country itself is majorly suffering from a divisive culture and a lack of capacity to compromise having as a background the major protest occurred on 5 May (a violent clash between activists and police, with injuries on both sides). So, on 20 July and 31 August 2016, leaders of the main four political parties reached a deal on the implementation of the Przino Agreement which included setting 11 December 2016 as the date for early parliamentary elections and declaring their support to the work of the Special Prosecutor. The implementation of the Agreement proved troublesome, with opposition parties accusing the largest party.

Figure 1 *Management and coordination of the EU integration process*



The inter-ethnic situation also remains fragile. The review of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the 2001 conflict and provides the framework of the inter-ethnic relations, still needs to be completed in a transparent and inclusive manner. The agreement also referred to provisions for altering the official languages of the country with any language spoken by over 20% of the population, becoming co-official with the Macedonian language on a municipal level. While speaking about civil society, it also played an important role in supporting the democratic processes and ensuring balances. Civil society organizations continue to express their concerns about the deterioration of the climate in which they operate, limited government commitment to dialogue as well as public attacks by politicians and pro-government media.

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is moderately prepared with the reform of its public administration. Over the past years, the country had some progress, although limited. Implementation of a new legal framework on human resources management has started. Even so, insufficient progress in the implementation of the Commission's previous recommendations was recorded. Temporary contracts continue to be transformed into permanent ones without open competition, even though sustentation could be applied. Ineffective accountability lines, the use of the public sector as a political instrument, allegations of pressure exerted on public employees and alleged politicization of administration in an electoral year continue to be of concern. A public administration reform strategy is belatedly under preparation for 2017-2022. Furthermore, the lack of political commitment to deliver on necessary reforms in public financial management led to a significant reduction of EU financial assistance in 2016.

4.3. Rule of law

The Macedonian legal system belongs to the category of states where continental law is applied and where the main sources of law are the Constitution, the national laws and the international agreements concluded and ratified according to law.

The country's judicial system has some level of preparation. However, the situation has been backsliding since 2014 and achievements of the previous decade's reform process have been undermined by recurrent political interference in the work of the judiciary. Unfortunately, the authorities failed to demonstrate the necessary political will to address effectively the underlying issues which were identified in the "Urgent Reform Priorities". The obstructions faced by the newly established Special

Prosecutor have shown the need to address effectively the lack of independence of the judiciary and to prevent selective justice.

Concerning the fight against corruption, there is still work needed to be done. Corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem of Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The legislative and institutional framework has been developed. However, the structural shortcomings of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and political interference in its work have minimized the impact of past efforts. There is still a need to establish a convincing track record, especially on high level corruption cases.

Referring to the fight against organized crime, the legislative framework is broadly in line with European standards and new strategies have been elaborated. However, the law enforcement capacity to investigate financial crimes and confiscate assets needs to be developed further.

Regarding regional cooperation, the country generally continues to maintain a good relationship with other enlargement countries and participates actively in regional initiatives. Steps have been taken to improve good neighborly relations, including through the recent progress in implementing the confidence-building measures with Greece.

Today, Macedonia's president is elected by direct vote, for a term of five years which only can be renewed once. Moreover, the president cannot hold any other public office or position in a political party, grants decorations, honors and pardons and makes diplomatic appointments and some judicial and Security Council appointments. He is the one who appoints or dismisses ambassadors, the members of the Security Council of the country and the Prime Minister. The power of the president is fairly

limited with all other executive powers being vested in what the Constitution describes as the Government, the Prime Minister and the Ministers. The last ones propose laws, budget regulations to be adopted by the Assembly, are granted immunity, control diplomatic policy and can't be called for service in the Armed Forces. The last but not the least, the Judiciary power is exercised by courts, with the court system being headed by the Judicial Supreme Court and the republican Judicial Council. The assembly appoints the judges.

4.4. Economic development and competitiveness

More than in any other country in the Balkans, Macedonia's economic situation can't be properly understood without a large analysis of its political situation. Being the poorest republic of the Former Yugoslav, the economy was rural and agricultural, based on the existence of a large number of communist powerful factories. Turning back in 1991, immediately after the Proclamation of Independence, Republic of Macedonia discovered that it was the victim of socialism imposed by Tito's regime and continued by Milosevic. One of the most conclusive arguments is that the transport was done on a north-south axis with immediate neighbors: Albania and Bulgaria. Moreover, all the roads and railways were designed to lead to Belgrade, to the north across Kosovo. In the wake of the global economic downturn, Macedonia has experienced decreased foreign direct investment, lowered credit availability and a large trade deficit. Trades with Greece, Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia Herzegovina were not encouraged.

Nevertheless, this situation has been improved in the last years. Now, Macedonia's major trading partners are Germany, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Russia and Italy. In 2010, the total trade between Macedonia and

the United States was \$116,6 million, and in the first 8 months of 2011 it was \$65 million. In January 2011, Republic of Macedonia became the first country eligible for the IMF's Precautionary Credit Line. This program gives Macedonia a line of credit worth €475 million (about \$675 million) over two years, intended to be accessed only in the case of need brought about by external shocks. Also, unemployment was a continuing problem in the Republic's economy where a large percentage of the Republic's qualified labor force can't find work. Many Macedonians lost the jobs with the collapse of Yugoslavia. As a result, national unemployment was above 35% (37.30% in 2005), but in recent years the number has dropped to 23.4% (2016).

Despite all of this, the vulnerable economy has determined the parties, regardless their political colors, to apply more and more fiscal measures. This way, the inflation has been maintained at a low level as possible and the local currency (denarius) was consistently linked to a foreign currency, the initial dollar, then the German mark and, finally, in recent years the euro. The fiscal efforts made by the republic of Macedonia, gave it the appreciation of the IMF and the World Bank. Since 2002, Macedonia has become a member of the World Trade Organization and also has started to benefit of an Association Agreement with the European Union, which leads the country to export to the EU without paying fees.

When it comes to agriculture and food, the country is self-sufficient, as in the energy sector. The Republic of Macedonia is still using widespread coal, extracted in normal quantities. The last statistics showed that agriculture is only 20% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), while industry represents 39% and services 41% of GDP. These percentages show that the Republic of Macedonia is about to transform itself from an agricultural and

industrial (heavy industry and communist factories) economy into a service-based one. This transformation can also be seen as a first step of the process named “Europeanization”.

5. In the end

The country has the capability to prosper under correct administration. The various reforms that have and had been made are directing the country on a wave that could catapult them as being one of the most energetic economies that Europe has seen. Its self-sufficiency in the energy sector, various water resources, pricey minerals that are or could be extracted more efficiently, are just a few of the doors that the Macedonian people could open.

The country is already experiencing a massive influx of tourists, due to the various natural reservations and the staggering views that can be witnessed both in the mountain side and the lake.

More investors could be attracted as well, once the judicial system will perform a better scrutiny in regards to the way the law is applied. A constant dialogue is required between the state (voice of the people) and the venture capitalists, bureaucracy being one of the major issues that stand in the way. The country’s potential could be reached thru constant implementation of reforms and open-mind thinking.

The name issue remains the biggest challenge that FYROM is facing, with Greece putting up a long fight over the dispute. Nevertheless the country’s name could be renamed as simple as “Country” if, in retrospect, that will bring prosperity and wealth to the Macedonians. At the end of the day, they are just seeking for a way to align themselves with the worldly standards, while other countries already obtained their moral independence.

EU has already seen the benefits of adding Macedonia on its list of members, with financial support already injected in the country's economy. The intricate road network and the ease of access for Greece to the rest of Europe might eventually seal the deal and solve the dispute once and for all. Financial gain perspective needs to be prioritized, especially from a perspective where nor Greece nor Bulgaria could say that they are financially independent. Differences must be put aside for the benefit of future generations.

All in all, Macedonia is still facing day to day challenges, like many other countries (EU and non-EU), with a bright perspective for the future, a prudent approach towards total democracy and a strong sense of belongingness embedded in their hearts. May ration eventually prevail upon the situation and make this a stepping stone not just for Macedonians, but for democracy as a whole.

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CASE STUDY ON REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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1. Country description

1.1. Geographical context

Moldova's total land area is 33,851 km². Located in Eastern Europe, Moldova is bordered on the west and southwest by Romania and on the north, south, and east by Ukraine. Most of its territory lies between the area's two main rivers, the Dniester and the Prut. The Dniester forms a small part of Moldova's border with Ukraine in the northeast and southeast, but it mainly flows through the eastern part of the country, separating Bessarabia and Transnistria. The Prut River forms Moldova's entire western boundary with Romania. The Danube touches the Moldovan border at its southernmost tip, and forms the border for 200 m.

1.2. Background

Moldova was forced into the Soviet Union after World War II and faces a secessionist pro-Russian movement in its Transnistria region, where more than 1,100 Russian troops are encamped. Excessive economic dependence on Russia further threatens its sovereignty. In 2014, a pro-European

integration coalition of the center-right Liberal Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and the center-left Democratic Party of current Prime Minister Pavel Filip blocked efforts by the pro-Russia Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) to form a government. In 2016, the PSRM's Igor Dodan narrowly won the first direct presidential election since 1996. Moldova remains one of Europe's poorest countries. Its economy depends on emigrants' remittances and agriculture, especially fruits, vegetables, wine, and tobacco.

1.3. Cultural context

The country's folk traditions and costumes are highly valued at a national level, and preserved in the capital's museums, its Republic Dance Company and its choir, Doina, as well as forming part of every Moldovan celebration. The Colinda Christmas tradition of masked and costumed singers, musicians and dancers going from door to door to give performances and receive gifts bears a resemblance to the Christian tradition of caroling, but is rooted in pre-Christian pagan practices. Wine is deeply rooted in Moldovan culture, with the vineyards some of the oldest in the world, known and appreciated by the Romans and a major source of export revenue during the Middle Ages.

1.4. Economic context

During the communist era a diversified industry was established in Moldova, agriculture was modernized, and transport and the building industry were overhauled. Following independence, the government began the gradual transformation from a command to a market economy, establishing a program to privatize many state enterprises primarily through distribution of ownership vouchers to the public. The transition has

been slow and uneven because of corruption, lack of foreign investment, and other economic pressures. In the early 21st century Moldova was among the poorest countries in Europe. The economy remains vulnerable to weak administrative capacity, vested bureaucratic interests, higher fuel prices, Russian political and economic pressure, and unresolved separatism in the Transnistria region.

Transparency, accountability, and corruption are crucial concerns. Business confidence is low and the macroeconomic framework remains vulnerable, while external budget support, based on an agreement with the IMF, has a high level of conditionality. Continuous economic stabilization, advancement of key economic reforms, and creation of a rule-based environment for businesses are key goals.

Moldova faces other important challenges. Large scale emigration, combined with decreasing fertility rates, has alarmingly reduced the population and hastened the pace of aging in Moldova, putting pressure on the pension system and limiting the country's long-term competitiveness.

1.5. Moldova- European Union relations

Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova have intensified in the past years. Moldova joined the EU's Eastern Partnership in 2009 and the EU-Moldova Association Agreement entered into force on 1 July 2016.

The question is: what will happen if Moldova becomes part of EU???

The Association Agreement will strengthen Moldova's political and economic ties with the EU. It will set out a reform plan in areas vital for good governance and economic development and strengthens cooperation in several sectors.

Since 28 April 2014, Moldovan citizens with a biometric passport can already travel to the Schengen area without a visa. The EU will provide support to Moldova for reforms in the areas of justice and security, including in the fight against corruption, which are related to visa liberalization.

Figure 1 *Presentation of the Republic of Moldova*



The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the European Union will offer Moldova privileged access for goods and services to the EU market. Access to the European markets and benefits from the DCFTA will further increase once Moldova has aligned its health and safety standards to those of the EU. The food safety reform will enable Moldova to export its agricultural products, notably animal products, whose safety for consumers is strictly controlled in the EU. Overall, if reforms are completed, the DCFTA is expected to boost Moldova's GDP by 5.4% annually.

Domestic reforms in Moldova, together with EU support, will upgrade the quality of Moldovan products and services. This will open trade opportunities well beyond the EU market and bring growth and jobs to Moldova.

More than that, Moldova will benefit from cooperation, exchanges, capacity building and mobility opportunities in the field of education and youth.

2. The fundamental adherence criteria.

The Treaty on the European Union states that any European country may apply for membership if it respects the democratic values of the EU and is committed to promoting them.

The EU operates comprehensive approval procedures that ensure new members are admitted only when they can demonstrate they will be able to play their part fully as members.

The first step is for the country to meet the key criteria for accession. These were mainly defined at the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993. Countries wishing to join need to have:

- stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces in the EU;
- the ability to take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

2.1. Rule of Law

The rule of law is one of the most important values that the EU is promoting for the accession process. The rule of law is crucial for a stable business environment, providing legal certainty for economic operators, supporting consumers and stimulating investment, jobs and growth.

2.2. Fundamental rights

Fundamental rights are another essential element in the accession process of EU Integration. The fundamental rights are about universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity. It is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.

2.3. Economic development and competitiveness

Becoming a member of the EU is also about making a country economically fit for membership to make sure that it can reap all the benefits of EU accession, while at the same time contributing to the growth and prosperity of the EU economy. Increasing competitiveness and introducing measures fostering job creation in the region should mitigate migratory pressures from the enlargement countries to the EU.

2.4. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reforms

One of the biggest issues that have to be faced by the countries that access to the EU integration process is the bad functioning of the public institutions and the difficulty they have in implementing reforms. It's true that the public administration in the eastern European countries is

influenced by the policy of the parties that are controlling the parliament and they usually try to change things in the direction that is according to their interests. Citizens have less trust in the public institutions because their voice is not heard and solving personal problems has become more difficult. Seems like the public institutions forgot their main role that has to be played. Serving more the interests of the citizens and less the hidden interests of the politicians is a goal that countries that are in development, such as Republic of Moldova, have to achieve. The problem is that corruption is so deeply rooted and trying to improve something means to change totally the system and the people involved in this process too. The democracy in the public administration is missing because again, other interests are followed by influencing politicians or businessmen. But as far as we know, citizens have not only a right to good administration, but also to be actively involved in policy-making. More needs to be done to strengthen participatory democracy and develop dialogue between decision makers and stakeholders such that the public administration proves its transparency and democracy.

3. Status and challenges in meeting criteria

3.1. Rule of law

As we mention it before, the rule of law is essential for a good functioning of the state, every state that is part or wants to be part of the European Union has to have a good and developed rule of law that provides security and stability. As all of the states that want to enter in the European Union Moldova have to establish more ground rules and to have an economic stability.

To help Moldova achieve the optimal rules European Union has implement in the country projects that will make the Moldova a safer and developed country. Also, we have to mention that through the years EU has supported Moldova, the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) had increased three times since 2007 to 2014. Is is clear that the European Union is supporting this country throughout the years and it is encouraged to change some of the laws in education, justice and also to develop economically.

A good example for the new laws from Moldova is the Association Agreement (AA) between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova because to this agreement our neighbor gets a much easier access to the European market. Also it has the ability to grow over the years a powerful economic state. Through this project people from Moldova are getting access to more products and services from the European Union that is at the same standards and quality as in all the Europe.

The AA is providing new ground for the new laws, now all the products from Moldova have to be at the standards from European Union. The customers from European Union and Moldova have to be respected and get the same treatment. Also the law needs to evolve so they can permit the economy to grow. It is very important that Moldova encourage the citizens and the business men from outside the country through the new laws to invest money in the economy. In the 2016 the AA was fully implemented and in the 2017 the economy was growing. European Union had made Moldova to develop new laws in all the area. A good thing was that the citizens from Moldova could vote for EU parliament in 2014. I think that Moldova it is on a good path and had evolve a lot in the last years, it is important that the negotiations continue in the years that came and that the bond between Moldova and EU to grow and to be more and more strong.

3.2. Fundamentals rights

One of the many benefits that the people from Moldova have gain since the approval process in the European Unions is the free visa project, that allows people to travel through all Europe more easily. One of the main improvement that Moldova has been done in the late years is the develops of Public Health System, every citizen of the country must have access to health support and also have a longer and easier life. The European Union is hoping to create in our neighbor a state that will respect all the fundamentals rights, even if this is a very elaborate process. For example is the educational system that is been developing for many years, and that it is not perfect, it is allowing to the students to study over the border.

For example many of the students from Moldova came to Romania to study mostly because of the many similarities with their system.

In the late years, European Union has tried to make the country more safe and protect and to give the citizens of Moldova all the fundamentals rights like the right for education, for religion, for health, the freedom to express their opinion and many others. Although, the process is long I thingt they are succeed.

One of the many problems in Moldova is with the Russian state, because of their past is very hard to get the Moldova in the European Union because Russia will lose a very important state for them that is easy to control and has an advantage of geographic position in the Europe. They are many conflicts around this theme and I know that sometimes the Russian government does not care about the people of Moldova. One of the fundamental rights is usually forgotten, the right of protection, the fact that Russia has easy access to Moldova is a many concern of European Union.

In other words, I think that Moldova had to develop a more advance security in the country.

This process that Moldova is taken part of is really helping the people from the country to have more freedom, more space to develop and also more trading market places. It is important to mention that European Union is helping Moldova to have more care for the people, to have the same quality goods in their country as in any other country from Europe. They are respecting the customers so they want that Moldova to do the same, so for any goods that it is send in other country from Europe they have to respect the international standers and they want that the people from Moldova to have the same standards in their country. I think that this is a very important part from the process and that it is something very good for the people.

In other words I thing that the integration in the European Union for this country it is very good and it is helping the country and the people from it to develop. In the past years I think that you can see an improvement in the quality life of the people from Moldova and even if the process in not over we can see some results now.

3.3. Economic development and competitiveness

Economic growth and the poverty reduction trend is closely correlated in Republic of Moldova with the flow of remittances and consumption generated by the latter. Revenues from Moldovans' work abroad have fueled the disposable income of households, thus leading to an increased aggregate demand for consumption. Constrained by the limited capacity of domestic production, this demand was largely met by imports of goods and services. The national public budget has benefited from this, but the trade balance has turned into an alarming trade deficit.

Economic development, wherever it occurs, is based on 3 factors, namely accumulation of capital, labor force and its productivity level, which includes and other parameters, such as: technologies, efficient governance, skills, etc. The Government has made an attempt to shape the historic and future development of Republic of Moldova in the context of the National Development Strategy „Moldova 2020”. An analysis of economic development factors in Republic of Moldova reveals a very alarming conclusion - without a concerted effort to change the development paradigm, the potential of growth over the next ten years is limited to a maximum of 4.5% to 5% annually. Even this relatively moderate growth scenario is based on rigid assumptions, that labor outflow will be stopped and remittances will remain at current levels at the least, fact which is not guaranteed at all.

A change in the development paradigm can only occur through a concerted effort by both Government and society. This effort is meant to identify, as quickly as possible, and address those gaps that still impede an economic development model focused on raising investments in fixed capital and its increased utilization, including by increasing labor force productivity.

As a way to increase the productive stock of capital and the knowledge regarding its use, the economic development paradigm would imply attracting investment, developing export industries, promoting a knowledge-based society, including strengthening research and development activities, innovations and technological transfer geared towards efficiency and competitiveness. Changing the development paradigm of the Republic of Moldova will be achieved by ensuring equitable distribution of economic development benefits for all strata of

society. On the other hand, the speed, scale and consistent approach to the broad spectrum of proposed reforms are also important. A shift in paradigm cannot be achieved through a set of instant reforms only. Promoted reforms will serve only as a first step in establishing a new working method and approach towards issues by the Government and entire society. If we learn to work together at this pace, Moldova will become a competitive country in Europe in terms of its ability to reform and innovate, but economic development will accelerate to a rate that will reduce, in the near future, the gap between Moldova and developed European economies.

3.4. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

Bessarabia was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 (with the consent of Germany) because of the secret protocol of the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939. On August 2, 1940, the Soviet government proclaimed the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, having its capital in Chisinau, thirds of Bessarabia with about half of the Moldovan RSSA, hence its own economic potential and historical integrity have been endangered from the beginning.

During the Moscow coup in August 1991, commanders of the South West Command tried to impose the state of emergency in Moldova, but were defeated by the Moldovan government, which declared its support for Russian President Boris Yeltsin. On August 27, 1991, after the failure of the coup, Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Although independent of the USSR in 1991, Russian forces remained in the eastern territory of the Dniester to defend the Slav population, mainly of Ukrainians, Russians and Bulgarians, who declared their republic of Transnistria on the territory of the Moldovan Autonomous RSS. Following that Moldova, in 1995, obtained total independence on Moldovan territory.

Therefore, in the near future, normal development has been established in the development of the Republic of Moldova, and joined the Council of Europe on 13 July 1995. Upon accession, it accepted the statutory obligations and entered into a number of specific commitments as laid out in the PACE Opinion 188 (1995) on Moldova's application for membership of the Council of Europe.

At the same time, the Action Plan is geared towards supporting the Moldovan authorities in meeting key national reform objectives in the priority areas of functioning of democratic institutions with a particular focus on co-operation in constitutional and electoral matters as well as the fight against corruption, reform of the justice sector and independence of the judiciary bodies, protection and promotion of human rights, including the fight against trafficking and anti-discrimination, freedom and pluralism of media as well as local democracy and decentralization.

The present Action Plan has been prepared as a comprehensive instrument of enhanced co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Republic of Moldova with the overall strategic objective to further support the country in the fulfilment of its outstanding statutory and accession commitments. It is well aligned with the national Action Plan on honoring the Republic of Moldova's commitments towards the Council of Europe adopted by the Parliament on 12 July 2012, which calls upon the relevant authorities to ensure co-operation with the Council of Europe with a view to eliminate identified deficiencies and to finalize the launched reforms.

The Action Plan has been developed to respond to specific reform needs through mobilizing legislative assistance, expertise and capacity-building.

Firm action against corruption and economic crime in line with Council of Europe recommendations remains an acknowledged reform priority in the Republic of Moldova. In this respect, the improvement of national legislation and a number of actions for the implementation of GRECO and MONEYVAL recommendations are envisaged to be undertaken by the government. Drawing from lessons learnt during previous co-operation, the present Action Plan prioritizes assistance to reinforce the national efforts to combat corruption through upgraded law enforcement and enhanced capacities of the National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) and the National Commission on Integrity (NCI). Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the country in the implementation of GRECO recommendations concerning party financing.

Main specific objectives are to reinforce the existing national mechanisms in the fight against corruption and economic crime at all levels in line with the CoE conventions and other international treaties and to support the effective implementation of the principles of European constitutional and electoral heritage in an all-inclusive manner involving both the relevant national authorities and civil society. An overall objective is to improve the functionality of democratic institutions and to strengthen good governance in the Republic of Moldova.

I'll conclude by Mark Twain's quote: "If voting made any difference they wouldn't let us do it." Why? Because Moldova, despite its independence, still feels the traces left by Russia in previous years, indirectly subjugated by Russia, Moldova may have a much higher unemployment rate, due to individuals with precarious financial conditions working on the territory of Russia.

3.5. Other key obstacles in European Union accession for the country

Russia is the only source of gas imported from Moldova, and Russia will probably use the Republic of Moldova's energy dependence on exerting influence and proclaiming corruption. Russia will try to use the conflicts in Transnistria and Gagauzia to provoke an excessive reaction on the part of Moldova. He may also try to ensure that after the elections in Moldova, a weak coalition will emerge to slow the European ambitions of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the resources available to Moldova.

4. Conclusion

The current Moldovan government calls itself pro-European, but in reality, its leaders hardly embody European values. The political sphere, economy, judiciary, and media in Moldova are still monopolized by a small group of individuals who use political power to advance their own interests. This ambiguity is just one of the reasons why the idea of EU integration has been devalued and is less popular than before. Citizens expect fast and visible change, but instead they see the same people, still in control and still acting in their own interests and not in those of the country. Restoration of confidence in the state now requires full transparency. The records of what happens to EU financial aid should be open and visible. Public reports on funds received and spent should be the norm. The privatization of remaining state assets should also be carried out in the public eye. At the same time, the fight against corruption in government institutions, power ministries, and agencies has to become uncompromising. Zero tolerance of corruption needs to be cultivated in the public as well. Efficient, deep reforms of the police, similar to those implemented in Georgia, need to take place in Moldova. The country needs strong, independent journalists who

have one goal: to provide objective and complete information on current events. Only independent media can educate the population and fulfill their duty as the 'fourth power'. It is very important that European leaders, who have done so much to promote links with Moldova, do not turn away just because the country has ticked the right boxes. The EU as well as the United States should put more pressure on the leaders of the Moldovan pro-Western coalition and use their leverage to persuade them to follow the spirit of EU agreements, and not just the letter. Coalition members must stop using their political position to promote their personal interests and instead focus on reforming the country and returning to the path of democratic development.

CASE STUDY ON SERBIA

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1. Country description

Serbia, officially the Republic of Serbia, is an aspiring and eligible candidate to EU accession. It has always been a part of Europe and an important political partner of the EU.

Relative to its small territory, it is a diverse country distinguished by a transitional character, situated along cultural, geographic, climatic and other boundaries.

Serbia is a state situated at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe. The territory covers the southern part of the Pannonian Plain and the central Balkans. Serbia borders Hungary to the north, Romania and Bulgaria to the east, Macedonia to the south and Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to the west. The border with Albania is disputed through the territory of Kosovo. Serbia numbers around 7.2 million people and its capital city, Belgrade, is also amongst the biggest cities in Southeast Europe.

Following the Slavic migration to the Balkans, the Serbs established a medieval state, which developed into the Serbian Kingdom and the maximum expansion took place in the fourteenth century. In the sixteenth

century, the Serbian state was conquered by the Ottomans. Serbia regained its independence towards the Ottoman Empire through the Serbian Revolution from the nineteenth century, expanding its territory in the same time. Vojvodina, Habsburg Empire's former royal province, united with Serbia in 1918. Following the end of World War I, Serbia formed a union with the other Slavic states from Western Balkans, making a Yugoslav state, which existed in different political forms and which broke apart in 2006 when Serbia again became an independent country.

In 18 February 2008, the parliament of Kosovo, Serbia's southern province with an Albanian ethnic majority, declared independence, with mixed responses from the international community. Serbia does not acknowledge Kosovo's independence and considers that Kosovo is governed by ONU.

Byzantine Empire's influence on Serbia was the most significant. The Serbs are Eastern Christians, having the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Serbs use both the Cyrillic alphabet and the Latin alphabet because of both influences Western and Eastern. The Serbian monasteries, built mostly in the Middle Ages, are the best proof of the Byzantine and Orthodox influence, but also of the Western Europe (Latin) influence.

Serbia is an upper-middle income economy with dominant service sector, followed by the industrial sector and agriculture. Since 2000, Serbia has attracted over \$25 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI). Serbia has an unfavorable trade balance, however, its exports recorded a steady growth in last couple of years. The country has free trade agreements with the EFTA and CEFTA, a preferential trade regime with the European Union, a Generalized System of Preferences with the United States, and individual free trade agreements with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Turkey.

2. The fundamental adherence criteria

In order to become a member of the EU, a country must go through a complex procedure. Once all the conditions for adherence are fulfilled, the candidate countries must apply the EU laws in all areas.

Any country that meets the conditions for membership may submit her candidacy. Known as the "Copenhagen criteria" (after the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993 which defined them), these conditions include the political criteria, the economic and the institutional criteria.

The political criteria refer to a stable democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect and protection of minorities. Countries need to make efforts to deal with issues such as judicial reform and the fight against organized crime and corruption. The candidate countries have to reform the key areas of the rule of law (particularly judicial reform and anti-corruption policy, independence of key institutions, freedom of expression, anti-discrimination policy, the protection of minorities) and to track record of reform implementation to make sure that reforms are deeply rooted and irreversible.

The rule of law implies that government authority may only be exercised in accordance with documented laws, which were adopted through an established procedure. The principle is intended to be a safeguard against arbitrary rulings in individual cases.

Human rights, other political criteria, are those rights which every person holds because of their quality as a human being. These rights are absolute and belong to all humans, meaning it cannot be bestowed, granted, limited, bartered away, or sold away. Human rights include the right to life, the right to be prosecuted only according to the laws that are in existence

at the time of the offence, the right to be free from slavery, and the right to be free from torture.

Regarding the members of national minorities, they should be able to maintain their distinctive culture and practices, including their language (as far as not contrary to the human rights of other people, nor to democratic procedures and rule of law), without suffering discrimination of any kind.

Functional democratic governance requires that all citizens of the country should be able to participate, equally, in the political decision making at every single governing level, from the local to the highest, national level. This also requires free elections with a secret ballot, the right to establish political parties without any obstacle from the state, fair and equal access to a free press, free trade union organizations, freedom of personal opinion, and executive powers restricted by laws and allowing free access to judges, independent of the executive.

The economic criteria involve the existence of a functioning market economy, the capacity to deal with competitiveness and market forces within the EU.

In order to have a functional market economy, a country must meet conditions such as: the existence of a broad consensus about essentials of economic policy, macroeconomic stability (including price stability, sustainable public finances and external accounts), a free interplay of market forces (including liberalized prices and trade), free market entry and exit (including issues of establishment/bankruptcies of firms) and an adequate legal system (including a system of property rights, enforceability of laws/contracts) and a sufficiently developed financial sector.

Competitiveness in the EU requires: the existence of a functioning market economy, sufficient human and physical capital (including issues

of education, research and infrastructure), adequate sectoral and enterprise structures (including issues of enterprise restructuring, sectoral shift, role of small and medium-sized enterprises), limited state influence on competitiveness (including issues of trade policy, competition policy, state aids, support for small and medium-sized enterprises) and sufficient trade and investment integration with the EU.

The institutional criteria require the administrative and institutional capacity to take on the obligations of membership which include political adherence, economic adherence and monetary union. It includes the whole range of policies and measures that constitute the *acquis communautaire* of the EU that candidate countries must adopt, implement and enforce. This requires the administrative capacity to bring the national laws into line with the body of European law built up over the history of the Union, to implement it and to effectively enforce it through appropriate administrative and judicial structures.

3. Status and challenges in meeting the criteria

3.1. Rule of law

In order to meet the adherence criteria for being a part of the EU, Serbia needs to overcome the challenges in the judiciary sub-sector. Regarding the independence and efficiency of judiciary, Serbia has issues such as: judicial network, electronic case management, capacities of the key stakeholders, procedural laws, prosecutorial investigation, availability of legislation and case-law. The Judicial Academy's capacity also needs to be strengthened.

In Serbia, corruption is high and widespread in many fields of public and economic life and is still a serious cause of concern. According to the 2012 survey of the Anti-Corruption Agency, 18% of the population in

Serbia had participated in corruption by giving a bribe in the previous year. Corruption also acts as a promoter for organized crime and affects the development and prosperity of economy. The legal and institutional framework to fight against organized crime is largely in place, however, an anti-trafficking strategy and a strategy for the narcotics crimes still needs to be adopted. Regarding trafficking in human beings, Serbia is a country of origin, transit and destination. Serbia needs to improve the procedures for the identification and handling of identified victims and the protection of victims. Being on the main Balkans drug trafficking routes, Serbia requires solid efforts by the customs administration both to detect and seize narcotics at the borders and to properly store and destruct drugs.

Regional and international cooperation has led to a number of high profile investigations into organized crime groups. However, in order to improve information flow and exchanges between law enforcement agencies and to ensure prosecution, there is a need for capacity for intelligence-led policing, especially intelligence analysis, and inter-agency cooperation. Serbia needs to increase its capacity to run complex financial investigations in parallel with criminal investigations.

Another issue for Serbia is the monitoring of individual cases due to lack of common electronic databases and efficient procedures for exchanging information. Serbia needs to develop a track record of investigation, prosecutions and final convictions in corruption cases.

The new strategy for the prevention and fight against corruption for the period 2013-2018 and its action plan have both a structural approach that covers issues such as good governance, independent institutions, internal control and external audit, and protection of whistle-blowers, and

a sector approach addressing public procurement, spatial planning, judiciary, police, education and health.

3.2. Fundamental rights

Regarding the fundamental rights, Serbia needs to make solid implementations in fields like education, language usage and access to the media and religious services in minority languages. In areas such as access to justice, equal treatment and accommodation of people with disabilities, Serbia need to bring its national laws into the same line with the EU legislation. There are also still present issues such as homophobia, discrimination and hate crimes on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Another issue in Serbia is represented by the poor living conditions and ill-treatment of prisoners in the mental health institutions, prisons, social care centers and police stations.

As concerns the minorities, Serbia has issues with the Roma population that is very often a victim of racism, discrimination and social exclusion and lives in deep poverty, lacking sufficient access to healthcare, education and training, housing and employment. Serbia needs to work towards improving the status of the Roma.

Freedom of expression represents another problem because there is a lack of transparency in media ownership. The state budget is financing the media sector and this has to be brought into line with the EU acquis on state aid.

Serbia faces substantial challenges during the accession process on fight against organized crime, migration, asylum, visa policy, external borders and Schengen. A major challenge that Serbia faces is that of the fight against organized crime because there are criminal groups originating

from Serbia or having links to Serbia that operate within and beyond the borders of the country.

Regarding migration, Serbia needs to take effective actions on irregular migration, to improve analytical and technical capabilities, communication and working procedures. Serbia also has to implement a unified system for data and information collection on migratory movements.

As concerns asylum, a national database for checking personal data and for additional reception facilities with adequate conditions for asylum seekers would facilitate the process because the access to asylum procedure is dependent on recognized accommodation.

Serbia also needs to prepare a comprehensive Schengen Action Plan, covering visa policy and Schengen acquis alignment.

3.3. Economic development and competitiveness

Serbia's economy is mostly based on various services (47.6% of GDP), industry (42.7% of GDP) and agriculture (9.7% of GDP). It sits at \$ 101.5 billion by purchasing power parity. The main industries include: automobiles, base metals, furniture, food processing, machinery, chemicals, sugar, tires, clothes, pharmaceuticals. As concerns agriculture, the products it revolves around are: wheat, maize, sunflower, sugar beets, grapes, fruits (raspberries, apples, sour cherries), vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes), beef, pork, meat products, milk and dairy products. From this products, exported are the following: iron and steel, rubber, clothes, wheat, fruit and vegetables, nonferrous metals, electric appliances, metal products, weapons and ammunition, automobiles and the main

partner countries are Italy (16.2 %), Germany (12.6%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (8.7 %), Romania (5.6 %) and Russia (5.4 %).¹

In numbers, we have an estimated sum of \$12.85 billion in exports² and \$17.37 billion in imports.³

Public debt represents 78.5 % of GDP as of 2016, witnessing a rise of 1.5 % from 2015.⁴

Serbia needs to undergo several structural reforms in order to compensate the current economic challenges.

The internal market is too weak to influence economic growth and convergence with the EU. To improve the business environment, it is important to reduce the state presence in the economy, strengthen the current weak private sector and solve the legal uncertainty problem which keeps away potential foreign and even native investors. Fair competition and business growth remains stagnant as long as the informal economy dominates the market.

Administrative and technical capacity need to be improved, especially concerning free movement of goods (technical harmonization, standardization and metrology and market surveillance), competition policy, intellectual property rights, consumer and health protection, company law and enterprise and industrial policy.

There is a current digital gap both within the country and with the EU which also weakens the business environment which can be solved by

¹ As of 2015, according to the World Factbook from www.cia.gov

² It witnesses a rise of \$ 0.25 billion comparative with 2015.

³ \$ 0.34 billion more than in 2015.

⁴ According to the World Factbook from www.cia.gov

making broadband, fixed and wireless, available, coupled with forwarding training programs focusing on digital skill development.

An area which can greatly influence the economy is innovation and technology transfer. Investment in Research and Development (R&D) has remained marginal, and is also influenced by the lack of modernization of the education system and lack of available support to stimulate innovation at business level. Therefore, Serbia needs assistance in developing new technologies and research and training programs, a better management of loans and grant programs, more collaboration with foreign research institutions.

The SME sector has low productivity, yet it's one of the main influences on the Serbian economy. The majority of SMEs lack market intelligence and access to information. They have inadequate technology and limited access to affordable finance. Only around 26% of SMEs use external sources of funding. A course of action that needs to be taken consists of: access to external funding, diversification of financing sources, investment in targeted business infrastructure, training programs concerning competition, consumer protection and patent law and also an emphasis on entrepreneurship, especially among women and young people. Something to be noted is that this sector has received over the period of 2007-2013 nearly EUR 1 billion from international donor programs.

A problem is also the current quality of Serbia's education system. Even though higher education in Serbia is being aligned to the Bologna process, many reforms are still to be fully or properly implemented. The system does not prepare students for work, it is unresponsive to the current needs of the economy and there's a lack of training programs for workers to upgrade their skills.

Therefore what Serbia can do is focus on the training of teachers since their performance greatly influences the quality of education provided, implementing curricula that focuses on students and what they can provide to the labor market and also providing current workers with the opportunity to evolve.

Social protection supporting labor market participation and employment should be enhanced. Another topic that needs to be tackled is social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities, women, children and Roma by investing in permanent housing, better social protection and better access to health care.

Since it holds great importance for the Serbian economy and labor market, the Serbian agricultural policy should align with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to contribute to a competitive, sustainable and efficient agriculture sector, to improve food safety and strengthen the response to climate change.

3.4. Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

Over the past few years, Parliament's legislative activity was proactive and it showed involvement in the accession negotiation process. Consultation and transparency improved. Even so, there still are some areas that are problematic: the executive lacks an effective approach towards the quality of law making, constant changes to the parliamentary agenda and the use of urgent procedures.

The current government has a positive approach towards EU integration and to the EU-facilitated dialogue with Kosovo and amongst the key priorities is economic recovery and growth by means of foreign

investments. The constitution has yet to fully respect the recommendations of the Venice Commission, particularly on parliament's role in judicial appointments, the political parties' control over the mandate of Members of Parliament, the independence of key institutions and the protection of fundamental rights, including data protection.

What Serbia needs to do next consists of several actions including: aligning the National Plan for the Adoption of Acquis (NPAA) with the medium-term budget plan, prepare a legislative programme that promotes better regulation based on impact assessments and timely inter-institutional and public consultations, guarantee the neutrality and continuity of the public administration and implement the meritocracy system and regularly report on the implementation of the public financial management reform programme 2016-20.

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system. Civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights defenders continued to operate in a relatively improper public and media environment and thus can't access their full potential.

Serbia is moderately prepared with the reform of its public administration. Good progress has been achieved with adoption of the public financial management reform programme, e-government strategy, a strategy on regulatory reform and policy-making, new laws on general administrative procedures, public salaries and civil servants at provincial and local government level. However, implementation of the public administration reform action plan has been slow in some areas, and no progress was made with amending the legal framework for central government civil servants.

3.5. Other key obstacles in EU accession

The new center-right government under Aleksander Vucic, formed in 2009, a conservative, pro-European party, has fought corruption, implemented harsh economic reforms and, above all, pushed for the normalizing of relations with Kosovo. Instead of rewarding Serbia's efforts, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, as one of his first actions in office, halted EU enlargement until at least 2020. This might prove as a big mistake since both Russia and China keep their eyes on the country.

The Chinese government considers the Balkans a central node in its long-term strategy to speed up east-west trade and to ensure greater access to the western European market. The Chinese Development Bank and other Chinese banks are concentrating on making large investments in Serbia's weak infrastructure, one result of which is the China-Serbia friendship bridge that stretches across the Danube. This new partnership between China and Serbia doesn't stop at economic co-operation. It also includes close political partnership. Serbia went as far as agreeing not to join any international initiative that criticizes China's human-rights policy. Something to be noted is that Serbia is currently a transshipment point for Southwest Asian heroin moving to Western Europe on the Balkan route.

A more natural alternative for Serbia - and one even more alarming, in light of the situation in Ukraine - is Russia.

The relation between Serbia and Russia is even more probable: the two countries share historic and cultural ties, Russia supports Serbia's position on Kosovo in the United Nations Security Council, and the pair maintains close economic cooperation, especially in the energy sector.

In 2013, Serbia and Russia signed a strategic partnership agreement that deepened economic and political cooperation, including coordination

in international organizations. Serbia was the only EU-candidate country that failed to support the sanctions on Russia and that abstained from the UN statement condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Serbia is also the only country outside of the Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to have signed a free-trade agreement with Russia, in 2009. In October 2014, the special relationship was again brought to the fore when Russian president Vladimir Putin attended the first Serbian military parade since 1986.

The Serbian energy sector is especially vulnerable to Russian interests, since Gazprom Neft and Lukoil hold the majority of shares in Serbia's local oil monopoly.

The Kremlin opposes NATO and EU membership for Serbia, viewing both institutions as a threat to its own alliances. The EU has onerous legislation, oversight and transparency that endangers Russia's opaque and corrupt business model. Although the Serbian government maintains close relations with Russian officials in order to gain economic benefits, it has no illusions that the Eurasian Economic Union can be a viable alternative to the EU, regardless of Kremlin enticements.

Belgrade aspires to join the EU for two fundamental reasons: to improve economic conditions in Serbia, which is suffering recession and high unemployment, and to avoid being left behind in the region as a "gray zone" of insecurity, especially after Croatia's 2013 admission.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The new government programme included Serbia's EU accession as a priority goal. Involvement of parliament and stakeholders, including civil

society, in the accession process, was further enhanced. Constitutional reforms are needed for alignment with EU standards in some areas.

Serbia is moderately prepared in the area of public administration reform. Good progress was achieved with the adoption of the public financial management reform programme, strategies on e-government and on regulatory reform and policy-making, and of new laws on administrative procedures, public salaries and local and provincial civil servants.

The judicial system has reached a certain level of preparation but not nearly enough. Some steps were taken to promote a merit-based recruitment system, and harmonise the jurisprudence. Further steps are needed to tackle political influence. The quality and efficiency of the judiciary and access to justice remain undermined by an uneven distribution of workload, a burdensome case backlog and the lack of a free legal aid system.

Regarding preventing and fighting corruption, Serbia has made some steps in the right direction but corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem. The institutional setup is not yet functioning to the fullest in bringing down corrupt practices. A track record of effective investigations, prosecutions and convictions in corruption cases is required, including at high level- few countries if any actually manage to direct a successful cleansing procedure among the highest ranks.

Some progress has been made in adopting a new police law, reorganising the Ministry of the Interior and in adopting the first serious and organised crime threat assessment (SOCTA) using Europol methodology. A credible track record in the fight against organised crime still needs to be established.

The legal and institutional framework for the respect of fundamental rights is in place. Consistent implementation across the country needs to be ensured, including the protection of minorities. Serbia was the first enlargement country to introduce the EU Index of Gender Equality. Further sustained efforts are needed to improve the situation of persons belonging to the most discriminated groups (Roma, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and other socially vulnerable groups).

Serbia has been diligently working on its neighborly relations to acquire peace and cooperation. Regarding the normalisation of relations with Kosovo, progress was limited, mostly because of the electoral process in Serbia and the domestic situation in Kosovo. However, in August 2016 the building of the Mitrovica Bridge has commenced and this will facilitate the freedom of movement. Even so, more conscious and continuous efforts are needed in order to actually implement the agreements reached with Kosovo.

Regarding the economic criteria, Serbia is moderately prepared in developing a functioning market economy. Good progress was made to address some of the policy weaknesses, in particular with regard to the budget deficit and restructuring of publicly-owned enterprises. Economic reforms have brought clear results in terms of growth prospects and reduction of domestic and external imbalances. In view of the still high level of government debt, fiscal consolidation needs to be sustained. The restructuring of large state-owned utilities is still to be completed. Credit activity is recovering but the high level of non-performing loans remains an issue. Unemployment remains high, particularly among youth (18.9 %

as of 2016).⁵ Further expansion of the private sector is hampered by weaknesses in the rule of law. Serbia is moderately prepared to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Even though the public and private investments increased, the level of investment activity remains below the economy's needs. The quality, equality and relevance of education and training do not match societal needs. There was some progress made concerning support to SMEs and entrepreneurship but SMEs still face a number of challenges, including an unpredictable business environment, a high level of para-fiscal charges, and difficult and costly access to finance.

As regards its ability to assume the obligations of membership, Serbia has continued to align its legislation with the EU *acquis* across the board. Adequate financial and human resources and strategic frameworks will be crucial to maintaining the pace of reforms.

Serbia will need to align its foreign and security policy progressively with the European Union's common foreign and security policy in the period up to accession. Serbia needs to address, as a matter of priority, issues of noncompliance with the SAA, in particular on safeguard measures on some agricultural products, State aid control, and fiscal discrimination.

Serbia continued to be affected by the migration crisis. This created a substantial burden on its asylum and migration system. Serbia continued to cooperate with neighboring countries and Member States, ensured the effective screening of refugees and migrants, and made substantial efforts to provide shelter and humanitarian supplies, with EU support as well as the support of others. It is important that Serbia remains engaged. It should

⁵ According to the World Factbook from www.cia.gov.

also maintain its efforts to decrease the number of unfounded asylum applications lodged by its nationals in EU Member States.

The negotiation process is foreseen to end in 2018, with Serbia entering the EU in 2020. The process could drag on for much longer though because of the volatile situation in Serbia and the Western Balkans and because the economic crisis is still present. Anchoring Serbia to the EU has become a geopolitical issue especially since Russia has been showing a lot of interest in the country and Serbia itself holds a relatively high sense of loyalty towards them.

All in all, Serbia has shown in the past few years that they're more than willing to enter the EU and have made great efforts, and still are, to meet the criteria.

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CASE STUDY ON TURKEY

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1. Turkey- Candidate Country for European Union

Representing a bridge between Europe and Middle East, Turkey has always been, and remains until nowadays a considerable partner for the European Union.” In terms of its significance for the EU, Turkey stands on par with Russia in the neighborhood, and a step down after the Unites States and China on the global scene.”¹ Turkey’s importance on the international scale, especially for the European Union, is due to the strong ties that existed between these two throughout the history.

In order to gain a proper understanding of the always evolutive relationships between Turkey and the European Union, it is essential to deepen our knowledge about this transcontinental country of Eurasia, officially known as the Republic of Turkey.

Defined by its remarkable and unique geographical position, Turkey’s location holds both geopolitical and strategic importance. Occupying Asia Minor and a small portion of Europe, Turkey has acted, throughout the history, as both a boundary and a deck between the two

¹ Tocci N, Turkey and the European Union, Turkey Project Policy Paper Nr.5, November 2014

continents. Representing nowadays only a tiny remnant of a once powerful empire that at some point extended over much of the Balkans, Turkey is still „ among the larger countries of the region in terms of territory and population, and its land area is greater than that of any European state”.² Over time, a major influence upon Turkey’s relations with other states had Turkey’s control of the three narrows, collectively known as the Turkish straits, referring to the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles.

Turkey is a secular state that does not have an official state religion, Turkish Constitution providing the freedom of religion. The dominant religion of Turkey is Islam, with more than 90 percent of population recognized as Muslims. Due to the significant predominance of Muslims, Islamic traditions, ideologies and rituals play an important role in Turkish society, mainly in rites of passage. Christianity, Judaism, Agnosticism and Atheism are examples of other religions practiced by Turkey’s population. Turkey’s strong secularism has often resulted in various actions which can be interpreted by some as limiting the freedom of religion. A relevant example is the prohibition of wearing the head scarf in a number of public venues.

Turkish population counts over 75 million people, with the majority of Turkish population being of Turkish ethnicity, about 70-75 percent. The largest non-Turkish ethnicity is represented by the Kurds, around 18-25 percent of the population, concentrated mainly in the east and the southeast of the country, in what is also known as Turkish Kurdistan. Starting with 1983, the east and southeast part of Turkey is the theatre of a bloody civil war between Republic of Turkey and various Kurdish rebellious groups,

² www.britanica.com/place/Turkey

which demanded separation from Turkey and creation of an independent Kurdistan.

Although Turkish law guarantees equality between the genders in regard to the equal pay for equal work, according to tradition values, women should do domestic work and not work in the public arena, men dominating the high-status occupations in all the fields of work.” Women are found in medicine, science, and the arts, and increasing numbers of women work in industry and the service sector. The position of working-class urban women—particularly from the families of recent migrants—and of women in rural areas, however, remains highly traditional”.³ Turkish traditions also bring restrictions in the marriage and divorce processes, for example mutual consent of the couple is not recognized by law as a ground for divorce.

„The 1982 constitution states that „Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state”(Article 2).”⁴ On its way to a bright democracy Turkey has adopted the principle of the separations of power, supported by a legal system, which has been entirely incorporated with the system of continental Europe. Nonetheless, Turkey is internationally condemned because of its inability to ensure the human rights.

Foreign trades play an increasingly important role in Turkey’s economy, leading to Turkey’s entrance into a customs agreement with the European Union in 1995. About half of all trade is with Europe, where Germany is the main trading partner.⁵

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey/Cultural-life>

⁴ www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Turkey.html

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey/Demographic-trends>

Analyzing the previous information it is easy to highlight some main reasons why Turkey would like to join the European Union. As a reason can serve the access to European funds, new markets trade, raw materials from the countries within the European Union. Becoming a member of the European Union will also bring support and development of Turkey's economy and tourism, allowing the free movement of goods, services, capital and people. Despite the Turkey's economic achievements in relations with the European Union, the Republic of Turkey still has to overcome a variety of internal issues in order to meet the fundamental adherence criteria and become a member of the European Union.

2. The Fundamental Adherence Criteria for Joining the European Union

Motivated at first by various political, economic and security considerations, European Union stands for peace and prosperity, while concurrently being enriched by the variety of cultures, traditions and languages of the European continent. Starting in number of six founding members, over time European Union expanded to its current size of 28 member countries. Still, there are states with status of prospect of membership or candidates for membership that have not yet meet all the criteria in order to join the European Union.

“The Treaty on European Union states that any European country may apply for membership if it respects the EU's democratic values and is committed to promoting them.”⁶

A country can only join if it meets the political, economic and legal membership criteria.” These were mainly defined at the European Council

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership_en

in Copenhagen in 1993 and are hence referred to as 'Copenhagen criteria'.⁷ All the current EU rules that the candidate country has to implement and enforce are divided into 35 different policy fields (chapters).

The process of joining the European Union is a lasting and laborious one. The candidate's progress is continually monitored by the commission, that also keeps the European Union Council and European Parliament informed during the process. When the negotiations are completed and all the criteria are met, the country can join the European Union, if all the existing European Union countries agree.

The key priorities in the enlargement process are the core issues of the rule of law, fundamental rights, strengthening democratic institutions, including public administration reform, as well as economic development and competitiveness.

The Rule of Law is not only a fundamental democratic principle it is also a fundamental value for the European Union, and probably the first step needed to be taken in the accession process, in order for the roosts of the changes implemented by the candidate countries to be seen during the negotiation process. The Rule of Law is so highly priced by the European Union because it is crucial for any other aspects of country's development and evolution. Strengthening the Rule of Law is a priority for any state in the enlargement process. This key challenge embodies the changes that have to be done in order to ensure a proper functioning of the core law-regarded institutions and the efficient functioning and total independence of the judiciary. Corruption is another strong flaw that a proper system of the Rule of Law can combat.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership_en

The Fundamental Rights criterion represents one of the main aspects the European Union wants a state that is seeking for membership to take in account on its way of becoming a member of the union. Mainly, the name says it all; the Fundamental Rights criterion embodies the fundamental aspects of everyday life in a democratic and contemporaneous society. This criterion emphasizes its attention upon such issues as the lack of freedom of expression and media characteristic for some candidate members. Another aspect covered by this criterion is the protection of minorities of any forms such as religious, cultural, ethnic, national, sexual, refugees and so on against any kind of racism, discrimination and social exclusion. There is a need for a tolerant approach in order to create a harmony in the society. The equality between men and women is also a topic often recalled, implying that any person is equal under the right of law, and thus has to be treated equally. The improving of the rights of the child and the support of the persons with disabilities represent particularities that must be specific for any country that wants to become member of the European Union. To ensure that the candidate country can achieve this criterion there is a need for a robust institutional framework, able to not only implement legislative changes but also put them in practice.

Economic development and competitiveness is another criterion taken in account by European Union during the enlargement process. A country has to be considered as having a functioning market economy in order to meet the European Union rules and standards. To join the European Union a country has to prove that its economy fits for membership in order to reap all the benefits of the European Union accession, at the same time being able to contribute to the European Union economy. Improvements have to be done mostly in infrastructure and education system. The lack of attractive job opportunities on a domestic level causes the weakness of the

national economy and significant inflows of remittances from abroad. The proper development of the economy has to be backed up by a proper functioning independent judicial system that will enforce the property rights, the competitiveness and will combat corruption and its negative effect on investment climate.

While analyzing the readiness of a country to become a European Union member, the European Union pays close attention to the functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform. Despite the changes that have been done, in some countries the democratic institutions remain fragile, characterized by weak parliamentary committee systems, excessive use of urgent procedures for legislation, insufficient stakeholder consultation, with minimal input from experts. A positive change in regard to this aspect can only be done by implementing public administration reform, that represent the key in ensuring strong stable democratic institutions. Public administration reform together with the Rule of Law build the basis for implementing the European Union rules and standards. Concerning, the public administration, a proper balance needs to be found between central, regional and local government, the duty of regional and local authorities playing an important role in the European Union alignment process. More has to be done in order to ensure citizens' rights to be actively involved in policy-making, to strengthen participatory democracy and develop dialogue between decision makers and stakeholders. It is important to be mentioned that all the criteria are interspersed, and a country can only become a European Union member when reaching all the criteria.

3. Status and Challenges in Meeting the Criteria

3.1 The history of the Turkey-European Union relationship

The long-lasting relationship between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey started back in 1959, Turkey being one of the first countries which showed the desire to collaborate and cooperate with the European Economic Community, the predecessor of the European Union. The next step of strengthening the relation was the signing of the Ankara Agreement that took effect on 1 December 1964. A Custom Union between Turkey and the European Union took effect on 1 January 1996.

Although Turkey submitted its application for membership on 14 April 1987, it was in 1999 when Turkey got the status of candidate country for the European Union membership. On 17 December 2004, the European Council opened the membership talks with Turkey the following year the Accession Negotiation was opened. Despite all the challenges at the European Union-Turkey Summit of 29 November 2015, the two decided to vitalize and strengthen their relations.

Concerning the accession negotiation, 16 chapters have been opened so far. Chapter 25: Science and Research is the only one of them that was provisionally closed. Because of the complicate situation and the disputes in conjunction with Turkey's agreement to apply the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Association Agreement to Cyprus, no other chapters will be open and no chapter will be provisionally closed.

Although Turkey has achieved some level of preparation in most of the policy fields, the attempted coup of 15 July 2016 showed the world that Turkey still has a lot to do to strengthen its democratic institutions, the rule of law and the human rights.

3.2 Turkey's Rule of Law

In the last years, Turkey has regressed significantly in terms of rules of law, separation of powers, citizens rights and freedom of expression. In 2014, EU Member States have identified constraints on social media area, obstruction of investigations against corruption and restrictions on space to express critical views of authorities. According to these, a new law was adopted on the Internet that allows the Telecommunications Directorate to block access to websites without a court order. EU countries share the same negative view on Turkish democracy deficits, but in terms of solutions to improve these deficits, opinions are divided.

Functioning of judiciary

The judiciary in Turkey is found in an early stage of development. During the last year, the biggest challenge to the judicial system was the independence. The changes that have occurred in the structure and composition of the high courts are worrying because these changes threaten the independence of the judiciary system and does not respect European standards. Judges and prosecutors were dismissed and in some cases arrested on charges of conspiracy within the Gulen movement. The situation greatly escalated following the coup in July 2015, when a fifth of judges and prosecutors were dismissed, their accounts being frozen. Regarding the judiciary, Turkey starts implementing a judicial reform strategy, which covers the period 2015-2019. In these circumstances, the Strategy Development Department of the Ministry of Justice is representing the central institution, which supervise the implementation of this strategy, working with High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) and the Judicial Academy. HYSK is the most important institution of the judiciary, with an individual budget of 18.5 million euros. The

Minister of Justice, represented by its President and its Secretary continues to have a significant influence over the HSYK activity.

” The Justice Academy is responsible for pre-service and in-service training of candidate judges and prosecutors. Since the February 2014 legislative changes, the President of the Academy and deputies have been appointed by the executive, which is threatening the independence of the Judicial Academy. The human and financial resources of the judiciary seem proportionate to the challenges it faces”⁸. Therefore, it requires improving the transparency of the HYSK to enhance the credibility of the Council and public credibility, given that HYSK is perceived as the main executive judicial means. About independence and impartiality, there are numerous reports on selective justice and political interference in court cases. There are serious concerns about the executive interference in cases, which persist and affect the credibility of the judiciary as a whole. The implementing of the principle of immovability of judges remains a serious problem. Transfers of magistrates against their will were frequent and were not disposed to judicial review. A significant number of disciplinary proceedings against magistrates were not the subject of fair process, the analyze of these cases often relying only on indictments and judgments of the same judges in the exercise of their functions. This situation conflicts with the rule of law and undermines trust in justice. The changes of structure and composition of the Court of Cassation and the Council of State, in July, raised multiples concerns as to its impact on the independence of judiciary. “Comments by representatives of the executive and the legislative branches on ongoing judicial cases, challenging among

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey_en

others decisions taken by the Constitutional Court, have continued as a regular practice. In the days and weeks following the attempted coup, 3 508, i.e. one fifth of the total number of judges and prosecutors were suspended by HSYK and 3 390 subsequently dismissed. 2 386 judges and prosecutors have been detained: 2 229 of first instance, 109 from Court of Cassation, 41 from Council of State, two members of the Constitutional Court, and five members of the HSYK.⁹ After the coup attempt, a large number of new judges were appointed in very short time. These actions raise serious questions about the criteria applied. The performance and independence of the judiciary suffer significant challenges following these numerous dismissals as well as multiples recruitments of new magistrates.

While, the lawyers have to abide by the rules set by The Union of Turkish Bar Associations, there is no rules for magistrates. Integrity is a characteristic of major importance for magistrates, as part of their training curriculum, but it is not mentioned in the selection process for senior positions. Disciplinary cases are reviewed by HYSK Inspection Board and it is also taking decisions about disciplinary and ethical issues. Disciplinary system is a tool to exclude judges and prosecutors based on political reasons. Wealth declarations are binding on all judges who occupy positions in the high courts including members HYSK, excluding prosecutors.

The quality of justice is provided by the Academy of Justice, responsible for pre-forming and continuous training of judges and prosecutors candidates. Taking into account legislatives changes in 2014, when the executive was responsible for appointing the President of

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey_en

Academy and Academy's Members, judicial independence is threatened. Overall quality of judicial decisions has improved in recent years, the low quality of judgement and indictment without an assessment of adequate supporting documentation is still a serious problem, particularly with regard terrorism. In addition, despite advanced communication technologies, there are not published regular activity reports. In general, the judiciary in Turkey has the capacity to manage its caseload. However, the problems that arise within this system are related to the delays Court of Cassation. The length of the procedures for resolving the cases has been a long-standing problem, so in 2012 there was a reduction of arrears, while in subsequent years, including 2016, it increased significantly.

Fight against corruption

The country is characterized by a medium level in the fight against corruption. Although some progress was achieved lately, still corruption remains persistent in many areas, representing a major problem. Adopting a strategy against corruption and an action plan is needed immediately. Effects of corruption are most frequently encountered in the legal framework, where the influence of executive on investigations of important persons suspected of corruption remains a major problem.

History of investigations, prosecutions and convictions of corruption cases is very poor. Investigations that took as subject people of public administration ended in their favor. The institution in charge of investigating and identifying cases of corruption registered a very small number of possible cases of corruption that should be investigated. Transport, purchase of property, electricity and public-private partnerships are particularly vulnerable to corruption.

Turkey does not have a specialized institution for preventing corruption, which affects the effectiveness of policy. There is however, a body responsible for coordinating preventive measures of corruption but it does not operate independently and is not able to start independent investigations. In addition, there are not achieved frequently anti-corruption campaigns. In the private sector there is no anti-corruption measure, the country still does not have a specialized body to initiate corruption investigations. "For the prevention of corruption, there is still no permanent, functionally independent anti- corruption body. The lack of a body in charge of fighting corruption, and inadequate coordination of the various institutions, are major impediments to policy effectiveness. The Prime Ministry Inspection Board coordinates preventive anti-corruption measures, but it is not independent and has no independent investigation powers. The Prime Ministry Communications Centre (BIMER) is the main body in charge of reporting on corruption and maladministration. Anti-corruption awareness-raising campaigns have not been conducted on a regular basis. There is no comprehensive policy in place to prevent corruption in the private sector."¹⁰

Legislation regarding political parties is inadequate, not yet in line with international standards or recommendation of GRECO¹¹, therefore financing political parties meets a lack of transparency, which runs counter to the recommendation of GRECO. In the period, 2010-2014 there was a plan of action regarding corruption, but no provisions have been met. In

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey_en

¹¹ Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO)

April 2016, this plan was modified, insisting on greater transparency and means of improving the fight against corruption.

Fight against organized crime

Turkey is characterized by insufficient methods to combat money laundering. Financial investigations are conducted in secrecy, the results of which are only known to the body responsible for investigations.

Turkey has not sufficiently trained people in the fight against crime. It is therefore necessary to develop this segment. As regards technique equipment, Turkey has the most modern technologies. It is observed a low cooperation between the police and gendarmerie, relations between these bodies for the implementation of the law, should be improved, in order to face in cases of organized crime. In terms of legislation relating to the protection of data, this is not in accordance with European standards. However, Turkey has an accord with Europol¹², since 2004, and has designated an officer who is in charge of problems related to the data protection. ” There is no operational cooperation agreement with Europol as the data protection legislation is not yet in line with European standards. However, Turkey has a strategic agreement with Europol, in force since July 2004. In March 2016, Turkey signed an agreement with Europol on the appointment of a Turkish liaison officer in The Hague, who was subsequently seconded to Europol from May until September 2016. A new Liaison Officer has been selected and will start in November 2016”¹³

With regard to the protection of witnesses, there is a law in their favor, protection being provided by the units of the police and gendarmerie

¹² European Police Office(Europol)

¹³ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/23/world/europe/turkey-eu-membership-talks.html?_r=1

of the 81 provinces. Nevertheless, the legislation relating to this problem comprises many shortcomings, therefore is necessary to improve the policy for protection of witnesses. ”In the fight against cybercrime, operate the law of Internet, which allows the presidency of Telecommunications to block the access of websites, without a judicial act. However, this law raises concerns, whereas it is in contradiction with the fundamental rights of human. In the fight against cybercrime, Turkey set up a 24/7 contact point under the national police. The Internet Law, which allows the Telecommunications Presidency to remove or block access to content without a court order, remains a matter of concern.”¹⁴

Legislation to combat money-laundering and terrorism is largely in agreement with standard of the Financial Action Task Force. Still more changes are necessary in laws that regards the seizure of assets.

Fight against terrorism

Recently, Turkey has been affected by the numerous terrorist attacks attributed to PKK and Da’esh. The European Union condemns the acts of violence and terrorist attacks. Turkey shall have the right to defend itself in the case of these terrorist acts, but in concordance with the provisions of the European Union. In the fight against terrorism, the biggest problem for Turkey is represented by PKK, especially after the last attack in July 2015. ”The EU condemns all acts of terrorist violence and deplores the casualties that these attacks have caused. Turkey has a legitimate right to defend itself against such terrorist violence, but the measures taken need to be proportionate. In its efforts to fight terrorism, Turkey has been giving

¹⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/23/world/europe/turkey-eu-membership-talks.html?_r=1

priority to the PKK, particularly following a severe surge of violence in the country since July 2015.”¹⁵

In order to strengthen the fight against terrorism, Turkey is member of the global coalition against ISIL/Da'esh.”¹⁶ The PKK remains on the EU's list of terrorist organizations. Turkey has addressed the terrorist threat from Da'esh more vigorously. It joined the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Da'esh in September 2014.” Likewise, it has an agreement with United States of America, which allows the use of Incirlik base. Terrorism is a phenomenon of a great extent, Turkey representing an important source of terrorist acts. Whereas the fight with foreign terrorists is a phenomenon that is growing, Turkey should strengthen its measures for the prevention of terrorism by appropriate legal policy.

Based on the information presented above, we can conclude, specifying the general situation of the rule of law in Turkey and the extent to which it is in accordance with the requirements imposed by the European Union. Thus, corruption is sufficiently high; therefore, Turkey should develop long-term policy in this respect and solve this problem. The country should set up, in first place, an independent body to be responsible for the fight against corruption in accordance with the standards of the United Nation's Anti-Corruption Convention. Meeting the standards recommended by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), through the adoption of the relevant legislation is also necessary to ensure the independence of the corruption investigations. This should take into account the revision of the adoption of the legislation

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey_en

¹⁶ <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.WGzejlN96M9>

on data protection, the adoption of measures for the dismantlement of the criminal networks as well as the development of the procedures for the assessment of possible threats.

3.3 Fundamental Rights

Turkey is among the countries that are part of international organizations that fight for human rights. But given the events that took place in July of 2016 and the declaration of the emergency it declared that temporary, a part of the rights and freedoms of citizens will be obstructed.

As far as the right to free expression we can say that Turkey is at an early stage of development. The freedom of expression is a subject of numerous constraints. Taking into account the latest events, as well as the cases against journalists, writers, or users of social media, as well as the credential withdrawal or closing of some television stations, serious problems arise. The number of arrests of journalists, on a large scale, which took place after the coup attempt is extremely serious because they were breaking the right to the presumption of innocence and to benefit of a fair trial. Also, foreign journalists have been deported or had the entry banned, for those who wanted to enter in the country. Since 1990, there have been many assassinations, attacks, acts of physical violence against journalists, without the identification of the perpetrators. In addition, changes have taken place in the editorial policy being appointed administrators that control the mass media group. All of these measures have been taken to intimidate the mass-media, to control it, breaking the right of citizens to be informed. According to statistics, before the events of July, 36 journalists were arrested, following that after coup, the number rose up to 130. A number of physical attacks on media outlets and journalists took place and no major progress was made on identifying perpetrators related to old cases

of killings and assaults on journalists, including from the 1990s. The closure of media outlets and the appointment of trustees to control media groups, leading to a change in editorial policy, restrict pluralism and the right of citizens to be informed and intimidate other media outlets. Prior to the 15 July coup attempt, there were 36 journalists in prison, many of whom were charged with crimes under the anti-terrorism law. In the aftermath of the coup attempt, by the end of October, some 90 journalists were arrested bringing the total to more than 130. Decrees taken under the state of emergency also brought the closure of some 170 media outlets. The accusation against journalists, writers and citizens about the insult of President continues to exist. Many times these accusations end up with prison sentences. These measures of censorship are not in accordance with the vision of European Union to the penalties applied in case of denigration the heads of state. With reference to the current legal framework, it does not guarantee the freedom of expression, of press or of the internet. The legislation includes a series of laws that include restrictions on the freedom of expression, which contravene the european standards. The most significant in this respect are the legislative provisions on counter-terrorism, the Law of Internet and The National Law of Information. The provisions of these laws would affect significantly the freedom of expression. The main problems are related to the power held by the Telecommunications Communication Presidency (TIB) that controls, deletes or locks the content. ” The legislative provisions on anti-terrorism, the Internet Law and the Law on the National Intelligence Agency severely impede freedom of expression. Provisions in these laws that run counter to European standards, ECtHR case-law and the recommendations of relevant international institutions should be revoked. The recommendations of the Venice Commission should be implemented. The wide powers granted to

the Telecommunications Communication Presidency (TIB) to block or remove internet content, upon the request by the government, continue to raise concerns. The judicial control for requests relating to content takedowns or blocking content is within the remit of the individual decision of Criminal Judges of Peace. Political influence on the judiciary and communication authorities to implement restrictive blocking of websites or take down content should be prevented in practice.”¹⁷ According to the penal code existing in this country, the insults of politicians, the president, blasphemy or religious insults are punishable by prison. These penalties are very severe and impose restrictions on the activity of the mass-media with respect to reporting. The omission by the mass-media of sensitive information, in particular in the case of terrorist attacks is a tendency often found. As regards the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) the activity is rather transparent, being published regular reports of activity but what raises problems is the neutrality of it. Regulation of broadcasting do not fold on the European standards. The submitted information tends to be subjective. It is appropriate to reduce the political risk by amending the procedure of electing the members, which currently are elected by the Parliament and not take into account the opinion of the civil society or organizations. Also the state advertising is not transparent.

In terms of fundamental human rights in Turkey, we mention the situation in eastern and south-eastern region and the Cyprus dispute. The situation in this region is marked by violence of the PKK terrorist organization. Numerous terrorist attacks on Turkey’s western region are condemned by the European Union, but accepting Turkey’s right to self-defense, this fight with the Kurds should respect human rights and

¹⁷ Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat, Human Rights in Turkey, pp.29-56

freedoms. In the context of the state of emergency decreed following the terrorist attacks, the daily life of citizens has been disrupted, obstructed the rights of healthcare and education. Also, since the terrorist attacks deaths of security officers, children, civilians were recorded. This whole situation has attracted serious human rights violations, most of which are caused by security forces. We can mention torture, physical violence, arrests.. Also destruction of important cultural, religious, historical institution were identified. About 35,000 people have moved after damage. But the most worrisome problem is the lack of official information on all allegation of violating these rights. The perpetrators were not identified, being necessary to investigate these serious accusations. No measures were taken about the issue of missing persons, the victims' families do not have the possibility to bury their dead relatives. ” The Government pledged to continue security operations, dismissing any prospect of a resumption of the talks with the PKK, unless the terrorists surrendered arms and pulled the militants out of Turkey’s territory. Long-lasting, round-the-clock curfews were imposed in several cities; these severely disrupted citizens’ daily lives and impeded access to healthcare and education. Most of these curfews have now been lifted, but they were followed by others. Between July 2015 and September 2016, over 1 500 people – of which 320 civilians, including 75 children and over 600 security force members – have been killed and 1 600 were injured in clashes between the security forces and the PKK.”¹⁸

On religion and spirituality, freedom of worship is respected. Insults to religions and blasphemy are considered crimes. Problems in this area are related to legal personality religious institutions. Further efforts are needed

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey_en

to implement existing legislation and a national action plan on the protection and prevention of domestic violence against women. Forced and early marriages represent a major problem. Measures taken against violence against women are insufficient. There is no system to monitor such cases; the possibility for women in such situations to receive official help is quite poor.

About cultural rights, it has not yet been legalized delivered public services in a language other than Turkish. Kurdish was accepted but as an optional language in public schools. In addition, mass media and broadcasting programs in Kurdish were closed, which is a worrying problem.

To conclude, we will resume the minuses of Turkey regarding respect of fundamental freedoms. This country must give up unjustified restrictions on freedom of expression and information especially in time of crisis and the pressure exerted by the state on the media should stop. Certain provisions of criminal law must be reviewed (in particular those relating to defamation and other similar crimes) without constraining critical opinion. Also, the anti-terrorism law, the law of Internet and the penal code must be revised to comply with European standards and their application should not limit freedom of expression or equality under the law.

In general, human rights and freedoms are respected, the problems that appears are related to the applicability of legislation and the lack of specialized bodies in monitoring cases of rights violations. Citizens have problems in terms of official aid in cases of right's deprivation. Another problem is the situation of Kurdish minority that requires urgent solving.

3.4 Economic development and competitiveness

At the roots of its creation, the European Union had the aim to secure lasting peace by uniting European countries economically and politically. Taking into consideration this fact and not only, it is easy to understand why the economic criterion is so important during the process of becoming a member of the Union. It shows that you can both contribute to the European Union economy and develop your own.

Based on the Turkey 2016 Report of the European Commission, Turkey's economy is considered well advanced, representing a functioning market economy. However, Turkey still has many problems to solve, in regard with its economy. Macroeconomic stability is one of the matters Turkey has to address in order to prove its economic strength. Although, "the Turkish economy has grown at an average annual rate of 3.7% over the past three years"¹⁹ the amount of private investments maintained at a low scale, while the net export contribution was negative. In 2016, the GDP growth slowed down, and the significant decline in foreign tourists' visits had gravely influenced Turkey's economic stability. Despite the fact that Turkey's current account deficit reduced, it is still relatively high. This reduction is due to the lowering of oil price and the slight growth of gold trades. Excluding energy and gold, the current account actually deteriorated by 1.5 percentage points of GDP between 2014 and 2015."²⁰ The macroeconomic instability has also an impact upon the inflation that has increased reaching 8.8 % in 2015. Overall, Turkey's economy is excessively dependent on capital inflows, being vulnerable to financial

¹⁹Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2016 Report, Brussels, 9.11.2016, pag.33

²⁰ Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2016 Report, Brussels, 9.11.2016, pag.33

incertitude, political changes and unpredictable investments movements and there is scope for making necessary economic adjustments in order to reduce the macroeconomic instability.

Concerning business environment, it became even more cumbersome and expensive to start your own business, the process consisting of 8 separate procedures that may last quite a long period. On the other hand, the market exit did not get any easier. It is also costly and extends on an even longer period than before. Due to targeted actions against mass media, significant business people and political adversary, the overall business environment continues to deteriorate.

Another factor that slows the economic development is the state inappropriate involvement in economy. The government continues to set the prices for some key products. For instance, the price for food and alcohol remain dependent to policy decisions. It is also stated that no progress was achieved in improving the transparency of state aid. The rate of privatization slowed down again.

There is also a problem in the functioning of the labor market. Even though the number of job increased, its rate is still below the growth rate of the labor force. Gender discrimination persists on the labor market, the employment rate of women reaching a very low level.

“Turkey has a good level of preparation in achieving the capacity to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the EU.”²¹ Although Turkey is well integrated concerning both trade and investments, significant issues persist concerning the quality of education. Gender equality is a matter that needs to be addressed, many girls facing problems

²¹ Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2016 Report, Brussels, 9.11.2016, pag.38

of access to education. In 2015 “Turkey was the EU’s 4th main export market and number 6 in terms of imports”.²² Despite the increased, both export and import rates, Turkey’s international price competitiveness has declined due to 10.2 % appreciation of the lira.

In order to maintain a functioning market economy Turkey should pay special attention to improving the business environment by ensuring the rule of law, making easier to enter and exit the market and also protect and develop the competitiveness. Turkey should focus on promoting domestic savings and providing macroeconomic stability. To support long-term growth, Turkey should consider improving the quality of education and the qualification of low-skilled workers. In addition, Turkey should intensify its strategy in support of research and development.

3.5 Functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform

Despite the fact that the fundamental law of Turkey- the Constitution declares that the Republic of Turkey is a secular and democratic republic that obtains its sovereignty from the people, the strength of the democratic institutions in Turkey is questionable, taking in consideration the military coup attempt of 15 July 2016. The European Union instantaneously condemned the attempted coup, considering it as a direct attack on democracy and the democratic institutions of Turkey. In addition, the Constitution of Turkey ensures the separation of powers between the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Powers of the state. However, the reality is not the one written on the paper.

²² Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2016 Report, Brussels, 9.11.2016, pag.40

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey represents the Legislative Power of the state. Although the current Turkey parliament works on a busy legislative agenda stimulated by various aspiring reforms, its work is continuously assaulted by different political confrontations. Some key legislation were passed without the prior consultation with the Parliament, some of them were in dissonance with the European standards, as for example the law on data protection. In such a case, there is no way of talking about the clear separation of the powers. In addition, no progress is registered in meeting the European standards concerning the legal framework on elections and political parties, the threshold for parties to be represented in Parliament remaining at the 10% level. Another negative aspect seen in the legislative power is the minimum involvement of media and stakeholders in the legislative process. The Committees on Human Rights Inquiry and on EU Harmonization also hold a limited power. The interpretative character of the Constitution and the imperfections in the anti-terror legislation represent a threat for the freedom of expression of members of Parliament- an essential part of democracy.

The President, Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, represent the Executive Power. The current President Erdoğan is actively engaged in key domestic and foreign policy issues. He also has a big influence upon the legislative procedure, thus unbalancing the separation of the powers. Following the attempted coup, the power to govern by decree was given under the state of emergency to the Council of Minister and the President. The political agenda of Turkey is continuously influenced by the debate on a possible shift to a presidential system of governance. Under the government of President Erdoğan thousands of people working in police, media and so on lost their jobs and a part of them was arrested based on the assume that they were supporting the coup. Erdoğan has been criticized for

his politicization of the media, over 200 journalists being arrested after the coup attempt. A non-profit, non-governmental organization that defends freedom of information and press-Reporters without Borders called Erdoğan an "enemy of press freedom" and said that he "hides his aggressive dictatorship under a veneer of democracy".

Another aspect that diminishes the strength of the democratic institutions is the huge influence Turkey's military has over the government. Despite all the changes implemented to meet the European standard, the Constitution of Turkey is condemned for giving military too much influence in politics, through the National Security Council.

Turkey proves moderate preparation in terms of reform in public administration. There has been backsliding, however; following the coup attempt. Limited progress was made on reform, the first annual reform plan being developed in December 2015. Although Turkey implements reforms in different public finance areas, there is no overarching public financial management reform program. Another aspect that should be addressed about public administration reform is the budget transparency. The annual budget reports published by the state does not give enough information and transparency. These reports are insufficient and must be improved.

The citizens' rights to good administration are ensured by several internal and external agreements, but they are not protected enough. Turkey's legislation still has to implement laws that will ensure the rights of people to participate in policy-making process.

Work on simplifying administrative procedures is obstructed by the lack of a law on general administrative procedures. The legal framework is disorganized, as different sectorial laws cover administrative procedures.

In conclusion, Turkey reached moderate level of preparation in the area of public administration reforms and functioning of the democratic institutions. Nonetheless, the coup attempt of 2016 caused backsliding to most of the achievements. Turkey still has to implement many changes in order to ensure the strength of the democratic institutions. It can be done by ensuring judiciary independence, limiting the military influence upon politics, safeguarding the legislative process, and by empowering and respecting the Rule of Law.

3.6 Other key obstacles in EU accession for Turkey

Although Turkey did achieve some kind of progress in various legal membership criteria, still several key obstacles prevent Turkey's integration.

A big concern for the European Union represents the long lasting dispute over the military invasion and Turkish occupation of the northern third of the Cyprus Island. Turkish invasion of the Cyprus launched on 20 July 1974, as a respond to Cypriot coup d'état on 15 July 1974. The coup aimed the annexation of the island by Greece. Turkey invaded the island claiming that the Cyprus coup was actually compliant with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. This treaty between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland bans Cyprus from participating in any political or economic unions. "Until Turkey agrees to apply the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Association Agreement to Cyprus, eight negotiation chapters will not be opened and no chapter will be provisionally closed."²³

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey_en

A matter of primary significance represents the situation concerning the Kurdish nationalism. This social movement that expands over the eastern and southeastern Turkey, region also known as Turkish Kurdistan, represents a threat for the Turkey's integration process in the European Union. The Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK is the one promoting the Kurdish nationalism. It was a long-lasting confrontation with the Turkish state concerning equal rights and self-determination of the Kurds in Turkey. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by several states and organizations, including the European Union. The continuous PKK attacks and the lack of capacity to ensure peaceful negotiations represent barriers for the Turkey's integration process.

“In addition to Kurdish nationalism, Turkey's security forces are concerned with narcotics trafficking, since Turkey is a route for the transfer of hashish from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran to Europe.”²⁴ Due to its geographical location, Turkey is a significant point for major routes of drugs. For instance, Turkey is an important route for heroin from Afghanistan to Europe. Turkish laboratories process an estimated 80% of the heroine on the European market. The drug trafficking is a serious matter the Turkish authorities have to address.

A delicate aspect of the Turkish integration process represents the refugee crisis. Turkey is the country that hosts the largest refugee population in the world, the number reaching over 3 million people. “The European Union and its Members States are funding the “Facility for Refugees in Turkey” which provides €3 billion to address needs of refugees and host communities with humanitarian and development assistance in

²⁴ <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Turkey.html>

2016 and 2017.”²⁵ The expanding spending and threat of terrorist attack represent some of the negative aspects of the refugee crisis.

In 2016, another event pointed to the fact that Turkey is not a mature European-style democracy. The coup that launched on 15 July 2016 was aimed against state institutions, the government and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The European Union immediately condemned the coup. Arrests and purges followed the coup, most of the taken measures being illegal and threatening the human rights. The coup proved just one more time how fragile is the democracy in Turkey, and pointed that the Republic of Turkey should work on strengthening its democratic institutions.

The Turkish government itself may serve as an obstacle for the integration process. The elected Presidents of 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan proved to shift the democratic direction of the country to a more authoritarian one. He is condemned for his targeted actions against mass media, and any people that are against his way of governing. Moreover, president Erdoğan claims that he wants to restore the death penalty. If it happens, it will put an end to the Turkey’s European ambitious.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

“True to history, Turkey’s relations with the European integration project have been dense, contested, and tortuous since the outset.”²⁶ Turkey’s integration represents a unique case. Before Turkey, all the candidates that aspired for membership became fully integrated members; however, in Turkey’s situation, the path towards membership was and continues to be a very difficult one; with barriers and disagreements along the way, the

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/turkey_syrian_crisis_en.pdf

²⁶ Tocci N, Turkey and the European Union, Turkey Project Policy Paper Nr.5, November 2014

future of EU-Turkey's relationships is uncertain. Turkey has been in the integration process for almost three decades, unlike any other candidate, yet the outcome of this long-lasting relationship is nowhere in sight.

The actual Turkey's objective situation shows that the Republic of Turkey is not yet ready to become a member of the European Union. Turkey is still lacking the strength of the democratic institutions, as well as it is not able to ensure the Rule of Law and is not capable to guarantee the respect of the Human Rights. A matter of concern is also the Cyprus's crisis that holds on the integration process. The attempted coup that launched on 15 July 2016 caused backsliding to all of the state's areas of activity, moreover brought to light the European concern about the Turkish democratic stability. However, Turkey's situation has some positive aspects too. Turkey is a strong economic partner for EU, and as well, it shows signs that in case of integration it will be able to compete with other countries, enriching the EU economy and developing its own.

Both European Union and Turkey may benefit as well as lose something in case of Turkey's full integration. Despite the fact that Turkey is a key economic partner and its geographical position has a geopolitical and strategic importance, Turkey may bring instability and regress to the overall European structure. In addition, "Turkey is too big for the EU to absorb. With a population predicted to reach 91 million by 2050, it will be the dominant member of the EU."²⁷ Turkish economy is still undeveloped comparing to most EU states. "Turkish GDP per capita, at €13,000, is less

²⁷ <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.WIezZIN96M->

than half the EU average. The entry of a country that poor and that big would place unbearable strains on EU finances.”²⁸

Concerning the EU-Turkey relations, various scenarios may take place. EU-Turkey’s relations may grow into a competition and even a conflict between the two of them. The faith in the negotiating membership process will be lost, the decision of abandoning the process most likely belonging to Turkey, because of the passive dynamics of the negotiations. Without the EU’s supervision, Turkish government will pass the reforms that fits them the best, causing even more backsliding on fundamental freedoms. Turkey will not necessary face an economic crisis. As a trading state, it will reach out to regional and global markets. The economic agreement between Turkey and the European Union will scale down from a custom union to a free trade agreement. In terms of security, Turkey will behave as a “lone wolf” negotiating alliances depending on the issue at stake. The growing economic and political differences will affect the EU-Turkey’s relations. Both Turkey and the European Union will agree that Turkey is not a European country.

Another scenario reveals that the EU and Turkey will reach a cooperation agreement. Although both sides will abandon the accession process, they will keep the strong ties between them. Just as in the first scenario described previously, without the European influence, Turkey’s government will develop into a centralized presidential system, where the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms are curtailed. Although the EU will still express itself in regard with the Kurdish peace process and other issues, it will have no impact other Turkish government anymore. Turkey

²⁸ <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.WIezZIN96M->

will admit that it does not see herself in the Union. It may lead towards a “privileged partnership” originally proposed by Angela Merkel. In this scenario, the economic and security cooperation between Turkey and the EU will deepen.

Although, it is not very likely, the EU-Turkey relations may end up with Turkey’s full integration. In this case, Turkey’s full membership in the EU will support its evolution into a mature democratic state. Turkey will experience economic development as well, economic anchoring to the EU deepening more than any time before. Turkey’s full integration will determine a resolution of the Cyprus dispute.

Turkish integration process is a subject discussed on a global scale. While some promote Turkish integration, others express themselves as being against it. The 2014 elected president of the EU, Jean-Claude Juncker affirmed that “... under my Presidency of the Commission... no further enlargement will take place over the next five years. As regards Turkey, the country is clearly far away from EU membership. A government that blocks Twitter is certainly not ready for accession”.²⁹ Concerning the EU-Turkey relations, Angela Merkel stated, ““We don't want the full membership of Turkey. But we don't want to lose Turkey as an important country”, referring to her idea of a strategic partnership”.³⁰

Overall,” Turkey’s European future remains highly uncertain.”³¹ Although we cannot predict the trajectory of Turkey’s European future, we

²⁹ http://juncker.epp.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/nodes/en_03_fp.pdf

³⁰ Die Welt: Vor Treffen mit Gül: Merkel lehnt EU-Mitgliedschaft der Türkei ab, 20 September 2011. Retrieved 22 September 2011

³¹ Tocci N, Turkey and the European Union, Turkey Project Policy Paper Nr.5, November 2014

can affirm for sure that the close and complicated relationships between the EU and the Republic of Turkey will last in future.

To conclude, we believe Turkey is not ready at this point to become the member of the EU. Changes have to be done concerning its democratic institutions, judicial system and so on. Turkey has yet to work upon reaching the most crucial criteria such as Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights. Turkey has to provide the separation of powers and assure the total independence of all the domains. Only by having a strong legislative body and a non-corrupted, fair judicial system and with a democratic executive body, Turkey will be able to become a mature European-style democratic country, with high chances of becoming a member of the European Union.

In the end, we will also like to highlight the fact that it is possible that Turkey will itself end the long-lasting process of integration. Based on the way he leads the country, we can assume that the current President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not believe himself that Turkey will become a member of the European Union. "...when addressing the AKP Congress in 2012, [he] did not include EU membership in his vision speech for 2023."³²

Although the future of the EU-Turkey relationships is uncertain, most likely it will not end with Turkey's integration.

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**Think Green, Act Green:
Environmental Protection
in a United Europe**

CASE STUDY ON UKRAINE

**Ruxandra IONCE, Lucica SOLOVASTRU,
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1. Introduction. Country Description

1.1. Geography of Ukraine

Ukraine is a country situated in Eastern Europe, bordered by 7 other countries, including Russia to the east and northeast. It also borders the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south and southeast, respectively. It spreads over 603,628 square kilometers and it is the largest European country that is entirely in the continent (and the 46th largest country in the world).

Ukraine is relatively rich in natural resources, including iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, graphite, and it has an abundance of arable land.

Despite this fact, the country faces a number of major environmental issues such as inadequate supplies of potable water, air and water pollution (resulting in large-scale elimination of the fish population, particularly in the Sea of Azov), deforestation, as well as radiation contamination in the north-east from the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

1.2. Brief History

Ukraine became an independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. On December 1st, voters approved a referendum formalising independence from the Soviet Union. Over 90% of Ukrainian citizens voted for independence, with majorities in every region, including 56% in Crimea.

The political situation in Ukraine from then on was far from perfect. There have been a lot of political scandals and serious public dispute, mainly between the pro-Russian supporters and the pro-European supporters. The conflict escalated towards 2014 when security forces kill at least 77 protesters in Kiev. A month later, Russian forces seized and then annexed Crimea, prompting the biggest East-West showdown since the Cold War. In September, the government signed the Minsk peace plan ceasefire with pro-Russian leaders in eastern Ukraine but nobody is getting their hopes up just yet, unfortunately, and the citizens of Ukraine are still looking for a peaceful and just closure.

1.3. Economy

Before 1990, Ukraine's economy wasn't independent as it is today but in fact was part from a much bigger economy, the one of the Soviet Union. Back in those days, even though Ukraine used to receive only a small amount of Soviet Union's investment funds had the capacity to produce a large amount of goods. The statistics show that Ukraine's economy was able to produce 17% of the industrial sector of the Soviet Economy and 21% of its agricultural sector.

At the beginning of the 1990's and after the Soviet Union collapsed Ukraine's economy confronted with high rates of inflation. This aspect had

a negative effect on the life of the majority of the people living in the country. At those times, the economy and the general standard of living declined massively. The ones who were affected the most were the people who lived on fixed incomes due to the fact that prices rose extremely fast. After Ukraine gained independency, it had to wait for approximately ten years to register an increase in its GDP. This increase was recorded for the first time in the year 2000. Ukraine's GDP continued to grow until 2008 when at a global level a major financial crisis emerged.

In 2013, Ukraine registered zero GDP growth and in 2014 the statistics show that this indicator reduced by 6.8 %. The main cause of a decrease in the GDP was the War in Donbas and another important reason was the annexation of Crimea Peninsula by Russian Federation. It is predicted by the World Bank that in 2016 Ukraine will register an increase in its GDP of 1%. The most important industries of Ukraine's economy are petrochemical and gas industry, the industry of chemical products, machine building and ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy.

1.4. Culture

Ukraine is situated between Europe and Asia and, due to this fact, its culture has both Eastern and Western influences. At the present time, in the East regions of the country, we can find a more significant Russian influence but in the western regions, we can identify certain cultural aspects that have European influences. Before the 990's, the writers had to write only positive things about the socialist regime and had to describe the soviet leaders and their deeds in a glorifying way. After Ukraine's detachment from the Soviet Union, they gained the freedom of expression. Ukrainian culture can be linked to some ancient traditions which date back from the 16th century. Some of these traditions are the dummy and the playing of an

instrument called kobza. Some of the Ukrainian dances were present at ancient cults and originate from Rural Cossack village.

2. The Copenhagen and Madrid Accession Criteria

Despite some of its vocal critics, the European Enlargement strategy is almost unanimously seen as a necessity and an opportunity for the European Union. It is meant to strengthen the continent politically and economically, the act of accession being at the same time valued as a symbolic triumph in an unprecedented historical era of European peace and cooperation.

The sine qua non principles of the European Union, as stipulated in the Art. 2 TEU (Treaty of the European Union) are the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and the rights of minority groups. The functionality of both the member and the candidate states must be founded first and foremost upon these values generally and specifically, to fulfil and or possess the capacity to implement the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*.

In order to become members, countries have to fulfil by the accession date (pre-accession strategy) the conditions listed in Art 49 TEU and the principles of Art. 6 TEU. The most relevant accession criteria were established by the European Commission in 1993 in Copenhagen- today known as the Copenhagen Criteria- and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995 (Madrid Criteria), the latter having to do with the candidate state's responsibility to present its institutions prior to the accession as fully capable of supporting the European *acquis communautaire*. In regards to Ukraine, the following statement included into the presidency conclusions of the Madrid European Council was presented:

„The European Council expresses satisfaction at the recent accession of Ukraine to the Council of Europe and supports its authorities' undertaking to continue the current process of economic reform. The Union continues to provide support for Ukraine through macro-economic assistance and welcomes the important agreement reached with Ukraine on the definitive closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power station by the year 2000, in accordance with the timetable and conditions foreseen”

Firstly, the Copenhagen criteria refer to the political realm: the state must have stable political institutions, has to be democratic, has to respect and submit to the rule of law, respect human rights, respect and protect the minorities. Economically, it must have a functioning market economy, must be able to cope with the competition and market forces of the European Union.

The country also has to be able to take on the inherent obligations of an EU member state, adhering to the aims of the political, economic and monetary union.

3. The Rule of Law

In the Venice Commission on the Rule of Law report, the best definition for the term is considered to be the one formulated by Tom Bingham: “all persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private, should be bound by the entitled to the benefit of laws publicly made, taking effect (generally) in the future and publicly administered in the courts”. Eight more points are added to qualify the definition, listed as followed:

- Accessibility of the law (that it be intelligible, clear and predictable)
- Questions of legal right should be normally decided by law and not discretion

- Equality before the law
- Power must be exercised lawfully, fairly and reasonably
- Human rights must be protected
- Means must be provided to resolve disputes without undue costs or delay
- Trials must be fair
- Compliance by the state with its obligations in international law as well as in national law.

“Ukraine is a post-totalitarian, post-colonial and post-genocide country”, considers Yushchenko. As in many other post-Soviet or post-communist countries, historical traumas are bound to penetrate the nation’s mentality both consciously and sub-consciously and, with the help of inertia, will influence a country’s evolution on the course of many generations after such events happened. What makes old Western democracies so functional and obedient to the rule of law is, amongst other things, the “long practice” practice of democratic laws (*longa consuetudo*) and the common law/customary law. With the benefit of long, generational periods of practice they construct a tradition and, most importantly, these values eventually become embedded into the collective mentality and self-implied in the perception of a functional state. Ukraine is yet to achieve that.

There are several problems regarding the rule of law in Ukraine: lawlessness governs Ukraine despite a healthy constitutional framework, the denial of authorities of there being a problem (Potemkin villages), and the people’s continual loss of trust and hope in the executive institutions.

Amongst the hindrances of law implementations are of course the political and business elites and the power structure. Legal scholars,

practitioners and experts, the general population and its social norms are also significant obstacles. When asked a question on the reform-making in justice issues, a Ukrainian professor allegedly replied: ‘Rule of law reforms? Which reforms? There is nothing to reform: everything is nicely written down and spelled out!’

A positive is that the Ukrainian Constitution does contain clauses that proclaim the rule of law, such as the separation of power, judicial independence and transparent legislative processes (Hague Institute of Internalization of Law, 2007, p.12; Tamanaha 2007, p.1.). The concept of the rule of law (*verkhovenstvo prava*) and the lawful state (*pravova derzhava*) are included. Even the Venice Commission concluded in the ‘Opinion on the Constitution of Ukraine’ of 1997 that the ‘important elements of the rule of law have found a proper expression’ in the text of the constitution.

Thus being said, the Ukrainian rule of law has not only been affected by corruption and mere battles of interests, but by more tragic events on the course of the past decades (Orange Revolution and the Maidan, Euromaidan, etc.) that led to destabilization and chaos. According to the World Justice Rule of Law Index Ukraine has been repeatedly receiving low scores in all rule of law factors and sub-factors, ranking very low- close to the bottom- on a global scale. Notorious cases come to emphasize these results such as Yulia Tymoshenko’s trial- breaching basic rights for a fair trial, no access to legal remedies - the brutal involvement of state forces in the Euromaidan crises etc.

According to Koziubra, an established legal scholar, “in Ukraine, the process of consolidating the principles of *verkhovenstvo prava* and *pravova derzhava* [...] take place with tremendous contradictions, deformations and

rollbacks, I would not dare to claim what prevails in this process in the years of independence- progress or regress, achievements or losses.”(Koziubra, 2010).

Democratic laws, including the Constitution have been made in the context of a complete lack of experience. A lot of the laws adopted were addressing issues not yet existing, while administrative justice at the time it was introduced had no precedence in the state’s recent history. Nevertheless, overall, Ukraine does possess an extensive legal system and a developed law-making process. It also established a Commission on strengthening Democracy and Establishing the Rule of Law in 2005 in order to monitor the respect to democratic principles and rule of law. The commission cooperated with the Venice Commission and the Ukrainian community of legal experts. One can therefore draw the conclusion that Ukrainian material law consists the least of problems, on the other hand procedural law and some legislative gaps presented in the context of large scale corruption represent a major drawback.

Another dramatic problem is the people’s perception of law implementation and, especially, their mistrust in the law enforcement institutions, regarded to be most corrupt. As of March 2013, “59.8 % of Ukrainians do not support the activity of the court system in Ukraine, merely 4.7% support the activity of the court system fully and 25.4 % support the judiciary’s activities in isolated cases. The support for prosecution system is slightly higher than for judiciary, with 7.1% of the population supporting its activities fully, 26.7% favouring certain practices and 54.2% disapproving of how the prosecution functions.”(Burlyuk, 2015).

On the slightly optimistic side, in contrast to Russia or other post-communist states, Ukraine is characterized by a more exacerbated competition between political and business elites and oligarch clans and has therefore “sufficient openness in the system for new elites to form and enter the political landscape- this ensures rotation amongst political elites and fuels constant reform process” (Burlyuk, 2015). Ukraine also benefits from the assistance of major rule of law promoters (USAID, EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, etc. This permits many development and improvement opportunities for Ukraine.

Depending on the course of near future events, the Euromaidan may become the opportunity and the occasion for positive change, allowing new pro-European elites to emerge and become influential. On this will depend the European future of Ukraine.

4. Fundamental Rights

In 2014, in the wake of the Euromaidan protests, the Human Rights House Foundation published an article in which they described how the Ukrainian Parliament introduced a lot of restrictions on the rights of freedom of expression as a reaction to the peaceful protests.

For instance, the participation to peaceful protests without a clearance is punishable with a fine between \$200 and \$400 or with a 10 days detention. The people who organize this kind of events could eventually be convicted to a maximum of 15 years in prison. And if one, for example, set up a sound system or a tent without authorization, can be forced to spend 15 days in jail.

The access to the Internet is not free either. The law allows for it to be controlled and limited. Additionally, the information agencies must have

a special document from the government, otherwise, they risk having their computers and servers confiscated.

Furthermore, the article describes how the Ukrainian law protects the law-enforcement forces, even when violating human rights. Under the revised article 134 of the Law of the Status of Judges and the revised Law on Information Agencies, policemen, for example, have an immunity that prevents them from being lawfully punished should they commit crimes.

Finally, according to Human Rights House Foundation, the Ukrainian NGOs receiving funding from abroad need to be registered as a foreign agent and the NGOs involved in political activities need a special authorization from the state.

These are serious fundamental rights issues that Ukraine must deal with before adhering to the EU.

5. Economic development

According to State Statistics Service of Ukraine, unemployment rates in Ukraine increased to an alarming, all time high of 11% at the beginning of last year. It has decreased since then, to 9.4%, but it is yet too soon to predict how this number will behave in the following years.

Also, inflation blew-up in the beginning of 2014, reaching 47.1% in the April of 2015 and then dropping to 40.3% in January 2016. The HICP reference value (calculated as the arithmetic average of the similar HICP inflation rates in the 3 EU member states with the lowest HICP inflation plus 1.5%) in February 2016 is -0.2%.

Industry (and by that we mean manufacturing, mining, utilities) isn't doing very well either. The change in overall production averaged at -

1.66%, reaching -22.5% in the middle of 2015. For example, steel production decreased by 33% since 2013.

Another dark shadow cast upon Ukraine's economic situation is the public debt. The International Monetary Fund, Ukraine's key creditor, forecasts the state's public debt to reach 92.1% in 2016, and eventually drop to around 70% in 2020. That is well above the 60% ceiling agreed upon by the EU Council in March 2005.

Remarkably, according to State Treasury report, Ukraine's general budget deficit narrowed to 1.6% of GDP in 2015. It is worth mentioning that the IMF had outlined 4.2% of GDP deficit limit for 2015.

No significant economic growth is expected by the experts in the current year but neither is a breach of the 3.7% GDP deficit limit committed by Ukraine to the IMF for 2016.

No significant economic growth is expected by the experts in 2016 but neither is a breach of the 3.7% GDP deficit limit committed by Ukraine to the IMF. Focus-economics.com sees the Ukraine economy growing 1.2% in 2016, and accelerating to a 2.6% expansion in 2017.

Ukraine is very economically unstable and because of various changes in tax values and collection methods, it is extremely hard to predict how long it will take until the country regains its economic stability and growth. Right now, it is far below the almost all EU adherence requirements and at least 5 more years should pass until the light at the end of tunnel can even be seen.

It is important, however, that we realize things are not black and white and a country's economy is not that simple to analyze and/or fix. Every piece must work in order for the entire engine to run properly and drive a country forward. The political situation in Ukraine has been very

shaky as well and the Ukraine Government and people have to fight to stabilize the political stage, to decrease the high levels of corruption and to create a more transparent financial management system. This is essential for economic growth in any country of the 21st century Earth.

6. Functioning of Democratic Institutions and Public Administration Reform

The main authorities in Ukraine are represented by Verkhovna Rada or just Rada (unicameral parliament) which is the sole legislative body in the country, the Cabinet of Ministers the highest body in the system of executive power, and the Supreme Court of Ukraine the highest judicial body.

The cabinet of ministers is the executive power of Ukraine. This authority has the responsibility to take all the measures and to perform all the necessary activities in order to assure the well-functioning of the public administration at a central level. To achieve 2 major objectives, first is economic development and second is protection of human rights, the public administration must take measures in accordance with the following principle: course of law, impartiality, predictability, consistency and transparency.

At present time, the public administration doesn't accomplish the standards of good governance asked by the European Union. The country confronts with a series of problems such as an inefficient and bureaucratic administrative system, the executive power is excessively centralized, the authorities are detached from the difficulties of the average citizens and above all it has a legal system that is not completely reformed and isn't able

to support the well- functioning of the institutions and administrative actions.

Some of the issues of the administrative system in Ukraine are related to: the lack of separation of political responsibilities between the President and the Government, each minister is overloaded with administrative problems, the political and administrative functions are not fully divided between the ministries, there is a large number of central executive authorities that have a resembling status, the centralization of the executive power, the local administrations doesn't have a significant effect on the communities which appoint the representatives from the territory, a low level of coordination between the ministries, the inefficiency of the mechanism through which the Government influences the local administration

Another problem we have identified concerns the budget planning: there is still a large gap between the planning and the actual budgetary process, the set public policy targets failing to take into account the budget restrictions.

At a local level there are problems related to the lack of division of power and responsibility among local officials and local self-governance levels, and disproportions in the rayon development and in the size of rayon territories and population.

One of the most important aspects that should be taken care of in order to adhere to the European Union is the transparency of the administrative activities and the citizens' free access to information about them. The Orange Revolution was a crucial moment in the political sphere of Ukraine and this revolution was the point where the country started to turn the focus of governance from state centered to citizen-centered. During

the Orange revolution, a step was taken in the forward direction, in the sense of pointing out some of the major problems of the public administration.

In any democracy, the voice of the people, the effective communication between citizens and public authorities is extremely important. One of the main aspects required by the European Union is the transparency of the public administration - the tax payers need to have knowledge of how the funds are used. They need to know what is done in a community, when it is done and what are the costs and implications of a project that is implemented in order to assure the well-being of the population.

In recent time in order to assure the reformation of the public administration the President and Cabinet of Ministers have adopted a series of regulations such as the laws of Ukraine “On Administrative Services”, “On Central executive Authorities’ „On Access to Public Information”, a new Bill on “Public Service”. In certain cases the reforms in the administrative sector were made without having a proper preparation and without building a clear strategy. Some of the strategies such as the reformation of central public authorities had a negative impact and led to a disorganization of the ministries and a reduction in the number of civil servants and didn’t helped in forming the conditions for a result-oriented public management.

The authorities should take into account reforms like adopting the concept of Public Administration Reform, adopting the Administrative Procedure Codex, the decentralization of powers and resources, adopting a bill on Public Strategic Planning, to ensure European principles of good governance, openness and transparency, effective evaluation of public

policies, efficiency in administrative actions, to ensure an independent financial control, to align the state financial inspection to the EU standards, to adopt a strategy of Local-Self Government Reform, a new legislation that will ensure a professional level and neutrality of public servants.

In 2015, Ukraine made a number of reforms which consisted of a constitutional package of decentralization measures through which the local councils can establish executive offices, and the prefects (subordinated to the president) will evaluate local decisions and how the decisions will influence the national legislation and security assuring the oversight of the central government over the activity of the local public administration. The politicians and experts criticized this measure because they consider that once the reformed was approved the president gained more power in the territory.

In order to fight corruption, a legislation was adopted, through which the Anti-Corruption Bureau was created and investigators were hired but... which was unable to start operations due to the fact that “some key personnel was missing”.

Due to the fact that the Anticorruption Bureau wasn't able to run operations, the Ministry of Internal Affairs started investigating judges, officials, staff of customs, tax and social welfare on suspicion of corruption but in fact until now there haven't been any convictions of officials accused by corruption.

7. Other Key Obstacles in EU Accession

There are also other important obstacles in the way of Ukraine's EU Accession which cannot be ignored or neglected. In a world that is (fortunately) focused more and more on the protection of the environment

and the prevention of climate change, Ukraine should really double its effort in this field. It has to fight the pollution of water (which in some place has reached very dangerous levels of toxicity), of air (Ukraine produces hundreds of millions tons of carbon dioxide every year), restore the fish population, strengthen the protection of its biodiversity, stop the ever accelerating deforestation and it definitely has to stop releasing toxic substances into the Black Sea immediately. The state authorities should be more actively involved in these important and serious environmental issues than they are today.

Also, Ukraine's strong ties with Russia represent another major obstacle for joining the European Union. This is not an anti-Russia essay, but the facts remain that it opposes Ukraine's accession to the EU. Russia violated international law (today being under EU and US sanctions), and it annexed Crimea in a moment of huge political instability and vulnerability. The "Euromaidan" events are still not fully investigated and the crimes committed back then are not yet punished.

Despite all this, there is a vocal pro-Russian trend going on, especially in the Eastern part of the country, Russia still provides 6.8% of Ukraine's foreign direct investment, has and provides most of Ukraine's natural gas and has a lot of subsidiary banks inside the country.

During an interview in 2014, the Russian minister of Economy claimed that in case of an Ukrainian economic association agreement with the European Union, Russia will impose new restrictive measures like the increase of custom duties, explaining that the effect of such an agreement will be a flood of European goods in Russia passing through Ukraine. In the same interview, the minister underlines another possible consequence

of the agreement with EU: retractions of Russian investment funds from Ukraine.

The economic part of the association pact enables the creation of a free trade zone between EU and Ukraine which will suppose a cancellation of import duties. The main consequence refers to an increased number of cheap duty-free European goods on the Russian market coming from Ukraine.

Starting with January 2016, the measures largely discussed in previous years by Russian authorities are being put into action. The inferior chamber of the Russian parliament suspends Ukraine from the free trade agreement of the CIS states (CIS- Commonwealth of Independent States formed by the former Soviet Republics - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and increases custom duties from 0 to 6%. The Russian companies from Ukraine will have major problems if they want to export goods to EU states because these companies have technical standards of production which are different to the European ones. To match the standards imposed by the European regulations, the Russian companies would have to spend large sums of money, maybe billions of dollars. Ukraine should really make efforts to sever as many ties as possible with Russia and create more ties with countries in the West, specifically in the European Union.

8. Conclusions

Since the separation of the Soviet Union, Ukraine showed interest in establishing a strong connection with the institutions of the European Union and the member countries. This desire to join the European block

dates back to 1994 through the signing of a document called Partnership and Cooperation agreement. But from that moment on, the progress made in order to attain this objective was very slow and along the way the country had to battle with social, political and economic crises. There were confrontations at all levels between the pro-Russian and pro-European sides which led to arrests and demonstrations that caused political instability and, most importantly, a split civil society. The most significant demonstrations in Ukraine were the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Euromaidan demonstration in 2013 when the authorities intervened in a violent manner, wounding 97 people. The Ukrainians that participated at those manifestations wanted a government that was orientated towards Europe, one led by democratic principles and untainted by corruption. They wanted a country where the fundamental rights are respected, but they were met with brutality and they were restricted to exercise a basic human right: their freedom of speech.

One of the key figures in Ukraine that supports the adhesion to EU and NATO is Yulia Timoshenko, Ukrainian politician and ex-Prime Minister. She was convicted in 2011 for embezzlement and abuse of power and there is evidence that the basic rights for a fair trial were not respected in her case and this raised question marks regarding the performance of the judicial system. From this case we can identify one major problem which is lack of immunity for law enforcement institutions leading to abuse of power.

In this essay, we identified another major problem: the economic instability, inflation and an unhealthy economic dependency of Russia. At this point, Ukraine has a long way to come till meeting the requirements of 6 % deficit of GDP and 60% debt of GDP imposed at the European level.

In the public administration sector, we identified various problems like the centralization of power or the facts that there is no clear line between the President's and the Government's political responsibilities, each minister is overburdened with administrative problems, the political and administrative functions are not fully separated between the ministries, there are too many central executive authorities that have a similar status, the executive power is centralized, the local administration doesn't have enough impact on the communities which elect the representatives from the territory, the coordination between ministries is not at the highest standard, the mechanism through which the Government influences the local state administration is inefficient, making the decision-making process at a national level very entangled and complicated.

We should also mention the (so far) failed attempts to combat corruption with a practically useless Anticorruption Bureau, created without conducting operations and without sanctioning people for corruption-related crimes.

One of the most important steps made towards integration was the signing and ratification of the Association Agreement that establishes the legal basis for cooperation between Ukraine and EU for the medium-term perspective. In 2014, with the help of the European Commission, a document called the European Reform Agenda for Ukraine was elaborated. This document contains a list of tasks and fundamental reforms that must be developed and implemented by the authorities before the integration.

Geopolitically, Ukraine represents a great interest for both the EU and NATO, both of the organizations having it in their interest to help Ukraine break the existing ties with Russia and become a member state. Despite the technical incoherencies with the EU's principles, the country

might see, given the right, peaceful political and economic context, a premature integration into the EU.

But nothing is ever that simple, because simply based on the above mentioned issues, one would say it is very unlikely to see Ukraine joining the European Union in the near future - many Copenhagen and Madrid Accession Criteria are just not met. On the other hand, one should take into consideration the misfortune and political chaos which have destabilized the country in the recent years. Today, Ukraine looks like it is making progress through a difficult and extremely uncomfortable situation. And, based on previous cases of EU accession – such as Poland, Romania and others –, if significant progress exists, Ukraine may be granted the membership even before it completely fulfils all the requirements.

And we predict this will happen in the late 2020s, assuming the people of Ukraine will continually increase their efforts to improve their country in every aspect that matters.

SECTION II

MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE EU



**Think Green, Act Green:
Environmental Protection
in a United Europe**

INCREASING AWARENESS REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AMONG CHILDREN AND ADULTS

**Ruxandra IONCE, Iulia TRANDAFIR,
Lucica SOLOVASTRU, Bogdan GHIORGHIU**

1. Introduction

We are destroying our environment. Not the planet Earth, but our environment. Not even if we used the infinitely too many nuclear weapons that we have on Earth right now, it still wouldn't be nearly enough power to destroy a planet. We are too small for that, too insignificant to the Solar System scale (just think about how insignificant we are at the galactic or cosmic scale!). But we are destroying our environment. Our breathable air, our perfect temperatures, vegetation, the ecosystems of the beautiful and innocent animals, on land and in the oceans, these wonderful and essential things can be destroyed by the hands of man and are.

These needs to stop in this very second we are writing this essay. But it will not. It will take time. Because most of the people are polluting and it is hard for them to just stop. Why, you ask? Why are people polluting?

They always have been polluting so they can survive wars, feed their families and cities and empires, and prosper to make better lives for them and protect themselves from “the other guys”. Pollution and over-exploitation of Earth’s resources are in our nature. It’s actually what got us in this point. This point of huge technological advancement and, in the same time, this point of almost pushing our environment over an edge from which there is no return.

So why are people polluting? Because it is in their nature to think of themselves first and the planet and everyone else in it second. So what if we have advanced as a civilization to a point that we no longer need to pollute in order to prosper? Even though we consciously acknowledge this imminent danger, we unconsciously ignore it. And, unfortunately, our species is built in such a way that the unconscious still rules over the conscious and it takes a lot of psychological effort and discipline to change that – to wake up all by yourself and realize that you have not been present all your life, not really, and that you haven’t been connected to the bigger picture, the global reality, but you have been stuck in a little bubble in which only you, your family, your home, your job and maybe some of your friends fit.

So how do you do that? How do you wake up? Sometimes, people wake up all by themselves but this is very rare because it is against our nature. Most of the times, people are awakened by other people who had been awakened before them. I think you can begin to see that there is no small task at hand: what we need to do to save our environment is to change

ourselves as a species. Evolve. We need to change the entire global culture by changing the views of every individual man or woman until there is enough of us to stop the big and powerful corporations and take control of our society. If you change a person, you change their children, and maybe you change their spouse and their friends a little bit too. It is a long process, but it needs to happen very soon and we need to accelerate it while it is happening.

This essay is about ways of doing just that. Awakening people, raising awareness concerning pollution, over-exploitation of resources, ecosystem destruction, global warming... We will talk about various ideas, changes, public activities that will help raise awareness among the people in Europe and not just in Europe.

2. Raising awareness all over the world

People in Romania and all over the world try to attain this ultimate goal: a high quality of life. For the majority of the people, this standard of living is obtained without regards to our environment, ignoring the signs our planet is showing us through natural disasters, climate change, the melting of the glaciers and many other well-known issues caused by deforestation pollution of all types (soil, water, air), etc.

The urge to protect the environment has been of subject of books, documentaries and an important area of research for numerous scientists. We learn about it in school, we pick various information from mass-media and so some of us have more or less information about what it means to protect the planet in the area we are living, but there is still a large number of people in the world who don't have enough information regarding these issues, especially those who don't have access to any kind of education or information. If I would divide the world in two groups of people, I would

say that there are people that really do not have any or at least sufficient information about the cause-effect relation between pollution, massive exploitation of natural resources and climate change (most of this people live in Africa but there are still persons all over the world who don't have access to education and information) and there is the other group of people who have all the knowledge, some of them even the power and money to live in accordance to the standards of environmental protection- these ones are the main polluters at a global level (here I would refer to China where air pollution is a huge problem, but there is also USA and other developed countries). The latter still choose to ignore this subject, they choose to live only in the present without taking into consideration the life of the future generations. At a big scale I think we can divide once more the world in two: individuals on one side and the political, administrative structures, governments, central and local authorities on the other side. Each individual has the power to influence the way he/she is living and maybe a little the people with who he connects, but the governments generally speaking have power over countries, communities, these are the law-makers and the ones that enforce the law including environmental laws, but let's not forget these structures are also formed from individuals.

The main question is how we can bring people to environmentalism? How can we convince the poor, the middle class and the rich people, the common citizens and the politicians, that pollution and climate change are all serious problems that affect us today and will continue to intensify in the next years?

First of all one of the answers to this questions is education, information and constant practice of what we learn in theory. The environmental education should start at home. From a young age children

should be taught simple things as riding a bicycle, not wasting energy by leaving the computer or light turned on, why it is wrong to throw away garbage in parks, ponds or other natural habitats. Families could organize frequent trips to the mountains and, in my opinion, this will create that strong bond with the natural world, that feeling of connectedness with the world and nature which I think is the key element, the starting point in developing individuals that have respect, care and love for environment. The education should be continued in schools. Educating children and also young adults about environmental problems is essential to a long-term success. Environmental education should be integrated as a separate discipline which can be taught from primary, middle class to high school. Children can be oriented to create their own garden or taking care of an animal. In schools, there should be organized more frequent activities such as planting of trees, recycling and even competitions for ideas and projects related to the environment. Organizing summer camps in order to discuss and to analyze the real impact that pollution has on the environment would also be a great idea.

Among other ideas, promoting electric cars, financially supporting their purchase and making them look cool through a well thought campaign is an efficient way to replace, on the long term, the polluting cars with “green ones”. And finally, another important aspect is the cities’ infrastructure and how efficient they are in accommodating bicycles – most of the people today do not use a bicycle because they do not feel safe riding it on a busy street in the middle of a chaotic traffic.

3. Education and Industry.

Education is the most important part with which we can protect the present and future environment. And that’s because if we are an educated people

and with the sense of responsibility we do not only protect and think green, we transmit this type of lifestyle to the next generations and go on.

In Romania we study in school a lot of optional objects, like civic culture or technological education. There should be implemented an optional called “Green Education” for one year in every cycle of studies. For the beginning, teenagers should know about the actual situation: about global warming, about CO₂ emissions and how polluted is the air or the estimated time until we cannot do anything anymore to maintain a balance between our activities and the necessary time of Earth to regenerate. Then, after they are conscious about the situation and their role to make the world a better place, I think they should adopt a proper behavior in their own neighborhood (if they see a piece of paper on the ground to take it and put it in the garbage can) and to become an active ecologist (planting trees, using a bike instead the car, turn off the light when it is not needed, taking a shower instead of bath and so on). In the last part of the module, I think it is useful to have a long-term course about green ways of living (using a solar or a wind plant).

Secondly, the governments need to discourage the factories that are polluting over the limits by increasing the green-taxes and in the same time should to encourage, with green-producers, the eco-friendly articles and promote the eco label. I think that a slogan like “Have no time to plant a tree? Help us to do it for you by buying this!” it would be very useful for busy people which have money, but no time.

Secondly, another major aspect related to the protection of the environment is the information. The access to information is a huge problem in the developing countries. There are many barriers that prevent people from rural and tribal areas to learn about environmental problems

such as language, illiteracy and cultural differences. In order to confront this problem we should first reach out to community leaders (religious or tribal leaders) that have the influence and can spread the information to a large number of people.

Information regarding the importance of protecting the environment can also be spread through the media and by means of modern technologies (phones and mobile apps). The non-profit organizations and government agencies should establish strong connections with media, because this way their message and activities can be made known to people who might want to join such organizations or start to live and promote a nature-friendly lifestyle.

Increasing media coverage of environmental issues especially through public TV stations would be imperative. At a national level an online database with various types of information such as the evolution during the years of various indicators (indicators of air pollution, soil, water pollution and deforestation), solutions for protecting the environment which can be put in practice by any citizen would be a solution.

Even though education and information are important when it comes to protecting the environment, it proves to be extremely difficult to change people's mindset, to change a certain way of living especially for adults. It is extremely important, in order to convince this category of reticent people, to emphasize other benefits of protecting the environment, benefits regarding health or finances. I think this perspective can be more firmly promoted rather than the quasi apocalyptic one, presenting the destruction of our planet and the end of the world. One major aspect in convincing people who don't believe or don't care about the principles of environmentalism is the pressure of the community and the actions of the

local authorities. In a village or a town in which the public services offered to the citizens are using renewable energy, the administrative structure create facilities for smart recycling, the laws are strictly enforced when it comes to protecting the environment, and sanctions for disobedience are severe, the people of that community will tend to implement some of the good behavior in their own homes. A town where most people use solar batteries might influence the rest of the people and motivate them to implement similar devices in their homes.

The increase of the global population generated a huge need for resources. To assure large amounts of food, water and shelter for people all over the world, led to the overexploitation of natural resources, harming the natural habitats- homes of so many species of plants animals. Some of the major actors at this level are corporations, multinational companies who try to produce goods fast and cheap only to collect profit.

On the other side, there are companies who produce green products or companies that form the new wave that function in buildings that are using green energy, new technology for increasing water efficiency or paperless systems of payments. These companies should have financial support from the local governments by implementing a sort of reward system, and, above all, should have full support and confidence of costumers in buying the final products from these firms. We as consumers can promote these green companies and green products in our group of friends or on online social platforms.

4. Vegetarianism

Also, we cannot emphasize enough the danger of over-populating the planet. We do not suggest imposing a limit on the number of children a family should have, we think this moment is still a century away, but we

do suggest something else. The problem with over-population is not that 15 billion people do not physically fit on the planet. The problem is that Earth does not have enough resources to satisfy today's first world way of living. We consume too much, we pollute too much, we produce too much waste and... we eat too much meat.

The moral issues aside, if we want a green planet that can host more of us, vegetarianism is the way to go. Again, we are not saying meat should be banned today. But, the fact is that Earth cannot sustain 10 billion meat-eaters. But, it can sustain 20 to (if most countries conduct a sustainable industry and everybody lives in peaceful conditions) 30 billion vegetarians.

In the world today, there are over 20 billion chicken, 1.5 billion cows, 1.5 billion sheep, and 1 billion pigs. If the entire world became vegetarian, over 30 million squared kilometers of good, useful land would be available for agriculture, forests or cities, and that doesn't even include the land that today is used to grow crops just to feed those animals. That is a lot of space, made available right away.

Also, there would be less pollution caused by the animals' CO₂ and methane (much more dangerous to the environment than CO₂) emissions (which are more than all the planes, trains and cars put together) and the water consumption would go down drastically. Today, 70% of the water we use is used on farm animals. That is a huge number that can make all the difference in the future.

Many scientists today claim that a vegetarian lifestyle is one of the best ways to fight climate change and protect the environment. We should encourage a vegetarian lifestyle in schools, on TV, in the supermarkets (maybe a law that forces supermarkets to have a "fully equipped" vegetarian stand), in the restaurants, and so on. Vegetarianism is not yet

looked upon in favorable way by the vast majority of people and that is ridiculous (again, we are not raising any moral issues here at all) considering all the benefits it has on the environment on the long run. Vegetarianism, or at least “a less meat diet”, should be encouraged, it should be made popular and “cool” and it is important that the EU and the national governments across the world fund campaigns with that objective in order to protect our environment in the long term.

5. The situation in Romania

In Romania, important efforts should be made in order to raise awareness among children and adult citizens. In our country there still are a large number of people who don't have any information about environmental issues, perhaps they only know some remote aspects of the problem. Education in schools is one of the main areas where it should be worked upon. At the present time in primary and middle school the environmental issues are part of discipline called Science. In recent years an optional called Ecological Education was taught in primary and middle school. I think it should be a separate and mandatory discipline. When presenting the information to the teachers, there should be more emphasis on the significance and importance of the damaging effects the pollution, deforestation, etc have on us. It should create a real concern not only a symbolical image.

Education is one of the keys to forming responsible, pro-active citizens that have strong values regarding environmental protection. At a national level, there can be organized every year, in each school, summer camps where children could live close to nature and engage themselves in different activities like recycling or tree planting for one or a couple of months.

In Romania one of the main problems is deforestation without planting anything instead. In order to raise awareness in this sector, I think the mass-media can be engaged much more. Campaigns that have public figures in the center should be organized. These campaigns could promote activities such as „The week of tree planting”, ``The days of recycling ``. I think that tree planting can be organized by the local public administration which should have more money of their budget directed to this issue. Forest owners should be drastically sanctioned if they cut down trees and don't plant back. In order to raise awareness among rural communities, I think that the message of protecting the environment can be presented by priests in churches, at the work place, or with on other social occasions or gatherings (in concerts and music festivals for example).

In Romania there should be some financial support from the central and local authorities or private companies in order to build facilities for selective recycling in each town and village. Financial support for companies that produce goods from recycled materials and also support people that build “green houses” should be considered. In each community there should open information centers, where people can be consulted on how to access funds in order to implement renewable energy projects (solar panels, wind systems).

6. General Issues, Perspectives and Conclusions.

Despite being one of the main goals of the 7th Environment Action Programme, the European natural capital is unfortunately far from being secured and enhanced. Most efforts attempted by the European Union were addressing air pollution and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, which, successful as they were (greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 19% since 1990, less waste is being thrown and every country's recycling

rates have gone up, improvement of air and water quality, etc.), other important issues such as anthropic land degradation which leads to the damage of environmental and, implicitly, public goods. The loss of soil functions for example is happening at the cost of the consumers' well-being and with the perturbation of the economic functioning of the countries in question. Provided that the climate change impacts are prognosed to become more impactful, the need for prompter solutions is urgent.

The future of many protected species (60%) and habitat types (77%) is uncertain due to the Union's lack of capacity to provide efficient and sufficient strategies for all its member states. Halting the biodiversity loss by 2020, as stipulated in the agenda, is not a realistic goal.

All these being mentioned, the most important and stringent argument that needs to be used in the environmental discourse is the more active involvement of the civil society. It is a fact that some states do more than others to combat the effects of climate change and to protect the environment (such as France, Germany, the Scandinavian countries etc.) and that is because their economic and social framework allows them to concentrate more on those issues. Other countries, especially those from Eastern Europe, still need to catch up to their forerunners in the European Union and to adjust their economy, legislation and institutional framework. The 2008 economic crisis, with heterogeneous effects across the continent, has particularly affected countries from the East, creating macro-economic imbalances and a discontinuity in the process of integration. Not to be blamed, the governments in this geographical region had to concentrate first on wellbeing of their citizens before they could allow themselves to make the environmental protection a state priority. The good thing is that

an extensive European legal framework in the form of volumes of directives exists and is gradually being implemented by the states.

In order to speed up the process and reach the goals of the Action Program, the optimal strategy is non-formal education, which is already encouraged through numerous environmental initiatives. Non-formal education means educating the general public, both young and adult, through conferences, seminars and workshops in ways that are both interactive and relevant to their everyday lives. In Romania, for instance, there is a great lack of understanding and knowledge of its citizens in regard to environmental issues.

In conclusion, we have a lot of work to do. It starts with education, maybe with a mandatory class regarding the environmental protection, then it goes on with promoting cycling, electric cars, “green products”, involving influential people in campaigns, eating less meat, planting more trees (and most importantly, making those activities “look cool”), and then it circles back to education (especially in small towns and rural areas). Because after all, this is what people need – to be educated about the dangers and about the ways of avoiding those dangers. If efforts continue to be made in that direction, we will undoubtedly transform environmental protection into a piece of global culture and have the green planet and the green society we are already dreaming of.

RECYCLING DOMESTIC WASTE

**Ana-Maria OLEINIC, Alina ROȘIORU,
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1. Introduction

An essential problem of the 21st century is world pollution. Currently the environment is so contaminated that urgent measures should be taken. A single individual cannot be blamed for the world pollution, however every person should take care of his or her habitat. In 2010, total waste production in the EU amounted to 2,5 billion tons. From this total only a small part was recycled, the rest was landfilled or burned, of which some 600 million tons could be reused.

Just in terms of household waste alone, each person in Europe is currently producing, on average, half of a ton of such waste. Only 40 % of it is recycled and in some countries more than 80% still goes to landfill. Transforming waste into a raw material is one way to a circular economy. If we re-manufacture, reuse and recycle, and if one industry's waste becomes another's raw material, we can move to a more circular economy where waste is eliminated and resources are used in an efficient and sustainable way.

Separating materials in the home is the best way to make recycling work. Once materials are put in the garbage they are more difficult to collect. Some studies indicate it takes less than three minutes a day for a homeowner to recycle glass, cans, aluminum and newspaper. There are many ways in which domestic waste can be recycled or reused.

2. Composting

Composting is a natural biological process, carried out under controlled aerobic conditions. In this process, various microorganisms, including bacteria and fungi, break down organic matter into simpler substances. Composting is not a mysterious or complicated process. Natural recycling occurs on a continuous basis in the natural environment. Organic matter is metabolized by microorganisms and consumed by invertebrates. The resulting nutrients are returned to the soil to support plant growth.

Composting is relatively simple to manage and can be carried out on a wide range of scales in almost any indoor or outdoor environment and in almost any geographic location.



It has the potential to manage most of the organic material in the waste stream including restaurant waste, leaves and yard wastes, farm

waste, animal manure, animal carcasses, paper products, sewage sludge, wood etc. and can be easily incorporated into any waste management plan.

Since approximately 45 - 55% of the waste stream is organic matter, composting can play a significant role in diverting waste from landfills thereby conserving landfill space and reducing the production of leachate and methane gas. In addition, an effective composting program can produce a high quality soil amendment with a variety of end uses.

3. How do people recycle?

There are several ways of arranging to recycle waste. People can take it to a recycling facility or use a kerbside collection. For organic waste, they may choose to compost it themselves.

There are 3 types of permanent recycling facility: bring banks, civic amenity sites and recycling centers. Most local authorities also set up temporary collection points for Christmas trees each year in winter.

Bring banks are unstaffed collection points for recyclable materials like glass bottles, drinks cans and food cans. Some bring banks also have collection bins for unwanted clothes.

Civic amenity sites are similar to bring banks but can accept a larger variety of items. They are built for this particular purpose, are staffed and have specific opening hours. They usually accept paper, cardboard, plastic and glass bottles, drinks cans and food tins, textiles and footwear, electrical equipment, fluorescent tubes, waste oil and DIY waste. Some also accept garden waste and Christmas trees. Staff working at civic amenity sites can provide helpful advice and information about recycling and they may even sell home composting bins there.



Recycling centers also have staff, are gated and, more than that, have specific opening hours, but accept a smaller variety of items than civic amenity sites. The difference is that they do not accept very bulky items. They are not custom-built and tend to be located in existing sites such as local authority depots.

Again, their staff can provide advice and information about recycling and they may have home composting bins for sale. Kerbside collection of recyclable waste is often known as a 'green bin' collection. Recyclable materials include plastic bottles, glass bottles, drink cans, food tins, newspapers or magazines, and cardboard. Most of the developed cities and not only, have nowadays separate bins collection for organic waste – often called a 'brown bin' collection.

4. What happens to recycled items?

Lead acid **batteries** (from cars, trucks, boats, tractors, etc.) are made of plastic and contain dilute sulphuric acid and lead. During the recycling process, the batteries are crushed, the acid is drained off and neutralised and the plastic and lead are compacted and baled for recycling. Button batteries (cameras, hearing aids, watches, computers and calculators) can be recycled using a thermal process. Domestic rechargeable batteries

(mobile and cordless phones, laptops, power tools and cordless appliances) can be also recycled using a thermal process. Some the reclaimed components are used to make new batteries, such as nickel and iron, which are used to make stainless steel.

Glass must be sorted according to colour to avoid contamination. It is crushed and turned into cullet, which means waste glass. In the making of new glass, cullet can be up to half of the raw material. This leads to significant savings in raw materials and energy needed to melt the glass.



Vehicles can be disassembled, stripped of any valuable materials and crushed for smelting.

Household appliances like washing machines, cookers, dryers, dishwashers and toasters can be dismantled. The ferrous and non-ferrous metals are separated and the rest is disposed of. There are also specialist recyclers who process the more complex items such as computers and televisions. These recyclers separate components of the equipment for resale or recycling of valuable materials. They may also renovate the entire systems for resale.

The **aluminium** can is one of the most valuable waste materials. Aluminium foil can also be recycled – both the heavy foil that comes with take-away meals, ready-cook meals



etc. and the lighter ‘tin foil’ used in cooking. Baled aluminium cans and foil are smelted into ingots, which are then rolled before being made into cans and other products.

Waste **mineral oil** (fuel oil) can be reprocessed and re-sold as low-grade industrial lubricant or industrial boiler fuel oil to generate heat, electricity or both. Vegetable oils, such as cooking oil, should never be mixed with mineral oil. These oils can be cleaned and used in animal feeds, or in fuel for adapted cars. Some recycling centres accept domestic cooking oils.

For fire safety reasons, **paper** recycling facilities must be supervised. Newspapers, magazines, office paper, junk mail, light cardboard, telephone books, greeting cards, calendars and diaries, paper bags, comics can all be recycled. Collected paper goes to paper mills, where it is recycled into new paper.

The **plastics** industry has a code for labelling different plastic materials to help with identification and recycling. The majority of plastic containers found in the home are made from HDPE, LDPE, PVC or PET. Most of the containers for soft drinks are made from PET, which means polyethene terephthalate. These bottles can be



shredded and recycled as fibre for the polyester lining for sleeping bags, pillows and quilted jackets. Recycled plastics can be used for fencing, garden furniture, car bumpers, plastic bags, PVC pipes and flooring.

Home composting provides an excellent soil conditioner and allows most kitchen and garden waste to be recycled. Some civic amenity centers provide composting services and sell the compost. Most local authorities also recycle Christmas trees. They are shredded and the shavings are used for landscaping.

Clothes and textiles that are suitable for re-sale are sent to charity shops to be sold. Clothes and textiles that are not suitable for re-sale are recycled into carpet underlay felt, machine-wiping cloths or fibre filler for furniture.

5. What happens to the unsafe waste?

Many household products contain substances that are potentially harmful to the environment. They include medicines, aerosols, bulbs and fluorescent tubes, polishes, adhesives, household cleaners, drain cleaners, solvents, weed killers and fertilizers.

Some of these items can be brought to a civic amenity center, where they can be recycled or disposed of. Pharmaceutical drugs, such as painkillers, medical waste- syringes or surgical gloves and containers for pharmaceutical drugs should be returned to the local pharmacy, which can dispose of them properly. In some cities, local authorities organize mobile collections, where hazardous waste can be left at a central point.



6. The situation in Romania

Organic waste derived from plants or animals sources-thus, identified waste as a food waste, fruit and vegetable peels, flower trimmings and other. Additionally, these wastes are biodegradable materials and therefore people turn their organic waste into compost and use them in their gardens.

Waste collection and recycling is a success business in Romania. The companies invested significant amounts in waste recycling in Romania, especially in equipment, transport machines and installations. Companies focus on the development of solutions in accordance with European legal framework in order to avoid landfills that are poorly managed and producing adverse effects on the environment. The big companies specializing in waste recycling comply with the legislation in force and looking for ways to be efficient and environmentally friendly, so that they can be closed illegal landfills.

In Romania, the waste has been stored in mines, industrial plants and military and therefore resulted in a significant amount of radioactive waste, chemical weapons, rocket fuel and other hazardous toxic.



However, our country has implemented the along during a series of reforms in determining compliance with European directives imposed by the European Union.

The anaerobic digestion provides an innovative and useful solution through which gases from organic waste is converted into energy.

Degradation of waste material using microorganisms in a particular environment. Its use is in the treatment of organic solid waste and wastewater. The remaining material in the vessel may act as a fertilizer for plants, and biogas from energy turns. Organic materials can turn into a gas (carbon monoxide and hydrogen) through gasification and plasma arc gasification. And the resulting gas is burned to produce electricity and steam. Waste disappear completely, and the gas is converted into energy.

Recycling is a benefit to the environment and the population thus it:

- Helps protect the environment via recyclable waste materials in which would have been burned or ended up in the landfill. Pollution of the air, land, water and soil is reduced.
- Conserves natural resources, for example recycling more waste means that we do not depend too much on raw (natural) resources, which are already massively depleted.
- It saves energy: it takes more energy to produce items with raw materials than from recycling used materials.

Any reduction of food waste means, in fact, potential environmental benefits. If we reduce the amount of food we dispose of along the food system, we will need less water, fewer fertilizers, less land, less transport, less energy, less waste collection, less recycling, and so on.

Recycling waste can be considered as the cornerstone of the entire environmental issues, including giving it some solutions on the

conservation of natural resources and energy, and in terms of maintaining a healthy and unpolluted environment in all aspects. At the same time, it can keep part of the present natural resources at our disposal to aid recycling. In this context, Romania has recovered a large gap with the advanced European countries, both in terms of legal framework and especially, behaviours and attitudes that are to be improved and adjusted to European practice in the field.



7. New reforms for recycling

It is very hard to recycle here in Romania because usually the domestic waste is in the same place with the plastic, paper and metal. We are the last country in the EU at recycling our waste. It is decisive to change our behavior in the world and try to improve ourselves.

Romania will have to change this situation in the next years because the EU has approved the new laws for recycling. Until 2025 we will have to be able to reuse and recycle 55% of our total waste that means more than 15 times of our current reused and recycled waste.

That means that in a few years the taxes on waste will increase significantly, now we pay around 25 euros/ton of waste to be deposited, in 10 years will pay approximate 100 euros/ton.



It is a good measure because we are responsible for our country and our environment, will need to reuse 70% of glass until 2025 that will encourage people to take care of their waste much more seriously. The paper is one of the most important because it will be reused and recycled in 75% of the cases which can mean that people will pay attention how much paper they will use and most of the work will be done in an electronic and a free-paper way.

The new laws can mean a new perspective, children will learn that taking care of our planet is important and that we have to respect and appreciate nature.

8. Convincing reasons why people should recycle domestic waste:

- Trash that is thrown away and not recycled will end up either in a landfill, or incinerated, or will hurt the environment in some other way. The more waste that gets recycled, the less damage is done to the environment.

- Everybody wins with recycling. It is not just beneficial to the environment and a way of tackling global warming, it is also good for businesses and industry because it conserve energy.

That's because it is cheaper to recover raw materials from recycled waste than go through the damaging and expensive process of extracting them from scratch, or by going through the original manufacturing processes.



- Recycling isn't just an issue for one country, it is a problem for the entire human race and therefore a worldwide problem. If the human race carries on as it is, we will run out of places to bury the synthetic waste, or do the environment serious damage, as is happening with global warming.

- Between about 2/3 and 3/4 of household waste is currently recyclable.

The more people who get involved in recycling, the more resources can be made available for recycling and the more pressure can be put on manufacturers and stores to use renewable materials.

- Recycling is not just something that a handful of environmentalists should be involved with – it is something that everybody needs to be doing. There is overwhelming scientific evidence that synthetic waste that isn't recycled is causing serious problems with health, the weather, and the ecosystem generally. While it is true that just a few people recycling 50% of their waste wouldn't make much difference, if the majority of people do it, then it can make a massive difference.

- The more ordinary people who recycle, the stronger the message to the politicians and leaders that strong action is needed on a national and international level. Ordinary people taking responsibility for their waste makes a political difference, as well as a practical one.

- Recycling is a free action. All it will cost people is a small amount of time, sorting their waste into the basic categories and washing out cans and bottles and maybe a minimal amount of fuel for the transport of their recycling boxes and bags to be recycled.

- Trash pollutes the environment generally. It contaminates the sea and the soil, it can be hazardous for bird and animal life, and it undermines local eco-systems. Recycling is the most responsible way in which trash can be dealt with.

- Many the resources that are used to produce products and packaging in the modern world are finite. Plastic requires oil, but the oil will

eventually run out someday. The sooner and more extensively people can use renewal fuels and materials and then recycle them, the better.

- People can cut down on the amount of waste that they generate generally, regardless of whether it is recyclable or not, by thinking about the things that they buy. The less plastic packaging a product has, for instance, the less waste there is left over after they've used or consumed it.

DEMAND FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Adriana CIOBANU, Dorina CHIOSA, Paula ILIEV,
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1. Introduction

What is a Resource Based Economy? I am sure, you all heard about it, but a Resource Based Economy is entirely different than anything that has ever existed in the past. Most decisions were made by kings, politicians, statesmen, but nothing based upon resources.

To better understand the meaning of a Resource Based economy, picture an island somewhere in the South of Pacific. And you really want to know how many people can that island support and to what degree can the extravagance of the island be maintained. First, you have to know how much wood there is, how much water, how much arable land. Once you do a survey of the resources of that island that can best be the method for determining how many people it will support. So, you really need technical competence in order to arrive at decisions that make sense. You can not arrive at decisions that make sense by consensus. Politicians have opinions about everything and information about nothing in particular.

At present we do not have to burn fossil fuels. We do not have to use anything that we could terminate the environment. There are many sources of energy available. Alternative energy solution pushed by the establishment such as nuclear energy is highly insufficient, dangerous and exists only to perpetuate the profit structure that industry is created. When we look beyond the propaganda and self-serving solutions put forth by the energy companies we find a seemingly endless stream clean, abundant and renewable energy for generating power. Solar and wind energy are well known to the public, but the true potential of these mediums remains unexpressed. Solar energy derived from the Sun has such abundance that one hour of light at high noon contains more energy than what the entire consumed in a year. Another good source of renewable energy is geothermal power that utilizes what is called heat mining, which through a simple process using water is able to generate massive amounts of clean energy.

Nowadays, it is entirely possible to develop non-polluting renewable energy systems to operate the entire country and still maintain our natural surroundings. As we said, this could be accomplished by harnessing the sun, the tides, the wind, the geothermal power and other sources.

2. Geothermal

As refinements in conversion technologies increase its feasibility, geothermal power will come to take on a more prominent role. Readily available in various geographical regions throughout the country, both on land and under the sea, this power source alone could provide enough clean energy for the next thousand years.

Theoretically, Romania has a remarkable potential in terms of geothermal energy, being considered the third country in Europe, after

Greece and Italy, in this aspect. It can be used for heating, but also for producing electric current. Now, with the geothermal energy some houses from our country are heated, people also use it to grow plants in greenhouses, to dry crops, to heat water in fish farms, to realize industrial processes (such as pasteurization of milk). In Romania, this kind of green resources is located in the western region, like Banat, Apuseni Mountains, Bihor, so we should work for developing in these areas, methods of extracting more energy. In the case of Romania, here we do not have temperatures of water above 100 degrees Celsius at depths less than 3000 meters. This is one of the reasons why geothermal energy is not seen yet as a solution that completely replaces other energy sources, but only as an assisting energy.

The geothermal map of Romania marks two types of resources according to the distribution of temperature depending on the depth : resources that can be used for thermal energy (temperatures of 6-120 degrees Celsius) and resources that can be used to obtain electricity (water should be over 140 degrees). The first type of resources is specific to the Western Plain (Banat, Bihor, Hunedoara), the second one is specific for the Oaş-Gutâi – Țibleș, Călimani- Gurghiu – Harghita. These zones could be more developed if this abundance of geothermal energy would be used for the benefit of the people. Our society does not image how much is our geothermal potential, so they can't ask for renewable energy.

The best solution is to involve the government and public authorities in these issues by giving people subsidies, to encourage people develop such projects that will use geothermal energy for economic activities, such as growing plants, fish farms. So, step by step, the western zone of our country will completely turn to a renewable way of using natural resources,

and at the same time, the economy will benefit from it. Another way to convince people to demand this kind of energy is to increase taxes on electricity and to propose low geothermal taxes.

3. Solar Energy

The timeline of solar cells begins in the 19th century when it is observed that the presence of sunlight is capable of generating usable electrical energy. It took a long time and a lot of money to reach nowadays performance in solar energy. There are several ways to harness solar energy: photovoltaics (also called solar electric), solar heating & cooling, concentrating solar power and passive solar. The first three are active solar systems, which use mechanical or electrical devices that convert the sun's heat or light to another form of usable energy.

Many are familiar with solar cells that are described as being photovoltaic, irrespective of whether the source is sunlight or an artificial light. The cells are made of semiconductor materials like those found in computer chips. When sunlight hits the cells, it knocks electrons loose from their atoms. As the electrons flow through the cell, they generate electricity.

It is a technology used to harness the sun's energy and make it useable. Solar photovoltaic modules generate electricity from sunlight, which can be fed into the mains electricity supply of a building or sold to the public electricity grid. Reducing the need for fossil fuel generation, the growing grid-connected solar PV sector across the globe is helping create jobs, enabling families and businesses to save money, and cut greenhouse emissions.

Solar energy is lauded as an inexhaustible fuel source - and often noise-free. PV electricity is one of the best options for sustainable future

energy requirements of the world. At present, the PV market is growing rapidly at an annual rate of 35-40%.

Solar heating & cooling technologies collect the thermal energy from the sun and use this heat to provide hot water, space heating, cooling and pool heating for residential, commercial and industrial applications. These technologies displace the need to use electricity or natural gas.

Concentrating solar power systems generate solar power by using mirrors or lenses to concentrate a large area of sunlight onto a small area. Passive Solar buildings are designed and oriented to collect, store, and distribute the heat energy from sunlight to maintain the comfort of the occupants without the use of moving parts or electronics. Though costly to implement, solar energy offers a clean, renewable source of power and help cut global carbon emissions.

Some disadvantages are that solar energy doesn't work at night without a storage device such as a battery, and cloudy weather can make the technology unreliable during the day. Solar technologies are also very expensive and require a lot of land area to collect the sun's energy at rates useful to lots of people. Despite this, solar energy use has surged at about 20 percent a year over the past 15 years, thanks to rapidly falling prices and gains in efficiency. Japan, Germany, and the United States are major markets for solar cells. With tax incentives, and efficient coordination with energy companies, solar electricity can often pay for itself in five to ten years.

We must appreciate what we have and what nature given us and must choose green energy. The costs of renewable energy technologies have declined steadily, and are projected to drop even more and this encourages

people to drop fuel energy. Say NO to a dirty environment, and Welcome to a clean and healthy planet!

4. Bioenergy

Bioenergy is one of the largest renewable sources of energy nowadays, representing 10% of world's energy supply. It might serve as a basic energy source for cooking and space heating, but just with clean fuels and adequate biomass cook stoves, it can have a lower impact on the environment.

Biomass is any organic decomposable matter, derived from plants or animals and it can be renewed. Woods, wood agricultural crops, herbaceous and woody energy crops can also serve as biomass, as well as municipal organic wastes, or manure.

The carbon used to construct biomass is absorbed from the atmosphere as carbon dioxide (CO₂) by plant life, using energy from the sun. Plants may subsequently be eaten by animals and thus converted into animal biomass. However the primary absorption is performed by plants.

If plant material is not eaten it is generally either broken down by micro-organisms or burned:

- If broken down it releases the carbon back to the atmosphere, mainly as either carbon dioxide (CO₂) or methane (CH₄), depending upon the conditions and processes involved.
- If burned the carbon is returned to the atmosphere as CO₂.

Categories of biomass materials:

The realities of the economics mean that high value material for which there is an alternative market, such as good quality, large timber, are very unlikely to become available for energy applications. However there are huge resources of residues, co-products and waste that exist in the

which could potentially become available, in quantity, at relatively low cost, or even negative cost where there is currently a requirement to pay for disposal.

There are five basic categories of material:

- Virgin wood, from forestry, arboricultural activities or from wood processing;
- Energy crops: high yield crops grown specifically for energy applications;
- Agricultural residues: residues from agriculture harvesting or processing;
- Food waste, from food and drink manufacture, preparation and processing, and post-consumer waste;
- Industrial waste and co-products from manufacturing and industrial processes.

Why use biomass fuels?

Biomass is a renewable, low carbon fuel, Its production and use also brings additional environmental and social benefits. Correctly managed, biomass is a sustainable fuel that can deliver a significant reduction in net carbon emissions when compared with fossil fuels.

- Biomass is a “carbon lean” fuel producing a fraction of the Carbon emissions of fossil fuels.
- It can be sourced locally, from within the UK, on an indefinite basis, contributing to security of supply.
- The establishment of local networks of production and usage, allows financial and environmental costs of transport to be minimized.

- The use of biomass fuel provides an economic incentive to manage woodland which improves biodiversity.
- Many biomass fuels generate lower levels of such atmospheric pollutants as sulphur dioxide, that contributes to 'acid rain'. Modern biomass combustion systems are highly sophisticated, offering combustion efficiency and emission levels comparable with the best fossil fuel boilers.
- Biomass residues, arising, co-products and waste not used for energy, or some other application will usually rot. This will generate CO₂ in any case, and may also produce methane (CH₄), a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than CO₂.

EU supporting:

Research and Technology Development (RTD) plays a key role in bioenergy and the EU has supported bioenergy-related RTD under several successive Framework Programmes, covering the whole chain from feedstock production to end-use.

Since starting in 2007, the current Framework Programme (FP7) has been focusing on biofuels and renewable electricity production from biomass. The predominance of biofuel projects was a direct result from the high oil prices during that period. Thus far, more than 20 projects have been supported with around EUR 70 million. International cooperation has become a central issue with coordinated calls to address certain areas, e.g. power generation with Russia and biofuels with Latin America. Coordinated and joint calls are used to a much larger extent than in previous years. Case in point is the joint call "Biorefineries" that was published in 2008 and brought together four different research Areas (Energy,

Materials, Environment, Agriculture). Other priorities of current activities are new feedstocks (aquatic biomass & waste) and biorefineries.

5. Wind Energy

Wind energy or wind power is a renewable energy source and offers many advantages, which explains why it is one of the fastest-growing energy sources in the world.

Unlike many types of electricity sources, wind power depends only of windy weather. Wind power is inexhaustible, wind is actually a form of solar energy, it is caused by the heating of the atmosphere by the sun, the rotation of the Earth and Earth's surface irregularities. For as long as the sun shines and the wind is created and the energy produced can be harnessed.


People should realize the benefits of wind energy, it does not use water like conventional electricity sources, it does not alter the environment like dams do, and they can be placed on the surface of the sea or ocean where the wind blows almost every day.

The estimated cost of transitioning from plants power to wind power is reaching a parity to the conventional power sources. The wind power is even cheaper than solar energy that should make people think to change their preferences. The improvements in just the past five years are striking and I believe that in just a few years it will become even cheaper due to the researchers and engineers that are improving the technologies continuously.


We should take example of Puerto Rico which has created The Green Energy Fund(GEF) which aimed to increase green energy production and promote sustainability in Puerto Rico.

The same thing should EU do, to create the “European Green Energy Fund” to promote green energy, especially wind power by granting subsidies to each member which in its turn to direct the money to people.

6. Hydroelectric Power

Hydroelectric power is one of the old but most useful energy on earth. Hydroelectric power is a renewable source of energy, which is only made by the force of falling water where the flow of water can be used with benefit and used for powering the generator as a potential energy. Hydroelectric energy is economically profitable and acceptable in terms of environment impact. According to research data, the picture on the right have shown that over 7% of energy were hydroelectric conventional.

To produce Hydroelectric is to convert the power of moving water into electrical power, there will be a dam that is used to store a large amount of water on one side, which often the places that got hydroelectric plants would be mountainous countries so that the depth of fall will be would to produce more energy. As how the picture had shown on the left, when the sluice gates opened, water released and went through the penstock, gravitational energy makes the water on top of the dam flows down to the bottom of the dam. It hits the turbine in a high speed in rotation, which harness the kinetic energy of water and transform it into rotational energy while turning the generator. But during the energy transform, sound and heat energy was wasted in the drop of water, the turning of the turbine and the force of the generator. Kinetic energy will be transferred to electrical energy through the wires. Then, Electrical energy created would be stored in the powerhouse or the reservoir beside the dam. Last, the transmission

lines would carry the electricity to home and business that we use for daily life.

For the environment, hydroelectric is a great choice of renewable since that it didn't require fuel but only water. After building a power plant, it can last for a long time with low operations and maintenance costs; it is an unlimited natural source. Hydroelectric power plant and last 50-100 years, which mean it is a long term use energy that gives a lot on benefits. Water cycle keep continue so rain will bring in more water, and water is the only factor that hydroelectric power plant is needed to produce energy. Moreover, it can be used to protect from floods and droughts since it helps on collecting the rainwater and stops the water from coming in. It also reduces acid rain and smog since it generate substitute from fuel. Also, it didn't produce any green house gases or any other emissions. This helps on the climate change and specifically improves the air pollution. Hydroelectric had been used over the world, USA, China, Canada, Brazil, Russia etc.

According to 'Use and Capacity of Global Hydropower Increase' post in Washington, D.C on January 17,2012,it was written 'Hydropower use reached a record 3,427 terawatt-hours, or about 16.1 percent of global electricity consumption, by the end of 2010, continuing the rapid rate of increase experienced between 2003 and 2009.' It states that the use of hydroelectric energy had been increasing in different country and it's likely to continue to grow in the future.

However, hydroelectric have a couples of disadvantages. It requires a large area near the lake or river that affected the animal's environment and aquatic ecosystems. Dams are building to stop the water from one side gong to another side. At the same time, it stops the animals' to migrate and

disturb their mating seasons. Fishes and other creatures might get stuck in the turbine and cause to death. This will affect the ecological balance. Not only animals, but also building a hydroelectric dam will need to relocate the citizens there to make their way. In North America, the dam had causes decrease of the salmon population. The turbines and the quality of water condition were harmed salmon Spawn, which decrease their migration. Moreover, it affects lots of the surrounding area that create noise pollution. Large dam will even affect the water supply to neighbor countries and water conditions quality. Although it is a long term use, but it requires high investment cost, a long time and lots of employee to build a hydroelectric power plant.

The world biggest Dam, Three Gorges Dam had got a massive impact on the development of hydroelectric and Bring up lots of political problem and argument in China. The Three Gorges Dam was started in 1993 and finished in 2011. In the past 14 years, the displacement had involved 1.13 million people and it causes big dislocation that displaces more than 300,000 people. The whole project causes \$24billion on twelve hydro mega-bases. At that time, 67% of energy supplies in China were from Coal and 6% were from Hydropower. But as the cost of the coal increase, China then decided to choose solar, wind, biomass or hydropower as their main energy supply. They decided to choose hydroelectric power since they saw that there are many samples of successful dams in United State. 100,000 people protested but it didn't stop the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. "Past experience has also taught that hydropower development will not necessarily improve local social and economic conditions," the authors wrote. "There is widespread concern that, although the hydropower stations are as modern as those in Europe, the residents will become as poor as people in Africa. The construction of the Three Gorges Dam destroyed

some ancient temples and landmark. Mr. Wang from the China state council had once warned the government about the hidden dangers of the environment and the endangered drinking water in different places.

Also, Deforestation and soil erosion had become another serious problem cause by the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. Today, The Three Gorges Dam was a successful piece that the share prices of the company can get \$1.2 billion in a day. However, the construction had displaced 23 million people in China and now people are saying that the government should rebuild the community. Although the government had let them return to the village, there was nothing left and not enough money to rebuild. But on the other side, the Three Gorges Dam did help China on the environment, social impacts, economics issue and the energy situation. Dam had helped China on controlling flood, water shortages and river transport, which the cost of the construction had been recovered and is now making money for the resettlement funds.

In conclusion, renewable energy is the best solution for cleaning up the environment. Although it brings up serious political and some economy problem, it gives more benefits to the environment than other energy. All energy got its own advantage and disadvantage, but to choose a good kind of alternative sources of energy, renewable energy would be a great type of energy that mostly only give benefits to the environment. If people don't start using alternative energy and continues to pollute the earth, one day the energy would be used up and would come to an end.

ENCOURAGING RESEARCH ON ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

Simona FARCAS, Angela TELEVCA

To understand the significance of the sustainable development idea represents, nowadays, a major reference to the national and international policies. The non-governmental organizations have given an important input to the promotion of this concept, complementary fact to the actions taken by states and companies to build a future based on the new approaches of production and consumption.

Whether we are talking about a simple idea, a concept or an action programme/ an agenda, the sustainable development starts to get a shade of advertising argument/ a marketing strategy, each of these trying to change its direction by following its own projects and intentions. Given these considerations, the notional sphere has undergone changes, as Sylvie Brunel says in her paper *Le développement durable*. These can be classified under the form of 3M: les menaces that press down the planet (the threats), les misères of the humanity (needs, poverty), les manques of governance at global level (deficiencies)². Viewed from this perspective, the sustainable development tends to seem an utopia, a schematic assembly of ideas.

World Commission on Environment of Development – WCED (1987). According to WCED, the sustainable development is intended to answer the present needs of the humanity without compromising the ability of the next generations to answer their own needs.

Following this perspective, each of us needs to be responsible for their own activities of meeting needs, we must not forget, not even for a moment, of the future generations, we must be aware of the impact of our decisions and actions on the environment, thus contributing to the health of our generations and the future one. The limitation of resources and the rarity impose on people an additional concern regarding their allocation, fact pointed out also by WCED. The concern for the effective allocation of limited means needs to have as a protective point a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the course of investments, the orientation of the technological development, and the institutional changes must be made concordantly to our future, as well as the present needs.

Europe 2020 is a strategy adopted by the European Union, whose purpose is, mainly, of supporting the economic growth and employment, trying to diminish the economic crisis at a global and European level. The duration undertaken for these strategies is 2010-2020. Besides the overcoming of the crisis, the European Union aims to find efficient solutions for a smart, ecological and inclusive economic growth.

The sustainable growth supports the economy by using more efficiently the resources. At the same time, it is possible to speak of a green and a more competitive economy. Europe may develop new technologies, including green technologies that would allow the extension of internet networks for enhancing the competitive advantage of affairs. The domains on which the European Union should focus its actions are: competitiveness,

the fight against climate change, clean and efficient energy. As concerns the competitiveness, the European states need to broaden their comparative advantage of productivity in relation to the other main competitors in the area trade.

A main advantage is constituted by the key membership of the Union in the green solutions area, given their innovation and application. The fight against climate change carries the reduction of carbon emissions, as well as the usage of the new technologies for growing the efficiency of resources usage. Furthermore, it is required the capacity to deal with the natural disasters, but also their prevention. The clean and efficient energy offers both financial (reduction of the gas and oil consumption) and social benefits (usage of renewable resources).

The initiative a resource-efficient Europe has as its main objective to reduce the dependency between the economic growth and the usage of resources, as well as the reduction of carbon emissions and the improvement of the energy security level. The industrial policy in the context of globalization guides the actions of the industrial sector by encouraging the entrepreneurship, but also aid measures to reduce the challenges for the purpose of creating an ecological economy.

The success or the failure of the Europe 2020 strategy depends, undoubtedly, on the European institutions and the member states ability to adopt and formulate clear the definite objectives. To assure a sustainable future, we need to look by now beyond the short-term priorities. The strategy shows that Europe is capable to assure a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth ... and to leave a clear direction to our societies. 7

The sustainable development – concept on the basis of which are being developed the activities of the European Union – it is not being

limited solely to measure for controlling the environmental concerns. The sustainable development policies carry the ethic mark. The development of the European policy in the relation to the environment, the creation of institutions and organism to survey the application of the legislation in force, have received as aid enforcement strategies of the sustainability principle in the sectoral policies.

The sustainable development is the pillar that guides the community activities. The cooperation between the Member States of the Union and the rest of the world is indispensable if the aim is a fight against environment concern. By the measures taken, it is encouraged the efficient usage of natural resources and the increasing of interest for the public health. These actions target, as shown in the European legislation, a sustainable and balanced development. The decision of the sectorial policies must take into account the environmental policy, and the integration will allow the addressing problems much more coherently. The economic and environmental aspect are complementary and indissociably. The green economy allows a cutting of environmental cost due to an efficient usage of resources, and the new technologies develop a growth of the employment. The competitiveness within the companies generate an economic growth. Therefore, the sustainable development guides the activities within the European Union.

Tackling the environmental problems does not exclude transportation policy - road, air, rail or sea transportation. European strategy aims incorporating environmental requirements in European transportation policy. A modern transportation system must be a sustainable system, viewed from three perspectives: economic, social and environmental. European Union instruments and policies must work for sustainable

transport and solutions are needed to be found to the current issues urgently. The solutions proposed by the White Paper are moving towards rebalancing ways of transportation, removal of blockages, placing the customers at the heart of transportation policy and managing the effects of globalization on transportation system.

The main difficulties facing the European Union in the transportation sector, as deriving from the White Paper are:

- uneven growth in the use of different ways of transportation;
- congestion / crowding of major roads and rail;
- environmental pollution and public health.

In order to have an efficient and sustainable transportation system, smart technology must be developed. It is necessary to educate citizens and support initiatives to develop new routes for transportation through funding. Developing a trans-European network remains one of the essential condition to rebalance ways of transportation and this is impossible without political support. Public transportation must replace personal car, which would be possible only if it offers good advantages for customers. Some of the main factors that can determine people to use public transportation instead of a personal car may be the price of fuel, time and the high pollution on environment. All the factors mentioned above, can not be included only within a one common policy at EU level regarding transportation. Sustainable development involves addressing from different perspectives. Thus, sustainable transport strategy must be integrated policies such as territorial and urban policy, social policy and education policy and budget, research - development.

A performing industry generates positive externalities on the entire economy. Investments for environmental protection, smart technologies

and environmentally friendly production processes have enabled the industry to take into account the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the relationship between production and atmospheric pollutants. Industrial policy must find the right balance to achieve strong economic growth, making use of the resources necessary to meet environmental requirements, but also social. Besides the aspects of macro – economics, influence should emphasize innovation and growth entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Therefore, sustainable development is becoming an engine of economic growth and productivity in European Union. Entrepreneurs should create sustainable value, which will enable commercialization of products that respect the environment standards and stimulate new markets for their products in the context of consumer demand.

The environment is a matter of common concern across the European Union, such that Member States have transferred certain elements of sovereignty to the EU level over development decisions that are likely to have significant environmental impacts, irrespective of whether these impacts are felt across national borders. In other words, the EIA Directive was adopted in order to protect the environment throughout the European Union. The same applies to the subsequent legislation on strategic environmental assessment. It involves ensuring that other areas such as agriculture, energy, transport, fisheries, regional development, research, innovation and external aid take fully into account the environmental consequences of their policy and funding decisions. This mainstreaming will ensure a more coherent approach towards environmental challenges and maximize synergies.

Environmental protection and maintaining a competitive EU presence on the world market. Environmental policy can play a vital role in creating jobs and stimulating investment. "Green Growth" involves integrated development of policies that promote environmentally sustainable framework. Environmental innovations can be implemented and exported, thus strengthening competitiveness and improving the quality of life in Europe. The environment does not stop at EU borders. Air, water, oceans and wildlife do not respect borders. The European Union must encourage neighboring countries and not only them, but all the countries worldwide to adopt high environmental standards. The higher the standards will be, the better will be the quality of our environment and our lives.



**Think Green, Act Green:
Environmental Protection
in a United Europe**

PROMOTING DEMAND FOR THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

**Alexandra-Ioana PÎRJOL, Elena PĂUN,
Georgiana-Mihaela PÎRJOL, Dan SĂVOAIA**

1. Introduction

Have you ever wonder how important is to preseve the environment? That at some point, the resources will be gone and our life can't relay on chemicals? We all want a life that is healthy and full of energy. Where is Romania when we talk about this aspect? How sustainable is the Romanian agriculture? We will try to light up those aspects and we will try to emphasize the importance of investment and the education, in order to achieve sustainability goals.

2. Sustainable agriculture

Agricultural Area is a distinct entity defined by cultivated land, pastures and meadow, and arrangements introduced by humans that generate specific forms of organization of space. Agriculture, in general, is one of

the oldest preoccupations for human beings. Since ages, their first priority was to survive, therefore food is an absolute necessity and many could thrive if they were dedicated. When we think about agriculture, we should consider the importance that this branch has.

Firstly, we have to consider the big impact that plants have it on the environment. Through the process of photosynthesis they consume the CO₂ from the atmosphere and release O₂ reducing the pollution. But that's not all. The environmental impact of agriculture involves a variety of factors, from soil, to water, animals and people. If we choose a correct form of growing our crops, we complete a cycle that works into our favor, living a healthier life. Unfortunately, agriculture has become an agent of its own environmental pollution. The irrational use of agricultural machinery and improper performance of agricultural work led in time to soil compaction, destruction of their relatively large surfaces.

Secondly, in the world exist millions of people dying from starvation because governments are not able to take advantage from their land or supporting the local farmers. Here are some statistics from WORLD FOOD PROGRAM:

- **Some 795 million people** in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth.
- The vast majority of the world's hungry people **live in developing countries**, where 12.9 percent of the population is undernourished.
- Poor nutrition causes **nearly half (45%) of deaths** in children under five - 3.1 million children each year.

Sustainable agriculture is a long-term goal action which seeks to overcome those problems and limitations faced by conventional agriculture, society in general, to ensure economic viability, a healthy

environment and acceptance of alternative farming system. Sustainable agriculture relates to the understanding of the relationships between the different parts of an ecosystem: more exactly the relationship between organisms and their environment. As every domain, sustainable agriculture has its strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths of sustainable agriculture should be:

- quality material resources;
- fertile land and favorable environment;
- continuous improvement specialists and agricultural workers, and the provision of expert advice;
- existence of European grant programs;
- favorable impact of European bodies on policy makers in Romania;
- diversification of communication tools;
- abundant labor.

Unfortunately, there are weaknesses that must be prevented, so that they can be identified to stimulate the main directions practicing sustainable agriculture in Romania.

The main weaknesses are:

- the lack of material and financial resources;
- reduced access to some means of communication;
- lack of involvement of scientific research (for financial reasons);
- deficient system of pay leading to migration specialists and domestic labor to other countries;
- lack of motivation and manifest lack of interest;
- high costs for upgrading technology;
- outdated mentality.

Sustainable agriculture is meant to offer high yields with the most efficiency causing the natural systems the minimal harm. The most common sustainable agriculture techniques used by farmers today to achieve the goals of weed control, pest control, disease' control, erosion control and high soil quality are crop rotation, cover crops, soil enrichment, natural pest predators and bio intensive integrated pest management.

- *Crop rotation* means that different crops can be grown in different stages and with this method the crops will have the necessary nutrients and substances to grow healthy. The soil in which the plants prosper could be enriched with waste that comes from yards and local organic farms. As an example, in Romania corn crops could be rotated with soy (soy is known as a plant that replenishes the nutrients in soils), so this rotation could help controlling the corn borers or the other pests but also considering that soy helps with nitrogen being fixated in the soil the demand for chemical fertilizers goes down.
- *Cover crops* are a good way to avoid using herbicides, insecticides, and fertilizers. Farmers prefer to plant clover or oats in order to keep their land clean of weeds, preventing the corrosion and enhancing the productive qualities of the soil between the planting seasons.
- *Soil enrichment.* In the agricultural ecosystems, the soil is the most important and cherished resource. A healthy land keeps alive many organisms, such as: beneficial microbes, worms and insects. Therefore, farmers must pay attention when using pesticides. A good soil can give back significant yields and can produce crops that are less vulnerable to pests. On the soils that have been overused a higher fertilizer quantity is needed to produce a good amount of crops. Soil quality can be maintained and enhanced in many ways, including

leaving crop residues in the field after harvest, plowing under cover crops, or adding composted plant material or animal manure.

- *Soil treatment* is an ecological alternative to chemically sterilization of the soil. As an example steaming is a method worth mentioning. This method involves introducing steam into the ground through different pathways. Steaming can remove some pests (insects, bacteria) and can even increase soil temperatures. Solarizing is based on the same principle, used to increase the temperature of the soil to kill pathogens and pests. Certain crops act as natural bio fumigants, releasing pest suppressing compounds. Mustard, radishes, and other plants in the brassica family are best known for this effect. There exist varieties of mustard shown to be almost as effective as synthetic fumigants at a similar or lesser cost.
- *Bio intensive Integrated Pest Management*. One of the most promising technologies is the control of pests through integrated pest management (IPM). This approach relies to the greatest possible extent on biological rather than chemical measures, and emphasizes the prevention of pest problems with crop rotation; the reintroduction of natural, disease-fighting microbes into plants/soil, and release of beneficial organisms that prey on the pests. Once a particular pest problem is identified, responses include the use of sterile males, bio control agents like ladybugs. Chemical pesticides are only used as a last resort. The capacity for ecosystem services to be strong enough to allow a reduction in use of synthetic, nonrenewable inputs whilst maintaining or even boosting yields has been the subject of much debate. Recent work in the globally important irrigated rice production system of East Asia has suggested that - in relation to pest management at least - promoting the ecosystem service of biological

control using nectar plants can reduce the need for insecticides by 70% whilst delivering a 5% yield advantage compared with standard practice.

In Romania there are serious difficulties in the current agricultural reality that make the notion of sustainable agriculture. In the context in which it appears that natural resources are very limited, quantitatively and qualitatively, it is natural to show signs of concern about the prospects of development of the sector that provides the basic needs of human existence. It is important to focus on the identification and recognition of current conditions that Romanian agriculture has to determine whether this industry is ready to embrace a new direction of development: sustainability.

Romania is “a land of lands”, with a total of 23.8 million of hectares, from which 13.3 million is used in agriculture. Romanian agriculture represents 6% of the GDP, compared to USA which is only 1.7%. As far as the arable land of Romania is, if we will take into consideration the population, each individual has 0.41 hectares which is a way higher value than other countries of Europe and it is double than the average for the EU. There is a huge potential for Romania related to agriculture and could be a business material. The investors saw the huge potential and also, other important elements such as the lower price of the land, the workforce that is cheaper, the liberty of commerce as part of the EU and the funds. The main production comes from cereals, vegetables and watermelons and potatoes.

As we refer to sustainable agriculture, which is a form of agriculture that enables the production of healthy food without compromising future generations' ability to do the same, food production should never come at the expense of human health. Development of the sustainable agriculture in Romania involves long term investment in appropriate equipment, good irrigation systems and drainage, protective forest field system against floods, as well as strengthening agricultural holdings and food processing enterprises. "A community that invests in agriculture is a rich community", they said because it creates hundreds of jobs and can help financially an entire region. In Romania is needed a bigger support from the state in order to have performance. Small farmers are complaining that big stores around the country choose foreign, genetically modified products in their detriment, while organic Romanian products are wasted. That is why they need politicians to implement laws which capitalize their work. As a result, with good earnings, farmers afford to invest more, making use of the uncultivated land, bringing more money for the community. Obviously, an ecological agriculture is more profitable.

The investment plan is good, but if we look down to the pipeline, it is a lot of work. People that own lands prefer to use it as personal purpose. Sometimes, the methods that they use are time consuming, mostly manual and with less technology. Do you want Cinderella's carriage? Don't worry, is still present in some villages from Romania! On the brighter side, their production is 100% bio and the taste is authentic.

3. Conclusion

In our opinion, the best way to have a functional system is to educate children, specially, for the future. If they would realize the agriculture's potential in this country, than the food problem is not only diminished by several percent, but the outcrops have conditions for an organic product (which is our purpose). Another important aspect is the investment in agriculture. As we saw, there is a huge potential for Romania to grow in this direction and if we remember, Romania was so called Europe's breadbasket. We could make this work again with the right laws, investments and people. The humanity's fate is strong related to sustainable agriculture and is part of our existence as human beings.

SUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION OF FORESTS

Cristina SNATINSCHI, Alina TENEA

1. Introduction

”What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Despite international efforts to save forests, global damage continues. Recent studies have shown that deforestation is steadily increasing and sustainable forest management is avoided.

This situation imposes an international need for an institutional, political framework to support the efforts of countries to manage and conserve forests for a long time. Taking into account the primary impact of policy decisions and actions on forests, the international actions that exist have little use in the effort to promote sustainable forests development.

Globally, the phenomenon of deforestation and forest degradation does not show signs of stopping. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe have recently published several reports on changes in the size of forest areas. According to data released by The Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations, over the past decade, 15.4 million hectares of forests have disappeared on average each year. Analysts of this study said that forest deforestation would have the biggest impact on biodiversity. Besides deforestation, also the rest of forest resources are affected, they have undergone strong pressures in recent years. Forest exploitation activities have increased, and new tree plantations have failed to keep pace with deforestation. In the 1990s, for example, an average of six hectares of forests was grubbed up for each planted tree.

The World Conservation Monitoring Center believes that the biggest problem this phenomenon represents is the loss of habitat, with the greatest impact on biodiversity. Degradation and fragmentation of forests diminish biological diversity. Removing certain plant and animal species, may affect the life cycle of others. Undoubtedly, many plant and animal populations cannot live for a long time in a fragmented habitat. In addition, deforestation is behind the annual loss of 2,5 gigatons of biomass above ground.

There is no way we can underestimate the importance of forests. The forests provide the indispensable basic needs for our survival, from the air we breathe to the woods we use. Besides being a home for animals and humans, forests also prevent soil erosion, offer watershed protection and diminish climate change. Yet, although we understand how much we depend on forests, we are still allowing them to vanish.

The studies in the field bring to our attention the following data:

- "about 30% of the world's land surface is forest;
- over 2 billion people rely on forests for shelter, livelihoods, water, food and fuel security;

- 300 million people live in forests, including 60 million indigenous people;
- more than 13 million people across the world are employed in the formal forest sector.”¹

On a global scale, the world lost around 129 million ha of forest, between 1990 and 2015. This led to irreversible changes in the ecosystem of our planet. It is important to understand that by taking away forests, we determine the entire ecosystem of the planet to fall apart; thus, the conservation and the sustainable exploitation of forests is a current priority for the entire world.

Focusing on the territory of the European Union it is known that “forests and other wooded land cover over 40% of the EU’s land area, with a great diversity of character across regions. Afforestation and natural succession have increased the EU’s forest area by around 0.4% per year over recent decades. Globally, however, forest area continues to decrease.”²

In case of Romania, forests do not only play biological, ecological and environmental roles. Expanding over a surface of 6 249 million ha, forests represent 26.3% of Romania’s land area, contributing to economic and social growth. This nation also has tight roots with its forests concerning country’s historical and cultural development; thus, taking care of the forests is not only a matter of necessity in the modern world that is facing different environmental challenges, it is also a matter of being

¹ http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/deforestation/importance_forests/

² http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:21b27c38-21fb-11e3-8d1c-01aa75ed71a1.0022.01/DOC_1&format=PDF

thankful and appreciative for all the natural capital this country has on its territory.

As mentioned previously, forests cover more than 40% of the European Union's land area, with 60% of them being owned by private owners, and the remainder belonging to the state and public owners. The EU vision is that forests are playing a multifunctional role, serving to social, economic and environmental purposes. Although the forests are often underestimated, on a socio-economic base, they contribute to the development of rural areas and the supply of jobs for millions. About half of the EU's total renewable energy consumption is represented by forest biomass. In these terms, it is essential to ensure the sustainable forest management, in order to harvest all the benefits the forest can give as without diminishing the possibilities of the future. The proper definition for sustainable forest management was given during the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held in Helsinki, 1993:

“Sustainable forest management means using forests and forest land in a way, and a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.”

Although the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU has no specific references about the sustainable exploitation of forests, the EU is promoting and contributing to the implementation of sustainable forest management through a variety of its policies. “Important developments include the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, the Resource Efficiency Roadmap, Rural Development Policy, Industrial Policy, the EU

Climate and Energy Package with its 2020 targets, the Plant Health and Reproductive Materials Strategy and the Biodiversity and Bioeconomy Strategies.”³

Sustainable exploitation of forests contributes to several societal objectives, as for example:

- Developing rural and urban communities: forests provide economic welfare and jobs, in special for rural areas.
- Promoting and ensuring the competitiveness and future development of the EU’s Forest-based Industries: wood represents a completely natural, reusable, renewable and recyclable raw material, which along with non-wood forest products, gain market interest, especially increasing the income in a low-carbon, green economy.
- Mitigating climate change: forests are vulnerable to climate change, therefore it is necessary to maintain and enhance their adaptive capacity. Forests areas play an important role in diminishing the extreme weather events being able to moderate temperatures and reduce the speed of wind.
- Improving the knowledge base: in order to understand the complex environmental and societal changes and the challenges the forest sector is facing nowadays, it is indispensable to strengthen our knowledge about forests and their sustainable management.
- Determining the Member States to communicate and collaborate together in order to ensure the harmonized management of EU forests. The communication between the Member States on the topic of sustainable exploitation of forests is a particular challenge,

³ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:21b27c38-21fb-11e3-8d1c-01aa75ed71a1.0022.01/DOC_1&format=PDF

because most people are not aware of its importance. There is need in improving the links with the forest-related policies.

Currently significant EU funding target the forest sector, a spending of about 5 billion euros being expected for 2014-2020. This spending are supposed to ensure the EU forests are managed accordingly to sustainable forest management principles. The guiding principles refer to sustainable forest exploitation, resource efficiency and global forest responsibility. Now there is no common EU forest policy and the coordination between the existing sectorial policies is poor, thus a strategy for forest sector is necessary. This will enhance forest's capacity to adapt to developments in various policy areas.

Being a member of the European Union Romania is supposed to meet all the European standards; the forest sector is not an exception. The studies in this field show however, that a lot of improvement must be done by Romania in order to be able to achieve the principles of the EU policies and to ensure the sustainable forest management.

“The forest area is 6 249 million ha, representing 26.3 percent of Romanian's land area. Ninety-six percent of the forest land is publicly owned and four percent is private property.”⁴ Over the last decades, the deforestation rates are higher than the once stipulated by law through the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC). Fortunately, the state mobilized its forces, taking the situation under its control. Currently the legislative document that covers the forest sector is the Forestry Code of 1961. A new code has recently been prepared, which will both integrate previous laws and regulations and recent legislative changes. The key modifications will cover the introduction of private ownership, limitations of log and

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3722E/w3722e23.htm>

increased penalties for forest offences. As a result of a governmental decision, the responsibility for the proper administration and exploitation of most public owned forests lays on the Autonomous Administration of Forests, ROMSILVA R.A. Concerning forest extension, “according to the Land Law of 1991, degraded or polluted lands with productive potential are established with restoration perimeters.”⁵ Thirty-eight percent out of 16.9 million ha, that represent the area outside the forest land, are characterized by degradation, afforestation representing the only way to reinstate the mentioned areas in a productive cycle. Perhaps, the new Forestry Code needs to enforce the development of specific extension services and determine close collaboration between forestry institutions.

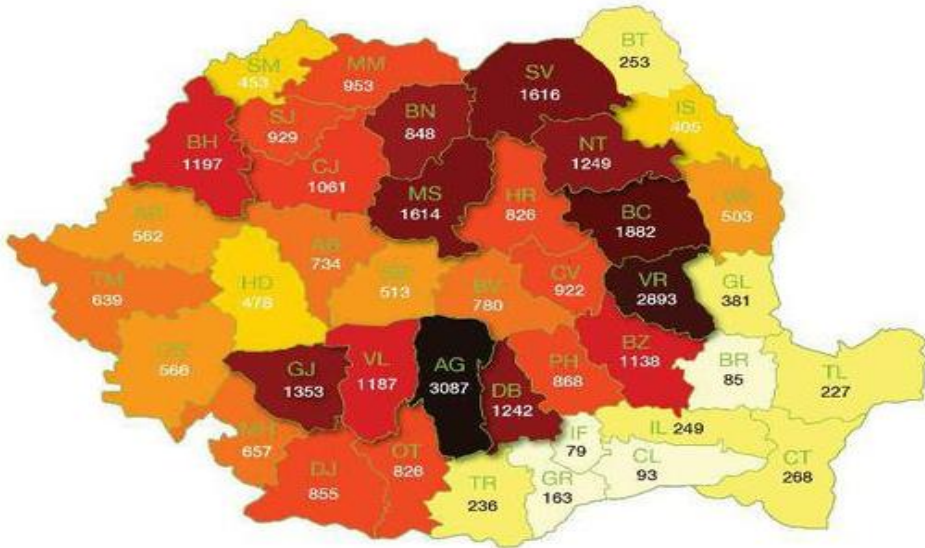
One of the most severe issues the Romania is facing in the forest sector is the illegal logging. The Greenpeace data states that Romania is losing three ha of forest every hour. According to data provided by authorities, 34 870 cases of illegal logging were recorded in 2015. Countries that registered the highest number of cases of illegal cutting of trees in 2015 are Argeş- 3 087 cases; Vrancea- 2 893 cases; Bacău-1 882 cases. Suceava and Mureş reported 1 616, respectively 1 614 cases of illegal logging pursuant to Greenpeace Romania.

The number of cases of illegal logging is so high, because there is no empowered legislation to take care of these iniquities. The present Ministry of Waters, Forest and Environmental Protection along with the Ministry of Industry with the Department of Wood Industry seem to be unable to protect forest areas from illegal logging. They also show their indifference towards multiple cases of illegal logging and wood transportation by major foreign companies. A relevant example is the case of the Austrian company

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3722E/w3722e23.htm>

Schweighofer-Holzindustrie, the largest processor of timber in Romania. Most Romanians believe that the company is willing to purchase illegally logged timber. Even more, it promises bonuses for exceeding the amount of wood delivered, even though the company knows that this is not possible unless violating the law. Still, no actions were taking to properly investigate the cases and find the truth. Another fact that explains the increasing number of illegal logging cases is the corruption that still persists in the Romania and creates a permissive atmosphere for these illicit actions.

Figure 1 *The map of illegal logging in Romania. Source: Greenpeace*



Taking in consideration the actual data concerning the illegal logging, it is obvious that Romania is not able to guarantee sustainable exploitation of forests. As a member state, however, Romania is required to make the necessary changes to reach the 2020 goals about forest sector, and environment domain in general. The European Union goals can be promoted and achieved in Romania through a set of changes, modernizations and developments.

The first field that should be changed or at least improved in order to achieve the EU goals in Romania is the legislative one. There is a need in a legalized code that will specifically cover all the matter arising concerning the forest sector and will establish the legal rules for forest management. It is also important for this Forest Code to specify the punishment for the illegal actions, and to state the ways of reinstating the degraded areas in the productive cycle.

In addition, the code should determine the accepted limits of forest exploitation for the national and foreign companies, prohibiting any possible misunderstandings or multiple interpretations of the rules, which may be used by companies interested in enhancing their income of wood, or non-wood forest products. The Forest Code must limit the log and increase the penalties for forest offences.

Adjacent to legislative changes, modification should appear in the judicial sector. There is a need for a just and fair judicial system, which will be able to ensure that all the rules are obeyed and all the offenders are punished respectively to their offense.

All throughout the government institutions there is a need to combat corruption that often determine the permission for forest offences or the forgiveness of these delicts. By diminishing corruption, we will obtain a stronger and more reliable legislative and judicial system.

In order to promote sustainable exploitation of forests, Romania needs to pay more attention to Research, Education and Training sector. A primary goal for Romania is to improve the knowledge base and ensure that the information held right now reflects the actual truth.

Overall, the situation of the forest sector in Romania is not destructive, nevertheless, if no actions will be taken Romania will continue

to loss daily dozens of ha of forest. Romania should follow the European principles for forest management, prohibiting illegal logging and ensuring the sustainable exploitation of forests. The European Union and Romania as a member state mitigate for a clean environment, protecting the natural capital of the area, thus, Romania should prove that she is able to protect its forests and guarantee their sustainable management.

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RESPONSIBLE/SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Paul ROCA, Ionuț COZMA

Air pollution is an increasingly urgent matter of public concern in cities and regions around the world. Air pollution was linked to 9 million deaths around the world in 2015, with 92% of deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. While poorer countries are the worst affected, air pollution is also a major health problem for countries in the global North. One of the major contributors to air pollution in cities is transportation. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that each year 2.4 million premature deaths from outdoor air pollution could be avoided.

Transport systems have significant impacts on the environment, accounting for between 20% and 25% of world energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions. The majority of the emissions, almost 97%, came from direct burning of fossil fuels. Greenhouse gas emissions from transport are increasing at a faster rate than any other energy using sector. Road transport is also a major contributor to local air pollution and smog.

In order, to mitigate the negative effects of transportation on the environment, we must promote sustainable transportation.

Sustainable transport refers to the broad subject of transport that is sustainable in the senses of social, environmental and climate impacts and the ability to, in the global scope, supply the source energy indefinitely. Components for evaluating sustainability include the particular vehicles used for road, water or air transport; the source of energy; and the infrastructure used to accommodate the transport (roads, railways, airways, waterways, canals and terminals).

In order to promote sustainable transport we believe there is a need for population and government involvement. Some of the sustainable transport methods that can be applied are: clean fuels and vehicles, sustainable transport infrastructure, access restrictions or collective passenger transport.

We have said that the promotion of sustainable transport requires the involvement of governments and the population. So we will first turn our attention to governments, local authorities and other state structures empowered to make decisions in this area. They can create laws and regulations to make people choose sustainable transportation.

For example, an effective method for reducing the pollution caused by transport especially in cities and which we believe can be applied in Romania is the access restrictions. This method will be implemented in cities around the world. Even if it is a ban, in this way we will use responsible transport to protect the environment. However, it is not enough for local authorities to establish these restrictions. They must offer to people, but also to transport companies, ecological alternatives. Once these restrictions are imposed on polluting cars, local authorities must offer people, for example, improved and efficient public transport. This means that it has to invest in modern buses, preferably electric, must improve the movement of these buses through cities and at the same time create charging stations for these buses.

In order to have a sustainable transport, it is also necessary for the authorities to solve traffic problems that make the pollution much higher.

Another solution in order to have a sustainable transport in Romania and which is unfortunately not very well done, by the Government this time, is the aid given to the population for the purchase of electric or hybrid cars. This is a very effective solution that can be achieved but requires a proper planning and budget. Because this solution is already in place, we believe that it will be easier to achieve in the future. Even if the subsidies received are not very high, compared to car prices, the Government needs to create a special infrastructure for this type of car, and here we refer to the charging stations. Even if large investments are needed to build this special infrastructure, its existence can lead citizens to choose green cars instead of polluting ones and the benefits will be significantly higher than the costs of making these investments.

As we said earlier, authorities need to be involved in helping transport companies, not just citizens, and also to make them choose sustainable transport. Government infrastructure needs to be set up, and fiscal facilities can be provided to companies that carry out their work in an ecological way.

The Government, local authorities and other institutions also need to work with the NGOs; to consult the population; to make all these investments as planned so that everything goes the right way.

Even though the costs of investing, providing grants and subsidies, and planning all of them are high, we believe that financial resources can be found, but the biggest problem remains how they are used.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to involve the population in order to have a sustainable transport. One of the most polluting transport factors are cars used by people. That is why it is important that, in order to

promote sustainable transport, to involve people. In this way, we can achieve the goal of having a sustainable transport. People need to be aware that the current way they travel is environmentally harmful. These information campaigns should not only be made by the authorities. Citizens, NGOs, can also get involved, and in Romania, where public confidence in the government is not very high, it is more important for these campaigns to be made by people, especially by NGOs because they have a greater impact.

Even if the involvement of NGOs has a major impact, the shift to sustainable transport is only made when people choose to do so. For example, even if the authorities do their job and create an environment conducive to the development of sustainable transport, if people do not choose to use what is offered, nothing will change.

There are countless solutions. Electric cars, biofuels, cars charging from roads are just a few examples. What is most important is that people have to use all of these things.

Also another polluting factor is the commercial transportation. Even if we are talking about companies here, those who run them and those who work there are also people and are affected by the effects of pollution. That is why even if they want to get profit, they have to change the way they work to stop polluting. As we said, they can be helped by the government, but at the same time they need to think about the need for change and that they must opt for sustainable transport. We believe that this will be quite difficult to achieve in Romania because of the mentality of people and their preconceptions.

At the same time, perhaps the best way to promote sustainable transport is through education. Perhaps this is the job of the Government, they have a ministry that deals with this, but we think it is not enough. Of

course, it is important that during the school, to present to childrens ways in which we can have sustainable transport, do activities related to this and so on. But the education received from parents and other people is very important. For example, children and adults should be encouraged to walk or use the bicycle to the detriment of the car.

That's how we get to the power of the example, and that's why it's important for people to be involved in promoting sustainable transport because this goal can only be achieved if people travel in this way, and when a person takes a first step then they will do it and others, and when one person will educate each other about how to do something in order not to destroy the environment we will have a society in which sustainable transport will become reality.

In conclusion, there are many ways in which sustainable transport can be promoted and through which this objective can be achieved in Romania. It is true that in other countries of the European Union things move faster, but this can also happen in Romania if there is involvement from the authorities and the population. At the same time, people need to figure out what the problems are, recognize that they exist and try to solve them. Solutions exist, only need to be implemented, and if people want to change something then the change will come. All of these solutions cost, and at first, there are no tangible benefits, but we must think about the future and the fact that our lives are at stake, and transport is a major pollutant and we need to make a change to diminish and ultimately eliminate all its negative effects.