

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Economics (FEM)**



**Master's Thesis**

**The role of multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania**

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**CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE**

Faculty of Economics and Management

**DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT**

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European Agrarian Diplomacy

Thesis title

**The role of multifunctionality of Agriculture in Romania**

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**Objectives of thesis**

The objective is to define the concept of multifunctionality of agriculture, and to investigate the various dimensions encompassed by multifunctionality, including economic, social, and environmental aspects. An evaluation of the implementation of multifunctionality in the EU will be needed: assess how the principle of multifunctionality is integrated into the agricultural policies of EU member states and explore the impact of multifunctionality on the agricultural sector and its broader implications for rural development within the EU.

To understand Romania's Agricultural Landscape an in-depth analysis of Romania's agricultural sector will be done, considering its historical context, current state, and challenges.

**Methodology**

Analysis of key theoretical frameworks, definitions, and conceptualizations of multifunctionality in agriculture and identification of existing methodologies used in previous studies to assess multifunctionality.

Use of qualitative methods, including interviews with stakeholders/experts, to understand how multifunctionality is integrated into agricultural policies; collect and analysis of relevant policy documents, strategic plans, and reports to assess the effectiveness of multifunctionality implementation.

Analysis of historical data, agricultural statistics, and policy documents to understand the evolution of multifunctionality in Romania. Development of comparative framework based on identified variables and indicators and analyze data using statistical methods to quantify differences and similarities (use of Eurostat, EU reports, Romanian reports, FAO reports...).



**The proposed extent of the thesis**

70 – 90 pages

**Keywords**

Agriculture, CAP, European Union, Romania, Multifunctionality, Social, Economic, Policies, Culture, Rural

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**Recommended information sources**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my master's thesis titled "The role of multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master's thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 31.03.2024

Badiceanu Ilinca

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# **The role of multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania**

## **Abstract**

This study delves into the impact of Romania's accession to the European Union on the multifunctionality of Romanian agriculture, a pivotal issue in the context of contemporary agricultural policies. The main aim of this research is to analyze the evolution of agriculture's multifunctionality in Romania from 1993 until 2020, focusing on economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Through a multidisciplinary approach, this thesis explores the benefits and drawbacks of extending the European Union's Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) to Romania, assessing the effectiveness of the CAP within the specific Romanian context. Furthermore, it reflects on the various institutional definitions of multifunctionality to understand global perspectives on the concept, including the American approach and the agricultural policies of the European Union. The study builds on a critical analysis of the multifaceted dimensions of multifunctionality, encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects within the Romanian agricultural landscape.

Concerning the economic impacts, the findings were that Romania's EU accession introduced its agricultural sector to new markets and standards, but also to significant challenges. Aligning with the Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) opened up opportunities for subsidies and financial support, aiming to modernize and make agriculture more competitive. However, adapting to the high standards required by the EU in terms of food quality and safety was a challenge, particularly for small-scale farmers who often lack the resources to upgrade their practices. Moreover, market liberalization has put traditional Romanian agriculture in competition with imported products, often priced lower, affecting the incomes of local farmers.

For the social implications, EU accession has had a profound impact on rural communities in Romania. On one hand, access to new funds has supported rural development, improving infrastructure and services in rural areas. On the other hand, the transition towards a more modern and competitive agriculture has led to a decrease in agricultural employment, forcing many workers to leave the countryside in search of opportunities in cities or abroad. This emigration has consequences on the demographic and social structure of rural communities, exacerbating the aging population and the decline of some agricultural traditions.

On environmental aspects, it is perhaps where the EU has had the most significant impact on Romanian agriculture. European directives on environmental protection and sustainable development have encouraged Romania to adopt more ecological agricultural practices. Efforts to reduce pesticide use, improve water resource management, and promote organic farming have been strengthened. However, the implementation of these sustainable practices is uneven, with significant progress in some regions and delays in others, often related to financial constraints and a lack of awareness.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, CAP, European Union, Romania, Multifunctionality, Social, Economic, Environment, Rural

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# 1 Introduction

As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said, 'We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.' This reflection underscores the critical importance of the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania, not only to address today's challenges but also to preserve the legacy for future generations in the context of its integration into the European Union.

In the face of global climate challenges and the awakening of ecological awareness, Romanian agriculture commits to the path of multifunctionality, illustrating the transformation of an ancestral sector into a pillar of sustainability and European integration.

Romanian agriculture is a mirror reflecting the challenges and opportunities of a successful European integration.

In the evolving landscape of European agriculture, the concept of multifunctionality has emerged as a critical lens through which to examine the intricate roles that agriculture plays beyond mere food production. This thesis ventures into the rich agricultural tapestry of Romania, a nation whose journey through history, political transformation, and economic development has deeply influenced its agricultural practices and policies. Since its accession to the European Union in 2007, Romania has stood at the crossroads of traditional agricultural heritage and the modern imperatives of sustainability, market integration, and rural development. The multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania encapsulates a complex array of functions that extend beyond the conventional boundaries of agricultural production to include environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development.

Rooted in a comprehensive exploration of Romania's agricultural evolution, this research delves into the historical context, examines the contemporary challenges, and forecasts the future prospects of Romanian agriculture within the European framework. It scrutinizes the impact of EU membership on the multifunctional roles of Romanian agriculture, assessing how the integration has influenced environmental sustainability, economic viability, and social cohesion within rural communities. This analysis is anchored in the broader discourse on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its

adaptation to the unique Romanian context, reflecting on the lessons learned and the pathways forward.

By adopting a multidimensional perspective, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of agriculture's multifaceted roles in Romania and its broader implications for rural development, environmental policy, and socio-economic resilience in the European Union. It seeks to illuminate the ways in which multifunctionality can serve as a guiding principle for policy-making, driving the transition towards more sustainable, equitable, and resilient agricultural systems. Through this lens, the study explores the potential of Romanian agriculture to balance productivity with sustainability, tradition with innovation, and local imperatives with global challenges.

How has the multifunctionality of agriculture evolved in Romania from 1993 to 2020, particularly in terms of its economic, social, and environmental dimensions? What are the specific benefits and drawbacks that have emerged from extending the European Union's Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) to Romania, and how effective has the CAP been in addressing the unique challenges of the Romanian agricultural sector? How do various institutional definitions of multifunctionality align or differ, particularly between global perspectives such as the American approach and the European Union's agricultural policies, in understanding the multifunctionality of agriculture? In what ways do the economic, social, and environmental aspects of multifunctionality manifest within the Romanian agricultural landscape, and how do these dimensions interact to influence the sector's overall performance and sustainability? Based on the insights gained from exploring the complex dynamics of Romanian agriculture post-EU accession, what policy recommendations can be made to enhance the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania? How can these policies be tailored to better fit Romania's specific socio-economic and environmental contexts within the broader European framework?

The subsequent sections embark on a comprehensive exploration to unravel the previous guiding research questions and the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania, dissecting its implications from economic, social, and environmental angles. Following the introductory segment, which sets the stage by contextualizing the significance of Romanian agriculture and defining the concept of multifunctionality, the structure of the thesis systematically addresses the research objectives. Chapter II outlines the objectives and methodology, adopting a mixed-method approach that integrates literature review,

statistical analysis, and stakeholder interviews to capture the multifaceted impacts of multifunctionality. The literature review in Chapter III delves into the theoretical underpinnings of multifunctionality, its manifestation in EU agricultural policy, and the historical trajectory of Romanian agriculture, laying the groundwork for the empirical analysis. The practical part, Chapter IV, forms the core of the thesis, presenting an in-depth examination of the multifunctional role of agriculture in Romania across its economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Chapter V synthesizes the findings and discusses their implications for policy and practice, while the concluding chapter, Chapter VI, encapsulates the key insights and recommendations, contemplating the future of Romanian agriculture within the European context. Supplementary materials, including pictures, tables, graphs, and a list of abbreviations, are meticulously catalogued to augment the narrative and provide empirical evidence supporting the analysis.

## **2 Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1. Objectives**

This thesis will analyse the evolution of the role of multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania from 1993 to 2020.

The primary aim of this master's thesis is to evaluate the impact of the Romania's accession to the European Union on the multifunctionality of agriculture. By determining the benefits and disadvantages of the expansion of the European Union Common Agricultural Policies to a country that considers itself as the breadbasket of Europe before its accession, we can evaluate the efficiency of the CAP. The decision to conclude the analysis in 2020 is informed by the desire to critically examine the immediate effects and outcomes of Romania's European Union (EU) membership on its agricultural sector within a clearly defined temporal context. The year 2020 represents a significant milestone, marking over a decade since Romania's accession to the EU in 2007. Furthermore, the last completed framework was for the period 2014-2020. This period allows for a robust assessment of the multifaceted impacts of EU policies, particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), on the multifunctionality of Romanian agriculture.

Focusing on the period up to 2020 enables a concentrated study of the transformative changes and adaptations within Romanian agriculture in response to EU integration, without the confounding effects of subsequent global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other geopolitical events. By 2020, Romania had experienced several CAP programming cycles, making it a pivotal year for evaluating the progress and challenges in aligning with European agricultural standards, accessing EU funds, and leveraging opportunities for modernization and sustainability.

Moreover, 2020 provides a solid foundation for analyzing the advancements in agricultural practices, rural development, and environmental stewardship in Romania. It allows for the examination of trends, policy impacts, and the sector's evolving role within the broader socio-economic landscape of the country, setting the stage for future research to build upon this foundational analysis by exploring subsequent developments and emerging challenges in Romanian agriculture.

It is important to comprehensively explore and define the multifunctionality of agriculture, a concept that proves challenging. An analysis of different institutional definitions will provide a foundation for understanding the global perspectives on multifunctionality. The examination of the USA approach will offer insights into the variations in conceptualization and implementation strategies across countries. Additionally, a comprehensive review of the European Union's agricultural policies will shed light on the practical aspects of integrating multifunctionality into diverse national contexts, serving as a benchmark for the Romanian case study.

The second objective is to investigate the multifaceted dimensions of multifunctionality, encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects. To grasp the intricacies of Romania's agricultural landscape, an in-depth analysis will be conducted, considering the historical context, current state, and existing challenges. This examination will provide a holistic view of how multifunctionality operates within the Romanian agricultural sector, addressing its economic contributions, social implications, and environmental sustainability.

By exploring the economic dimension, the study will assess how multifunctionality influences agricultural productivity, market dynamics, and the overall economic viability of Romania's agriculture. The social dimension will examine the impact on rural communities, farmers' livelihoods, and societal well-being, emphasizing the role of agriculture in shaping social structures. Environmental aspects will focus on the sustainability of agricultural practices, evaluating how multifunctionality contributes to or mitigates environmental challenges in Romania.

This work will explore in detail:

- How has the multifunctionality of agriculture evolved in Romania from 1993 to 2020, particularly in terms of its economic, social, and environmental dimensions?
- What are the specific benefits and drawbacks that have emerged from extending the European Union's Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) to Romania, and how effective has the CAP been in addressing the unique challenges of the Romanian agricultural sector?
- Based on the insights gained from exploring the complex dynamics of Romanian agriculture post-EU accession, what policy recommendations can be made to enhance the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania?

This master's thesis seeks to contribute to the understanding of multifunctionality in Romanian agriculture by dissecting its conceptual foundations, exploring international perspectives, and conducting a detailed analysis of its dimensions. Through this comprehensive approach, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the role of multifunctionality in shaping the future trajectory of Romania's agricultural sector and its broader implications for rural development.

## **2.2. Methodology**

The methodology will be based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. This thesis is build in three main parts.

Firstly, the literature review is written to describe and examine the development of the terminology of multifunctionality of agriculture, the development of agriculture in Romania, and the accession of Romania in the EU. This part is based on the review of relevant literature, Romanian documents, and EU primary sources.

Secondly, the practical part employs quantitative methods. The aim of this part is to look at official data, interpret findings and identify temporal correlations.

The third section of the study will utilize a combination of methods, including semi-structured interviews conducted through modified Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) adapted for online communication, public policy analysis, documentary research, and literature review.

This multifaceted approach offers two primary benefits: it facilitates the collection of a broad spectrum of opinions on the subject matter from diverse sources, grounded in both official documents and data. It also provides the opportunity to engage with individuals directly involved in the decision-making process at both Romanian and European levels, capturing their professional insights into the situation. This strategy not only broadens the scope of the discussion but also incorporates practical perspectives into the analysis.

### **2.3. Data analysis**

The main part of the study will heavily rely on quantitative data such as historical data, agricultural statistics, and policy documents to understand the evolution of multifunctionality in Romania. This involves developing a comparative framework based on identified variables and indicators, as well as analyzing the data using statistical methods to quantify differences and similarities. A significant emphasis is placed on the utilization of official data sourced from reputable and authoritative organizations, such as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), NIS Romania (National Institute for Statistics - Romania) and the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture among others. This approach ensures the reliability and validity of the data employed in this analysis. These sources provide comprehensive datasets and reports that cover a wide array of topics relevant to the research, including agricultural production, economic indicators, and sustainability metrics, among others. Leveraging these official datasets allows for a grounded analysis in established facts and figures, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are both credible and substantiated. Additionally, using such reputable sources enhances the academic rigor of the thesis, as it builds upon a foundation of verified information, contributing to the body of knowledge with insights derived from authoritative data. This methodological approach not only bolsters the credibility of the research findings but also aligns with the standards of scholarly research, ensuring that the analysis is anchored in reliable evidence.

### **2.4. Interviewee selection**

My panel comprises experts in agricultural issues from Romanian and European institutions and also of a Romanian farmer. Their interviews provided practical insights that complemented the theoretical research.

Micu Marius, a professor at the University of Agriculture in Bucharest, provided the opportunity to attend his study block titled "Management and Rural Development". This course, which lasted two weeks, was broadcasted on Zoom. Each day, a different speaker was invited to contribute. The interview could be conducted with each of the speakers and Dr. Marius Micu. He stands out as a significant figure in agriculture, with a deep-rooted connection to farming stemming from his upbringing on a family crop farm.

Holding a Ph.D. in Agronomy from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, his academic and professional journey is distinguished by impactful roles in both the educational and policy-making arenas. He is the Vice Dean at the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest in the Faculty of Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture, and Rural Development since 2022. He is also Counselor in the Parliament of Romania's Chamber of Deputy, Parliamentary Office, showcasing a long-term commitment to agricultural policy since 2002. A secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2022), reflecting his significant influence in shaping national agricultural policies. And the fifth vice-president of COPA-COGECA, highlighting his role in advocating for farmers and agricultural cooperatives at the European level, a position he has held since 2022.

The first speaker was a Romanian farmer, who had been working in the field for ten years. To protect the individual's confidentiality, the name has been changed to „Alexandru“.

The second speaker was Stefan Padure. He is a leader in the European food industry, serving as the President of the Pro Romanian Food Association (APAR) since 2011. His work has significantly impacted legislative initiatives and advocacy campaigns to support the Romanian agri-food producers within Romania and the EU. Padure holds a Ph.D. in Engineering with a focus on Food Science from "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati and a Master's degree in Organic, Halal, and Kosher food from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest. His expertise is demonstrated through his involvement in coordinating Romanian pavilions at international food exhibitions and his role in the development of vital legislation for the food industry and rural development. Additionally, as Vice-President of the BUSINESSROMANIA Employer's Federation, Padure has played a crucial role in promoting the competitiveness of its members on a national and European scale, emphasizing his commitment to enhancing the food sector's growth and sustainability.

Oana Neagu was the third speaker. She is the Director of the General Affairs team at COPA-COGECA, where she oversees matters related to the circular and bio-economy, environment and climate change, research and innovation, and food waste. Holding a background as an agricultural engineer complemented by a Master's degree in business



administration, Neagu has a rich history in agricultural policy and EU integration. Her career began at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture, managing market measures before which she served as an adviser on European integration at the Ministry of Agriculture in Romania, playing a key role in Romania's accession to the EU. Oana Neagu is also part of the management committee of the multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU and contributes to expert groups on the bioeconomy, forestry, and rural development. Her work with Copa and Cogeca, organizations representing millions of farmers and thousands of agri-cooperatives in the EU, underscores her commitment to sustainable, innovative, and competitive EU agriculture, ensuring food security for the continent.

The fourth speaker was Nina Gheorghită, a shareholder of Triagroexim, a company cultivating 600 hectares of cereals in Brăila County, since 2010. Nina Gheorghită has had a diverse career path before becoming a farmer in the Brăila region of Bărăgan. Initially embracing the profession of a pedagogue, she then moved on to roles such as marketing and development director at a multinational company. Her journey into agriculture is marked by her origins in Teleorman and her education at an agricultural high school, following which she was placed at the Agricultural High School in Turnu Măgurele through a redistributive exam process.

### 3 Literature Review

Agriculture, a cornerstone of human civilization, transcends its primary role of producing food, fiber, and other raw materials. To understand the multifunctionality of agriculture, it's essential to trace its origins back to its genesis. The concept of agriculture's multifunctionality, according to scholarly research, originated in 1968 with the founding of the Club of Rome (Elfkah et al., 2012, p.3), an international organization that addresses a variety of global political, social, and environmental issues. In 1972, the Club of Rome's report, "The Limits to Growth," highlighted the ecological constraints on economic and demographic expansion through a mathematical model projecting to 2100, suggesting ecological limits could be reached if current trends persisted (Elfkah et al., 2012, p.4). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission, convened by the United Nations General Assembly in 1984, recommended strategies for global environmental stewardship, culminating in the 1987 report "Our Common Future" that popularized "Sustainable Development" and provided a clear definition.

The explicit introduction of multifunctionality occurred at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which produced pivotal documents like the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, laying the groundwork for sustainable development initiatives. Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, focusing on sustainable agricultural and rural development, first acknowledged the multifunctional nature of agriculture, expanding its definition beyond purely productive/economic roles to include services providing societal benefits (Delorme, 2003, p.6; Bonnal et al., 2000, p.29). Agriculture produces both basic and non-market products, highlighting its intrinsic multifunctional character (Delorme, 2003, p.3).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) views multifunctionality as the link between commodity and non-commodity output production in agriculture, acknowledging the co-production of public goods or externalities (OECD, 2008, p.7-17). This concept has ignited extensive debate, particularly around its economic, social, and environmental dimensions (OECD, 2001, p.61; Mundler, 2002, p.64; Delorme, 2003).

The World Trade Organization (WTO) defines multifunctionality as agriculture's various roles beyond food and fiber production, including environmental protection and rural employment (WTO Glossary - Multifunctionality). The lack of a universal definition complicates international agricultural policy formulation (OECD, 2001, p.129). Distinct interpretations by major organizations such as the OECD, WTO, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) underscore this challenge (Bonnal et al., 2012). The OECD, favoring a positive or economic approach, considers multifunctionality an attribute of economic activities, marked by their diverse outputs or effects, which can be both market and non-market in nature (OECD, 2001).

Conversely, the normative approach, preferred by the FAO, emphasizes agriculture's inherent multifunctionality, recently acknowledged for its significant roles in environmental, economic, and social sustainability (FAO, 2000). This perspective views agriculture as pivotal in producing food and ensuring food security while also fulfilling important environmental and social functions. The distinctions between these functions are often blurred, underscoring the complexity of agriculture's role in society (Pingault, 2001, p.51-69).

The FAO's approach highlights agriculture's economic contributions, such as producing essential goods, supplying raw materials to industries, fostering agro-tourism, creating added value in niche markets, and contributing to global trade. Simultaneously, agriculture's environmental responsibilities include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, managing water and soil quality, sustaining renewable natural resources, and protecting biodiversity. Socially, agriculture supports food security, employment, rural vitality, cultural heritage preservation, and land development (FAO/Netherlands, 1999).

The multifunctionality debate within the WTO illustrated a clash between the positive approach, criticized by multifunctionality opponents, and the normative approach, advocated by its proponents, during agricultural negotiations. This led to a descriptive definition of multifunctionality by the WTO, acknowledging "non-trade concerns" without choosing sides in the debate.

### **3.1 Unpacking the layers: Defining agrarian multifunctionality**

Agriculture, a cornerstone of human civilization, transcends its primary role of producing food, fiber, and other raw materials. To understand the multifunctionality of agriculture, it's essential to trace its origins back to its genesis. The concept of agriculture's multifunctionality, according to scholarly research, originated in 1968 with the founding of the Club of Rome (Elfkah et al., 2012, p.3), an international organization that addresses a variety of global political, social, and environmental issues. In 1972, the Club of Rome's report, "The Limits to Growth," highlighted the ecological constraints on economic and demographic expansion through a mathematical model projecting to 2100, suggesting ecological limits could be reached if current trends persisted (Elfkah et al., 2012, p.4). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission, convened by the United Nations General Assembly in 1984, recommended strategies for global environmental stewardship, culminating in the 1987 report "Our Common Future" that popularized "Sustainable Development" and provided a clear definition.

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### **3.2 Exploring the legitimizing power of agricultural multifunctionality**

The concept of multifunctionality entered the realm of agricultural trade discussions following the 1994 Uruguay Round's conclusive agreement, acknowledging the necessity

to consider "non-trade concerns" intrinsic to the agricultural sector and individual countries within the liberalization process (Aumand, 2004, p.5). Nations such as Japan, Norway, Switzerland, and several within the European Union highlighted potential environmental impacts and threats to national food security arising from the liberalization of agricultural policies. Despite the World Trade Organization's (WTO) inclination towards trade liberalization and the phasing out of agricultural subsidies, these countries successfully introduced the idea of multifunctionality into global agricultural trade negotiations, albeit under the guise of "non-trade concerns".

The turn of the millennium on January 1, 2000, inaugurated new multilateral negotiations on agriculture under the pre-established agenda in the Agreement on Agriculture from the Marrakech Agreement in 1994. The lead-up to these discussions and the initial phase saw intense debate between the proponents and opponents of multifunctionality concerning market access and, predominantly, domestic support. This reignited the divisions present during the Uruguay Round. During this period, factions emerged: one side, led by the United States and the Cairns Group, advocated for comprehensive liberalization of agricultural trade (opposing multifunctionality), while the other side, represented by countries like Japan, Switzerland, Norway, and members of the EU, cautioned against the hazards of such liberalization, advocating for a controlled, flexible approach (supporting multifunctionality) (Aumand, 2004, p.5). Consequently, the discourse on multifunctionality within the WTO became highly polarized between the allies of multifunctionality (3.2.1) and its critics (3.2.2), with developing countries also contributing their perspectives on the matter (3.2.3).

This intricate dialogue underscores the complex interplay between trade liberalization, environmental sustainability, and food security, highlighting the multifaceted roles agriculture plays beyond mere commodity production. The debate on multifunctionality not only reflects differing national priorities and strategies but also underscores the broader challenges of aligning global trade policies with sustainable development goals. The term "multifunctionality," while often associated with the European Union's agricultural policy, illustrates a global aspiration to reconcile economic growth with the preservation of environmental resources and the assurance of food security. This evolving discourse invites a reexamination of traditional approaches to agricultural policy, urging a balance between the liberalization of trade and the

safeguarding of vital non-trade values integral to the well-being of nations and their citizens.

### **3.2.1 The stance of nations supportive of agricultural multifunctionality**

The "friends of multifunctionality," including the EU countries, Norway, Switzerland, Korea, and Japan, uphold that agriculture provides more than just food and fiber production. They recognize agriculture's vital contributions to environmental protection, landscape preservation, food security, and rural development, stemming from agriculture's unique characteristics and its interplay with sociological, economic, historical, and cultural factors (Aumand, 2004, p.5). This collective asserts two principal arguments: firstly, that public goods production and management are beyond the market's regulatory capability; and secondly, the definition of public goods is inherently linked to national contexts, intertwining agriculture with broader societal and economic relations, thus making it a matter of national sovereignty (Losch, 2002, p.23). They argue against excessive liberalization, fearing it could destabilize vulnerable agricultural sectors and impede the realization of recognized non-trade goals.

The European Union stresses the significance of sustaining agriculture, especially in remote or marginal regions with limited employment alternatives, to prevent depopulation and promote territorial balance. Agriculture supports the vitality of rural areas with scarce diversification or economic transition potential, retaining populations and contributing to landscape, environmental, and cultural benefits (Aumand, 1999, p.5). It also points out the environmental risks of abandoning such areas, including soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and the vanishing of agricultural landscapes (World Trade Organization [WTO], 1998, p.8). Norway aims to preserve agricultural production to safeguard biodiversity from intensive practices and land abandonment, preventing rural depopulation. Agriculture is a key employer in Norwegian rural communities, offering few viable economic alternatives (Linland, 1998, p.29).

Switzerland advocates for agriculture's role in ensuring food security, conserving natural resources, and maintaining rural landscapes and land use, underpinning a policy shift towards integrated or organic farming (Solagral, 1999, p.124).

Japan and the Republic of Korea highlight the environmental benefits of rice

cultivation, such as mitigating soil erosion, floods, and landslides by retaining rainwater in rice paddies (WTO, 1998a).

These functions, championed under the guise of multifunctionality, underscore these countries' commitment to supporting agricultural activity in WTO negotiations, arguing the sector's significance warrants state intervention due to its production of externalities and public goods alongside basic commodities. The friends of multifunctionality advocate for policies promoting "non-trade concerns," though such support mechanisms, often tied to primary production, face opposition from multifunctionality critics.

**Table 1: Non-market functions of agriculture and support instruments for the friends of multifunctionality**

Country	Elements of multifunctionality	Support measures
<b>Japan</b>	Land conservation (prevention of floods, landslides, erosion) Water resource protection Natural environment preservation Landscape formation Transmission of cultural heritage Production of rural amenities Maintenance and revitalization of rural communities. Food security	Production- linked support. Border protection
<b>Mauritius</b>	Environmental Rural development	Provisional financing Sugar protocol
<b>Norway</b>	Agricultural landscape Rural area viability Biodiversity Food quality Food security	Provider-beneficiary principle (remuneration for public goods) Coupled measures Border protection
<b>Republic of Korea</b>	Food security Landscape Environmental protection and biodiversity Rural region viability	Production and price-linked supports Border protection
<b>Switzerland</b>	Food security Conservation of natural resources Landscape maintenance Land use	Targeted, transparent, and as decoupled as possible direct payments
<b>European Union</b>	Product quality Environment Rural landscapes Socio economic development of rural areas Cultural heritage	Targeted and transparent measures, „Blue Box“ compensatory payments, Agri-environmental measures, Structural funds, Technical constraints, Labeling Intellectual protection through origin appellations

*Sources: Anthony Aumand, 2004, based on WTO (1998, 1999), WTO, committee on Agriculture (2000)*



### **3.2.2 Perspectives of nations critical of agrarian multifunctionality**

The countries most vocal in their skepticism towards multifunctionality, notably the Cairns Group members (including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Argentina) and the United States, base their reservations on six principal arguments, as outlined by Solagral (1999, p.124). These nations perceive multifunctionality primarily as a reiteration of the externality concept. They argue that, particularly in industrialized nations, local producers shouldn't be burdened with ensuring internal food security and sustaining rural communities. They view food security as an outcome of trade rather than of national production, suggesting that diversifying supply sources is a more effective strategy against potential disruptions than relying solely on national output, which is vulnerable to climatic, phytosanitary, and health uncertainties. According to them, greater trade liberalization is advantageous, allowing "non-commercial considerations" to be acknowledged but not prioritized over agricultural trade reform objectives. They argue that each country has legitimate non-trade concerns, but these should remain secondary to the broader goal of fundamentally reforming the agricultural sector through significant and gradual reductions in support and protection (Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture). They believe that continuing the reform process is essential for growth and development, thus questioning the emphasis on multifunctionality (Solagral, 1999, p.124).

Opponents also highlight that policies favoring protection and subsidies tend to promote overproduction and excessive exploitation of natural resources, exacerbating market failures and environmental issues. They promote removing incentives that generate negative externalities and implementing precise, targeted policies to address market failures in providing positive externalities.

For these critics, the pursuit of multifunctionality objectives doesn't preclude further trade liberalization. On the contrary, they argue that reducing agricultural production's negative impacts requires moving away from subsidy and protection measures, which only increase negative externalities' incidence and scale. They fear that multifunctionality-related policies might cater more to entrenched minority interests than to broader social expectations.

Supporting rural and environmental aims through agricultural policies can negatively impact global socio-economics, including depressing global prices and shifting production to subsidized regions at the expense of those previously enjoying comparative

advantages. In discussions on food security, for example, they argue against guaranteed national production, advocating instead for diversifying supply sources to ensure a distortion-free market.

While proponents of greater liberalization concede that state intervention might sometimes be necessary to rectify market failures, any such intervention should align with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) core objectives and trade liberalization principles. They favor decoupled policies to minimize market distortions and external effects, suggesting regulatory and fiscal measures over production-linked subsidies.

The Cairns Group staunchly opposes any relaxation or expansion of the green box criteria, advocated by multifunctionality supporters, calling instead for stricter measures to nullify associated distorting effects (WTO, 2000). The United States occupies a nuanced stance, advocating for a dual categorization of support—some exempt from reduction commitments and others subject to cuts. They acknowledge market failures, especially in natural resource management, and support eco-conditionality to regulate agricultural practices while compensating producers for competitive losses (Losch, 2002, p.23). For the United States, support measures must unequivocally be decoupled from production outcomes.

**Table 2: Positions and support measures of countries critical of agricultural multifunctionality**

<b>Country/Group</b>	<b>Main arguments against multifunctionality</b>	<b>Proposed support measures</b>
<b>Cairns Group (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina..)</b>	<p>The Cairns Group, a coalition of agricultural exporting countries largely in favor of agricultural trade liberalization, has historically expressed reservations about the concept of multifunctionality, primarily because they see it as a potential justification for maintaining agricultural subsidies and protectionist measures by other countries, which could distort international trade.</p> <p>The Cairns Group's skepticism towards multifunctionality is rooted in their goal to promote freer and fairer competition in the global agricultural market. They tend to argue that agricultural policies should focus on production and trade efficiency rather than on providing public goods or achieving social and environmental objectives, which could be addressed through other means.</p>	<p>Advocate for the reduction of production-linked subsidies.</p> <p>Support decoupled support measures to directly address market failures</p> <p>Promote further liberalization of agricultural trade.</p>
<b>Unites States</b>	<p>Acknowledge market failures, especially in natural resource management, while advocating for deep liberalization of agricultural policies</p> <p>Concerned that policies associated with multifunctionality might serve entrenched interests rather than societal expectations.</p>	<p>Suggest a two tier support classification, with some supports exempt from reduction commitments.</p> <p>Recommend regulatory and fiscal measures to mitigate negative externalities. Insist that any subsidies should be completely decoupled from production.</p>

*Source: Own work based on FAO, 1999, WTO, 2007, OECD, 1998 reports*

### **3.2.3 How developing countries stand on the concept of agrarian multifunctionality**

Developing countries generally critique the asymmetrical nature of global agricultural agreements, which they perceive as skewed towards the interests of developed nations, thereby placing them at a disadvantage. They highlight the paradox in the stance of industrialized countries that advocate for trade liberalization while simultaneously bolstering their own agricultural sectors through substantial subsidies. This critique echoes concerns about market access and the demand for a more equitable playing field in global agricultural trade. These nations call for enhanced access to markets in developed countries and advocate for greater leeway in formulating their agricultural policies. This includes the right to protect and support their agricultural sectors to safeguard food security, combat poverty, and foster development, aligning, in some respects, with the multifunctionality proponents on non-trade considerations (Aumand, 2004, p.5).

Until the Cancún conference, developing countries were categorized into four distinct groups according to their interests and developmental perspectives:

Developing CAIRN group consists of developing agro-exporting countries with varied levels of development. They share a common interest in accelerating the liberalization of agricultural trade and seeking more open markets for their products in partner countries.

Allies of multifunctionality, comprising developing and transition countries, this faction views agriculture as crucial for achieving essential national goals. Aligning with the multifunctionality proponents, they have voiced their concerns through a collective submission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding non-commercial concerns, drawing on outcomes from the international conference in Ullensvang, Norway (July 1-4, 2000).

Development box proponents is a collective of eleven countries has proposed the establishment of a "development box," advocating for special considerations and flexibilities in agricultural policies to support development objectives.

India and the food security box advocates proposing the creation of a "food security box" to specifically address and prioritize food security within the WTO framework.

The debate within the WTO over incorporating agriculture's multifunctional aspects into national policy frameworks underscores one of the most contentious issues in

agricultural trade negotiations. This debate not only involves developed nations but also a wide array of developing countries, illustrating a complex interplay between proponents of multifunctionality and advocates for comprehensive trade liberalization. However, an intermediary group exists, recognizing the importance of non-commercial considerations while still favoring gradual trade liberalization, provided it does not compromise these non-trade concerns (Aumand, 2004).

Developing countries' stance on agricultural multifunctionality reflects their unique challenges and aspirations within the global agricultural framework. Their critique of the asymmetrical nature of global agricultural agreements highlights a broader concern for fairness and equity in international trade, advocating for policies that recognize the diverse roles agriculture plays beyond commodity production (Wanki Moon, 2015).

Smallholder farmers in developing countries are vital for national food security, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods. These farmers often practice forms of multifunctional agriculture that contribute to environmental conservation and social welfare. However, global trade policies that prioritize large-scale production and export-oriented agriculture can undermine smallholder farmers' viability. Supporting multifunctionality could offer a framework to acknowledge and support the diverse contributions of smallholder farmers, potentially through targeted subsidies, access to markets, and investments in sustainable agricultural practices (IFAD, 2023).

The principles of multifunctionality align closely with several SDGs, particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Emphasizing multifunctionality in agriculture can foster practices that contribute to sustainable food systems, promote biodiversity, and enhance resilience to climate change. Developing countries advocate for agricultural policies that support these goals, emphasizing the need for international support and cooperation to achieve them (SFGs website, consulted 5.02.2024).

International organizations like the FAO and regional groups such as the African Union play crucial roles in advocating for the interests of developing countries. These organizations can facilitate knowledge exchange, provide technical assistance, and support policy development that reflects the multifunctional aspects of agriculture. This support is crucial for developing countries seeking to balance trade liberalization with national development goals (FAO, African Union).

Developing countries are often disproportionately affected by climate change, making the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices a priority. Multifunctionality can support this transition by recognizing and rewarding practices that mitigate climate change impacts, preserve natural resources, and maintain ecosystem services. International climate finance and technology transfer are essential to enable these countries to adopt sustainable practices without compromising their development objectives (IPPC, 2018).

Innovation and access to knowledge are key to enabling multifunctional agriculture in developing countries. Technologies that enhance productivity sustainably, improve water use efficiency, and reduce post-harvest losses can make significant contributions. International cooperation and investment in research and development are crucial to ensure that these technologies are accessible and adaptable to the needs of developing countries (Asenso-Okyere, Kwadwo Davis, Kristin E. Aredo, Dejene, 2008).

### **3.3 Similarities and distinctions between multifunctionality and durability**

The concept of sustainability, often seen as closely related to that of multifunctionality (CIRAD-INRA, 2000, p.8), was officially introduced in the report "Our Common Future" by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987. This report, also known as the Brundtland Report, defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Thus, although the concept of sustainability predates that of multifunctionality, both are included in Agenda 21, which, unfortunately, does not establish a clear distinction between these concepts.

Some authors view the concepts of multifunctionality and sustainable development as similar, sometimes even using them synonymously (Cairol et al., 2005, p.189-200). De Gasquet (2006) notes that "the idea that agriculture fulfills several functions coexists in minds alongside the notion of sustainable development." This similarity arises from their common reference to an activity that integrates social, environmental, and economic dimensions.

However, other authors insist on a fundamental distinction between multifunctionality and sustainability, rejecting the notion that they are synonyms. The OECD (2001), in its analytical framework for multifunctionality, differentiates these

concepts by associating multifunctionality with a characteristic of the production process and its sustainability objectives. For the OECD, the distinction rests on the "positive" character of multifunctionality versus the "normative" character of sustainability. Yet, this distinction may be seen as superficial, given that both multifunctionality and sustainability can assume a normative character (OECD, 2001).

Hediger (2008), despite criticizing the literary weakness in analyzing the link between these two concepts, bases his distinction primarily on the temporal horizon of application of these notions. According to him, multifunctionality tends to be a "short-term" phenomenon, while sustainability is viewed in a "long-term" perspective.

Buisson et al. (2007), for their part, establish a distinction based on the respective objectives of these concepts. Sustainability aims to limit or reduce the negative effects of agricultural activity on natural environments, natural resources, and, consequently, on society to ensure its sustainability. In contrast, the notion of multifunctionality implies enhancing and/or increasing the positive external effects of agricultural activity beneficial to society and the environment.

### **3.4 Agriculture in Romania: a closer view**

For centuries, agriculture has been Romania's most significant economic resource, playing a central role in its economy and society. In 1913, Romania was ranked fourth in the world for wheat exports, demonstrating its importance on the international market (Georgescu, 1995). This section aims to trace the evolution of Romanian agriculture, focusing on major transformations through different historical periods.

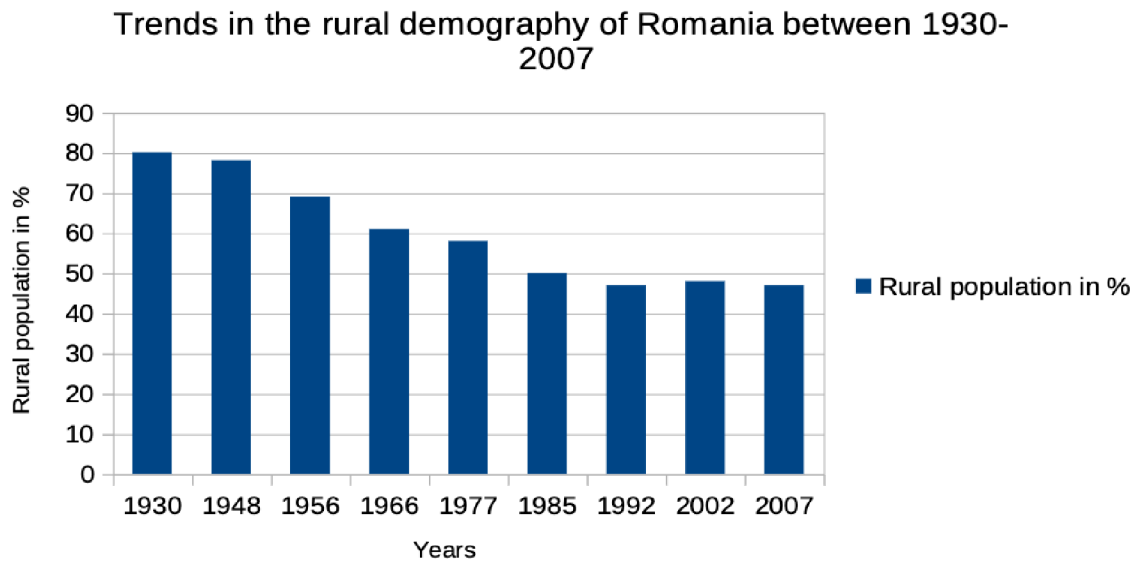
#### **3.4.1 Before EU membership: historical foundations**

##### **The rural predominance**

During the 1930s, the majority of the population resided in rural areas, primarily involved in agriculture. By 1930, 80% of the population was rural, but between 1930 and 2002, the rural population experienced a systematic decline (see graph 1), a result of the Communist Party of Romania's policy aiming to reduce the population engaged in agriculture to force the peasants to work in collectivised farms or state farms. Between 1948 and 1989, this population decreased by 32%, and those directly involved in

agriculture by 40%, marking a massive migration of 5 million people from the countryside to cities (Trebici, Vladimir, 1985).

**Graph 1: Trends in the rural demographic of Romania from 1930 to 2007**



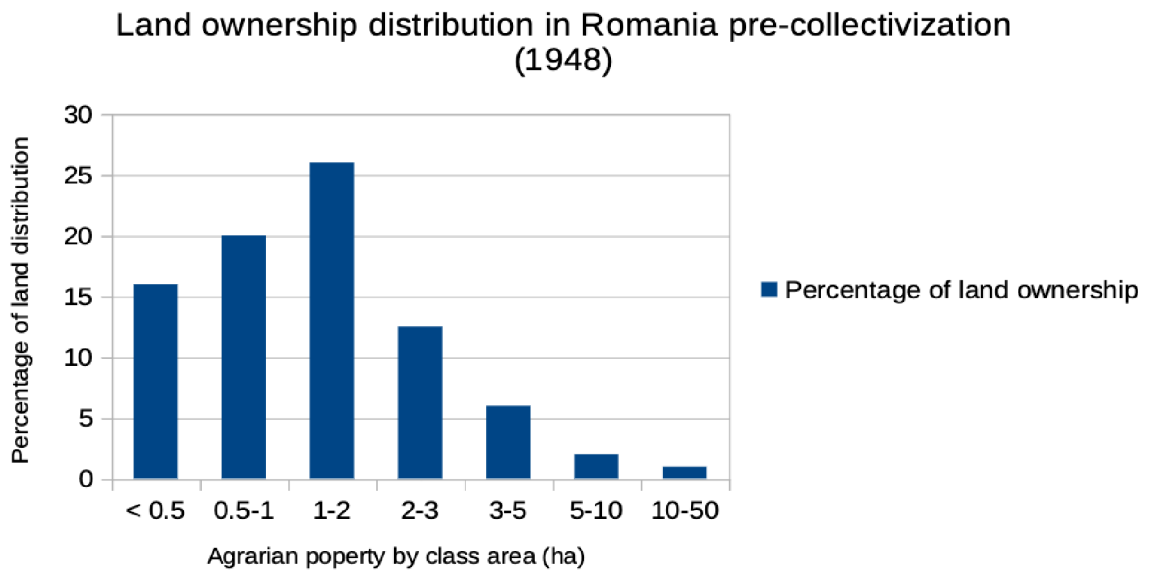
*Source: Own work based The Statistical yearbook of Romania, 2008, Institut National Statistica si Studii Economice, Bucuresti*

### **Collectivization and its consequences**

The communist regime imposed collectivization, aiming to increase production and productivity, but also deeply restructuring the rural economic and social fabric. The 1945 agrarian reform aimed to increase the land of existing peasant households with less than 5 hectares, to create new individual farms for landless agricultural workers, while promoting agricultural industrialization and modernization (Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, 1986).



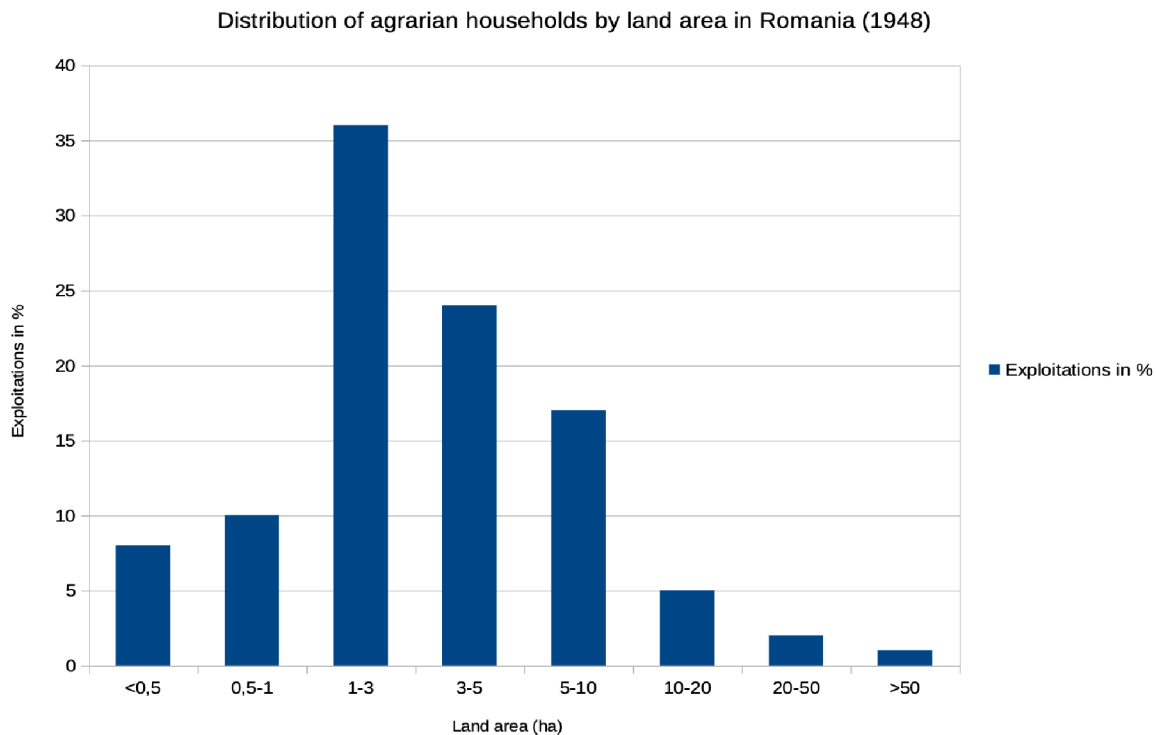
**Graph 2: Land ownership distribution in Romania pre-collectivization (1948)**



*Source: own work based on Alexandrescu, Bulei, Mamina, Scurtu, Enciclopedia, see fn. 1, 380*

Graph 2, from the national census of January 1948 give insight into the agrarian property classes and the percentage of landholdings across different size categories before collectivization. This can illustrate the diversity of farm sizes and the predominance of small-scale peasant agriculture before communist reforms. (Cornel Micu, 2014)

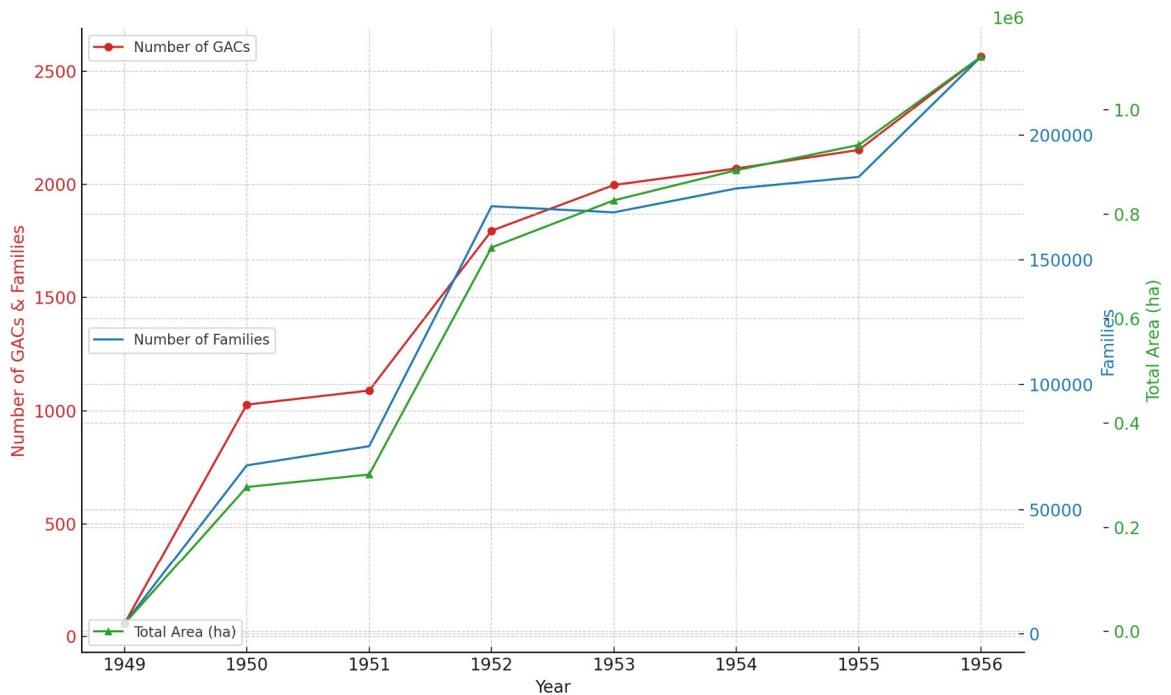
**Graph 3: Distribution of agrarian households by land area in Romania (1948)**



*Source: own work based on Alexandru, Bulei, Mamina, Scurtu, Enciclopedia, see fn. 1, 380*

Graph 3 visualizes the distribution of agrarian households in Romania by land area, categorizing them into eight distinct classes based on the size of the land they exploit, measured in hectares (ha). These households are typically involved in producing crops and raising livestock for their subsistence and possibly for local markets. They are often characterized by traditional farming methods, and their livelihoods are closely tied to the land and agricultural cycles. The percentages represent the proportion of total agrarian households falling within each land area category. The graph highlights a predominantly small to medium-sized agrarian structure in Romania, with a significant emphasis on small-scale farming. The decrease in percentage with increasing land area reflects a common trend in agricultural economies, where a large number of smallholders form the backbone of the rural landscape. The distribution underscores the challenges and opportunities within Romanian agriculture, from subsistence farming at the smallest scale to commercial and industrial agriculture at the largest scales, each with distinct needs, potential for growth, and contributions to the food system. (Cornel Micu)

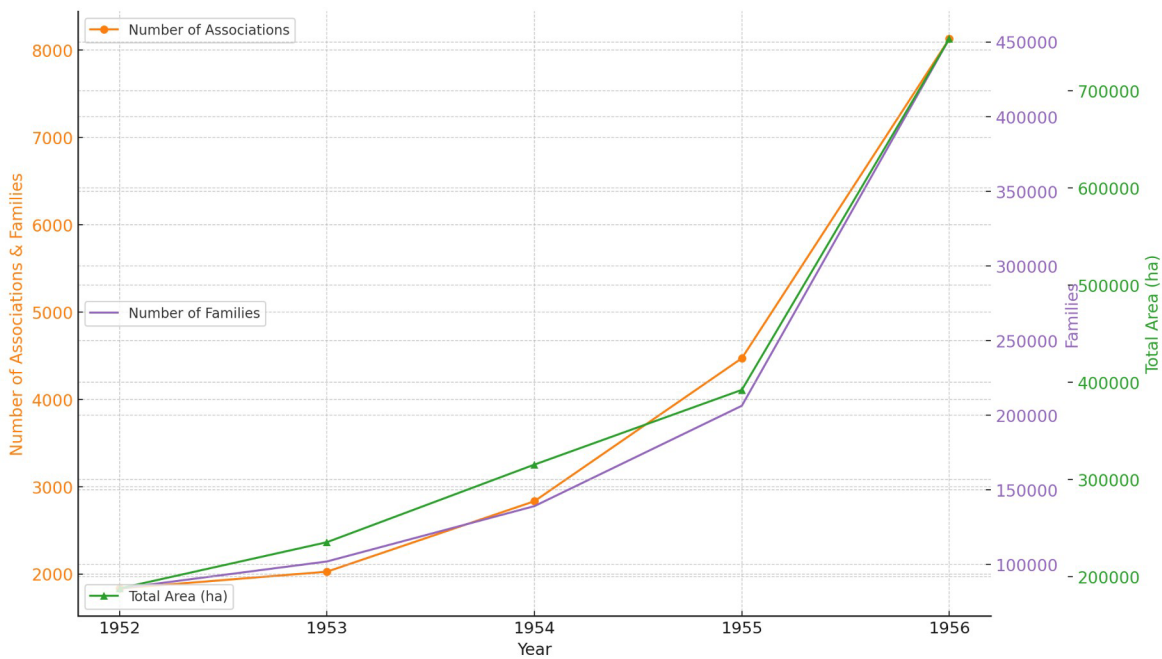
**Graph 4: Evolution of collective agricultural farms in Romania between 1949 and 1956**



*Source: Own work based on Iancu Gheorghe, Aspecte din procesul colectivizării agriculturii în România, 2001*

Graph 4 provides a detailed visualization of the significant transformation in Romanian agriculture through the expansion of Collective Agricultural Farms (CAFs) between 1949 and 1956, highlighting three key metrics: the number of CAFs, the number of families involved, and the total area covered by these farms. The graph underscores the radical and swift transformation of Romanian agriculture post-World War II, driven by the ideological and economic policies of the communist government. The increase in the number of CAFs and the scale of their operation reflect a deliberate move towards centralized control over agriculture, aiming at improving production efficiencies, self-sufficiency in food, and the socialist restructuring of rural societies. However, this transition was not without challenges, as the consolidation of land and the shift to collective farming required significant changes in traditional farming practices, potentially leading to resistance among the peasant population. (Iancu Gheorghe, 2001)

**Graph 5: Growth of land working associations in Romania between 1952 and 1956**



*Source: Own work based on Iancu Gheorghe, Aspecte din procesul colectivizării agriculturii în România, 2001*

Graph 5 represents the growth and expansion of associations for working the land in Romania over the span of five years, from 1952 to 1956. The data illustrates the expansion and impact of associations for working the land in Romania during the years 1952 to 1956, highlighting the growing participation of rural families and the increasing utilization of agricultural land under collective management. (Iancu Gheorghe)

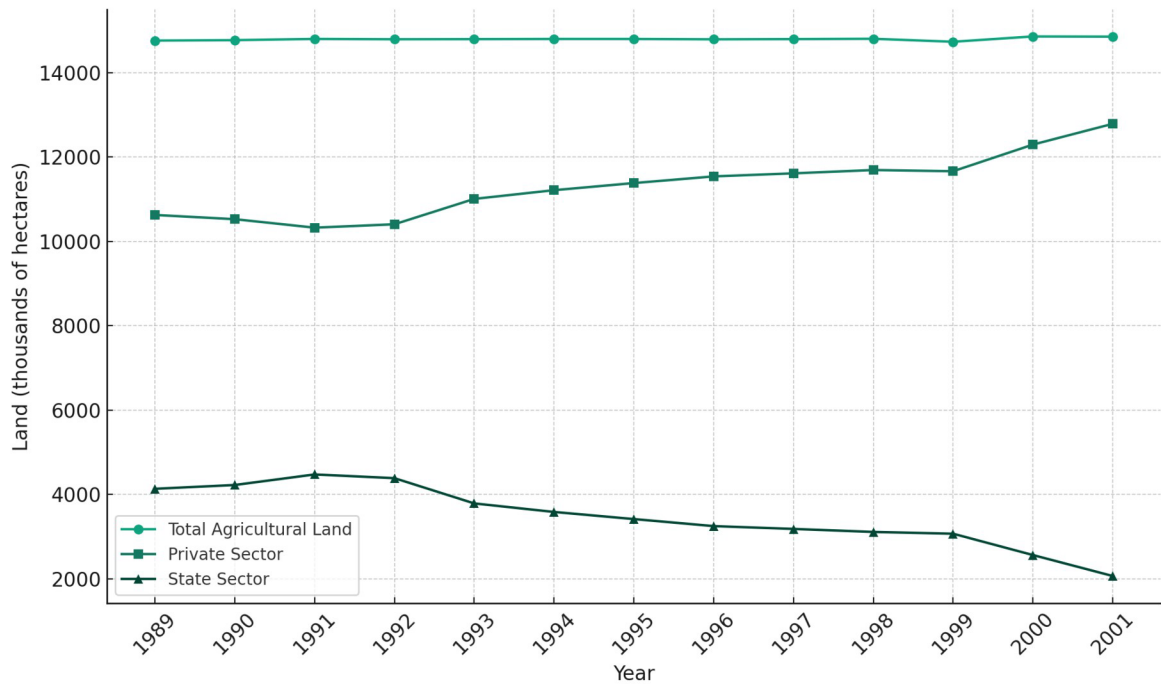
### **Transition to market and post-communist modernization**

The fall of the Soviet bloc at the end of the 1980s marked a historical turning point for Eastern European countries and other regions, leading to radical reforms in many sectors, including agriculture. After 1990, these nations began the difficult transition from a planned economy to a market economy. This transition involved profound structural reforms, notably the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the restitution of agricultural lands to families who had been expropriated during the communist era. (Deininger, 2003)

The privatization and land restitution were crucial steps in breaking up large state monopolies and redistributing lands to private farmers. This marked the beginning of a period of restructuring and modernization, aiming to increase efficiency and productivity.

According to the World Bank and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), these reforms varied in scope and success across countries but generally led to an increase in small-scale farming and a diversification of production structures.

**Graph 6: Evolution of agricultural land ownership in Romania between 1989 and 2001**



*Source: Own work based on World Bank data, 2024*

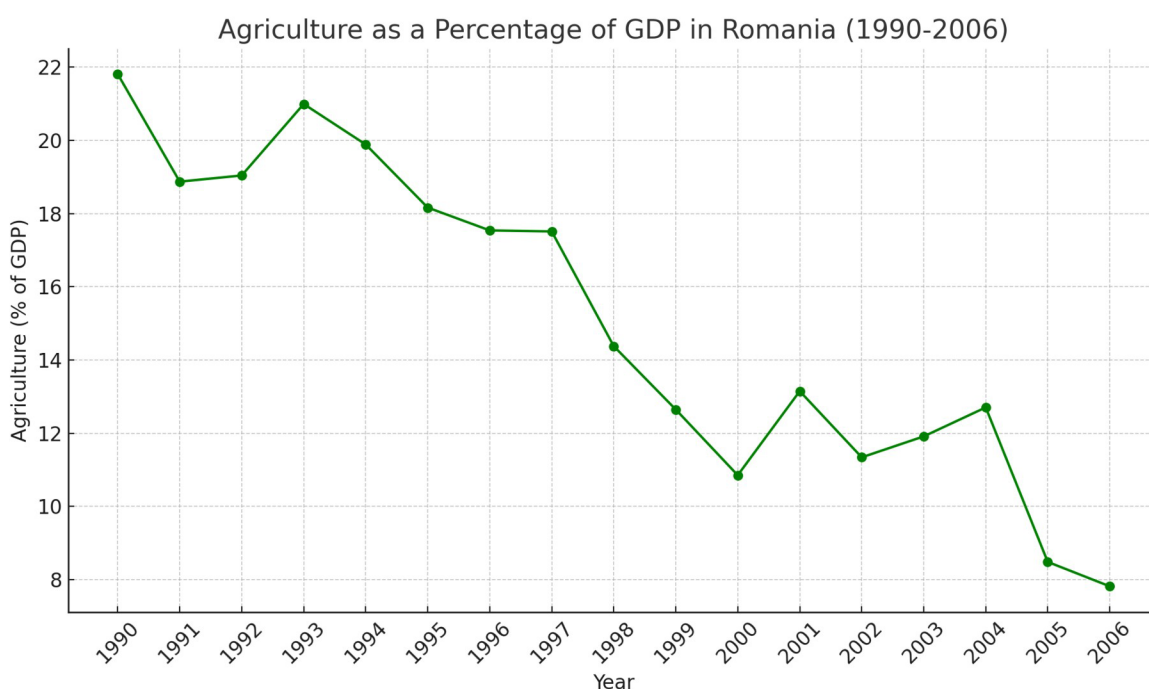
Graph 6 shows the evolution of agricultural land ownership in Romania from 1989 to 2001, highlighting significant changes in the distribution between the private and state sectors over this period. Initially, in 1989, the state sector controlled a considerable portion of the agricultural land, approximately 4,134 thousand hectares. However, following the collapse of communism and the start of Romania's transition to a market economy, there was a marked shift towards privatization and the restitution of lands to private owners. By 1991, the private sector's share began to noticeably increase, a trend that continued throughout the decade. This increase in private ownership is indicative of the government's efforts to redistribute state-owned agricultural land to individuals, which was a key component of the economic reforms aimed at transitioning to a market economy. The private sector's land holdings rose from 10,625 thousand hectares in 1989 to 12,785.8 thousand hectares by 2001, showcasing a significant shift towards privatization. Conversely, the state sector's share of agricultural land saw a steady decline over the same

period, dropping from 4,134 thousand hectares in 1989 to 2,066.5 thousand hectares in 2001. This decline reflects the government's systematic efforts to reduce state involvement in agriculture, aligning with broader economic reforms aimed at reducing the size of the public sector and encouraging private ownership and market-driven agriculture. (Dawidson, 2013)

However, the transition was not without challenges. The significant reduction in the activities of cooperative and artisanal enterprises, which had previously benefited from state support, was exacerbated by market opening and the introduction of foreign competition. Many of these enterprises struggled to adapt to the new market realities, leading to closures and an increase in rural unemployment. (Lavigne, 1999)

Data from the World Bank show that the agricultural GDP in transition countries initially experienced a decline before beginning to recover as the reforms took root. For example, in Poland, the share of agriculture in GDP dropped from 6% in the early 1990s to about 2.3% in 2019, reflecting both the modernization of the sector and its relative declining importance in a diversified economy. (Lipton, Sachs, 1990)

**Graph 7: Trend of Agriculture's Contribution to Romania's GDP between 1990-2006**



*Source: Own work based on World Bank data, 2024*

Graph 7 depicts the trend of agriculture's contribution to Romania's GDP from 1990 to 2006. The decline reflects Romania's broader economic transformation post-1990,

transitioning from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one. This period was marked by significant reforms, including privatization of state-owned enterprises and restructuring of the economy, which likely influenced the relative contribution of agriculture to the GDP. (Luca, 2015)

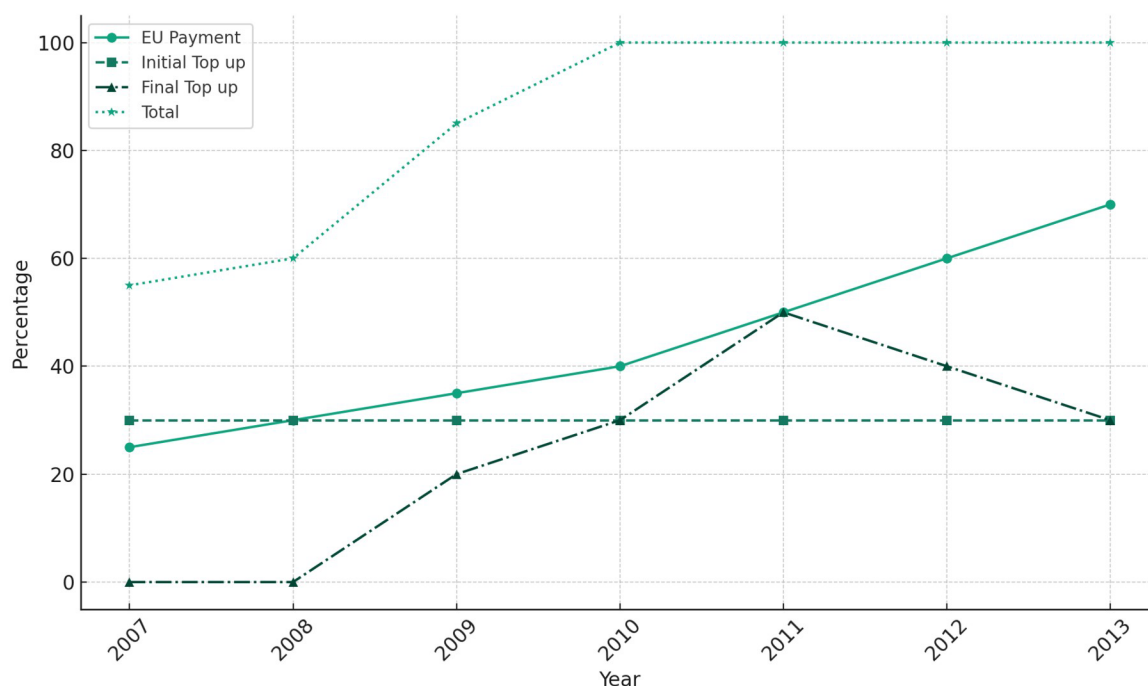
Given the timeframe, Romania's preparation for and accession to the European Union in 2007 may have played a role. The process involved aligning with EU standards and opening up to competition from European goods, which could impact domestic agriculture's relative contribution to the economy. The graph highlights a significant period of change for Romania, reflecting broader economic, social, and political transformations. The reduction in agriculture's share of GDP is a common trend in transitioning economies, illustrating shifts towards a more diversified and modern economic structure. (European Commission reports)

### **Since EU Membership: Challenges and Perspectives**

Following its accession to the EU in 2007, Romania gained access to nearly 19 billion euros in structural and cohesion funds, plus 14.3 billion euros from the CAP for the period 2007-2013. These funds were allocated to support infrastructure development, enhance the long-term competitiveness of the economy, more efficiently develop and utilize human capital, strengthen administrative capacity, and promote equitable territorial development. In agriculture, 44% of CAP funds were allocated to support agricultural markets and prices, while 56% were directed towards financing rural development projects. Despite a gradual increase in direct aids starting in 2007, reaching full eligibility by 2016, the Single Area Payment Scheme (SAPS) has been criticized for exacerbating inequalities, favoring large farms over smaller ones. (Bazin, 2007) In 2010, 90% of beneficiaries received less than 500 euros, while a minority received the majority of aids. This unequal distribution of aids reflects the polarization of Romanian agriculture and underscores the importance of considering the impact of rural development aids on small and medium-sized farms (European Commission, 2024)



**Graph 8: Level of direct aid for Romania from 2007 to 2013 (in %)**



*Source: Own work based on Romanian ministry of agriculture, 2024*

The graph 8 illustrates the schedule of EU payments and additional top-ups to Romania from 2007 to 2016. The EU payments, which are likely direct payments to farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), show a gradual increase from 25% in 2007 to full payment (100%) by 2016. This steady growth indicates a phased integration approach designed by the EU to gradually introduce new member states to full CAP benefits. The 'Initial Top up' and 'Final Top up' lines likely represent supplementary payments that Romania negotiated at the Copenhagen Summit and during the health check negotiations of 2009. These additional funds were meant to assist Romanian farmers in adjusting to the EU's agricultural policy framework and to support them through the transition period (Ungureanu, 2012).

The initial top-ups start at 30% in 2007 and remain constant until 2011, after which they taper off to zero by 2016. This suggests that these top-ups were temporary measures to provide immediate additional support post-accession. The final top-ups come into effect in 2009, increasing support temporarily before also being phased out by 2016. This could reflect adjustments made following a review of the initial accession terms, providing an additional layer of transitional support that decreases as the EU payments increase. The total line combines the EU payments and both top-up types, reaching 100% from 2009



onwards. This indicates that by 2009, Romanian farmers were receiving the full level of support envisaged under the EU's CAP, which includes both direct payments and additional top-ups (Unguranu, 2012).

### **3.4 Multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania**

The multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania, though not a new phenomenon, underscores the evolving expectations society has towards agricultural activities. This concept arises from the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, which is understood as development that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, and socially equitable. The application of sustainable development principles to agriculture leads to the notion of "sustainable agriculture." In Romania, as in other EU member states, agriculture serves three primary functions:

Agriculture remains a vital factor in the functioning and growth of the economy, even in highly industrialized countries. This is due to the significance of its production, its role in the agri-food sector, which accounts for about 15% of household expenditure, and the market it provides for other industrial activities (Swinnen, 2011).

Agricultural land use can have beneficial or detrimental effects on the environment. It is involved in many ecological relationships and contributes to the production of amenities and public goods (European environment agency, 2013).

The conservation and vitality of rural communities may depend on peasant agriculture, which, in turn, can contribute to its maintenance. The quality of rural life can hinge on the agriculture's relationship with the rural milieu (Laurent, 1999).

In Romania, the multifunctionality of agriculture is evaluated within these three categories. As Romania implements the CAP, it blends the EU's agricultural model with its national vision, reflecting the multifunctional character of its agriculture and its unique approach to addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities in the sector. The Romanian agricultural sector, characterized by a high degree of polarization, illustrates the complex nature of applying multifunctionality within the European framework. Following the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Romania has been defining its own strategy within the European agricultural model. This model was agreed upon in 1997, at a time when the EU faced new challenges such as increasing international competition due

to liberalization efforts, financial constraints on the EU budget, climate change impacts, and adaptation to new technologies. The Council of Agricultural Ministers then articulated a set of common values: competitiveness, sustainability, multifunctionality, and applicability across all EU regions. However, despite this common framework, the European model of agriculture takes different forms in practice (Blandford, Hassapoyannes, 2018).

## **4 Practical Part: EU accession and its effects on the diverse functions of agriculture in Romania**

Romania joined the European Union on January 1, 2007, marking the end of a journey that began in the mid-'90s (Wallace, 2007). Romania's path to the European Union started on February 1, 1993, with the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union, which came into effect two years later. The official application for membership was submitted in June 1995, and negotiations were initiated in December 1999 by the European Council, simultaneously with six other states. Formal negotiations began on February 15, 2000, and technically concluded during the Ministerial-level Accession Conference on December 14, 2004. The closure of negotiations was confirmed during the Brussels European Council on December 16-17 of the same year. This Council also reaffirmed the accession timeline, including the signing of the Accession Treaty in April 2005 and the effective accession on January 1, 2007 (Gallagher, 2009). From 1998 to 2006, the European Commission annually presented evaluations of Romania's European path, reporting on its progress towards accession. After the signing of the Accession Treaty, comprehensive follow-up reports were issued, highlighting Romania's advancements in fulfilling the commitments made during the accession negotiations. The Accession Treaty of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU was signed on April 25, 2005, in Luxembourg (Gabanyi, 2006). Preceded by the European Parliament's assent on April 13, 2005, with an absolute majority of votes from European parliamentarians, the signing marked Romania's transition from a candidate to a state in the process of accession, granting it the status of an active observer in Union activities. Romania actively participated in the work of all European institutions at both the political and technical levels. After the signing of the Accession Treaty, it had to be ratified by all EU member states. The ratification process was completed in November 2006, officially making Romania a member of the European Union on December 1, 2007 (Voskopoulos, 2011).

### **4.1 Distinctive traits of Romania's agricultural sector preceding EU accession**

Romanian agriculture exhibits distinctive features that have shaped its development and status just before its accession to the European Union in 2007. These distinctive traits

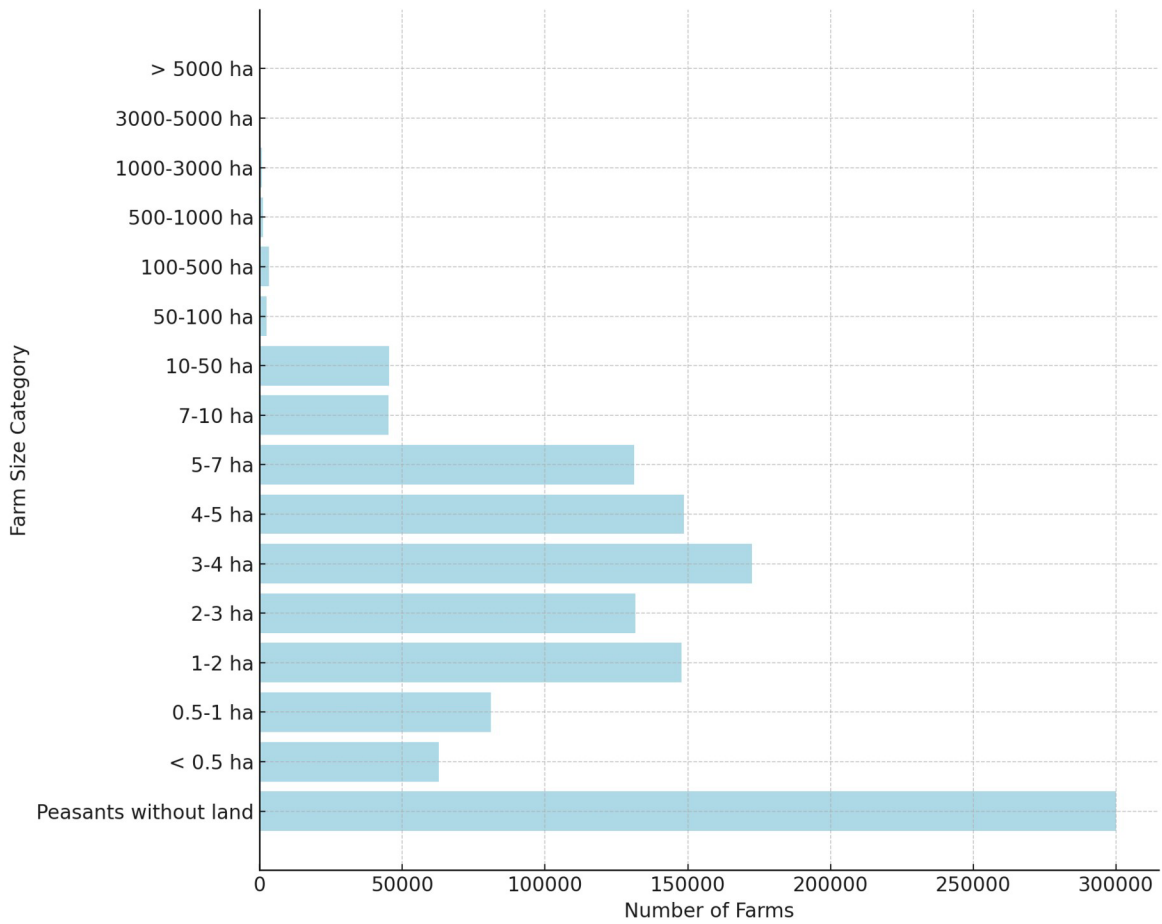
result from a rich and complex agricultural history, marked by land reforms, political changes, and economic challenges. Before joining the EU, Romania's agricultural sector was characterized by a wide diversity of farming structures, ranging from small family farms to large collective production units inherited from the communist era. The post-communist transition period witnessed significant efforts towards land restitution and privatization, although these processes were often hampered by administrative and legal difficulties, leading to excessive fragmentation of farms and limited modernization. Moreover, Romania's geographical and climatic diversity has contributed to a rich variety of agricultural productions but has also posed challenges in terms of efficient resource use and environmental management. Among other features, these characteristics defined the context in which Romania prepared to integrate into the EU's regulatory framework and single market, marking the beginning of a new era for its agriculture.

#### **4.1.1 The Agrarian reform of 1864: restructuring rural dynamics**

In 1864, a pivotal reform was implemented with the aim of redistributing land to peasants and dismantling the feudal system. Article 46 of the Treaty of Paris intensified the examination of social relations, occurring at a juncture where liberal ideologies clashed with the steadfast stance of conservative party members intent on preserving prevailing social and economic structures (Zeletin, 1927). The liberal government, established in 1863, proposed a reform initiative that failed to gain approval from the Assembly. Responding to this setback, Alexandru Ioan Cuza took the decisive step of dissolving the Assembly and endorsing the agrarian reform based on the proposal presented by the liberal Prime Minister, M. Kogalniceanu. Consequently, peasants were granted ownership rights over two-thirds of the land within feudal domains, transitioning from their previous limited usufruct rights. Concurrently, obligations and duties owed to the lord were annulled. However, the remaining one-third of the land officially became the property of the boyars, relieving them of the obligation to allocate plots to the peasants. Another critical facet of the reform impacting land distribution was the removal of the lord's responsibility for assigning plots to newlywed couples. As a result, familial succession emerged as the primary avenue for children to secure access to land. In the backdrop of population growth, this outcome of the 1864 agrarian reform led to the fragmentation of land. Compounding this challenge were difficulties in consolidating plots, the prohibition of land alienation, and an escalation in payments and services demanded from peasants working on the lords'

lands. It is evident that, from an economic perspective, this reform lacked inherent fairness. Despite the allocation of 1.8 million hectares of land to 463,554 beneficiaries, the practical improvement in the peasants' situation was minimal (Gherea, 1908).

**Graph 9: Distribution of agricultural land by farm size at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century**



*Source: Own work based on Gherea, 1908, referenced by Dropu, 2011*

Graph 9 illustrates the distribution of farm sizes at the end of the 19th century, showcasing a significant disparity in land ownership. A large number of farms fall into the category of "Peasants without land," highlighting a substantial population that lacks land ownership entirely. The data reveals a high concentration of very small farms, particularly in the "< 0.5 ha" to "5-7 ha" size categories, indicating that most farmers operated on a very small scale. As the farm size categories increase, the number of farms sharply decreases, with very few farms exceeding 100 hectares in size. This stark contrast suggests a significant inequality in land distribution, where a vast majority of the population possessed minimal to no land, while a small fraction owned large estates (Gherea, 1908).

The categories representing larger farm sizes, especially those above 50 hectares, show a drastically lower number of farms. This pattern points towards a highly polarized agrarian structure, with land concentration in the hands of a few, contrasting sharply with the large peasant population working small plots or possessing no land at all (Dropu, 2011).

The worsening living conditions, marked by an increase of nearly 200% in rental rates between 1870 and 18903 (resulting in an escalation of obligations for peasants subleasing land) (Cartwright, A.L, 2001), the fragmentation of plots, and the general discontent among peasants led to the 1907 revolt, also known as the Great Peasants' Revolt in Romania.

Despite the implementation of a reform intended to benefit those without land, challenges persisted and even intensified for the peasants. Thus, in the early 20th century, the Romanian peasant consumed about half as much cow's milk as in 1860, and the proportion of pork available to them had decreased by 35% (Dropu, C., 2011).

#### **4.1.2 The greater Romania: an historical perspectives**

After the conclusion of the First World War, the formation of "Greater Romania" took place. It is a diverse country, undeniably shaped by the history of each of its constituent regions. Between 1912 and 1920, the Romanian territory nearly doubled due to the country's unification and the incorporation of new regions. Its land area increased from 14 to 29.5 million hectares, including 12.5 million hectares of arable land. In 1918, almost 80% of the Romanian population resided in rural villages. Despite the national unification in 1918, each region independently issued a decree in the same year addressing land issues and land redistribution. The national decree by the king was considered less influential than the regional decrees. Lands owned by the king, arable lands in the public domain, and lands belonging to foreigners or individuals not present on the estate were subject to expropriation and redistribution through a purchase-sale mechanism (Livezeanu, 1995).

The accession of Carol II and the global economic depression critically impacted Romania's democracy. Carol II's disdain for democracy, aiming to centralize power, coincided with economic hardships that fueled extremist politics, notably the Iron Guard's rise, blending nationalism, Orthodox spirituality, and anti-Semitism. Meanwhile, the marginalized Romanian Communist Party struggled due to its alignment with Soviet

interests and disregard for peasantry. In response to the turmoil, Carol II established a royal dictatorship in 1938, dissolving political parties. Internationally, Romania pursued security through alliances and conventions, relying on France and Britain to uphold the post-WWI order (Ciorteanu, 2015).

The land reforms were not just economic measures; they had profound socio-political implications. They played a crucial role in stabilizing the newly formed Greater Romania by appeasing the rural population and integrating various regions more cohesively into the nation (Livezeanu, 1995).

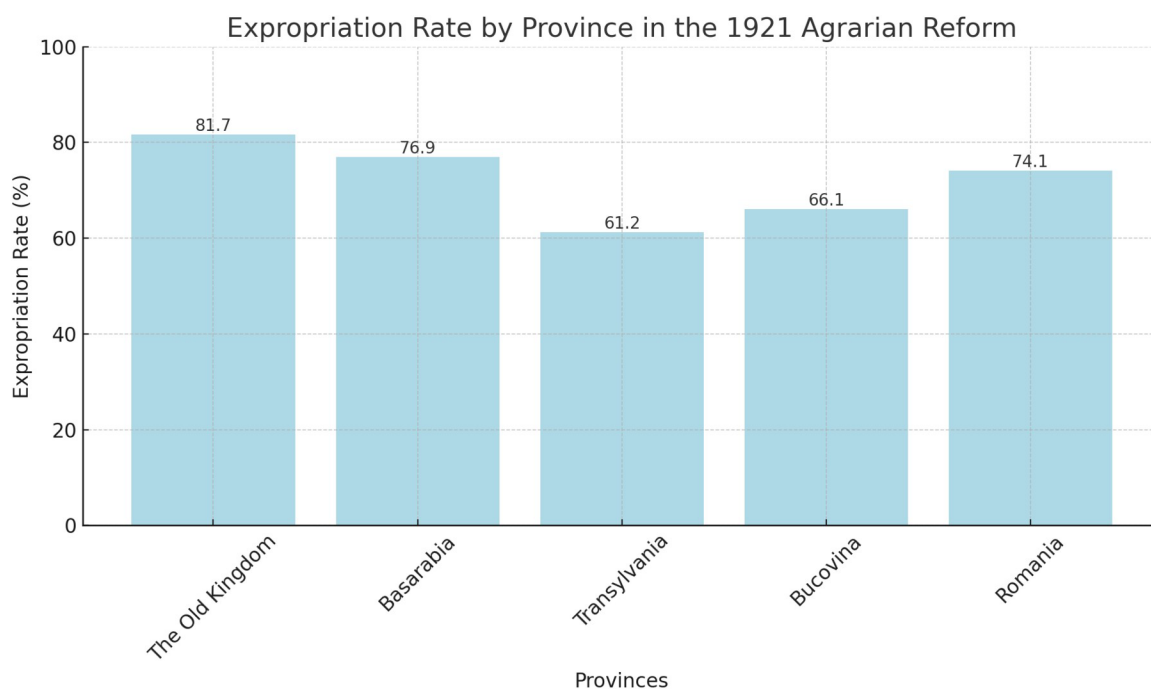
#### **4.1.3 The agrarian reform of 1921: shaping agricultural realities**

The context of World War I, which intensified the urgency for agrarian reform, and King Ferdinand's commitment in 1917 to acknowledge peasants' wartime sacrifices is important to note. Post-unification, the reform aimed to address land inequalities, with the 1921 legislation facilitating the redistribution of large estates to those significantly affected by the war and the economically disadvantaged, emphasizing a move towards equitable land ownership and recognizing the agrarian sector's critical role in Romania's socio-economic landscape (Zoltan, 2001).

Despite the Great Peasants' Revolt's failure to improve the peasants' situation, their concerns persisted in collective memory. The issue resurfaced in political discourse in 1913 in the middle of various ideological currents, including nationalism, populism, and socialism, alongside liberal and conservative ideas. The Peasants' Party emerged during this period, advocating the superiority of small-scale agriculture (Imre, 2009). The outbreak of World War I temporarily diverted attention from the peasants' concerns, but in 1917, King Ferdinand prioritized an agrarian reform to recognize the peasants' wartime contributions. After the war and the country's unification, the agrarian reform became a focal point, with new regulations implemented. Despite suspicions of government reluctance, the law was enacted on July 17, 1921. The 1921 agrarian reform involved the expropriation of farms exceeding 100 hectares, with compensation. The expropriated lands were then allocated to war veterans, invalids, soldiers' widows, landless peasants, and those with less than 6 hectares, prioritized in that order. Eligible individuals needed agricultural experience, training, village residence, and a commitment to agricultural labor. Public officials in rural areas were also eligible, provided they committed to agricultural

work. Merchants and artisans could only buy land after fulfilling all prior beneficiaries' requests (Venczel, 1993).

**Graph 10: Expropriation rate by province in 1921 agrarian reform**



*Source: Own work based on Bulgaru, 2003*

The graph 10 displays the expropriation rates during the 1921 Agrarian Reform across different provinces in Romania. It reveals that the Old Kingdom experienced the highest expropriation rate at approximately 81.7%, indicating a significant portion of latifundia (large estates) was redistributed. Basarabia follows with a 76.9% expropriation rate, illustrating substantial land reform efforts in this province as well. Transylvania, however, shows a lower rate at 61.2%, suggesting a more conservative approach to land redistribution in this region. Bucovina has a 66.1% expropriation rate, which is higher than Transylvania but still below the national average. Lastly, the overall expropriation rate for Romania stands at 74.1%, reflecting the nationwide effort to redistribute land from large estates to smaller landholders and address agrarian inequality (Lup, Miron, Alim, 2018).

#### **4.1.4 Romanian agricultural dynamics during interwar**

The period between the two world wars is often idealized as the zenith of Romania. This glorification is rooted, on the one hand, in the political context marked by the end of the First World War, which witnessed the country's unification, and, on the other hand, in



comparison with the subsequent communist era. The modernization of the country from the 1930s, marked by the development of industry and urban centers, as well as the rise of the intellectual elite, contributes to this perception. Thus, in the collective imagination of the late 1930s, Romania is perceived as transitioning from being a "predominantly agrarian country" to an "agro-industrial country" (B. Murgescu, 2012). Regarding agriculture, the prevailing notion in discussions is that Romania was the "granary of Europe" between 1935 and 1938, playing a crucial role in supplying cereals to the continent. However, in contemporary times, an increasing number of historians and economists challenge the myth based on Romania's specialization in cereal production and an increase in exports in quantity during certain periods of the 1930s. Axenciuc and Murgescu strongly criticize the agricultural development of this period, describing this aspect as a "myth." Other historians, such as Hitchkins or Boia, maintain more neutral opinions about the overall economy, without necessarily advocating the idea of significant development in all sectors. Analyzing agricultural and industrial statistics, as well as macroeconomic indicators from the 1920-1930 period, and comparing them with the pre-World War I era, historian Bogdan Murgescu concludes that the economic development balance of the interwar period is rather unfavorable, especially when compared to other European countries (B. Murgescu, 2012). This perspective, shared by many other historians, helps temper the idealized image of the 1920-1939 period, without denying the progress made in certain areas.

#### **4.1.5 The agricultural iron curtain: romanian agriculture under the communist regime**

In 1947, King Michael is forced to abdicate, marking the same day as the proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic. The Groza government implements an agrarian reform in 1945, and from 1948 onward, the country embarks on a process of collectivization that will conclude in the early 1960s, just before Nicolae Ceausescu comes to power in 1965 (Illarion, 2007).

Conceived with the intention of bolstering the Communist Party's favor among the rural population, the agrarian reform of 1945 facilitated the redistribution of nearly 1.5 million hectares to approximately 800,000 peasants. IP Otiman's analyses indicate that, as a result of the 1945 reform, 2.2 million new agricultural holdings came into existence. (Otiman, 1994) Out of the nearly 5.5 million farms, 97.8% had holdings of less than 10

hectares, and over 60% were situated below the 2-hectare threshold. These farms were allocated an average of 1.3 hectares, a plot that could not be traded, leased, or subdivided without the explicit approval of the Ministry of Agriculture. Consequently, the period witnessed the perpetuation and intensification of the fragmentation of agricultural production units (Kligman, Verdery).

Concurrently, the inception of "statization" transpired. The enactment of Decree 565 in July 1945 bestowed upon the state the exclusive prerogative to act as the official buyer of agricultural products (at predetermined prices) and mandated producers to contribute a portion of their cereal harvest to the National Cooperative Institute. Although this particular measure was discontinued in 1946, it was replaced by the imposition of a "tax" in the form of agricultural products.

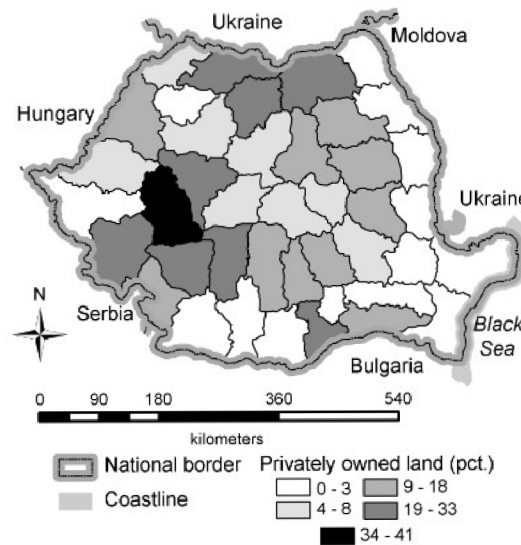
Subsequently, in 1947, a novel statute proscribed the sale of any agricultural holding surpassing 15 hectares. The legislation stipulated that individuals not involved in agricultural pursuits were barred from acquiring land, even if falling below this specified threshold. Furthermore, a preemptive right was accorded to the state for farms ranging from 5 to 15 hectares, allowing for the purchase of these lands at prices beneath the prevailing market rates.

In 1948, Romanian authorities took draconian measures by prohibiting the Greek-Catholic Church and confiscating its properties. In a similar vein, the Orthodox Church and other public institutions were compelled to "donate" their lands to the state. The process of collectivization officially commenced in March 1949 through Decree 83, which authorized the confiscation of all lands, buildings, and equipment belonging to landowners with over 50 hectares after the 1945 reform. Those refusing compliance, labeled as "moşieri," faced severe penalties, ranging from imprisonment to substantial fines. Consequently, an area exceeding 472,000 hectares came under state control.

The collectivization period, aimed at mitigating disparities between urban and rural areas, spanned approximately 13 years, marked by various forms of resistance. Farmers, deeply attached to their lands, vehemently opposed Ceausescu's radical land development policy known as "Systematization." Despite the communist rhetoric advocating industrial development, agriculture was reorganized into collective farms (CAP) and state-owned farms (IAS). CAPs, modeled after Soviet kolkhozes, embraced the pooling of all means of production, accompanied by modest remunerations and prevalent theft practices. On the

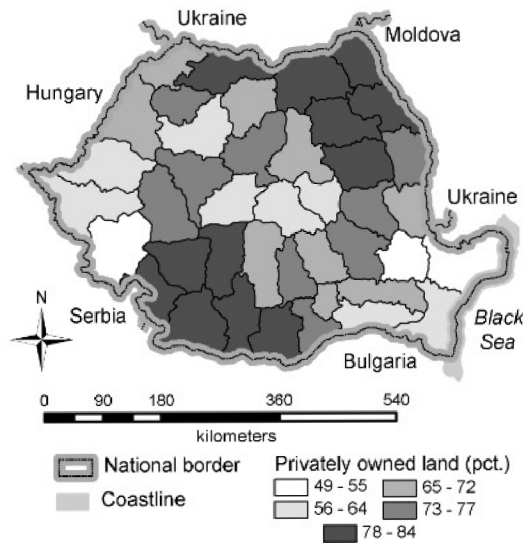
other hand, IAS, inspired by Soviet sovkhoses, proved more productive and offered more attractive compensations. Nevertheless, private ownership persisted in mountainous areas where communalization was challenging to implement.

**Map 1: Private agricultural land in Romania after collectivization, 1969**



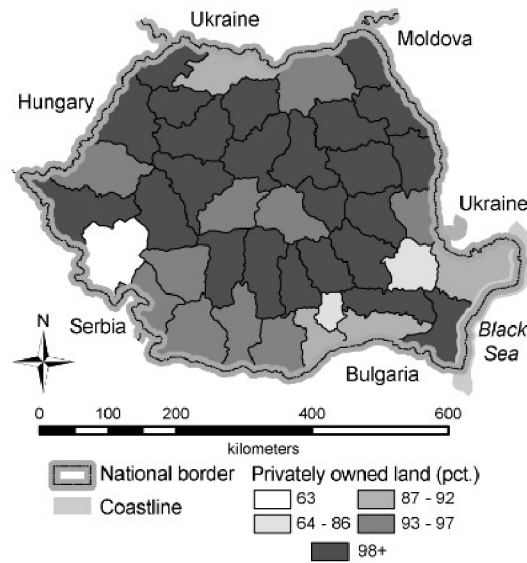
*Source: Karin E.K. Dawidson, 2013*

**Map 2: Private agricultural land in Romania in the early stages of privatization, 1994**



*Source : Karin E.K. Dawidson, 2013*

**Map 3 : Private agricultural land in Romania at the completion of privatization, 2000**



*Source: Karin E.K. Dawidson, 2013*

The progress of land privatization in Romania is illustrated in maps 1–3, showing the pattern of private land ownership at the end of the collectivization campaign in 1969, in the early stages of land privatization in 1994, and after the virtual completion of land privatization in 2000. The diffusion of private land ownership displayed in these maps is summarized in Table 2 across seven geographical zones. The Northeast and the Southeast have experienced the most rapid recovery of private land ownership since 1969, mainly due to the weakness of the collective farms in these hilly areas (Rey et al., 2000).

Between 1950 and 1989, the establishment of state-enforced agricultural cooperatives led to the creation of large-scale farms. This era was also marked by significant investment in agricultural technology, introducing chemicals and mechanical tools. As a result, over one-third of Romania's arable land was equipped with irrigation systems, covering nearly 3 million hectares out of 9.4 million total, which improved productivity per hectare. Despite these advancements, Romania's contribution of cereals to the European market remained modest. The period saw foreign trade dynamics influenced by the lingering impacts of war, both economically and politically, as well as by domestic production capabilities and the broader global economic landscape, including fluctuating prices and policy decisions.

#### **4.1.6 From collective to individual : agricultural reforms in romania post 1989**

The 1989 revolution marked the end of over 40 years of communist rule in Romania. Following Ceausescu's fall, the new government quickly turned its attention to the restructuring of the agricultural sector, emphasizing initiatives like decollectivization, agricultural modernization, and the privatization of state farms. These measures were seen as crucial elements to facilitate the transition to a market economy, making land reform a top priority. (Dachin, 2008; Vincze, Kerekes, 200) The initial step in this transformation was the conversion of state farms into commercial entities, paving the way for their privatization over a 7-year period. However, this process proved to be slow, resuming in 2001 after a 4-year hiatus. The redistribution of land from cooperatives aimed to allocate plots to former owners, their heirs, and former employees, but resulted in increased land fragmentation. Over time, various legislative changes were introduced, gradually increasing the allowed sizes of agricultural holdings. Laws enacted in 1991, 1997, and 2005 established different thresholds for land ownership. Notably, the Lupu Law of 2000 exacerbated this fragmentation by allowing the restitution of 50 hectares per individual. Laws governing the transfer of land rights were introduced in 1994 and 1998. However, obstacles such as high transaction costs and a preference for leasing hindered the establishment of an effective land market. These legislative developments have left lasting impacts on the Romanian agrarian structure, characterized by land leasing and manual cultivation of small plots (Dachin, 2008; Vincze, Kerekes, 200).

#### **4.2 Functions of agriculture before accession**

Romania, endowed with black soils rich in humus known as Chernozem, considered among the world's best for agriculture. During the 19th century, with the rise of wheat trade within a capitalist exchange framework, local notables acquired land, cultivated through sharecropping by peasants who had access to small plots based on their family size. The political objective was to develop modernized agriculture supplying the European market via the Danube while retaining peasants as essential labor for land cultivation. The purpose of agricultural production shifted from a subsistence economy to commodity production integrated into the global market (Stahl, 2005). Approaching World War II, Romania emerged as a predominantly cereal-producing nation (Stan, 2005), with agriculture representing over three-quarters of total employment (Georgescu, 1991). The

collectivization initiated in 1948 introduced two large-scale organizational forms: Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CAP) and State Agricultural Enterprises (IAS). Lands were transferred to the state and cooperatives, while small private farms were maintained in non-collectivized mountainous regions. A bimodal production system emerged within these two structures. The cooperative sector, completed by 1962 and predominantly managed by local agricultural elites, mobilized rural labor mainly composed of women and the elderly. Most agricultural tasks were performed manually, as CAPs were poorly equipped with machinery. Mechanized operations were provided as a service by mechanization stations. Labor payment was made in kind and cash. In addition to the right to a plot of 0.15 to 0.30 hectares for subsistence farming, remuneration was minimal, and product theft was widespread. In 1989, agricultural cooperatives had an average size of 2,127 hectares, representing 67.2% of agricultural land. IAS legally operated on state-nationalized lands and received significant investments, making them better equipped and more productive than CAPs.

Employees received remuneration comparable to the industrial sector. Their diversified and intensive production included processing workshops. In 1989, IAS operated an average of 4,835 hectares, representing 15.5% of agricultural land. Private forms of agricultural structures were mainly represented by individual plots, with an average size of 0.2 hectares, accounting for 10% of the total cooperative area. But Romania couldn't join the European Union with agricultural plots sized with less than 1 hectare. (Dobrescu, 2007) Production was particularly intensive, focused on proximity to residences and primarily oriented towards subsistence farming, including vegetables, corn, and poultry farming. In 1970, despite their small share of the country's agricultural land (6.6%), individual plots represented 15% of total corn production, 17% of potato production, and 30% of vegetable production (Stan, 2005). Despite the high productivity of IAS, the Romanian population experienced severe food restrictions during the last decade of communism. The decline in agricultural yields from the 1980s was linked to the lack of investment in CAPs, due to the political choice to repay external debt at the expense of the population's well-being. The country's industrialization, promoted by the communist regime, facilitated rural exodus, long postponed due to delayed industrial development. This deconcentration placed industries in small urban centers to be closer to the workforce. Traditional household incomes diversified: revenues from CAPs and plots for women and elderly parents still

working in the village, and industrial revenues for men and younger members (Amblard, 2006).

#### **4.2.1 Pre-accession economic dynamics of Romanian agriculture**

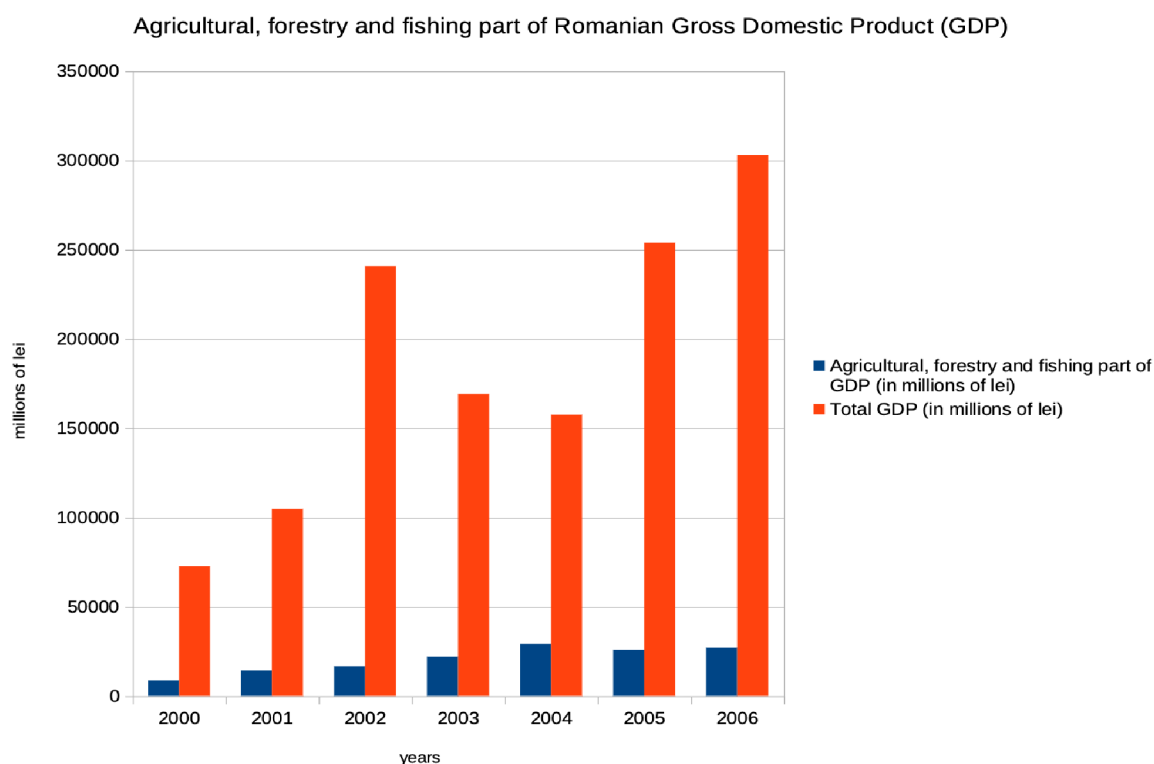
Three main ideologies shape the policies concerning the future of Romanian agriculture (Hera, 2005):

- The "traditionalist" perspective asserts that land is intricately linked to the village, seen as the guardian of the soil crucial for Romania's food security, peace, and prosperity. The village, considered the essence of Romanian culture, is viewed as the primary producer of wholesome and high-quality food.
- Conversely, the "modernist" viewpoint deems the Romanian village, supporting subsistence agriculture, as outdated, with self-sufficiency regarded as an anachronism.
- The "potentialist" standpoint emphasizes the significant pedo-agronomic potential and excellent agricultural production capacities. This perspective, prevalent among the former agricultural elite, underscores the need to reclaim past agricultural prowess by protecting the domestic market and avoiding the lamentable importation of locally producible food.

In the early 2000s, anticipating European Union integration, the government, influenced by the European Commission and the World Bank, formulated a set of measures to facilitate agricultural restructuring. From 1997 to 2000, under Constantinescu's leadership, the Romanian government pursued a liberal policy, resulting in a decline in living conditions. In preparation for defining the directives for the Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) proposed by the EU, it crafted the National Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development 2000-2006 (PNADR). The strategy of this plan explicitly prioritizes the consolidation of economically viable farms. The targeted size of these farms should be sufficient for economic viability, excluding marginal farms from subsidies. The primary focus is on structural adjustment and the consolidation of farms to make them competitive in the face of European market pressures.

The early 2000s witnessed also the return to power of Iliescu and a left-leaning government composed of the former Romanian elite. This social-democratic government showed sensitivity to peasant issues for electoral reasons (Roger, 2008) while maintaining allegiance to a socialist-type agricultural structure (Otiman, 1997), contradicting the agreements signed by the previous government with the World Bank. This resulted in a series of contradictory measures, sometimes favoring large enterprises, including state-owned companies, and at other times, supporting the peasantry, leveraging their electoral strength. These fluctuations reflect the challenge of balancing a long-term strategy with strong orientations and managing the transition to achieve a competitive agriculture comparable to neighboring European countries. However, there is no clear consensus on the desired objective, oscillating between a productivity-focused large-scale agriculture (as advocated by potentialists) and the necessity of supporting small farmers to ensure social peace in the context of Romanian agriculture's reality.

**Graph 11: Agricultural, forestry and fishing part of Romanian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 2000-2006**



Source: own work based on National Institutes for Statistics - Romania, 2024

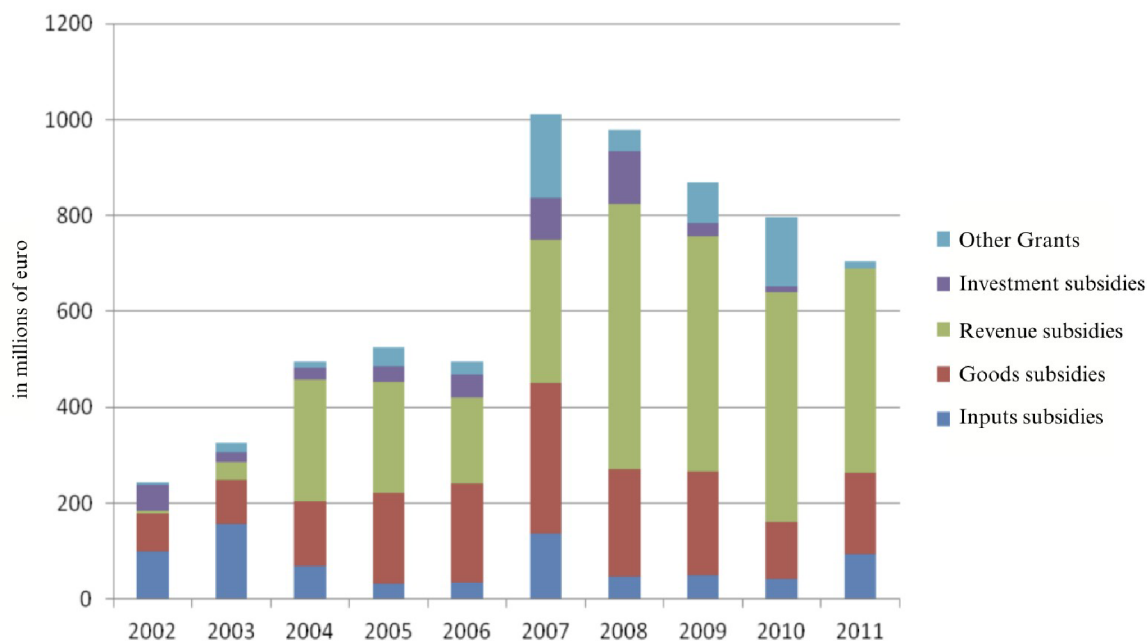


Prior to joining the EU, the total GDP of Romania, shows a general upward trend over the seven-year period. This suggests that the overall economy of Romania was growing during this time. The contribution of the agricultural, forestry, and fishing sector to the GDP it remains relatively stable across the years. This indicates that while this sector contributes to the economy, it does not represent a major portion of the GDP compared to other sectors. The substantial difference between the sizes suggests a diversified economy where other sectors contribute more significantly to the GDP than agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

Before Romania joined the EU, its agricultural sector faced significant challenges, particularly in securing state funding and navigating the complexities of bank lending under the prevailing environmental and climatic conditions. These hurdles made progress difficult for many farmers. However, the scenario shifted positively following EU integration. Legislative reforms and new regulations began to support agricultural development, significantly easing the way for farmers. A pivotal change was the availability of EU grants, enabling the acquisition of advanced farming equipment and the expansion of agricultural operations. This development played a crucial role in enhancing Romania's GDP, agricultural output, and the profitability of its farmers.

In 2002, the SAPARD program aimed to support the accession process, focusing on the rural economy's development through agricultural modernization and non-agricultural economic growth. This included rural infrastructure development, transformation, and commercialization of agricultural and fishery products, as well as investments in agricultural enterprises during the pre-accession period.

**Graph 12: Volume and structure of national agricultural subsidies in the pre-and post-accession interventions by destination**



*Source: Lucian, 2013, based on Romanian Ministry of Agriculture data, 2024*

Graph 12 delineates the disbursement of national funds by the Ministry of Agriculture, exclusively for operational activities and not for the Ministry's administrative expenses. The disbursement, which is strictly from the national budget and concerns only the year of allocation (regardless of entitlements from preceding years), is distributed among various entities within the agri-food sector. These funds are organized into five principal groups: Input subsidies, which have progressively decreased, were provided for the producers of certified seeds, irrigation services (whether from the state agency SNIF/LRA or water user associations), diesel fuel (via excise duty reduction or direct subsidy), and for fertilizers in 2002-2003. Goods subsidies, awarded through crop production support programs (like those for greenhouse vegetables, and the processing of vegetables and fruits) and livestock (including pigs, poultry, and dairy), comprised of payments for market sales of agricultural produce and, after 2010, supplemental welfare payments. Revenue subsidies, comprising agricultural vouchers and cash transfers to both small and large farms, annuity payments, direct national funding supplements (additional payments for the European vegetable and livestock sectors), and minimal financial aid provided in late 2008. Investment subsidies, which include supports for agricultural and irrigation endeavors, compensation for modernizing dairy farms, and allocations from the

Romanian SAPARD program. Other grants, covering production bonuses, compensations for natural calamities (notably the 2007 drought and the 2008 floods), crop insurance premiums, waste management post-accession, and contributions to the fruit distribution program in schools. Excluded are the allocations from the EU SAPARD program and the national contributions to this program, as well as funds from the National Rural Development Programme post-2008. Furthermore, starting from 2007, the national public expenditure of the Ministry of Agriculture encompassed solely the supplementary national direct payments, excluding those co-financed by the EU budget.

#### **4.2.2 Social dynamics of Romanian agriculture in the pre-accession period to the European Union**

In the context of Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC), the transition from a planned to a market economy necessitates the acknowledgment of private property, often seen as a means to enhance economic efficiency. The cornerstone of this agricultural reform lies in the land reform, which involves a delicate balance, as described by Swinnen (1999), between "historical justice" concerning the restitution of land to former owners and "social equity" related to the redistribution to former agricultural workers. The 1991 land reform in Romania combines a limited restitution of land to those expropriated under the communist regime and a redistribution to agricultural workers. This process granted property titles for 9.4 million hectares to around 4.7 million owners, including urban ones due to Romania's industrialization (Râmniceanu, 2004).

The land restitution process has been a complex and evolving one. The 1990s witnessed a series of laws without providing a stable property environment, revealing uncertainties in the successive governments' overall choices for agricultural activity orientation. The gradual increase in thresholds allowed former owners to claim additional land as the land law underwent modifications: the maximum restitution increased from 10 hectares in 1991 to 50 hectares in 2000. Initial restrictions on family land holdings (100 hectares in 1991 and 200 hectares in 1997) were abolished in 2005. Consequently, after the 1945 agrarian reform, a family left with only 50 hectares out of the original 1,000 hectares could reclaim their full pre 1945 land after 2005 (Law 18/1991, Law 1/2000).

However, these claims often led to disputes, with nearly 70% of property titles contested in court, resulting in significant retrocessions and complicating ongoing restitution procedures. The European Parliament's report documented around 210,000 lawsuits

between 2005 and 2009 (EP, 2010). This has contributed to extensive land fragmentation, with approximately 10.3 million hectares of arable land owned by 4,170,279 households in 2001. The average cultivated area per household was quite small, standing at 2.47 hectares.

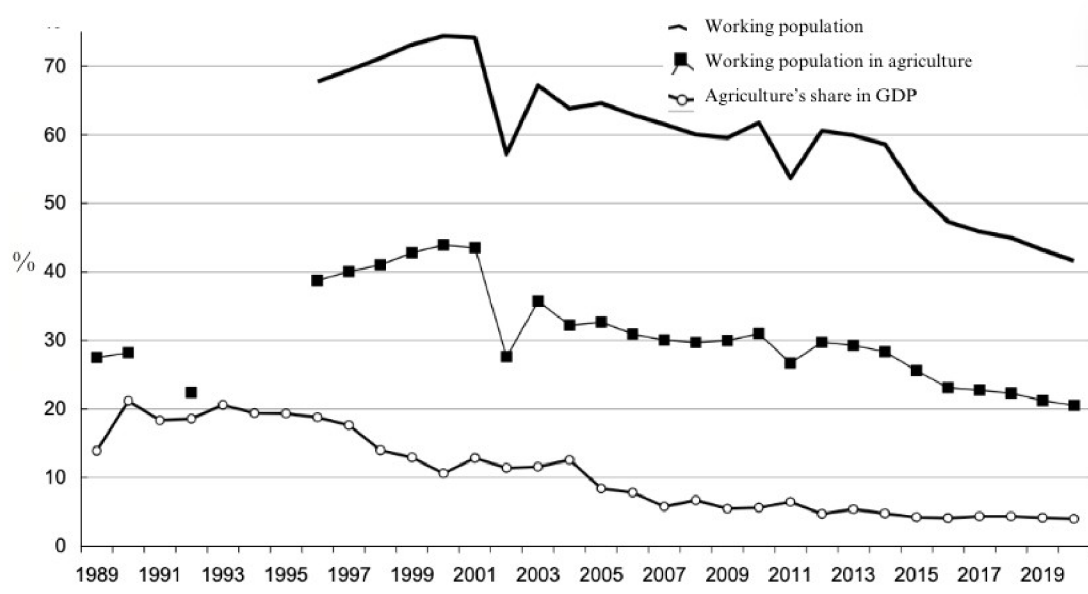
The partial restitution and redistribution of land expropriated during the communist period triggered an increase in the agricultural areas of small plots, following the same production logic as the pre-existing plots. It also led to the transformation of former cooperatives and state farms into a new type of capitalist enterprise. Consequently, the Romanian agricultural landscape exhibits a pronounced duality. The perpetuation of small-scale agriculture, a significant player in national agricultural production and rural household well-being during the last three decades of the socialist era (Stan, 2005), provided reassurance to a population uncertain about future developments, one that had played a limited role in the revolution. Some observers attribute the inconsistency and disjointed approach to land policies since 1989 to this mix, resulting in considerable chaos, especially due to overlapping retroceded rights on the same land. According to a report by the European Commission, Romania had one of the highest numbers of farms in the European Union, with more than 3 million holdings, most of which were small, subsistence-based family farms. Thus, while the proportion of the population formally classified as "farmers" would have been quite low during the peak of collectivization, this figure rose significantly during the transition period of the 1990s and early 2000s as land was returned to private hands (EP, 2010).

Prior to Romania joining the European Union, the agricultural sector accounted for around 14% of the GDP in 2004. However, its contribution to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) declined to 8.8% by 2006 (see graph 12).

During the transition period after the fall of communism in 1989 up until Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, the agricultural sector underwent significant restructuring. The shift from collective to private farming and the restitution of lands led to a substantial increase in the number of smallholder and subsistence farmers. The incomes of these farmers varied widely and were influenced by several factors, including the size and fertility of the land they worked, their ability to invest in and use modern farming techniques, access to markets, and the overall economic situation in the country, which was often unstable during this period. Many of the new private farmers were engaged in

subsistence or semi-subsistence farming, with their "salary" effectively being the value of the food they produced and consumed themselves. Any surplus could be sold for income, but this was not a regular salary in the formal sense. For those able to produce a significant surplus, earnings could be irregular and highly dependent on both domestic market conditions and the weather (Salasan, 2009).

**Graph 13: The share of agriculture in the employed population and in GDP (1989-2020)**



Source : own work based on populația ocupată în agricultură: AMIGO, RPL 1992, 2002, 2011 ; PIB: Anuarul Statistic al României 1991-2021

The top curve of graph 13 represents the working population (Total Population) begins at approximately 65% in 1989 and shows more volatility than the total population's employment in agriculture. Despite fluctuations, the general trend is a decline, dropping to just above 50% by 2007. This trend suggests a significant shift away from agricultural employment among the rural population during these years.. The middle one shows employment in agriculture (Rural Population): Starting at around 30% in 1989, this metric, represented by the line with square markers, shows a slight increase in the early 1990s, peaking at about 35%. It then follows a downward trend, dropping to just below 30% by 2007. This indicates that a lesser proportion of the total population was employed in agriculture over this period. The last one defines agriculture's share in GDP; it begins at about 20% in 1989 and shows a steep decrease in the early 1990s, stabilizing at around

10%. This line remains relatively flat up to 2007, indicating that agriculture's contribution to the overall economy had diminished and then stabilized as a smaller component of the GDP (Anuarul Statistic al Romaniei, 2001).

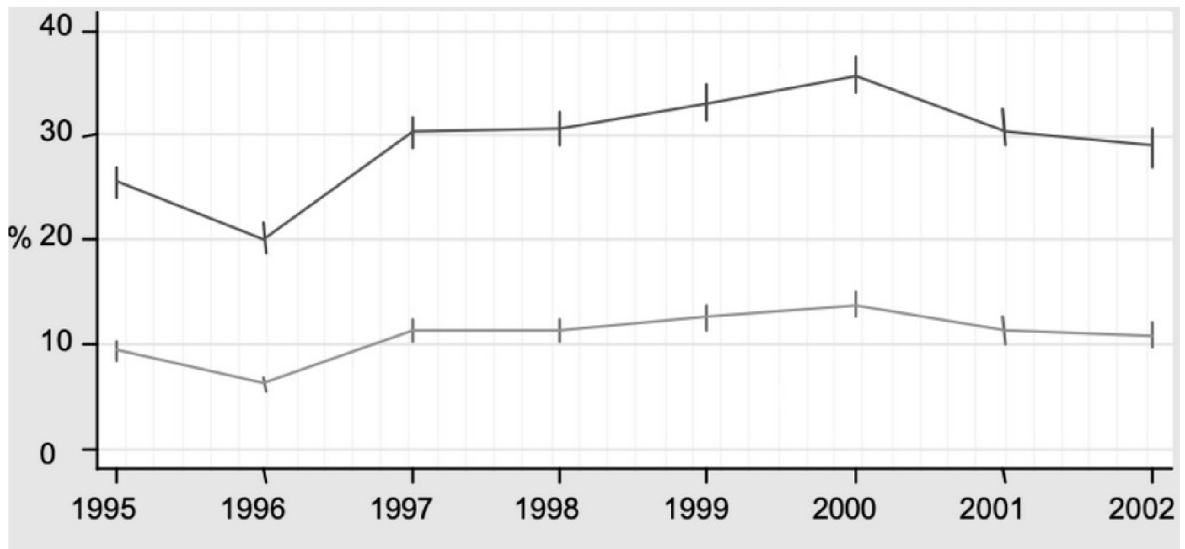
Indeed, this situation significantly contributed to Romania's lag in agricultural development compared to other Eastern European countries. The process of transitioning from a centralized, collective system to a market-oriented economy involved redistributing land and assets—a process mired in legislative complexities and disputes. The ramifications of communist policies and the time-consuming process of land redistribution impeded the adoption of modern agricultural techniques and practices that were being rapidly implemented elsewhere in Eastern Europe. As Romanian farmers grappled with reacquiring and consolidating land, many of them faced the challenge of operating without basic infrastructure. The lack of essential services such as running water compounded the difficulties of modernizing their practices. This hindered not only their daily living conditions but also their capacity to participate in the broader industrial and technological advancements sweeping through the agricultural sector at the time. For a significant number of Romanian farmers, the priority was to meet the immediate needs of subsistence rather than investing in long-term productivity enhancements. This gap in fundamental utilities and the slow pace of infrastructural development placed Romanian agriculture at a considerable disadvantage. The repercussions were far-reaching, as the absence of basic amenities directly affected the efficiency and economic viability of farming operations, thereby delaying Romania's entry into the competitive agricultural landscape of the industrialized world (Salasan, 2010).

Given the economic conditions in Romania during this time, there was limited foreign investment in the agricultural sector, and the workforce was primarily made up of local Romanian farmers. Foreign workers were not a significant presence in Romanian agriculture, partly because the wages in the agricultural sector were quite low, which did not attract workers from other countries. Moreover, the fragmented nature of farming, with many small subsistence and semi-subsistence farms, meant there was little demand for outside labor.

In terms of actual figures, precise salary data for Romanian farmers during this period is challenging to pinpoint due to the informal nature of much of the agricultural

work at that time. It is only possible to find data on the poverty rate based on the consumption.

**Graph 14: Dynamics of poverty rates in Romania, 1995-2002**



*Source : Own work based on Romania AIG 1995-2000, ABF 2001-2002*

Poverty significantly decreased from 2000. The reduction in poverty was largely due to economic growth. Social protection programs, especially the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI), also functioned relatively well, providing assistance to those who are not in a position to benefit from economic growth (World Bank, 2003).

Before Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, the agricultural sector was characterized by significant gender dynamics that reflected traditional roles in rural areas. Generally, both men and women played crucial roles in agricultural activities, but their responsibilities often differed. Women in Romanian agriculture traditionally managed household food production and small-scale family farming activities. They were primarily responsible for gardening, raising small livestock, processing food for the family, and preserving fruits and vegetables. Women's labor was often not formally recognized or remunerated, as it was considered part of their domestic duties. However, their contribution was essential for the subsistence of the household and the rural economy. Men were typically engaged in the more physical aspects of farming, such as plowing, planting, and harvesting on larger plots of land. They were often more involved in the commercial side of agriculture, selling produce at markets and making decisions about investments and expansion (FAO, 2015). The post-communist transition period saw many men migrate to

urban areas or abroad for work due to the economic difficulties of the time. This migration led to an increased 'feminization' of the countryside, with women taking on more responsibilities in managing farms. Despite their significant contributions, women often had limited access to the resources needed for larger-scale farming, such as land ownership, credit, and agricultural extension services. This was compounded by a lack of formal recognition in property rights following the redistribution of land post-communism, where land titles were more often registered solely under men's names. As Romania prepared to join the EU, there was an increased focus on gender equality and women's rights, which started to influence agricultural policy. However, the full impact of these policies on gender equality in agriculture would not be felt immediately (FAO, 2015). There are no precise data, it is challenging to pinpoint them due to the informal nature of much of the agricultural work at that time.

#### **4.2.3 Environmental situation in Romania before accession**

Romania has a rich history of environmental conservation. The country's first environmental protection laws were initiated by Alexandru Borza in 1924 and enacted in 1930. In 1935, Romania established its first national park in the Retezat Mountains. The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, created in 1992, encompasses most of the Danube Delta and is shared between Ukraine and Romania. After World War II, during the communist era, as many as 550 nature reserves were established. Then, in 1990, 10 national parks were created, although they were not officially recognized until 2000. The boundaries of these zones were initially poorly defined until they were clarified in 2003. In 1990, environmental protection became an independent field with the founding of the Ministry of the Environment. The National Strategy for Environmental Protection, the cornerstone document defining the country's environmental goals, was first issued in 1992, with updates in 1996 and 2002. This strategy includes an inventory of natural resources detailing their economic status and environmental quality, as well as the strategy itself, which outlines overarching principles, priorities, and objectives across short, medium, and long-term horizons. Starting in 1996, the national strategy began to align with the community strategy, emphasizing sustainability, pollution prevention, biodiversity protection, preservation of cultural and historical heritage, adherence to the "polluter-pays" principle, and the promotion of ecological restoration. Priorities have been set to maintain



and enhance the natural potential, protect against disasters and natural mishaps, maximize cost-benefits, and uphold international agreements and conventions.

Before Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, its agricultural sector and ecological situation were influenced by several decades of intensive farming practices, which included the widespread use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. These practices were part of the larger agricultural policies during the communist era, aimed at increasing productivity and food security through the intensive use of chemical inputs and the collectivization of land (Florian Banu, 2020). During the communist period, and extending into the years following the regime's collapse in 1989, Romania, like many other Eastern European countries, experienced significant environmental challenges due to the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers. This period was characterized by a lack of environmental regulation and awareness, leading to issues such as soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity (Stiri de Cluj, 2023). However, it's important to note that despite the intensive use of chemicals in certain areas, Romania also retained a significant portion of agricultural land that was farmed using traditional, low-intensity methods. These areas, often due to economic constraints rather than deliberate environmental strategy, had lower levels of chemical input usage. As a result, Romania entered the EU with a mixed agricultural legacy: regions of intensive, chemically dependent agriculture alongside extensive areas of semi-subsistence farming with high biodiversity and low chemical input usage (Mariana Iancu, 2024). The period leading up to EU accession saw a gradual shift towards better environmental practices in agriculture, driven by the need to align with EU standards. This included improved regulation and control over pesticide and fertilizer use, as well as the adoption of EU directives aimed at environmental protection, sustainable farming practices, and the promotion of organic agriculture. The exact data on pesticide use and its environmental impact in Romania before 2007 can vary, and detailed statistics from that period may be less readily available or reliable. Nonetheless, the general trend was a move towards adopting EU agricultural and environmental standards, which has continued to influence Romanian agriculture's ecological footprint positively.

With Romania's EU accession in 2007, the multifunctionality of agriculture has been significantly impacted, especially through the lens of organic farming. The movement of Transylvanian farmers toward organic practices in 1992, catalyzed by Swiss training initiatives, culminated in the formation of Bioterra, Romania's premier organic farming

association, in 1997. The subsequent creation of the first Romanian control body, Ecoinspect, and the Ministry of Agriculture's subsidies post-2000, propelled the organic sector forward, further bolstered by EU accession and subsequent funding. This organic expansion was, however, met with challenges. Despite a surge in certified organic operators and acreage, inadequate processing and marketing structures led to a decline in organic operator numbers and a decrease in organic acreage between 2013 and 2017. The sector rebounded around 2018, with organic operators increasing by about 700 annually. The transformation of Romanian agriculture through organic practices reveals a trend toward higher profitability on large-scale arable farms, contrasted with the smaller, diversified farms of the 2000s.

### **4.3 Changes in post-accession agricultural policies**

Romania's accession process to the European Union was prolonged and challenging. Candidate countries were required to meet the criteria set by the EU during the Copenhagen Council, both in legislative terms and economic benchmarks. For Romania, key hurdles included combating corruption and the treatment of minorities. It was only with the Kosovo conflict that the need to stabilize the Balkans region led the EU to expedite accession negotiations, concluding in 2005. Since 2007, Romania has been an EU member, subject to the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism to monitor progress in adopting the EU acquis. This mechanism is still operational today. Following Romania's integration into the European Union, Romanian farmers have become beneficiaries of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with a simplified payment system per hectare that primarily benefits those working on very large landholdings. However, the budget for the second pillar of the CAP is more substantial than the one allocated for direct aid, thereby extending the possibility of accessing these funds to other categories of farmers. Nonetheless, due to a lack of active representation from the agricultural sector, accessing information, support, and monitoring of these programs can prove to be problematic, raising questions about the targeted and efficient allocation of resources. Therefore, establishing independent structures that bridge the gap between farmers and decision-making centers remains essential.

### **4.3.1 Post-accession economic dynamics of Romanian agriculture**

Romania's entry into the European Union on January 1, 2007, heralded a significant phase in its economic evolution, focusing on economic and social cohesion. This approach aimed to foster conditions conducive to economic growth, ensure high employment levels, and promote balanced and sustainable development. The agricultural and rural development in Romania reflects a mix of historical, political, economic, social, and international influences. To effectively reform agriculture, rejuvenate rural areas, and invigorate the peasant class, it's essential to examine Romania's agricultural trajectory. This examination is pivotal because the revitalization of the Romanian peasantry is intrinsically linked to the nation's revival. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) represents the Union's most comprehensive sectoral policy, employing a variety of measures to integrate agricultural markets, support farmer incomes, and facilitate rural development. Despite its application across a diverse and uneven developmental landscape, marked by significant disparities in productivity, income, infrastructure, and living standards, CAP has historically succeeded in Western Europe. Over six decades, CAP has transformed Western Europe from an agriculturally import-dependent region into a leading global agricultural force. In Romania, the adoption of CAP has yielded both positive outcomes and areas needing improvement. A notable benefit has been the predictability and consistency of measures and interventions, allowing farmers access to funding for production through direct payments from European funds, irrespective of Romania's economic or financial conditions (Gavrilescu Camelia, 2017).

During the period from 2007 to 2020, farm incomes in Romania saw a significant increase, rising by 50%, largely due to subsidies in the form of direct payments, which accounted for up to 40% of farm incomes. This period also witnessed improved physical yields in certain crops, notably cereals and oilseeds. However, the distribution of direct payments highlighted the growing disparity within the agricultural sector, leading to the decline of many small and medium-sized farms and the emergence of larger farming operations. The broader effects of Romania's EU accession were keenly felt in the agricultural and rural sectors, spurred by market liberalization and the free movement of products, labor, and capital. Romanian farmers faced challenges with the low competitiveness of specific products, including animal products, vegetables, and fruits, struggling against imports from other countries. Additionally, the rural areas experienced

challenges due to the migration of younger workers seeking higher wages in Western Europe. This migration trend, coupled with an aging agricultural workforce, mirrored patterns seen in other Eastern European countries integrating into the single European market. The opening of capital movement led to significant foreign ownership and operation of Romanian agricultural lands. Despite these challenges, the rural sector and farmers benefited from substantial EU funds aimed at production and investment. Between 2007-2013, CAP support totaled 15.8 billion euros, split between Pillar 1 (EAGF) and Pillar 2 (EAFRD). The 2014-2020 period saw even greater CAP support, exceeding 20 billion euros. These investments prompt questions about their long-term impact on rural quality of life and prosperity. While initial assessments of CAP's effects anticipated mixed outcomes for farmers and consumers, reflecting concerns over the competitiveness of Romanian versus European agricultural products, the reality proved more complex. The integration into a consumer society has brought about significant changes in consumption behaviors within Romanian society (Micu Marius, 2024).

Throughout the transition period and leading up to EU accession, Romanian agricultural support mechanisms underwent significant changes, marked by fluctuations in the annual funding amounts and the economic-financial tools employed. This evolution highlighted a notable absence of a consistent and stable legislative and institutional structure. In the early stages of transition, initial financial support measures were introduced, funded by the state budget, providing price subsidies to food industry processors. Over time, a complex system of subsidies for input prices was developed. Additionally, through Law 83/1993, various forms of financial support were formalized, including subsidies on interest rates for production and investment loans, production bonuses, and other forms of compensation. The primary method of support for agricultural producers was through production bonuses, incorporated into the prices of four key national interest products—wheat, pork, poultry, and milk—setting minimum guaranteed prices for these commodities (Manescu, Mateoc, Dascalu, Mateoc-Sirb, 2017).

after initiating association agreements with the European Union, Romanian authorities began preparing to access significant EU funds designated for candidate countries. From 1990 to 2006, the European Union allocated approximately 80 billion in funds to assist Central and Eastern European countries through pre-accession programs like SAPARD, PHARE, and ISPA. The implementation of SAPARD, in particular, was a crucial and

beneficial step for Romania, providing not only significant financial resources but also a valuable learning experience in managing and utilizing these funds in line with the Common Agricultural Policy. During the period from 2007 to 2020, there was an overall increase in EU cereal production, with Romania's growth primarily attributed to higher average yields. However, Romanian cereal yields per hectare, despite increases, remained below the EU average. In 2015, Romania's average cereal yield was only 64% of the EU's average. This period also saw changes in the cultivated areas for major crops like wheat, corn, barley, oats, sunflower, colza, rice, and soy.

**Table 3: Trends in cultivated land for principal crops in hectares between 2007-2020**

	Total	Wheat and rye	Rye	Barley and two-row barley	Rice	Sunflowerseed	Soya beans
2007	7777174	1987114	12092	363806	8434	835923	133234
2008	7798075	2123281	13015	394029	9917	813891	49857
2009	7884101	2164347	15519	517513	13346	766080	48833
2010	7807379	2176945	14557	515820	12403	790814	63948
2011	8081613	1959362	12354	419508	12674	994984	72056
2012	8058329	2006306	8673	424244	11304	1067045	79793
2013	8166824	2114724	10739	495685	11930	1074583	67672
2014	8234437	2123034	10168	515996	12719	1001020	79910
2015	8265354	2116194	9603	469859	11106	1011527	128156
2016	8409242	2148192	10461	481605	9435	1039823	127266
2017	8307344	2062505	9588	455457	9125	998415	165143
2018	8466658	2126417	10264	423500	8251	1006994	169422
2019	8737275	2177726	9355	448885	7427	1282697	158149
2020	8263672	2166506	11252	441982	5996	1142841	168901

*Source: Own work based on Nation Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024*

In 2016, Romania's cultivated cereal area spanned 5,486.9 thousand hectares, with wheat accounting for 39%, corn 47%, barley 5%, oats 3%, and other cereals making up the remaining 5%. Post-2007, the land area dedicated to cereal cultivation has remained relatively stable with minor fluctuations, whereas the average yields have shown an upward trend, which is also mirrored in the total production of wheat. Variability in cereal production over the observed period can be attributed to the producers' reliance on weather conditions. Regarding the distribution by farm size for cereal cultivation, there is a consistent trend in Romania towards the consolidation of medium-sized farms (20-99.9 hectares) and larger farms (over 100 hectares). Between 2003-2013, there was a 14.5% increase in the number of medium-sized farms and a 56.4% increase in larger farms cultivating wheat, with the cultivated area expanding by 37.6% for medium and 44.3% for large farms, respectively. The pre-accession EU funds (SAPARD) and the subsequent National Rural Development Program have made it possible to acquire advanced agricultural machinery and, along with it, the transfer of know-how, ultimately leading to land consolidation in medium and large-scale farms. The forthcoming table and graph will

illustrate the progression of yields for primary field crops such as wheat, corn, barley, oats, sunflower, colza, rice, and soy from 2007 to 2020 (Manescu, Ada-Flavia, Sicoe-Murg, Gavruta, Mateoc, Toth, 2016).

**Table 4: Trends in production output for key agricultural crops in kilograms per inhabitant between 2007 and 2020**

	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Rye</u>	<u>Maize</u>	<u>Sunflower</u>	<u>Sugar beet</u>	<u>Potatoes</u>	<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Fruit</u>
<b>2007</b>	145.8	1	184.5	26.2	35.9	177.8	149.3	52
<b>2008</b>	349.6	1.5	382.2	57	34.4	177.7	186	57.4
<b>2009</b>	255.4	1.6	391.5	53.9	40.1	196.6	191.6	65
<b>2010</b>	287	1.7	446.6	62.4	41.4	162.2	190.8	70.1
<b>2011</b>	354	1.6	581.6	88.8	32.8	202.3	207.3	73.5
<b>2012</b>	264.1	0.9	296.8	69.7	35.9	122.9	176.2	56.3
<b>2013</b>	365	1.2	565.6	107.2	51.5	164.6	198.2	65
<b>2014</b>	380.8	1.2	601.9	109.9	70.2	176.7	190.9	65.3
<b>2015</b>	401.7	1.2	455.1	90.1	52.5	136.2	185.3	61.8
<b>2016</b>	427.8	1.3	545.3	103.1	51.4	136.5	170.4	63
<b>2017</b>	512.2	1.4	731.2	148.7	59.9	159.1	185.7	54
<b>2018</b>	520.6	1.5	957.9	157.2	50.2	155.1	194.9	93.1
<b>2019</b>	531.4	1.4	899.7	184.2	47.3	135.6	182.2	76.8
<b>2020</b>	331.3	1.5	523.3	110	37.2	83	180.5	82.4

Source: *Own work based on National Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024*

In 2007, Romania held the 8th position within the EU for cereal production, climbing to 6th by 2015. The country was also ranked 4th in terms of wheat cultivation area and 1st for corn, a standing it maintained from 2007 to 2015. Romanian wheat yields were at 50% of the European Union average between 2007 and 2009, and growth in average wheat yields did not keep pace with the EU, resulting in Romanian wheat yields dropping to 42% of the EU average between 2012 and 2015. Conversely, corn yields in Romania saw a more significant increase. Between 2007 and 2009, Romanian corn yields were at 36% of the EU average, but they rose to 53% of the EU average in the period from 2013 to 2015 (Otiman, Paun, Mateoc-Sirb, Manescu, 2016).

**Table 5: European Union funds received by Romania pre and post accession in millions of euros**

<b>CFM 2007-2013</b>	<b>Program 2007-2013</b>	<b>2007-2020 Execution as of 31.12.2020</b>
<b>AMOUNTS RECEIVED FROM THE EU BUDGET</b>	40.254	36.685
<b>Pre-accession Funds</b>	2.851	2.754
<b>Post-accession Funds, of which:</b>	37.402	33.930
<b>1. Advances</b>	3.696	3.658
<b>2. Reimbursements (including EAGF)</b>	33.706	30.272
<b>Structural and Cohesion Funds (SCF), of which:</b>	19.667	17.262
<b>a. Advances from SCF</b>	2.125	2.125
<b>b. Reimbursements from SCF</b>	17.541	15.136
<b>Funds for Rural Development and Fisheries (EAFRD+FEP), of which:</b>	8.327	7.298
<b>a. Advances (EAFRD+FEP)</b>	32	32
<b>b. Reimbursements (EAFRD+FEP)</b>	8.295	7.266
<b>European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF)</b>	7.658	7.658
<b>Others (post-accession), of which:</b>	1.748	1.709
<b>a. Advances</b>	1.538	1.500
<b>b. Reimbursements</b>	209	209

*Source: Ministerul Investițiilor și Proiectelor Europene (absorbția fondurilor europene 2014-2020, la data de 31 decembrie 2023)*

During the first two programming periods in which Romania participated within the European Union, from 2007 to 2013 and from 2014 to 2020, it received 38.6 billion euros from the European Commission as part of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The majority of the European funds that Romanian agriculture received consisted of direct payments to farmers, amounting to 22.1 billion euros for the period from January 1, 2007, to December 31, 2023. These funds came from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) during the first two programming periods, 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. Farmers

received this money directly through the Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA), without the necessity of submitting projects. The remaining 16.5 million euros were paid by the European Commission to Romania from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Fisheries Fund. These funds were allocated for investments in the projects of farmers, processors, non-agricultural entrepreneurs in rural areas (to a lesser extent), and public authorities in the rural environment. Beneficiaries drew the funds through the Agency for the Financing of Rural Investments (AFIR) and the Management Authority of the Fisheries Program, both under the Ministry of Agriculture.



**Table 6: Overview of EU funding allocations and absorption rates for Romania (2014-2022)**

<b>Program 2014-2020</b>	<b>Allocation 2014-2020 (EU)</b>	<b>Payments to beneficiaries (EU)</b>	<b>Pre-financing received from the EC (European Commission)</b>	<b>Amounts requested from the EC within the limit of the EU allocation of OP (current absorption rate)</b>	<b>Reimbursements from the EC (effective absorption rate)</b>	<b>Total amount received from the EC</b>
<b>Regional Operational Program</b>	6.860.000.000	111.96 %	12.02 %	85.28 %	76.27 %	88.29 %
<b>Large Infrastructure Operational Program</b>	9.338.581.661	98.19 %	15.78 %	96.40 %	84.05 %	99.83 %
<b>Competitiveness Operational Program</b>	2.379.787.234	93.35 %	18.22 %	77.94 %	72.0 %	90.23 %
<b>Human Capital Operational Program</b>	4.596.057.078	99.84 %	13.97 %	84.50 %	75.27 %	89.24 %
<b>Administrative Capacity Operational Program</b>	563.588.476	99.0 %	12.69 %	88.70 %	79.83 %	92.52 %
<b>Technical Assistance Operational Program</b>	332.765.958	97.24 %	12.77 %	84.66 %	76.10 %	88.86 %
<b>Cohesion Policy</b>	24.070.780.407	101.96 %	14.49 %	88.79 %	78.76 %	93.25 %
<b>National Rural Development Program</b>	10.968.146.956	85.72 %	10.89 %	80.36 %	80.34 %	83.30 %
<b>TOTAL ESI Funds (European Structural and Investment Funds)</b>	35.207.348.734	96.78 %	14.83 %	85.99 %	79.09 %	89.98 %
<b>Operational Programme for Administrative Development</b>	497.013.044	83.72 %	14.83 %	82.58 %	77.87 %	92.70 %
<b>Total Cohesion Policy and FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived)</b>	24.567.793.451	101.59 %	14.50 %	88.66 %	78.74 %	93.24 %
<b>TOTAL ESI Funds and FEAD</b>	35.704.361.778	96.59 %	10.95 %	85.94 %	79.07 %	90.02 %
<b>EAGF 2015-2022 (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund)</b>	15.289.049.754	96.57 %		96.57 %	94.59 %	94.59 %

*Source: Ministerul Investițiilor și Proiectelor Europene, 2023*

In the programming period of 2014-2020, through direct payments to farmers from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), Romania received 14.46 billion euros, representing an absorption rate of 94% as of December 31, 2023. Also, during the 2014-

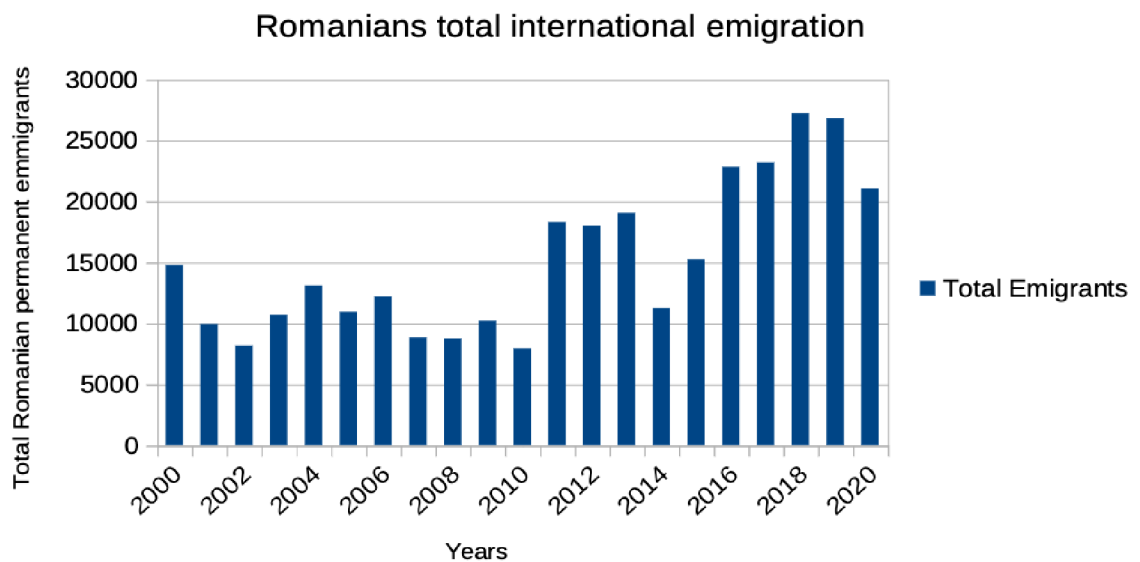
2020 programming period, Romania was granted 9.13 billion euros by the EU for the National Rural Development Program (NRDP), achieving an absorption rate of 83.3% as of December 31, 2023, including advances provided by the European Commission. Through the Fisheries Program, Romania utilized 96.3 million euros, representing an absorption rate of 57.18%, including advances. In the earlier programming period of 2007-2013, Romania received 7.65 billion euros in direct payments to farmers from the EU, achieving an absorption rate of 100%. Furthermore, during the 2007-2013 programming period, Romania received 7.3 billion euros for agriculture, rural development, and fisheries projects, marking an absorption rate of 87.6%.

Apart from the Common Agricultural Policy, the Romanian farmers and the food industry also received state aid supported by the EU through the Operational Programme for Competitiveness (OPC) 2014-2020. This assistance was granted exceptionally through Emergency Ordinance 61/2022 to combat the COVID-19 crisis. The aid was allocated a total of 300 million euros, with 150 million euros coming from the European Union, through the European Regional Development Fund - REACT EU. These measures were administered by the Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA) for the micro-grants part, and by the Ministry of Economy for the working capital grants part. Furthermore, pre-accession funds that entered Romania after joining the EU are also included. These pre-accession funds amount to a total of 2.75 billion euros, through the SAPARD, PHARE, and ISPA programs, with SAPARD being predominantly directed towards agriculture.

The influence of EU policies aimed at improving living standards and ensuring fair compensation for labor across member states. This integration resulted in notable changes, including the increase in the minimum wage for agricultural workers. Prior to EU accession, the minimum wage for agricultural laborers in Romania was indeed relatively low, often below 100 EUR per month. However, with the implementation of EU regulations and standards, there was a gradual increase in wages. For instance, according to official data from the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, the minimum wage for agricultural workers increased steadily over the years. By 2020, it had risen to approximately 275 EUR per month, reflecting a substantial improvement compared to pre-accession levels (Eurostat, 2020).

However, EU accession also facilitated the free movement of workers, leading to a significant phenomenon of labor migration. Studies such as that of Sandu (2010), which explores post-accession Romanian migration dynamics, show that many Romanians chose to seek employment abroad, attracted by higher wages. The agricultural sector, critically dependent on labor, was particularly affected by this emigration. The shortage of workers led to an increase in labor costs for those who remained, exacerbating challenges for Romanian farmers who must compete in a broader European market. In fact, regarding the national institute of statistics data, the peak in Romanian emigration occurred in 2011, coinciding with Romania's accession to the Schengen Area.

**Graph 15: Total international emigration of Romanians from 2000-2020**



*Source: Own work based on Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2024*

When it comes to land prices, Romania indeed has one of the lowest costs of agricultural land in Europe. A study by the European Commission reports that the average price per hectare of agricultural land in Romania is significantly lower than that of countries like France or Germany, making Romanian lands attractive to foreign investors. This accessibility has led to a significant increase in land purchases by foreigners, although exact figures vary depending on sources and periods considered. Between 2007 and 2020, there has been a notable increase in the price of agricultural land in Romania. In 2007, the average price per hectare of agricultural land was approximately 1,000 to 2,000 euros, depending on regions and land quality. However, by 2020, these prices had significantly

risen to an average of between 4,000 and 10,000 euros per hectare, or even more in some regions with high agricultural value (agrintel.ro, consulted the 26/02/2024). This increase reflects the growing interest of both domestic and foreign investors in acquiring agricultural land in Romania (Micu Marius, Appendix Interview, 2024). Regarding land ownership, reports indicate that a significant percentage of agricultural land in Romania has become the property of foreigners since EU accession. Although exact figures may vary, some reports suggest that up to 10% of Romanian agricultural land was owned by foreign investors at certain times since 2007. This trend of land acquisition by foreigners notably intensified after 2010, with a significant increase in transactions involving foreign investors in the Romanian agricultural sector (Alexandru, Appendix Interview, 2024).

Since its accession to the European Union, Romania has benefitted from substantial financial support through various EU funds, particularly in the agricultural sector. According to data provided by the European Commission, Romania received a total of €35.3 billion in EU funds between 2007 and 2020, with a significant portion allocated to rural development and agriculture. These funds have played a crucial role in modernizing Romania's agricultural sector by promoting the adoption of advanced technologies and innovative farming practices. For instance, investments in precision farming technologies, such as GPS-guided machinery and drone technology for crop monitoring, have increased efficiency and productivity on Romanian farms. Furthermore, subsidies and grants provided through EU programs have incentivized farmers to invest in sustainable agriculture, including organic farming methods and environmentally friendly practices. As a result, the utilization of agricultural technologies has seen a notable increase in Romania, leading to improved yields, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced competitiveness in the European market (European Commission, 2021).

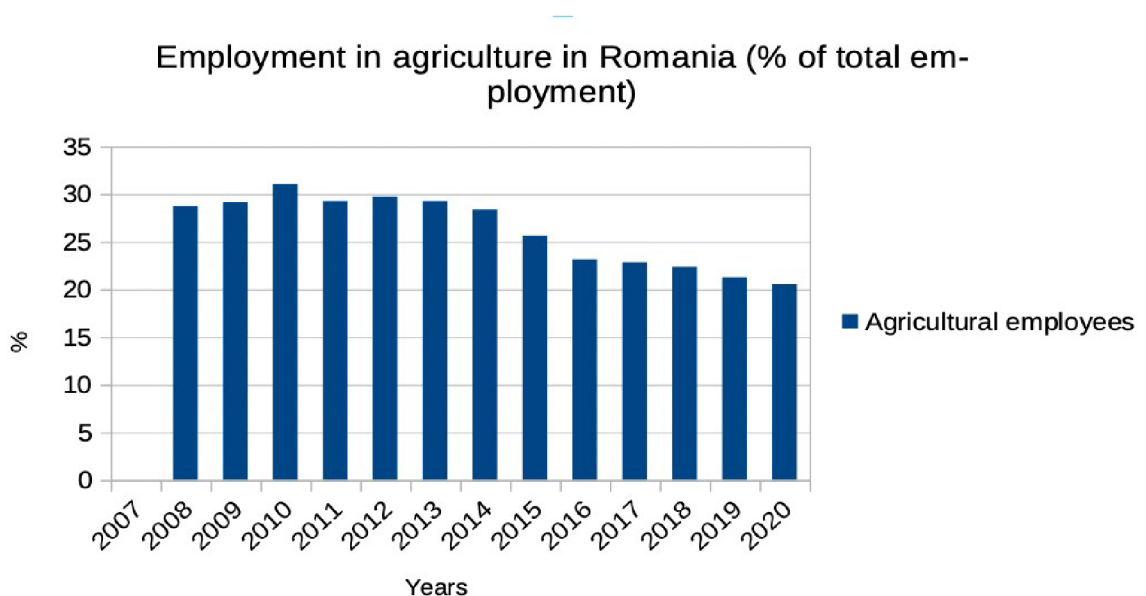
#### **4.3.2 Social impacts of European integration on Romanian agriculture**

In Romania, agriculture has traditionally been a cornerstone of the national economy. However, upon joining the European Union, this country faced challenges in matching the performance of more established member states. Contributing factors to this disparity include a lack of organization and modern equipment, the prevalence of outdated technologies, insufficient skills among agricultural laborers, and a highly divided land ownership model (Samochiș & Glogovețan, 2012; Havlik, 2015). In Romania, agriculture serves as the primary means of livelihood for the rural populace (INS, 2019). When

examining the composition of the agricultural workforce, it becomes evident that a significant portion of the population engages in agricultural activities.

Data from the World Bank (2024) revealed that 23% of Romania's workforce was employed in agriculture, a stark contrast to the European Union average of just 3%. Furthermore, a considerable segment of the Romanian population engages in agricultural work, either on a permanent or seasonal basis. Romania stands out within the EU for having the highest percentage of its workforce involved in agriculture, with the rate reaching 23% in 2020. This is significantly higher than in France (4.31%), Germany (3%), Spain (4%), and Poland (10%) (Vasile, 2014; Macours & Swinnen, 2005). Following the financial downturn, the proportion of individuals working in agriculture in Romania began to rise. Specifically, in the aftermath of the economic downturn, the agricultural sector saw an increase in employment: 28% of the working-age population in 2008, 29% in 2009, and 31% in 2010 were employed in agriculture (Vasile, 2014). This trend was partly due to rising unemployment and a decline in employment rates in both the secondary and tertiary sectors. In 2008, 32% of the working-age population was employed in the secondary sector, which decreased to 30% in 2009 and fell further to 28% in 2010 (World Bank, 2024; NIS-Romania, 2024).

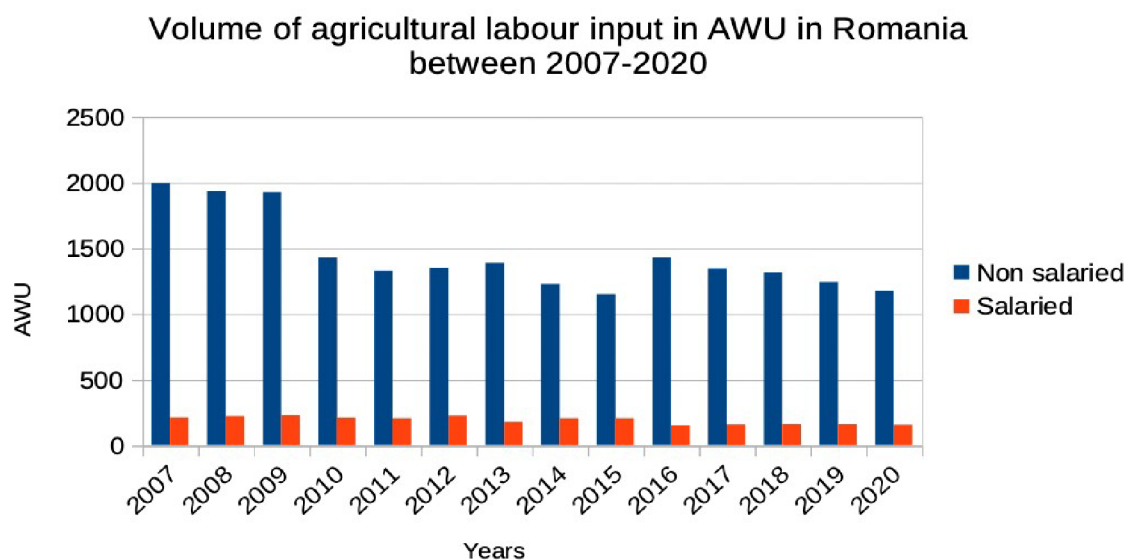
**Graph 16: Employment in agriculture in Romania (% of total employment) between 2008-2020**



*Source: Own work based on National Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024*

By 2020, the percentage of those employed in agriculture had fallen to around 20% of total employment. The consistent year-on-year decrease suggests a structural shift in the Romanian economy away from agriculture toward other sectors, and it could indicate increased mechanization and efficiency within the agricultural sector, reducing the need for human labor. This trend of declining agricultural employment as a share of total employment is common in developing economies as they diversify and as agricultural operations become more efficient. Additionally, remittances from Romanians working abroad may have impacted rural economies, potentially reducing the reliance on agriculture for livelihoods and contributing to the observed decline in agricultural employment (Vasile, 2014).

**Graph 17: Volume of agricultural labour input in AWU in Romania Between 2007-2020**

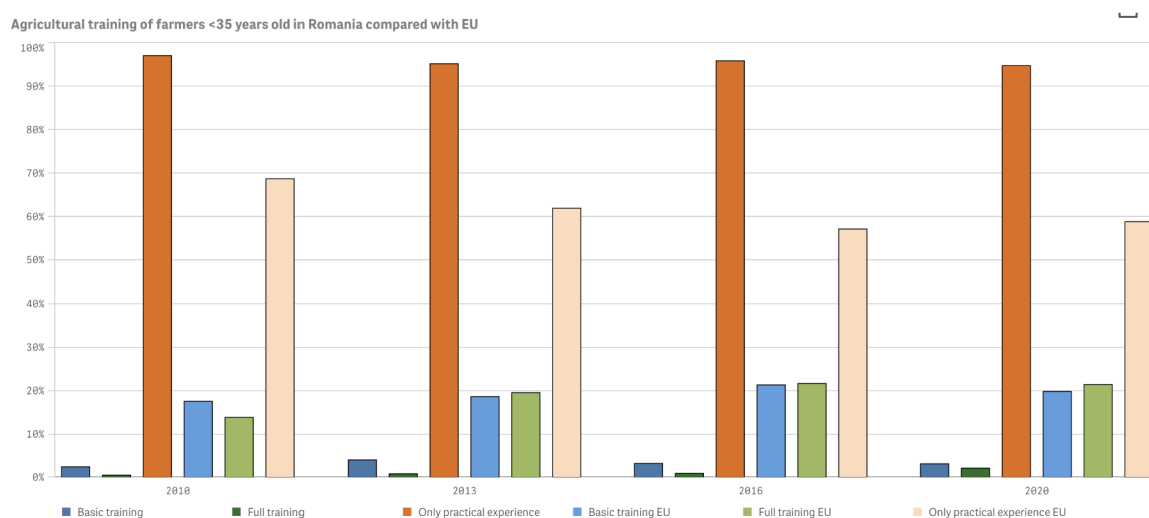


*Source: Own work, based on National Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024*

The total agricultural labor input, both salaried and non-salaried, appears to decrease over the observed period. The non-salaried labor input, is significantly higher than the salaried throughout the entire period. In 2007, the non-salaried AWU was around 2,250, showing the highest labor input in the chart. The salaried AWU was around 250. By 2020, the non-salaried AWU decreased to around 1,250, while the salaried AWU remained relatively stable, at around 250. There's a notable downward trend in non-salaried AWU, suggesting a decline in the number of days worked by individuals not receiving a regular

wage in the agricultural sector. The relatively constant salaried AWU suggests that the number of days worked by salaried employees has remained stable. The difference between salaried and non-salaried labor inputs suggests that most agricultural work is likely done by non-salaried workers, which include family members, part-time workers, or seasonal labor (Unguru, 2017). Considering an AWU represents the work of one person working full-time in agriculture over one year (based on 245 working days of eight hours per day), the chart provides insight into the human labor component of Romanian agriculture and indicates significant shifts in the industry's labor dynamics over the analyzed period (National Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024). Analysis by NIS (2018) and Erdelystat (2019) found that 15.5% of the country's workforce was self-employed, with 7.2% assisting family members in 2020.

**Graph 18: Agricultural training of farmers < 35 years old in Romania compared with EU (from 2010 to 2020)**

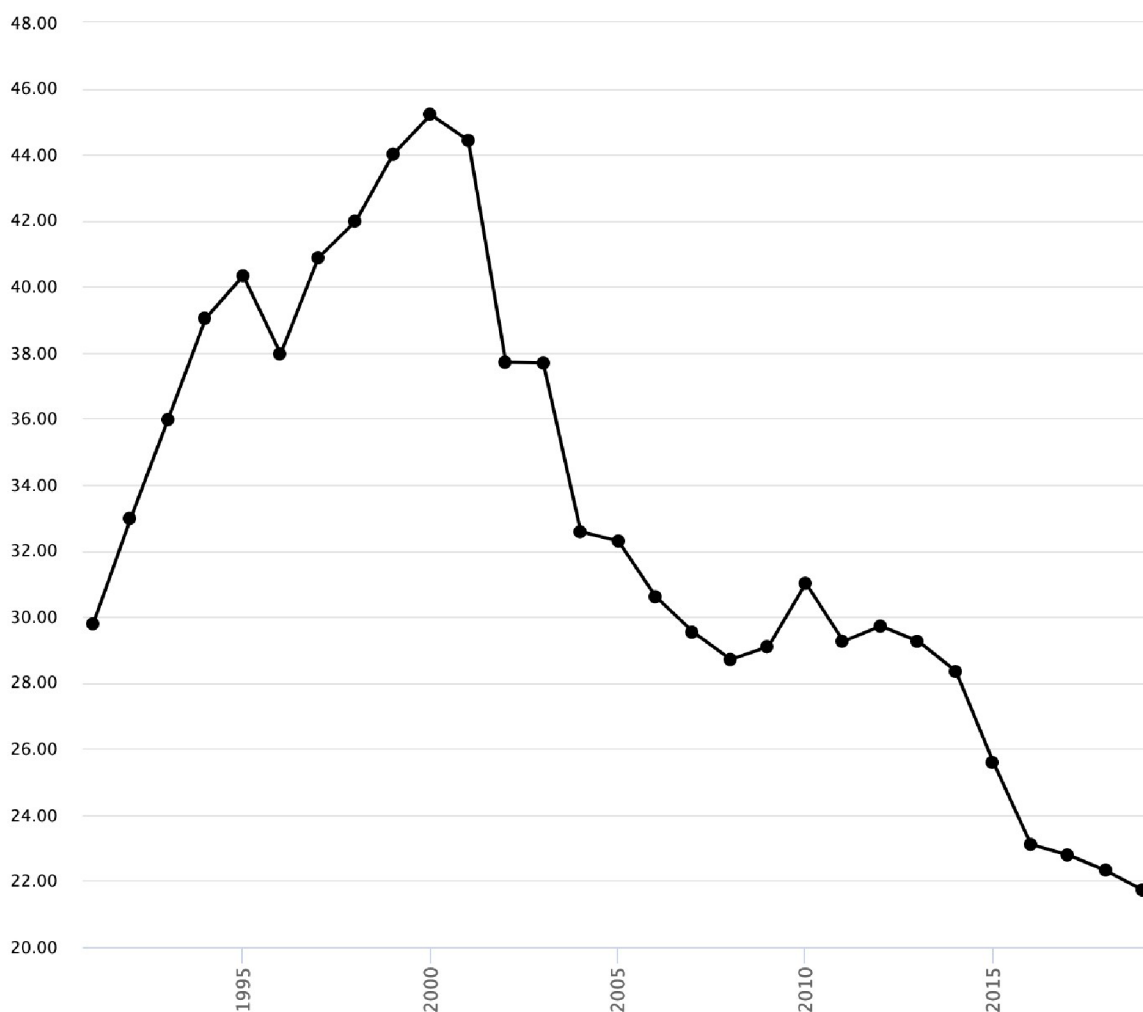


*Source: DG AGRI – Eurostat data, 2024*

Data between 2007 and 2020 (National Institute for Statistics, Romania, 2024) show a declining trend in the proportion of individuals with higher agricultural education. This downturn may be attributed to agricultural wages trailing behind the national average, diminishing the sector's competitive appeal and failing to attract young people. The number of students receiving education in agriculture in Romania decreased from over 25,000 in 2005 to less than 15,000 in 2020. The diminishing allure of agricultural training and careers among Romanian youth leads to a reduced involvement in agricultural

production and a decreased likelihood of considering them as potential agricultural workers (Unguru, 2017).

**Graph 19: Evolution of the agricultural workforce in Romania: 1995-2020**



*Source: own work based on WordBank data, 2024*

The agricultural workforce saw an increase during this time, reaching a peak around the year 2000. This might correspond to a period of stability or growth in the agricultural sector, or due to external factors that temporarily heightened the reliance on labor in agriculture.

There is a significant drop in agricultural labor following the peak reached around the year 2000. This coincides with Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, which could have contributed to a restructuring of the agricultural sector, with an increase in mechanization, policies favoring larger and more efficient farming operations, and a possible migration of labor to other sectors or countries. After a period of relative stabilization, where the agricultural workforce appeared to stabilize or slightly decrease,



there is a continuing downward trend until 2020. This suggests an ongoing trend of modernization and restructuring in the agricultural sector, potentially accompanied by demographic changes impacting the availability of labor for agriculture (Eurostat, 2023).

With Romania's EU accession significantly impacting its agricultural sector, the country's strides in agritourism and ecotourism have been particularly noteworthy. Leveraging its extensive natural landscapes and a robust rural heritage, Romania is emerging as a key player in European rural tourism (Galluzzo, 2020). This recognition is a testament to Romania's ability to showcase its landscapes, traditions, and preserved rural customs on an international stage. A study released on World Tourism Day, celebrated annually on September 27, underscores the significance of rural tourism in Romania over the past 25 years. According to tourism consultant Traian Badulescu, rural tourism represents the country's most spectacular tourism form during this period, asserting Romania's competitive edge in this sector against any European country. Moreover, the resilience of Romania's rural tourism sector, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, highlights its sustainability and appeal. This trend not only illustrates the sector's resilience but also its growing attractiveness for longer vacation periods. Emil-Razvan Pirjol, the State Secretary in charge of the General Directorate of Tourism at the Ministry of Economy, views rural tourism as a pivotal development factor for the country. The increasing interest from foreign investors in hotels and pensions around increasingly attractive tourist circuits further evidences this sector's growth and potential. This evolving landscape underscores the symbiotic relationship between Romania's agricultural development and its burgeoning tourism sector, fueled by the country's EU membership.

The diversification into sustainable tourism forms such as agritourism not only enriches Romania's rural economy but also positions it as a compelling destination. Agritourism provides an alternative income source for farmers and rural households, which can be especially important in areas where traditional agriculture is under pressure. Data on this aspect might include average income increases for households participating in agritourism. By diversifying into tourism, rural areas can create new jobs not only directly in tourism but also in related sectors such as local handicrafts, food production, and services. Statistics might show the number of jobs created or the reduction in rural unemployment rates due to agritourism. Agritourism encourages the conservation of natural landscapes and cultural heritage, which in turn attracts more visitors. Metrics here

could involve investments in landscape and cultural preservation or the number of agritourism sites that incorporate conservation efforts (De Castris and Di Gennaro, 2019).

#### **4.3.2 Environmental and ecological transformation in Romanian agriculture following EU integration**

Following Romania's accession to the EU, measures were introduced in the Romanian National Rural Development Program 2007-2013 to support the preservation of certified organic farmland. This was enacted through Measure 214, known as "Agri-environment payments," which provided payments for the conversion period in accordance with Article 68 of Regulation (EU) No. 73/2009. Notably, there was a significant increase in the organic area after completing a period of 3 years of conversion and 5 years of commitment (2010-2012) and (2017-2020). However, there was a decrease in organic area observed between 2015-2016, which can be attributed to the fact that the area under permanent grasslands, accounting for more than 70% of organic land, received subsidies only during the conversion period (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020).

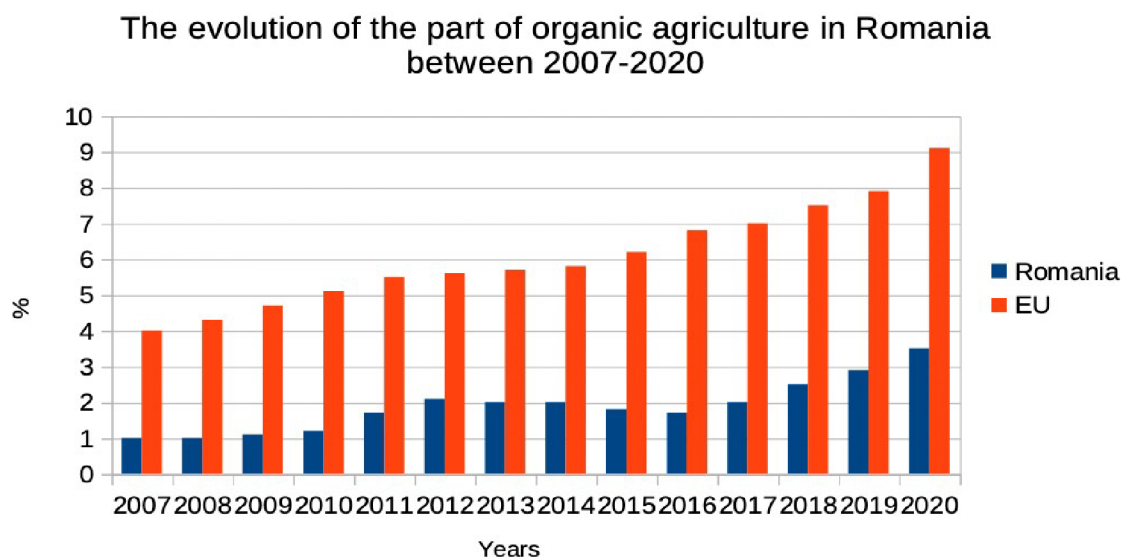
As an EU member since 2007, Romania fully implements EU legislation on organic farming. Decree no. 895 / 31 of August 2016, modified by Decree 61 / 2017, outlines the rules and responsibilities for implementing EU organic legislation. The Ministry of Agriculture serves as the competent authority responsible for implementation, approval, and surveillance of all private control bodies in Romania. Each of Romania's 41 counties has its Directorate of Agriculture with a designated individual responsible for organic matters, including the registration of organic operators and any derogations (Stanciu, 2021).

Romania has a national organic logo corresponding to the term "ecological," widely recognized among consumers for organic products. The use of this logo, owned by the Ministry of Agriculture, is voluntary and must be accompanied by the EU logo, the control body's code, and a statement of the origin of raw materials (e.g., "Romania(n) agriculture" or "EU agriculture"). Rules governing the usage of the national logo are defined by Decree 317 / 190 / 2006.

The Romanian Government supports organic farming through its Payments and Intervention Agency for Agriculture (APIA), providing subsidies for both the conversion period and the maintenance of organic certification after conversion.

In 2021, 42% of the subsidies were allocated to support conversion to organic farming, while 58% were designated for the maintenance of organic certificates. Arable farming absorbed over 70% of the funds. Almost half of the organic area was dedicated to organic grains and oilseeds, with an additional 12% utilized for fodder crops essential for sustaining soil fertility in organic farming practices. According to a FiBL survey, Romania ranked 8th in Europe for organic grain production in 2020, with approximately 134,000 hectares under cultivation, following Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, Ukraine, and Poland. The majority of organic grain produced in Romania is intended for human consumption, with a smaller portion allocated for animal feed. Romania also ranks fourth in Europe for organic oilseed production, covering 90,000 hectares, primarily cultivating sunflower rape-seed and soybeans. However, a crop rotation consisting of approximately 40% oilseeds may not be sustainable in organic farming. Many organic farms in the Tulcea and Constanța regions range from 500 to 2000 hectares, including Biofarm Crucea, Anglo-Rom Agriculture, Delta-Rom Agriculture, Kiara Laci, Agro Exim Grup, and several Naturland-certified farms (Stanciu, 2021).

**Graph 20: The evolution of the part of organic agriculture in Romania and in the EU between 2007-2020 (in %)**



*Source: Own work, based on the National Institut for Statistics, Romania, 2024, and Eurostat, 2024*

In southeastern Romania, Biochem Organics plays a central role in the organic grain sector by acting as an offtaker for contracted farmers and facilitating international organic grain trade. In Tulcea county alone, the company collaborates with farmers cultivating organic crops on over 70,000 hectares, offering storage services for organic grains. Similarly, Delta Organic Crops and Agri Mondo partner with farmers managing 5,000 hectares of certified organic land. Other notable organic grain traders include Copeland Crop near the Hungarian border and AgranoLand in Vrancea county, which also operates as a primary processor, producing organic flour, vegetable oil, and animal feed from organic grains and oilseeds. Additional primary processors include Maragro Group in Banat and LTA Mondial in Constanța, specializing in organic sunflower and rapeseed oil production. Collectively, these companies process approximately 90% of organic grains, oilseeds, and vegetable oil, with most products sold in bulk to EU partners (Dumitrascu, 2020).

Moreover, there has been a notable increase in the consumption of organic food among Romanians working in Western countries, with young families with children being the primary consumer group. (Micu Marius, 2024) According to a survey conducted by Modern Buyer and iQarConsult in 2021, two-thirds of the population purchase organic fruits and vegetables once to three times a week, with 10% buying daily. The majority of organic products are bought from retail chains, with Lidl being the most popular choice, followed by Kaufland, Carrefour, and Auchan. These chains offer a wide variety of organic products, including fresh produce, dry goods, baby food, and cosmetics, with many providing online purchase and delivery options. While about 90% of organic products are still imported, locally produced organic items, such as dairy products, breakfast cereals, pasta, honey, nuts, wine, fresh fruits and vegetables, and juice, are steadily increasing in availability and diversity. Major retailers, including Cora, Kaufland, Mega Image, Selgros, Auchan, and Carrefour, offer a wide range of organic products, with Carrefour's "Creștem România Bio" program supporting local producers of fresh fruits and vegetables by covering certification costs and providing market support during conversion and beyond, as mandated by law (321/2009).

## 5 Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Results

Romania has a complex history when it comes to economic development and land management within its agricultural sector. For decades, the country struggled with challenges that ranged from inefficient collective farming practices during the communist era to the cumbersome process of transitioning to a market economy post-1989. This historical backdrop has significantly influenced Romania's approach to agricultural development and land management, often leading to fragmented land holdings and underinvestment in modern agricultural technologies.

The accession to the European Union marked a pivotal turning point for Romanian agriculture. The influx of EU funds, through instruments such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), provided vital resources for modernization, technological upgrade, and structural adjustments within the sector. However, the pace of transformation in Romania's agriculture has not matched that of some Eastern European counterparts, largely due to its unique historical and socio-economic context.

Given the country's economic backdrop, the industrial revolution that transformed Western agriculture did not fully take root in Romania in a timely manner. By the time Romania joined the EU, the agricultural sector was markedly behind, with many farmers living in modest conditions, often without basic amenities like indoor plumbing. The notion of investing in advanced machinery and tractors was, for many, an unattainable luxury in the face of such fundamental needs.

EU membership facilitated the free movement of labor, which had unintended consequences for the Romanian labor market. Many Romanians sought better-paid opportunities in Western Europe, leading to a labor crisis within the country. This shortage has been particularly acute in the agricultural sector, where farmers increasingly rely on seasonal workers, including those from abroad. Despite these efforts, attracting labor remains a challenge due to comparatively low wages, which are among the lowest in Europe.

The low price of arable land at the time of EU accession attracted numerous foreign investors to Romania, significantly impacting the agricultural landscape. This influx of

investment has contributed to the modernization of the sector but has also raised concerns about land ownership and the long-term sustainability of rural communities.

In terms of ecology, EU membership has imposed conditions that have encouraged the development of more sustainable agricultural practices. These conditions have spurred growth in the organic farming sector and promoted environmental stewardship among Romanian farmers. Agritourism presents a promising avenue for diversifying rural economies and enhancing the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania. By leveraging its rich cultural heritage and beautiful landscapes, Romania has the potential to develop agritourism as a significant source of income for rural communities, contributing to rural revitalization and sustainable development.

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

**Resilience and adaptability:** Romanian agriculture has shown a strong ability to adapt to historical, economic, and environmental changes, especially with its integration into the EU and the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policies (CAP).

**Agricultural diversity:** Romania benefits from a wide range of climates and soils, enabling diverse agricultural practices that meet both local needs and export markets.

**Potential for rural development:** Focusing on multifunctionality allows agriculture to play a key role in rural development, improving not just the economy but also preserving traditions and the environment.

### Weaknesses

**Land fragmentation:** Excessive fragmentation of agricultural holdings limits their efficiency and ability to modernize and access European funds.

**Underinvestment:** Despite access to EU funds, the agricultural sector suffers from chronic underinvestment in infrastructure, technology, and sustainable practices.

**Vulnerability to EU policy changes:** Adjustments in EU policies, such as the CAP, can significantly impact Romanian agriculture, making it vulnerable to decisions made outside the country.

### Threats

**Climate change:** The effects of climate change, such as droughts and floods, threaten the stability and productivity of Romanian agriculture.

**Competition in the European market:** Increasing competition within the European single market can pressure Romanian farmers, particularly those from small holdings.

**Dependence on subsidies:** A heavy reliance on EU subsidies may limit the agricultural sector's autonomy and its ability to adapt to market evolutions.

### Opportunities

**Development of agroecology:** Sustainable agricultural practices and agroecology offer the chance to enhance multifunctionality while addressing environmental concerns.

**Valorization of local products:** The growing trend towards consuming local, quality products can boost the agricultural sector, especially through origin labels and organic production.

**Integration of modern technologies:** Adopting modern technologies and innovative agricultural practices can improve the productivity and sustainability of Romanian agriculture.

## **5.2 Challenges in the research process**

The primary challenge highlighted was the heavy reliance on quantitative data, such as historical agricultural statistics and policy documents. While these data sources are crucial for understanding the evolution of agricultural multifunctionality in Romania, they also present a limitation. The analysis was constrained by the availability and scope of these datasets, which may not capture the full range of factors influencing agricultural practices and policies. The multifunctionality of agriculture encompasses a wide array of aspects, including economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The thesis aimed to explore these dimensions comprehensively. However, the multifaceted nature of multifunctionality meant that not all aspects could be explored in depth within the confines of the study. This complexity underscores the challenge of capturing the full spectrum of multifunctionality's impact on Romanian agriculture and rural development. The methodology employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, incorporating literature review, data analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Despite the thorough methodological framework, the analysis encountered limitations due to the restricted page count and the vast scope of factors affecting agricultural multifunctionality. These factors include economic crises, social events, wars, annual weather variations, and climate change, which could not be fully accounted for in the analysis. Such exclusions mean that certain findings might be influenced by these unaccounted variables, highlighting a critical limitation in the study's scope and depth of analysis.

## **5.3 Discussions**

The interviews presented in the document provide a rich narrative on the complexities and multifaceted nature of Romania's accession to the European Union and its impact on the country's agricultural sector. They unanimously agree that Romania would not be where it is today without EU membership, but also highlight the country's lack of preparedness for such a monumental shift.

Across the interviews, there is a consensus that while EU accession was beneficial, Romania was not adequately prepared for the transition. This unpreparedness spanned various aspects, from the inability to fully leverage EU funds to a lack of strategic planning in agriculture. Interviewee Nina Gheorghita explicitly states, "Surely Romania today would not have been able to say everything that we have as development if we had not

entered the European Union. That is, it would have been much further back from all points of view”.

The interviews highlight a significant gap in infrastructure and strategic vision that hampered Romania's agricultural development post-EU accession. For instance, the discussion points out the drastic transformation needed in agriculture, from adopting modern practices to addressing the significant shift in the rural workforce and the migration patterns exacerbated by open labor markets within the EU.

Economic and social ramifications of EU accession were also a focal point, with interviewees discussing the challenges and opportunities presented by the opening of markets and the availability of EU funds. They explored how these factors influenced agricultural practices, market access, and overall economic viability for farmers and agricultural businesses.

The adaptation to EU environmental standards and regulations was identified as both a challenge and an opportunity. This adaptation process has been a double-edged sword, introducing stringent requirements but also leading to improvements in sustainability and product quality.

Looking forward, the interviews suggest areas where Romania can improve, such as enhancing strategic planning, better utilizing EU funds, and more effectively preparing for the evolving demands of EU membership.

These interviews serve as a microcosm of the broader challenges and opportunities faced by Romania in the wake of EU accession. They underscore the complexity of integrating into a larger economic and political union, highlighting both the strides made and the hurdles that remain. The narrative woven through these conversations reflects a journey of growth, adaptation, and continuous learning, with a clear acknowledgment that while EU membership has propelled Romania forward, there is still much work to be done to fully realize the potential benefits.

The interview with Nina Gheoghita highlighted (See Interview 4) those points: EU membership has had a distinctly positive impact on the development of the agri-food sector in Romania. It enabled significant advancements that the country could not have achieved otherwise, especially in terms of modernization and professionalization of the sector. Despite progress, there is criticism regarding the absence of a clear agricultural strategy, highlighting the importance of collaboration between the private sector and policymakers



in developing effective public policies. The entry of international companies into the Romanian agricultural sector is seen as a major advantage provided by the EU, bringing both business knowledge and financing solutions to a historically underfunded sector. The transition from state agriculture to private farming and the improvement of infrastructure are significant aspects of the post-accession evolution of the agricultural sector. The interview emphasizes the crucial importance of representing agricultural interests in the creation of public policies and the necessity of mandatory consultation with the private sector for effective policy formulation. The discussion also addresses the need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy to make it more flexible and adaptable to the specific needs of each member country, including Romania. A point for improvement identified is the insufficient development of family farms and agritourism, which could significantly contribute to the local economy and rural development.

The interview with Alexandru, a Romanian Farmer (See Interview 1) presented an interesting point of view: He noted the crucial role of EU subsidies and funds in advancing agriculture, introducing new products, and opening markets. However, there were also challenges, such as adapting to reduced pesticide use and other EU agricultural policies. The conversation highlighted the significance of EU funding for small and medium-sized farms in Romania. Opportunities from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms have led to the development of these farms, allowing for better equipment and adaptation to new agricultural challenges. However, guidance in equipment acquisition and a conservative mindset were cited as limitations. Professor Micu Marius elaborated on Romania's position within the EU and global agricultural markets. He stressed that while Europe is a leading exporter of agri-food products, Romania has lagged in adding value to its exports. The discussion also touched on the challenges and opportunities presented by the EU market. Alexandru shared his personal success in the artisanal spirits market as an example of entrepreneurship without significant state or legislative support. His story underscored the importance of innovation and value addition in Romanian agriculture. Both speakers advocated for cooperative development and better representation in agricultural policy-making. They emphasized the need for farmers and entrepreneurs to take initiative and work collectively for their interests, rather than relying on external support. The discussion concluded with reflections on the future of the CAP and agricultural policy in the EU context. Concerns were raised about the adequacy of current

policies in addressing emerging challenges, including the potential impact of Ukraine's agricultural production on the EU market. The speakers argued for a more flexible, reality-based approach to agricultural policy to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of EU agriculture.

The second Interview (See Interview 2) was with Stefan Padure, the President of the Association for the Promotion of Romanian Food (APAR). He focuses on representing Romanian agri-food producers and promoting their products both domestically and internationally. Padure discusses the mixed impacts of Romania's EU accession in 2007, particularly highlighting how it accelerated rural depopulation by enabling labor migration within the EU due to the principle of free movement. Despite these challenges, improvements in the average salary and work conditions in Romania have been noted. Padure critiques the encouragement of large-scale farming and land ownership in Romania, which has not only perpetuated but accentuated social disparities in rural areas. This model contrasts with the EU's recommendations for limiting subsidies to large agricultural holdings to encourage more equitable land distribution. The interview sheds light on the need for a more nuanced and regional approach to agricultural policy in Romania, recognizing the diverse agricultural conditions across the country. Padure argues for the adoption of cooperative models to leverage benefits similar to those seen in other European countries. The discussion acknowledges the technological advancements in Romanian agriculture but criticizes the lack of comprehensive cooperative development that integrates modern management, marketing, and purchasing practices. Padure identifies potential opportunities for Romanian agriculture within the EU, emphasizing the country's rich natural resources and the geopolitical significance of its agricultural produce. He advocates for a strategic approach to leveraging Romania's agricultural potential through quality schemes and infrastructure development. The importance of associations like APAR in shaping agricultural policy and ensuring the sustainability of rural communities is highlighted. Padure calls for stronger representation and a more active role in policy discussions to secure the interests of Romanian farmers and agri-food producers.

Micu Marius (See Interview 3), a notable figure in Romanian agriculture, has a rich background in farming and academia, highlighted by his Ph.D. in Agronomy and positions as Vice Dean at the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Counselor in Romania's Chamber of Deputies, Secretary of State in the

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the fifth vice-president of COPA-COGECA. His expertise spans educational, policy-making, and European agricultural advocacy. Marius addresses questions on ecological agriculture, noting that Romania supports organic farming with financial incentives and compensations during the conversion period. However, achieving the EU's ambitious goal of a 25% organic agriculture footprint by 2027 presents challenges due to the high financial requirements. The discussion touches on the challenges of increasing organic production in Romania and the EU. Marius points out the necessity of creating consumer markets for organic products and balancing domestic demand with imports, which often do not meet EU production standards. Marius shares insights from a study indicating a misunderstanding among Romanian consumers between traditional and organic (bio) products. This highlights the need for better consumer education on organic products and addressing the challenges of integrating Romanian agriculture into the European market, particularly without full access to the Schengen Area, which affects the perishability and competitiveness of Romanian agricultural products. The interview covers the infrastructural and bureaucratic challenges that hinder the efficiency and competitiveness of Romanian agricultural exports, emphasizing the need for Romania to secure its internal market before expanding intra-EU and global exports.

## 6 Conclusion

This study rigorously delved into the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania, providing a profound analysis of its evolution over time, the challenges it faces in the present, and the opportunities it holds for the future, especially within the context of its integration into the European Union (EU). The investigation revealed substantial changes within the Romanian agricultural sector, influenced as much by national policies as by European ones. Through meticulous evaluation, it uncovered the impact of EU accession on various fronts: the modernization of agriculture, its sustainability, the expansion of market access, and the progress of rural development, highlighting both the advancements achieved and the challenges overcome.

The analysis began by diving into the historical evolution of Romanian agriculture, from the agrarian reforms of the 19th and 20th centuries through the era of collectivization, towards the profound transformations post-1989, and into the current period marked by EU membership. This historical perspective was fundamental in grasping the enduring significance of agriculture in Romania's socio-economic framework.

At the heart of this thesis was the exploration of the multifunctional nature of Romanian agriculture, detailing how it surpasses conventional productivity roles to incorporate social, economic, and environmental dimensions. This multifunctionality reflects the complex role of agriculture in supporting rural communities, preserving biodiversity, and contributing to the national economy.

A considerable segment of this study focused on evaluating the effects of Romania's accession to the European Union on the multifunctional aspects of its agriculture, which encompass social, economic, and environmental facets. Romania's integration into the EU and its adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) ushered in a period of significant transformation within its agricultural domain. This research meticulously outlined the dual nature of this transition, shedding light on both the opportunities that arose and the challenges that were encountered. These included gaining access to CAP funding, which facilitated the modernization and restructuring of the agricultural sector. Additionally, the study delved into the complexities of meeting EU standards and competing within the EU market, highlighting the pressures these factors exerted on Romanian agriculture. This thorough examination aimed to provide a holistic understanding of how EU integration has reshaped the agricultural landscape in Romania,

considering the intricate interplay between social, economic, and environmental dimensions of agricultural multifunctionality.

This thesis boldly addressed the current challenges confronting Romanian agriculture, such as the widespread issue of land fragmentation, the increasing age of the rural populace, and the pressing concerns regarding environmental sustainability. Despite these hurdles, the study also pinpointed several avenues for potential growth and progress within the sector. It spotlighted the burgeoning field of organic farming as a promising path forward, the emerging popularity of agritourism as a sustainable economic venture, and the strategic utilization of European Union funds to bolster rural development. These identified opportunities underscore the potential for revitalizing Romanian agriculture, transforming challenges into stepping stones towards a more sustainable, economically viable, and environmentally friendly agricultural sector.

The study culminated in the formulation of several astute policy recommendations designed to amplify the multifunctionality of Romanian agriculture, drawing heavily from the insights provided by the stakeholders interviewed. Key among these recommendations is the encouragement of sustainable agricultural practices that align with environmental preservation and long-term viability. It advocates for bolstering support for small and medium-sized farms, which are pivotal to the Romanian agricultural landscape, ensuring they receive the necessary resources and guidance to thrive. Investment in rural infrastructure was highlighted as crucial for the modernization and efficiency of agricultural operations, facilitating better access to markets and services. Moreover, the promotion of agro-environmental initiatives is seen as essential in integrating ecological sustainability with agricultural productivity. Emphasizing a balanced approach, these recommendations aim to honor and preserve Romania's rich agricultural heritage while steering towards innovative, sustainable practices that can ensure the sector's resilience and prosperity.

To answer the questions asked at the beginning of this research:

How has the multifunctionality of agriculture evolved in Romania from 1993 to 2020, particularly in terms of its economic, social, and environmental dimensions?

From 1993 to 2020, the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania evolved significantly, impacted by Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007. This period saw a shift towards a more diversified agricultural sector that balances economic, social, and environmental objectives. Economic transformations included improvements in

agricultural productivity and integration into EU markets. Socially, there was a focus on rural development, preserving rural communities, and addressing depopulation. Environmentally, practices shifted towards sustainability, conservation of biodiversity, and compliance with EU environmental standards.

What are the specific benefits and drawbacks that have emerged from extending the European Union's Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) to Romania, and how effective has the CAP been in addressing the unique challenges of the Romanian agricultural sector? The benefits are mainly the access to financial supports and subsidies to modernize agriculture and rural areas; the introduction of sustainable agriculture practices and environmental protection measures and the improvement market access within the EU for Romanian agricultural products. Some drawbacks have also to be underlined such as the increased competition from EU products, challenging for smaller Romanian farms; the complexity and bureaucratic challenges in accessing EU funds and the CAP's one size fits all approach sometimes mismatched with Romania's specific needs, particularly in addressing the disparities between small and large agricultural holdings.

The CAP has been partially effective in modernizing Romanian agriculture and integrating it into the EU market. However, its effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges of the Romanian agricultural sector, such as the significant number of small-scale farms and the need for more targeted rural development, has been mixed. The CAP has supported infrastructural and technological advancements but has also highlighted the need for policies more tailored to Romania's specific socio-economic and environmental contexts.

How do various institutional definitions of multifunctionality align or differ, particularly between global perspectives such as the American approach and the European Union's agricultural policies, in understanding the multifunctionality of agriculture? Global perspectives on multifunctionality differ, with the American approach focusing more on productivity and technological innovation in agriculture, while the European Union emphasizes the socio-economic and environmental roles of agriculture. The EU's agricultural policies are more aligned with the concept of multifunctionality, incorporating sustainability, biodiversity, and rural development as integral parts of agricultural policy. These differences reflect broader disparities in agricultural policy objectives and priorities between the US and EU, with the former concentrating on competitiveness and the latter on balancing multiple functions of agriculture.

In what ways do the economic, social, and environmental aspects of multifunctionality manifest within the Romanian agricultural landscape, and how do these dimensions interact to influence the sector's overall performance and sustainability?

In Romania, the economic aspect of multifunctionality manifests in efforts to enhance agricultural productivity and market integration. Socially, the focus is on preserving rural communities and traditions, improving rural livelihoods, and promoting rural development. Environmentally, there is an emphasis on sustainable practices, protecting natural resources, and enhancing biodiversity. These dimensions interact to shape Romania's agricultural sector, influencing its performance, sustainability, and ability to meet both local and EU-wide objectives.

Based on the insights gained from exploring the complex dynamics of Romanian agriculture post-EU accession, what policy recommendations can be made to enhance the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania?

From the findings, to enhance the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania, policies should: provide targeted support for small and medium-sized farms to improve competitiveness; encourage sustainable agricultural practices through incentives and education; foster rural development initiatives that create alternative employment opportunities and improve rural infrastructure; promote biodiversity and environmental conservation as integral components of agricultural policy; ensure that agricultural policies are adaptable to Romania's diverse geographic and socio-economic landscapes.

The findings of this research not only shed light on the multifunctionality of agriculture in Romania but also serve as a crucial benchmark for understanding the broader implications of EU integration on agricultural sectors of accession countries. This exploration into Romania's agricultural evolution, challenges, and opportunities in the wake of its EU membership raises pertinent questions about the future of agricultural policies and practices within the European Union. As the EU looks forward to integrating more countries, one might wonder if the lessons learned from Romania's experience will inform the approach to agricultural development and support in these new member states.

Will the EU leverage Romania's experiences to streamline the integration process for upcoming members, particularly in aligning their agricultural sectors with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)? Moreover, how will the EU address the unique challenges that

these new members may face, such as land fragmentation, rural depopulation, and the need for sustainable agricultural practices? Furthermore, the question arises as to what extent the EU will encourage the preservation of local agricultural traditions while promoting innovation and sustainability in these countries.

Another critical area of inquiry revolves around the effectiveness of EU funds in fostering rural development and agricultural modernization in future member states. Will the financial mechanisms and support structures that were available to Romania be adapted or expanded to meet the specific needs of these countries? Additionally, how will the EU ensure that the multifunctional role of agriculture – encompassing not just economic output but also social cohesion and environmental stewardship – is fully recognized and supported in the policies tailored for new members?

These questions underscore the importance of adopting a tailored, nuanced approach to agricultural policy and support in the context of EU expansion. They highlight the need for the European Union to draw upon the experiences of countries like Romania to formulate strategies that not only address the challenges of integration but also capitalize on the opportunities it presents for enhancing the multifunctionality of agriculture across the continent.



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#### **8.4 List of abbreviations**

WCED: World Commission on Environment and Development

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

WTO: World Trade Organization

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

CAP: Commune Agricultural Policy

CAP: Cooperativa Agricola de Productie

IPPC: International Plant Protection Conventions

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

## 9 Appendix

### Interview 1, 14/03/2024

**Profil:** Interview of Professor Micu Marius and Alexandru (names have been changed) a romanian farmer.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom. Micu Marius is in his office, Alexandru is in a non recognizable place.

**Length:** 29 min 34

**Interviewer:** Bun, și, spre exemplu, este cum a influențat adărea României la Uniunea Europeană multifuncționalitatea agriculturii sale, deci diversificarea, în special ceea ce privește sustenabilitatea economică și accesul la piață. Care ar fi opinia voastră, Alexandru?

**Alexandru:** Păi, părerea mea este că, am mai spus-o, da, într-adevăr, România nu cred că ajungea la nivelul agriculturii de acum. Ok, deci, nu cred că ajungeam la nivelul de acum al agriculturii fără sprijinul care l-am avut prin adărea la Uniunea Europeană. Și aici vorbim și de partea de subvenții, odată, de partea de atragere de fonduri europene, dar nu în ultimul rând, și nu trebuie să pune că doar subvențiile și fondurile europene ne-au ajutat și deschiderea de piețe. Am reușit, în parcursul nostru european, să aducem și produse noi în piață. Nu mai suntem în urmă cu partea de substanțe active, pesticide, versus anii trecuți. Anii trecuți vorbim dinainte de aderare, da?

**Interviewer:** Da.

**Alexandru:** Într-adevăr, avem și presiuni. Presiuni pe alte produse, substanțe active și presiunea asta acum, din toți europene, de a produce cu mai puține pesticide, mai puține îngreșăminte. Dar toate vin la pachet, să zic, într-un fel sau altul. Și, iarăși, un lucru important. Probabil că n-am fost suficienți de pregătiți sau n-am avut suficientă încredere sau nu ne-a oprit nimeni să nu integrăm. Adică eu nu am văzut o chestie așa de intenționată din partea Comisiei Europene de a frâna anumite state membre în integrarea de materii prime în produse cu valoare adăugată mare. Practic, au avut noi nevoie de timp, noi, ca români, ca fermieri, ca oameni de afaceri, antreprenori, să înțelegem lucrurile. Și, da, eu zic că a fost de bun augur aderarea noastră la Uniunea Europeană și este în continuare. Cu

toate presiunile economice și toate lucrurile care nu ne plătească. Dar, puse în balanță, părerea mea este că am avut mai multe beneficii și avantaje decât dezavantaje.

**Micu Marius:** Bine, cumva ai răspuns, dar mă simt obligat să iau o casă și o ajutăm în studiu. Îmi scapă numele de familie, dar pe numele este Ilinca, că nu i-am prezentat-o, este alături de noi. Am avut și un ghept pe ce înseamnă conexiunea la internet.

Interviewer: În ce moduri ai influențat finanțarea Uniunii Europene și, bineînțeles, reforma PAC, viabilitatea economică a fermelor românești, în special, întreprinderile mici și mijlocii?

**Micu Marius:** Cumva ai răspuns în cursul asta, în comunicarea asta, că nu eram aici. Dar, extinde un pic. Păi, putem să luăm, de exemplu, hai să luăm exercițiu trecut, nu? Este 2017. 2017, 2013, 2017, care s-a prăjit până în 2021 sau ceva de genul asta. Am avut niște oportunități noi ca membri ai Uniunii Europene în atragerea de fonduri și dezvoltarea de noi ramuri. Am avut și avem în continuare niște fonduri disponibile pe internet. Pentru atragerea de tineri fermieri. Într-adevăr, discuțiile sunt multe. Poate să fie și pro și contra. Ce înseamnă tânăr, ce înseamnă dezvoltare de tineri fermieri. Avem și exemple pozitive și avem și exemple negative. Dar, una peste alta, într-adevăr, pot să spun că le-am dezvoltat. Și eu văd câți fermieri mici, în ultimii ani, au fost dezvoltate. În ultimii 5-6 ani au reușit să se capitalizeze cu ajutorul fondurilor europene. Și nu trebuie să fim acum doar contra Uniunii Europene, că ne convine cu fel și fel de substanțe scoase sau presiuni pe pădloagă sau pe diverse lucruri. Pentru că am avut și fermierii mici, au avut oportunitatea, în ultimul exercițiu financiar, să se capitalizeze cu acele utilaje pe fonduri europene. Și nu știu cum sunt în alte zone, dar în telor mașinarge am văzut foarte multe ferme cu suprafețe relativ, hai să zic, medii. Ar fi suprafețe, cred că, cel mai bine echilibrat economic, undeva la 150-200 de hectare, care, într-adevăr, sunt utilizate. Și pot face... Teoretic pot face față mai ușor noilor provocări. Au fost, într-adevăr, niște probleme aici pentru că nu au fost neapărat foarte bine îndrumați în achiziția echipamentelor și, probabil, și conservatorismul nostru ca fermieri nu ne-a ajutat să ne adaptăm echipamentele luate la un viitor tip de agricultură. Dar, eu zic că a fost un pas foarte bun pentru fermierii, cel puțin pentru fermierii mii și medii.

**Micu Marius:** Da, cred că nu mă aștept pe mine internetul. Am oprit camera să n-am un flux așa mare de date ca să pot să fiu activ. O următoare întrebare și o să fac eu un context dacă m-ajut.

**Interviewer:** E... Uniunii Europene, exporturile agricole din România și ce înseamnă acest lucru pentru poziția economică a țării în Uniunea Europeană.

**Micu Marius:** Aici sunt două direcții, că dacă vorbim de export, este cum s-a plasat România în schimbul ăsta comercial cu țările terțe și, pe de altă parte, cum s-a plasat România în piața comunitară, dacă am avut acces la piață. Și a zis că fac un pic de context aici, în sensul că trebuie să spunem că Europa este cel mai mare exportator din lume de produse agroalimentare. Deci Europa e numărul unu în lume. Vinde valoare adăugată. În primul rând, din perspectiva politicii de a avea siguranță alimentară înaltă, pentru că orientarea noastră la începutul Uniunii Europene a fost pe securitate alimentară, după care pe siguranță. Și cumva, cumva, începe să ne întoarcem la securitate alimentară. Dar, mă rog, elementul ăsta de siguranță alimentară, calitatea produselor, ne-a făcut să fim pe locul unu la nivel mondial, la fel ca la nivel de Uniune Europene. Întrebarea, de fapt, aici cred că se pune mai corect, este a știut România să joace această oportunitate? Îți dau un exemplu, Polonia. Pentru că în Uniunea Europene, dacă ne uităm la țările din Uniunea Europene care fac Uniunea Europene să fie cel mai mare exportator, pe locul trei este Polonia. Trei. Și România este mai la coadă. Dar, cumva, ai răspuns și aici este că noi nu vândem, ne referim la vinde doar materie primă și nu știm să facem valoare adăugată, că să ne integrăm pe oportunitățile sectorului agroalimentar, de produs finit. Acum să abordez și cea de-a doua latură, a întrebării, adică piața comunitară. Noi avem o problemă, în primul rând, să ne cucerim piața, pentru că Europa a venit și cu beneficii, dar a venit și cu aspecte mai puțin plăcute, în sensul că căuta și în România o piață de desfacere, într-o anumită măsură, și, pe de altă parte, am avut și această bagheră a ce înseamnă spațiul Schengen, chiar dacă ea face referire la circulația populației cu precădere în spațiu comunitar, dar iată că verificările mărfurilor agricole la graniță durează și câteva ore, șase, opt ore, poate, în anumite cazuri. Ceea ce înseamnă o barieră pentru a accesa piața. Tu cum vezi, Alexandru, lucrurile astea?

**Alexandru:** M-am făcut și moderator de emisiune. Da, da, da. Păi, de acum mai... Păi, cum am zis, știi... Orică noi nu ne-am jucat cartea cum trebuia și la adevărata valoare. Au fost mai multe lucruri pe care nu le-am înțeles. Nici nu vreau să caut vinovați, că nu este felul meu de a căuta vinovați. Prefer să caut soluții la ce se va întâmpla de acum încolo. Nu am avut o susținere și nu am avut o presiune. Nu pot să spun presiune. Hai să zic un push din partea guvernului și numai a guvernului, atât ce înseamnă aparat de stat pentru produse

procesate. Și, practic, de aici ne-am pierdut și piața pentru că noi, odată cu intrarea României la Uniunea Europeană, noi nu am fost pregătiți să satisfacem, să zic așa, nevoile vieții europene cu produse. Și a trebuit consumatorul român, da, s-a plimbat în Uniunea Europeană sau cel puțin a avut suficiente informații și apoi a venit și dorința de a consuma anumite produse. Și această dorință nu poate rămâne nesatisfăcută, clar. Îți vin produse din altă parte. Dacă tu nu ești în stare să le consumi, să le consumi. Dacă te aduci în piață pe anumit context, piața aia nu va rămâne aprovizionată. Se va aproviziona, într-un fel sau altul. Și cred că aici este diferența între noi și Polonia. În Polonia există foarte multe sisteme și întreprinderi de procesare, da, și de... și de agroalimentar, vorbim aici. Fac și foarte multe utilaje de-astea de dimensiuni medii și mici, de exemplu, și echipamente pentru industria alimentară. S-au axat foarte mult pe partea asta de produs cu valoare adăugată, ceea ce noi nu am făcut-o. Pentru că noi ne-am axat pe partea de producție. A fost și un specific, să zic, probabil că mai favorabil nouă de a produce aceste commodities. Că asta este termenul bursier, da. Și nu cred că ca să poți să aduci un produs cu valoare adăugată trebuie să ieși un pic din zona de confort. Și nu cred că am vrut să ieșim din zona de confort. Noi, ca antreprenori, vorbim aici. Nu doar ca fermieri, pentru că cineva care produce ceva este într-adevăr un antreprenor. Nu mai rămâne doar fermier. Și cred că nu am jucat cartea potrivită și cred că nici cei care ar fi trebuit să ne îndrume sau să ne impulsioneze mai mult nu au făcut-o corespunzător. Da. Deci, cam asta este punctul meu de vedere și cum văd eu lucrurile la nivel de România. Și totuși constat că cheia este la noi. Adică nu trebuie să mai așteptăm neapărat să facă cineva ceva pentru noi pentru că nu se va rezolva. Și ca să vă dau exemplu meu și pot să spun că și exemplu reușitei într-un business asta de integrare, ce spunea și domnul Micu mai devreme, sunt unicul producător de băuturi spiritoase artizanale din România care a reușit să mai afirm pe piața... Urmează piața internațională dar cel puțin la nivel de calitate și competiție internațională și în 2024 am câștigat un premiu de cel mai bun produs de un anumit tip din lume. Și asta am făcut tot singur. Nu m-a impulsionat, nu m-a ajutat nimeni din partea statului, nu m-a ajutat legislația, nu m-a ajutat decât perseverența mea. Și cu faptul că am crezut în proiect și cred în continuare. Și... Cred că...

**Micu Marius:** Da, ai dreptate și ești belăudat Alexandru aici pentru că aceeași experiență o împărtășesc și eu, inclusiv cu crearea Cooperativei. Pentru că am zis, domne, ce ne dezbină? Hai să căutăm elementele care ne unesc. Și am vorbit pentru prima dată când am

vrut să constituie Cooperativa la 200 de fermieri. Erau tineri fermieri, eram președinte al Asociației Naționale a Vinilor Producători. Am crezut eu că sunt mai open mind la momentul respectiv în 2018, mai cu despicare către asociere. Și știți câți au venit în proiect? Fix zero. Până lui am luat la baionetă 5-5. Mă, trebuie să o faceți. Sunteți dispuși să pierdeți? Cu mine pe idee? Asta n-am reușit să o ducem mai departe. Și până la urmă stă în devotamentul nostru față de cauză. De aceea și asocierea ca principiu are aceiași valori. Noi trebuie să facem pentru noi ceea ce nu fac alții. Mă rog, instituțiile. Sau să corectăm, sau să îmbunătățim. Dar dacă nu, noi nu o să facem niciodată nimic pentru noi. Nu trebuie să avem așteptarea ca altcineva să facă pentru noi. Fie că vorbim de o persoană, fie că vorbim de instituții. Dar toți noi uniți putem forma acele organizații de reprezentare care să ducă să bată la poartă instituției și cu mandatul nostru să schimbe instituțional ceva. Până la urmă puterea va fi în vocea poporului, până la urmă. Care se manifestă în mod democratic până alege. Dar nu vreau să deschid subiectul că suntem într-o Românie complicată cu 4 tururi de alege, inclusiv la nivel european. Și nu vreau să ducem în zona asta care e foarte activă și feed-ul e populat așa, de știri, de înțelegi. Vreau doar să-ți aduc câteva elemente de noutate, mă rog, tuturor. Poate care nu s-au discutat atât de transparent la nivel național. Bine, unele da, unele nu. Acum aportarea Poloniei a fost diferită față de a noastră. În primul rând că au intrat mai demult, perioada e mai lungă. Și au avut o abordare macro pe ce vrem să facem. Adică vrem în primul rând infrastructura până ne apucăm să investim în unități de producție. Ceea ce la noi, bine nu fac referire la noi, dar a fost infrastructura. După care s-au concentrat pe producție și n-au investit nici infrastructură, nici în procesare. După ce au investit în exercițiu financiar s-au concentrat pe procesare. Adică asta înseamnă că a venit un quantum mare de finanțare doar pe un anumit element. În România, dacă ne uităm de în 2007 și până în prezent, nu știm cum să spargăm baniiăștia din politica agricolă comună în 30 de spițe, 30 de măsuri de finanțare, de a ajunge să avem linii de finanțare de 100 de milioane pe instalarea tinerilor fermieri. Bine, e mai mult, e 200. Adică dăm câte puțin pe fiecare subdomeniu. Adică n-am luat un domeniu să-l dezvoltăm, să-l ducem acolo sus, să fim performanți. Apoi Polonia, aici vorbesc de partea mai discretă a lucrurilor, mai zona gri, a mai făcut un lucru cu care s-a confruntat când s-a extins războiul. Pentru că războiul a început în 2014, nu e acum. Mă rog, acum decât a escalat, da. Dar ce a făcut Polonia? Pentru că noi știm foarte bine că Polonia este maestru sau maestră la ce înseamnă instrumente financiare ascunse de susținere a fermierilor. Știți că noi avem plafoanele alea, nu putem da mai multe ajutoare de stat din buget național, nu



din banii europeni, pentru a nu crea perturbații în ce înseamnă echilibru, ce înseamnă piața economică la nivel european, cerere și ofertă. Și atunci ei cumva au avut o politică de europenizare, de polonizare așa putea, dacă există termenul ăsta cumva undeva, a produselor din Ucraina despre care nu s-a vorbit. Ucraina și până în 2014 era în piața europeană prin produsele din Polonia. Că uite-te la suprafața agricolă, câte mere să aibă Polonia să exporte în toată Europa? Câtă carne de pui și câte ouă, că sunt campioni pe cele trei elemente, să aibă statele membre probleme, să spunem? În România dacă spui Polonia te gândești la mără, așa m-ajut. Cum te gândești la Coca-Cola la Crăciun? Așa te gândești când spui Polonia la mără, așa m-ajut. Sau când spui mără te gândești la Polonia. Ok, noi ne-am confundat cu și vecinii noștri și celelalte state membre. Bașca este locul trei în ceea ce înseamnă Uniunea Europeană la export, adică nu numai că a sufocat statele membre cu mără, pui și pui, mă refer la carne de pui, ouă, dar exportă în China, exportă în alte state terțe, îndepărtate. Adică, mă, de unde au venit producțiile astea? Până la urmă. Că nu e numărul unu, nu e cât Ucraina să aibă 40 de milioane. Și atunci ei au avut un mecanism de a europeniza produsele din Ucraina. Când s-a întâmplat războiul, mă rog, partea a doua a războiului, invazia Rusiei în cele trei zone acum, acum cred că doi ani de zile s-a întâmplat, dacă îmi pare de o veșnicie, lucrul ăsta, cu ce s-a confruntat? Că prima țară de la graniță, care a fost direct afectată, a fost Polonia. Dar dacă te uitați la plângerile lor, nu era vorba de producția primară de cereale, sau că tranzitează, sau care import. Sau floarea soarelui, care e un deficit în Uniunea Europeană. Și au avut produse pe produsele agroalimentare finite. Și de fapt, de aici aveau, pentru că ei aveau mecanismele create, barierele care s-au ridicat oricum total la începerea războiului, au făcut ca să fie un flux mare de produse agroalimentare, produse finite, pe piața poloneză, care n-a mai putut fi distribuită, pe cota de piață a Poloniei în Europa, la momentul respectiv. Și ăsta e unul dintre adevărurile care nu se discută nici în prezent. Dacă te uiți la ajutoarele de stat pe care... Că Comisia ce-a făcut? Că virgulă Comisia, Comisia Europeană ce-a făcut? A zis, doamne, haideți să ajutăm Ucraina. Sunt oricum discuții mai înalte, nu vreau să intru aici. E clar că trebuie să protejăm Europa. România nu poate duce un alt fel de conflict. Europa nu poate duce un alt fel de conflict. Cumva plătim poloniei. A poliția garantului, să zic așa, adică a garanției de securitate. Și poate o facem pe bună dreptate și pe merit, dar e un alt nivel al discuției. Însă, ce a făcut Uniunea Europeană? A dat drumul la niște mecanisme de a ajuta Ucraina. Unul dintre sectoare a fost... ne-a impactat pe noi, agricultura în mod direct. Adică noi suntem ajutorul ăsta al Uniunii Europene de a ajuta femeile din Ucraina

ca sector privat. La asta mă refer. Dar a venit Comisia cu compensații, Uniunea Europeană a venit cu compensații pe măsura relaxării politicilor comerciale cu Ucraina? Nu. Pentru că în ceea ce privește România, 100 de milioane a adunat-se în 2 ani de zile. Impactul pe care îl estima comisarul cu o discuție publică, dar directă, era la peste 1 miliard de euro acum un an. Da? Mare atenție. Deci 1 miliard la 100 de milioane este doar 10%. Însă... A dat posibilitatea statelor membre să aloce ajutoare de stat din buget propriu. Și atunci aici s-a văzut puterea statelor membre. Cine a putut și cine nu a putut. Ghiți cine e pe primul loc la ajutoare de stat de la nivel de cuvert. Polonia este peste 1 miliard. Nici Franța nu are. Are undeva la 500 de milioane. Nici Germania, care e așa între ghilimele tăticul sau mămica noastră. Trebuie să ne între cap. Și pentru francezi reprezintă lucrul ăsta. Pentru că Germania este net contribuatoare. Adică dă cei mai mulți bani către Uniunea Europeană. Noi suntem net beneficiari. Adică primim mai mulți bani decât dăm. Nu înseamnă că nu dăm bani. Da? Și atunci trebuie să înțelegem că cine dictează în Europa este cine pune banii pe masă. Știți că se discuta Europa în două viteze. Și se mai discuta ceva la un moment dat. Se discuta aderarea statelor membre pe sectoare economice. Au fost două idei care nu s-au dus la bun în sfârșit. Nu și-au găsit aplica termenul. Îmi scap. Acum nici nu stau să îl reproșez. Să fie aplicabil. Dar dacă te uiți la Ucraina, în realitate, fără să avem partea juridică, Ucraina pe sectorul agroalimentar este cumva în Uniunea Europeană. N-are nicio barieră. Adică cumva filozofia aia este transpusă într-o realitate. Și atunci ne punem întrebarea. Cum gândim politică agricolocomună din 2027? Cu Ucraina aderată sau cu Ucraina neaderată? Adică este în piață Ucraina sau nu este? Pe jumătate este în piață. Deci dacă noi, ea de fapt o nu va fi și nici n-are cum. Dar e o părere subiectivă a mea. Tu ce ai spus, ai spus bine. Rezolvarea soluției o va reprezenta la un anumit moment dat intrarea Ucrainei în Europa. Cum a fost și România în... în spațiu ăsta. Poate fi o soluție. Însă, noi trebuie să fim conștienți că a intrat Uniunea... a intrat Ucraina în Uniunea Europeană înseamnă conflict direct armat cu Rusia. În secunda a doi. Măine suntem membri, mâine suntem în conflict. Adică războiul e deschis. Deci nu va exista riscul ăsta. Dar e o părere subiectivă. Nu pot avea argumente mai solide în spate că am participat sau nu la discuții. Dar totuși trebuie să ne punem întrebarea că 2027, că Uniunea Europeană mai este într-un ghed. Nu numai că nu are politică agricolă comună ancorată în realitatea zilelor noastre. Actuală. De ce nu o are? Pentru că a elaborat-o, a adoptat-o într-o perioadă în care eram visători, eram transcendenți. Nu mai avusesse în război, nu mai avusesse în pandemie, nu aveam criză pe input-uri din cauza costurilor pe energie. Nu uităm că discuția pe energie

este responsabilitatea Europei. A fost prima criză care a generat creșterea input-urilor. Eram într-o stare transcendentă când puteam să avem obiective foarte ambițioase în ceea ce înseamnă schimbările climatice, măsurile, obiectivele ambițioase pe care trebuie să le luăm. Puteam să o gândim, deși eram singura țară, hai să-i spunem țară, Uniunea Europeană de pe glob care avea o politică. Nu poți face o primăvară cu o floare. Adică ok, când China poluează, adică avem o rată a mortalității doar din poluare pe zi impresionantă, nu poți spune că Europa, în politice agricole, va schimba lumea. Dar hai să zicem că ne permitam la momentul ăla. Și așa mi-a erovat la politică agricolă comună și au venit condiționalitățile astea și, mă rog, toate măsurile astea. Ea este neancorată. E clar că și Comisia observă astăzi, pentru că apare gradul ăsta de flexibilizare nemai întâlnit. Păi când se apară derogare după derogare? Uitați și conturizat numai derogările la nivel erogar care s-au luat pe politică agricolă comună. E clar un semnal. E clar un semnal. E clar un semnal. E clar un semnal. E clar că ei recunosc că nu este adaptat. Însă, ce vom face în 2027? Pentru că noi, din păcate, uite la nivelul COPAC-14K am avut deja primele două întâlniri cum să arată care să fie obiectivele ale viitoarei politice agricole comune. Adică în 2027. Dar dacă nu suntem în 2024 și Comisia n-a pus un document pe masă, avem timp în 3 ani de zile să facem o politică coerentă și adaptată? Și adoptată? adică noi trebuie să facem reforma reformei, știi? Când vorbim de politica agricolă comună, noi spunem așa întotdeauna reforma politicii agricole comune. Din păcate suntem în reforma reformei astăzi. Și cum va arăta politica agricolă comună? Cum va apărea pilonul 1? Dacă luăm în calcul că mai e un element. Dacă mai luăm în considerare Ucraina. Fie chiar dacă nu e aderată de faptul în numele european. Păi bugetul, dacă te uiți istoric, pe politica agricolă comună a scăzut de la exercițiu financiar la exercițiu financiar. Cadrul multianual multifinanciar a scăzut. Dar a lua Ucraina în considerare înseamnă cel puțin la nivelul ăsta care suntem cu bugetul, cel puțin un buget consolidat de 30%. Da? Matematic este 30%. Nu cred că este realist mai devreme de... Pentru 2027, 2031, nu. Nu cred că... Nu are cum să... Nu, până nu, înțeleg, dar nu trebuie să ignorăm producțiile agricole din Uniunea Europeană în elaborarea politicii agricolei comune. Ei, păi, jumătate sunt prezenți pe piața asta, vreau să concluzionez. Dar suntem la final și am promis că două ore n-am încă n-am epuizat, dar oricum, vei fi invitată și mâine seară și până mâine seară, pentru că mai avem alți cinci invitați, sunt în domeniu, sunt chiar implicați la nivel european în elaborarea politicilor sau reprezentării, așa, și o să reluăm întrebările. O să continuăm și o să le reluăm

într-o jumătate de oră, așa că vei avea un spectru mai larg de analiză, nu doar pe mine, ci vei avea toți invitații și poate că vei avea... O să te rog totuși...

### **Interview 1, 14/03/2024 Translated in English**

**Profile:** Interview of Professor Micu Marius and Alexandru (names have been changed) a romanian farmer.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom. Micu Marius is in his office, Alexandru is in an unrecognizable place.

**Length:** 29 min 34

**Interviewer:** Well, and, for example, it's how Romania's accession to the European Union has influenced the multifunctionality of its agriculture, so diversification, especially in terms of economic sustainability and market access. What would be your opinion, Alexander?

**Alexander:** Well, my opinion is that, I said it before, yes, indeed, I don't think Romania was reaching the level of agriculture we have now. Ok, so, I don't think we would have reached the level of agriculture we have now without the support we had by joining the European Union. And here we are talking about subsidies, once, and attracting European funds, but last but not least, and we should not put that only subsidies and European funds have helped us and the opening of markets. In our European journey, we have also managed to bring new products to the market. We are no longer lagging behind in terms of active substances, pesticides, versus previous years. We're talking about years before accession, right?

**Interviewer:** You can start there, yes.

**Alexander:** Indeed, we also have pressures. Pressures on other products, active substances and this pressure now, from all Europeans, to produce with less pesticides, less fertilizers. But they all come together, let's say, in one way or another. And, again, one important thing. We probably weren't prepared enough or didn't have enough confidence or nobody stopped us from not integrating. I mean I haven't seen such a deliberate thing from the European Commission to hold back certain Member States from integrating raw materials into high value-added products. Basically, it took time for us, as Romanians, as farmers, as businessmen, as entrepreneurs, to understand things. And, yes, I say that our accession to the European Union was a good omen and it still is. With all the economic pressures and

all the things that don't pay us. But put into the balance, my view is that we've had more benefits and advantages than disadvantages.

**Micu Marius:** Okay, somehow you answered, but I feel obligated to take a house and help her in the study. I miss the last name, but the name is Ilinca, that I didn't introduce her, she is with us. We also had a ghetto on what the internet connection means. In what ways have you influenced the EU funding and, of course, the CAP reform, the economic viability of Romanian farms, especially small and medium-sized enterprises? Somehow you answered in this course, in this communication, that I wasn't here. But, expand a bit. Well, we can take, for example, let's take the last exercise, right? It's 2017. 2017, 2013, 2017, that fried until 2021 or something like that.

**Alexander:** We had some new opportunities as members of the European Union in attracting funds and developing new branches. We had and still have some funds available on the internet. For attracting young farmers. Indeed, the discussions are many. There can be pros and cons. What is young, what is development of young farmers. We have positive examples and we have negative examples. But, one over the other, in truth, I can say that we have developed them. And I see how many small farmers in the last years have been developed. In the last 5-6 years they have managed to capitalize with the help of European funds. And we don't have to be just against the European Union now, that it suits us with all sorts of substances being taken out or pressures on forestry or various things. Because we also had small farmers, they had the opportunity in the last financial year to capitalise with those machines on European funds. And I don't know what they're like in other areas, but in telor machinarge I've seen a lot of farms with relatively, let's say, average areas. There would be areas, I think, at best economically balanced, somewhere between 150 and 200 hectares, which, indeed, are used. And they can do... Theoretically they can cope more easily with new challenges. There were, indeed, some problems here because they were not necessarily very well guided in the purchase of equipment and, perhaps, our conservatism as farmers also did not help us to adapt the equipment taken to a future type of farming. But, I say it was a very good step for farmers, at least for thousand and medium farmers.

**Interviewer:** There are two directions here, if we are talking about exports, it is how Romania has positioned itself in this trade exchange with third countries and, on the other hand, how Romania has positioned itself in the EU market, if we had access to the market.

**Micu Marius:** We have to say that Europe is the world's largest exporter of agri-food products. So Europe is number one in the world. It sells added value. First of all, from a policy perspective of having high food security, because our orientation at the beginning of the European Union was on food security, then on safety. And somehow, somehow, we are starting to go back to food security. But, anyway, this element of food safety, the quality of products, has made us number one in the world, as well as in the European Union.

**Interviewer:** The question, in fact, here I think it is more correct to ask, is whether Romania knew how to take advantage of this opportunity?

**Micu Marcus:** I'll give you an example, Poland. Because in the European Union, if you look at the countries in the European Union that are doing European Union to be the largest exporter, third place is Poland. Three. And Romania is further behind. But somehow, you answered and here is that we do not sell, we mean sell only raw material and we do not know how to make added value, that we integrate on the opportunities of the agrifood sector, of finished product. Now let me turn to the second side of the question, the Community market. We have a problem, first of all, in conquering the market, because Europe has come with benefits, but it has also come with less pleasant aspects, in the sense that it is also looking for a market in Romania, to a certain extent, and, on the other hand, we have also had this baggage of what the Schengen area means, even though it refers to the movement of people mainly in the Community area, but here we have the fact that checks on agricultural goods at the border take several hours, six, eight hours, perhaps, in certain cases. This represents a barrier to market access. How do you see these things, Alexander?

**Alexander:** I also became a show moderator. Yes, yes, yes. Well, from now on... Well, like I said, you know... We didn't play our cards right and to the fullest. There were several things we didn't understand. I don't even want to look for blame, because it's not my way to look for blame. I prefer to look for solutions to what will happen from now on. I didn't have a backing and I didn't have a pressure. I can't say pressure. Let's say a push from the government and only the government, so much for the state apparatus for processed products. And, basically, that's where we lost the market because we, with Romania's accession to the European Union, were not prepared to satisfy, so to speak, the needs of European life with products. The Romanian consumer had to go around the European Union or at least had enough information and then came the desire to consume certain

products. And this desire cannot remain unsatisfied, clearly. You get products from elsewhere. If you are not able to consume them, consume them. If you bring yourself to the market in a certain context, that market will not remain supplied. It's going to get supplied, one way or another. And I think that's where the difference is between us and Poland. In Poland there are a lot of processing systems and enterprises, yes, and... and agri-food, we're talking here. They also make a lot of medium and small machines, for example, and equipment for the food industry. They have focused very much on this value-added product side, which we have not done. Because we focused on the production side. It was also a specific, let's say, probably more favorable to us to produce these commodities. That's the stock market term, yes. And I don't think to be able to bring in a value-added product you have to go a little bit out of your comfort zone. And I don't think we wanted to get out of our comfort zone. We, as entrepreneurs, are talking here. Not just as farmers, because someone who produces something is really an entrepreneur. He's not just a farmer anymore. And I think we haven't played the right card, and I think those who should have given us more guidance or more impetus haven't done it properly either. Yeah. So that's pretty much my point of view and how I see things at the Romanian level. And yet I see that the key is with us. I mean we don't necessarily have to wait any longer to do something for us because it's not going to work. And to give you my example, and I can say that I am also an example of success in this business of integration, as Mr. Micu said earlier, I am the only producer of artisanal spirits in Romania that has managed to assert itself on the market... The international market follows but at least in terms of quality and international competition and in 2024 we won an award for the best product of a certain type in the world. And that I did all by myself. I didn't get any impetus, I didn't get any help from the state, I didn't get any help from legislation, I only got help from my perseverance. And the fact that I believed in the project and I still believe in it. And... I think... Micu Marius: Yes, you're right and you're right Alexandru here because I share the same experience, including the creation of the Cooperative. Because I said, "What's dividing us? Let's look for the elements that unite us. And we spoke for the first time when we wanted to set up the Cooperative to 200 farmers. They were young farmers, I was president of the National Association of Wine Producers. I thought I was more open minded at the time in 2018, more dismissive towards the association. And do you know how many came on board? Zero. Up to him we bayoneted 5-5. Ma, you gotta do it. Are you willing to lose? With me on the idea? We never got to take this one any further. And in

the end it's in our commitment to the cause. That's why association as a principle has the same values. We have to do for ourselves what others don't. Well, the institutions. Or correct, or improve. But if we don't, we'll never do anything for ourselves. We must not have the expectation that someone else will do for us. Whether we're talking about a person or institutions. But all of us united we can form those representative organizations that can go knock on the door of the institution and with our mandate make institutional change. The power will be in the voice of the people, after all. Who democratically manifests until they choose. But I don't want to open the subject that we are in a complicated Romania with 4 rounds of elections, including at European level. And I don't want to lead into this area which is very active and the feed is populated like this, by news, you understand. I just want to bring you some news, well, to everyone. Maybe that have not been discussed so transparently at the national level. Okay, some yes, some no. Now Poland's contribution was different from ours. First of all they came in earlier, the period is longer. And they had a macro approach on what we want to do. I mean we want infrastructure first before we start investing in production facilities. Which to us, well they don't refer to us, but it was infrastructure. And then they focused on production and didn't invest in either infrastructure or processing. After they invested in the financial year they focused on processing. I mean that means that a large amount of funding came in just on one particular element. In Romania, if we look from 2007 until now, we don't know how to spread this money from the Common Agricultural Policy into 30 spikes, 30 funding measures, to end up with 100 million funding lines for setting up young farmers. Well, it's more, it's 200. I mean, we give a little bit each subdomain. I mean we didn't take a domain to develop it, to take it up there, to be successful. Then Poland, here I'm talking about the more discreet side of things, the more grey area, did another thing that it faced when the war spread. Because the war started in 2014, it's not now. Well, now than it has escalated, yes. But what has Poland done? Because we know very well that Poland is the master or the master at what are hidden financial instruments to support farmers. You know that we have those ceilings, we cannot give more state aid from the national budget, not from European money, so as not to create disturbances in what is meant by balance, what is meant by the economic market at European level, supply and demand. And then they somehow had a policy of Europeanisation, of polonisation I might say, if there is such a term somewhere, of Ukrainian products that was not talked about. Ukraine was in the European market until 2014 with products from Poland. That look at the agricultural area, how many apples



should Poland have to export to the whole of Europe? How much chicken and how many eggs, that they are champions on the three items, to have member states problems, let's say? In Romania, if you say Poland, you think of blackberries, that's my point. How do you think of Coca-Cola at Christmas? That's how you think when you say Poland at the Bramble, that's how I help. Or when you say "Bramble" you think of Poland. Ok, we have confused ourselves with our neighbours and other member states. Czech is the third place in terms of the European Union in terms of exports, I mean not only it has choked the member states with blackberries, chicken and chickens, I mean chicken meat, eggs, but it exports to China, it exports to other third countries, far away. I mean, where did these productions come from? After all. That it's not number one, it's not as big as Ukraine's 40 million. And then they had a mechanism to Europeanize products from Ukraine. When the war happened, well, part two of the war, the invasion of Russia in the three areas now, now I think two years has happened, if it seems like forever ago, this thing, what did it confront? That the first country on the border that was directly affected was Poland. But if you looked at their complaints, it wasn't primary grain production, or that transit, or that import. Or sunflowers, which is a deficit in the European Union. And they had products on finished agri-food products. And in fact, that's where they had, because they had the mechanisms in place, the barriers that went up anyway totally at the beginning of the war, made it so that there was a large flow of agri-food products, finished products, into the Polish market, which could not be distributed, into the Polish market share in Europe at that time. And this is one of the truths that is not discussed even today. If you look at the state aid that... That the Commission did what? That comma the Commission, the European Commission what did it do? It said, my God, let's help Ukraine. There are higher discussions anyway, I don't want to get into that. It's clear that we have to protect Europe. Romania can't lead another kind of conflict. Europe cannot lead another kind of conflict. Somehow we pay the Poles. To the guarantor police, so to speak, that is to say the security guarantee. And maybe we do it rightly and on merit, but it's another level of the discussion. But what has the European Union done? It has unleashed some mechanisms to help Ukraine. One of the sectors has been... impacted us, agriculture in a way direct. I mean, we are the European Union's aid to help women in Ukraine as a private sector. That's what I mean. But did the Commission come with compensation, did the European Union come with compensation in terms of relaxing trade policies with Ukraine? No. Because as far as Romania is concerned, 100 million has been collected in 2 years. The impact that the

Commissioner estimated in a public but direct discussion was over 1 billion euros a year ago. Yes? Big attention. So 1 billion to 100 million is only 10%. But... It gave Member States the possibility to allocate state aid from their own budget. And that's when you saw the power of the Member States. Who could and who couldn't. You guess who's on top in terms of state aid from the covert. Poland is over 1 billion. Neither does France. It's somewhere around 500 million. Neither does Germany, which is so in quotes our mommy or daddy. We have to get our heads around it. And for the French it means this. Because Germany is a net contributor. That means it gives the most money to the European Union. We are net beneficiaries. That means we receive more money than we give. It doesn't mean we don't give money. Does it? And then we have to understand that who dictates in Europe is who puts the money on the table. You know they talk about two-speed Europe. And there was some discussion at one point. They were discussing the accession of Member States by economic sectors. There were two ideas that did not come to fruition in the end. They did not find their term. I'm getting away. I don't even want to rethink it now. Let it be applicable. But if you look at Ukraine, in reality, without having the legal part, Ukraine on the agri-food sector is somehow in the European Union. It has no barriers. I mean somehow that philosophy is translated into a reality. And then we wonder. How do we think about the common agricultural policy in 2027? With Ukraine in or without Ukraine? Is Ukraine in the market or not? It is half in the market. So if we, it actually won't be and it can't be. But that's a subjective opinion of mine. What you said, you said well. The solution will at some point be Ukraine's entry into Europe. Like Romania was in... in this space. It can be a solution. But we have to be aware that entering the Union... entering Ukraine into the European Union means direct armed conflict with Russia. In the second second. Tomorrow we're members, tomorrow we're in conflict. That means war is open. So there won't be that risk. But it's a subjective opinion. I can't have more solid arguments behind that I participated or not in discussions. But still we have to ask ourselves that 2027, that the European Union is still in a ghed. Not only does it not have a common agricultural policy anchored in the reality of our times. Actual. Why doesn't it? Because it developed it, adopted it at a time when we were dreamers, we were transcendent. We had not had it in war, we had not had it in pandemics, we had no input crisis because of energy costs. Let's not forget that the energy discussion is Europe's responsibility. It was the first crisis that generated the increase in inputs. We were in a transcendental state when we could have had very ambitious targets in terms of climate change, the measures, the ambitious targets

that we had to take. We could have thought it through, even though we were the only country, let's call it the Union European policy in the world. You can't make a spring with a flower. I mean ok, when China pollutes, I mean we have an impressive death rate just from pollution per day, you can't say that Europe, in agricultural policies, is going to change the world. But let's say we allow ourselves at that point. And that's how the Common Agricultural Policy came about and these conditionalities and, well, all these measures. It is unanchored. It is clear that the Commission is also noticing today, because there is this degree of unheard-of flexibility. When does derogation after derogation appear? Just look at the derogations that have been made to the common agricultural policy. It is clearly a signal. It's clearly a signal. It's clearly a signal. It's clearly a signal. It's clear that they recognise that it's not adapted. But what are we going to do in 2027? Because we, unfortunately, look at the COPAC-14K level, we have already had the first two meetings on how to show what the objectives of the future common agricultural policy should be. That is in 2027. But if we are not in 2024 and the Commission has not put a document on the table, do we have time in 3 years to make a coherent and adapted policy? And adopted? I mean we have to reform the reform, you know? When we talk about the common agricultural policy, we always say reform of the common agricultural policy. Unfortunately we are in reform reform today. And what will the Common Agricultural Policy look like? What will Pillar 1 look like? If we take into account that there's another element. If we consider Ukraine. Even if it's not joined by the fact in the European name. Well the budget, if you look historically, on the common agricultural policy has decreased from financial year to financial year. The multiannual multi-fund framework has decreased. But taking Ukraine into

account means at least at this level that we are with the budget, at least a 30% consolidated budget. Yes? Mathematically it is 30%. I don't think it's realistic earlier than... For 2027, 2031, no. I don't think that... There's no way that... No, until not, I understand, but we should not ignore agricultural production in the European Union in the development of the common agricultural policy. Well, half of them are present on this market, I want to conclude. But we're at the end and I promised that two hours I haven't exhausted yet, but anyway, you'll be invited tomorrow evening and by tomorrow evening, because we have five other guests, they're in the field, they're even involved at European level in policy making or representation, so, and we'll take questions again. We're going to go on and

we're going to take them again in half an hour, so you'll have a broader spectrum of analysis, not just me, but you'll have all the guests and maybe you'll have... I'm going to ask you though.

### **Interview 2 14/03/2024**

**Profil:** Interview of Stefan Padure. He is the President of the Association for the Promotion of Romanian Food (APAR). Since 2012, he has been leading APAR, representing the interests of Romanian agri-food producers in promoting their products.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 37 min 43 sec

**Stefan Padure:** Da, suntem într-o... Cine a pus această întrebare este?

**Interviewer:** Sunt. Eu sunt o studentă în Franța și lucrez pe proiectul meu și cu studiile pe România. Nu vorbesc foarte bine, îmi cer scuze.

**Stefan Padure:** Dar nu vorbesc foarte bine. OK. A, da. România a abordat după aderarea la Uniunea Europeană din anul 2007, Am A. A. Lucrurile au avut sau. Precipitat, să spunem, acquis-ul comunitar. Știți foarte bine că a fost a Am adoptat înainte, în etapa de preaderare a practic și unele dintre punctele pe care le avem în permanență la verificare din partea Uniunii Europene țin de convergența socială în zona agricolă și în comunitățile rurale. Din păcate, măsurile luate au nu au oprit depopularea zonei urbane, ci, mai mult, aceasta a avut un caracter accentuat în etapa a de vot, în prima etapă, atunci când s-a produs depopularea prin plecarea forței de muncă atât în zonele urbane, cât și în afara României. Lucrul acesta s-a așezat pentru că am vrea să vedem Uniunea Europeană ca pe un principiu al vaselor comunicante. A, dacă salariile sunt mici, condițiile de muncă sunt încă precare într-un anumit stat. Convergența se atinge și prin mișcarea oamenilor. Pe piața unică europeană, unde avem libertatea de mișcare, se poate munci și în afara țării. Între timp, în România a crescut salariul mediu, a crescut, a În România există o legislație specifică, cu avantaj pentru sectorul agricol, alimentar și al construcțiilor, în care sunt câteva facilități fiscale. În continuare pleacă români la muncă în afară pentru aceste munci agricole, dar condițiile s-au îmbunătățit destul de mult față de ce era înainte. Iar din propria

experiență vă pot spune că unul dintre cei mai buni oameni sau unii dintre cei mai buni oameni care lucrează în business urile naționale sunt cei care au fost în afară și au lucrat și au învățat și au văzut că de fapt munca e muncă și nu te plătește nimeni dacă nu muncești acum la noi, dorință sau foarte multe să avem ca afară, dar să muncim ca stat. Și atunci lucrurile nu pot evolua așa. A. Da a manca complica ceea ce am spus la deficitul de balanță comercială. Atâta timp cât noi exportăm materia primă, atâta timp cât modelul României este unul care se bazează pe suprafețe agricole mari, când noi, ca și țară, nu am limitat subvenția pe exploatare la o anumită sumă, am încurajat marii latifundiari.

**Interviewer:** Deci modelul care era unul comunist nashpa, după acela prin care neocomunist de comunist, care este mai specific Germaniei de Est, Poloniei, Bulgariei, României, suprafețe mari sau sau POPAM, s au făcut suprafețe foarte mari aparținând unor latifundiari sau ale unor a unele investiții?

**Stefan Padure:** Da, pentru că a fost un business, prețul terenului era foarte mic și, așa cum bine știm, singurul lucru care nu se mai produce este pământul. OC, că atâta este suprafața. Noi ca România a mai câștigat prin procesul cu Ucraina, dar nu suficient cât să l dublăm, să l livrăm suprafața țării. A, deci acesta, aceasta creștere și politică ne roade în seamă că atât Comisia Europeană, cât și Parlamentul ne a pus la dispoziție instrumente prin care să nu mai am terenurile, să nu mergem pe comasate pe suprafețe foarte mari ale unui latifundiar, precum am făcut, decât să încurajăm acest lucru. Deci, cu cât avem teren mai mult, cu atât câștiga mai mult și nu ia subvenția. I se cheamă pierdere de venit. Ca și practic, acestea, aceste pierderi imense sunt pentru cei mici, cei care nu pot singuri să se să supraviețuiască, pentru că o exploatare mare au sute de hectare, dar noi vorbim de mii de zeci de mii de hectare în România, acea exploatare nu are nevoie de de subvenții. Sau teoretic nu ar avea nevoie, pentru că la noi, fizic așa a fost construit. Dar în afară nu se dau exploatarele din Franța, din Belgia, din țările acesta care sau o tradiție în democrație și care au format Uniunea Europeană s a. Ferma medie pe 30 de hectare. Da, Adică vorbim de suprafețe mici în care ei lucrează prin cooperare, prin cooperative, tocmai pentru a putea avea beneficiile unui unei suprafețe mai mari. Să vedeți acum ce se va întâmpla și cum vom putea prelua problema Ucrainei, pentru că acolo sunt principalii. Sunt a 10 mari proprietari care au 80% din suprafața Ucrainei. Deci vorbim deci de toate aceste sunt european până la urmă, dar și o forță pe care o avem va avea Ucraina într o viitoare piață

comună. Bănești, dezechilibre se creează la graniță și dacă nu avem grijă de ele și cum le facem? Oricum, Politica Agricolă Comună nu va mai putea fi gândită așa cum este gândită acum, în perspectiva unei integrări a a Ucrainei Moldova, Muntenegru, Serbia. Să intrăm un nou relevant în această discuție. Vorbim de Ucraina, țara noastră și de aceea eu cred că. Însă pe măsură ce atingem convergența cu Uniunea, se stabilizează și ceva puteam să ofere. O să vedem. Poate în România, venind la muncile câmpului și a portului, oamenii în Portugalia vor să vină în România la muncă, pentru că Portugalia deja coboară sub nivelul României. Da. A, și dacă apare deșertul aici, s ar putea ca oamenii pricepuți de acolo să vină aici să pună vin, să pună viță de vie și să facă lucruri. Suntem într un spațiu. Europa, ca să aibă o șansă, va trebui să lucreze ca o uniune federală de state, ca și Statele Unite ale Americii. Altfel n are nicio șansă. Toate proiecte comune Gener mus care ați văzut ca a reușit să înfrângă bingo, dar doar prin propuneri, atâta timp cât nemții pac nu știu tancuri Leopard și românii continuă să facă tancurile nu știu care, Nu avem nicio șansă. Noi trebuie să fim la un standard și să producem același lucru. America de aceea e puternică, are, are un stat, niște standarde ca și acum, vine către tot. Atunci când Europa se va uita către propria siguranță, către afacere, ocoli împreună a face un tractor performant european, un porc, dar nu zece tractoare. Atunci s ar putea să avem de câștigat. Europa să coopereze federativ. Dar acolo se așează și pentru noi. Eu cred că va fi foarte bine. R A Avem o poziție geostrategică bună. A. Și a început și R.

**Interviewer:** Social și patronat și patronatele și sindicatele să înțeleagă acest mecanism și acest joc care trebuie făcut astfel încât să fie luat în seamă atât la nivel național, ce spuneam la nivel național, cât și la nivel european?

**Stefan Padure:** Ce spunea mai devreme o ceartă că s au ocupat poziții prin diverse organisme care contează și organizații internaționale a. Sustenabilitatea socială și a comunităților agricole din România. Momentan cred că este o problemă care nu s a pus foarte puternic în România. Suntem la nivel de subzistență în muncă, în comunitățile agricole, a.

**Interviwer:** Harta sărăciei are vin se marchează foarte bine sau este aceeași cu harta marilor latifundiari, acolo unde mari latifundiari este și sărăcia cea mai mare?

**Stefan Padure:** Ne uităm spre Moldova, dar acolo unde sunt suprafețe mai mici deja avem o bogăție, pentru că în zona Ardeal au fost cu suprafețe mai mici. A cu cooperative, cu oameni care lucrau împreună. A da lucrurile natural se așează poate și aici. Eu sunt sigur că a fost o greșeală și asta mediului asociativ și poate colegii noștri, în viitor, cu colegii noștri, vom face o limitare a și vom reuși să ne facem și pe colegii noștri care sunt mari. În context, ei pun produsele pe piață, acționează pentru piață. Nu vorbesc de cei care sunt ferme cu 3. Vaca ca nu e fermă, este pentru uzul familial. Da, o să încercăm să venim cu suport și politicile agricole viitoare să fie pentru cei care sunt în clasa de mijloc. Pentru că ei sunt de fapt puterea și îți dau și siguranța și securitatea alimentară. Și atenție că nu neapărat securitatea alimentară este importantă, este deja un termen vechi. Suveranitatea alimentară. Pentru că securitatea alimentară îți spune că pot să cumpere alimente, daune între componente, să ai acces la alimentele și a fost să poți să iei alimentele de care ai nevoie tranzita perioadă care astăzi îl avem la preț de un leu la kilogramul de cartof, iar mâine ia. Din cauza pieței, acest cartof kilogramul crește la 10 lei. Iată că este foarte volatilă sau se întrerup lanțurile alimentare, cum s a întâmplat un pic în pandemie și toate țările, practic, inclusiv România, a spus Noi nu ne mai dăm grâu, noi nu mai dăm pesta. Tocmai Europa este o plasă de siguranță pentru toate țările să împărțim ceea ce avem pentru a nu avea crize. Noi ce am făcut? Primul lucru să remarcăm, nu să mănânce românii. Vei primi. OK, dar cum poate asta cartof, dar nu să mai ulei cu care să îi prăjești. Așa că lucrul asta trebuie gândite și Unirea trebuie să îl folosească, însă să funcționeze ca o. Poate cu mai puțină importanță pentru guvernele statelor membre, cu mai multă informație importantă pe regiuni. Și atunci nu mai avem nici problema valorilor flamanzilor a Cataloniei. Da, regiunile care s au învățat să lucreze la mama, așa cum românii cu bani lucrează foarte bine, care de ani de zile pe granițe geografice au ca foarte bine cu bulgarii. Da, cei din zona Dobrogei, poate cei din zona Ardealului, din zona de graniță lucra, sau cei din Banatul sârbesc cu sârbii, pentru că de-a lungul timpului conexiunile se fac în comunități, acolo unde există bariere naturale apă, munte. Da, așa s a dezvoltat regiunea, granițele. Avem granițe în Africa care să arate cu linia. Nu au nicio legătură. Cu legăturile de acea atrăgătoare foc a legături economico sociale între acele, între acei oameni. Poate a tras linie și a împărțit casa nouă. Da, exact cum s a întâmplat în Berlin, când s a separat Berlinul între Est și Vest. A. Sigur că la nivel european, la nivelul actelor, se vorbește despre jaf, tranziția. Vorbim despre o tranziție justă în care să fie luate și apoi să fie luate. Partea aceasta sindicală, partea drepturilor angajaților a. Dar n am cum

sa nu spun eu, fiind din zona angajatorilor. A murit. Capitanul nu mai este cel care dictează, pentru că forța de muncă înseamnă foarte mult și are nevoie de o armonie între combinare, între capital și starea de bine a celor care muncesc și o repartizare echitabilă pentru a putea trece mai departe. Nu mai este simplu. Ești angajat ca remunerat cu un salariu. La ei am terminat. Da, aceea a fost o altă etapă de dezvoltare. Dar atenție, dacă ne pierdem timpul. Pe anumite elemente care nu ne fac decât să pierdem bani și nu vom mai avea beneficii. Nu va mai exista niciun fel de tradiție, nu va mai exista nici un fel de justețe, nu va mai exista posibilitatea de a împărți ceva. Dacă eu, ca și capitalist, ca și antreprenor, nu mai pot să duc mai departe. Se încheie orice discuție, pe lângă ce nu mai vorbim de mediu și de celelalte lucruri pe care ni le am asumat. Sigur că Europa este cu un pas înainte, cu un pas înaintea tuturor. Dar poluarea. Europa produce opt la sută din poluarea mondială. Poluarea nu sta deasupra Europei.

**Interviewer:** Dar atâta timp cât noi nu prea ok și facem, ne restrângem din ce în ce mai tare, cu ce costuri?

**Stefan Padure:** Cu costuri asupra vieții, asupra noastră supărată, suportate de de de cetățenii europeni care sunt obligați să plătească prețul din ce în ce mai mari. Noi ne am dus într o direcție în care încurajăm energia verde, dar, atenție, noi aducem toate componentele pentru energia verde din China. Noi am plecat pe autoturisme electrice că i am pierdut de mult. Producătorii europeni deja încep să renunțe la producția de autovehicule electrice, pentru că China sau Statele Unite, care de fapt tot în China produc, câștigă, au câștigat această piață. Iată că noi am venit cu lucruri, am fost înainte cu cercetarea, dar nu ne am adaptat, ci am rămas. Timmermans a fost unul dintre cei care îți lasă că știu eu ce trebuie făcut. Și a ținut studiile de impact sub masă, nu le a scos. Nu se poate lucra așa pentru că pierdem un avantaj competitiv pe care Europa l a avut. Îl pierdem și nu ne vor veni peste noi. Piatră avem din războiu, în afară de tragedia pierderilor de vieți omenești. Războiul acesta cu din Ucraina a. Pierderea mare este creșterea BRICS, creșterea economică în care intră state care ne vor deveni o putere și vor avea liber schimburi libere între ei. Iar noi, ca și zona europeană, fără sprijinul american, din păcate, nu prea putem exista, pentru că nu avem politici coerente. Deci iată că nu rata. La ceea ce ar trebui să facem. Nu adaptăm. Suntem într o creștere a populației, avem că o să ajungem la la, la 10 miliarde. Noi trebuie să gândim mai multă populație. Nu avem flexibilitatea în a da



libertate mai multor tehnici, mai multor studii, a. Lucrurile sunt împărțite când nici nu poți să ai o libertate și să ajungi fermierii ai unor companii multinaționale care vând semințe și care văd un patent, dar și vor de noile tehnici genomice. Da, dar noi ce am făcut prin voi, cei care le am avut, am interzis, am interzis o. Cultivarea organismelor modificate genetic, în schimb, aducem din Brazilia și prin alte țări, organizăm și în America organisme modificate genetic. Da, creștem animalele cu ele și mai departe mâncăm animalele pe care le avem. Iată că suntem într o într un dans din acesta în care pierdem, pierdem competitivitatea pe care am avut o noi ca europeni și dacă o pierdem după aceea, mi e teamă că lucrurile nu mai pot fi puse la un loc și bunăstarea aceasta pe care o are Europa. Cred că poți. Ai bunăstare atunci când ai, poate că nu mai ai bani. Încep să apară conflicte, conflicte sociale, state totalitariste. Vedem ce s ar întâmpla acum cu creșterea extremelor, fie că dreapta sau stânga, dar de obicei acum este o extremă dreaptă, periculoasă. A. Inclusiv în România. Vedem acest lucru și lucrăm. Dacă pierdem dialogul, pierdem valorile, pierdem democrația, libertatea și tot ceea ce este valoros în Europa. Dacă ne pierdem. Posibilitatea de a face un dialog. Pe pag. 2000 27 încercăm de fapt 2000, 2004 2027 ca și implementare pe exercițiu încercăm să. Schimbările anticipate în sectorul agricol românesc. Încercăm să refacem patul nostru. Multe țări europene au știut și au a politici a PAC,

**Interviewer:** Au BNS un plan acela strategic care de fapt este transpunerea Politicii Agricole Comune la nivel național?

**Stefan Padure:** Au plan naționale, strategice, regionale sau împărțite în funcție de. Cred că specificitățile și ale României sunt diferite. Una este la munte, alta este la câmpie, alta este în zona costieră. Adică noi am mers. De fapt, SAPARD. A fost un exercițiu preaderare foarte bun, dar de la acel exercitiu am făcut decât copy paste în PNDR și în perete. Au venit cu a concrete și mult mai bine și mai. Pe care le aveam a avut acte Ministerul Agriculturii, Dacă întrebați în momentul de față nu știe cât producem, ce producem, unde vindem, ce vindem, aflăm de la de la Comisia de statistică a Petrom Pentru produsele terțe și prin sistemul VIES al TVA ului vedem unde au plecat produsele, dar noi nu știm, Ministerul nu știe. Și atunci, dacă tu nu știi cât produci, ce produci, unde produci, pentru cine produci, unde vinzi, nu ai cum să faci politici bazate pe dovezi. Și atunci vine unul și spune Șefu, noi avem nevoie de fabrici, de oameni. OK, mai facem fabrici de mâine, dar

avem vara parcă. Sau noi avem nevoie de GABA? Pare ok, dar avem animale sau animale au scăzut. Decidentul politic de multe ori este influențat de informații care nu sunt reale și acest lucru trebuie să dispară. Este ceea ce vorbeam la început ca ne stimulăm dialogul. Trebuie să vedem cum facem acum. Noi vorbim de repede. Se fac că pleacă, nu se mai aude nimic. Un meci la Viena. Nici la mine. Ne raminea. Te vedem, probabil. În Capitală, cu tot cu conexiunea. Da, aștepta un pic, dar cum era de așteptat. Da, Deci discutam, discutam de. Mai puțin. Da, eram la la apă Politica Agricolă Comună, deci ar trebui să avem aceste informații postate pe desene de sistemul de date, care aveam un sistem foarte învechit, în care datele sunt date la mișto de către firme. Scuzați limbajul colocvial, nu au. Nu pot sa cred așa. România, prima adresa străinătate și asta o știu din orice lucrare din facultate. Dacă are. Este legea în cervicita 1 in 4 nu iti poti. Acțiunea. Mai departe. Cum a facilitat apartenența la Uniunea Vamală, proces tehnologic și inovație.

**Interviwer:** În agricultura românească?

**Stefan Padure:** Toți care înjurau, care furau guvernul și care participau la greve au evoluat numai tractoare, șantier? Da, și. Dacă ești o forță de cumpărare, este mai ieftin decât la un utilaj agricol performant. Așa că io cred că nu are sens. Și am fotografii, chiar mergeam cu colegii. A fost blocat browser de câteva ori de fermieri în ultimele săptămâni. La fel. Erau utilaje de ultimă generație. A. Eu nu cred că putem pune la îndoială eficacitatea politicilor agricole comune. În schimb, atenție ca pe o părere personală pe care am început să o spun. De la politica Cioloș. De fapt, este politica comisarului. Cum scap înainte de Cioloș? A sosit. Au fost doi, cu unu mai apropiat numele de familie A, care s a decuplat practic de producție, aproape că mai a pierdut. Ca de decuplat subvenția de producție pentru asta, pentru performanță. Diferența între sistemul european este că chiar dacă nu muncești, primești o sumă de bani. Sistemul american e. Dacă ai performanță, primești și încurajăm performanța. România, pentru că așa a fost începutul pe SAPARD.

**Interviewer:** A fost o performanță. Dacă aveai bani de calitate, nu dacă avem cantitate de porc, dar avem lapte de calitate privat?

**Stefan Padure:** Da, cotele au fost iarăși un sistem care au adus bunăstare. Restul minim garantat a adus bunăstare. Adică tu știai că orice s ar întâmpla asta, ai investit, poți primi,

poți acoperi costurile și vei avea aceste convulsii sociale. Sigur că am avut o deschidere. Aceasta vorbea de corect organizația OME. Ce, dar americanii așa fac? Americanii nici măcar nu îți dau asigurări dacă nu poți modifica genetică mai mare, ar rezolva problema. A mers pe banii mei cursului sau problema a. A secetei. Cred că trebuie să plătesc. Pe seceta. Iarna nu i nici măcar un localnic. Sateliții Avem imagini satelitare, putem vedea când este seceta, când este inundație, când avem probleme cu cultura respectiva, nu. De ce? Pentru ca cineva face bani, trimite la o comisie de 5 oameni. Împărțim banii la 5 și uite așa se mărește apoi acesta ca să înceteze. Presa începe să funcționeze ca un business acasă, ca un business de stat.

**Interviewer:** Ce puteți spune de proces tehnologic în agricultura?

**Stefan Padure:** Deci ca proces tehnologic, nici Vaslui, ca suntem, suntem noi chiar care a venit la sfârșit, avem cele mai noi utilaje, deja o aplicăm. A doua tehnologizare a. Din păcate că nici ne unim nu s-a dat un procent din acesta de cooperativizarea. Ei și au făcut cooperativă doar ca să beneficieze fiscal de facilități și au să lucreze împreună, să comercializeze, să aibă marketingul un management bun, o achiziție bună. Nefăcând aceste lucruri, nu au cum să și cumpere. Utilaje din care să crească foarte puține cooperative și moderne, corecte, care funcționează, pe când afară sunt cooperative care au în Grecia are peste 10 mii de membri, este cel mai mare producător de cap, piersici, caise. Ei nici nu mai sunt ce cooperativa sunt. Ei produc și știu că au un preț mai mare de pe piață. Cât ar lua dacă iau singuri. În rest nu i interesează. Au nicio treabă, ei produc și primesc bani. Dacă dați din cooperativă, va primi mai puțin. Deci nu primesc inputurile, primesc, faci, dar ei sunt proprietari. Atenție! Adică nu este un sistem în care vin o firmă de inputurile și compania, producția poate și nu se mai dau și niște bani ca unii sau ceva, un manager. Deci practic partea de organizare pe forme economice, de grade de cooperare, cum au fost în grupul organizației de producători cooperative. Înțeleg că ați studiat în zilele trecute, ar trebui să vadă în pravoslavnicii inclusiv aceste zone ale ONG-urilor. ONG-urile se ocupă de vânzare produse, adică formele care trebuie să susțină interesele legitime, fac și vânzare de produs și ajung să plătească și TVA pe care s-a făcut confuzie de-a lungul timpului. A. Uite că acum trebuie să revenim la normal. A. Privim la viitor. Care sunt provocările și oportunitățile cheie pentru agricultura românească în cadrul Uniunii Europene? Eu cred că România are un potențial extraordinar, România având materiile prime în context

geopolitic complicat. Materiile prime, cerealele, animalele din păcate, că încep să scadă în România începe să scadă. Deși profitabile, vor avea un preț concret, o valoare foarte mare în viitor. Și vom putea negocia poziția țării prin prisma acestor lucruri. Mâine le putem face pași în spate și putem integra investitori. Inițiativa aceasta de origine românească, prin care să facem o schemă de calitate, să integrăm a materia primă românească produse finite, este un ajutor. România nu a făcut ce trebuia să facă la început a făcut drumuri, autostrăzi, logistică, dacă pot s o fac. Dar iată că acum acesta, lipsa de frumos și autostrăzi pe care le construim acum au o rezervă de productivitate, de creștere pentru România, pentru a nu intra în crize financiare. Alții, care și au făcut tot imediat ca să aducă în criză numai faptul că construiești, ai și cheltuieli, ai și îți merge și industria alimentară, merge și agricultura. Numai că trebuie să stăm un pic să discutăm și să punem pe masă cum ne valorificăm acest potențial mai bine, pentru că a Jawa sau oaia cu cereale este cam același lucru și pământul care în fiecare an se termină. Da sau aș fi o exploatație ca anul acesta de țară. Ne lipsesc obiectivele majore și analiza lor, pentru că noi, ONG urile și formele asociative cu rol de reprezentare ar trebui să poată fi responsabile. E memoria instituțională O parte vin și pleacă, prim miniștrii vin și pleacă. Ar trebui să fim permanent acolo. Am încercat și deja încercăm să aproape că reușim la Ministerul Agriculturii să fim ostili. Ei vor spune că te întrebă nu vrei să fii ministru, nu vrei să fii secretar de stat? Nu ai. Avem o poziție mai puternică decât tu. Ești popular polonă, două, trei, cinci. Noi suntem permanent aici și avem o forță mai mare în spate decât ai fost. A pus cineva? Deci cam asta ar fi atmosfera la întrebările.

### **Interview 2 14/03/2024 translated in English**

**Profil:** Interview of Stefan Padure. He is the President of the Association for the Promotion of Romanian Food (APAR). Since 2012, he has been leading APAR, representing the interests of Romanian agri-food producers in promoting their products.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 37 min 43 sec

**Stefan Padure:** Yes, we are in a... Who asked this question ?

**Interviewer:** Good Afternoon, my name is Badiceanu Ilinca. I am a student in France and I am working on my master thesis on Romania. I don't speak very well, sorry.

So the question would be: Can you elaborate on the social changes in rural communities after joining the EU, especially regarding employment and rural depopulation?

**Stefan Padure:** But you speak perfectly. OK. Ah, yes. Romania approached after joining the European Union in 2007, I A. A. Things had or precipitated, shall we say, the *acquis communautaire*. You know very well that it was a ? We adopted before, in the pre-accession stage of basically and some of the points that we have constantly to check from the European Union relate to social convergence in the agricultural area and in rural communities. Unfortunately, the measures taken did not stop the depopulation of the urban area, but, moreover, it was accentuated in the voting phase, in the first stage, when depopulation occurred through the departure of the workforce both in urban areas and outside Romania. This was because we would like to see the European Union as a principle of communicating vessels. Ah, if wages are low, working conditions are still poor in a given country. Convergence is also achieved by moving people. In the European single market, where we have freedom of movement, people can also work abroad. In the meantime, the average wage in Romania has risen, has increased, has In Romania there is specific legislation, with an advantage for the agricultural, food and construction sectors, where there are some tax breaks. Romanians still go abroad to work in these agricultural jobs, but conditions have improved quite a lot compared to before. And from my own experience I can tell you that one of the best people or some of the best people who work in national businesses are those who have been abroad and have worked and have learned and have seen that work is work and nobody pays you if you don't work for us now, and there is a desire or a lot of desire to work as a state. And then things can't evolve like that.

A. Yes eating complicates what I said to the trade balance deficit. As long as we export raw materials, as long as Romania's model is one based on large agricultural areas, when we, as a country, have not limited the subsidy per farm to a certain amount, we have encouraged large landowners.

**Interviewer:** So the model that was a nashpa communist one, after the neo-communist one of communist, which is more specific to East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, large

areas or or POPAM, s were made very large areas belonging to landowners or to some investments?

**Stefan Padure:** Yes, because it was a biznis, the price of the land was very low and, as we well know, the only thing that is no longer produced is land. OC, that's all there is surface. We as Romania gained more through the process with Ukraine, but not enough to double it, to deliver it to the surface of the country. So this, this growth and politics is eating away at us that both the European Commission and the Parliament have provided us with tools whereby we don't have the land, we don't go on comasate on very large areas of a landowner, as we have done, rather than encourage this. So the more land we have, the more he earns and doesn't take the subsidy. It's called loss of income. As a practical matter, these, these huge losses are for the small ones, the ones who cannot survive on their own, because a big farm has hundreds of hectares, but we are talking about thousands of tens of thousands of hectares in Romania, that farm does not need subsidies. Or theoretically they wouldn't need it, because that's the way we are physically built. But there are no farms in France, Belgium, in countries that have a tradition of democracy and have formed the European Union. Yes, I mean we are talking about small areas where they work through cooperation, through cooperatives, precisely in order to have the benefits of a larger area. Let's see now what will happen and how we can take over the Ukraine problem, because that's where the main ones are. There are 10 big landowners who have 80% of the land in Ukraine. So we are talking about all these are European after all, but also a strength that we have will have Ukraine in a future common market. So, we are creating imbalances on the border and if we don't take care of them and how do we do it? However, the Common Agricultural Policy will no longer be able to be thought of as it is now, in the perspective of an integration of Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia. Let's get another relevant entry into this discussion. We are talking about Ukraine, our country, and that is why I believe that. But as we reach convergence with the Union, it stabilises and something could be offered. We will see. Maybe in Romania, coming to work in the fields and the port, people in Portugal want to come to Romania to work, because Portugal is already going below the level of Romania. Yes. Ah, and if the desert comes here, it might be that the skilled people from there will come here to put wine, put vines and make things. We're in a space. Europe, to have a chance, will have to work as a federal union of states, like the United States of America. Otherwise it has no chance. All the Gener mus joint projects that

you have seen that managed to defeat bingo, but only by proposals, as long as the Germans pac don't know Leopard tanks and the Romanians continue to make don't know which tanks, we have no chance. We have to be at a standard and produce the same. That's why America is strong, it has, it has a state, some standards like now, it comes to everything. When Europe will look to its own safety, to the business, bypass together to make one European performing tractor, one pig, but not ten tractors. Then we might have something to gain. Europe to cooperate federally. But there it sits for us too. I think it will be very good. A We have a good geostrategic position. A. And R.

**Interviewer:** Social and employers and employers and trade unions to understand this mechanism and this game that has to be played so that it is taken into account both at the national level, and at the European level?

**Stefan Padure:** Yes, what was said earlier a quarrel that s have occupied positions through various bodies that matter and international organizations a. Social sustainability and agricultural communities in Romania. At the moment I think it is an issue that has not been very strongly raised in Romania. We are at the level of subsistence in work, in the agricultural communities.

**Interviwer:** Is the map of poverty with wine very well marked or is it the same as the map of the big landowners, where the big landowners are also the biggest poor?

**Stefan Padure:** We are looking towards Moldova, but where there are smaller areas we already have a wealth, because in the Ardeal area there were smaller areas. A with cooperatives, with people working together. A da natural things are maybe settling here too. I'm sure that was a mistake and that the associative environment and maybe our colleagues, in the future, with our colleagues, we will make a limitation of and we will manage to do and our colleagues who are large. In the context, they put products on the market, they act for the market. I'm not talking about the ones that are farms with 3. The cow that's not a farm is for family use. Yes, we will try to come with support and future agricultural policies to be for those who are in the middle class. Because they are actually the power and they also give you food security and safety. And beware that not necessarily food security is important, it's already an old term. Food sovereignty. Because food

security tells you that they can buy food, damage between components, have access to food and was to be able to take the food you need transiting the period that today we have it at the price of a leu a kilogram of potato, and tomorrow takes. Because of the market, this potato kilogram rises to 10 lei. Here is that it is very volatile or food chains are interrupted, as happened a little in the pandemic and all countries, practically including Romania, said We do not give us wheat, we do not give the plague. It is precisely Europe that is a safety net for all countries to share what we have in order not to have crises. What have we done? The first thing to notice, not to eat the Romanians. You will get. OK, but how can that potato, but no more oil to fry them with. So this thing has to be thought about and the Union has to use it, but it has to work as a. Maybe with less importance for the governments of the Member States, with more important information per region. And then we don't even have the problem of the Flemish values of Catalonia. Yes, the regions that s have learned to work to mother, as the Romanians with money work very well, who for years on geographical borders have as very well with the Bulgarians. Yes, those in the Dobrogea area, perhaps those in the Ardeal area, in the border area work, or those in the Serbian Banat with Serbs, because over time connections are made in communities, where there are natural barriers water, mountain. Yes, that's how the region developed, the borders. We have borders in Africa to show the line. They have no connection. With the links of that attractive fire of economic social links between those, between those people. Maybe he drew the line and shared the new house. Yes, just like what happened in Berlin, when he separated Berlin into East and West. A. Of course, at the European level, at the level of acts, there is talk of looting, transition. We are talking about a just transition where they are taken and then they are taken. This trade union part, the employees' rights part a. But I can't help saying it myself, being from the employers' side. It's dead. The captain is no longer the one who dictates, because the workforce means a lot and it needs a harmony between the combination, between the capital and the welfare of those who work and a fair distribution in order to move forward. It is no longer simple. You are employed as a wage earner. With them we are finished. Yes, that was another stage of development. But be careful, if we waste our time. On certain items that only make us lose money and we won't benefit. There won't be any tradition, there won't be any fairness, there won't be any opportunity to share anything. If I, as a capitalist, as an entrepreneur, can't carry on. It ends any discussion, besides we don't talk about the environment and the other things we have taken on. Of course Europe is one step ahead, one step ahead of everyone. But pollution.



Europe produces eight percent of the world's pollution. Pollution does not stand above Europe.

**Interviewer:** But as long as we don't really do, we're shrinking more and more, at what cost?

**Stefan Padure:** At a cost to our lives, to our angry citizens, who are forced to pay the ever-increasing price. We have gone in a direction where we are encouraging green energy, but beware, we are bringing all the components for green energy from China. We've gone on electric cars that we've long lost them. European manufacturers are already starting to give up the production of electric cars, because China or the United States, which in fact also produce in China, win, have won this market. Here we have come up with things, we have been ahead with research, but we have not adapted, we have stayed. Timmermans was one of those who let you know that I know what to do. And he kept impact studies under the table, he didn't take them out. It can't work like that because we lose a competitive advantage that Europe had. We're losing it and they're not going to come after us. We've got the war stone, apart from the tragedy of loss of life. This war with in Ukraine has. The big loss is the growth of BRICS, the economic growth where countries that we will become a power enter and have free trade between them. And we, as the European area, without American support, unfortunately, we cannot really exist, because we don't have coherent policies. So here we are that you don't miss. To what we should be doing. We don't adapt. We're in a population growth, we have that we're going to get to, to 10 billion. We have to think more population. We don't have the flexibility to give freedom to more techniques, more studies, a. Things are divided when you can't even have a freedom and become farmers of multinational companies that sell seeds and see a patent, but also want new genomic techniques. Yes, but what we have done through you, those of us who have had them, we have banned, we have banned a. The cultivation of genetically modified organisms, instead, we bring from Brazil and through other countries, we also organize in America genetically modified organisms. Yes, we breed animals with them and further we eat the animals we have. Here we are in one of those dances where we are losing, we are losing the competitiveness that we had as Europeans and if we lose it after that, I am afraid that things can no longer be put together and this well-being that Europe has. I think you can. You have wealth when you have it, maybe you don't have it anymore.

Conflicts are starting to arise, social conflicts, totalitarian states. We see what would happen now with the rise of extremes, whether right or left, but usually now it's a right-wing, dangerous extreme. A. Including in Romania. We see this and we work. If we lose dialogue, we lose values, we lose democracy, freedom and everything that is valuable in Europe. If we lose ourselves. The possibility of dialogue. On page 2000 27 we are actually trying 2000, 2004 2027 as implementation per exercise we are trying to. anticipated changes in the Romanian agricultural sector. We are trying to rebuild our bed. Many European countries have known and have policies of CAP,

**Interviewer:** Does the NBS have a strategic plan which is actually the transposition of the Common Agricultural Policy at national level?

**Stefan Padure:** They are national, strategic, regional or divided according to. I believe that the specificities of Romania are different. One is in the mountains, another in the plains, another in the coastal area. I mean we have gone. In fact, SAPARD. It was a very good pre-accession exercise, but since that exercise we've only done copy pastes in the NDP and in the wall. They came up with concrete and much better and more. That we had had papers Ministry of Agriculture, If you ask at the moment does not know how much we produce, what we produce, where we sell, what we sell, we find out from the Petrom Statistical Commission For third products and through the VIES system of VAT we see where the products went, but we do not know, the Ministry does not know. And then, if you don't know how much you produce, what you produce, where you produce, for whom you produce, where you sell, you can't make evidence-based policies. And then one comes along and says Boss, we need factories, we need people. OK, we'll make more factories tomorrow, but we've got the summer. Or do we need GABA? Seems ok, but we have animals or animals have decreased. Political decision making is often influenced by information that is not real and this needs to go. It's what we were talking about at the beginning to stimulate our dialogue. We need to see how we do now. We're talking fast. They pretend to leave, we don't hear anything. A match in Vienna. Not even mine. We're staying. See you, probably. In the capital, with the connection. Yes, he was waiting a bit, but as expected. Yeah, so we were talking, talking about. Less. Yes, we were at the water Common Agricultural Policy, so we should have this information posted on the data system drawings, which we had a very outdated system, where the data was being mocked

up by companies. Excuse the colloquial language, they don't. I just can't believe it. Romania, first address abroad, and I know this from any college paper. If it has. It's the law in cervicitis 1 in 4 you can't. Action. Further. How membership in the Customs Union facilitated, technological process and innovation.

**Interviewer:** In Romanian agriculture?

**Stefan Padure:** All the swearing, government stealing, strike-taking evolved only tractors, yard? Yes, and. if you're a buying force, it's cheaper than a high-performance farm machine. So I think it doesn't make sense. And I have photos, I was even going with colleagues. It's been browser blocked a few times by farmers in the last few weeks. Same here. It was state of the art machinery. A. I don't think we can question the effectiveness of the common agricultural policies. Instead, attention as a personal opinion I started to say. From the Ciolos policy. In fact, it is the Commissioner's policy. How do I get rid of Ciolos? It has arrived. There were two, with one closer to the surname A, which has virtually decoupled from production, almost lost. Like decoupling the production subsidy for that, for performance. The difference between the European system is that even if you don't work, you get an amount of money. The American system is. If you perform, you get it and we encourage performance. Romania, because that's how SAPARD started. It was a performance. If you had quality money, not if we have quantity of pork, but we have private quality milk? I mean, you knew that whatever happened, you invested, you could get, you could cover the costs and you would have these social upheavals. Of course we had an opening.

**Interviewer:** Now, about the technology development since EU accession, What can you say about the technology process in agriculture?

**Stefan Padure:** So as a technological process, neither Vaslui, as we are, we are the ones who really came to the end, we have the latest machinery, we already apply it. The second technologization has. Unfortunately, we have not given a percentage of it to cooperativization. They have made the cooperative just to benefit fiscally from facilities and to work together, to market, to have good marketing, good management, good purchasing. By not doing these things, they can't buy. Very few cooperatives have modern,

correct and functioning machinery to grow, while outside there are cooperatives that have in Greece has over 10 thousand members, it is the largest producer of goat, peaches, apricots. They are not even what cooperatives are anymore. They produce and they know they have a higher price on the market. How much would they get if they take it themselves. Otherwise they don't care. They have no business, they produce and get money. If you give from the cooperative, you will get less. So they don't get the inputs, they receive, you do, but they are the owners. Attention! I mean it's not a system where they come a firm of inputs and the company, the production maybe and you don't give some money like some or something, a manager. So basically the part of organization on economic forms, degrees of cooperation, as they were in the group cooperative producer organizations. I understand that you have studied in the past days, you should see in pravoslavnici including these areas of NGOs. The NGOs deal with the sale of products, i.e. the forms that have to support legitimate interests, also sell products and end up paying VAT, which has been confused over the years. A. Now we have to get back to normal. A. We look to the future.

**Interviewer:** And, what are the key challenges and opportunities for Romanian agriculture in the European Union?

**Stefan Padure:** I believe that Romania has an extraordinary potential, Romania having raw materials in a complicated geopolitical context. Raw materials, cereals, livestock unfortunately, that are starting to decrease in Romania are starting to decrease. Although profitable, they will have a concrete price, a very high value in the future. And we will be able to negotiate the country's position through these things. Tomorrow we can step back and integrate investors. This initiative of Romanian origin, whereby we make a quality scheme, whereby we integrate finished products with Romanian raw materials, is a help. Romania did not do what it should have done in the beginning – roads, motorways, logistics, if I can do it. But here it is now, the lack of nice and highways that we are building now have a reserve of productivity, of growth for Romania, to not get into financial crisis. Others, who and have done everything immediately to bring in crisis only the fact that you build, you have and spending, you have and your food industry works, agriculture works. Only that we have to sit a bit to discuss and put on the table how we better exploit this potential, because to Jawa or sheep with grain is pretty much the same

thing and the land that every year runs out. Yes or I would be holding like this years country. We lack major objectives and their analysis, because we NGOs and associations with a representative role should be able to be accountable. It's institutional memory Some come and go, prime ministers come and go. We should be there permanently. We have tried and are already trying to almost succeed at the Ministry of Agriculture to be hostile. They will say they ask you don't you want to be minister, don't you want to be secretary of state? You don't. We have a stronger position than you do. You're popular Polish, two, three, five. We're permanently here and we have a stronger force behind us than you were. Did someone put? So that's pretty much the atmosphere to the questions.

### **Interview 3 20/03/2024**

**Profil:** Interview of Micu Marius. Micu Marius, a professor at the University of Agriculture in Bucharest. He stands out as a significant figure in agriculture, with a deep-rooted connection to farming stemming from his upbringing on a family crop farm. Holding a Ph.D. in Agronomy from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, his academic and professional journey is distinguished by impactful roles in both the educational and policy-making arenas. He is the Vice Dean at the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest in the Faculty of Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture, and Rural Development since 2022. He is also Counselor in the Parliament of Romania's Chamber of Deputy, Parliamentary Office, showcasing a long-term commitment to agricultural policy since 2002. A secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2022), reflecting his significant influence in shaping national agricultural policies. And the fifth vice-president of COPA-COGECA, highlighting his role in advocating for farmers and agricultural cooperatives at the European level, a position he has held since 2022.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 23 min 19 sec

**Interviewer:** Nu, nu sunt specialități, Deja am lucrat ok. Am avut încă o dată să scriu o lucrare pentru primul master și deja am lucrat pe România și acum încă o dată de.

**Micu Marius:** OK, am înțeles. Acum am o sugestie ce faci cu studiul? Să spunem termini studiu? Adică nu, ca să spun sigur îl vei termina la momentul oportun. Da, dar e un subiect interesant dintr un punct de vedere, și anume al originii tale. Da ce faci cu rezultatele? OK, îl prezinți acolo. E cumva aici că dacă te obligă un coleg diplomația agrară? Dar a politicii? Comune agricole? Da, impactul țărilor care au fost de aderare. Și tu ți ai luat țara noastră, ta ca subiect. Da, originea ta, din câte am înțeles o din discuția privată și o dezvoltă acum, cu permisiunea ta, este că de origine ești din Republica Moldova. Și sugestia face referire la faptul că Republica Moldova se află în curs de aderare la Uniunea Europeană, pe lângă alte state și pe lângă Ucraina, care e un proces complex pentru Ucraina, dar complică și pentru celelalte state care sunt în curs de aderare procesul de aderare, inclusiv pentru Republica Moldova. Bun, dar nu cred că ar fi util să transmiți Ministerului Agriculturii de acolo și în speță dlui ministru Bolea, îți spun eu și îți dau și contractul dumnealui îi transmiți lucrarea ta pentru că poate să constituie o punct de plecare sau să fie adăugat în punctul lor de plecare în studiul respectiv. Și așa află că ar în spațiul Uniunii Europene și o tânără politic din Basarabia. Ca să ne mai apropiem așa, ca să spunem că suntem frați care am studiat partea asta a politicilor agricole comune și mai ales pe partea de diplomație, ceea ce este foarte interesant. Asta așa ca da, ca și sugestii. Oricum, felicitări și mulțumiri este alături de noi. Mulțumirea este cumva un sentiment reciproc. Îți mulțumesc, dar și nu îți mulțumim. Dar să știi că și studenții pot să vă răspundă la întrebări, pentru că na, fiecare la nivelul lui, în primul rând guvernat de vârstă, a resimțit într un fel sau altul. Una este să vorbesc eu că sunt în domeniu și la o anumită vârstă, dar altceva înseamnă să fie un coleg mai tânăr care se specializează. Ei poate îi este mai greu să facă comparația între. Până în 2007, adică în momentul în care am aderat la Uniunea Europeană și după 2007. Da, poate avem o vârstă totuși cu experiență și au trecut patru de Ciprian poate să ne spună la mână, dar hai să intrăm în esență și vedem cum mă completează colegii, supune mă testului sau mă rog pe boul. Pune mi o întrebare care mi a mai fost abordată, Poate nu. Mă rog, o întrebare care o consideri tu propice în discuția asta.

**Interviwer:** Deja toate întrebările au fost abordate, abordate, așa că mulți. Dar e. Sau eu acum așa avea mai multe. Întrebarea despre partea ecologică nu știu dacă.

**Micu Marius:** Nu e punctul meu forte, vine aici ca antreprenor, dar pot răspunde. Am răspuns Când eram eu, am fost secretar de stat și am răspuns pe segmentul ecologic. Dar punem întrebarea asta dacă mă pricep, îmi asum riscul să nu mă văd. Acuma. Uite, fac o paranteză știți că noi în România, ne pricepem la tot și toate. Da care e un mare păcat. Cred că până la urmă ar trebui să îl știm acolo, într un anumit segment. Dar hai de polemică dacă.

**Interviewer:** Știu că, de exemplu, în Franța, cum sunt cele agricole aplicate, dacă plătești lu Uniunea Europeană bani, deoarece nu. Nu respecti legile care au fost spuse, merge, funcționează și că în Franța, când sunt mari producători, asta se împlinște. Ar fi întrebarea. E o posibilitate care e tot am angajat în România sau nu prea? E foarte clar.

**Micu Marius:** N am auzit ultima parte.

**Interviewer:** Dacă este o situație care s a angajat Dinamo tot în România sau nu se petrece așa.

**Micu Marius:** OK, tu vorbești de sancțiuni, alteori de sancțiuni. În primul rând, avem un sprijin financiar în plata direct în Pilonul 1, suplimentar pentru cei care sunt în ecologic, în cultură, în sistem ecologic, bineînțeles, tot pe o perioadă de conversie. Cred că perioada de conversie, dacă nu greșesc, este de 3 ani de zile. Ar trebui să fie clar că e de fapt condiția minimă la nivel european. Nu știu dacă o altă țară, mă scuzați, o secundă și imediat că bătrâna doamnă ambasador din Maroc știu să răspund. Cosma. Asta vorbeam cu colegu și fac paranteză la alte păreri. Pe deschiderea de piețe noi percepute ca vecini, încearcă să descrie Marocul. Acuma. Ciprian, avem, facem o delegație acolo în urmă, în aprilie, pentru PE, un târg important pe Africa. Revenim la întrebare. Perioada de conversie PP condiție minimă reglementată la nivelul Uniunii Europene. În piesă, bineînțeles că fiecare stat membru poate să vină cu condiții superioare condițiilor minime din Politica Agricolă Comună, dar perioada de conversie este trei ani de zile, dar și în această perioadă de conversie avem o plată compensatorie, adică pe lângă plata de bază, e o schemă și așa mai departe. Avem și o plată compensatorie, adică este un drept în plata, dacă nu mă înșel, dar o să mai revin în zilele următoare cu date mai exacte. Este mai mare în perioada de conversie decât în momentul în care intri pe un sistem ecologic, Dar oricum sistemul

ecologic de producție are o durată mai mare decât plata pe convențional. Și da, bineînțeles că există sancțiuni în ceea ce privește nerespectarea regimului. Și da, ești scos din sistemul de plată pentru ecologici. Ba mai mult, sunt. Noi avem Agenția pentru Plăți și Intervenție în Agricultură a APIA, care ușor se ocupă de plata banilor, mă rog, a subvențiilor care se află în Pilonul 1 și cred că sancțiunea este mult mai dureroasă dacă nu respecti într un an, și anume că vei da și banii pe subvenție pe care îi iei. Ei bine, acum, dacă este să vorbim pe sistemul ecologic în România, România are în momentul ăsta aproximativ trei la sută suprafață agricolă în sistem ecologic. Ambiția care vine din Grindul și a fost transpusă și încercată de a se implementa la nivel european a fost să se ajungă la o medie la nivel european de 25 la sută. Din păcate, la nivel european, nu foarte multe țări îndeplinesc acest procent, bineînțeles tot bianual, dintr o arhitectură a viitorului și să ne fie asumat prin Politica Agricolă Comună, implicit prin Planul Național Strategic, care este instrumentul la nivel național de transpunere a Politicii Agricole Comune. Dar suprafața la nivelul anului 2020 este aproximativ 3, era 3 la sută. Acuma, din calculele pe care le am făcut la momentul ăla, pentru că ar trebui să avem un plan național de susținere a sistemului de producție ecologic, chiar am trăit să desemnăm și ambasadorii onorifici ai ecologiei în România prin Politica Agricolă Comună, care s a transpus prin s a transpus la nivelul fiecărui stat membru. A trebuit să propunem un obiectiv, mă refer la partea de procent și am făcut un calcul matematic la momentul respectiv, o aritmetică matematică, adică de metodologie concretă și nu o să știu sumele exacte, dar în zilele următoare o să vin și eu, o să îți dau personal dacă te interesează.

**Interviewer:** Însă am făcut analiza din 2007 până în 2020 la momentul respectiv și am luat în considerare toate sumele, fie că vorbim din buget național, fie că vorbim din Fond, fonduri europene care au fost alocate către sectorul ecologic raportate la momentul T0 2007 și la cât am ajuns, adică câte sute de milioane de euro am băgat în sistemul ecologic și ce am reușit să facem?

**Micu Marius:** Care este cadrul de performanță Și se pare că am ajuns la 3% și am constatat că pentru a ajunge la 25 la sută, dacă ar fi să extrapolăm pe viitor, adică câți bani ar trebui băgați din experiența anilor trecuți Și nu e o perioadă scurtă, și anume 2007 2010 3, 10, 13 ani, 14 ani, două exerciții financiare. Nu ne ajuta nici bugetul pe două exerciții financiare din viitor, doar pe ecologic. Da, da, se poate. Mulțumesc. Deci, dacă ar fi să



extrapolăm că modelul matematic real nu ne ar ajunge nici două exerciții financiare, dacă presupunem că noul exercițiu financiar va fi altfel, după 2027 va fi tot de aproximativ 16 miliarde de euro, nemaivorbind de 30 de miliarde de euro. Să ajungem la 25 la sută și atunci. A Chiar dacă Uniunea Europeană uneori are obiective ambițioase. Noi suntem totuși mai realiști la nivelul statelor membre și atunci nu ne am putut asuma decât un plan până în 2020 și 2030, cred. Dar, mă rog, impactul de evaluare va fi la nivelul anului 2027, pentru că în momentul de a unui nou exercițiu financiar este să creștem până la 5%. Adică am spus că putem aloca din cele 16 miliarde pentru sectorul ecologic și nu extrapolăm modelul matematic, un rezultat conceput de cei 2% care și ăsta. Sincer să vă spun, este foarte complicat să îl senate acum, dacă este să vorbesc mai mult și în afara întrebării, la nivel european este o problemă cu producția ecologică. Adică ok, producem în sistem ecologic, aducem, ajungem la produs finit în nordul Uniunii, adică infinit mai defectuos. Poate trebuie și nu fie poluant să fie procesat sau să fie producția primară. Dacă vorbim de legume fructe, pentru că punem tomata direct în magazin, o ducem fie vrac, fie ambalată. Mă rog, într o ce formă trebuie să ai și piață de desfacere,

**Interviewer:** Adică cât să producă Europa ecologic și cât consumă Europa ecologic?

**Micu Marius:** Și dacă merge în arhitectura asta trebui. Întrebare bună, pentru că o să constați, mai ales pentru Franța, dacă o să iei Austria, că e pe locul întâi pe care 27 28 până în 30 la sută e una dintre țările care respectă procentul mediei prin obiectiv, adică de 20 la sută, O să constați că avem o ofertă mai mare decât cererea la nivel european, mă refer în acest sens și atunci producător în sistem ecologic va fi obligat să vândă la un anumit preț, pentru că prețul întotdeauna este guvernat în balanța cerere ofertă. Și atunci și trebuie niște măsuri în. În ceea ce privește crearea pieții, adică a consumatorului și. Cum facem aceasta? Cum facem aceasta?

**Interviewer:** Cum facem această cotă de piață?

**Micu Marius:** E o întrebare destul de complicată, pentru că tu cumva deja ca în Uniunea Europeană, compensezi pe durata de bază. Printr un aport financiar suplimentar, producția sistemului ecologic la produsul ecologic, într un final versus produsul convențional are un preț mai mare și atunci prețul nu este atractiv. Și atunci cred că trebuie și niște campanii de

tipul și. Ecologici. Acum, dacă este să fac referire și aici, mă poți cita. Am făcut un studiu. Există în UE bursa însă sau, mă rog, în celelalte platforme. Studiu O parte din studiu a făcut un studiu. Cred că pe 500 de consumatori într un târg de produse tradiționale este lângă noi, lângă universitate. Ceilalți debateri cunosc târgul săptămânal de la Academiei și dar acolo sunt și producători tradiționali și producători bio, care sunt lucruri distincte și văd că România nu le dă limitări. Una este să ai vinde produse tradiționale sau să cumpărăm produse tradiționale. Asta nu înseamnă că sunt și ecologice. Una este să cumpărăm produse ecologice. Nu mai spun că avem o discrepanță între termeni. În anumite țări din Uniunea Europeană se folosește termenul de bio. În România însă, folosește termenul de eco și dacă este cum avem și organic mai nou, care e și mai greșit. Scuzați mă că spun așa, pentru că organic eco în Statele Unite ale Americii este doar organic ca termen utilizat, dar organic nu există, nu este reglementat la fel ca noi în Uniunea Europeană. Adică organic este tradiționalul maximum ecologic ului. Dacă vrei să spui că Statele Unite ale Americii este produsul tradițional de la noi și adică are legătură cu sistem, adică intensiv sau extensiv, adică creștem zece pui pe metrul pătrat sau creștem un pui în momentul pătrat, îl creștem în aer liber sau în spațiu închis. Deci, mai ales la nivel de continente, avem viziuni diferite și de aceea că dacă am aduce că în Marea Britanie, Marea Britanie s a întâmplat cu termenul organic, am crea confuzie între consumatori. De ce există? Dar întorcându mă la studiu. Ce m a frapat? Peste 70% opinează că a consuma un produs tradițional în România înseamnă a consuma un produs bio, ceea ce nu se supune certificării bio la om. Dar, repet, datele exacte 7 6,9 cât le vezi din studiu, are câte un loc 5, 6, poate chiar 10 ani. Dacă stau bine să mă gândesc. OK, deci avem o percepție la ce înseamnă produs convențional extra bulz, produs tradițional, produs bio, dar care se supune unei anumite certificări. Și mai fac o paranteză în ceea ce privește bio, noi suntem campioni în România la producție primară bio. Da, o vindem și o menționăm mai departe. Adică nu se duce într un sistem de procesare bio ca să ajungă produs finit Biotta.

**Interviewer:** Pentru că ne interesează subvenția, subvenția, vom plăti, dar după care unde o vindem cu cât o vindem?

**Micu Marius:** Asta e o altă poveste. Din păcate, e un adevăr, trebuie să spunem lucrurilor pe nume. Închid paranteza. Mă întorc la spirit. Apoi, din aceia care înțelegeau ce este bio, adică foarte puțin. Până și scenariul acela i am întrebat cât de verzi și cât de mult cumpără

și pe ce cumpără. Pe primul loc a ieșit sănătatea pentru sănătate. Cumpărător Mă rog, ei, există și locul doi și trei, dar numai aduc aminte. Dar pentru sănătate. Și am pus și întrebarea sănătatea cui? Că mă așteptam să fie și sănătatea? Cui a primit răspunsul bunicii, părinților mei, adică celor în vârstă sau a copiilor? Da, pentru ei era foarte puțin procent, adică 1 2%. Adică pentru cumpărător cumpărătorul cumpăra pentru alte categorii din familie, vârstnici și copii. Și. După aia s a născut întreba. Mă rog, a fost un preț mult pentru că am achiziționat și am recalibrat chestionarul astfel încât să iasă cât mai cuprinzător. Da, vorbesc de forma finală, după care e secvența. Un procent foarte mic aveau o frecvență clară, adică puneau pe o masă produse bio. Unii mai aveau, era la actori, adică în anumite momente scoteau produse bio. Foarte puțini puneau la masă produse bio pentru toți consumatorii de la masă, adică pentru toată familia. Adică ce înseamnă asta? Nu există o familie medie în România, părinte, și azi, să zicem, de bine. Era în mediul rural, pe stoc doi copii, doi părinți, doi bunici la masă. Ipotetic, puneau produsele la masă, efectiv la cină, la prânz pentru sau la micul dejun, pentru copii, bio, pentru vârstnici. Și pentru ei convențional. Sau, mă rog, aveam doar două categorii părinți și copii cu primul campion olimpic sau Comănești. Până atunci mi am dat seama că e o ruptură impresionant de mare și nu cred. Sau spital s a blocat. Mergem înainte. Da, pentru că acum avem să facem un exercițiu la noi, să ne punem copiii când ei pun laptele copilului biomasă și bea un alt lapte care nu este, copilul va fi tentat să întrebe ce bei acolo de cel bei până acolo? De ce nu bei lapte sau miere? De ce n ai lapte de-ăsta și prima lui tentație în viață? Și mi o spun ca părinte și cred caz trecut este ca copilul, la momentul când poate să încerce fix produsul care nu a avut voie să săl consume, dar te a văzut pe tine ca adult consumând. Adică se întâmplă fix pe el dacă îl vede în frigider, este conștient că are 5, 6, 7 ani sau chiar și mai mic. PAC și vede cele două cutii ăla din care bea și ori la care bei tu îl va încerca și până la altă, pentru că, de exemplu, eu am interzis sucurile acidulate, în afară de cele naturale, în familie. Bine, mi am revenit repede și n am mai interzis nimic. Da ori n am mai consumat, dar am atenuat efectele și am Coca Cola, Fanta Ostra cunoscut și am trimis la bunici. Primul lucru care l am făcut la bunici în prima zi a fost să bea unul dintre aceste sucuri, dar au venit și foarte mândrii înapoi să mi spună. Nu, nu să mi spună mie, șușoteau ei. Nu că ne mai întoarcem la bunica să bem iar Coca-Cola sau Pepsi. Deci așa se întâmplă și cu produsele bio, din păcate, dar este demonstrat științific. Adică pentru un public destul de elocvent la nivel național, adică bun, acum 10 ani până acum s au mai îmbunătățit lucrurile, însă Europa mai are o problemă, pentru că ne luptăm să impunem bio versus

convențional produs în Europa. Dar ce ne facem că avem foarte multe produse care vin din import? Pentru că dacă Europa este marele exportator, trebuie să ne gândim că este și unul dintre importatori. Nu știu dacă o fi cel mai mare, nu este cel mai mare, pentru că exista decalaj în balanța comercială a Europei, dar vin foarte multe produse din afara Uniunii Europene prin acordurile de liber schimb care trebuie să atragă atenția. Și astfel, în tendința noastră de a ne duce pe o siguranță alimentară exagerată, cel puțin până acum. Dacă acumă discutăm de securitatea alimentară, vrând nevrând am vreo două mase de consumatori în Europa, cei care își permit să produs, să consume produse obținute în Europa, fie că se convenționale, fie că sunt ecologice și o altă categorie care nu își mai permit să consume toate produsele și atuncea în pe rafturile magazinelor din Europa, dar sunt din import și s a discutat la nivelul Uniunii Europene și nu ajunge. Dar s a demonstrat în diverse studii că avem dublu standard. Da, nu numai că avem dublu standard într un an întreg. Producătorii din Europa, după ce vindem unul din Franța în România, poate fi diferit, dar este clar că ce vine din import este un dublu standard, pentru că nu respectă aceleași condiții de producție ca cei din vin din Europa. Și atunci avem trei elemente pe masă care ne creează dificultate în relația cu consumatorul. Produsul din import da, produsul convențional și produsul eco. Adică noi avem o mare bătălie între convențional versus import convențional, dar vrem să acceptăm până la două și asta înseamnă că două și la sută din populația cel puțin 25% din populația Europei nu știu dacă vaca din Mexic au folosit tot ar trebui să consume produse ecologice dacă vrem ca producția să ducă la două. Și bine, nu i chiar corect, pentru că noi vrem să creștem producția ecologică, reducem balanța comercială, adică să exportăm din Europa produs ecologic pentru Australia, mă rog, și alte state. Adică nu e chiar relevant să spun că 22% trebuie să consume Europa, dar mă rog, pe piața internă, adică trei, să te preocupe în primul rând să te asiguri piața ta internă, după care ar trebui să te preocupe, pentru că România are o problemă. Dacă am vorbit de și dintr un alt subiect, poate cu o altă întrebare, să răspund. Dacă în România am constatat în urma discuțiilor că a obținut beneficii, a apărut fluture cu grupe de vii, că nu este bine. Am dezvoltat în mediul rural, munceam, stăteam la agricol un an agricol. Am dezvoltat că tractoare mai mult decât suprafață, tot tehnologii de cultură. Să știți că avem și o barieră și trebuie consemnat acolo. România nu a avut acces în mod real la piața intracomunitară atâta timp cât nu am fost în spațiul Schengen, care și face referire la Cipru. Populația liberă a populației a crescut și la mărfuri, să știți. Ilinca, dacă vii astăzi la noi, doar o să vezi o anchetă sau uneori să vezi cozi care durează cel puțin câteva ore, șase, șapte, opt ore, ca un tip să fie, să treacă o

vamă. Mult control și noi, românii și ungurii, partea cealaltă. Ceea ce înseamnă că noi nu avem, adică avem nu din punct de vedere al rentabilității, al costului, al prețului cu care îl vindem și avem o barieră din punct de vedere al perisabilității prin Schengen. Adică cineva care vrea să cumpere dintr-o altă țară din Uniunea Europeană intracomunitară, trăiesc așa cel puțin opt ore până îl ajunge produsul, ceea ce este imposibil. Arhitectura Uniunii Europene. Să ne gândim astăzi că nu putem avea în mai puțin de opt ore un produs pe un supermarket din Ungaria sau chiar și Cehia? Da. De la Nădlac vorbesc pentru că nu mă au cu turismul. Ne-a opt ore să ajungem la vamă, pentru că e o altă problemă, că nu am creat infrastructură de avem o autostradă. Octavia e o problemă complicată că nu traversăm și nu colectăm pur și simplu pentru autoturism dacă vreți să faceți opt ore până la Arad. Acum a mai spus din timp Nu mă transpun într-un camion, mai stau opt ore în anumite sau patru ore sau cinci și după aia fac șase ore până la Viena. Este imposibil. Adică avem de două sau de trei ori să pun produsul captiv pe Pera. Când în Uniunea Europeană câștigi. Și noi știm foarte bine că fructele ajung în aceeași zi pe raft din supermarket, adică nici nu mai ajung la costul peticii haos, adică să intre la sortare și așa mai departe. Se întâmplă încă și avem o problemă cu o comună cu o piață. A intrat de când cu războiul și a accentuat problema, pentru că spațiul Schengen, oricât ne-am luptat. Cu povești a fost profitat din plin România, dar trebuie să ne câștigăm piața internă. Este o discuție în România după care să ne gândim la intracomunitară, după aia să ne gândim la partea de export și cred că îmi închid pledoaria, ideea pe subiectul ăsta și aștept următoarea întrebare

**Interviewer:** Mulțumesc mult pentru prezentare și mă bucur să fiu alături de depui. Îmi doresc asta.

### **Interview 3 20/03/2024 Translated in English**

**Profile:** Interview of Micu Marius. Micu Marius, a professor at the University of Agriculture in Bucharest. He stands out as a significant figure in agriculture, with a deep-rooted connection to farming stemming from his upbringing on a family crop farm. Holding a Ph.D. in Agronomy from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, his academic and professional journey is distinguished by impactful roles in both the educational and policy-making arenas. He is the Vice Dean at the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest in the

Faculty of Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture, and Rural Development since 2022. He is also Counselor in the Parliament of Romania's Chamber of Deputy, Parliamentary Office, showing a long-term commitment to agricultural policy since 2002. A secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2022), reflecting his significant influence in shaping national agricultural policies. And the fifth vice-president of COPA-COGECA, highlighting his role in advocating for farmers and agricultural cooperatives at the European level, a position he has held since 2022.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 23 min 19 sec

**Interviewer:** I've already worked on Romania last year. I had to write a paper for the first master and I already worked on Romania and now one more time.

**Micu Marius:** OK, got it. Now I have a suggestion, what do you do with the study? Let's say study terms? I mean no, to say for sure you will finish it at the right time. Yes, but it's an interesting topic from one point of view, namely your origin. But what do you do with the results? OK, you present it there. You took our country, yours as your subject. Yes, your origin, as far as I understand it from the private discussion and I reveal it now, with your permission, is that you are originally from the Republic of Moldova. And the suggestion refers to the fact that the Republic of Moldova is in the process of accession to the European Union, in addition to other countries and in addition to Ukraine, which is a complex process for Ukraine, but also complicates the accession process for other countries that are in the process of accession, including the Republic of Moldova. Good, but I think it would be useful to send your paper to the Ministry of Agriculture there and specifically to Minister Bolea, I'll tell you and I'll give you his contract as well, because it can be a starting point or be added to their starting point in that study. And that's how they find out that a young politician from Moldova is in the European Union. To get closer, to say that we are brothers who have studied this part of the common agricultural policies and especially on the diplomacy side, which is very interesting. That's just as a yes, as suggestions.

Anyway, congratulations and thanks is with us. Thanks is somehow a mutual feeling. We thank you. But know that students can also answer your questions, because, everyone at

this level, primarily governed by age, felt in one way or another. It's one thing for me to talk about being in the field and at a certain age, but it's another thing for a younger colleague to specialize. They may find it harder to make the comparison between. Until 2007, that is, when we joined the European Union and after 2007. Yes, maybe we have an age however experienced and have passed four of Ciprian can tell us at hand, but let's get into the essence and see how I complete my colleagues, subject me to the test or pray the ox. Ask me a question that has been addressed to me before, maybe not. Well, a question that you think would be appropriate in this discussion.

**Interviewer:** The question would be more about the environmental part I don't know if...

**Micu Marius:** It's not my strong point, coming here as an entrepreneur, but I can answer. I answered when I was me, I was secretary of state and I answered on the environmental segment. But I ask this question if I'm good at it, I take the risk of not seeing myself. Now. Look, I'm making an aside, you know that we in Romania are good at everything. Yes, which is a great pity. I think we should know it in a certain segment. But let's not polemic if.

**Interviewer:** Let's start about the European sanctions on the environmental level. How is it seen in Romania, what is the result of it, how useful is it? Because before the communism, Romanian agricultural history could be called one of the more organic ones, so it should have been part of the culture?

**Micu Marius:** OK, you talk about sanctions, other times sanctions. First of all, we have a financial support in direct payment in Pillar 1, additional for those who are in organic, in culture, in organic system, of course, also for a conversion period. I think the conversion period, if I am not mistaken, is 3 years. It should be clear that it is in fact the minimum condition at European level. I don't know if another country, excuse me, one second and immediately that old lady ambassador from Morocco I know how to answer. Cosma. This is what I was talking to my colleague and I digress to other opinions. On opening up new markets perceived as neighbors, try to describe Morocco. Now. Ciprian, we have, we are doing a delegation there in April for the EP, an important fair on Africa. Back to the question. The conversion period PP minimum condition regulated at EU level. In the piece,

of course each member state can come up with conditions higher than the minimum conditions of the Common Agricultural Policy, but the conversion period is three years, but also in this conversion period we have a compensatory payment, that is, in addition to the basic payment, there is a scheme and so on. We also have a compensatory payment, i.e. there is an entitlement in the payment, if I am not mistaken, but I will come back in the next few days with more exact dates. It's higher in the conversion period than when you go onto an organic system, but anyway the organic system of production has a longer duration than the payment on conventional. And yes, of course there are penalties for non-compliance with the scheme. And yes, you are taken out of the organic payment scheme. What's more, they are. We have the Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture of the APIA, which easily handles the payment of the money, I mean, the subsidies that are in Pillar 1, and I think the penalty is much more painful if you don't comply in one year, which is that you will also give the money on the subsidy that you take. Well, now, if we are talking about the organic system in Romania, Romania currently has about three percent of its agricultural area under organic system. The ambition that comes from the Grindul and has been transposed and tried to be implemented at European level was to reach a European average of 25%. Unfortunately, at European level, not very many countries achieve this percentage, of course on a biannual basis, from an architecture of the future and to be assumed through the Common Agricultural Policy, implicitly through the National Strategic Plan, which is the instrument at national level for transposing the Common Agricultural Policy. But the area in 2020 is about 3, was 3 percent. Now, from the calculations we made at that time, because we should have a national plan to support the organic production system, we even lived to appoint honorary ambassadors of ecology in Romania through the Common Agricultural Policy, which has been transposed at the level of each Member State. We had to we propose an objective, I mean the percentage part and I did a mathematical calculation at the time, a mathematical arithmetic, i.e. of concrete methodology and I will not know the exact amounts, but in the next days I will come and give you personally if you are interested.

**Interviewer:** But we did the analysis from 2007 to 2020 at that time and we took into account all the amounts, whether we are talking about the national budget, whether we are talking about the Fund, the European funds that were allocated to the environmental sector



at the time of T0 2007 and how much did we reach, that is how many hundreds of millions of euros did we put into the environmental system and what did we manage to do?

**Micu Marius:** What is the performance framework And it looks like we got to 3% and we found that to get to 25%, if we were to extrapolate into the future, that is how much money would have to be put in from the experience of the past years And it's not a short period, namely 2007 2010 3, 10, 13 years, 14 years, two fiscal years. It doesn't help our budget for two financial years in the future either, just the ecologic. Yes, yes, it can. Thank you. So, if we were to extrapolate that the actual mathematical model would not even get us two financial years, if we assume that the new financial year will be different, after 2027 it will still be about 16 billion euros, let alone 30 billion euros. Let's get to 25% then too. A Even if the European Union sometimes has ambitious targets. But we are more realistic at Member State level and then we could only assume a plan until 2020 and 2030, I think. But, anyway, the impact of the assessment will be at the level of 2027, because at the time of a new financial year is to grow up to 5%. I mean we said that we can allocate from the 16 billion for the green sector and we are not extrapolating the mathematical model, a result designed by the 2% that and this. Frankly to tell you, it is very complicated to senate it now, if I am to speak more and out of the question, at European level there is a problem with green production. I mean ok, we produce organically, we bring in, we end up with the finished product in the north of the Union, which is infinitely more defective. Maybe it should and not be polluting to be processed or be primary production. If we're talking about fruit vegetables, because we put tomatoes straight into the shop, we take them either loose or packaged. Whatever, in some form you have to have a market.

**Interviewer:** You mean how much does Europe produce ecologically and how much does Europe consume ecologically?

**Micu Marius:** And if it goes into architecture it should. Good question, because you'll find, especially for France, if you take Austria, which is on the first place that 27 28 to 30 percent is one of the countries that respects the average percentage by objective, that is 20 percent, you'll find that we have a higher supply than demand at the European level, I mean in this sense and then the producer in the ecological system will be forced to sell at a certain price, because the price is always governed in the supply-demand balance. And then we need some measures in terms of market creation, i.e. consumer and.

**Interviewer:** What do you think, how do we do this market share?

**Micu Marius:** It's quite a complicated question, because you already somehow, as in the European Union, compensate for the basic duration. Through an additional financial contribution, the production of the ecological system to the ecological product, in a final versus conventional product has a higher price and then the price is not attractive. And then I think we need some campaigns like that. Now, if I'm going to refer to that here as well, you can quote me. I did a study. There is in the EU the stock exchange but, or whatever, in the other platforms. Study Part of the study did a study. I think on 500 consumers in a traditional produce fair is near us, near the university. The other debaters know the weekly fair at the Academy and but there are traditional producers and organic producers there, which are distinct things and I see that Romania does not give them limitations. It's one thing to sell traditional products or to buy traditional products. That doesn't mean that they are also organic. It is one thing to buy organic products. Not to mention that we have a discrepancy between the terms. In some countries in the European Union the term organic is used. In Romania, however, it uses the term eco and if it is like we have it and the newer organic, which is even more wrong. Excuse me for saying so, because organic eco in the United States of America is just organic as a term used, but organic does not exist, it is not regulated in the same way as we are in the European Union. I mean organic is the traditional maximum organic. If you want to say that the United States of America is the traditional product of us and that is related to the system, that is intensive or extensive, that is we raise ten chickens per square meter or we raise one chicken per square moment, we raise it in the open air or in confined space. So, especially on a continental level, we have different views and that's why if we were to bring that in the UK, the UK s happened with the term organic, we would create confusion among consumers. Why does it exist? But back to the study. What struck me? More than 70% think that consuming a traditional product in Romania means consuming an organic product, which is not subject to organic certification in humans. But, I repeat, the exact data 76.9 as you see from the study, has a place 5, 6, maybe even 10 years. If I think about it. OK, so we have a perception of what conventional extra bulbous product means, traditional product, organic product, but it's subject to some certification. And I'll make another parenthesis about organic, we are champions in Romania for organic primary production. Yes, we sell it and we mention it

further on. I mean it doesn't go into an organic processing system to become Biotta finished product.

**Interviewer:** It's because the interest is in the subsidy, the subsidy, we will pay, but after that how much do we sell it for?

**Micu Marius:** That's another story. Unfortunately, it's a truth, we have to call a spade a spade. I'm closing the parenthesis. Back to the spirit.

**Interviewer:** could you explain the Romanian relationship to biological products, or organic?

**Micu Marius:** For those who understand what organic is, that is very little. Even that scenario I asked them how green and how much they buy and what they buy. First came out they buy for health. And I also asked the question whose health? Got the answer grandparents, my parents, I mean the elderly or children? Yes, for them it was very little percentage, that is 1 2%. I mean for the buyer the buyer is buying for other categories in the family, elderly and children. And. After that was born ask. Anyway, it was a lot price because we purchased and recalibrated the questionnaire so that it came out as comprehensive as possible. Yes, I'm talking about the final form, after which is the sequence. A very small percentage had a clear frequency, i.e. they put organic products on a table. Some did, it was with the actors, i.e. at certain times they would take out organic products. Very few put organic products on the table for all the consumers at the table, that is for the whole family. What does that mean? There is no average family in Romania, father, and today, let's say, well. It was rural, on stock two children, two parents, two grandparents at the table. Hypothetically, they would put the products on the table, effectively for dinner, lunch for or breakfast, for children, organic, for the elderly. And for them conventional. Yes, because now we have to do an exercise at home, to put our children when they put the baby milk biomass and drink another milk that is not, the child will be tempted to ask what you drink there of the one you drink up there? Why don't you drink milk or honey? Why don't you have that milk and his first temptation in life? And I say it to myself as a parent and I think the past case is that the child at the time can try the exact product that he was not allowed to consume, but saw you as an adult consuming. I

mean it's happening fixed on him if he sees it in the fridge, he's aware he's 5, 6, 7 years old or even younger. Sees the two cans that he drinks from and the times you drink it he will try it and up to another, because, for example, I banned fizzy juices, apart from natural ones, in the family. Well, I quickly got over it and didn't ban anything. Yes or n I no longer consumed, but I mitigated the effects and I have Coke, Fanta.. Sometimes I sent my children to grandparents. The first thing they did to the grandparents on the first day was to drink one of these sodas, but they also came back very proud to tell me. No, not tell me, they whispered. Not that we're going back to Grandma's to drink Coke or Pepsi again. So that's what happens with organic products, unfortunately, but it's scientifically proven. I mean, for a fairly eloquent audience at the national level, I mean, well, 10 years ago to now things have improved, but Europe still has a problem, because we are struggling to impose organic versus conventional produced in Europe. But what do we do with so many products coming from imports? Because if Europe is the big exporter, we have to consider that it is also one of the importers. I don't know if it's the biggest, it's not the biggest, because there is a gap in Europe's trade balance, but there are a lot of products coming from outside the European Union through free trade agreements which must be noticed. And so in our tendency to go on an exaggerated food security, at least so far. If we are talking about food security now, we have, like it or not, two groups of consumers in Europe, those who can afford to produce and consume products obtained in Europe, whether conventional or organic, and another group that can no longer afford to consume all the products that are on the shelves of European shops, but are imported, and this has been discussed at European Union level and it is not enough. But it has been shown in various studies that we have double standards. Yes, not only do we have double standards in a whole year. Producers in Europe, after we sell one from France to Romania, it may be different, but it is clear that what comes from imports is a double standard, because it does not meet the same production conditions as the wine from Europe. And then we have three elements on the table that make it difficult for us to deal with the consumer. The imported product yes, the conventional product and the eco product. I mean we have a big battle between conventional versus imported conventional, but we want to accept up to two and that means that two and percent of the population at least 25% of the population of Europe don't know if the cows in Mexico have used it all should consume organic products if we want production to lead to two. Well, that's not really fair, because we want to increase organic production, reduce the trade balance, i.e. export organic product from Europe to

Australia, whatever, and other countries. I mean it's not really relevant to say that 22% should consume Europe, but whatever, on the domestic market, I mean three, you should be concerned first of all to secure your domestic market, and then you should be concerned, because Romania has a problem. If I spoke of and from another topic, maybe with another question, let me answer. If in Romania we found from the discussions that it got benefits, butterfly with live groups appeared, that is not good. I developed in the countryside, I was working, I was staying in agriculture for one agricultural year. We developed that tractors more than area, all crop technologies. Know that we also have a barrier and it has to be recorded there. Romania did not have real access to the intra-Community market as long as we were not in the Schengen area, which also refers to Cyprus. The free population of the population has also increased in goods, you know. Ilinca, if you come to us today, you're just going to see a survey or sometimes see queues that take at least a couple of hours, six, seven, eight hours, for a guy to be, to get through a customs. A lot of control and us Romanians and Hungarians, the other side. Which means that we don't have, I mean we don't have in terms of profitability, in terms of cost, in terms of the price at which we sell it, and we have a barrier in terms of perishability through Schengen. I mean someone who wants to buy from another EU country intra-EU, they live like that for at least eight hours until the product arrives, which is impossible. The architecture of the European Union. Let's think today that we can't have a product in less than eight hours in a supermarket in Hungary or even the Czech Republic? Yes. I'm talking about Nădlac because they don't have me with tourism. It takes us eight hours to get to customs, because that's another problem, because we haven't created the infrastructure to have a motorway. Octavia It's a complicated problem that we don't cross and we don't collect pure do for the car if you want to make eight hours to Arad. Now he also said in time I do not cross in a truck, I stay eight hours in certain or four hours or five and then I do six hours to Vienna. It is impossible. I mean we have two or three times to put the captive product on the Pera. When in the European Union you win. And we know very well that the fruit arrives that day on the shelf in the supermarket, that is, it doesn't even get to the coast, that is, to go into sorting and so on. It still happens and we have a problem with a commune with a market. It's come in since the war has exacerbated the problem, because the Schengen area, however much we fought. With stories Romania has been taken full advantage of, but we have to win our internal market. There is a discussion in

Romania after which we should think about the intra-community, then we should think about the export side and I think I will close my plea, my idea on this subject.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for the presentation and I'm glad to be with you. I'm looking forward to it.

#### **Interview 4 21/03/2024**

**Profil:** Interview of Nina Gheorghita. She is a shareholder of Triagroexim, a company cultivating 600ha of cereals in Braila County.

**Place:** During Professor Mîcu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 32 min 03 sec

**Interviewer:** Naționalitatea n a ajuns subiect francez. Dar m am născut în Moldova, în Republica Moldova, dar sunt naționalități franceză. Cum am. Dublă, nu.

**Mîcu Marius:** Sunt toți ca eu, ca să zic așa. Da, da, da, da, dar are originile, însă în baza ei, își propune să analizeze impactul pe care l a avut aderarea României la Uniunea Europeană. Așa temă centrală Bine, nu are niște puncte cheie, nu le luăm pe toate la rând. Dar să dăm un răspuns acoperitor, în sensul că s a dezvoltat România în bine pe segmentul agroalimentar și pe componenta de dezvoltare rurală. Adică cum agricultura s a dezvoltat, în ce sens a mers, ce? Care este perspectiva, stadiul asta, satul românesc, infrastructura? Sunt schimbări. Care ar fi fost situația dacă nu. Adică care e percepția omului care trăiește la țară în raport cu aderarea la Uniunea Europeană? Are opt.

**Nina Gheorghita:** Da, eu, Eu îmi împart viața între București, între. București, din nou. Și a venit din nou. Are deja o întrebare avem o viziune corectă astăzi. Au trecut din 2007 până în 2024 și s a născut că numai s au format degeaba. Rep. Aduce anul 2000 sau în BRI dreptate. In 2007. Anul cu di la Revoluție. Mă gândeam acuma de la a și a da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da. Intrarea unde locuim. În mod ideal, agricultura privată. Apoi abordarea. Acuma răspund simplu după ce a dezvolt, cu siguranță România astăzi nu ar fi avut cum să vă spun tot ceea ce avem ca dezvoltare dacă nu intram în Uniunea Europeană. Adică era

mult mai în spate din toate punctele de vedere. Deci intrarea în Uniunea Europeană are cu siguranță mai multe beneficii decât minusuri. Acum că dacă am fi fost poate mai bine pregătiți, dacă am fi fost conștienți de această oportunitate și am fi exploatat o de o altă manieră, poate că ne era și mai bine decât ne este. A, și pentru că vorbim de de agricultură, le spuneam studenților înainte, mai înainte că. Dacă noi nu avem o strategie agricolă astăzi, să știi că e vin așa. Lasă că munca asta de reprezentare și adică munca, vina a fermierilor, pentru că noi suntem cumva munca de reprezentare, este liantul între. Și partea privată. Statul nu poate. Guvernării, decidenții nu pot croi politici publice pe domenii, în speță pentru agricultură. Fără expertiza noastră tehnică și fără îndrumarea noastră ce funcționează, ce nu funcționează, cum să funcționeze mai bine.

**Interviewer:** Nu, dar și ca suport tehnic, ca suport tehnic?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Pentru că, până la urmă, noi suntem cei care, în practică, exact cu competențele de care spuneam, trebuie să aducem plus valoare și atunci trebuie să căutăm echilibru. Deci intrarea noastră în Uniunea Europeană ne a adus. Să știți că nu mai e. Nu mai rețin pe dinafară, cred că era undeva peste 30 și nu mai știu cât de miliarde de euro dacă îl schimbam pentru agricultură 2027, 2014, 2014, 2009 depășit, i am zis, peste 30 de.

**Interviewer:** Și dacă mai mult decât SAPARD ?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Dată mai pune și SAPARD ul, este clar că ne am dus la multe zeci de miliarde. Două a fost programul. Fonduri de preaderare. Treaba însă ce ne a adus extraordinar de mult, pentru că totuși banii aceștia, miliardele acestea, nu au fost cheltuite cu mare eficiență economică. Și aici a.

Marele avantaj pe care ni l a adus Uniunea Europeană ca domeniu a fost faptul că ne au adus companiile un nou al lor pentru agricultură, adică ne au învățat să facem business și. Partea de finanțare, pentru că agricultura românească nu a fost niciodată finanțată. Decât foarte puțin la începuturi, după Revoluție, că funcționa numai fostele fostele întreprinderi de stat care aveau deja un capital, se privatizează de acum, dar aveau capital circulant și oarecum mecanismele puse la punct. Bilanț la bancă. Așa că trecem mai departe. Să nu uităm că în 2007 aveam aproape 3 milioane de hectare pârloagă, deci, iar astăzi nu mai găsești o palmă de pământ de nu poți să spui și asta. Numai intrarea în Uniunea Europeană

a produs această transformare. Deci, foarte important, au venit companiile cu aceste cunoștințe și cu partea de finanțare și am ajuns în agricultură. Fermele acestea pe care noi le luăm ca model astăzi, să știți că s-au dezvoltat și cu fonduri europene. La fonduri europene au fost cu precădere fermierilor, până la un anumit număr de soiuri. Cam aici au început să se limiteze la 250.000. Asta înseamnă în producție vegetală în până în 500 de hectare. S-au mai depășit atunci când nu au fost proiecte, ci pentru proiecte mai mari. De asemenea acțiuni au fost companiile, inputurile. Gândiți-vă că. Ne-au dat creditul furnizor. Țăsta a fost un avantaj. Oricât am încerca acum, oricât am încerca acum să nu știu, să nu recunoaștem. Să spună domne, multinaționalele au făcut mai mult rău. Laș nu aș lua așa. Deci primarul este nefondat. O astfel de grilă este nefondată. După ea au venit, ne-au dat inputuri, ne-au pus gratuit, ne-au dat utilaje. Erau programe din astea.

**Interviewer:** Cumperi tractor acum și plătești peste un an subvenție?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Da utilaje. Îți dau un exemplu pentru lucrurile acestea.

Ca să închei, nu venea acestei companii dacă nu intram în Uniunea Europeană și dacă nu aveam garanția stabilității. La din Europa, cu garanții. De legislație că au ceea ce se cheamă stat de drept și se respectă. Intrarea în Uniunea Europeană. Dacă, după tradiție, nu te opresc din explicații. Mi-a răspuns că nu vreau să rămânem în zona top cum este agricultura și cum este și faptul că satul românesc este doar. Dar lasă-mă să cumpăr. Am crezut că și de asta am zis că vreau o abordare generală nu specifică. Și bine ai făcut precizarea la companii, pentru că parcă și condiționalitățile.

**Interviewer:** Pe lângă bani care ești în program, au venit și partea asta de finanțare pe care le-a acordat o companie gratuită pentru a câștiga cotă de piață și a extinde activitatea.

**Nina Gheorghita:** Asta este clar, condiționalitățile astăzi ne pun probleme. Asta ne-am fi gândit în 2007, adică azi ne întoarcem în 2007 și să nu ne imaginăm și să nu ne uităm. Suntem în 2007 și ne uităm cum arată, cum să le punem în dulap. Cum arată acum. Ca un stat. Am fi crezut că suntem atât de puși la punct, adică cu cereri, cu documente, cu utilizare.

Nu e clar că am făcut, am făcut progrese. Adică o fi greu acum ca un cetățean, zic eu, dar vreau decalajul de percepție între 2007 și un an înainte de 2007 și 2000-2004 cu cap toate



greutățile, pentru că mă uit așa și stând foarte bine organizat, fără să ne dăm seama în sine, nu am acces la niște principii europene. Adică fermierul în discuție este și undeva în zona asta. De ce aduc în discuție azi mai ales România? Ucraina participă. Au făcut și noi în simpla Moldova la procesul de aderare.

**Interviewer:** Mă rog, ce înseamnă reprezentarea intereselor în mediul privat? Paritatea la nivel de activitatea DNA? Adică mă întâlnesc cu organizațiile din Ucraina, mă întâlnesc cu organizațiile din Moldova și văd decalajul ăsta și nu cred că ei vor face, adică mijloace?

Nina Gheorghita: Vor ajunge acolo. Asta i greutate. Noi trebuie să le dăm crezare că și noi am să le dăm crezare, că și noi am fost în situația lor. Dar, de exemplu, uite, vorbeam cu o asociație reprezentativă din Moldova, în schimb, obiectele credeau sau emite ideea am i am adus la Bruxelles cu RC pentru că trebuie să fie la masa discuției și Republica Moldova. Nu o spun că ei link aici e mamă, mă rog, e normal. Deci vor fi pentru că își doresc și ar putea să. Fie și să participe. Și când vreți să le transferăm acel know how pe care noi nu l am avut, să fie mai bine decât la noi într un bun acest. Program, să vorbim și aceeași limbă, având aceeași mentalitate, respectiv această evoluție, cu siguranță. A fost timp. Mă sună foarte supărați la o săptămână după vizita ei. Mă rog, în zilele alea sau în ziua aia au achiesat foarte bine la principii, Citez sunt supărați, ne au nenorocit, ne au băgat camerele agricole, Nu există nici un ban în plus, adică strict ceea ce mi am dat seama, unde mi am pus semnul de întrebare. Ba mă reticentă, nici nu spun dictatorii. Eu nu vreau să discutăm cu camerele, Legalitatea e doar de percepție, adică cum e asta, ci cum o vor achita eu satul românesc și diferența de percepție după cam punct. Da, da, cu siguranță am evoluat mult la toate nivelurile, adică nu. Și chiar dacă, să spunem în statistici, spunem că încă nivelul sau mediul rural a sărăcit sau tot felul de parametri din aceștia. Eu spun din experiența mea 2010, când când am mers în fermă, niciun nu din angajați nu avea bani, deci nu avea bani în caz acasă, Da, Deci era ligheanul, cădița. Astăzi, cu excepția unuia singur, care este singur în vârstă și nu își dorește lucrul acesta, toți au baie în casă, toți au apă curentă la toți. Este un indicator de creșterea nivelului de trai. Veneau toți cu bicicleta. Astăzi la mine la poartă sunt mașini parcate de zici că am musafiri. Că ăsta nu e bine dacă ne uităm în schimbările climatice etc. Se arată că își permit exact, adică în momentul în care nu mergeau în concediu. Decât în armată mecanizatori. Când am ajuns în comună, am vorbit cu soția și cum să putem noi să le vorbim despre cum să facem ceva. Le am dat tichete de vacanță, le am organizat vacanțe, am mers cu ei în Bucovina să vadă în Bucovina, am mers

colindând, am mers cu ei în Transilvania, am mers cu ei. Nu le venea să creadă asta. Ca să poți să crești puțin gustul, percepția, să vezi cum este și în alte locuri și atunci să știi și tu către locurile alea. Când am fost în Malta, i am dus la Bran, în zona, mă rog, în Dincolo de hotel și a zis Șefu, nu putem să vindem ferma din Bărăgan mult.

**Interviewer:** Si despre mediu rural ?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Anul ăsta. Da, deci am. Mediul rural s a schimbat. Noi ne am structurat, nu suntem acolo unde ar trebui să fim. Sunt multe din idei, unele țin de noi, de mentalitate, altele țin de resurse, altele țin de decidenți, de clasa politică și de nivelul lor, de modul cum reușim noi, prin activitatea de reprezentare, să ne facem ascultați, înțeleși, pentru că doar așa am un dialog din acesta constructiv. Până la urmă pot schimba lucrurile, altfel rămânem fiecare la opinia lui. Și dacă nu încerci să să înțelegi punctul de vedere al ambelor părți, dar ai nevoie într adevăr și de un lider care să i ia la jumătate și să își asume, nu i așa? Ușor, dar nu știu astăzi cu cine vorbești. Și am fost la o întâlnire, de exemplu, ne a convocat domnul europarlamentar, ne a invitat, iertați mă, iertați mă, dar nu convocat, având mai mereu în media asociativă. Avem convocator la luna trecută, Deci v a invitat la unul, la o discuție politica. Mă rog, România mea, Orizont 2030. Cum vedem noi, mediul asociativ, să spunem viitorul, pac, sistemul de subvenții, Care ne sunt percepțiile cu privire la ceea ce am încheiat până la momentul ăsta și cel după discuțiile avute? Se exprimă ceva de genul că și ar fi dorit ca mult text asociativ românesc să aibă nivelul de profesionalism pe care îl are acum, la momentul la care România a aderat. Deci asta este clar că am evoluat față de pregătirea pe care o aveam atunci. Poate dacă eram mai bine structurați, dar dacă era mai un aparat executiv mai dezvoltat, poate că la momentul la care s a negociat aderarea noastră, cu siguranță condițiile erau altele, adică mult mai favorabile. Facă potențialul nostru. Poate ne am fi atins însă. În asociația implicată.

**Micu Marius:** Da, tocmai asta acum, deși, deși Uniunea Europeană, pentru că noi, dacă ne am dezvoltat și ne am structurat cumva, să știți că indirect și Uniunea Europeană a participat, pentru că politica aceasta agricole i am forțat, pentru că politica agricolă s a dus la nivel european, la nivel național și să creionez acest mare, un plan național strategic. Acuma, dar în exercițiul trecut era în Programul Național de Dezvoltare Rurală. Îl produci consultându te și cu mediul social, mediul asociativ, apoi îl implementezi și faci

modificări, orienta, implicând și comitetul și mediul asociativ, că doar suntem membri în comitetul de monitorizare. Dar uite aici, la discuție, care s a înțeles mult timp, proza lui Bine, Sandu o procedură de aderare nu a fost înțeles deloc. Pentru că ai mare dreptate, aici este obligatoriu să te consulți, Nu este consultativ, nu. Este obligatoriu să te consulți.

**Nina Gheorghita:** Că înainte de Consiliul Consultativ, nu, el nu face referire. Dacă vrei să iei apă, ce s a spus în actul de consultare, dar ești obligat, nu vrei să bagi pe gât aici, tu.

Ia exact, Trebuie să stai șase. Tot ce zice ori în șase, ori în zece ori nu mai știu. Și procesele au fost mai lungi pentru doi funcționari. Nu exagerez, a lucrat doar cu BNS. Apoi domnul Focșa, al treilea, a venit domnul Chesnoiu și am stat miercuri o lună și jumătate și credem că erau zile în care începeam la 8 și termina la 12 noaptea. Și nu glumesc pentru că el nu bea, deci erau îngrozitoare. După aceea, când a venit Domnul Buddha, ea însuși a fost extrem, extrem de respingător cu privire la partea de a se consulta cu mediul asociativ. Dar oricum era dezbătut. Cei doi miniștri. Lucrează. Ce vreau să scot în evidență este faptul că. Dacă tot tot l au transmis la Bruxelles, dar astăzi. Dar n au trei luni, să asculți oameni, de ce ai face observații? O rămâne să faci ei involuntar. Nici nu vrei să.

**Micu marius:** Știi care sunt problemele și știi ce se așteaptă după aceea. Iar eu cred că i am învățat o lecție cu toții. Pentru că dacă n ar fi ascultat la dezbateri protestele acestea la nivel european nu ar fi avut amploarea pe care au avut o în luna ianuarie și februarie. Pentru că aceste proteste au avut, ca o mica, mă rog, combustibil, exact îngrădirile pe Politica Agricolă Comună, pentru că nu m au ascultat. Nu poți să pui, în condițiile geopolitice pe care le de le trăim astăzi, să pui într un așa pericol. Vrem stabilitatea fermelor, să i oblige să lase pârlăgă, să i oblige să nu mai întocmească la nivel de fermă rotațiile acelea care să îmbine partea tehnică pe partea economică a. Deci este ceva ce nu înțelegi că sunt plante care se auto suportă și că noi trebuie să găsim linia de mijloc între ceea ce trebuie să respectăm din punct de vedere tehnic, dar să asigurăm și viabilitatea economică a fermei, că nu putem altfel. Și mulți dacă ne ascultau. Iar acum, când a venit domnul Barbu, nu a făcut nimic altceva decât să încerce să pună în aplicare ceea ce noi, mediul asociativ, prin documentele de poziție explicați celor doi miniștri și domnul, dar ea nu din nimic, din ce document de poziție nu a introdus în FNS și le a trimis la Bruxelles,

cum își dorea curentul ecologist și politicianul bruxellez care nu are nicio treabă cu agricultura acolo?

**Interviewer:** O întrebare. Pentru că de fiecare dată când elaborăm și negociem Politica Agricolă Comună, adică pe fiecare exercițiu financiar, vorbim de reforma Politicii Agricole Comune de la înființarea Uniunii Europene. De fiecare dată spunem trebuie să facem reformă în Politica Agricolă Comună are nevoie. Astăzi este, în timpul implementării PACT, un alt calapod. Avem nevoie de reformă în reformă?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Voi face și reformă, reformă. Clasa va discuta la nivel european reforma reformei. Este prima dată când se întâmplă lucrul acesta, dar nici Uniunea Europeană ce se propune nu a trecut prin epidemie suprapusă cu război. Circumstanțe și dreptul la dialog pe formula reformă și culoare au înțeles pentru că e pentru prima dată în Politica Agricolă Comună când acceptă să. Se reformeze numai cu articole. Pe Regulamentul 2000 115, ceea ce nu s a mai întâmplat. Iar aici România și mediul asociativ au prin COPA-COGECA a avut un aport substanțial. Reforma asta poate fi așa cum vedem. Reforma este faptul că am primit derogări. E un element așa de.

Adăugare, ca și cum, apelând la derogare, vom modifica condițiile inițiale, pentru că este clar când apelezi la derogare, pentru că ei știau, exista acel articol pentru care nu vreau să le mai dea derogarea, pentru că scria clar Derogarea o dai pe o perioadă de maxim 12 luni. Dacă șeful. Luptă cu boala sau. Pentru care ai dat derogarea modifică cadrul că nu se potrivește. Da, dar uite acum ce părere ai despre flexibilizarea măsurilor de flexibilizare? Care cum să transport, de exemplu, mai multe condiționalități sau o parte mai corect spus, din condiționalități, din scheme obligatorii, din condiționalități, de fapt, obligatoriu se transformă. Bine, trebuie modificare pe planul strategic a apărut talent strategic. Este instrumentul fiecărei țări de a transpune politica Agricolă Comună, măcar și pachetului. Partea de transfer va implica modificare a planului strategic, dar mutarea din zona de obligativitatea condiționalităților în zona de voluntar de voluntariat, adică să fie voluntare. Citeam, mă refer la eco scheme, pentru că se discută în pachetul de flexibilizare. Atât avem o parte din GAL, cât din condițiile din caiet cu care să ducă un pachet de eco scheme.

Dar să nu uităm că flexibilizarea asta nu ar fi venit fără o presiune a mediului asociativ și a fermierilor. Și iată de ce este nevoie, la nevoie, la nevoie, să ne organizăm astfel încât să putem să influențăm politica agricolă de la nivel. European, național și până la nivel

regional. Și politica agricolă europeană trebuie să țină cont de particularitățile și de specificul fiecărui stat membru, iar aceste particularități ale noastre, portavocea acestor particularități, până la urmă tot mediul asociativ rămâne pionul. Excluderi. Rămâneau doar umbre și cu pârlă, nu? Pe lângă asta, eu am evoluat de la competențele mele, pentru că documentele acelea de depozitie am avut un aport și tocmai pe partea cunoștințelor mele și făcând, cum să zic, apel la literatură, la implicând ASAS ul, Academia de Științe Agricole și Silvicultură. Unele, pe rând, mor cam cerând ajutorul UE a domeniului cercetării. Domne, susțineți ne, pentru că doar așa putem să convingem și să modificăm lucrurile acestea. Și revenind la la mediu, mediul rural, că mi a mai rămas în minte un lucru acum ce lipsește mediului rural și ce n am reușit noi, deși am avut programe, dar nu le am pus în aplicare așa cum ar fi trebuit ca să pot să se dezvolte și mai mult agricultura aceasta care lipsește în peisaj, în arhitectura noastră, adică ferma aceea de familie care să poată să ofere producție locală, să adauge valoare adăugată, să dezvolte la nivel local alte servicii care să contribuie la creșterea bugetului și economiei locale. Mă refer aici la servicii de agroturism, la. Pentru că spuneam mai devreme că au ajuns în Columbia, de exemplu, partea de turism agroturism în zonele cultivate de cafea să depășească veniturile din cafea, pentru că oamenii sunt curioși, au această curiozitate să ajungă în zone celebre și să li se explice.

#### **Interview 4 21/03/2024 translated in English**

**Profile:** Interview of Nina Gheorghita. She is a shareholder of Triagroexim, a company cultivating 600ha of cereals in Braila County.

**Place:** During Professor Micu Marius' class of Management and rural development in Romania on Zoom.

**Length:** 32 min 03 sec

**Interviewer:** But I was born in Moldova, in the Republic of Moldova, but I am French nationality.

**Micu Marius:** They're all like me, so to speak. Yes, yes, yes, yes, but it has its origins, but based on it, it aims to analyze the impact that Romania's accession to the European Union has had. So central theme Well, it doesn't have some key points, we don't take them all in a row. But let's give a comprehensive answer, in the sense that Romania has developed for the better in the agri-food and rural development segments. I mean, how has agriculture

developed, in what direction has it gone, what? What is the outlook, the state of the Romanian village, the infrastructure? There are changes. What would have been the situation if nu. I mean, what is the perception of the man who lives in the country in relation to joining the European Union?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Yes, me, I divide my life between Bucharest, between. Bucharest, again. And it came again.

Now I answer simply after having developed, certainly Romania today would not have been able to tell you all that we have as development if we had not joined the European Union. I mean, it was much further behind in every respect. So joining the European Union certainly has more benefits than drawbacks. Now that if we had perhaps been better prepared, if we had been aware of this opportunity and had exploited it in a different way, perhaps we would have been even better off than we are. Oh, and because we're talking about agriculture, I was telling the students before, before, that if we don't have an agricultural strategy today, you know it's coming like this. Let this work of representation and I mean the work, the fault of the farmers, because we are somehow the work of representation, is the link between. And the private side. The state can't. Governments, decision-makers cannot make public policies on areas, specifically for agriculture. Without our technical expertise and without our guidance what works, what doesn't work, how to make it work better.

**Interviewer:** Could you develop what do you mean by technical support?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Because, in the end, we are the ones who, in practice, with the skills I mentioned, have to add value and we have to look for balance. So our entry into the European Union has brought us. You know it's not anymore. I don't remember anymore, I think it was somewhere over 30 and I don't know how many billions of euros if we change it for agriculture 2027, 2014, 2014, 2009 exceeded, I said, over 30.

**Interviewer:** Do you add SAPARD?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Once you add SAPARD, it is clear that we have gone to many tens of billions. Two was the programme. Pre-accession funds. But the job has brought us an

extraordinary amount, because this money, these billions, have not been spent with great economic efficiency. The great advantage that the European Union has brought us as an area is that companies have brought us a new one of their own for agriculture, i.e. they have taught us how to do business. funding, because Romanian agriculture has never been funded. Only very little at the beginning, after the Revolution, that only the former state-owned enterprises operated, which already had capital, they are now privatized, but they had working capital and somewhat set up mechanisms. Balance sheet at the bank. So we move on. Let's not forget that in 2007 we had almost 3 million hectares of fallow land, so, and today you can't find an inch of land that you can't say that too. Only the entry into the European Union has brought about this transformation. So, very importantly, companies came in with this knowledge and the financing side and we got into agriculture. These farms that we take as a model today, you should know that they have also developed with European funds. With European funds they have been mainly farmers, up to a certain number of varieties. This is where they started trying to limit themselves to 250,000. That means in crop production up to 500 hectares. They went over when there were no projects, but for bigger projects. Also actions were companies, inputs. Think about that. They gave us supplier credit. That was an advantage. As much as we try now, as much as we try now not to know, not to acknowledge. Let's just say, gentlemen, the multinationals have done a lot of damage. Coward I wouldn't take it that way. So the mayor is unfounded. Such a grid is unfounded. After it they came, they gave us inputs, they put us free, they gave us machinery. There were programs like that.

**Interviewer:** Buy tractor now and pay subsidy in a year?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Yes machines. I'll give you an example for these things.

This company would not come unless we joined the European Union and had the guarantee of stability. In Europe, with guarantees. By legislation that they have what is called the rule of law and they respect it. The entry into the European Union. If, according to tradition, they don't stop you from explaining. He replied that I don't want to stay in the top area like agriculture is and like the Romanian village is just. But let me buy. I thought that's also why I said I wanted a general approach not specific. And well you made the specification to companies, because it seems and conditionalities.

**Interviewer:** In addition to the money that you had in the program, there's also this part of the funding that a free company has given you to gain market share and expand your business?

**Nina Gheorghita:** That is clear, the conditionalities today are causing us problems. That's what we would have thought in 2007, that is, today we go back to 2007 and we don't imagine and we don't forget. We are in 2007 and we are looking at how they look, how to put them in the cupboard. How they look now. As a state. We would have thought we were so set up, I mean with applications, with paperwork, with usage. It's not clear that we have, we have made progress. I mean, it's gonna be hard now as a citizen, I mean, but I want The perception gap between 2007 is a or before 2007 and 2000 2004 with all the difficulties, because I look at it this way and sitting very well organized, without realizing it in itself, we do not have access to some European principles. I mean the farmer in question is also somewhere in this area. Why am I bringing up Romania in particular today? Ukraine participates. They have also made us in simple Moldova in the accession process.

**Interviewer:** What does it mean to represent private interests? Parity at the level of DNA activity?

**Nina Gheorghita:** They will get there. That's the weight. We have to give them credit that we too will give them credit, because we too have been in their situation. But, for example, look, we were talking to a representative association from Moldova, instead, the objects believed or emitted the idea we brought to Brussels with the RC because the Republic of Moldova should be at the table. I'm not saying it that they link here it's mother, whatever, it's normal. So they will be because they want to and could. be and participate. And when you want to transfer to them that know how that we didn't have, to be better than us in a good this. program, to speak the same language, having the same mentality, that is this evolution, for sure. It was time. She calls me very upset a week after her visit. Anyway, in those days or on that day they agreed very well to the principles, Quote they are angry, they screwed us, they put us in the agricultural chambers, There is no extra money, I mean strictly what I realized, where I question mark. I'm not even saying dictators. I do not want to discuss with the cameras, Legality is only of perception, that is how it is, but how I will pay the Romanian village and the difference in



perception after about point. Yes, yes, we have certainly evolved a lot at all levels, I mean no.

**Interviewer:** Since you are in the rural area, could you tell us about its development?

**Nina Gheorghita:** Let's say in statistics, we say that still the level or the rural environment has impoverished or all sorts of parameters of these. I say from my experience 2010, when I went to the farm, none of the employees had no money, so no money in the case at home, Yes, So it was the pot, the kettle. Today, except for one, who is alone in his old age and does not want this, all of them have bathroom in the house, all of them have running water to all of them. It's an indicator of rising living standards. They all come by bicycle. Today at my gate there are cars parked like guests. That this is not good if you look at climate change etc. It shows that they can afford it exactly, that is when they were not going on holiday. Than in the mechanized army. When we arrived in the commune, we talked to the wife and how we could we talk to them about how to do something. We gave them holiday vouchers, we organised holidays for them, we went with them to Bukovina to see in Bukovina, we went caravanning, we went with them to Transylvania, we went with them. They couldn't believe it. So that you can develop a little taste, perception, to see what it's like in other places and then you know where those places are. When I was in Malta, I took them to Bran, in the area, I mean, beyond the hotel, and the boss said, we can't sell farm in Bărăgan much.

**Interviewer:** What about the rural environment nowadays in 2020's?

**Nina Gheorghita:** This year. Yes, so I have. The rural environment has changed. We have structured ourselves, we are not where we should be. There are a lot of ideas, some of them are related to us, to our mentality, others are related to resources, others are related to the decision makers, to the political class and their level, to the way we manage, through our representation activity, to make ourselves heard, understood, because this is the only way to have a constructive dialogue. In the end I can change things, otherwise we all stick to our own opinions. And if you don't try to understand the point of view of both sides, you really need a leader who takes them in half and takes responsibility, don't you? Easy, but I don't know who you're talking to today. And we went to a meeting, for example, the MEP

called us, invited us, forgive me, forgive me, but not called, having more always in the associative media. We have convened from last month, so you invited to one, to a political discussion. Anyway, my Romania, Horizon 2030.

**Interviewer:** How does the associative environment see the future ?

**Nina Gheorghita:** How do we, the associative environment, see the future, let's say the future, the subsidy system, what are our perceptions of what we have concluded so far and after the discussions? It is expressed something like that they would have wished that a lot of Romanian associative text had the level of professionalism that it has now, at the time Romania joined. So this is clearly that we have evolved from the preparation we had then. Perhaps if we were better structured, but if there was a more developed executive apparatus, perhaps at the time when our accession was negotiated, conditions were certainly different, i.e. much more favourable. Make our potential. Perhaps we would have reached our potential. In the association involved.

**Micu Marius:** Yes, that's just it now, though, although the European Union, because we, if we have developed and structured ourselves somehow, you know that indirectly the European Union has also participated, because this agricultural policy we have forced, because the agricultural policy has gone to the European level, to the national level and to create this great, a national strategic plan. Now, but last year it was in the National Rural Development Programme. You produce it in consultation with the social environment, the associative environment, then you implement it and make changes, orient it, involving the committee and the associative environment, because we are members of the monitoring committee. But look here, at the discussion, which has long understood, the prose of Good, Sandu a procedure of accession was not understood at all. Because you're quite right, here it's mandatory to consult, It's not consultative, no. It's mandatory to consult. That before the Advisory Council, no, he doesn't refer. If you want to take water, what he said in the consultation act, but you're obliged, you don't want to shove it down here, you. Take it exactly, you have to stay six. Everything he says either in six or ten or I don't know. And the trials were longer for two officials. I'm not exaggerating, he only worked with the BNS. Then Mr.Focşa, the third one, Mr. Chesnoiu came and we stayed Wednesday for a month and a half and we think there were days when we started at 8 and

finished at 12 at night. And I'm not kidding because he doesn't drink, so they were awful. After that, when Mr. Buddha came, he himself was extremely, extremely obnoxious about the part of consulting with the associational environment. But anyway it was debated. The two ministers. Work. What I want to point out is that. while they still sent it to Brussels, but today. But n have three months, to listen to people, why would you make comments? It's up to them to do it involuntarily. You don't even want to.

**Nina Gheorghita:** You know what the problems are and you know what is expected afterwards. And I think we've all taught him a lesson. Because if he hadn't listened to the debates these protests at European level would not have had the magnitude that they had in January and February. Because these protests had, as a small, I mean, fuel, exactly the restrictions on the Common Agricultural Policy, because they didn't listen to me. You can't put, in the geopolitical conditions that we live in today, to put in such danger. We want stability on farms, to force them to leave fallow, to force them to stop drawing up rotations at farm level that combine the technical side with the economic side. So it's something that you don't understand that these are self-supporting plants and that we have to find the middle line between what you have to respect from a technical point of view, but also ensure the economic viability of the farm, because we can't do otherwise. And many people would listen to us. And now, when Mr Barbu came, she did nothing but try to implement what we, the associative environment, through position papers explained to the two ministers and Mr, but she did not from nothing, from what position paper did she not put in the FNS and send them to Brussels, as the environmentalist current and the Brussels politician who has nothing to do with agriculture there wanted?

**Interviewer:** Question. Because every time we draw up and negotiate the Common Agricultural Policy, that is, every financial year, we talk about the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy since the European Union was founded. Every time we say we need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy. Today is, during the implementation of the CAPT, a different model. Do we need reform within reform?

**Nina Gheorghita:** I will also reform, reform. The class will discuss reform at European level. This is the first time this has happened, but the proposed European Union has not gone through an epidemic superimposed with war either. Circumstances and the right to

dialogue on the formula reform and color have understood because it's the first time in the Common Agricultural Policy when they agree to. It reform only with articles. On Regulation 2000 115, which never happened. And here Romania and the associative environment had a substantial contribution through COPA-COGECA. This reform can be as we see it. The reform is that we have received derogations. It's such an element. Addition, as if, by appealing to the derogation, we will change the original conditions, because it is clear when you appeal to the derogation, because they knew, there was that article for which I do not want to give them the derogation, because it clearly said Derogation you give it for a maximum period of 12 months. If the boss. Fights his illness. for which you gave the waiver amends the framework that doesn't fit. Yes, but now look what you think about the flexibilities? That how to transport, for example, more conditionalities or a part more correctly said, from conditionalities, from mandatory schemes, from conditionalities, in fact, mandatory turns. Well, it must change on the strategic plan appeared strategic talent. It is the instrument of each country to transpose the Common Agricultural Policy, at least and the package. The transfer part will involve modification of the strategic plan, but moving from the area of obligatory conditionalities to the area of voluntary, i.e. to be voluntary. I was reading, I mean eco schemes, because they are discussed in the flexibility package. We have both part of the LAG and the conditions in the specification with which to take an eco scheme package. But let's not forget that this flexibilisation would not have come about without pressure from associations and farmers. And this is why we need, when necessary, to organise ourselves in such a way that we can influence agricultural policy from the top. European, national and even regional level. European agricultural policy must also take account of the specific features and characteristics of each Member State, and it is our specific features, the spokesperson for these specific features, that ultimately remain the pawn of the associative sector. Exclusions. That leaves us with shadows and with a scapegoat, right? Besides that, I have evolved from my skills, because those deposition documents I had an input and precisely on the side of my knowledge and making, how shall I say, appeal to the literature, to involving the ASAS, the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences. Some, in turn, die a little bit asking for EU help to the research field. Goodness, support us, because that's the only way we can convince and change these things. And coming back to the environment, to the rural environment, I am still thinking of something that is missing in the rural environment and that we have not managed to do, although we have had

programmes, but we have not implemented them as we should have done, so that we can develop even more this agriculture that is missing in our landscape, in our architecture, that is to say the family farm that can offer local production, add value, develop other services at local level that contribute to the growth of the budget and the local economy. I'm referring here to agro-tourism services, to. Because I was saying earlier that they have reached in Colombia, for example, the agro-tourism part of tourism in coffee growing areas to exceed the income from coffee, because people are curious, they have this curiosity to go to famous areas and have it explained too.