

## CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ROMANIA' S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTEGRATION

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*Romania's accession to European Union, a solid economic structure and more developed, has a positive effect on our country as a consequence of the pressure on achieving a state of compatibility, but it is not sufficient for our sustainable development, which depends on the mobilization of our internal skills, according to a unique strategic vision, in line with the national priorities, concerted with the community ones.*

*The moment of accession, already confirmed, does not, however, automatically bring Romania closer to Europe and that is because reducing the distance that separates us from the community is not only a political, legislative or technical problem, but a development one, depending on our own capacity to gather all necessary forces for sustainable development.*

*Key words: European integration, development strategy, sustainability*

*Cod JEL: F02*

Romania's EU accession is one of the major challenges that have arisen in its history. Apart from being perceived as a simple process of "joining" an economic and geographical area, the process of Romania's accession in EU should be addressed in its complexity.

The insertion of Romania in an integrative group has the meaning of merging in a homogenous mixture. A body functions as a "whole" unit when none of its parts is seen as distinct. This is a fundamental right and, also, the logic of European integration: the Member States, applying the same set of rules, are involved in a mechanism, increasing the system through a synergistic action. Any disfunctionality endangers the operation of the whole mechanism and, therefore, must be remedied. This logic applies regardless of the level of integration or the subsystem in question, be it economic, social or political.

The real challenge that a state entering this grouping must face is the efficient use of the system energies, in transforming them in favorable elements for their development, which generates positive effects on all.

From another viewpoint, another challenge is to preserve "the national fingerprint". Even if the rule of open systems is applied, the experience has shown that nations which have a common base of characteristics, had this tendency for collaboration, with beneficial effects.

The way in which Romania's economy evolves, pre - and post - accession in the European Union, represents a strong challenge, as the successful integration into the European model represents, ultimately, Romania's modernization. The economy transition to the phase of sustainable development and the raising of competitiveness, in terms of a broader international opening through European integration and globalization, changes the approaching ways.

We must recognize that the state of Romania's development does not totally correspond to its potential, the economy still having many characteristics specific to underdeveloped countries, being not very competitive and with a still low potential for convergence. Structural transformations have taken place in the absence of a project of social and economic reform, the European integration often taking the place of such a project. But focusing only on accomplishing the EU requirements was not sufficient for modernizing the Romanian economy.

The European economic model, which we joined, means economic growth, social cohesion and convergence. If you do not know to sustainably use this opportunity, Romania will be condemned

to underdevelopment. Thus, the process of economic development imperatively requires giving up the strategies of survival and making the transition to sustainable development strategies.

Romania cannot overpass its backwardness in many areas, in comparison with developed countries and can solve the real problem regarding the relatively low capacity of its economy to cope with the pressure of international competition and also, regarding the unfavorable tendency of specialization in activities based on low and medium technology and increased resource consumption of traditional resources - activities having a low contribution to the added value, only focusing at maximum its efforts in achieving high rates of economic growth and in restructuring and modernizing the economy branches, ensuring also economic and social stability. This is important now more than ever, when Romania must overcome the problems brought by the economic crisis.

Thus, as a result of institutional transformations that took place in Romania and of the openings required by the integration into the European Union, redefinitions and shifts in the fundamental public policies (economic, industrial, commercial, agricultural, services) became necessary. It also became necessary to highlight the impact of accession on the development profile of the national economy, to apply some active development policies simultaneously with broad reform of social protection.

Although accession and integration are still found in the poorly informed public perceptions, as expressions of one and the same goal, between them there is a net distinction, both in conceptual layout, and operational aspects.

The integration process began in the period when Romania was still a candidate country for accession, taking the form of "Europeanization", for all structures in society as a whole. The integration process will continue for many years now, engaging the Romanian society as a whole, with its various entities in the economic, social, technological, cultural or educational areas, involved in the European structured dialogue.

The process of legislative harmonization of laws, made by assimilating the *acquis communautaire* and by establishing some systems for public policies coordination, aimed to assure compliance with the accession criteria, creating the conditions which, although are strictly necessary, are not in any way sufficient for the successful integration.<sup>213</sup>

The compatibility status is just a favorable environment, but not a determining factor for competitiveness. Assimilating the Community regulations do not automatically lead to achieving performance comparable with the European partners and cannot compensate for deficits in vision and own initiatives. Similarly, the public policies, no matter how carefully are designed and coordinated, cannot replace the foundation of a sustainable economic growth.

The substantive issues of European integration refer to the adaptation of Romanian enterprises to the competitive pressure of the single market, the progressive economic convergence, the advance in the direction of knowledge society and of implementing the European social model.

On the qualitative side, which in post-accession period becomes essential, the management of the European integration process involves the formulation and translating into action, by the Romanian society, some valid answers to the question "How do we integrate ourselves?".<sup>214</sup>

The potential advantages of integration can become effective only according to the ability of each Romanian company or institution to fructify, based on their own strategies and on the adopting the best European practices, both the valences of the harmonized legislative framework and the opportunities offered by the single market. The insufficient preparation for such functionality generates constraining effects and high costs for integration, in which case Romania's strengths

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213 Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier U.; Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Nr. 11(4), 2004, pp 669–687.  
214 Angelescu, C., Dinu M., Dragomirescu H. (coord.); *România și Uniunea Europeană: calitatea integrării*, Editura Economică, București, 2006.

would refer only to issues such as the low cost of skilled labor force, facilities for foreign investments and attractive conditions for industries in course of outsourcing.

On national plan, in more than two years after joining the European Union, in the current concerns regarding integration the dominant logic of conformation, although it is improper for post-accession development.<sup>215</sup> The quality of integration must be seen as a key variable of the Romanian model of development.

Post-accession development cannot be based on verifying the fulfillment of some formal criteria, but on designing and implementing strategies and programs, in a vision arising from own priorities concerted with those established at Community level.

This implies the existence of competences for strategic thinking: "not acting according to a strategy represents a major vulnerability, highlighted - and not at all justified - by the increased turbulence of the business environment; therefore, for Romanian companies, any manifestations of "strategic skepticism", maintained by the limitations of some conceptual skills, but also by the more convenient alternative of improvisation, represents, probably, the highest risk of failure in competitive confrontation"<sup>216</sup>.

Therefore, approaching the construction of a development strategy in line with community structures should be based on corresponding to the national interests, but also on sustained participation in joint European projects.

The successful integration of Romania in the European Union involves mobilizing its own skills, individual and organizational, as micro-foundations for the development of national economy and for achieving economic convergence and social cohesion in the enlarged European Union.

The accession to the European Union should be seen for Romania, rather as an essential factor of sustainable development and not an aim in itself, from which benefits would arise automatically, without effort on our part.

Repeatedly, the integration has been placed among the stimulating factors for transformation towards notable economic performance, so it can act as a catalyst for development. It is important to note that development through integration does not mean post-development, but it expressed gradually, through the procedure of adopting a set of reforms before accession.

On the other hand, the membership status is not a guarantee for economic development, although it is true that this status exerts a positive effect on the major premises of long-term development and creates great opportunities for the exploitation of a strategy of sustainable development.

Sustainable development, recently become a goal shared by more and more countries, aims firstly, to establish on long term three basic components: economic growth in sustained rhythms, continuous improvement of living standard and of social welfare and maintaining the ecologic balance, preventing and/or reducing pollution and improving environmental quality. Therefore, the development sustainability aims consistent and constant pursuit of these objectives, implementing concrete policies.

In the approach to address the long-term development of Romania, we should also have in mind the context of accession in the European structures: one very special, moment in which Europe maintains its fundamental objective to become the strongest economy in the world, although is currently required to meet effectively the challenges of crisis. This adds an extra reason for Romania to go on the road ensuring performant functioning, both internally as well as externally. However, the firm option to adopt the European model, represented for Romania a major event in its historical development, the integration into the European Union being seen as a solution to

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215 Dragomirescu H.; România în Uniunea Europeană: dezideratul calității integrării sub condiția proactivității, în România în Uniunea Europeană. Calitatea integrării. Creștere. Competență. Ocupare, vol 2, Economie Teoretică și Aplicată, Supliment, simpozion 23 noiembrie, AFER, pp 9-15.

216 Dragomirescu H.; Competențele – miză strategică a competitivității în noua economie, în C. Angelescu (coord.), Educația economică. Actualitate și perspective, Editura Economică, București, 2003, pp 199-205.

many problems of society in search of modernization and economic transformation, an opportunity for economic relaunching.

The moment of accession, already confirmed, does not, however, automatically bring Romania closer to Europe. This is because reducing the distance that separates us from the community is not only a political, legislative or technical problem, but also a development one.

To give the correct meaning for development through integration, we must approach this concept from as many angles as possible. Each side brings out a part of its complex content and only a concomitant approach can assure for the development through integration the valences we expect.<sup>217</sup>

*Integration must be a purpose.* An active society, institutionally structured and based on resources cannot admit integration as an exogenous phenomenon. Integration does not come by itself and must not be allowed to just happen, without being accompanied by policies for guidance in this purpose. Integration is a set of policies covered from a stage to another, from simple to complex, from surface to depth and aiming to model the entire political-economic and social system.

*Integration is a functional system.* All integration models are perceived as integrated systems with functionality for a defined purpose. Being in a functional system wider than the economic borders of a country must be an assumed option, in the sense that wishing to benefit from the effects of such a position, you must operate in the parameters of the system agreed as a purpose. That is why an adherent to the integrated system cannot be accepted unless it meets the functioning procedures of the system.

*Integration is a process.* Accession to an integrated operating system follows the rules of a step-by-step process. The process aims to adjust to existing rules, and this is the case of Romania, which adheres to a well-defined system. Integration has both advantages and disadvantages, related to the ability of being directly or indirectly participant in modeling the integrated system.

*Integration is a tool.* In a world of interdependences and of speedy communication, the option for integration has proven to be the most viable, from the perspective of development and of ensuring prosperity for society in Europe, in reasonable periods of time. This process has the advantage of going through the historical stages of integration in periods much shorter than those consumed by those already in the system.

*Integration is a mix of policies and institutional building.* The principles of democracy, the market economy and the resistance to European competition, although appear as expressions of great generality at first sight, a deeper approach shows a methodology aiming both the whole and its component parts.

The definitions of integration cannot be generalized, as choosing one or another, and only accepting their simultaneously application we can understand the directions for development through integration.

Development through integration can only be based on the values of democracy and market economy. To put them into practice, we need a solid institutional building, which is not sufficient, as it needs stability and administrative and managerial capacity to ensure their transformation from spirit into process. This can happen only using human resources and behaviors, and from this point of view, the most important role is played by the educational reform.

Development through integration means simultaneously addressing issues of micro and macroeconomic development and in terms of resistance to the competition in the single market means structural reforms.

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217 Pop N.; Dezvoltarea pentru integrare – cazul României, în Iancu Aurel (coord.), Dezvoltarea economică a României, Competitivitatea și integrarea în Uniunea Europeană, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, 2005, pp 985-998.

Development through integration brings benefits to both parties only if the partnership is built on the mutual powerful forces and based on mutual commitment to growth and prosperity in the long term.

As regards the way in which Romania can meet the challenges of globalization, in the sense of better valorificating opportunities, it can be said that development by integrating favors it, as a global confrontation being a member state is beneficial. Therefore, development through integration must follow the rationality of integration and its meanings, in their dynamics and their permanent reference to the phenomenon of globalization.

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