



**DIRECTIONS AND
PROBLEMS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
SOME SECTORAL
POLICIES OF THE NEW
EUROPEAN UNION
MEMBER STATES**

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Rezumat

Articolul își propune să evidențieze unele direcții și probleme în implementarea unor politici sectoriale în noile state membre ale Uniunii Europene care nu fac parte din zona euro, menite să conducă la atingerea țintelor stabilite prin strategia Europa 2020. Astfel, în toate țările Uniunii Europene în care există probleme în domeniile sectoriale s-au elaborat sau sunt în curs de elaborare politici și strategii de rezolvare a acestor situații problematice, pentru ca până în 2020 să se atingă obiectivele Strategiei Europa 2020, un rol crucial avându-l fondurile structurale și de coeziune provenite de la Uniunea Europeană, dar și îmbunătățirea capacității de absorbție a acestora de către țările beneficiare.

De asemenea, autorii au arătat faptul că țintele politicilor economice și obiectivele de mediu nu trebuie să fie în contradicție, ci este bine să existe sinergii între aceste domenii; prosperitatea economiilor Uniunii

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Europene pe termen lung depinde de introducerea unor modele sustenabile de producție și consum, adaptate capacităților ecosistemelor de regenerare, dar și faptul că realizarea obiectivelor energetice și de mediu presupune investiții în cercetare și inovare.

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to point some directions and problems in the implementation of some sectoral policies in the new EU member states which are not members of the euro zone, aiming to allow the accomplishment of the targets set by the Europe 2020 strategy. Thus, all EU member states having problems in the sectoral fields developed or are developing policies and strategies to solve these problematic situations, so that by 2020 they may achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Structural and cohesion funds of the European Union have a crucial role to this purpose, as well as the improvement of the absorption capacity by the beneficiary countries.

The authors show that the targets of the economic policies and environmental objectives must not be in contradiction, rather synergic. The long-term prosperity of the European Union depends on the introduction of sustainable patterns of production and consumption adapted to the renewing capacity of the ecosystems and on the investments in research and innovation.

Keywords: convergence, Europe 2020 strategy, sectoral policies, new EU member states

JEL classification: L9, O13, Q20

1. Introduction

Within the current macroeconomic context, the economy of the EU member states must cope with several important challenges, among which the fast technological changes, population ageing and the speeding globalization. These challenges require major efforts to improve the adjustment capacity of the EU economies in general, of the workforce, in particular. An important role for the accomplishment of the adjustment necessary for an efficient operation of the European Union is played by the structural reforms. Their purpose is to establish a favourable environment for the implementation of the economic policies, on the background of transparent governmental policies, an efficient cooperation of the public and private sectors to promote prosperity and sustainable development, and to reduce the adjustment frictions in the economy.

The Lisbon Strategy marked some progress in the implementation of sectoral policies, but only with the start of Europe 2020 strategy (March 2010), the horizon of development and end of the crisis for the European Union seems to get a clear movement towards the macroeconomic stability, by the implementation of ambitious medium- and long-term structural reforms with the purpose to promote the sustainability of the public finances and to improve the economic growth.

The development of Europe 2020 strategy took into account the fact that the EU economies are intrinsically linked because no member state can approach efficiently the global challenges by an isolated action, so that the success of getting past the crisis also depends on the tight coordination of their macroeconomic policies.

The global economic and financial crisis shattered the fundamentals of the world economies, and Europe felt fully the effects of the shock waves of the crisis. Within this context, Europe 2020 strategy proposes to eliminate the basic problems revealed by the crisis by building a new economic model based on knowledge, on an economy

with low carbon emissions, with high productivity and social cohesion and with a high employment rate.

The success of Europe 2020 strategy depends crucially on the ability of the member states of the European Union to implement the national reforms necessary in order to stimulate the economic growth and to cooperate with the European Commission and with the other EU member states.

Europe 2020 strategy provides a framework for the economic and structural policies of the European Union. They provide added value and consistency to the national reforms by setting joint objectives and an increased macro-structural monitoring.

The progress towards these objectives will be measured against five reference indicators representative at EU level, which the member states are invited to translate into national reference indicators which reflect the starting points:

- 75% of the population aged 20-64 must be employed;
- 3% of EU GDP must be invested in research and development;
- The climatic and energetic objectives „20/20/20¹” must be met;
- The proportion of early school dropout must be below 10%, and at least 40% of the young generation must have tertiary education;
- The number of people exposed to the risk of poverty must be reduced by 20 millions.

With the view to accomplish these objectives, the Commission proposes and Europe 2020 agenda consisting of 7 pilot-initiatives. The application of these initiatives is a common priority which requires measures at all levels: EU level organisations, the member states, the

¹ *The European Union proposed the following environmental and energy targets:*
- 20% reduction (from the 1990 level) of the greenhouse gas emissions;
- the energy produced from renewable sources must account for 20% of the final gross consumption of energy,
- decrease the consumption of energy by 20% until 2020.

local and regional authorities. At the level of the member states, these initiatives are included in national strategies.

The *sustainable growth* presumes 2 *pilot-initiatives*:

1. A Europe which uses efficiently its resources – support the transition towards an economy using efficiently its resources, with low carbon emissions, with sustainable production and consumption models (based on quality, innovation, longevity, environmental protection, saving resources). Europe must reach the 2020 goals of production and consumption of energy and energy efficiency.

2. An industrial policy for green economic growth – support the competitiveness of the industrial basis of the post-crisis European Union, by promoting entrepreneurship and development of new competencies. This may create millions of new jobs.

The success of Europe 2020 strategy depends crucially on the ability of the EU member states to implement the national reforms necessary to stimulate the economic growth, and to cooperate with the European Commission for the 7 pilot-initiatives.

The progress towards the national objectives of Europe 2020 strategy is explained by the national authorities within two annual reports: the Program of stability/convergence and the National program of reform (NPR).

2. Some sectoral policies of the new EU member states (transport, energy, environment, agricultural policy and cohesion policy) and difficulties in their implementation.

Starting from the objectives of Europe 2020 strategy, all EU member states have set, through their *National Programs of Reform*, the national priorities and objectives defined so as to reflect the internal conditions and the priorities of each country, and which set the framework and directions of sustainable economic growth. The mobilisation of the institutional and financial efforts, doubled by a broad consensus of the entire society, were determining factors for the materialization of these national objectives and priorities.

In **Bulgaria**, the structural and cohesion funds play a crucial role in financing the infrastructure and environment² projects and of the transportation³ projects, with the aim of a better absorption.

The main priorities of the energy policy of Bulgaria for the next 10 years refer to the increase of the proportion of renewable resources into the final gross consumption of energy and to better energy efficiency. Thus, the actual objectives are:

- The energy produced from renewable resources must represent 16% of the final gross consumption of energy,
- The energy produced from renewable resources must represent 10% of the energy used by the transportation sector;
- 25% increase of the energy efficiency.

Bulgaria didn't set a target concerning the reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, outside the one set by the Europe 2020 strategy. In the sectors outside the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (transportation, agriculture, waste recycling), Bulgaria proposed to increase the greenhouse gas emissions with less than 20% by 2020, compared to 2005.

The infrastructure investment projects are deterred by the high level of irregularities in the public acquisitions. Measures have to be introduced and implemented efficiently which to allow monitoring the public acquisitions based on risk evaluation. The capacity of the authorities to prevent and sanction the breaches and to improve the quality of public funds utilization must be improved.

The 2011 variance analysis of the Program of Convergence for 2011-2014 and of the National program of Reforms of Bulgaria, the European Union Council recommended the adoption of measures for 2011-2012, among other, to ensure the independence of the Authority for Regulation in Energy from Bulgaria, with the purpose to open the

² *The investments in environmental infrastructure focus on the supply and treatment of household water, waste recycling.*

³ *The investments in transportation infrastructure concern the railways, road and maritime infrastructure.*

markets of energy and fuels for competition, to remove the opacity of the price-setting mechanisms and to introduce stimulants for the increase of the energy efficiency of the buildings, which largely accounts for the high energy consumption of the Bulgarian economy. Although there is the possibility to use European structural funds for investments in energy efficiency, little investment has been done in this direction, while the income from taxes on energy and transportation decreased as proportion of the GDP. In conclusion, measures are required to increase the energy efficiency and the resource efficiency, to improve the opportunities for investments and economic growth.

Among the obstacles to the sustainable “green” economic growth in the Czech Republic is the infrastructure and transportation⁴ network which is insufficient and inadequately developed. Consequently, the NPR of the Czech Republic proposed to improve the transportation infrastructure and to promote the green economy.

Given the strategic geographical position which provides the premises for transit transportation services and the orientation towards exports of the Czech economy, the development of the transportation network is crucial for the economic activity.

The Czech Government considers that the policy of cohesion is an instrument for the sustainable, intelligent and inclusive growth. The cohesion policy is strong in the Czech Republic, supporting the public investments in the national fields of priority development. The Czech Government considers that the policy of cohesion is not just an important instrument which can close the gap between regions with different levels of development; it can also increase the competitiveness of the individual regions and of the national economy as a whole. As a consequence, in the period 2014-2020, the policy of cohesion will support the development of the transportation infrastructure, including intelligent transportation systems, which are essential for a competitive economy relying on industry and exports.

⁴ *Railroad, maritime, air and cyclist transportation.*

The Czech Republic is also supported in its common agricultural policy, particularly to increase the competitiveness of agriculture, of the food industry, of tourism and rural business, as well as of the alternative forms of energy production.

Other important problems of the Czech Republic which affect the economic growth, competitive at the European and global level, are the high consumption of energy and raw materials as proportion of the GDP, the high emissions of greenhouse gases and the inefficiency of waste management.

The Czech Government aims to cut the polluting emissions, to save energy and to build an efficient management of energy production, distribution and consumption. The Czech Republic didn't set yet a target for the improvement of energy efficiency.

During the first stage of transformation of the energy sector, the focus will be on the heating sector and on the use of energy for transportation (use of hydrogen).

The Czech Republic undertook the following pledges for 2020 in the field of environment and energy:

- 13% of the final gross consumption of energy must come from renewable resources;
- 10% of the energy used in transportation must come from renewable resources;
- Maximum 9% increase (compared to 2005) of the greenhouse gases emissions in the sectors outside the EU Emissions Trading System.

A significant obstacle for the economic development and competitiveness in **Lithuania** is determined by the lack of connections with the European Union in the fields of fuels and electricity. Thus, the energy sector is not integrated within the European Union. Due to its size, the problem of the insufficient energy infrastructure cannot be solved efficiently just by measures taken at the national level; the political and financial support of the European Union is crucial.

The environmental infrastructure too needs improvement. Thus, the supply of water and waste water treatment, the development of waste

management infrastructure lag behind the economic development and the increasing demand for water and for waste water treatment.

Lithuania set the following 2020 goals for environment and energy:

- 23% of the final gross consumption of energy must come from renewable resources (16% in 2010);
- 21% of the energy (36% of the energy used for heating) must come from renewable resources;
- 10% of the energy used in transportation must come from renewable resources;

The higher cost of the energy produced from renewable sources compared to the energy produced from fossil fuels cause the development of this form of energy to be supported only by the state so far.

The energy intensity of the Lithuanian economy is one of the highest in the European Union, although the consumption per capita of energy and electricity is lower than the EU average. This is largely due to the heating of households, the blocks of flats with no thermal insulation explaining this situation. Little investment has been done despite the introduction in 2004 of a strategy aiming to solve this problem. Lithuania pledged to consume 1.5% less energy each year until 2020. Furthermore, the number of private cars increased fast and the income from taxes on energy and transportation decreased as proportion of the GDP. A solution to the low taxes in energy, including of the taxes for the registration and purchase of transportation automobiles would support the short-term fiscal consolidation and would stimulate a more efficient consumption of energy.

The reform of the competition policy in the field of energy is slow. The conclusion of the reviewed national strategy for energy independence will help solving the problems pertaining to the security of the offer and will promote competition in the production of energy. The implementation of the *Third EU Package of Electricity and Fuel Markets* will improve the competition on the retail market of energy.

The Lithuanian potential to cut the greenhouse gas emissions depends on the evolution of the energy sector and on the environmental measures implemented in other sectors.

The development of economy presumes the development of the transportation infrastructure, which currently is underdeveloped and insufficiently modernized. Thus, the inadequate technical parameters and the quality of services may be an impediment for the full utilization of the Lithuanian potential for future transit services. The areas requiring improvement are the isolated railways system which lags technically and technologically behind other European countries because of the different rail gauge, the road system and the public transportation.

The European Commission and the Council of the European Union analysed the Program of Convergence updated for 2011 and the National Program of Reforms for 2011 and concluded that measures are necessary to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings, the strengthen the competition in the energy sector and to increase the taxes on energy.

In **Latvia**, one of the problems addressed in the NPR regards the efficient use and the acceleration of absorption of the European structural funds, which are one of the key instruments supporting the business environment.

The infrastructure of railroad, road, water and air transportation will be reconstructed and improved in 2011-2013. The targets for energy and environment are:

- 40% of the final gross consumption of energy must come from renewable resources (30% in 2008, one of the highest in EU); 10% of the energy used in transportation must come from renewable resources. The challenges for the increased production of energy from renewable sources refer to the existence of a legal framework which is not entirely in agreement with EU requirements and to the low competitiveness of the renewable resources in comparison with the fossil fuels.

- decrease the energy consumption by 0.48% by 2020 by increasing the energy efficiency. The challenges to energy efficiency regard the low energy efficiency of the end users, the large losses along the heating

energy supply network and the higher energy consumption for transportation.

- Maximum 17% increase (compared to 2005) of the greenhouse gases emissions in the sectors outside the EU Emissions Trading System. The challenges facing Latvia to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions regard the very high cost (one of the highest in the EU) because of the shrinking resources of financing compared to the period prior to the crisis; the lack of information of the population regarding the climate changes; the insufficient development of the new technologies with low carbon emissions.

The imported electric energy is to be replaced by energy produced locally from renewable sources and from imported fossil fuel. In consequence, the efficient consumption and production of energy at the local level will be a challenge not just in terms of energy efficiency, but also in terms of observing the environmental goals.

In **Poland**, the underdeveloped transportation infrastructure is an impediment to business and foreign investments, amplifying the regional disparities. Although the railway system of Poland ranks third in Europe as size, it cannot support efficiently the expansion of the economic activity because of the aged infrastructure.

The energy infrastructure of Poland ages rapidly and reached its limit in terms of capacity. Furthermore, it needs significant adjustments to meet the requirements of the policies aiming to temper the climate changes. Hence, the modernization and reconstruction of the energy infrastructure is a key aspect for the economic and social development of the country.

Poland has undertaken in its NPR and within the *Euro Plus Pact*, to close the gaps in the transportation and energy infrastructure.

In the field of environmental protection, Poland aims to promote the efficient use of the natural resources, to maintain the biodiversity and to support the adjustment to climate changes by developing the environmental protection infrastructure.

Poland pledged to attain 20% energy efficiency by 2020. It also aims to increase the proportion of energy from renewable sources within the

final gross consumption of energy and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions, however, without setting clear targets for these objectives.

The European Commission and the Council of the European Union analysed the Program of Convergence updated for 2011-2014 and the National Program of Reforms and recommended Poland to promote the investments in infrastructure, in the capacity of energy generation supporting the technologies with low carbon emissions, to develop the transboundary connections between the energy systems, to implement a multiannual investment plan for the railway infrastructure and to draw a general plan for the railway transportation.

As early as in 2009, through the Program of Convergence and the National Program of Reforms, **Romania** pledged for the efficient use and high level of absorption of the European funds. One of the main macrostructural obstacles is the very low level of absorption of the structural and cohesion funds. Measures have been taken in this direction and the problems and deficiencies affecting largely the process of implementation of the structural and cohesion funds have been approached with the purpose to eliminate or reduce significantly the barriers to absorption.

The substantial allocation of EU funds must be used optimally because it is a key-resource for the short-, medium- and long-term development of the Romanian economy and society. It also is a central element of budget sustainability by means of the investment strategy and of the non-refundable character of these funds.

While the EU-IMF adjustment program has been implemented satisfactorily, in order to consolidate these positive results, a preventive program has been negotiated by the Romanian authorities with EU-IMF for 2011-2013. The new program pays special attention to the structural reforms of the products market (in the sectors of energy and transportation), reforms which are required in order to capitalise on the increasing potential of Romania, to stimulate job creation and to increase the absorption of the EU structural and cohesion funds.

The Government of Romania is determined to accomplish the profound reforms of the enterprises with majority state capital,

particularly of those from key-sectors which generate economic growth, such as the energy and transportation sector.

In the field of transportation, Romania undertook to improve the performance and efficiency of transportation, to increase the profitability of the companies in which the state is single shareholder, to balance back the railway transportation in relation with the road transportation, to provide opportunities for the participation of the private sector in transportation.

One of the major priorities of the Government of Romania is the environmental protection. Within this context, the policy of economic development must be judiciously correlated with the major objective of fighting the climate changes, in order to support the shift to a low-carbon emission economy and to implement the principles of sustainable development in all sectoral policies.

Until now, Romania adopted several policies and legislative measures in the field of climate change, oriented towards the two major directions of action in the field: reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to the effects of climate changes. Romania assumed, under the Kyoto protocol, to reduce by 8% the greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 compared to 1989. For the non-ETS sectors (not included into the EU Emissions Trading System), Romania may have 19% more emissions compared to 2005, by 2020.

The blockages and constraints identified at the national level regarding the fight of the climate changes in Romania can be classified within the following categories:

- **Institutional:** lack of staff specialised in climate changes in the institution which must develop the policies regarding the climate changes and in the institution which must implement them. No firm application of the strategies in the field of environmental protection due to institutional and educational reasons;

- **Procedural and legislative:** the lack of a National Strategy for Climate Changes with 2020 targets and of related studies performed by all stakeholders, which to provide the guiding lines for the other ministries, for the integration of the policy for climate changes in the

development of the other sectoral policies. Delayed implementation of the provisions from the Plan of action to prepare Romania for the entering in force and implementation of the legislative package “Energy – climate changes”, which applied the commitments to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gas by 2012;

- **Budgetary:** lack of the financial resources required for the research aiming to identify the trends and measures to be taken in order to decrease the greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the effects of the climate change. The poor financing of the applied research in the field of clean technologies.

In order to contribute to the accomplishment of the decrease of greenhouse gas emissions set by the Europe 2020 Strategy, Romania proposes two main lines of reform: one supports the transition to a more resource-efficient economy decreasing the greenhouse gas emissions, while the second supports the development of technologies and measures attenuating the effects of the greenhouse gas emissions.

Measures are elaborated to decrease the greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in the energy sector by increasing the proportion of energy produced from alternative, non-polluting sources and with no greenhouse gas emissions. The renewable energy sources will be used to this purpose accompanied by the rational and efficient utilisation of the primary energy resources and by the preservation of ecosystems.

The efficient use of the resources presumes disconnecting the economic growth from the use of resources. To this purpose, special efforts will be deployed to stimulate an ecological economy with low carbon emissions, which uses primarily renewable energy sources and clean, energy-efficient technologies; the preservation of the natural resources and of the biodiversity are basic for the efforts to develop the environmental infrastructure and the non-polluting transportation infrastructure with low consumption of energy and resources. Intelligent, modernized and interconnected energy and transportation infrastructures will be developed.

For Romania, Appendix 1 of EC Directive 2009/28/EC stipulates that by 2020, the proportion of energy from renewable sources within the final

gross energy consumption will be 24%. The measures aimed to attain this objective include investments in the modernization and construction of new capacities for the production of electrical and thermal energy.

The identified blockages hindering this objective are the low purchasing power of the population, the insufficient ecological education of the building owners, the insufficiency of the budgetary resources required for co-financing the investments, the reticence of the banking system to give credits (as means to increase the use of renewable sources of energy in buildings), the insufficient capacity of the electricity networks which prevents the full use of the electricity produced from renewable sources.

The use of the structural funds is crucial for the accomplishment of the target regarding the renewable resources.

Romania undertook to cut by 19% until 2020 the consumption of primary energy.

The investments in installations and equipment which save energy will allow the accomplishment of the target regarding the renewable energy sources.

The use of the structural funds is crucial for the accomplishment of the target regarding the energy efficiency too.

In **Hungary**, the public transportation shows deficits with adverse impact on the economic competitiveness. The public transportation services are supplied by companies which report losses. Part of the problem is the uncontrollable and opaque system of subsidies given to the public transportation system.

Hungary pledged to attain by 2020 the following objectives regarding the environment and the energy:

- The energy produced from renewable sources must account for 14.6% of the gross final energy consumption;
- An increase of maximum 10% (compared to 2005) of the greenhouse gas emissions in the sectors not included in the EU Emissions Trading System
- 10% energy saving.

Hungary intends to respond to the challenges generated by the climate changes on the economic and social development, by the worldwide higher demand for energy and by the unpredictable modifications of the fossil fuels price, by developing an economic model based on energy saving, energy efficiency, intensive use of renewable sources and use of the national sources of energy.

3. Conclusions

Making use of the benefits of globalization is a current major challenge for the long-term economic policies of any state, which will create the conditions for an efficient adjustment to the change.

Europe 2020 strategy is a large project aiming to eliminate the fundamental problems revealed by the crisis, facilitating the adaptation of EU economies to the new conditions, by building a new economic model based on knowledge, on an economy with low carbon emissions, with high productivity and social cohesion and high employment rates.

All EU member states which have problems in the sectoral areas developed or are developing policies and strategies to solve these problems, allowing thus the accomplishment of the goals of Europe 2020 strategy. The implementation of these policies started, in most cases, in 2010 and requires a longer period of time (both to overcome the possible rigidities and to observe the outcomes) and financial resources which not all EU member states have in sufficient amount. Hence, the EU structural and cohesion funds play a crucial role in the accomplishment of Europe 2020 goals, as well as an improved absorption capacity of these funds by the beneficiary countries.

Due to the importance of the structural and cohesion funds for the accomplishment of Europe 2020 goals, the cohesion policy of each member state should be integrated in the policies from the strategic areas for the accomplishment of Europe 2020 strategy.

The cohesion policy supports the regional sectoral policies. Hence, the priorities of the cohesion policy will be formulated in cooperation with the regions and municipalities. The regional and local priorities will be considered as a complementary element of the national priorities.

The climate changes are the greatest challenge ever and require global solutions; solving the environmental issues presumes international cooperation.

The targets of the economic policies and the environmental goals must not be contradictory: the synergy between these areas is beneficial. Promoting the environmental targets while disregarding the interests of the economic growth is unsustainable, same as the economic growth which disregards the rarity of the material resources and which pollutes the environment of the society is “serves”.

The long-term prosperity of EU economies depends on the introduction of sustainable patterns of production and consumption adapted to the renewing capacity of the ecosystems. This presumes a “green” economic growth by developing cleaner economies with low greenhouse gas emissions, energy-efficient – economies which use the resources in an efficient way, which don’t contaminate or destroy the environment and which don’t exhaust irreversibly the natural resources. This will decrease the consumption of energy and natural resources while improving the quality of life and the welfare of people. Reaching this target will also contribute to the accomplishment of the European pilot initiative “A resource-efficient Europe”

The accomplishment of the energy and environmental goals presumes investments in research and innovation in order to develop technologies with low carbon emissions which have solutions for energy and resource-efficiency⁵ and the possibility to produce energy from renewable sources. In the developed EU member states, these investments are financed from the budget. The new member states and the peripheral EU economies have problems in this regard because their budget must cope with multiple demands, all of them stringent. In this situation, the structural and cohesion funds are of great help.

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⁵ *The energy efficiency is acknowledged worldwide as the most efficient method in terms of the costs of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions.*

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