Sustainable Development and Market Trends in Romania

Matei TĂMĂŞILĂ[1], Larisa IVAŞCU[2], Alin ARTENE[3]

Abstract – **The paper addresses sustainable development and shows the capacity of the Romanian market to achieve the goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The new Agenda focuses on a holistic approach to sustainable development in order to achieve global development. Sustainable development is addressed nationally and internationally because businesses do not exist in isolation. Business is a complex network that interacts and completes itself. The use of material, human, financial and informational resources by companies contributes to the assessment of the organisational capacity for sustainable development. Based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets, the paper presents a general assessment of Romania's situation on the three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Following this evaluation, we can conclude that the Romanian market needs to be aligned with the requirements of the European Union, and the difficulties encountered in various directions must be improved by defining strategic directions in line with international objectives.**

Keywords: Technological Capabilities; Education for Sustainable Development; Sustainability Actions; Water; Waste Management; Environmental Pollution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a concern of companies nationwide and internationally. Sustainable development involves balancing the use of company resources to achieve its goals without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to access the same resources as at present [1-2]. Moving to sustainable production within an organization is a complex process involving rethinking and efficiency. Shareholders should adjust their profitability expectations because a company that engages in sustainable development can have modest short-term financial results. Sustainable development involves assessing the three dimensions: economic, social and environmental [3-5].

II. THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (17 SDGs) are accompanied by 169 specific targets and are part of the strategic document called "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted in New York on 25.09.2015 by the governments of 193 countries within the UN Summit on Sustainable Development [5-7]. The development of this strategic document was based on a series of steps that have taken place since 1971 (see Figure 1) [2].
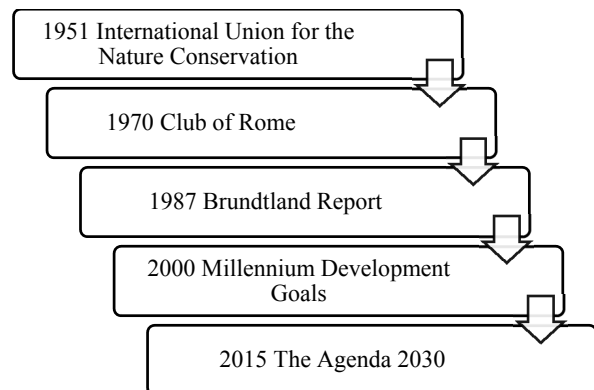

Fig. 1. The evolution of Agenda 2030

This document provides a new global strategic framework to eliminate all forms of poverty, to combat inequalities and to combat climate change. Agenda 2030 integrates in a balanced way the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Agenda 2030 cannot be shared, it needs to be implemented as a whole, in an integrated and not fragmented manner, based on the fact that goals and targets are closely linked [8].

The 2030 Agenda presents 4 sections:
(a) A political declaration;
(b) the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets;
(c) Means of Implementation;

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[1] Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania, matei.tamasila@upt.ro
[2] Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania, larisa.ivascu@upt.ro
3 Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania, alin.artene@upt.ro

(d) a framework for follow up and review of the Agenda (European Commission, 2018).

Agenda 2030 includes a powerful control and review mechanism that allows all organizations to assess the impact of their actions. This approach is supervised globally by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development [8-9].

For organizations, these goals provide directions for developing their own strategies and provide a reference framework for organizational capacity. The objectives of this agenda will guide the activities of existing institutions and organizations at local, national and global level. Local authorities, Shareholders, multilateral organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations will develop programs and directions, will allocate resources and will control the proposed activities in order to achieve the proposed objectives. All this will influence markets, logistics chains, improve people's access to information, technology and innovation, generating opportunities for economic and social progress [8-10].

On global markets, meeting agenda goals will generate the following [5-11]:

- Strengthening new markets for sustainable products and services;
- Globalization of service and product markets;
- Reengineering the organizational processes;
- Reducing the amount of waste generated;
- Pressures on the business environment to make more efficient use of resources;
- Passing economic agents to use energy from renewable energy sources;
- Increasing the living standards of companies
- New opportunities for communities, consumers and employees offered by sustainable products and services;
- New projects for the development of infrastructure for energy production, water distribution, transportation and rehabilitation of the quality of life of all.

Environmental sustainability for the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda is presented in a structure as shown in Table 1, including the 17 SDGs. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are global directions, with each authority, company or institution being able to implement actions in these directions.

The Agenda 2030 is not a mandatory for companies or institutions, but there are a number of rules and procedures which implies achieving these goals (e.g. the EU Action Plan for Circular Economy adopted on 2 December 2015, the 2014 Directive / 95 / EU on the obligation of large companies to report annually a number of non-financial and diversity-related aspects of the workplace, COP 21 - Global Climate Change Agreement, et. al.) [2].

Table 1. Environmental sustainability for the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda

Dimension	Goal	Short description
Healthy Ecosystems	SDG 15	Restoration of terrestrial ecosystems
	SDG 2	Food safety and sustainable agriculture
Improve soil & water	SDG 6	Sustainable water management and sanitation for all
Safeguard the oceans	SDG 14	Sustainable use of marine resources
Environmental governance	SDG 10	Reducing inequalities between countries
	SDG 16	Responsibility of society and equity of institutional levels
	SDG 4	Lifelong learning
	SDG 5	Equality between women and men
Reduce pollution & waste	SDG 3	Healthy life at all ages
Boost renewable energy	SDG 7	Affordable prices and sustainable resources
Increase resource efficiency	SDG 9	Promoting industrialization and stimulating innovation
	SDG 12	Sustainable consumption and efficient production
Live & prosper sustainably	SDG 8	Promoting economic growth, productive and decent work
	SDG 1	Eradicate poverty in all its forms
	SDG 11	Developing secure living environments
Combat climate change	SDG 13	Urgent action to combat climate change

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

3.1. Analysis of the Romanian achievements related to the 2030 Agenda

The UE has taken steps to reach the 17 SDGs. Some progress has been made in some areas and other actions have not yet been taken. The greatest progress has been made with: SDG 7 "affordable and clean energy", SDG 12 "responsible consumption and production", SDG 15 "life on land", SDG 11 "sustainable cities and communities" and SDG 3 "good health and well-being". Moderate progress is recorded on 8 goals, as follows: SDG 4 "quality education", SDG 17 "partnership for the goals", SDG 9 "industry, innovation and infrastructure", SDG 5 "gender equality", SDG 8 "decent work and economic growth", SDG 1 "no poverty", SDG 2 "zero hunger" and SDG 10 "reduced inequalities". Evaluating Goal Achievement is accomplished by specifying a decrease or an increase of an indicator for two selected periods [5-7].
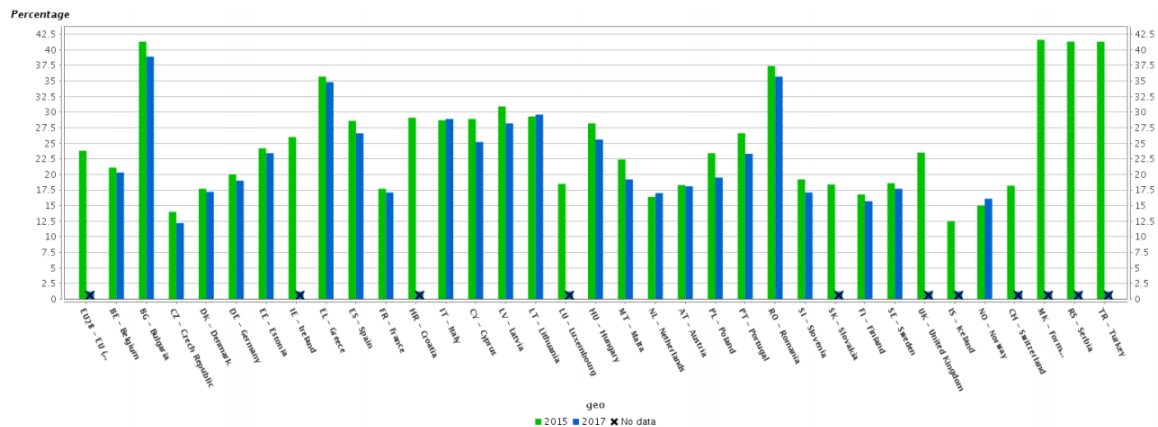
Fig. 2. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by country, 2015 and 2018 (% of population) (European Commission, 2018)

Assessing "People at risk of poverty and social exclusion", Figure 2, it can be noticed that Romania started to work in this direction, the percentage registered in 2015 was 37.4%, and in 2017 it was recorded a level of 35.7% [2].

From this point of view, country-specific approaches aim at encouraging fiscal and structural reforms (including social policies) that contribute to reducing poverty and poverty inequality. All other objectives are evaluated annually by the European Union in order to achieve them. Quantitative assessments are being carried out, with all objectives being pursued. From the perspective of Romania, the achievement of the 17 objectives is an approach to which he joined, a series of activities have been undertaken and several roles have been assumed [2]. Through an evaluation of the 17 SDGs, the following market trends in Romania can be systematized, Table 2.

It can be noticed that Romania is taking steps to reach the 17 SDGs and targets proposed. Strategies and approaches developed at national level contribute to achieving global goals [2].

Table 2. The market trends in Romania regarding SDGs [2-7]

Global Goal	Implication for Romania
SDG 1: No poverty	Romania needs to implement this goal at national level, as is done by each country. At national level, more than 40% of citizens live to the limit of survival, in poverty. Over 45% of children have major resource needs. In order to eradicate poverty, Romania needs to implement a series of rules and procedures. The country has some institutional challenges and the national strategy to eradicate poverty needs to be improved. Romania's main objective is to reduce the number of people living in poverty by 2020 by 400,000.
SDG 2: No hunger	Romania has started a series of collaborations with associations which are active in the field of agriculture, to strengthen this sector. Under the national rural development program of the country, farmers will have access to new funds that will help them to modernize their tools and equipment. At the same time, they will gain access to new product placement markets. They will have several alternatives for rural incomes, such as agro-tourism.
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	"The National Health Strategy of Romania for 2014-2020: Health for Prosperity" is proof of the commitment of the main actors and the Romanian government in assuring and promoting health as the main player of a prosperous country. Strategic principles include: equal access to essential services of life, cost efficiency, optimization of health services offered, focusing on services and preventive interventions, decentralization, international partnerships.
SDG 4: Quality Education	From the perspective of the quality of education at European Union level, Romania's position can be improved. At a global level, several steps are being taken, focusing on stimulating more complex responses and actively involving children in activities designed to develop different skills. Romania foresees several steps in the national strategy.
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Equality between men and women is one of the major objectives of the European Union. The Romanian legislation covers the fundamental principles of European Community legislation, these principles being already transposed into national legislation on human rights. Romania has a national strategy for equal opportunities between women and men. It responds through practical measures and activities to identified problematic situations.
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	Over 90% of Romania's water resources are collected by the Danube River. Human activities have affected the quality of groundwater and soil. Approximately 55% of all monitored rivers can be used as sources of drinking water. Approximately 46% of all potential resources are technically usable, mainly due to contamination. Satisfaction of water needs in all fields will be possible in the future only by carrying out major hydrotechnical works.

16

SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	Depending on geographic regions, Romania can develop production systems for all types of renewable energy. Romania's potential for green energy production is composed of: 65% biomass, 18% wind energy, 13% solar, 5% hydropower, 2% solar energy and geothermal.
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	Economic growth is associated with the level of industrialization and innovation that exists at national level. Romania needs to implement new technologies in industrial processes based on greenhouse gas emissions.
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Innovation and industrialization are directions that contribute to improve the quality of life at national level. At the level of Romania, the innovation process will find new directions, and the national strategy provides attracting funds to support companies.
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	Reducing inequalities at national level is an approach that tracks existing actions at global level.
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	The development of sustainable cities contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the quality of life. Romania provides in the "Environment Strategy" a series of actions to be followed.
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production	Romania is involved in reducing the amount of waste by 2030. Methods used in waste management must aim at prevention, reduction, recycling and re-use. The logistics chain must implement a series of resource efficiency measures.
SDG 13: Climate Action	National policies, strategies and plans aim at measures to reduce gas emissions.
SDG 14: Life Below Water	Prevention of water pollution is the action targeted in the national strategy. At the same time, a series of actions to improve water quality are foreseen.
SDG 15: Life on Land	Conservation and forest management are activities tackled at national level. Romania needs to increase the extent of forests and plantations.
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	The reduction of violence and other forms of violence are planned at national level.
SDG 17: Partnerships for The Goals	Strengthening internal organizational resources, including international support granted to Romania to improve its internal tax collection and other revenue, are important actions to strengthen partnerships.

3.2. Incorporating the SDGs in National Frameworks and Means of Implementation

The process of localizing the 2030 Agenda to the particularities of Romania is made through the upcoming review of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The revised strategy aims to be innovative and intuitive in the sense that, instead of just proposing policies that contribute to a more sustainable future, it also seeks to add a sustainable component to other strategies that are either directly or indirectly involved in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the target audience is not only public servants, experts, and politicians, but also the civil society. As such, Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy is the way of guiding public policy and justifying the principles of the 2030 Agenda for the national audience.

There are three issues encountered while revising Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy which, presents a learning experience for other countries which are currently considering ways of incorporating the SDGs in their respective national frameworks. These are:
- Involving all segments of society;
- Having experts;
- A robust monitoring system.

Firstly, involving all segments of society is critical. Sustainable Development, being a vast topic, requires a plurality of opinions if its spirit is to be preserved in its integrity. Specialists tend to see their niche as the most crucial aspect of any given subject, and it is only through building bridges that one can find the balance. That requires bringing politicians, public servants, NGOs, the private 9 sector, academics, and civil

society together and, at the same time, being aware of the specificities of the national context which it seeks to address.

Secondly, Sustainable Development requires experts that deal specifically with its complexities and nuances, and that requires training in the spirit of SDG 4: Quality Education. Romania's Ministry of Labor and Social Justice has recently recognized the title of "*Expert in Sustainable Development*", a new profession which, medium to long-term, will help enhance the act of incorporating the SDGs into Romanian public policy. There is envisioned a team of experts in every public institution, and these experts will act as a liaison between the public institution and the related department for the Ministry of Environment. Such experts will help boost inter-ministerial collaboration as well as help inform the public institution, they are working for about the importance of sustainability.

Third, monitoring Romania's progress by quantifying the SDGs into measurable indicators is essential in making sure things are on the right track. Considering the shift ushered in by the 2030 Agenda, experts and researchers have considered that Romania is currently in the process of updating its Sustainable Development indicator set – and this is an essential part of both the upcoming National Sustainable Development Strategy and the upcoming Action Plan which seeks to build upon the former by having a more specific, in-depth, character. To achieve this, the Ministry of Environment is closely collaborating with the National Institute of Statistics by bridging both the United Nations', and the European Union's indicator sets to choose the right indicators to address Romania's specificities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Romania is a supporter of the "Leave no one behind!" promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, according to which the UN Member States recognized that the dignity of the individual is fundamental and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets should be met for all countries and especially for all segments of society.

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015 sets the foundations that contribute to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Romania has the capacity to align itself with sustainable development goals, but a series of organizational actions must be imposed. The evaluation of the 17 objectives was done in a qualitative way to emphasize the national capacity for sustainable development. Existing organizations must join this approach and contribute to achieving the goals. Each objective must be pursued at national level and evaluated qualitatively to highlight its status. This assessment is carried out at national level by each country. There is also a qualitative assessment at EU level. The global assessment is carried out over a longer period following national reporting. Among the strategic steps to be taken at the level of Romania are:

- Improvement of the national strategy for environmental protection;
- Supporting purchases of electric vehicles;
- Improvement of public transport;
- Implementation of participatory management;
- Supporting forms of lifelong learning;
- Implementation of integrated management systems for municipal waste;
- Increase recycling rate through education.

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