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**ELEMENTS OF FOOD SECURITY IN ROMANIA IN THE  
CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT**

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**Abstract:**

Sustainable development - as a concept - had as its starting point the global economic crisis at the beginning of the twentieth century, reaching today the inclusion of all economic, social, and human spheres. This is the new path of humanity. For it is a concept that promotes the conciliation between economic and social progress and the balance of the planet in terms of environmental quality. The explosive growth of the planet's population comes with difficult problems for billions of people: hunger, lack of water, depreciation of the environment. These elements can lead to conflicts, which are accentuated in the current geostrategic context through: migrations due to armed conflicts and hunger, overpopulation, fewer and fewer natural resources. Food security and the ability to meet minimum needs must keep pace with climate change. In a world and an increasingly globalized economy, as a member country of the European Union (EU), Romania must capitalize on its agricultural potential. The land market, with many very fertile lands, is the resource of maximum interest in protecting the national population and ensuring food security.

*Key words: food security; sustainable development; global economy; overpopulation; own resources; economic progress;*

## **1. Introduction**

Agriculture plays a strategic role in the Romanian economy. In 2020, with the onset of the health pandemic, it was found that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a necessity: the EU's economic and agricultural cohesion is mandatory in the current global context [1]. The aim is to improve the lives of EU citizens, respecting the principles of sustainable development and the priorities related to this goal. The CAP militates to eliminate competitive disadvantages, guarantee food security, ensure fair prices for buyers, and increase productivity in agriculture [9].

## **2. Food security, as security of states**

Food security is a component of the security of every state. Own natural resources must be managed efficiently so as not to jeopardize the state and its population. The biggest problems are underdeveloped or developing countries.



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Agricultural production and food are viewed both in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality and diversity [2]. The prosperity of a nation and a society is interdependent with its food security.

The increase in the world's population and the pressure to provide food on limited areas of agricultural land has triggered the development and use of new technologies in agriculture.

Today on earth are living approx. 7,89 billion people, and by 2064 it is estimated that about 9,7 billion people will live.

The number of malnourished people is increasing every year, today they are around 855 million people; 788 million people do not have access to safe drinking water, according to [www.worldometers.info](http://www.worldometers.info) [12]. More than 1 billion people suffer from hunger because they are too poor to buy food. The agrarian system, considered at one time as "old-fashioned" work, has returned to the top of the most important activities, an important component in the GDP of developed countries.

F.A.O. gave a definition of food security: "the direct access of all people to the food they need." This concept was first defined in 1963, in Rome, when the manifesto "Proclamation of the right of every man to eat to satisfy his hunger" was launched [10].

The report "Population: one planet, too many people", prepared by the Institute of Mechanical Engineering of Great Britain, was analyzed in NATO-Review 2011 [6], as: "the population explosion in the XXI century will be hungry, lack of water, overcrowded urban areas with possible conflicts."

Sustainable practices and the anticipation of phenomena based on engineering technologies together with global measures are elements that can help states and societies [11].

According to estimates, the world's population will grow, reaching a peak of the curve between 2085-2070. There will be a decline in the curve, generally in developed countries, with stable populations, or countries with a high degree of industrialization. Populations in developing countries show an accelerated growth of citizens. It is about Africa and Asia, where internal or cross-border conflicts can occur.

Demographic trends in the EU were analyzed by the European Parliament in the report published on 19.05.2021, "How to stop the decline of the population in the regions of Europe?"

The EU is affected by the decrease in the number of births and the negative demographic increase in recent years, starting with 2015.

The COVID-19 crisis has affected birth rates and mortality in EU countries, but the consequences are ongoing, given the current evolution of the pandemic. The impact is economic, social, cultural and environmental protection.

Some regions of Eastern and Southern Europe will be depopulated due to migration to developed countries and low birth rates, he continues, in other words "brain drain".

Rural areas have 44% of the EU area, but 78% of the population lives in urban areas. The phenomenon of population aging is also witnessed due to the increase of life expectancy; in 2019 it was a percentage of 20% with people over 65 years and is estimated to reach 30% in 2070.

According to EU policies, rural areas must be connected to transport networks. The digital system, which has proved its necessity and usefulness in pandemic online education, can be part of rural development, agricultural production and modernization in food production. Jobs will be created for young people fighting the depopulation of rural areas.

In the next 40 years, according to the same British study, populations of up to 1 billion could be displaced due to climate change, drought, armed conflict, or natural disasters. This



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large-scale migration, which is already happening from Asia and Africa to Europe, is putting pressure on states in the field of security in general, but also food security.

Romania is the country with the largest number of farms - mostly family - in the EU. Out of the total agricultural area, only 2,9% is the ecological area, we being on the last places in Europe. The European average is 8.5%. Switzerland has 25%, Sweden and Estonia 20%, Italy and the Czech Republic 15%, Germany and France 7,7%, the ecological area of the total agricultural area.

The EU is preparing a number of 23 measures to lead to the development of organic farming, around 3 priority axes, namely:

- stimulating the consumption of organic products,
- increasing organic agricultural production,
- improving the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Special attention is paid to research, with an allocation of funds worth 30%.

Another important component is the consolidation of local processing and the exchange of information and good practices.

In the material "Food security in the context of a global food crisis and the rise of food power", Ms. Madalina Virginia Antonescu from the University of Bucharest, says: fertile (both in terms of classical risks, such as interstate warfare, but also unconventional risks - sudden and massive displacement of populations due to war, starvation or economic causes. " [5]

The signs of a global food crisis are spreading. Highly developed countries in terms of food, with surplus food and processing them themselves, produce additional value that is found in the country's strategy.

Romania had in 2021 a record agricultural production of cereals, of 34 million tons, of which an estimated 11 million tons of wheat, 15,4 million tons of corn, 1,3, million tons of rapeseed, 3,35 million tons sunflower: according to the Farmers' Trading House, Ziarul "Financiar". It turned out that Romania has potential, and with an irrigation infrastructure and storage space, the conductivity will increase.

Romania is one of the countries with the most fertile land in the EU. Romania's land market is undergoing continuous transformations. The geographical position of the country is favorable to agriculture; the ratio between the Arabian area and the number of inhabitants shows that each Romanian citizen has 0.41 ha / capita; the EU average is 0.212 ha / capita, according to the 2018 Eurostat Year Book; in contradiction, we also have the most fragmented agricultural area in the EU.

Romania owns 7,6% of the agricultural area used at EU level; France owns 16%, Spain 13,6%, Germany 9,6%, Poland 8,3% of EU agricultural land.

The average size of an agricultural holding in Romania is 3,6 ha compared to the EU average, which are 14,2 ha. In the structure of the agricultural area used, 63% is arable land compared to the EU average of 60%.

Romania is the largest grower of corn grains and sunflowers in the EU; on the area cultivated with wheat we are on the 5th place after France, Germany, Poland and Spain, according to Eurostat.

According to the UN, the institutions with competences in the management of the necessities in agriculture, the provision of basic food to avoid migrations, conflicts generated by the food crisis, zonal or global, are of special importance. It is necessary to combat pollution generated by food waste.



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The 2030 Agenda, with the 17 goals of sustainable development of the UN, represents the desire for a better world without poverty, inequality, hunger and without environmental degradation [7].

Objectives 1 and 2 refer to poverty and hunger. So:

\* Objective 1 - No poverty - means reducing hunger, malnutrition, limited access to education, basic services, social discrimination.

\* Objective 2 - Zero starvation - talks about rural development that must be people-centered and environmental protection, providing food for all. Climate change is putting pressure on primary resources, increasing the risks associated with disasters caused by drought, floods, rapid degradation of soils, freshwater, forests and biodiversity.

Participatory policies, social behaviors, food waste, sustainable food systems must be changed in line with new technologies.

Hunger and poverty, population aging, geopolitical instability, climate change are elements that must be studied and corrected to create the conditions for sustainable agriculture by protecting the environment [8].

Food waste is on the rise worldwide.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Report conducted in 2019-2020, it revealed that globally, approx. 2,5 billion tons of food at the level of farms, retailers and consumers, compared to 1,2 billion tons estimated to be lost and / or wasted [3].

The study conducted by the UN and FAO in 2011 showed that 33% of world food production was wasted.

Compared to the results of the studies and the reality regarding the food resources, it is necessary to take urgent measures to limit the food waste.

Food waste is a widespread phenomenon, the decline of which requires education and investment. The most wasted foods are fruits, vegetables and bread, and the culprits are mostly consumers and restaurants.

In the WWF study, Romania was part of the research. The Romanians participating in the study, in percentage of 83%, stated that they usually throw food.

The crisis caused by the health pandemic has accentuated food waste by about 10%, according to the same study.

One proposed measure at EU level is the establishment of a European Office for Food Waste Management.

In order to provide food for the population, the minimum requirement should be 30% more; annually, in a period of crisis, there must be agro-food products necessary for the Romanian population.

### **3. Conclusion**

Agriculture is one of the strategic sectors of the country. Along with health, during the pandemic, this is the basic area through which food is provided to the population, being necessary [3, 4]:

- Redirecting food to other markets has put pressure on the EU food sector.
- Supporting local producers, supporting the lot because they are pillars of Romanian food security.
- Encouraging young people to set up farms and support them by the state; they are providers of healthy, green food.



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- Reconciling the economic development and the ecological balance of the planet, in the context of the exponential growth of the world's population.
- Protecting its own primary resources, Romania's agricultural land, and its exploitation respecting the principles of sustainable development and environmental protection.

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