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Towards a Sociological Constructivist Approach to Rural Mountain Areas. Recent Developments of Policies, Practices and Performers

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ABSTRACT

After a short presentation of the mountain area from a sociological point of view (containing general data, aspects of the advantages it offers, about the influences, the opportunities and the dangers of globalization), the authors recall the ideas stated in the *Ecological Chart of the Mountain Regions in Europe*, and propose a conceptual framework (as a necessary condition for any policy which is based on the mountain space), starting from economic, social and environmental indicators; special attention is given to maintain a rigorous approach, so that the concepts might become operational (without forgetting that the metalanguage used can, sometimes, leave room for subjective interpretations). Then, certain characteristics of the rural mountain area are identified, their specific features within a European and a Romanian context, as well as the life conditions in this space - based on the data and the information which appear in statistics, in various outcomes of researches of different disciplines, in national sources, in a number of databases, etc. Due to its specificity, the issue of the rural mountain area has to be treated with much precaution (in order that a collective ample European and national action can be implemented). Thus, alongside the study of the soil and its natural characteristics, it is important that we highlight the results of studies in demographics, in the endangered community spaces, in the prevention measures, as well as a study of the spatial and temporal components and the conditions of developing communities in mountain areas. This type of methodological enterprise implies multiple interconnections between natural sciences and social sciences. The authors propose the concept of local ecosystem-village, in which the practical activities of the local actors is individualized. Then, they identify the main ideas from the specific legislation regarded the mountain area in the EU and Romania, the nowadays world-wide preoccupation in this domain (FAO exigences) and in the EU, as well as various (trans) national institutions, agreements, initiatives and tools. A useful chapter is dedicated to the sociological analysis in elaborating a policy for the mountain area (the importance of the level of political engagement, of the implication of the private sector as well as of the local communities, the inhabitants of these areas themselves, in showing the importance of an equilibrium between the technical evaluation and the local involvement, and of a long-term vision which gives good justifications for its priorities). Within this context, we present a scheme for the development of the community space - *Towards a Balanced and Longlasting Spatial Development of the Territory of the European Union*. The present-day situation of the rural mountain area in our country is presented on the basis of the data in the PNDR, and of a SWOT analysis of various mountain communities (the structure of the economy in the rural mountain area, the forests, the main dangers for the mountain, for the cultural heritage, as well as the effects of the physical and psychological isolation of its inhabitants). The authors mention a number of political options, of strategies and objectives for the development of the mountain areas, of the de-favoured mountain communities (the justification of the priorities in the *Strategic National Plan*, and the *Law regarding the outdoor activities*, etc.).

1. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The mountain has been photographed, filmed, artistically depicted (in paintings, novels), mapped (in

pedological, geological maps, cadastral surveys), and travel and hiking guides have been drawn up. It has been the subject of studies, data and available information collections in different scientific

disciplines¹ and statistics. We find out information about the mountain from national and international sources, from political, legislative, administrative entities, from the speeches of politicians, from statements, interviews, press conferences, press releases, from committees reports, from substantiation of bills, from scientific literature summarized in the preamble of some projects, from mass information sources.

Research represents a time and money - consuming but strictly necessary work, because only based on research can we overcome conceptual weaknesses, pre-scientific vocabulary, and lack of rigor. Certainly, the scientific language referring to the *mountain* is not very different from spontaneous words and phrases used by everyone in daily life. However, definitions are needed – as sociologist Emile Durkheim used to say – that take science away from ready-made and preconceived ideas, from unsupported allegations. More rigorous conceptualization is necessary in order to build-up laws, valid, unambiguous regulations, so as to reduce the extent of subjective interpretations.

Semantic study allows us to mark the *mountain* out from other forms of relief (hills, plains, tablelands, plateaus, valleys, gorges, etc.), or to look at it as a whole ('mountain region', 'mountain weather', 'mountain village', 'mountain policy', even 'mountain songs', etc.). Words identify both the mountain as a form of relief, and people's life as communities, in connection with their activities and lifestyle, with the opportunities and risks of living in the mountains. But when the same term refers to several objects, it is not easy to specify and determine its field of use ... Multiple words or phrases for the same object make fiction literature abundantly rich, but they are a shortcoming when speaking about scientific papers and research reports, which are to lie at the foundation of acts, policies, programs, intervention plans and projects. If we do not find a precise meaning of words in such texts, those who transpose them in everyday reality are compelled to interpret them according to their knowledge, even their interests maybe, to make reference to mental models and representations, to social imaginary, to collective myths, and, by accident, to some models and scientific theories².

When we utter *mountain*, we think of a set of features that allow us to distinguish it. The complexity of its defining characteristics can be captured by some *indicators*, which involves a *methodology*³ for collecting and processing data concerning natural biodiversity, as well as population, social and human

resources, institutional devices, sustainable development, people's perceptions and attitudes, etc. It is important to follow both the status, and evolution of *rural mountainous regions*. As a rule, naturalists have treated ecosystems only from a biological point of view, omitting people. So did those from the social and human sciences, who have neglected the physical-chemical-biological aspects.

This approach can lead to false and reductionist interpretations of knowledge. *Multiple interconnections between approaches of natural sciences and approaches of social sciences* are necessary. Human being and village community are part of the ecosystem.

We suggest that, sociologically, *we may use the concept of RMR (rural mountainous region) to integrate people and rural communities within the functional limits of the mountain ecosystem*. The vision on RMR emerges not only from one angle. Without ignoring the contributions of natural sciences, they must be correlated with changes in population statistics, with the number of active population, of plants, externalities, networking, etc.

Knowing people sociologically in their life space reflects the reality of the mountaineers' lifestyle, social and cultural practices⁴. *RMR must be studied as a complex ensemble*, starting from natural environment, to economic and social activity, and environmental aspects.

Only being located in the mountains is not enough for providing consistency and originality to *rural mountainous regions*. We will need to find out their defining characteristics, based on comparative studies made by branches of knowledge which are able to identify their altitude⁵, genesis, structure, flora, fauna, mineral resources, climate, rainfall, annual temperature, hydrology, composition, structure and age of their forests, soils, but also characteristics of human settlements and inhabitants.

We can carry out a synthesis of knowledge, and thus contributing to information systematization, essentialisation and consolidation into a model that can better serve people who make laws, ordinances/decrees, policies, projects. One cannot neglect that a mountainous region is a social, historical and daily construct, with its historically settled characteristics.

Even the way the rural mountain communities perceive themselves, depict or imagine how things go has an impact on choices, decisions, policies, practices, performers, and on their sustainable development. By using a conceptual framework constructed in such a way, the scientific approach should set the fundamentals of decision-making and laws – where

¹ Geology, geography, pedology, hydrology, biology, but also demography, sociology, ethnology, psychology, etc.

² The semantic study highlights the meanings of the following words: mountain, mountainous, altitude, peak, slope, plateau, hill, valley, depression/basin, etc.

³http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/ecoru_0013-0559_1995_num_229_1_4751

⁴ We cannot neglect changes regarding work, leisure, holidays, new residential needs of retirees etc., which give other dimensions and importance to rural mountain areas.

⁵ Earth's crust rising above a hill's height, usually rocky and exceeding the height of 800 meters (DEX).

there is an ambitious policy regarding the mountain matter, a policy concerned with nature, but also with village life, institutions, and intervention strategies.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL AND TEMPORAL FRAMEWORK

Mountains occupy 22% of our planet's surface. FAO⁶ estimates that 720 million people (12% of world population) live in mountainous areas⁷. European mountain areas⁸ provide water, energy, food products, tourist sites, and have major importance for the ecosystem and for its rich sociocultural diversity. The mountainous regions in Romania are ranked on the 11th place in Europe (with 0.29 ha of forest/capita, compared to the European average of 0.30 ha), representing one third of the national territory, occupying 46% of the territory of 28 counties, across 3,900 mountain villages and cities. Of the total areas of this region, the agricultural ones represent about 42%, and the non-agricultural 58%. Their population is about 3.6 million inhabitants (about 47 inhabitants/km²).

Delimitation of the mountain areas start from the criteria set out in EU Directive 75/268: altitude⁹, climate, topography, and the social indicators: the remote position at national level, traditional settlements which depend on natural resources directly, fragile ecosystems threatened by overexploitation of land, of forests or their abandonment. Some RMR, with aged population¹⁰ and due to migration of young people, are in economic decline, have no employment opportunities, and bad living conditions.¹¹ Such features

can destroy sociological spaces, the economic and socio-cultural bond¹², with all the riches they possess (beauty and cleanliness of places, good quality of drinking water, forests as a source of wood, fruit, mushrooms, herbs, wildlife¹³, the network of rivers with fish)¹⁴.

In RMR, household income derives from agriculture, husbandry¹⁵, forestry activities¹⁶, mining, handicrafts, some services. The household equipment is generally low. If there is industry, it means the exploitation and primary processing of wood (sometimes processing of milk, meat, mineral water bottling, some crafts¹⁷, and mining¹⁸). If there maintained, services are often of poor quality (loss of public services means lack of access to education, healthcare and information).

Rural mountainous regions have roads that cross them. Villages are electrified (except for hamlets or remote and isolated houses). Communications (telephone exchanges, post, television) are present, but most mountain villages do not have systems for the collection and water distribution, sewage (the situation is better where mountain travel and tourism is developed¹⁹). An asset of RMR can be organic production²⁰.

In RMR, *isolation*²¹ is not only physical but also *psychological, cultural, professional*. Depopulation has left villages even more dispersed as they were before, with an increased isolation perception of those that remain there... Some people feel the lack of communication especially when problems arise in everyday life (related to supply, healthcare, etc.), which can cause insecurity and fear; mental disturbances, asthenic neuroses, and other disorders identified by sociologists may occur: alcoholism, sexual perversions, incest and even suicide; we can add celibacy – more

⁶ Food and Agricultural Organization - FAO, international governmental agency within the UN, based in Rome, created on October 16, 1945, aimed at fighting hunger and poverty, improving nutrition and food security for countries' access to adequate food for an active and healthy life. FAO promotes sustainable agriculture and rural development through its strategy to improve long-term agricultural production and food security, through intensification of agricultural farm product trade and distribution, preservation of natural resources, and particularly through increase of the living standards of rural population. In 2008, F.A.O. had 191 members, including Romania (from November 9, 1961).

⁷ In 2010, over 1 billion people were considered food insecure, which negatively affects human development, social and political stability and progress in achieving the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. Fragile states, in particular, face serious difficulties in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/biogeos/Alpine/KH7809637ROC_002.pdf

⁹ Thresholds are generally higher in mountainous countries, e.g. in Switzerland, 24% of the land is considered mountainous, by LIM definition, and the population density is one of delimitation criteria.

¹⁰ http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/rga_0035-1121_1989_num_77_1_2740rural_development is a concept designed to identify any support regarding activities for improving rural people's life through an integrated and multisectoral strategy. (http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe2/pe2_050402_en.htm)

¹¹ Many mountain homes do not have running water, electricity, heating, sanitation, etc. More recently, the RMR residents have been complaining about the townspeople's "invasion", irrevocably returning from the cities (as the effect of industrial regression and reduction of employment opportunities), about the remigrants returning to destroy traditional houses by making architectural monstrosities (*as they have seen in other places...*), about the retirees who buy houses in the country where they come to stay only for the summer, about the owners of second homes left with the blinds drawn permanently...

¹² Some have taken action regarding the elimination of local taxes on constructions in mountain areas (in Portugal), subsidies for restructuring mountain villages (in France) etc.

¹³ Stags, roes, bears, wild boars, foxes, lynxes, capercaillies, wolves, chamois etc.

¹⁴ Populated with trout, grayling, huck, chub, barbel, broad snout, etc.

¹⁵ Agricultural crops specific to the mountain areas: potato, corn, rye, oats, spring wheat, vegetables used for human and animal consumption. Fruit shrubs and medicinal plants are not systematic crops. Common animal products are: milk, meat, hides and skins, wool. Animals are reared in a less polluted natural environment, but yields are lower than those from other countries.

¹⁶ The wood volume to supply the population is about 4 million m³/year.

¹⁷ Pottery, knitwear, basketry, wooden objects, smithery-farriery, etc.

¹⁸ There have been large layoffs in the mining industry after 1990.

¹⁹ Vatra Dornei, Borsec, Covasna, Sovata, Predeal, Sinaia, Poiana Braşov, Olăneşti, Călimăneşti, Căciulata, Herculane etc.

²⁰ In Austria, for example, biologically exploited surfaces have increased from 22,500 ha and 1,500 farms in 1990 to 250,000 hectares and 18,000 farms in 1996; biologically exploited surfaces have also increased in Germany, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands etc.

²¹ Natural boundaries isolate, condition mentalities, attitudes; people living in the mountains are often perceived as being on the edge of national social space; mountains are often seen as distant and dangerous, under the prolonged effects of snow cover, avalanches, landslides, cold, falling rocks; <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/cei-mai-izolat-loc-din-romania-un-sat-calamitat-de-100-de-ani-dar-in-care-oa-966429.html>

frequent in rural mountainous regions²². Cultural isolation takes form of the sense of marginalization (RMR inhabitants get to believe they belong to a different world, whose values are impaired in relation to the "prevailing values" of society). Professional isolation occurs with inhabitants who practice a profession (agriculture is usually seen as a devalued social work), with those who, because they have no contacts that would allow update their knowledge and skills, reach forms of professional archaism: horse shoeing, manufacturing tuns, weaver's reeds (those who manufacture weaver's reeds for weaving looms), pottery, tiles of wood, belts, sheepskin waistcoats, peasant sandals/shoes, etc. *Isolation leads to sociological consequences* perceived more or less profoundly, during special times (holidays), especially by women, children and elderly (more susceptible to loneliness and solitude). Village communities decrease, people fellowship diminishes when what once would strengthen cohesion²³ now vanishes. The decline of community life cuts off group's ability to solve their own problems and to increase their independence.

The mountain traditional village society had a certain autarky and residents would identify themselves in their own values that they were proud of. Isolation was not experienced negatively, but was "in the order of things" / "as it should be". People would do everything with brains and in time to mitigate the negative effects: they would ensure food and energy self-sufficiency, prepare their cultural respite, organize social events which blended the group, the community, etc. People knew they had to make supplies for the winter - each household was supplied with flour, vegetables, fruit, meat, pickles, preserved food, remedies, medicines should they be ill. The village, the community would built their temporary autonomy, people knew to be, to do, to have everything they needed...

2.1. For a European policy of the mountain

The RMRs have not always received due attention from those responsible for their management and development. The proposed development "models" have often proved themselves unsuitable for their economic, social and environmental situation. The aim was primarily exploitation of natural resources. Now, the RMRs experience globalization, mundialization. Some of them have become even more fragile and threatened ecosystems than never before because of the massive cuts, by way of economic and socio-cultural life (re)structuring and functioning, not only as a consequence of heavy snow, ice, extreme temperatures, strong winds. Mountain biotopes and ecosystems should be protected, for their restoration is difficult and takes time. RMRs cannot become just amusement parks

²² Low human density as a result of rural exodus, disarticulation of age groups structures etc.

²³ Celebrations, sewing bees, fairs, markets, group work / chirrurers etc.

or museums... All interventions²⁴ should be authorized by competent specialists who have first consulted the RMR populations.

A few decades ago, *The Ecological Charter for Mountain Regions in Europe*²⁵ (May 21, 1976) considered the European mountain regions "natural common heritage whose value must be recognized by all". It warned that water, air, soil pollution, landscape degradation, reduction or disappearance of animal and plant species destroy this patrimony's balance, and are a veritable "attack on common heritage". The Charter urged that every individual and each community must feel solidary with mountain regions.

After the Charter's appearance, mountainous areas have been the subject of planning and development policies in numerous countries. Those involved were encouraged and helped to fight against the degradation of natural and social environment (which had begun to be subjected to development plans), being considered that each mountain area was a biological and a human entity as a whole. The plans aimed at:

- *prevention of natural risks*²⁶;
- *legal measures on fire prevention*²⁷;
- *preserving the genetic material of endangered mountain species*;
- *conservation of biodiversity and integrity of biotic communities of plants and animals*;
- *appropriate management of hunting* (correct regulation of animal density);
- *preservation of landscapes*, of fragile and vulnerable natural, half-natural and cultural environments;
- *maintenance of rural mountain life* with its originality, with its specific human activities;
- *development of tourism and related facilities*, etc.

The Chart underlined the need for a *European policy of the mountain* (which was supposed to complement national policies)²⁸. The Economic and Social Committee proposed a *common policy for mountain areas* (1988); in the 1990s the *European*

²⁴ Be it ski slopes, ski chairlifts, roads, electric lines and pylons, leisure and industrial equipment, etc. which may affect the natural environment.

²⁵<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=592627&SecMode=1&DocId=654502&Usage=2>

²⁶ Such as avalanches, floods, landslides, falling rocks, etc.

²⁷ Natural forests are the result of an evolution by centuries. Indigenous species are better adapted to the existing natural conditions. Replacement of indigenous forest species with exotic species (e.g., palm trees) and of specific animals (e.g., with ostriches), is prohibited.

²⁸ In the Report on behalf of the *Commission of Regional Policy and Mountain Regions Planning* (rapporteur M. Musso, May 27, 1987); the European Parliament Resolution on Mountains (November 16, 1987); *A Policy for Mountainous Areas* (April 28, 1988); the *Final Declaration of the European Conference of Mountain Regions* in Trento, Italy, (May 1988); Report on *Mountains' and People's Place in Europe* (November 16, 1988) (stating the *existence of European mountain reality* and the necessity to give it the necessary means for the implementation of development projects and programs); European Commission, *the Future of Rural World* (July 28, 1988) (which drew the outline of a rural policy according to the requirements for the EU integration).

Charter on Mountain Regions was discussed again and modified; *European Recommendations on Mountain Sustainable Development* (FNSEA and SCH, 1996) emerged; a *European mountain policy: issues, impact, measures and adjustments* (ICALPE, 1997); a *new strategy for mountain regions* (Commission for rural development, 1998); the Report on the *25 years of application of Community legislation for hill and mountain farming* (Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, 2001); *on the future of upland areas in the EU* (Economic and Social Committee, 2002); *on structurally disadvantaged regions*, including the mountainous ones (Pomés Ruiz, 2003); report on *Community action in favour of mountain regions* (Borghi, 2003), etc.

Member States Meeting concerning *Sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountain areas* (May 27, 2009, Rome) raised the issue of *Sustainable rural development in mountain areas* and producing additional income for their people (compensation of positive externalities²⁹). We must also mention the contributions made by the *Workshop on Remuneration of positive externalities*, FAO, Rome, 15-16 April 2009, by the *Workshop on How to best remunerate mountain rural people for their provision of positive externalities*, Vienna International Centre, May 19, 2009, by the *Consultation workshop on policies, institutions and processes implemented*, Addis Abeba, May 22, 2009, by the *Summary of the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M) member states meeting*, May 27, 2009.

Conventions³⁰, international agreements etc. have become important tools for the implementation of mountain policies. A report by Jacques Blanc³¹ in 2011, on behalf of the European Affairs Committee, however, showed that the *mountains enjoy many European measures, but this allegation is wasted within various policies... There is no mountain policy in Europe, but a variety of EU policies with an impact on mountainous regions... Therefore,*

- *Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)* contains specific provisions for mountains (farmers have received support for organization of agricultural markets, export subsidies for beef or milk quotas);

- the European mountain regions have been helped with *compensations for natural handicaps (ICHN)*³² ;

- PHAE (agri-environmental grassland premium/prime herbagère agri-environnementale) was created in 2003 as a contractual device for maintaining environmentally sound agricultural practices;

- *the farmer set-up support for young farmers* (€ 16,500 - € 35,900 for the construction of stables, farm modernization, purchase of specific materials, etc.);

- other measures: agri-environmental payments *for maintaining transhumance and pastoralism practice, quality production, diversification, tourism*, and for *innovative projects* support.

Since mountain areas cover about one third of the EU territory, no policy could afford to neglect them (as there is a justification for their presence in the *regional development policies*). *Structural funds* pay "special attention to mountain regions" (having regard for the principle of subsidiarity). On their turn, *sectoral policies* concern transportation (which has a leading role in disenclavement of massifs³³), environment³⁴, research, education and culture³⁵. All *EU programs* have had positive effects generally. *The Treaty of Lisbon* has introduced the territorial dimension in the policy of the EU cohesion, and underlined the need to pay particular attention to mountain areas³⁶, a *European strategy on economic and social development of mountain regions* was adopted by the European Parliament on September 22, 2010, the policy objectives were set for the 2007-2013 period (table 1).

The ongoing financial crisis has challenged national budgets and solidarity among the Member States (each state tries to keep expenses under control, the EU takes measures to strengthen budgetary discipline and the pressure to limit the EU budget is very strong³⁷...). The European Commission has worked on the concept of *functional area*, starting from which to develop and promote a *European definition of the mountain*.

areas (the budget was €350 million Euros in 1998, of € 515 million Euros in 2009, of which € 283 million from EAFRD).

³³ For example, the *Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)* policy from 1996, in order to facilitate the movement of people and goods.

³⁴ The LIFE program has acknowledged the specific character of the *mountain biogeographical regions*; an evaluation will be made in 2015.

³⁵ Focus on quality and efficiency of education and training (e.g., the "the Culture" EU program is designed to facilitate exchanges between different mountain regions).

³⁶ Article 174: In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion aiming at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions. Among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as [...] mountain regions.

³⁷ http://www.realitatea.net/sub-socul-crizei-merkel-si-sarkozy-propun-modificarea-trataelor-ue_889736.html. Measures concerning financial discipline, labor market, convergence and harmonization of taxes, introduction of a tax on financial transactions, policies to stimulate economic growth and to improve the use of EU funds within the euro area, etc.

²⁹ *Positive externalities* refer to goods and services provided by mountain and not taken into account on the market (quality of water, soil, and trees, cultural heritage, tourism, rural tourism, quality products, local institutions concerned with mountain issues etc.).

³⁰ The Alpine Convention, signed in 1991, the Carpathian Convention, signed in 2003 by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine, with objectives to be implemented through thematic protocols. Romania has had a special PHARE program on "Mountain agriculture", implemented with the help of France and Germany.

³¹ A European mountain policy, on April 27, 2011

³² This allowance is the main measure of support for agriculture in mountain areas, in order to maintain sustainable activities in these

Table 1. The policy objectives were set for the 2007-2013 period.

Objectives	Priorities	Shall be eligible	Funds	Amounts
CONVERGENCE	Support for regions and least developed states	Regions with a GDP / capita = 75% of the EU-15 average and 75% of the EU-27 average	ESF and ERDF	81.54% = € 251 billion Euros
Regional Competitiveness and Employment	Jobs and economic competitiveness	Regions not covered by the Convergence objective, Member States propose the list of regions	ESF and ERDF	15,95% € 49 billion Euros
EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION	A harmonious and balanced development of the EU	Border regions and transnational cooperation	ERDF	2.52% = €7.75 billion Euros

RMR has many strong points so as to contribute to the *EU2020 Strategy* and its *development objectives*: sustainable, intelligent, inclusive, green. In the Member States, *operational programs*³⁸ should become the main tools for managing the funds allocated for achieving these objectives.

At European level *we are in a crucial moment for the implementation of a European mountain policy that will implement local sustainable development initiatives, for rediscovering identity, self-development, fair compensation and infrastructure services offered by the mountain population to the entire society*³⁹.

2.2. Concerns for RMR in some EU Member States

Despite some of their own, original features, the mountain policies of EU member countries have also common interests.

In Italy, *Act of 1923*, the *Italian Constitution of 1948*, *Act of 1952* formally defined the mountain areas and gave related policies a character as comprehensive and integrated as possible, based on the long tradition of freedom of communes, on regionalization and decentralization.

In France, the *Montagne Act* emerged only in 1985, which is partly explained by the centralist tradition⁴⁰ (which wanted that the same rules be evenly applicable throughout the country). But France took numerous measures in favour of mountains: the 1882 and 1922 regulations on *upper lands rehabilitation*, concerning *protection forests*, *Act 1972 on pastures*, the creation of the *special mountain allowance* in 1973 etc. For a long time after the Second World War, Germany used to have a major area declared as disadvantaged.

³⁸ LEADER programs can mobilize EAFRD funds for development projects in rural areas, starting with local action groups (LAG). The European Union develops cooperation tools, such as INTERREG, EGTC (European Group of Territorial Cooperation), with interregional and cross-border vocation (for a mountain range a macro strategy can be built, such as the Danube's).

³⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/rurdev/mountain_fr.pdf
<http://www.senat.fr/presse/cp20110504a.html>; the proposal to develop a Own-initiative opinion of the Committee of the Regions '*For a Green Paper – Towards a European Union policy for upland regions: A European vision for upland regions*', January 31, 2008.

⁴⁰ Republic is one and indivisible.

The State left the Lands wide competences regarding development in rural mountainous regions. Therefore, Germany has no specific *national* legislation, but policies on mountains have been implemented by these provinces since 1940 (e.g. in Bavaria, in Baden Wurttemberg, etc.).

In Austria, mountains occupy an important part of the national territory (60-70%). In these cases, the mountain is not a marginal area, but a core of the national territory and of relevant policies.

In Greece, Spain, and Portugal mountains have not been the subject of specific policies before these countries' joining the EU (before the CEE Directive 75/268).⁴¹ One explanation could be that Mediterranean mountains - except the Pyrenees - have not gained experience in tourism, which would have facilitated rise to prominence of the mountains in the 'national consciousness' and the construction of adequate public policies.

Generally, policies have been selective, according to circumstantial, time-limited, "horizontal" (social and economical) criteria (e.g. help for increasing revenue of all small EU mountain producers).⁴² Therefore, national experiences are not immediately and fully transferable to the EU level. Generally, those locally involved in mountain sustainable development insist on the idea that areas concerned have *special conditions* affecting economic and social life, and EU develops policies based on development goals at a *united Europe territory's scale*, although EU always reminds about its readiness to support disadvantaged, fragile areas.

What do the mountain areas policies stipulate?

When referring to agriculture, they take into account that it is done according to soil fertility, climatic conditions, traditions, markets, etc., and so diagnosis is pessimistic (areas in decline, the aging population, low productivity, etc.). The measures provide:

- subsidies for *investments in farms*;

⁴¹<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31975L0268:EN:NOT>

⁴²A 1991 report of the European Court of Auditors gives an insight into the evolution of the philosophy of the implemented devices, including compensation payments which had to encourage agricultural practices that preserved the environment, farmers with low incomes etc.

- *direct payments* to farmers;
- facilities for *improving equipment and infrastructure*;
- grants for *young farmers set-up support*;
- support for *pasture maintenance*;
- *special dairy produce quota*, for mountain areas;
- special label for *quality products*;
- support for *organic farms*, etc.

When considering forestry, policies start from the finding that forests vary according to environmental conditions, species, planting systems, productivity, property system⁴³, but play an important role in the RMR economy, provide opportunities for leisure and tourism etc. The measures aim at:

- support for *plantations*, covering the costs of *reforestation*;
- support for the *native species conservation*;
- compensatory allowances for *sustainable forest management*;
- support for *protection forests expansion*⁴⁴;
- *fire prevention and control*, etc.

Mining was (and still is) an important and traditional activity in (some) mountain areas, due to mineral resources that have been the main driver of the 19th century industrial revolution; now, however, numerous mining exploitations have been 'reorganized' because they 'are no longer competitive', and in their place appeared... commercial areas, demolished buildings or converted into 'tourist attractions'...

Manufacturing activities, handicrafts vary from one mountain area to another: food processing (cheese, sausages, preserved food), winter sports equipment, innovative activities (e.g. car testing)⁴⁵.

Tourism⁴⁶ has played an important role in RMR, as early as from the mid-19th century (e.g. in Austria, tourism contribution to GDP represents about 15%, and it is also given an important role in Bulgaria⁴⁷ etc.).

⁴³ For example, in Poland, 90% is state property, while in Portugal, 85% is privately owned.

⁴⁴ 65% in Finland, 60% in Germany, 32% in Austria, 15% in Slovakia.

⁴⁵ In Austria, for example, manufacturing activities occupy 36% of the RMR labor force; in Italy 25%, in France 22%. The measures support traditional artisans, local SMEs, provide preferential credits for rehabilitation measures, for development of NICT, for promoting telework.

⁴⁶ All kinds of tourism forms can be found now in the mountain areas: mass tourism, specific interest tourism (hot springs, historical monuments, hiking, hunting), rural tourism (summer holidays, trips, kayaking, rafting), tourism resorts (riding, hiking, travel on weekends, etc.).

⁴⁷ In Bulgaria, the PHARE project "Development of the Bulgarian Ecotourism" has involved an important partnership (with NGOs etc.) and has been centered on the mountain areas, and the objectives are: improving the quality of ecotourism, giving its contribution to GDP growth, extending the tourism season, etc. In the Czech Republic, an ambitious program to develop tourism, especially in thermal mountain resorts is ongoing and its objectives are: improving aid and legal framework for business activities in tourism, promotion and development of information and education systems, development of infrastructure and of touristic sector of products with local specificity, etc.

- What do the related policies support now?
- *renovation of historic villages*;
 - improving the *quality of accommodation offer*;
 - *infrastructure restructuring*;
 - *ski infrastructure modernization*, etc.;
 - promotion of *other local tourist attraction factors* (landscape, cultural heritage, traditions);
 - *extending the tourist season*, etc.

The infrastructure of mountainous regions is generally perceived as being of poor quality⁴⁸ and it remains in attention of policies that aimed at:

- *reclassification of forest roads* and their arrangement for general traffic;
- *traffic restrictions for heavy trucks* (high taxes, special roads);
- infrastructure for *mobile telephone networks*;
- subsidies for *satellite technologies*, etc.

Landscapes are not simply a result of natural processes, but also of human intervention over generations (this is how abandoned fields, buildings, roads etc. have appeared and changed sceneries). Several measures are taken into account:

- touristic facilities should protect mountain scenery (any change must have the expert opinion of the competent ministry);
- *knowledge improvement* regarding vulnerability and risk assessment and their *integration into sustainable development plans*;
- *intervention plans* for flood prevention, for reforestation, etc.

What do policies for disadvantaged mountain regions provide⁴⁹?

Measures have been taken in their favor even since 1975.

In 1979, *integrated development programs* started to be implemented. *Single European Act* in 1986 targeted an *economic and social cohesion policy*, the combined intervention of EU funds.

The quota policy guaranteed the price for an exact quantity of products (with special conditions with regard to milk production). CAP insisted (in 1992) on *afforestations* and encouraged *environmentally friendly techniques and technologies*. In 1996, the *Declaration on sustainable rural development* was made public in ten points⁵⁰.

New guidelines took shape during 2000-2007 (in the context of some new emerging EU countries)⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Germany, Austria, etc. are exempted in this regard, due to massive and continuous investment in transport infrastructure (roads and railways have facilitated access even in the most remote areas).

⁴⁹ http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/rga_0035-1121_2004_num_92_2_2287

⁵⁰ The Cork Declaration: *Un milieu rural vivant* (The European Conference on Rural Development, Cork, Ireland, November 7-9, 1996).

⁵¹ *The Rural Development Regulations* sets out 22 objectives. Specific measures for mountain areas are included within those on less developed regions, on regions undergoing conversion, or within those related to human resource development.

2.3. Towards a *balanced and sustainable spatial development of the European Union territory*

The *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP) was approved in Potsdam in May 1999⁵². Member States and the European Commission have agreed on guidelines for future development of the European Union:

- conservation and management of natural foundations of life and cultural heritage;
- *a more balanced competitiveness of the European territory*;
- *economic and social cohesion*⁵³.

There was a demand for a *territorial approach*, for policies with territorial impact (*the EU competition policy, trans-European networks, structural funds, common agricultural policies, environmental policies, research, technology and development, European Investment Bank loans, etc.*). The EU territory is of a great *diversity* which potentially is a growth factor and *must be maintained as the European integration progresses*.

Common policies must not standardize local and regional identities. The problem is that different countries, regions, communities do not enjoy the same conditions and resources. There are gaps among them⁵⁴. Economically weaker regions, despite the convergence efforts, have recovered only a part of these gaps. Hence, there is the concern for *progressive economic integration, for a greater cooperation between the Member States, for increasing the local communities' involvement*. But a policy oriented exclusively towards equilibrium would not lead to... a weakening process of strong regions and a strengthening process of the less favored regions' dependence? Only the combination of objectives *like development, balance, conservation, and their weighting according to specific local situations* can enable a *balanced and sustainable development of the EU*⁵⁵. For this purpose, the objectives are:

- *quality products*;
- *niche markets* (e.g. organic products);
- *attractiveness for tourist purposes* of the RMR;
- *facilitation of multiple activities*⁵⁶ (farming, of course, but also non-agricultural activities⁵⁷);

⁵² A good presentation of it are in the work carried out under INCD URBAN INCERC former CDCAS (Documentation Centre for Construction, Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning), Bucharest, 2003.

⁵³ Especially the *European Regional Development Fund* (ERDF), which aims at economic and social cohesion.

⁵⁴ Thus, within the regions delimited by the metropolitan areas of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg - 20% of the surface and 40% of the EU population contribute with 50% to the EU GDP.

⁵⁵ Integrated development planning, by using the principle of partnership that integrates all the concerned stakeholders in the decision making process.

⁵⁶ Its impact varies widely from region to region, partly depending on specific environmental, cultural, social and economic circumstances and conditions, and according to the types of production and market

- *networking of various stakeholders* (communities, institutions, companies) at different levels, from different countries, but also within the same country;

- *pilot projects, experience exchanges, analysis of wrong and good practices* etc.

2.4. Situation of RMR in Romania

Our country is well-known for its great *biodiversity*⁵⁸. Thus, in terms of *flora* have been identified 3,700 species of plants (of which 23 are natural monuments, 74 in danger of extinction⁵⁹, 39 are endangered, 171 vulnerable and 1,253 are very rare). As regards the *fauna*, there have been identified 33,792 species, of which 33,085 invertebrates and 707 vertebrates.

Out of the 191 species of fish, 11 species are endangered, 16 are vulnerable and 11 are very rare. Out of the 364 bird species, 18 are endangered and 17 are vulnerable. Out of 102 mammal species, 19 are endangered, 26 vulnerable and 13 are very rare. We have about 5,600 brown bears (60% of the European brown bear population), about 3,000 wolves (40% of European population of wolves), and 1,500 lynxes. Bisons have disappeared from the forests of Romania for over a century and today they live in reservations⁶⁰.

Romania is known for its great *biogeographical diversity* (we have 5 of the 11 European regions). We have 783 types of habitats (including 196 specific to pastures and hayfields⁶¹, 206 forest habitats, 90 habitats specific to rocky areas).

The total surface of protected areas is about 1.86 million ha (13 national parks, 13 nature parks⁶², 981 natural reservations, 28 special birds and animals protection areas). Romania is one of the few European countries that still has *virgin forests*.

If we consider now the *ethno-socio-cultural diversity*, the first finding concerns the development

organization. Landscape standardization, exploitation of large wetland areas, of natural dry landscapes, groundwater pollution, and biodiversity setback must be avoided.

⁵⁷ These areas must be capitalized economically, but only through an adequate management of their cultural heritage. Many settlements are exposed to the danger of marketing and cultural leveling, which destroys their individuality and identity. The mountain tourism is seasonal, with winter season and summer season, or both, and with specific types of jobs. It is differentiated with respect to domestic and international visitors, to a range of winter and / or summer activities, which quickly become old-fashioned in many cases. It is imperative that the tourism policy adjust to local resources and combine regional development strategies with those belonging to the global economy.

⁵⁸ <http://www.romanalibera.ro/cultura/aldine/printul-charles-si-comoara-numita-transilvania-245837.html>

⁵⁹ Endangered species are that whose number is very small and decreases continuously. Species in danger of extinction are the species very scarce and at risk of disappearing.

⁶⁰ <http://www.b1.ro/cinci-zimbri-din-parcul-natural-vanatori-neam-lasati-in-libertate-24211.html>

⁶¹ Semi-natural grasslands are precious ecosystems, but giving up traditional farming activities (mowing, grazing/pasture) lead to a degradation of habitats and to landscape changes.

⁶² Among them: the Retezat National Park, the Rodna Mountains National Park etc.

gaps between RMRs⁶³. Privatization has created both opportunities, and disadvantages⁶⁴. A sociological analysis, based on field data, can indicate us weakness and strengths, threats and opportunities of RMRs.

Weaknesses / Weak points:

- low level of incomes;
- subsistence agriculture;
- few agricultural activities;
- poor entrepreneurial culture;
- low level of professional competency;
- high unemployment rate among young people;
- little support for SMEs;
- limited access to markets;
- poor quality of infrastructure;
- few basic services;
- degradation of cultural values;
- scarcity of resources for co-financing projects;
- weak cooperation between public and private sectors;
- mistrust in associative type structures, etc.

Threats, risks:

- village depopulation, youth migration;
- the aging of the village population;
- diminishing heritage and traditions;
- lack of investments (especially during the crisis);
- postponement of infrastructure development;
- regulations that restrict the market access of the Romanian traditional products;
- reduced absorption of funds, etc.

Strengths / Strong points:

- potential for organic farming;
- sources for renewable energy;
- labor force at low costs;
- functional institutional and legal framework;
- highly valuable forests;
- protected areas, habitats;
- scarce use of chemicals;
- traditional handicrafts;
- rich cultural heritage;
- hospitality of the people, etc.

Opportunities:

- change in mentality of those who (temporarily) went abroad;
- remittances from abroad;
- European financial support;
- programs and development projects;
- agrotourism, rural tourism;
- traditional food products, etc.

In anticipation of EU accession, numerous *legislative acts and regulations* were adopted:

- *Act 1/2004* on the establishment, organization and operation of PIAA⁶⁵;
- *Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005* on support from EAFRD⁶⁶;
- *GEO No. 13/2006* on reorganization of the SAPARD Agency;
- *O.M. no. 243/2006* on measures financed by EAFRD, through PARDF and PIAA etc.

After 2007, the enactment continued in compliance with the EU requirements:

- *The National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013* (approved by the European Commission Decision No. 3837 from July 16, 2008);
- *Regulation (EC) No. 73 of 19 January 2009* establishing common standards for direct support schemes for farmers under the common agricultural policy;
- *Government Decision No. 725/2010* on the reorganization and functioning of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and some of its subordinate structures;
- *Regulation (EC) No. 65 of 27 January 2011* on the implementation of control procedures for rural development support measures etc.

*The Mountain Act*⁶⁷ regulates RMRs development and protection methods, the role of the *Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development*⁶⁸, and of other specialized bodies: *The Inter-ministry Committee* and *county committees for the mountains, the National Agency of Mountain Area* that coordinates the activity of the *Training and Innovation Centre for Development in the Carpathians*⁶⁹, which

⁶³ The competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and food industry is low, although the rural mountain regions could exploit major sources of renewable energy: solar, wind, biomass, geothermal energy.

⁶⁴ *Small farms* owned by people who are close or past retirement age; *subsistence farms*, most of them without legal personality (most of them unable to be considered farms...). *External migration* is considerable, especially that of young people. Besides its negative effects, this can have also some positive effects, if we refer to remittances from abroad, important for the rural economy on condition that they pave the way for the rural mountain areas development. Mountain villages still have the potential advantage that they keep their structure and traditional way of life, a little more than others.

⁶⁵ Payment and Intervention Agency for Agriculture (in Romanian: Agenția de Plăți și Intervenție pentru Agricultură, APIA).

⁶⁶ European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

⁶⁷ Published in Official Gazette No. 448 of June 30, 2009 (M. Of. 448/2009)

⁶⁸ Applying Governmental strategies and policies on development and environmental protection of population and mountain areas in Romania; cooperation with ministries, with other central public administration bodies and local public administration authorities in order to implement specific action plans; initiation, development of draft normative acts, as well as of integrated development programs for RMRs, monitoring the implementation of programs and projects for sustainable development in mountain areas; supporting the establishment and operation of the producers' and the farmers' professional organizations, of some forms of association; representing the interests of mountain regions in relation to other national and international institutions and bodies; methodological and technical coordination, and monitoring the activities in the mountain regions.

⁶⁹ <http://www.vatradornei.net/stiri/monitorul-de-dorna/regional/404-centrul-de-formare-si-inovatie-pentru-dezvoltare-in-carpati-vatra-dornei.html>; the Center is a public institution with legal personality,

cooperates with the *Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences "Gheorghe Ionescu-Sișești"* etc.

Chapter IV is concerned with *agri-mountain undergraduate education* (educational and scientific institutions dealing with research on mountain region may receive *free* rights for usage of agricultural land for experimental research groups, on condition that they provide evidence they contribute to the mountain area development).

Chapter V is about *mountain region development and environmental protection* (Article 8 : mountain producers receive state financial assistance⁷⁰ for carrying out agricultural activities, livestock breeding and improvement, for organizing fairs, exhibitions and conferences.).

2.5. Economic competitiveness of the RMR

Conditions, characteristics of RMR in Romania *should not be regarded only as troubles* but also as considerable *strengths*. It is true that we need concerted effort to reduce development, productivity, competitiveness disparities. Development of transport infrastructure is important in order to reduce isolation and improve accessibility⁷¹.

Not to forget about the wastewater and waste treatment, about formation of mountain stakeholders, about deepening knowledge about RMR through harmonized research methodologies.

Diversification of activities remains a task to increase revenues of people living in the mountain areas.

Forests represent an important potential which contributes with more than 9% to the country's exports. The total area of the national forest fund consists of 6.7 million hectares, from which: 30% coniferous and 70% deciduous (3.4 million ha are owned by the state).

The process of giving forests back should have found private owners ready for sustainable management. Much is known and little is spoken about illegal logging⁷².

specialized in sustainable mountain agriculture and rural development, funded by the State, directly subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; it can receive donations and sponsorships in order to improve its material resources and specific activities.

⁷⁰ Individuals and authorized family associations who carry out activities in tourism, within accommodation structures such as guesthouses and agrotouristic farms, may be granted by the local councils with available land areas, according to the law, for construction, development and operation of guesthouses and agrotouristic farms. In mountain areas planning priorities and needs of the mountain population are envisaged and harmonized with the need of preserving historical monuments and archaeological sites, biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources in the mountain areas. When designing the buildings in rural mountain areas, architectural requirements must be strictly observed.

⁷¹ ESDP aims at achieving and expanding some trans-European networks (TENs) in transport, telecommunications and energy supply infrastructure. This calls for improvement of national networks integration, especially while connecting the enclaves, the outskirts.

⁷² http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xmgqtl_romania-jefuitu-jafuldin-pydurile-yarii_news

Processing is almost insignificant in economic terms, like mining, energy production, commercial activities or services as well.

Micro-enterprises provide few jobs (the average number of employees in all rural micro-enterprises is 113,332; in this area there are 145,609 authorized physical persons and 39,433 authorized family associations)⁷³.

Rural tourism has increased, but its potential is considerably under-exploited. The tourism specific to North-East is a *religious* one, in the North-West - an *architectural and ethnographic* tourism, in the Centre - a *recreational and cultural* one. The *agricultural tourism* (farm related activities) would have chances, because of people's hospitality, preservation of traditions, cuisine specialties, and beverages.

Roads are far from reaching the European standards (only half of the communes have direct access to the road network); more than 25% of the communes cannot use roads during rainfall periods⁷⁴. County and communal roads have been neglected. Only 10.6% of them have been modernized (of which 30.7% were covered with slight road coating⁷⁵). Forest roads do not provide access to about 2 million ha of forest...

Only 33% of rural inhabitants have access to public water network, and in terms of hot water network the situation is even more critical. Most households (70%) use wells for drinking water. *The public sewerage network* is in its early stages.⁷⁶ There are still *partially electrified* villages⁷⁷. *Heat supply* services are limited (only 26 villages benefit from this service)⁷⁸. 89% of households use wood and coal-based stoves. *Waste management* is an unsolved issue in many mountain villages.

In the RMR there are not enough clinics, drugstores, kindergartens, schools of arts and crafts etc. *Access to Internet* is limited, although it is very important to facilitate access to markets, access to information.

The current situation of the RMR economy, services, and infrastructure affects the quality of human life and is a barrier to sustainable development.

Social competitiveness of the RMR. Due to human migration, young people's leaving, the rural communities' social web dissolves, all the links which usually should provide cohesion being thus diluted. Certainly, we cannot speak about *countryside* in general, but of *villages* with various characteristics. Their social competitiveness can be increased by combining multiple strategies, participation, collaboration, dialogue, conflict management,

⁷³ The Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007; the National Trade Registry Office, 2007.

⁷⁴ World Bank study, 2004.

⁷⁵ The Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006.

⁷⁶ The Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006.

⁷⁷ Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (MIRA), 2007.

⁷⁸ Processed data from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2005.

institutional and social adaptation to changes, to crises, etc. Projects with social purpose (regarding single elderly people, lonely children with parents abroad, unskilled and unemployed youth, uneducated Gypsies, etc.) which fail to include all community stakeholders do not have a high chance of success. The same happens with projects made by associations, organizations which exclude the state institutions. Prior to construction and implementation of projects the following things must be identified:

- *human resources* (individuals, collective stakeholders, project promoters, their contacts);
- *culture and identity* of the territory (relationships between those who share the same values);
- *governance*⁷⁹, interest, affinity or rejection relations, tensions and conflicts between stakeholders, capacity for cooperation, public and private possible actions;
- *know-how*, the competencies (people's knowledge in terms of social management, community development, democratic management, participatory democracy, etc.).

Culture can increment the attractiveness of the mountain villages. The RMRs have an original cultural and natural heritage, but are threatened by many dangers. The means by which culture might be transmitted and preserved are cultural centres, libraries, cinemas, radio, television, internet. In the last decades, there has been a *degradation of the cultural environment* against the background of the (financial) support decline. Numerous *cultural centres* no longer have their own premises, those which still exist are poorly equipped, many have ceased activity or have other destinations (bars, churches, etc.). Officially, there are 8,500 countryside libraries, but not all of them perform specific activities⁸⁰. Cultural identity is given by values, traditions, occupations, culinary specialties, traditional drinks, beliefs, symbols shared by the community etc. - a cultural heritage often not exploited because of lack of organization and marketing. Along with the omnipresent and omnipotent consumerist society, people and groups of RMR have seen themselves, paradoxically, becoming more and more isolated due to dependencies coming from outside. Some progress, designed to compensate disadvantages linked to population movement, have paralyzed social innovation, have promoted restraints... The gasoline engine has made people neglect roads and paths which used to connect them over the mountain in

one hour and now, in order to meet each other, they bypass the mountain through valleys for several hours.

Paradoxically, villagers' isolation increases as the people who come in the area for spending their vacation are gorged with consumerist society values and the peasants reach themselves to give up producing any potatoes if these can be bought from the 'boutique', or breeding cows if intermediaries take their milk with less than one leu per liter... In terms of (post)modern facilities, in 2012, thousands of people may remain isolated because of impracticable roads, power failures, faulty telephone networks, ambulances reaching with difficulty the patients who need intensive care... Disappearance of 'communal midwives', and of other traditional services have worsened the situation of those who now depend on the national medical services... Certainly, there should also be disenclavisation actions (improvement of road connections, the creation of new access roads); devices; snow removal equipment (that should enable people to intervene locally, by their own means); endowment with vehicles (crawlers) to allow salvation of the isolated, regardless of weather; constant radio connection (to calm locals, tourists); telecommunications to maintain contact, but also to create teleconviviality; videotexts to share information on public screens (at the post office premises, at the mayoralty); postal services that could extend their offer (by selling stamps, road vignettes etc.); other forms of public transportation (transport on demand, parcel post, school transport, etc.), local meetings, festivals attended by residents who can display the goods they have produced, multifunctional libraries (with internet, etc.), adapted social assistance (support at home for the elderly), alarm systems, etc., but the solutions must be sought on several levels⁸¹. Isolation is not inevitable. It is important to revive people's awareness against the fact that solutions must come not only from 'above' or 'outside'...

Radu Rey has recently said⁸² that: Romanians have become accustomed to treat their mountains as an internal colony, taking from them everything that can be taken and returning them too little. *The communists marginalized the mountain...* In 2000, the World Mountain Forum (WMF) published a statistics that revealed that the mountain population in Romania barely gains \$ 413/capita, compared with \$ 22,070 in Austria, \$ 12,540 in Greece, or \$ 2,120 in Albania. **Why all this?** Because during the communist dictatorship the private property development was banned, strong economic, cultural and spiritual traditions were torn apart, we did not have any research anymore, we did not have any education specific to mountain agriculture. After 1990, employment fell, the wool

⁷⁹ In terms of state weakening and decentralization, other forms of government arise alongside the government systems established by democratically elected states and local governments. 'Governance' is a concept originated along with globalization and refers to the form of democratic governance at various levels. These are forms of expression and democratic participation of civil society, of formation of new collective stakeholders.

⁸⁰ National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2005

⁸¹ Reorganization of living space, of infrastructure, administrative reorganization adjusted to the decreasing population density and increasing family dispersion, adaptation of education at the reduced number of children, support for the preservation of cultural identity, promotion of the local values and intensification of exchanges, ensuring bearable or even enjoyable solitude, by maximizing people's autonomy.

⁸² <http://www.formula-as.ro/2005/654/spectator-38/prof-dr-radurey-presedintele-forumului-montan-din-romania-5755>

market collapsed, middlemen bloomed by practicing extremely low prices for milk and meat. Impoverished, uneducated, unorganized and distrustful, inhabitants of the mountains have become a victimized group that moves towards cities or abroad. The elderly, those who have got a pension, gave up farming. Out of 900,000 mountain households, over 500,000 do not have even one cow, more than 600,000 do not have even one sheep. 744 mountain villages have still been left without specific agricultural education. What is our agricultural knowledge level to allow us to compete with the EU countries? With which stables, which breeds, which mechanization, which competencies, which younger generation? The Institute from Sibiu has been left with no investments and it desperately struggles to survive. The National Agency of Mountain Area has only 8 employees. The mountain villages still have each an agricultural specialist left for two, three or even four communes... If livestock decrease, the volume of natural fertilizers decreases too, and the mountain created for centuries flora becomes wild! ... everything is happening under governors' indifferent eyes on the conditions 'of the national civilization cradle', in front of authorities who concession some mountains to foreigners, 'to get out some quick cash'...

Environmental competitiveness.

Landscape is also related to community development.⁸³ The word spontaneously evokes positive images and emotions associated with beauty and pleasure (not bare hills, shaved forests, garbage piles, stray dogs ...). Landscapes may be dreamlike or nightmarish. Both kinds can be met in RMR, sometimes separated only by a few tens of meters⁸⁴ ... Indigenous people have also become more inquisitive and more interested in their living conditions, air quality, water, soil⁸⁵, but concerns for a sustainable development require a long *process of social learning*⁸⁶. Laws on landscape have been adopted⁸⁷, there are also agreements⁸⁸, associations to deal with the landscape problem. We certainly have still much to be done ...

2.6. Possible options for a sustainable development of RMR in Romania

The Mountain Act No. 347 of July 14, 2004 stating the purpose, principles and objectives of the mountain policy:

- biodiversity and landscape conservation;
- sustainable valorisation of mountain resources;
- promotion of sustainable farming methods etc.

More precisely, according to *MARD documentation*⁸⁹, we must:

- capitalize optimally the agricultural, forest, pastoral, industrial, and energy resources;
- diversify economic and social activities;
- develop tourism and agrotourism;
- carry out or upgrade the infrastructure;
- selectively maintain trades/handicrafts, traditional technologies;
- develop and adapt education intended for rural mountain areas;
- protect forests against deforestation;
- develop SMEs which practice green policies and create new jobs;
- create professional organizations, associations, initiative groups;
- maintain cultural identity;
- find solutions to the phenomenon of migration away from mountainous areas;
- adapt better the EU policies to more specific contexts;
- apply EU compensatory measures etc.

Specific targets and *strategic objectives*⁹⁰, *principles*⁹¹ are provided.

Taking into account that, on spot, in mountainous areas:

- there are still underdeveloped infrastructures, inadequate or poorly maintained roads, electrification unfinished, few settlements have sewage and running water;
- education, health system, services are more difficult to reach;
- peasant farms have low technological endowment;
- sheep livestock decreased by more than 50%⁹²;
- jobs have not been created, but lost;
- ancient trades / handicrafts and traditions have been lost and are still being lost;

⁸³ Gagnon, C. (1994), *La recomposition des territoires. Développement local viable*, Paris, L'Harmattan, coll. « Logiques sociales »

⁸⁴ http://www.google.ro/search?hl=ro&sugexp=frgbl&gs_nf=1&cp=27&gs_id=2z&xhr=t&q=mizerie+si+gunoie+la+munte&bav=on.2.or_r_g.c.r_pw.r_qf.cf.osb&biw=1680&bih=931&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=IM12T6bKJ8nltQbOm9mZBA

⁸⁵ R.E. Dunlap et A. Mertig (dir.), *American Environmentalism. The U.S. Environmental Movement, 1970-1990*, Philadelphia, Taylor & Francis, 1991, pp. 39-49

⁸⁶ Sachs, I. (1997), *L'écodéveloppement. Stratégies pour le XXIe siècle*, Paris, La Découverte, p. 74

⁸⁷ Act No. 451 in July 8, 2002, was voted by the Romanian Parliament (for ratifying the *European Landscape Convention* adopted in Florence in October 2002) and published in Official Gazette No. 536 from July 23, 2002.

⁸⁸ <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/fr/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

⁸⁹ <http://www.madr.ro/pages/page.php?catid=03>

⁹⁰ Ways: profitable grant credits for personal development projects; granting compensatory allowances for natural handicaps (ICHN) following the system practiced in the EU, of direct payments; providing support for implementation of breeding, improving livestock and veterinary assistance; granting non-reimbursable aids for the development of job-creating objectives; establishing an early retirement scheme for farmers who hand down their agricultural property to the younger generation; differentiated granting of fiscal incentives to professional organizations of mountain farmers, etc.

⁹¹ The human being as partner with nature; harmonization of inter-community relations; integration of the strategy with the European Union requirements.

⁹² Grazing fees have increased; exaggerated environmental restrictions are applied, without sheep grasslands go wild, the sheep wool is not capitalized etc.

- education is not adapted to the realities and the specificity of the upper lands;
- the level of information of population on the realities of mountain is low;
- villagers are not organized and cannot defend themselves from those who fix the prices for raw materials etc.

The *priorities of the Sustainable Development Strategy* are:

- increasing the competitiveness of the economic, social and mountainous environment;
- improving product quality and access to markets;
- diversification of the (non)agricultural activities;
- development of services;
- development of rural tourism;
- maintenance and development of traditional trades and crafts;
- enhancement of the mountain area landscapes, of the cultural heritage⁹³;
- making an inventory of hazardous areas and taking measures to prevent natural hazards;
- training programs for professionals and trainings for young farmers;
- diversifying research in montanology;
- developing scientific, technical cooperation etc.

We have *Community Strategic Guidelines, a National Development Plan, Regulations on Rural Development, a National Strategic Plan for Rural Development in Romania, a National Rural Development Programme in Romania* focused on several axes⁹⁴, within the framework of we have proposed the following *measures*:

- *trainings, information and dissemination of knowledge*;
- young farmers set-up support;
- modernization of agricultural holdings;
- improving the economic value of forests;
- supporting semi-subsistence farms;
- establishment of producer groups;
- providing advisory and consultancy services for farmers;
- agri-environmental financial support;
- first afforestation of agricultural lands;
- support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises;
- encouraging tourism activities;
- *village renewal and development, improvement of basic services for the rural population*

⁹³ Ways: inventory of the historic heritage, protecting traditions belonging to the mountain regions, maintaining the mountaineers' cultural identity etc.

⁹⁴ Axes: 1 - *Improving competitiveness of agriculture and forestry*; 2 - *Improving the environment and the countryside*; 3 - *Quality of life in mountain areas*; 4 - *LEADER type actions*.

*and economy, and turning rural heritage into good account*⁹⁵;

- *operation of the Local Action Groups*⁹⁶.

Under Regulation (EC) 1257/1999⁹⁷, the mountain area of Romania is considered *disadvantaged*⁹⁸ (an area of about 71,340 km², with 2.4 million inhabitants). Where large amounts accumulate a number of altitude and slope, climatic and edaphic factors⁹⁹, farmers may be supported¹⁰⁰ if they are engaged in activities for productive purposes or maintain land in good environmental conditions.

Sustainable development of RMR means more than the development of food and agriculture sector. The purpose would be to *improve people's life quality*. Around €12 billion Euros could be invested in 2007-2013 in order to access and implement these measures.

An important thing would be the use of a Practical Guide for assessing what is actually done for developing the RMR¹⁰¹, which asks for making the following steps:

Step 1 - setting up an overview¹⁰² of the major problems faced by populations in mountainous regions, highlighting the priorities and possible solutions and ways to reach them;

Step 2 - identifying and prioritizing an entry point, a priority problem in the area, after consulting all the stakeholders;

Step 3 - identification of management profile and of devices belonging to (non)governmental, private sectors etc., involved in formulation and implementation of the policies;

Step 4 - Identifying policies for sustainable development¹⁰³ (economical, social and environmental).

⁹⁵ They have recently been published on the website and in the Official Gazette Nr. 897 from December 19, 2011: Order No. 275 of December 6, 2011 on the approval of the penalties for measures 211 "Support for disadvantaged mountain areas", 212 "Support for disadvantaged areas other than mountain areas" and 214 "Agri-environmental payments" from the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, afferent to the requests for payments made from 2011 etc.

⁹⁶ In some municipalities in the country, by Local Council Decision, there has been created the position of *local development agent* (the interface between government and community) who has the duty to examine the local situation in order to identify appropriate solutions to solve the problems that hinder local development, to prepare and implement local development strategies, to provide any information, advice, to promote locally. *Local Public Administration Act No. 215/2001* stipulates the establishment of *intercommunity development associations*.

⁹⁷ <http://www.dadrbacau.ro/regulamente/31999R1257.pdf>

⁹⁸ Delimitation of the mountain area is the one from the *National Rural Development Programme* (Annex 4A - Disadvantaged Areas). Villages and towns located at average altitudes exceeding 600 meters, with an average slope equal or higher than 15% belong to the *disadvantaged mountain region*. The average altitude of the Carpathians is 1,136 m; the RMR average annual temperatures have values of 6°C at about 1,000 m altitude and less than -2°C at altitudes above 2,000 m.

⁹⁹ Related to the soil nature.

¹⁰⁰ There is a calculation methodology of compensation for each condition.

¹⁰¹ Framework for rapid evaluation of policies, institutions and development processes of disadvantaged mountain areas, November 2007 - a practical guide that suggests an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the mountain policies.

¹⁰² The data can be obtained by observation, interviews, materials depicting the history and the context of becoming a RMR.

¹⁰³ Key questions: Is there a strategy for sustainable rural development? What was put into practice for sustainable rural development? What is the focus? If there is no strategy, what are the reasons? etc.

Step 5 - examination of problems related to mountain development policies;

Step 6¹⁰⁴ - identifying institutional capacities, skills involved in drafting and implementing projects.

Step 7 - summarizing the main findings, of lessons learned, of recommendations.

There have passed more than two decades since we started searching a development model for the RMR, without obvious effects at the level of the mountain villages.

The Romanian Parliament have passed laws (for example, the recent law on the picnic activity passed in 2011)¹⁰⁵. Unfortunately, at the debate of this act villagers and townfolk were absent too. They wonder where the professional elites are, these wonder why people do not get involved and everyone wonders who and how does the real diagnosis of the level of development, who sets the gap scale in order 'to absorb' funds and to undertake something well grounded, until the end...

Where can the indefinitely postponed salvation of the mountain villages come from¹⁰⁶? What could be the factors of their dynamism¹⁰⁷?

There are no any recipes, but we could also identify such factors if we had the patience to honestly identify the indicators that measure them.¹⁰⁸.

Certainly, the RMR evolution depends on 'legitimate' (historical, economical, sociological etc.) situations, on perceptions, expectations, precautions or reactions of the local community institutions, residents, on the unique features of the local environment, on the (in)existence of people decided to do something in keeping their village from dying etc. It is good that there are new and new regulations in the Official Gazette, but rural dynamism is not only about the money, funding, grants.

Mountain villages cannot wait for Europe, U.S., IMF or World Bank to come with money and technocratic plans imposed 'from above'. The success of sustainable development of RMR depends *also* on its inhabitants¹⁰⁹ ... It is true that not all RMR have the same potential or growth opportunities, but the 'engine' of sustainable development combines money with the possibilities and will of the inhabitants, of local leaders, with the ingenuity of the teams, with reciprocal knowledge, communication, cooperation, consultation, and action altogether.

RMR are more likely to develop if they industrialize themselves¹¹⁰. For example, in Germany, through a targeted aid scheme, the development of over 300 rural activity centres was encouraged. In some areas, they reached to have at least one SME implant in each village. Germany has obstinately pursued rural planning, facilities for all entities of at least 20,000 people that would have no more than one hour to go to access workplace, services, leisure. Agricultural districts (Land-Kreise) have all the means for a balanced development of rural areas. Italy favoured the implantation of industrial activities in the villages situated along the passageways, inciting intercommunalities to obtain financial support.

Paradoxically, economic insecurity, lack of infrastructures, poverty of the past centuries have 'pushed' villagers to produce in order to develop and their activities have been in line with social cohesion, with the social bond... Industrialization can contribute to development of villages if leaders' responsibility for their communities is real, if people are consulted and involved in projects that affect them. Companies, the SMEs can reach villages.

We are not talking about large companies, large investment, but about some companies that want to expand, local entrepreneurs, Romanian migrants who return with money and want to become employers too... Villages that have raw materials and energy sources, services, are close to cities, industrial centres, disenclaved villages are more likely to develop by the help of industry.

¹⁰⁴Key questions: Which are the studied policy objectives? Do they address real problems facing the country at national, regional, local level? Do they take into account the specifics of the mountain? What about the links between mountain areas and plains? What are the views of those involved on the relevance of these policies? Do they consider they are effective? Are there inconsistencies and contradictions in these policies? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions in charge?

¹⁰⁵ ACT on picnic activity of the Romanian Parliament adopted in 2011 regulates the picnic held on public or private domain of the state and / or administrative units, in order to prevent, reduce, eliminate negative environmental impact on the health of the population. For this purpose, picnic activities on public or private domain of the state and / or administrative units, except for the areas prescribed by law shall be prohibited (with exceptions in terms of organizing occasional events, authorized by law). Article 5 contains the obligations of the manager of specially designed areas and of areas suitable for picnic activity, Article 6, obligations of individuals who carry on a picnic activity, and Article 7, the facts that constitute contraventions and are punishable.

¹⁰⁶ AUTREMENT (1983), n° 47, *Le local dans tous ses états*; Quééré Louis (1982), « Les élites du changement dans le développement rural », in POUR, no. 82, pp. 59-60

¹⁰⁷ Pierre Limouzin, « Les facteurs de dynamisme des communes rurales françaises. Méthode d'analyse et résultats », in Annales de Géographie, 1980, t. 89, nr.495, pp. 549-587

¹⁰⁸ Natural movement of the population, net migration (which expresses the attractiveness of SRM), job dynamics, dynamics of non-agricultural activities, the expenditures, utilities that allow the existence of living conditions comparable to those of citizens in the cities etc.

¹⁰⁹ Géraldine Derozier, Jean-François Mamdy, « Contribution des communes rurales à leur développement. Quels moyens ? Quelles conditions ? », in Économie rurale, nr. 207, 1992, pp. 11-16

¹¹⁰ Ph. Tourny, « L'industrialisation rurale au service du développement local en Europe Occidentale », in Économie rurale, no.118, 1977, pp. 33-40. What businesses in rural areas? We do not think of large companies, but of shops that require cheap labor and low skilled workforce (in fabrics, hosiery, etc.), cheap rental storage spaces that can facilitate network distribution (e.g. for potatoes), centers for machinery or equipment, facilities for large business groups coming in rural areas (e.g. Nokia in Jucu), SMEs etc. Companies that could come are those: a) of processing, production, which eliminate intermediaries between farm and factory, transportation costs are reduced and make higher profits for farmers (there is a need for an analysis of the correct location, taking into account the distance between raw materials and place of the processing), etc.; b) complementary - in mountain areas agricultural season is not sufficiently long and a productive activity to fill the gap during the dead season would be welcome;

c) ancillary industries which are not necessarily related to local conditions; setting them in the mountains would be linked to absorption of excess labor (we think of: ceramics, canned food, pickles, knitting, concentrated food containers, etc.).

The villages not likely to succeed are poor, enclosed, desperate and do not attract funds.

Services are a necessity in rural mountain communities¹¹¹. Consumption practices of the villagers tend to be similar to those of the urban population. If there are TVs, cars, refrigerators etc., they need some repair, maintenance, etc. A picture of service status must be carried out, and initiatives should be identified and valued. Absence of services means diluted socialization, solidarity networks, increasing individualism, sense of abandonment¹¹²... *The presence of the Internet and the presence of the rural community on the Internet* may facilitate distance learning, teleworking, telemedicine, teleconferences.

2.7. Possible options for a sustainable development of RMR

The political and administrative context has changed a lot in the last decades, as issues and problems the RMR are facing have changed too¹¹³. Although there are more numerous the villagers aspiring to the same living conditions as those of the townspeople's, risks remain high for the natural environment; the risk of isolation, of enclavization remains due to infrastructure costs, diesel fuel, gasoline, because of the gradual degradation of the transport, of supply services (some municipalities may not function because they do not have money to pay utilities¹¹⁴...). The RMRs wait, bear the intervention of European policies, and in the meantime, positive externalities are not valued, young people migrate to other horizons, globalization brings rapid changes in values, threatens the cultural heritage that gives the villages in the mountains uniqueness.

What options would be available? responsive? pro-active? sustainable?

The *responsive* ones would also set off from the perception of mountains as less favoured areas, with traditional economy, inadequate to the existing market conditions, with a depopulation considered a 'normal phenomenon'. He who has such options supports, renews traditional activities, runs after financial

compensation for 'disabilities', seeks opportunities for financing, assistance.

The *pro-active* ones aim at building of a new life of the mountain organized around cost effective activities, value labour, jobs, focus on product quality, develop infrastructure, services, seek to facilitate accessibility, innovation, competitiveness.

The *sustainable* ones involve environmental and heritage protection, in a society that is changing very rapidly. There is a strong need for economic growth, for reduction and/or eradication of some social problems, for a clean and protected environment. The village which has good roads, sidewalks, roads for carts, sewage, water supply, services, Internet, cable, etc. but people keep and use their traditions, costumes, local architecture can achieve sustainability.

We cannot close the gap if we linger in taking action, by continuously testing and experimenting, while people migrate or acquire sterile or extremist critical attitudes... Failures are due to lack of understanding of problems and solutions, to organization and postponement. Lack of achievements undermines self confidence and the cohesion of rural communities. In the specialized literature we find important ideas about *integrated rural development*¹¹⁵, which involves integration of agriculture, of rural industry and services necessary to the rural environment, the close relationship between planning and execution, and a development adapted and well defined area, in order to reduce disparities, to raise revenues and the quality of life in villages. *Are the RMRs able to adapt to the European requirements, to quickly assimilate new ideas? Who decides if easier and smaller changes, more coherent and easier to understand by the villagers, are necessary? Or small changes widely set in? How to get excellent results in times of crisis, with minimal investment?*

Who wants to propose an *integrated development plan* must be familiar with local conditions and to distinguish between *what is desirable and what is possible*. In the minds of some economists, accounting data analysis can lead to 'general formula' for solving problems... But, can all factors and stakeholders be identified and put into equations?

Two villages, A and B, close to one another, almost identical when speaking about natural resources, with people alike (by many socio-demographic items), had each about 60 farms, receiving about the same allowances etc. There were reasons to believe that the two would evolve similarly. But things were to be quite different... The A village grew rapidly and, in a relatively short time, farmers had adapted, acquired professional qualifications, performance and their revenues increased year by year. Village B lagged behind. Few people

¹¹¹ Véronique Roussel, « La politique des services publics dans l'espace rural : du discours aux pratiques », in *Économie rurale*, nr.238, 1997, pp. 28-32. What services? Schools, post offices, slaughterhouses, health centers, rural hospitals, elderly homes, workshops for road maintenance, telecommunications, electricity, water, sewer, cable TV, etc., that can attract secondary residences, complementary activities etc.

¹¹² Chevallier J., *Le service public*, Paris, PUF, collection "Que sais-je ?", 1991 ; Laignel A., *L'amélioration des services publics en milieu rural*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1993

¹¹³ From the rural exodus, now they face urban exodus, active population migration, growing number of retired persons, rising land prices... Not all mountain villages are ski resorts, the ones that were designed for that decades ago, and in the meantime users have changed their tastes; other customers may come with other claims, the competition between tourist destinations grows continually...

¹¹⁴ <http://www.ziare.com/ioan-oltean/pdl/oltean-despre-alocarea-defonduri-pentru-primarii-penibila-dar-atat-s-a-putut-1128778>

¹¹⁵ Raanan Weitz, « Sur le principe du développement rural intégré », in *Economie rurale*, 1964, vol. 61, pp. 3-14

remained in the village as farmers; many had sought work elsewhere, many left.

A sociological survey identified and explained the differences. In the A village, most families had been connected by degrees of relationship, had feelings of fellowship, they helped each other, acknowledged the same values, acknowledged and accepted an uncontested authority to work with the locals and everyone contributed to the adoption and adaptation of modern farming methods, etc. Village B was made up of different family groups and therefore they did not acknowledge themselves in the local public authority. Everybody had their own interests; no institution was sufficiently reliable to operate successfully. Divided authority did not encourage all individual initiatives etc. This factor was not taken into account in building community development plans.

Rural development is not possible without planning, although some factors of this process cannot be identified from the very beginning... Many data can remain hidden, latent, or will become evident, manifested during implementation of the plan. However, planning is a necessary guide, even if it is flexible. Observations made during implementation provide data needed to assess the effects of steps taken, and the original plan can be changed while keeping the original intention and main stages¹¹⁶. There is need for a free exchange of ideas, suggestions and recommendations, close relationships with the local population. The adequate space will be that in which the development program will make a difference. Practical limitations must be identified (village community may be too small for an efficient activity of integrated development if their duties are limited, if those involved do not understand or are unable to identify the purpose and effects of the plan; space or surface suitable to integrated rural development may sometimes be a group of rural communities connected to a town).

In our country contradictory perceptions and numerous paradoxical injunctions are being maintained:¹¹⁷ some speak of the handicap-mountain, while others of the asset-mountain; some say that the mountain is 'one and indivisible', others that it is multifaceted and varies from one area to another; we

¹¹⁶ Finding and formulation of the development project goals; collection of baseline data necessary for assessing factors that affect macro and micro-planning; a direction of the action in order to guide stakeholders towards a goal; plan preparation, including the system of organization which will be used by the development authority. Certainly, one can get to justified changes of the original plan, or of some of its objectives. From outside the development area, experts may sometimes come to prepare the plan, while execution shall be entrusted to local organizations that have had little or no contact with planners; the lack of coordination between planners and those who implement the projects hampers the continuity of the mechanism and sometimes delays execution of the plan. Connections must be continuous, not only at high, but at all levels.

¹¹⁷ 'Double bind' / 'Dual constraint' is a phrase we find in Gregory Bateson in 1956 and it meant that two obligations, which contradict and prohibit mutually, induce the logical impossibility of their execution without breaking one of them (i.e., to be freer and freer, but always at someone's disposal, to work as much as possible for as much less money as possible etc. Those who cannot use defense and survival mechanisms can get schizophrenia (duplication of personality).

speak about national solidarity, but we insist on people's solidarity among different communities or communities which have mountains; from the prolonged and local neglect of the mountain, now we want solidarity and European coordination, etc.

Future scenarios may start from the distribution of competencies between courts (European, national, state, regional, local ones).

In the *scenario* where there is a single, unique approach, the state, through the prefect's voice, has the central part in making the standard, unique and indivisible one; this means continuing the current situation, lack of differentiation of policies that must be applicable to areas with different characteristics;

The *scenario* which recognizes the specificity of the mountain, asks for a diversified approach, is based on the legitimacy of committees that develop and implement policies of revitalization of the RMRs; the state, the government identify risks and remain the guarantor of the general development framework;

In the *scenario* that requires individualization of the RMRs approach, the mountain regions have the last word in speaking about economic planning, about environmental and social policies in cooperation with other national and international entities, in appropriate forms which they identify together.

Scenarios can take into account *solidarity*: the first scenario focuses on the solidarity of the nation, where the state has compensated all SRM handicaps under undifferentiated criteria set at national level; in the second scenario, communities negotiate with the state a differentiated implementation of the national solidarity instruments; in the third scenario, the regions, the RMRs build up territorial solidarity, by consulting other communities.

But scenarios can start from taking into account the joint responsibilities of the state, of those who draw up reports, who provide information, who assume responsibilities for planning and implementation.

The sustainable development strategy of the mountain regions in Romania (proposals by R. Rey)

Mountains should be a clean living environment, constant suppliers of energy, biodiversity and food for humans and animals, through adequate safety measures and good management, with permanent compliance with the agro-forestry balance and prevention of depopulation and degradation of the cultural and farming traditions.

Any mountain region should be the subject of a planning and arrangement policy for the territory to be developed, a policy that should not to divert from its main vocation. Definition of the mountain region, achieved through normative acts, must take into account the natural handicaps that influence the economic local activities, on the basis of criteria recognized at national and EU level. The Sustainable Development Strategy of the Mountain Region is based on the following *principles*:

- man – the nature's wise partner to which he also belongs;

- controlled and judicious exploitation of the mountain resources, for helping local community and society;
- equal opportunities for inhabitants, living conditions, parity compared to other regions;
- constant and supervised balance between agriculture and forestry;
- harmonized intercommunity relations;
- consultation and consensus policies established with and by communities;
- preventing / fighting against human erosion and poverty;
- preservation of good practices and cultural identity;
- representation of mountain communities at different levels, to avoid imbalances;
- integration of Sustainable Development Strategy of the Mountain Region with the EU requirements.

General objectives:

- balanced development of mountain areas through traditional occupations, multiple activities, complementarity and added value;
- protection of local anthropogenic factor;
- creating society's responsibility towards the destiny and management of its mountain region;
- ensuring effective representation of the mountain communities and of functionality of the appropriate structures;
- development and consolidation of the mountain family farm prosperity;
- ensuring the needed number of mountain farmers, of the succession of generations, within tolerable limits of the territory;
- ensuring the modernization of infrastructure and of engineering services equipment, of the necessary services and facilities;
- improving the comfort and hygiene conditions for animals and people, through modernization and appropriate equipment;
- providing children, youth and adults education, teaching, information and continuous training;
- the implementation of agricultural policies differently from the plains and hills, with stimulating prices for milk and meat;
- protection, preservation and improvement of the natural environment;
- management and use of adequate natural resources with the priority participation and for the benefit of mountain communities;
- conservation and capitalization of local cultures and ethnographic traditions; historical monuments and local architecture protection and their bringing into the circuit of values;
- ensure the planning based on research, studies and programs scientifically developed;
- increasing income and quality of rural mountain life.

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