

# THE “POSITIVE” IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC CRISIS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Associate professor PhD. **MOLDOVAN Iosif**<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Post-crisis specific literature is rich in what we call crisis cause and effect analysis, it shows the states attitude in counteracting its negative effects by taking some more or less adequate measures to escape the crisis. Identified negative effects give birth to some natural questions such as: is it true that the crisis with all its dimensions and size and in all its targeted components has produced some positive effects as well? Has it not lead to a change in mentality and in managerial attitudes at the level of super-state organisms, of states and implicitly at the management of organizations level?

From the stated perspective, the purpose of the paper is the one of catching some of these aspects with a view to generalize the benefic effects of the sustainable development concept in all social economic fields and on all functional levels.

**Key words:** sustainable development, sustainability, ecological crisis, circular economy, doctrine of emergency

**JEL Classification:** Q01 - Sustainable Development

## 1.1 The Sustainable Development Concept and Sustainable Economic Growth

One of the challenges within the XX Century last decades has brought to the world states attention, as well as to different institutions and international organisms, the search of some answers and the identification of solutions to counteract sometimes disastrous negative consequences, which uncontrolled development might have over the environment.

These searches have imposed a new concept, known as sustainable development, which, expressed synthetically, means long term development under harmonized conditions of social, economic and environmental systems.

Interpreted *stricto sensu*, the term sustainable (of sustainability) finds its roots in the French word ‘durable’ or the Latin one ‘durabilis’ (DEX '98), with the sense: that lasts for a long time, durable, solid, sustainable, or in the verb ‘subtenir’ with the sense “arrest” or “sustain”. Its most adequate understanding is achieved if it refers to local communities, which must be sustained from “below”, firstly by nowadays inhabitants, in relation to their level of education and culture, in the interest of the future ones.

In the expressed sense, suggestive and relevant is the opinion which states that “Some places, by the specific combination of physical, cultural and maybe spiritual characteristics

---

<sup>1</sup> „Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Iosif.moldovan@ulbsibiu.ro

inspire people to take care of their community. These are the places in which sustainability has the biggest chances to exist (maintain)” (Muscoe Martin, 1995).

The term "sustainability" may become generic and may be used in different fields, both in the public sector and in the private one. The arguments come from the fact that the three sub-systems: economic, social and environmental inter-relate and inter- condition with each other firstly under regulatory aspect, conditioned by the interest and the authority of state institutions and secondly as a practical attitude at the organization level.

For example, in forestry, an extremely vulnerable field under the sustainability aspect on long term, sustainable development refers to strictly respecting procedures clearly regulated by administrators and responsible auditors. The conjugated action of these involved factors must ensure a long term positive balance between forest production capacity, the currently harvested timber density and the necessity of timber production growth in the future by respecting the ecological natural equilibrium, which shouldn't suffer as a result of uncontrolled deforestation.

Within the presented context, we must mention the fact that the forestry fund in Romania lies on a surface of 6.741.000 ha, less than 1/3 from the country territory (27,3%), under the average level of the European Union (36%). Given the fact that from this area less than half belongs to the state and the rest to the private sector, the high performance forestry management is difficult to insure. First, respecting the forest discipline is deficient by the small number of people responsible with auditing tasks and second, by the fact that based on the existent legislation, a possibility to exclude areas from the forestry fund in an uncontrollable way is created having negative effects on the conservation of forest ecosystem biodiversity non-rigorously sustained in the specific legislation.

Initially, sustainable development wanted to be a solution to the ecological crisis determined by the excessive exploitation of natural resources and by the continuous environmental degradation. At present, the objectives of sustainable development extended as a result of the fully justified approach of the justice and equity spirit between states, regions, communities and last but not least between generations.

In contrast to the last approaches, the concept ‘sustainable development’ may be defined as being the totality of forms, means and social-economic development methods undertaken in a given spreading area, with the immediate purpose of ensuring the natural equilibrium between the functional social-economic systems and the requests of a healthy natural environment.

The most accepted and well known definition of sustainable development is the one given by the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) in the report “Our Common Future”, also known under the name of Brundtland Report, which specifies that ”sustainable development is the development which pursues the satisfaction of present needs, without compromising the possibility of future generations to satisfy their own needs.”.

In the multiple approaches, the concept of sustainable development is expressed in different shades in relation to those who do research on it. Thus, biologists and ecologists righteously place the accent on natural resources and environment policies. The economists relate the concept to the public budgetary effort, to the private operators budget who touch on the environment with costs, rates and prices, entering in direct relationship with sociologists on aspects concerning income and social cost allocation. In relation to the above mentioned, a more optimistic vision belongs to futurologists who take into consideration a vital element, in many cases neglected, offered by the progress of science and technology, of knowledge in general, which, by developing new technologies would identify new resources or reconsider the alternative ones.

These approaches given, sustainable development may be considered a doctrine of emergency by which development policies and technical progress must play their role in the future and enclose within the limits established and imposed by the necessity of ensuring ecological equilibrium. As a follow up to this approach, easily alarming, some authors consider that „the environment protection and economic development are really antagonic processes”(William D. Ruckelshaus, 1989). The statement is not without sense but has to be analyzed according to situations and different factual states. The conflict between respecting the environmental protection requests and rules and uncontrolled economic development is not antagonically shaped, for example, in the states and developed regions aware that the environmental problems are important for future generations. Serious problems appear and may become antagonic in the under-developed states which do not have the knowledge, the administrative capacity and financial resources necessary to manage sustainable development in all its components. The problematic becomes acute by the global effects uncontrolled development produces, given the fact that, for example, polluting factors generated in Romania are found in Austria and hence, the need of inter-statal intervention in managing sustainable development.

The long lasting development concept undoubtedly needs to be analyzed together with the one of economic growth or more generously from the point of view of scientific approach with the one of sustainable development. In this sense, the opinion stated by the well-known professor Jan S. Hogendorn is relevant, considering that: „the idea of sustainable development is more convincing if it is interpreted in the sense that a certain growth rate may be difficult to sustain if the environment degrades, or if the population growth becomes uncontrollable, or if the farming land is fragmented and, thus, productivity reduces”. The same author, steadfast with the observed aspects considers that non-sustainable development is „the development within which negative effects on the environment affect economic growth” (Jan S. Hogendorn, 1996).

The above mentioned aspects give a larger field of interpretation to the definition of sustainable development in the Brundtland Report. Thus, the approach of satisfying present needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to satisfy their own needs, must be thought as a sustainable process by which sustainable economic growth is ensured, which should produce positive effects on future generations. The entire approach cannot be conceived without the responsible involvement of state institutions under the aspect of pursuing in what way the regulatory frame, the private sector and civil society are respected.

## **1.2. The Evolution of The Sustainable Development Concept**

The evolution of researches linked to sustainable development was determined by the analysis and signalling of global problems human kind has to face, which made the object of interdisciplinary reports like the ones emmitted by the Club in Rome (Report 2013), reference materials of the United Nations Organization, or other organisms of civil society.

A first event of the kind was the Conference of the United Nations Organization on the Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 where the emphasis was placed on problems of natural environment, human health from the man-nature perspective in ecological vision.

The event marking down the responsible approach of sustainable development is the year 1983 in which the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) chaired by Gro Bruntland was considered a follow-up of a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization.









