

AGRICULTURE IN TERMS OF EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR DANUBE DELTA ADOPTION

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Abstract:

This paper shows how the adoption of the EU strategy for the Danube will affect agriculture in areas along the river and the main objectives of the strategy for agriculture. Among the Danube's states, Romania has the largest area in the Danube basin, Danube strategy aims a macro-regional development and is also an action plan for the river areas and neighbouring countries. The people from the Danube delta have a way of life unchanged for centuries and agriculture remains a vital sector for the Danube region. Farmers will need support for adopting and maintaining systems and agricultural practices that will contribute to achieving the strategy's objectives for the environment and climate changes.

Keywords : *Danube Strategy, agriculture, sustainable development, co-operation, objective*

INTRODUCTION

Danube, the second largest river in Europe, covers about 2850 km, linking the Black Forest to the Black Sea, across ten countries and has tributaries from other four countries.

An ideal location for placement of hydroelectric power plants, a pan-European transport corridor and a refuge for the rarest species in Europe - the pressures on the river are often in conflict with each other and political changes in the region also influenced the way the difficulties are dealt.

Following the example of the EU Strategy for Baltic Sea, which was the first macro-regional approach, the EU strategy for the Danube was based on stakeholder efforts in the region, allowing them to create a region where all 115 million people to enjoy security, prosperity and equal opportunities. (Dobrescu Emilian M., Popovici Vlad – European Institute from Romania, 2010)

EU Strategy for the Danube is a model of regional cooperation at European level. (Romanian Government, 2010)

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Strategy - a tool for integration and better use of EU funds - is also a political innovation and a new stage in EU regional policy. The EU

Strategy's principles are solidarity and cooperation.

Strategy is EU's commitment towards job creation, sustainable and inclusive growth. It supports sustainable growth aimed at reducing energy consumption, increased usage of renewable energy, and upgrading transport sector by streamlining and improving its environmental impact and also ecological tourism. The EU Strategy helps to eliminate internal market barriers and improve the business environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Among the Danube states, Romania has the largest area, part of the Danube Basin and the Danube Delta, which is the second largest wetland in Europe.

Regarding the course of the Danube in Romania, we can mention the following: it flows through 4 development regions, 12 counties with 25 municipalities and 56 cities, growth poles such as Constanța and Craiova or development poles such as Brăila and Galați. The counties in the Danube region represent 30, 1 percent of Romania and 33, 8 percent of Romania's population. The socio-economic situation of the Danube region is the result of several factors including, demographic factors, level of education and training, remunerations

and unemployment, the overall level of economic activity and economic structure by sector, activity level and promotion of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), the local taxation, foreign investments, etc.

The Strategy for the Danube Region is a macro-regional development and is an action plan for areas and countries close to the river and also for Romania. In addition to the sustainable development of the micro-region, the strategy aims to the nature protection, the protection of the landscapes and cultural heritage. (Romanian Government, 2010)

For Romania, the consolidation of the Danube's cooperation is a priority taking account of the potential for sustainable development of the region and we want to contribute at making the Danube a backbone of the European area as part of the Rhine-Main-Danube corridor. (Debates at The First Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, 27-28 November 2012, Regensburg, Germany)

The problems we face are numerous and the dimensions of regional cooperation are multiple: transport, energy, tourism, agriculture and environment.

The economic and social development of the Danube region must be a sustainable development, which respects the European legislation regarding the environmental protection.

Romania supports this approach given that manages most of the climate change's reserves and the need to protect villages against natural disasters and national parks in the Danube region are extremely important aspects and need to be considered in the current strategy.

The Strategy's projects can be financially supported by developing strong synergies between different EU policies: cohesion, transport, tourism, agriculture, fishing, social and economic development, energy, environment, neighbourhood and development policies.

The people that live in the Delta have a way of life unchanged for centuries. Human implantation allowed discrete survival of the Delta's amazing ecosystems.

The great expanse of water explains the small number of inhabitants. Fishing is a constant of human activity in the region. The continuous usage of reed and bulrush is another branch of

human activity. In some banks people practice plant culture and on others are green lands for livestock.

The navigation on Danube's arms and the transportation on its channels are other concerns of the inhabitants.

Agriculture remains a vital sector for the Danube Region, which includes 5, 07 million hectares of agricultural areas - arable land, pastures, meadows, and orchards, representing 34, 5% of total national agricultural areas.

In the developing regions which include the counties in the Danube region, namely South East, South Walachia and South-West Oltenia, the agriculture, hunting and fishing have a higher share than the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product of Romania.

The development of hydraulic structures and those for the recovery of water along the Danube basin were related to the economic development and thus protecting settlements and population.

Flood protected areas were expanded and under the protection of dams was developed a stable agriculture, and manufacturing centres, buildings for agricultural products, households.

Over the years and especially lately, changes occurred in dams profile (and the land of their foundation), and some portions of the dams were weakened because of erosion, which could lead to their collapse and flooding in the remaining unprotected areas.

The policy focused on the Danube embankment to reduce the risk of flooding and to provide the land for agriculture, led to a dramatic decrease of fish stocks. Embankment at the same time reduced the sediment carried by the Black Sea, thus changing the landscape of the Delta and increasing the risk of shore erosion.

Sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources by practicing rational fishing is necessary for improving quality of life in fishing communities, conservation and restoration of fish stocks, improving and professionalizing the workforce and creating alternative occupational opportunities.

Supporting the sustainable development of fishery and improving quality of life in these areas, creating opportunities for alternative incomes for residents in the fishery areas, developing the specific infrastructure, training

of qualified personnel, ensuring the equipment for exploitation and manufacturing and encouraging the formation of partnerships, are important actions in the new Strategy.

The Danube Region is an ecosystem of interlinked and interdependent, providing invaluable environmental goods and services (food, fiber and fresh water, adjusting the quantity of water in a given territory and soil protection).

In this region there are the largest wild areas of Europe, which offers essential ecological health of the European environment as a whole. Industrial development, deforestation and pollution put hard pressures on the region.

The proposed actions to be taken include: implementation of bumper strips along the river to capture nutrients, usage of latest technologies for treating hazardous waste sites, helping restore wetlands as a way to increase flood protection and implementation of protected areas network.

A common theme through the whole process, proved the need to promote efficient use of resources to an intelligent sustainable and favourable growth for the inclusion of EU agriculture and rural areas, in line with Europe 2020.

It became more pronounced the market orientation of agriculture, while ensuring for producers an income support, also the integration of environmental requirements and the strengthen support for rural development as integrated policy for rural development across the European Union.

At the same time, agriculture and rural areas are invited to intensify their efforts to achieve the ambitious goals of climate change and energy and the implementation of the biodiversity strategy.

Farmers together with the foresters are the main managers of the land and they will need support for adopting and maintaining agricultural systems and practices that contribute to the achievement of particular environmental and climate changes, because the provision of public goods is not reflected in market prices. It will be essential to maximize the diversified potential of rural areas, contributing to inclusive growth and cohesion.

In the past 20 years there has been register a significant improvement in the quality of the

Danube's water. Appropriate treatment of waste water in all communities, usage of detergents without phosphates, agricultural production to protect water resources and fish bypass channels in hydropower and other dams - all this will have an important role.

The measures give the river more space, creating additional wetlands and protecting biodiversity. Therefore the balance of land usage is restored, no longer used exclusively for cultivation, but also as meadows and stock rising. Overall economic impact is in the benefit of agriculture and increases opportunities for nature tourism and recreation activities. (x x x - Inforegio Panorama magazine no. 37, 2011)

It is strongly highlighted the multifunctional role of agriculture in terms of food security, employment in rural areas, ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers and mitigation of climate changes effects.

EU Strategy for the Danube Region provides the European agricultural model, characterized by viable exploitation structures close to the market, along with rural development and environmental protection. Are needed measures to be taken to support agriculture producers to adapt to the consequences of climate change because these changes will influence the variability and size of agricultural production and livestock.

Particularly, the EU Strategy for the Danube River is focused on developing recess agricultural and nutriment production and also ecological and traditional products in those areas where there are favourable conditions. It will be needed measures to protect the name of Romanian products, recipes and cooking procedures on European Union's and third countries single market, in compliance with food safety and appropriate promotion of food safety.

Part of the new sustainable approach on river engineering includes river restoration, rebuilding at the same time the connection between the Danube and tributaries whose course are now discontinued. These conditions, similar to natural ones, protect and establish new habitats for flora and fauna, creating a more attractive environment for all river users.

The strategy provides a framework for sustainable cooperation actions targeting these issues, and others. For the strategy to succeed,

however, is that people in the region need to take actions in the Strategy, in order to build a sustainable future for themselves and their children. Preparation of large projects in the Danube area has accelerated lately as witnessed by the many conferences.

At Regensburg, Germany, was held the first Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, an event attended by local government representatives in the Danube region. Discussions at the forum focused on issues such as building the future of the Danube Region, improved environmental adaptability, perspectives, energy modern Danube region, a basin sustainable tourism and environmental assets, innovative action Danube successful businesses, promoting delegation, skills and overall growth and modern governance in the Danube area. (Debates at The First Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, 27-28 November 2012)

Another example is the Danube Financial Dialogue - II edition (23-24 January) that took place in Belgrade, Serbia. The event turned out big enough financial perspectives of the EU project covering the entire macro-region lying within the 14 states. In this dialogue discussed and agreed with the delegates of the Danube countries and representatives of the European Commission and the European Union to organize a forum dedicated to Bucharest Danube macro-region strategy. (Debates at the Danube Financial Dialogue – 2nd Edition, 23 – 24 January 2013, Belgrade, Serbia)

CONCLUSIONS

Danube Strategy projects are financially supported through structural funds allocated for 2007-2013 and the support of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), both as project preparation and implementation.

Looking at the strategy in terms of regional development perspective, it is the framework that can ensure the overcome of regional disparities, being created at an opportune moment, and the beginning of the end of the current programming period and start training

for 2014-2020. Strategy may change the way we approach regional development. Thus within the framework of this project by collecting projects and existing results, we can draw the lessons from the current period at regional level and make proposals for the future.

By adopting the Macro – Strategy for the Danube Region we can fill the development gaps between the European countries, including Romania.

The Danube Strategy is an important step towards simplification current funding and supports efforts to absorb European funds already committed to finance investment projects.

A Romanian regional policy rooted in reality with new and healthy institutions can bring new life line of our convergence towards the European Union. (Forum dedicated to the World Water Day and World Meteorological Day, Bucharest, 2013)

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