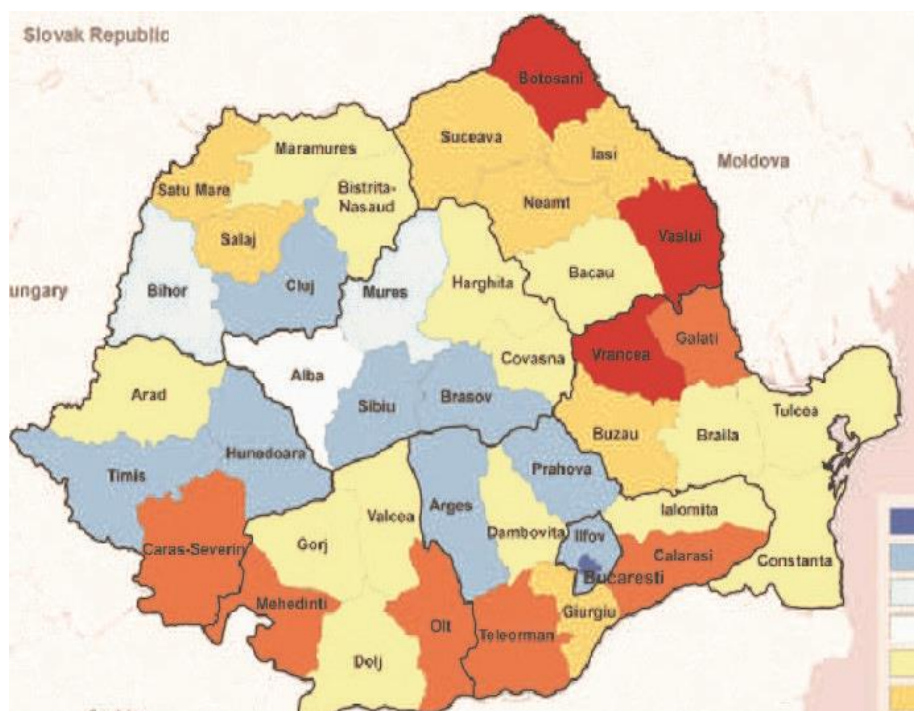




## Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development



*At-Risk-of-Poverty Rates, Counties' map (NUTS 3) Romania,  
World Bank poverty map, 2011 data*

# D 6.2 National Report

## Romania

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## Abbreviations

ADI	Asociația de Dezvoltare Intercomunitară (Intercommunity Development Association)
CMA	Cluj Metropolitan Area
EC	European Commission
EFRD	European Fund for Regional Development
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EU Funds	European Union Funds
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
GAL	Grup de Acțiune Locală (Local Action Group)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDA-CMA	Intercommunity Development Association – Cluj Metropolitan Area
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
LDS	Local Development Strategy
M.Ă.L.I.N.	Muncă, Asumare, Legalitate pentru Integrare și Nediscriminare (Work, Assuming responsibility, Legality for Integration and Non-discrimination)
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
PIDU	Planul Integrat de Dezvoltare Urbană (Integrated Plan for Urban Development)
PNDL	Programul Național de Dezvoltare Locală (National Program for Local Development)
PS2	Primăria Sectorului 2 București (Local Authorities of District 2 Bucharest)
R&D	Research and Development
SDTR	Territorial Development Strategy of Romania
SGI	Services of General Interest
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

## Executive Summary

We made use of our RELOCAL 'Actions'<sup>i</sup> as cases to illustrate larger processes of development in Romania, both in the sense of the production of spatial injustice manifested in numerous forms, and in the sense of solutions that different stakeholders conceived at the crossroads of several territorial governance structures to address the injustices. We propose to politicize the concept of spatial justice by addressing it as a phenomenon created by uneven development as an endemic feature of capitalism (both its product and premise; Smith, 1984; Harvey 2005, 2006).

Chapter 1 (the Introduction) briefly describes the manifestations of spatial injustice that we encountered in the selected 'Localities',<sup>ii</sup> such as: residential segregation in a polluted landfill area, informal housing on the margins of the locality, infrastructural underdevelopment in a developed city, and territory generally disadvantaged by economic collapse but displaying internal unevenness among its component areas. The concrete Actions addressed by our case studies are relevant for the RELOCAL research, because they address disadvantages, deprivations, marginalization, exclusion, and inequalities manifested in space; they are policy-driven mature interventions, implemented by governmental or non-governmental bodies, having clearly identifiable stakeholders and impact. Here we characterize these place-based Actions from the point of view of their aims, by the territorial governance structures through which they were implemented, and by the funds that facilitated them.

In Chapter 2, we describe the national context of Romania and what the particularities of the country mean for these Actions and spatial justice broadly. After a brief characterization of Romania's changing welfare regime, the chapter identifies some terms by which the realities of spatial injustice are approached at the national level, such as: regional unbalances, delays in development, less developed regions, unequal access to resources, differences in development, and territorial disparities. We discuss six legislative measures on the national level that after 1990 created the institutional and territorial structures through which the country was supposed to tackle these problems. In addition, we enlist here the development strategies on different scales that could influence how the analysed Actions were conceived in their very local contexts.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to discussing the main findings of the four case studies: the 'Pata Cluj project' (Cluj county, Northwest Development Region), the 'Mălin-Codlea project' (Brasov county, Central Development Region), 'Plumbuita PIDU' development plan (Bucharest, Ilfov county, Bucharest-Ilfov Development Region) and the 'GAL - Mara Natur' initiative (Maramureş county, Northwest Development Region). We use a comparative and transversal perspective in our analysis, highlighting the key analytical categories of the RELOCAL research and how the cases relate to national structures. This chapter observes that each and every Action promised to repair something regarding how a particular disadvantaged territory and its deprived inhabitants were treated or affected in the past decades by various factors. These Actions planned to deliver territorial desegregation, legalization of informal settlements, urban regeneration, or economic territorial development; however, none of them explicitly used the concept of spatial (in)justice in order to define the problem and its solutions. All of the Actions were limited by mainstream institutional structures and policies not tackling the problems they addressed.

The Actions were unable to address the systemic causes of spatial injustice, at most they were able to ensure temporary improvements to some aspects of life for some people out of the thousands who are dispossessed of socio-economic rights and access to the socially-valued resources of life. Therefore, as we conclude in Chapter 4, there is a lot of policy improvements at local and national level for making the territorial distribution of goods and

services more just, which would be needed in order to assure the sustainability of the local project-based interventions and of their results.

## 1. Introduction

The RELOCAL **Localities** chosen to be addressed in Romania are faced with different manifestations of spatial injustice, such as:

- **Residential segregation.** The existence of **Pata Rât in Cluj-Napoca**, defined as a 'growth pole' and the center of Cluj Metropolitan Area (Northwest Development Region), illustrates how semi-informal residential areas are formed in the isolated and polluted margins of a developed city as a result of several forces, among them: evictions and relocations of impoverished people to this area by administrative measures; the everyday life strategies of looking for cheap housing solutions by people who are forced to sell their labor power very cheaply; underinvestment in the area, which was formed in the proximity of the landfill; the reduction of the social housing funds to under 1.5% of the total housing funds available in the city, such that this situation and the criteria used for the distribution of social housing are not able to meet the housing needs of the most deprived; real estate development and speculations keep raising the prices on the housing market, which makes the city more and more inaccessible for low-income people.
- **Informal housing.** The formation of the **Mălin neighborhood in the city of Codlea** (Braşov county, Center Development Region), a municipality that belongs to Braşov Metropolitan Area or Braşov Growth Pole, dates back to the 1960s, when under the context of socialist systematization and urbanization, a group of Roma families were relocated from another part of the city to its margins near the local landfill. The Mălin neighborhood existed as such ever since, and as of now there have been no administrative measures that have aimed to legalize this informal settlement, to assure long-term security for the inhabitants, and to improve the living conditions in the area.
- **Urban areas suffering from underinvestment.** The area of **Plumbuita from District 2 of the capital city Bucharest** (the center of Bucharest-Ilfov region) shows how spaces of underdevelopment are formed even in the most developed region, that is, the capital city. An amalgam of natural and cultural patrimony, of deprived and informal housing, as well as of new real estate developments, has led to this neighborhood becoming subject to debates over property. It has become a battle field of several interest groups (the Orthodox Church, the 'Romanian Water' company, private developers, current owners of the historical palace, and the local administration), while the needs of impoverished Roma who have lived there for ages are not properly represented when the priorities of local development are established.
- **Territory disadvantaged by economic collapse and environmental disasters.** The area – a Local Action Group (*Grup de Acţiune Locală*, hereinafter: **GAL**) **territory circumscribed in Maramureş county** (Northwest Development Region) – includes the small town of **Baia Sprie and 17 villages**, while Baia Sprie also belongs to Baia Mare Growth Pole and Metropolitan Area. This is a former mining zone that socially and territorially was deprived of resources after closing down the mines, and was affected by environmental pollution. As a result, people lost their jobs and the area was emptied of economic activities. However, the GAL territory as a whole displays an internal unevenness from the point of view of economic development, the vast majority of the job-creator new companies being located in Baia Sprie and other three nearby localities, while five of the component LAUs are classified as poor areas. Altogether, nowadays, this territory is a pole of

transnational emigration, while the resources for the economic development of the area remain highly difficult to attract or generate.

In all the localities under our scrutiny we could identify all sorts of development strategies or plans that promised to have a long-term vision of the problem and its possible solutions, since the elaboration of such strategies became a must in the Romanian territorial administrative system as a condition for absorbing EU funds. Regarding the concrete Actions addressed by our case studies, they are relevant for RELOCAL because they address disadvantages, deprivations, and inequalities manifested in space; are policy-driven mature interventions, implemented by governmental or non-governmental bodies; have clearly identifiable stakeholders that took care of their implementation; and have identifiable impact on the local communities. Their full titles are as follows:

- ‘Social interventions for the de-segregation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in Cluj Metropolitan Area, including the disadvantaged Roma’ (hereinafter: Pata Cluj project, or Pata Cluj), analysis made for RELOCAL by Cristina Bădiță and Enikő Vincze.
- ‘Accountability of citizens in the field of housing’ (hereinafter: Mălin-Codlea project, or Mălin-Codlea), analysis made for RELOCAL by Iulia-Elena Hossu and Enikő Vincze.
- ‘Integrated Plan for Urban Development for the Area Plumbuita-Steaua Roșie-Petricani from District 2, Bucharest’ (hereinafter: Plumbuita PIDU), analysis made for RELOCAL by Ioana Vrăbiescu, with contributions from Enikő Vincze.
- ‘Microregional Association Mara Natur’ (hereinafter: GAL – Mara Natur initiative, or GAL – Mara Natur), analysis made for RELOCAL by George Zamfir, with the contribution from Enikő Vincze.

Below we briefly **characterize these Actions from the point of view of their main aims and the organizational and financial structures through which they were implemented**. This reflects that they were place-based actions: they tackled local issues that manifested in particular geographically-defined and historically-formed areas and that were embedded into local power relations; they mobilized local knowledge; and they were implemented by local stakeholders. Nevertheless, they were facilitated by trans-locally created territorial arrangements and financial schemes (similar to how the problems themselves that they proposed to address are also products of larger societal and political economic processes).

- **Pata Cluj project, conceived to prepare for the desegregation of the landfill area via the relocation of its inhabitants to other parts of Cluj-Napoca or outside of it**, was enabled in 2014 by the newly launched Poverty Alleviation Program of Norwegian Funds. Developed by a team that beforehand implemented a preparatory intervention in Pata Rât under the auspices of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), enjoying the support of Cluj-Napoca City Hall, from an institutional point of view, it was eventually assumed by the Intercommunity Development Association – Cluj Metropolitan Area (IDA-CMA). ‘Pata Cluj’ could found planning documents from different levels to be relatable; however, its results and findings were not institutionally incorporated into City Hall’s agenda for Pata Rât, as they were only referred to on the website of IDA-CMA.
- **Mălin-Codlea project, aiming the legalization of an informal settlement in the city of Codlea**, was facilitated in 2014 by a program of the National Agency for Roma on this matter, which is inscribed as a housing-related objective of the national strategy for Roma inclusion. The project was elaborated by an NGO from another locality, but it was implemented by the local town hall in cooperation with the former. It was not acknowledged as a foreseen action of the current

development strategies, and its fulfillment would have needed consistent changes in the national legislation on informal settlements.

- **Plumbuita PIDU targeted the urban regeneration of a small area of District 2 of the capital city of Romania, Bucharest**, that was suffering underinvestment, but had a huge development potential as foreseen by its multiple owners (the Local Authorities of District 2 Bucharest/PS2, the National Administration of ‘Romanian Waters’, the Romanian Orthodox Church, and the descendent of the restituted Ion Ghika Palace). Even though there are several governance levels where the transformation of the area could have been carefully planned, its desired regeneration was limited by several factors. Among them were the restricted legal capacity of PS2, the unclear property relations regarding the land, and the difficulties of winning financial support from the competition-based EU funds.
- **GAL – Mara Natur initiative was conceived to contribute to the sustainable development of a geographical area marked out in Maramureş county, aiming at economic growth, social equity and healthy environment.** One of the four GALs operating in the county, Mara-Natur covers to a significant extent former mining, and, consequently, disadvantaged territories, however its stakeholders emphasize that the area as a whole knows an unbalanced economic development, therefore it also has better-off spaces. This GAL was created in 2011 as an association on the base of the Romanian legislation of associations and foundations, and it was authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to absorb funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) through the LEADER program targeting rural areas. This case reflects how people involved into such initiatives foresee the urgent need for an administrative reform across the whole country as the economy and demography of the region vastly changed, while the territorial administration has not.

## 2. The Case Studies in a National Context

The above case studies describing manifestations of spatial injustice should be seen in the context of the big transformation that Romania went through over the past three decades, i.e., the transformation of actually existing socialism into neoliberal capitalism, which aggravated prior forms of unfairness and/or created new ones. Processes of privatization, marketization, formation of the banking sector, and the reduction of social expenditures were conditions for Romania's accession to the European Union and/or for gaining loans from international financial organizations. Its competitive advantage on the stage of global capitalism is the low cost of its labor force, the country also being a market for imported products, and a territory opened for foreign capital investment. Uneven development in Romania happens similarly as it does anywhere else in the world under capitalism's basic rule, i.e., of capital moving where it makes more profit and conquering newer and newer territories for the sake of accumulation.

The systemic transformative processes that reshaped Romania after 1990 included: the change of the state's role from a developmental state to a state that creates proper legislative frameworks ensuring the development of the market economy; the privatization of the means of production and dismantlement of privatized industrial economic units, which created new business opportunities for foreign and local investors; the privatization of the total housing market through right-to-buy policies, through restitution, and through state support for the creation of a new private housing market that transformed the housing and building environment into a commodity and an object of financial investment; the gradual reduction of the costs associated with social protection and public services, the dismantlement of the social state, and the tendency to privatize public services, which all became more prominent in the context of the austerity regimes implemented by the end of the 2000s. Under the rule of neoliberal governance, Romania currently displays some of the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion, income inequality, housing deprivation, and overcrowdedness, or household indebtedness.

Regarding the territorial distribution of these problems, statistical data show that Romania has entered 'the transition' with a relatively low level of regional disparities, compared to other new Member States, but that these disparities have increased rapidly (sources from the European Commission quoted in the Romanian National Development Plan 2004–2006, p. 170). The first analysis of regional disparities has been made under the PHARE program for the period of March to July 1996, which showed that poverty and under-development are spatially localized in the northeastern and southern parts of Romania. Later analysis revealed that the developmental disparities should be viewed in a more nuanced way, and the awareness about the inter-regional inequalities should be considered with the acknowledgement of the intra-regional ones (World Bank, 2016). For example, Cluj County has the second lowest poverty rate in Romania (after Ilfov county including the capital city), but its neighboring counties in the Northwest Development Region (Bistrița-Năsăud, Maramureș, Sălaj, and Satu Mare) have higher poverty than the Romanian average. Moreover, it should be noted that areas where poverty is high and areas that have the most impoverished people are not necessarily overlapping, because areas that are poor may also be sparsely populated, whereas large cities tend to have low poverty rates, but large numbers of poor people. For example, despite its lower poverty rate, Cluj County has more people at risk of poverty than Sălaj, and Bucharest has more people at risk of poverty than six other counties. Nevertheless, there are cases like some northeastern counties, especially Botoșani, Iași, and Suceava, which have both high poverty rates and large numbers of poor people. (Maps 1, 2 and 3 from Annex 6.2.1 reflect the spatial distribution of poverty in Romania from all the points of views discussed above).

The uneven development in Romania also means that the concentration of resources, including jobs, in a few major cities or growth poles, where capital is invested in the production of private housing, among other investments, lead to rapidly increasing prices. Territorial planning aims to back up the dominant developmental trends, sustaining the model of polycentric development and spatial agglomeration of economic activities in a few big cities. According to the latter, the development of a few urban centers and growth poles that are able to attract private capital and EU funds, should have a spatial trickle-down effect, and will also create job opportunities for people from the surrounding localities. In this system, the so-called ‘magnet cities’ are competing among each other to attract capital and to demonstrate their entrepreneurial capacities.

The administrative-territorial organization of the country remained unchanged after 1990 in the sense that the localities and the counties continue to be the units where decisions are made by the elected deliberative bodies, but the whole system of public administration did undergo a process of decentralization. However, new forms of territorial governance that lack administrative/political attributes have been formed in order to absorb EU funds: agencies of regional development, intercommunity development agencies of metropolitan areas, growth poles, Local Action Groups nurturing development in particular areas crossing the administrative borders of the localities via the LEADER program, or in specific suburban areas via the Community-Led Local Development programs.

## 2.1. Unpacking Spatial Justice in a National Context

Employing the building blocks of the RELOCAL definition of spatial justice—‘the spatial dimension of social justice’ and ‘the fair and equitable distribution in the space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them’ (Madanipour et al. 2017, p. 79–80)—in order to tackle the manifestations of spatial injustice and the solutions that aim to address them in Romania, we discover that at the national level they are approached via the following terms:

- **regional unbalances** (*dezechilibre regionale*), **delays in development** (*întârziere în dezvoltare*), **less developed regions** (*regiuni mai puțin dezvoltate*);<sup>iii</sup>
- **unequal access to resources** (*acces inegal la resurse*);<sup>iv</sup>
- **differences in development** (*diferențe în dezvoltare*), **territorial disparities** (*disparități teritoriale*).<sup>v</sup>

On the website of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, the two big entry points that display the national regulations and programs linked to spatiality are the following: **regional development**<sup>vi</sup> and **territorial development** (including matters of **local development, urbanism, territorial cohesion, sustainable development, urban mobility**).<sup>vii</sup>

None of the terms identified above acknowledge that the defined problems would create injustices or that something would need to be done against them with the aim to create (more) justice.<sup>viii</sup> Yet again, the approach informing such understandings pretends to discuss these subjects as non-political or non-ideological technicalities or objective processes. Parallel with this—in other policy spheres—this technocrat approach addresses poverty and social exclusion, suggesting explanations that rely on the presumed social or cultural characteristics of those living in poverty and social exclusion, and not on how imbalances or differences or disparities are cumulated spatially as manifestations of larger socio-economic inequalities and injustices created by systemic forces. At most, the Territorial Development Strategy of Romania (hereinafter: SDRT), adopted by the Romanian government in October 2016, but which has not been transformed into a legally binding instrument since, promised to link ‘competition with cohesion’, and ‘development with equal

opportunities for people'.<sup>ix</sup> This linkage is one among the considerations via which SDRT aims to tackle the territorial problems of Romania; nevertheless, these are conceived in the justice-neutral terms of 'economic growth, ... attracting innovative labor force, ... protecting the natural and built capital,' or those of 'coherently planning development, ... conserving the identity of the national territory, ... and equipping the national territory in order to enable it to respond to developmental needs' (SDRT, 2016, p. 8).

In the Localities where our RELOCAL case studies on Actions were conducted, we framed the topic of spatial injustice in accordance with the vocabulary of the latter. Each and every Action promised to repair something in the way a particular territory and its inhabitants were treated or affected in the past decades by different factors. The Actions promised to deliver territorial desegregation, legalization of informal settlements, urban regeneration, or territorial development through economic growth; however, none of them explicitly used the concept of spatial (in)justice in order to define the problem and its solution. Other key terms were used for describing the matter, such as disadvantaged, vulnerable, deprived, or marked by disparities or poverty. At least indirectly, this signals that the unequal distribution of resources existing at a particular time and in a particular place, and the inequality of the opportunities to use them, is seen by the vast majority of the institutional stakeholders as an unavoidable consequence of the developmental trends of an emergent market economy or as a fault of the people or even of the territory where they live.

Regarding the academic studies in Romania on the issues incorporated in the central concept of RELOCAL, first of all one must observe that there are very few analyses on the subject of territoriality in the context of this country that are framed by the particular standpoint of (in)justice (among few exceptions see Vincze, 2013, 2018).<sup>x</sup> Some studies published under the aegis of the Romanian Academy of Sciences address Romania's territorial (economic) development from a historical perspective, making use of terms like territorial unbalances, disparities, and inequalities (Ailenei et al., 2007; Goschin et al., 2008; Constantinescu and Constantin, 2010; Zaman, Goschin, and Vasile, 2013); while others are interrogating segregation in an urban context (Mionel & neaguş, 2011; Mionel, 2013; Mionel & Gavriş, 2015) or in the relation between marginality and public administration (Mihailescu, 2015). Regarding the relatively large palette of analyses made on the exclusion of the Roma in Romania, some scholars are discussing it as a manifestation of socio-spatial marginalization and ghettoization (Botonogu et al., 2011; Vincze, 2013, 2014, 2015; Vincze & Hossu, 2014; Vincze, Bartha & Virág, 2015); others do place it within the framework of housing poverty (Berescu, 2010), or are questioning it as part of stigmatization (Cheţan & Powell, 2018), or linking it to the uneven development of urban infrastructure (Chelcea & Pulay, 2015), or to 'social housing' initiatives (Rughiniş, 2004), or to urban differentiations via verbal icons (Picker, 2013), or to informal settlements (Suditu & Vâlceanu, 2013).

## 2.2. Policies Promoting Spatial Justice in a National Context<sup>xi</sup>

In response to the territorially manifested problems, during and after Romania's accession to the European Union, several **legislative measures** were taken at the national level in order to create the **institutional and territorial structures** through which the country was supposed to tackle them. Likewise, some **governmental programs and strategies** were also elaborated to rebalance the territorial inequalities produced at different spatial scales. Legislation favouring decentralization created the general **administrative framework** under which all of our analysed Actions were enabled to appear and to envision that they might solve some aspects of uneven territorial development at local levels.

- As a response to its duties as Member State of the Council of Europe regarding the 'European Charter for Local Autonomy' through **Law 215 from 23 April 2001**,

Romania re-shaped its system of **public administration** acknowledging that local autonomy in this country is maintained through ‘the public authorities, ..., such as the local councils and local mayors elected according to the law’. Even more, the **Constitution of Romania**, in its Art. 120, affirms the following: ‘public administration in the territorial-administrative units is based on the principles of decentralization, on local autonomy and de-concentration of public services’. Furthermore, the **Law of decentralization no. 195/2006** defines decentralization as ‘the transfer of administrative and financial powers from the central government to the local government or private sector’. In Romania, local autonomy means administrative decentralization and, as such, is part of the mechanisms that place the responsibility of development and providing public services from the central government to the local public authorities. Issues like those that the studied Actions aimed to tackle are supposed to be solved by the mobilization of local forces and by absorbing EU funds, which in turn were also conditioned by the fulfilment of the obligation to decentralize state power.<sup>xii</sup>

- The **Law regarding regional development in Romania (Law 315/2004)** created eight development regions, without administrative abilities, to act as frameworks on which to elaborate, implement, and evaluate regional development policies, and to gather specific statistical data for NUTS 2 according to EUROSTAT rules. The law specifies that one of the major objectives of regional development in Romania is the ‘reduction of regional imbalances, rebalancing the delays in development of the less developed regions, which were caused by specific historical, geographic, economic, social, and political factors, and avoiding the further creation of new imbalances.’ The Actions under our scrutiny are placed in three out of the eight Development Regions of Romania (NW, Centre, Bucharest-Ilfov). Economically, they are the most developed regions in Romania; however, they continue displaying internal spatial inequalities in terms of people’s access to the existing resources for more positive regional development.
- **Intercommunity development associations (IDA)** were established through **Law 286 from 6 July 2006 - Law regarding the modification and completing the Local public administration Law 215/2001** as non-governmental or private organizations with public utility that are allowed to access EU funds. IDAs are also defined as voluntary associations of the local councils serving the localities of the metropolitan areas, but also as a compulsory condition for accessing European environmental funds. The Guide for IDAs, elaborated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, states that they have the right to cooperate with the aim to jointly fulfil some development projects of zonal or regional interest, or to jointly provide some public services. The implementer of one of our Actions, the Intercommunity Development Association – Cluj Metropolitan Area (IDA-CMA), was created under this measure in 2008, and it illustrates the attempt to rescale the solution of the problems for the localities to the level of metropolitan area.
- Governmental Ordinance 28/2013 created the **National Program for Local Development** (*Programul Național de Dezvoltare Locală*, PNDL), which supports the local authorities in financing investments that are not supported from other resources. The major aim of this program is to turn Romania into a country that, ‘in its totality is a space constructed efficiently, in which all the inhabitants have equal access to resources, benefits towards the improvement of the quality of life, and in which communities develop according to their potential and to the strategies of sustainable development according to the principles of competitiveness and territorial cohesion’; this program targets ‘the development of local infrastructure in order to assure everywhere in the country a set of compulsory public services in the domain of health, education, water-sewage system, heating and electric energy,

transport, sanitation, culture, cults, housing, and sport'. Targeting micro-urban development, one of Actions that we focused on in the Plumbuita area of Bucharest shows a case in which the local authorities tried to assure resources for urban regeneration from other means than of PNDL, which otherwise does not have a proper budget to safeguard cohesive development across Romania and/or across localities.

- The institutional structures created for the absorption of the EU (LEADER) Funds called **Local Action Groups** (*Grupul de Acțiunea Locală*, hereinafter: GAL) became possible to be initiated at the crossroads of two legislative measures. One is the **legislation regarding associations and foundations**, and the other is **Law 492/2006** that defined the rules of administering the EU Funds in compliance with the Common Agricultural Policy. GALs are constituted as associations based on the voluntary alliance of the founding members including public institutions, private companies and civil society organizations acting on the circumscribed rural area. After it signed the Treaty of Accession to the EU in 2005, Romania introduced LEADER as a special axe in its Rural Development Program. These regulations started to make effects after the country began its first round of EU funded projects (2007-2013), when—according to the changes of the EU regulations on this domain—Romania also had to include the activities under the LEADER approach into the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development among the rest of the measures from this domain. In the front of all these novelties, between 2007-2009 the country focused on the priority of forming GALs across its national territory, who were supposed to elaborate the local strategies for local rural development (a condition of LEADER). The Microregional Association Mara Natur, the organization that administers one of the Actions that the Romanian RELOCAL case studies focused on (GAL – Mara Natur), constituted in 2011, is a promising tool in what regards contribution to the micro-region's economic growth, but it cannot really tackle the unevenness of the whole territory it is supposed to cover since it distributes funds on the base of competition.
- In order to better connect and place Romania on the stage of global development and international markets in a larger time perspective (until 2035), the **Territorial Development Strategy of Romania** (*Strategia de Dezvoltare Teritorială a României*, SDTR), started to be prepared in 2012. But this Strategy was adopted by the government only in 2016 in the context of the new 'Partnership Agreement of Romania with the European Union' that had important provisions regarding territorial cohesion, the urban dimension of cohesion policy, and some macro-regional strategies (most importantly the EU Strategy for the Danube region), but also integrated territorial approaches, and integrated territorial interventions for urban development and community-led local development. The developmental goals defined in this document refer, on the one hand, to the discrepancies between Romania and other EU Member States, but, on the other hand, are also addressing its internal disparities that 'led to a decreased grade of cohesion and citizens' participation on public life' and to people's reduced access to public services especially in some of the more underdeveloped territories of the country. The model of development proposed for Romania in this Strategy is the so-called polycentric model, which relies on the realities of the country regarding the territorial role and developmental function of several cities across its regions. The production of spatial injustices on which the Actions studied in Romania by RELOCAL are focused, illustrates the failures of polycentric development. In the case of GAL – Mara Natur or Mălin-Codlea, we could observe developmental disparities between the small localities and the growth poles in whose geographical proximity they exist, but also at the level of the localities themselves. In the case of Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca,

we dealt with the phenomenon of the developed so-called ‘magnet’ and ‘competitive cities’, which, while economically growing, also create inequality and poverty, and unequal urban development and poor residential areas within their administrative borders.

The ‘Territorial Development Strategy of Romania’ is supposed to be the base of the whole spatial planning system regarding urbanism and upgrading territories, likewise of **the regional, county, and local strategic documents** (strategies of territorial development, territorial upgrading plans, regional development plans), but also of operational documents such as urbanistic plans. Therefore, there is no much difference between the national level and the local level policies on paper; however, there are differences among the different localities in terms of the improvement of indicators used to measure development. This might be explained by the fact that these policies in themselves cannot re-balance the inequalities produced by the capitalist political economy, which continues to create uneven development. But, it is also understandable, because these policies could start producing effects pending on the funds that the localities might provide for their implementation. In the four Localities addressed by our RELOCAL research, we could identify the following strategies related to territorial matters:

- The ‘Cluj-Napoca Development Strategy 2014–2020’, the ‘Cluj Metropolitan. Integrated Strategy for 2014–2020’, the ‘Cluj-Napoca Growth Pole, 2014–2020’, ‘Development Strategy of Cluj County 2014–2020’, and the ‘Development Plan of North-Western Region, 2014–2020’.
- The ‘Codlea Sustainable Local Development Strategy 2011–2020’, the ‘Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Braşov Growth Pole, 2014–2020’, the ‘Development Strategy of Braşov country, 2013–2020–2030’, and the ‘Development Plan of Central Region, 2014–2020.’
- The ‘Integrated and Sustainable Local Development Strategy of District 2 for the period 2016–2025’, the ‘Bucharest Growth Pole’, the ‘Bucharest Metropolitan Area’, and the ‘Plan for Regional Development of Bucureşti-Ilfov region 2014–2020’.
- The development strategies of: Regional Development Agency Northwest 2014–2020, Maramureş County 2014–2020, Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Territory, ‘Nature 2000 Maramureş’ Network Development 2016–2020, Mara-Natur GAL territory 2014–2020, and the strategies of the territorial administrative units that are parts of the GAL.

The World Bank (WB) and its development vision stand behind very many Romanian policies. It was the WB that conducted all the studies informing the strategies related to regional and territorial development, integrated (urban) development, social inclusion of the Roma, combatting poverty and social exclusion, and—from the position of a consultant for the Romanian government—it also had a crucial role in elaborating the Partnership Agreement between Romania and the European Commission regarding the programs of the EU funds to be implemented in this country. Therefore, it was no wonder that we could discover in the case of each and every Action under our scrutiny a background strategy adopted at different scales (European, national, regional, county, metropolitan, locality) or a national program that could enable them, but also a strategy whose measures would only be implemented via projects that could gain financial support on a competition-based project market. These strategies and the territorial governance structures created as a condition for the integration of Romania into the EU were invented exactly to create the potential for the country to absorb the EU funds and with this to implement some of the EU recommendations on social and territorial cohesion matters. All these Actions happened under conditions of European macro-economic policies and fiscal surveillance of

the Member States that enforce the latter to cut the costs of the welfare state, which limits a lot the positive effects of the project-based initiatives in the domain of social and territorial cohesion.

### 2.3. Framing the Cases

The tables below offer some arguments for the relevance of the selected Romanian cases in both the context of RELOCAL research and in the larger national territorial context.

Wider Romanian territorial context	Stark inequalities between Pata Rât and the city of Cluj Rescaling (de)segregation at the level of CMA
RELOCAL context	Local initiative viewed at the crossroads of local, metropolitan, national, and transnational levels Externalization of public and social services and related de-politization of accountability Provides insights in the constellation of political and managerial actors

**Table 1.** The Pata Cluj project – residential desegregation of the landfill area of Cluj-Napoca

**Table 2.** The Mălin-Codlea project – legalization of informal settlement in Braşov county

Wider Romanian territorial context	Part of a larger initiative at the national level
Wider Romanian territorial context	Housing situation is challenging all over the country Corruption scandals around restitution (Ghiika Palace) Property ownership related to citizenship rights Former religious building (the Monastery)
RELOCAL context	Roma minority experiencing (institutional) spatial injustice Environmental issues regarding the park National/legal context that limits local initiatives Disputes around ownership rights on the island Mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches Poor Roma inhabitants lacking property documents
	New private residential projects
RELOCAL context	Place-based action directed towards Plumbuiţa area has been designed to respond to national, regional, and European development plans To analyse, how different interest groups organize in order to push their goals on the local government's agenda

**Table 3.** Plumbuita PIDU – regenerating a micro-urban area in Bucharest

Wider Romanian territorial context	Closing the mines New opportunity to retrace areas according to available funding, leading to experiments Reinventing the area as agro-tourist zone and its territorial identity
Interesting in the RELOCAL context	Opportunity to study the formation and functioning of a Local Action Group established under the European LEADER program Redefinition of development areas within a county Creation of new associative structures versus subsistence agriculture

**Table 4.** GAL – Mara Natur. Initiative for the development of disadvantaged territories in Maramureş county

### 3. The Studied Cases in a Comparative and Transversal Perspective

#### 3.1. General characteristics of the Cases

- **Maturity**

All of the addressed Actions have been implemented for several years, which has allowed for a better analysis of their impact on people's lives and/or on the institutional structures of (local) territorial governance in Romania. Even more, because they were situated at the crossroads of several initiatives defined at different scales (local, national, European) they permitted us to interrogate them as mirrors of larger societal processes creating both spatial injustice and ideas about how to tackle it.

- **Linkages to the existing 'welfare regime'**

All the studied Actions under the RELOCAL research were initiatives implemented in Romania a few years after the enforcement of governmental austerity measures as a reaction to the financial crises. In this sense, they might be assessed as manifestations of policies, which aimed to rebalance a little bit the severe effects of the 'reform of the state' or of declaring 'the death of the social state' in 2010. Nevertheless, they continue to be inscribed in **the regime of neoliberal governance** characterized by the changing role of the state in terms of development, i.e., the transformation of the state from a developer to a manager of development by legislative measures, which prepares the field of development for different private actors (companies, non-governmental organizations, charity groups, and others). Moreover, this neoliberal regime also means that the development of underdeveloped territories is conditioned by the competitiveness of the 'local community,' including public authorities, civil society organizations, private companies and regular citizens, so development might respond to people's needs of services and goods pending on their 'worthiness' regarding their capacity to absorb EU or other funds. Under the rules of enterprise-based development, social and spatial justice risks being conditioned on the merit of being competitive on the market of these financial schemes. Even more, in this regime, the competitive advantage of the cities continues to maintain and rely on the cheap labour force that is available locally; therefore, even if the localities attract private capital that is expected to create development, this will not necessarily result in the improvement of people's living conditions, similar to how economic growth does not result automatically in social welfare.

- **Territorial governance structures**

The institutional and policy backgrounds of the Actions under our scrutiny—besides all of their concrete aspects regarding how they deliver procedural and/or distributive justice—constitute one of the most interesting issues to be noted under the RELOCAL research, because this reveals their potential and limits. Two of the studied cases (Pata Cluj and GAL – Mara Natur) are illustrating situations in which the ownership of the Actions belonged to some territorial structures that did not have public administrative attributions, such as an intercommunity development association, or a local action group that acted on geographical spaces that are not administrative territorial units or LAUs, like the metropolitan area or the GAL territory. The other two cases (Mălin-Codlea and Plumbuita PIDU) display a different institutional arrangement, as the projects were implemented by the city halls and local councils, making use of policy frameworks defined at the national level. Altogether, all the cases look like experiments for the involved institutional structures on how to deal with territorially localized problems: the institutional abilities of the Local Authorities of District 2 Bucharest to administer urban regeneration was limited by its attributes in

relation to other institutional stakeholders that had powers on the area; the capacity of the Coldea Town Hall to legalize the informal settlement from its locality was constrained by the gaps in national legislation on this matter; the institutional powers of IDA-CMA to desegregate a territory of one locality of CMA by moving people from there to other component localities, together with becoming owner of a 'social housing' fund were at least inconsistent; GAL – Mara Natur was designed as to allow an extra funding stream to flow to a less developed micro-region, but those who did not have resources to juggle applications and projects remained disadvantaged in the competition for financial support, therefore it could not really work against the ongoing uneven economic development within its territory.

### 3.2. Findings. Analytical Dimensions 1–5

#### Analytical Dimension 1 – perceptions of spatial (in)justice

The **perceptions of disadvantaged or underdeveloped neighbourhoods in the city or of the local disparities manifested in space**, are very much shaped by the position of the person who talks about them. One's position includes both the role that he/she has in the administrative-political structures involved in urban governance, and the very personal embeddedness into the geographies of the city, most importantly living within or outside such areas. All of the interviewed stakeholders and people from the localities under our scrutiny were aware of the existence of spaces affected by injustice. More precisely, they were aware of the **geographical areas marked by multiple disadvantages**, more or less harshly separated from the rest of the settlement via natural **boundaries**, lack of transport, and/or stigmatization, while being referred to as marginal, vulnerable, poor, disparate, isolated, excluded, illegal, or informal. Among all the others, the case of Plum-buita displayed an ambiguous perception, since it was conceived at the same time as both urbanistically neglected and naturally rich in advantages that were waiting to be exploited. Moreover, this case was special compared to others, since it was not perceived as the most problematic area of the capital city that has several 'poverty pockets.'

When it came to **explanations** regarding the condition of such places, the stakeholders' positions started to diverge: according to some, this was a natural consequence of how the cities developed as they attracted investors and better-off people; others were ready to consider that there is something wrong with this and the municipalities had a contribution to the formation of such conditions; meanwhile, people living in disadvantaged areas acknowledged that due to their reduced financial resources, this was the only space and housing arrangement they could afford. The willingness to recall or not recall the **histories of the formation of these spaces** made a difference in the degree to which the space itself and the people inhabiting it were blamed for the deprived condition that they are in today. In three of our cases, since the dwellers of the disadvantaged areas were ethnic Roma, 'explanations' regarding them and their poor living conditions used **racialization** as a technique, which were used to naturalize and justify discrepancies, inequalities, and injustices that were happening to their detriment.

#### Analytical Dimension 2 – tools and policies for development

The existence of disadvantaged or excluded spaces in the locality and the possible solutions to the problems in those spaces are not necessarily acknowledged in the **main-stream policies of development**. But even in the cases when they are, they are not considered politically in a consistent and systemic way and are not served by the means of local governance, including local budgets or other internal resources. This is so especially when these territories are inhabited mostly by poor ethnic Roma. If other aspects of the

disadvantaged spaces are considered, such as in the case of Plumbuita, the housing condition of its Roma dwellers is not addressed by mainstream policies. The latter's problems are considered to be 'Roma problems' and are pushed on the agenda to attract EU or other **'Roma inclusion' or 'poverty eradication' funds** for solving them. This is widespread, considering that the local government has to target 'development', which implies particular measures in regard to attracting investors or private capital to the city, while 'underdevelopment' is not a matter that it has to deal with or in relation to which it should be accountable. The more a city is considered more developed, the stronger the practice is of denying that spatial injustice is an organic part of its realities, and as a result **the political will of policymakers** to deal with it is close to non-existent.

According to a national expert on EU funds, the **project-based tool** by which the Pata Cluj project was realized was an unusual one: it was selected directly by Brussels, and therefore the need to be chosen as a 'good practice' was there from its very beginnings. This was even more so due to the fact that it was following from a prior intervention of the United Nations Development Program, whose 'community development' model was considered as a success wherever it was implemented across other countries. The Mălin-Codlea project was also initiated from outside the locality and its institutional structures, i.e., by a proposal coming from a person acting in another city and, most importantly, shaped by a special program of the National Agency for Roma in accordance with the 'Governmental Strategy for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority.' In the case of the urban regeneration program envisioned to impact a larger area that was marked by multiple disadvantages, the role of the EU Cohesion Policy and other EU policies was essential. The latter policies did have a conceptual influence apart from the financial support. The LEADER program used by GAL – Mara Natur so far constitutes an exercise in administrative capacity to attract external funding, develop projects, while interacting at a different and novel scale. Practically, GAL operates as a localized intermediary management organism in the EU funding distribution chain: it opens calls and selects small-scale projects according to its Local Development Strategy.

Despite their limited impact or even due to that impact, all the studied Actions aim to be continued with the next rounds of projects looking for funds; however, the mainstream policies have not gone through the changes that would have been necessary for their sustainable success.

### Analytical Dimension 3: Coordination and implementation of the Action

The **coordination** of the Actions was assured by different structures defined in the Romanian legislation on public administration. In the case of the Mălin-Codlea project and Plumbuita PIDU, these administrations were the city halls, which were the historical institutions with political-administrative attributes for acting on the behalf of people inhabiting their correspondent territorial units, in our case, the localities. The specificity of Mălin-Codlea in this sense resulted from the fact that it was conceived as a project by a non-governmental organization from another city. Regarding Pata Cluj, the Intercommunity Development Association – Cluj Metropolitan Area (IDA-CMA), created in 2008 on the base of a special extension of the public administration law as a private organization with public utility, was the implementer of the project, after the latter was elaborated in a cooperation between UNDP and the Cluj-Napoca City Hall. GAL – Mara Natur was coordinated and implemented under the rules of the LEADER program, acting through a specific stakeholder public-private structure serving the GAL territory that crosses the existing administrative boundaries of Romania's territorial organization.

With the exception of Plumbuita PIDU, the Actions were **implemented** in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. They either had leading roles (as in the case of Mălin-Codlea, since it had direct contact with the funding agency); or had to put into

practice the plans of different project components and ensured more legitimacy to the whole project (like in the case of Pata Cluj); or effectively designed and coordinated the set of actions (such as in the case of GAL – Mara Natur).

In all the cases, the **decision-making capacities** of the institutional stakeholders were limited by several factors. As an organization formed on the base of the voluntary association of local councils and led by a council of directors, including the mayors of the localities composing Cluj Metropolitan Area, IDA-CMA does not possess a decision-making capacity in regard to the municipalities that enter under this arrangement. Moreover, during its implementation, the Pata Cluj project was marked by a core territorial-administrative inconsistency: even though its official title included the ‘vulnerable groups’ of the Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA), the Action was dedicated to people from Pata Rât of the city of Cluj-Napoca; a large percentage of people who were relocated from Pata Rât were moved outside the city, to the communes of CMA, which created tension especially with the locality where two houses were built in the territory of the commune for the relocated people. In the case of Mălin-Codlea, the decision-making capacities of the project were definitely overwritten by the lack of national legal provisions that should have facilitated the legalization of informal settlements, as well as by the reduced financial resources of the inhabitants not being able to purchase the land offered to them in the framework of the project. The capacity of the Local Authorities of District 2 of Bucharest, who had to implement the urban regeneration plan in Plumbuita, was restricted by the unfinished decentralization process, i.e., by its reduced capacities in relation to the mayoralty of the capital city, and it was limited by the lack of control on the lakes and the shore areas (these resources being under the administration of the ‘Romanian Waters’ company). In the technocratic world of GAL – Mara Natur, decision making and managerial procedures are meticulously laid out, as they set the stage for any future cooperation. How high the GAL and its resources are on the members list of priority, combined with the time spent on the road to attend the meetings would often explain who would be more active in decision-making.

In what regards **leadership**, in the case of Plumbuita PIDU it had a politically driven agenda, sometimes defeating the institutional interests, sometimes reflecting personal or professional disagreements. The Pata Cluj management team was more preoccupied with fulfilling the project indicators and with sustaining the image of a horizontally organized participative project that permanently informed and consulted the public, while negotiating the best decisions with some representatives of Cluj-Napoca City Hall, of whom some were also hired on the project. In the case of Mălin-Codlea, leadership was split between the municipality of Codlea and a non-governmental organization, whose collaboration was based on a quite clear division of labor (the town hall had to take care of the official administrative measures, while the NGO had to focus on fulfilling the project objectives). However, this model was not absent of tensions, which were actually rooted in the divergences between the two sets of agendas that the institutions had to deal with. While GALs vary considerably in terms of who kickstart the association, in the case of GAL – Mara Natur, the city hall of Baia Sprie, the only urban LAU in the territory, is seen as the leading force behind the initiation of the group, which is now lead by one of its former employees.

#### Analytical Dimension 4: Autonomy, participation and engagement

As already described in chapter 2.2 of this Report, **the conditions of possibility for local Actions** to be envisaged and implemented by different institutional stakeholders and with the support of the EU funds included the legal regulations allowing for the decentralization of public administration and the creation of new territorial structures, even if they were not enabled with administrative decision-making powers. The latter, and especially the GALs might even excel in celebrating **autonomy** in relation with the state powers because they invite at the decision-making table not only representatives of the public authorities,

but also of the private companies and NGOs. In this way, the local business environment might gain more influence and even start-up capital from EU Funds to invest into their private economic enterprises. At the end of the day, one may affirm that the GALs' or IDAs' autonomy from the state powers creates a greater dependence on the other side, i.e. a dependence on the EU Funds that have to be reached via endless competition for financial resources.

In a larger context, local initiatives are facilitated and even encouraged by the previously mentioned prevalence of neoliberal governance that favours transposing accountability for development and especially for 'social matters' from the shoulders of state institutions towards the 'local communities.' All these mechanisms and the underlying ideological convictions enable and motivate the local institutional stakeholders to get involved in the elaboration and implementation of projects, and to believe that by means of such projects they might solve some aspects of the negative effects of uneven territorial development at local levels. At the end of the day, all the representatives of local public administration, regardless of whether they act in economically richer or poorer localities, complain about the fact that **decentralization** (the transfer of responsibilities from central to local levels) is not properly coupled with the assurance of adequate funds for responding to these obligations; therefore, they all acknowledge the need to apply for alternative financial resources. Yet again, some are more capable of writing competitive projects, others have money for externalizing this work towards private companies. Even more, the differently positioned local governments have divergent opinions about territorial solidarity: the richer localities would like to keep more funds at the local level, especially from the resources generated from local taxes and other contributions of the city dwellers; while the poorer localities favour better redistributive mechanisms that could support them in their effort to deal with their local problems of underdevelopment and poverty.

Since our Actions deal with manifestations of spatial injustice, even if they do not use this term when considering the issues of territorial unevenness that they address, it makes one wonder why two of the projects (Pata Cluj and Mălin-Codlea) are **engaged** in initiatives that tackle the unequal access of ethnic Roma persons and communities to different resources, and the other two are not. All the cases would have reasons to address matters of social inequality and exclusion of the Roma in the Localities; however, both Gal – Mara Natur and Plumbuita PIDU seem to prefer to focus on developmental projects as technical and/or economic interventions and to not recognize how are these unequally benefiting different inhabitants of the area according to their social status, ethnicity, not to mention social class. Even more, as we could observe, the micro-urban regeneration project in the capital city not only did not include positive measures to assure that poor Roma would benefit from the interventions, but it invested resources into a video surveillance system that reinforced their stigmatization and separation from the rest of the dwellers of the area. Under these conditions, one may affirm: the existence and involvement at the local level of **autonomous civil society organizations and/or activist initiatives** is a factor that facilitates the appearance of local projects becoming more aware of the inequalities and injustices that are suffered by the most deprived and racialized social categories (such as the poor, ethnic Roma, or the pauperized working class).

The Actions under our scrutiny differ a lot in the degree to which they promote and, at the end of the day, fulfil **the aim of assuring the participation of potential beneficiaries** on the project-related decision-making processes. The management team of Pata Cluj did not want to exclude people living in Pata Rât from the conception of the actions, but they did not manage to include them in the effective decision-making process either. On the other hand, it aimed to extend its collaborators beyond itself, which was not only a way to gain expertise and legitimacy, or to transmit messages about its transparency, but was also a tool in raising awareness about Pata Rât to larger and larger public places. In contrast, Mălin-Codlea displayed a strong tendency to follow decisions coming from the top. This

project was 80% administrative-bureaucratic in nature, and it was less about assuring people's participation and engagement in making decisions about how things should have happened. However, according to the project coordinator, beneficiaries were informed about implementation, but spoke about poor communication between the parties. In the case of Plumbuita PIDU, which altogether suffered from a lack of transparency, we could learn that either the inhabitants of the area nor the local NGOs were involved in this Action. Nevertheless, the local population tried different initiatives to improve their lives, but these were negatively received by the local authorities, and people more often met the closed doors of the mayoralty rather than engaged support. GAL – Mara Natur illustrates that the large area of a territory can impede regular participation of all the stakeholders in decision making, and equal distribution of funds between the local administrations that were part of the GAL was hindered by many impediments. Moreover, the increased bureaucratic procedures and the need to co-finance the funded initiatives favour by design the public administration and the private economic agents, while are keeping apart the poor who have fewer incentives to apply for funds for their plans.

Viewed from another point of view, one may affirm that regardless of what they aimed for and of how much they involved the beneficiaries in decision-making, Mălin-Codlea and Plumbuita PIDU were cases where the local public authorities, because they were what they were in the administrative system, assumed a **political accountability** in relation to the Actions' beneficiaries. In the case of Pata Cluj and GAL – Mara Natur, the institutional structures responsible for the implemented initiatives had at the most some **technical accountability** in what regards project indicators or budget spending. But at the end of the day, Plumbuita PIDU did not assume responsibilities in relation to the impoverished Roma, while Mălin-Codlea articulated accountability in relation to them in an adverse manner: aiming to 'empower and raise accountability of citizens in the field of housing,' the mayoralty could affirm that it met their target, i.e., they created a framework so that these communities could leave behind their unfortunate situation, so if the problem remains, then they would consider it due to their lack of involvement.

Despite of the differences in the above, usually the local authorities did not give up the aim to **create their image of legitimacy** by claiming to run 'public consultations' and 'participative management.' We could observe that nowadays these became kind of buzz words for public governance that attract other specific funds for strengthening their institutional and managerial capacity.

### Analytical Dimension 5: Place-based knowledge and adaptability

Among all the cases, Pata Cluj displays a specific way of using **place-based knowledge**. It combined two sources of knowledge: one related to a formerly implemented UNDP project in Pata Rât (i.e., a household survey conducted in the area in 2012) and the other linked to local actions against ghettoization and environmental racism that started to take shape in the locality in 2010, that are continued today by larger local activist groups for housing justice. Contrary to this, in the case of the Mălin-Codlea project, one could not say that the initiator, a person from another city was very much involved in and knowledgeable of the local situation. As he confessed, things happened in reverse: the 2014 experience from Codlea was useful for him to later implement a project with the same objective in his own town. However, given the lack of proper national legislation regarding legalization of informal settlements, the project's problem was not only the lack of knowledge about the complexities and histories of the particular local situation of Roma living informally, but it was also a lack of ability in finding the local institutional and administrative niches that could have been used to fulfil its aims. The matter of evidence or knowledge on which an intervention is elaborated became an issue of mutual contestation among the stakeholders

of Plumbuita PIDU: local authorities stated that they generated knowledge via public consultations on different topics, such as quality of life, development, security, transport, and social services, and also conducted research about the perceptions of quality of life, which showed that people living in Plumbuita had a negative view of their condition. ON the other side, the experts and the inhabitants of the area whom we talked to claimed otherwise, maintaining that the authorities did not really know about the everyday realities in the area, at least not about all of its aspects. Where GAL – Mara Natur was required to devote considerable resources is precisely the production of place-based knowledge that had to form the basis of its Local Development Strategy (LDS). Public debates and inquiries all over the territory complemented a multitude of statistical data. While the analytical part of the SDL mentions some local impediments to development, such as the locals' reluctance to agricultural association, larger political decisions are not included as explanations.

Regarding the **adaptability** of the Actions to the permanent and not always foreseen challenges met during implementation, the differences between them are rooted in the degree of flexibility of the funding schemes that they used for their interventions. Due to the nature of the so-called predefined project funded by a Norwegian Grant, the Pata Cluj project could be very flexible, allowing the team to change the specific actions and to reallocate funds according to the realities encountered during implementation. This was a fortunate feature from the point of view of the relocation of 35 families from Pata Rât, which occurred as a result of introducing a housing component later on in the project's implementation. But it was a not-so-successful possibility, for example, from the perspective of the social economy project component that was meanwhile abandoned. The institutional stakeholders of Mălin-Codlea complained about the 'low elasticity and adaptability' of the governmental funds, which was a huge impediment in fulfilling the project's aims: this type of funding imposed a very short period of implementation and did not consider the timeframes needed for the related administrative procedures (including public auctions and acquisitions of services). The implementer of Plumbuita PIDU lamented over the lack of coherence in funding from the EU, or because there were too many rules and too many studies that it had to refer to when applying for money. It also complained that the requirements for obtaining EU funds are not flexible enough and the procedures should be much better adapted to the local needs. In terms of procedures, GAL – Mara Natur has sufficient space for movements both in what regards decision making and management, as well as in getting approvals from MARD to update its core document, the LDS. However, in some key aspects regarding the type, size, and manner of disbursing funding—crucial factors for beneficiaries—its hands are tied by national and EU regulations. Several experts and stakeholders across the Localities considered that there would be a need to have proper internal structures for the local authorities in writing and managing projects, without having to ask/buy external services from consultancy companies for this purpose.

### 3.3. Findings. Synthesising Dimensions A–C

#### Synthesising Dimension A: Assessment of promoters and inhibitors

In a large sense, the **major inhibitors of solving the manifestations of spatial injustice** that the Actions addressed are rooted in the lack of proper governmental territorial and housing politics with adequate budgets that would aim to reduce different types of inequalities and the effects of uneven development created by capitalist political economy. At the level of the projects, the major inhibiting factor of the sustainability for the Pata Cluj project (i.e., for the aim of desegregation of Pata Rât) was the lack of involvement and accountability of the Cluj-Napoca City Hall regarding this matter; in the case of Mălin-Codlea and Plumbuita PIDU, it consisted in the limited powers that the involved stakeholders (including the acting public authorities) had over the issue that they took responsibility for;

as for GAL – Mara Natur, it was about the disproportionate and demoralizing relation between the detailed production of place-based knowledge regarding the assessment of problems and needs, and the limited availability of instruments to tackle spatial inequalities.

Regarding **the factors that ensured the limited, but positive effects ('the promoters')**, one could mention here the following: the general consensus around the need of having a housing component in a project that defines itself as integrated and as dedicated to desegregation (Pata Cluj); the basic agreement between the mayoralty and the NGO implementing the project in regard to the need to go as far as possible in the process of legalizing informal settlements (Mălin-Codlea); the acknowledgement of the fact that urban regeneration needs external funds for infrastructural development, which are not equally available even in a developed city such as Bucharest (Plumbuita PIDU); and the opportunity for easier access to EU funding in areas with lower access capacity and less experience (GAL – Mara Natur).

### Synthesising Dimension B: Competences and capacities of stakeholders

While **evaluating the potential impact** of the studied Actions on the local settings, one should inquire about their effects in reducing spatial injustice, both from the point of view of their beneficiaries and of the institutions that implemented them. Regarding the **institutional capacities**, each of the interventions could affirm that they learned more about the addressed issues, proved something about the inhibitors and promoters of success, or even managed to change somewhat how they functioned in the face of such problems. Obviously, each and every Action was also preoccupied with its positive image, some of them nurtured more, others to a lesser degree, their desire of becoming a 'good practice' or 'model project' that should be replicated, not only locally but also in other similar settings. Nevertheless, one may conclude that the stakeholders, for the most part, if they did not include among them the local public authorities, enabled themselves to elaborate and implement further projects but had little to no impact on the regular policies of local public administration.

After the Pata Cluj project, the Cluj-Napoca City Hall did not change its criteria of attribution of social housing to support the most deprived in moving out of Pata Rât, did not elaborate a system of preventing and forbidding forced evictions, did not make plans to produce more social housing, and did not give any signs about wanting to contribute to another project cycle with funds from the local budget and/or with lands or buildings to be used with the aim of sustaining the desegregation of the landfill area. Even if after the Mălin-Codlea project a new program started for the benefit of poor Roma communities, which included a component of legalizing informal housing, one may observe that there was only sporadically any talk about Mălin at the town hall, and nobody from the community participated in the local council meetings. Even at this stage, the institutional stakeholders did not elaborate any mechanisms to involve the local community in decision-making on such important matters or to find out how people with different financial situations would be affected by the legalization process. In the case of Plumbuita PIDU, the main mechanisms and procedures that reproduced spatial injustice were connected to the lack of institutional transparency and accountability, and the institution does not seem to have changed after the program ended with such reduced results. In addition, the institutional memory of the local administration is weak: once the leaders of the implemented projects are not anymore in public positions, there is no responsibility transferable to the new local government. GAL – Mara Natur demonstrates that no local and political knowledge is useful without the capability of being an active part of the bureaucratic world. In a model technocratic design (where political colour is formally irrelevant) those

with the institutional and/or personal resources and capacities to juggle applications and projects are advantaged in the competitive funding arena.

The stakeholders directly involved into the Pata Cluj project did not manage **to empower the locals** by encouraging the creation of new community associations or organizations that might try to give a voice to their needs. In this sense, it did not enhance community capacity for self-representation. Treating the people of Pata Rât as beneficiaries that can achieve some goals by collaborating with a group of people who were not elected by them to represent them, and were not put in charge by the municipality to act on its behalf, went against the capacity of the project team to generate sustainable changes in the communities. Mălin-Codlea aimed to raise the citizens' accountability for solving their own problems, but at the end of the day it proved that beyond the problems of the informal settlements there are causes that exceed not only people's capacities, but also the competences and institutional abilities of the local public authorities. GAL – Mara Natur, using LEADER as a specific instrument of development, tried to animate and in this sense to empower bottom-up initiatives, but it hardly managed to put its resources on the benefit of the most disadvantaged areas or people. As an urban regeneration initiative, Plumbuita PIDU was not preoccupied with such matters, which is a more general characteristic of technical or infrastructural projects that do not care about their social impacts.

Last but not least, one may conclude that the authorities continued to be part of the problem of reproducing spatial injustices that they were supposed to handle. And when institutional commitments, political will, and the just distribution of local resources are lacking, the project-based short-term initiatives not only do not have the capacity to generate radical changes for the addressed problems, but in spite of them, the problems themselves continue to exist and/or enlarge. For example, until when the authorities will not stop forced evictions and/or provide more social housing to the most deprived, informal settlements and the marginal areas with deprived housing conditions will expand. Or until the economic disparities are reproduced by uneven development at different scales, there is little chance for people living in impoverished areas to become economically empowered on the spot.

### Synthesising Dimension C: Connecting the action to procedural and distributive justice

Speaking about how the Actions aimed and reached for improving **distributive and procedural spatial justice**, one can get a sense of the capacities of change if he/she views the results in their very local contexts. Therefore, in what follows, the (non)achievements will be presented as embedded in their particular settings.

The major achievement of Pata Cluj in terms of distributive justice was that it relocated 35 families from Pata Rât (approximately 10% of its inhabitants), but two-thirds of the beneficiaries were given apartments bought or constructed by project money outside of the city of Cluj-Napoca, in three of the villages of CMA (Apahida, Florești, Baciú). The project used a lot of resources on behalf of improving procedural justice: on fuelling 'community empowerment' via the work of several facilitators, case managers, and experts on restorative practices; on creating 'the participative community' via consultations run in Pata Rât and via a careful discursive construction of the project; on cultural events aiming to raise awareness among the majority population about the area and about the need to be involved in the actions as volunteers; and on extending the circle of stakeholders involved in the project beyond its managerial and implementation team. The latter not only had the role of bringing expertise on different matters, but also served the aim of creating a general positive consensus around the project, including for the cause of desegregation as well as the perception of the project as 'good practice'. It is still too early and there is too

little evidence to pronounce opinions about the improvement of local capacity to handle issues such as residential segregation. The outcomes are still heavily shaped by the disinterest of the local government, who continues to be very much interested in the local real estate market and not in providing adequate homes for low income people, including the inhabitants who continue to be forced to live in Pata Rât.

Not only the Mălin-Codlea project, but none of the other similar programs financed by the National Agency for Roma could be completed in the terms set in its call regarding the legalization of informal settlements. This was due to the short implementation period, to the administrative procedures' (including public auctions and acquisitions) calendar, and to the lack of national legislation on legalization of informal settlements, as well as to the non-acknowledgement of the various situations that different settlements display. It was expected that Mălin-Codlea would legalize 150 households from this area, but only 10% of the households ended up being legally recognized and only partially, in the sense that they became owners of the land below and/or near their houses lacking authorization of construction, and only because they could afford to buy it from the municipality. Therefore, an action that promised to repair the injustice that this community suffered in the past (not being legally recognized for almost 60 years including during socialist and post-socialist times), ended up re-creating injustice among its members. In addition, by framing the project as an Action for citizen accountability, the mayoralty was convinced that, by implementing it, the institution did everything that could possibly be done, and so it affirmed that those who did not become 'accountable citizens,' i.e., were not able to obtain ownership on the land, do not really want to improve their situation.

According to the evaluation of Plumbuita PIDU made by its implementer, only a couple of project components were fulfilled out of the twelve planned: 15 streets have been asphalted and a video-surveillance system was installed, while the water and sewage systems were implemented in the area by the General Mayorality of Bucharest. The housing-related needs of Roma ethnics were hardly addressed by this Action. Most importantly, the greatest injustice that they suffered in decades, having to live informally in their homes, was not even recognized by policymakers, not to mention the degree to which they could benefit from the general infrastructural improvements. According to the project assessment, PIDU failed to be implemented properly due to the lack of financial resources, to managerial capability, to the disapproval of shifting the management of certain territories and water to the PS2, and/or due to the fact that the desired development directions in the area fall outside the authority of PS2. But one could add to this list of reasons that a better understanding of the local population, its aspirations, conditions and needs, and of the area's potential for infrastructural development, could have led to more just outcomes. In addition, there is a clear need to address spatial injustice in ethnically and socially mixed places and to understand the specificity of a poor and marginalized Locality within a developed region. In the general context of Bucharest city and the Bucharest-Ilfov region, it is important to have an integrated urban development plan but where all the dimensions are addressed. Urban regeneration cannot be built on grandiose ideas that lack a deep and serious knowledge of the Locality and its inhabitants and without an awareness on how it impacts different categories of people.

The GAL – Mara Natur initiative manages funding for both private and public applicants, covering a wide range of economic initiatives (e.g., installation of young farmers) and public interest interventions (e.g., repairing public roads). For most public stakeholders, LEADER is nothing special in the sense that they are used to adapting any available funding opportunity to their communities. Currently, they got more and more used with another term, that of community-led local development, which continues the LEADER approach and even extends it from the rural to urban environment. In this regard, the characteristics of the concept of GAL appear to be not vastly different from the other superimposed bureaucratic structures. However, the way in which the GAL was formed and the

shape of its territory are the product of local political intuition and agility, because of the restrictive ratio of the urban population of a GAL that puts small urban centres in direct competition for the attraction of surrounding villages. A common concern related to European funding, including LEADER, is over-bureaucratization, which also arises when comparing to stories heard from experiences in other EU states. This affects administrations that lack adequate means (e.g., sufficient personnel) and/or experience in dealing with EU funding, more so when application windows are tight. The inflation of development strategies makes it difficult to navigate and correlate them productively, particularly when some levels are managed by different political parties. The relevance of political colour for local and regional development is overlooked in the concept of GAL. As they are, the GAL and the LEADER program on an overall are an exercise in administrative capacity to attract external funding and to develop projects, while interacting at a different and novel scale. Its real promised benefit is not in what it currently is, but in what it could be. Procedural justice is what it aims to offer first in order to pave the road.

## 4. Conclusions

The manifestations of spatial injustice in the Localities where the RELOCAL research was focused on the Actions tackling them, should be seen in **the context of the big transformation that Romania went through in the past three decades**, i.e., the transformation of actually existing socialism into neoliberal capitalism. This change aggravated many prior forms of unfairness regarding development and peoples' *de facto* access to public and social services across the country; but it also created new ones both between Romania and other EU Members States, and within the borders of Romania, among regions, among counties, among localities, and among different zones of the localities<sup>xiii</sup> (Annex 6.2 presents data regarding the regional disparities in Romania from four perspectives: poverty, Gross Domestic Product, population, and employment). Our case studies demonstrated that the problems to which the Actions aimed to respond were territorially localized, but they appeared due to larger trans-local factors and processes, many of them functioning in a long-duration time frame. Moreover, while in each case the main implementing stakeholders were local actors, the conceptual frameworks and financial schemes that facilitated them came from trans-local agents. Altogether, 'localism' itself as a perspective adopted in development theories and practices is rooted in trans-local, or even trans-national, policy agendas as a reaction to the failures of other development models. Displaying a transformative potential in what regards the capacity for acknowledging the local problems and for mobilizing local forces to solve them, localism itself does not exclude the reproduction of inequalities. In many cases, localism reproduces competition and meritocracy-based neoliberal governance and justifies inequalities and lack of solidarity. And, at the end of the day, local autonomy is not a medicine for treating the unequal opportunities that people differently positioned in the class system do have in what regards putting their priorities on the local public agenda and getting resources for solving/easing them.

What makes the addressed Actions very challenging for the RELOCAL research is that they reflect several dimensions of the changing welfare regimes in post-socialist Romania. In particular they talk about **how due to these changes, the state continues to (un-)serve people in the most impoverished social categories who are enforced by different constraints to make a living in underdeveloped areas**. These dimensions include: the outsourcing of welfare services from governmental bodies to project-based organizations and from public budgets to external funding; the rescaling of governmental responsibilities from the level of municipalities to the level of larger metropolitan areas or other geographically circumscribed territories; the use of several mechanisms to push the pauperized labour force to the peripheries of the gentrifying cities and even beyond their administrative borders as their lands gain more and more value on the real estate and land market.

What is needed?

- More coherent national and local policies for cohesive and inclusive territorial development, which promote, through legislative and financial incentives, the application of the principle of solidarity across unevenly developed areas and which enforce the implementation of national and local development plans that aim to equalize access to basic public services and income resources for each and every social category.
- A policy of EU funds that mainstreams in each and every developmental project the positive measures to be taken on behalf of people living in disadvantaged and deprived spaces and conditions.

- More state and social control on the socio-economic processes that create uneven development, spatial disparities, and deprivations, in order to reduce the risk of reproducing inequalities and injustices or life conditions in which people are dispossessed of their basic rights necessary for a decent life.

The Pata Cluj project not only aimed to improve the standard of living of **people affected by territorial and social segregation**, but also to prepare mainstream public services ‘to reach out for the most vulnerable groups in the society.’ But today we see that full socio-territorial justice for the inhabitants of Pata Rât is waiting to be delivered by further externally funded projects. No political accountability, no institutional change, and no financial or other types of contribution has been enacted by the decision-making bodies of local public administration towards improving living conditions in Pata Rât or relocating the inhabitants into adequate homes in other parts of the city.

What is needed?

- On the side of the fund-providers, to condition the project grants in this domain on the contribution of the local authorities to fulfil the projects’ objectives.
- On the side of local public authorities, the elaboration and adoption of a plan of concrete measures regarding the desegregation of the area that demonstrates real interest in this, regardless of the external funds that are or are not possible of being attracted with this aim (e.g., the creation of a social inclusion unit at City Hall, which would be enabled to coordinate all the social, territorial, and housing components of inclusion; a yearly allocation of financial contributions to this process from the local budget and a multiannual budgeted program; the allocation of public lands and buildings to contribute to the creation of the infrastructural conditions to relocate people from Pata Rât to the city of Cluj-Napoca). In addition, public authorities, should correlate the specific measures focused on the situation of people from Pata Rât with larger changes in the municipality’s social/public housing policy and its measures regarding evictions.
- On the side of national public policies, to modify the national housing-related legislation in a way that could *de facto* ensure adequate housing to all, and in particular social housing from public funds for people with low income, who are affected by different or several forms of social and spatial injustice, among them deprived housing conditions, informal and insecure housing, and evictions that leave them homeless.

Three years after the implementation of the Mălin-Codlea project, the municipality started a new initiative co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Community-Led Local Development Program that among others aims to support **people living in informal settlements**. This sounds like a positive development for those who will benefit from it, but it creates a sense of injustice among the others. At the end of the day, these two initiatives, in spite of the promise to solve a decades-old problem of spatial injustice, created tensions and new forms of unfair treatment in the local society.

What is needed?

- A national legislative measure for the legal recognition of informal housing, which starts from recognizing that in the case of many people, informal housing is a solution to their disparate condition in which they are unable to obtain other housing alternatives for themselves and their families.

- The recognition at national and local levels that the legalization of informal settlements in the case of situations characterized by housing deprivations cannot be the final aim. In such cases, this endeavour should be completed by improving people's housing and infrastructural conditions, their access to public transport and public utilities, as well as by eliminating all the sources of pollution from the neighbourhood where people are supposed to enjoy their property rights.
- A local and national policy that creates more social and public housing also as a mean to stop the extension of informal housing areas that do not ensure adequate life conditions and tenure security for their inhabitants.

Plumbuita PIDU aimed at micro-urban regeneration that could improve the quality of life for **the inhabitants of an infrastructurally underdeveloped area**; however, it neglected the situation of the most deprived. Moreover, the scarcity of the implemented projects left the place almost at the same level of under-development and with no foreseeable plan for further evolutions.

What is needed?

- On the side of local authorities, to change institutional arrangements through different collaborations with other institutional stakeholders that have powers over the land in the area.
- The inclusion of the disadvantaged poor Roma families into the potential collaborative schemes so that they will not be affected negatively by urban regeneration. For example, they should be protected against being evicted from the area, not to mention the need to make them beneficiaries of the resources created by the area-based urban regeneration projects.
- On the side of national public authorities and fund-providers, to include some compulsory safe-guarding provisions regarding the most vulnerable social categories in any urban regeneration or redevelopment project.

As an ongoing initiative, GAL – Mara Natur provides some welcomed benefits with no major drawbacks. In additions, it experiments with actions that transcend the boundaries of Romania's formal administrative-territorial units. It is foremost a pedagogical tool that attempts to open up a new plane of thinking while offering some concrete benefits in the form of small-scale projects to serve as examples. However, it displays a disproportionate and demoralizing relation between the detailed production of place-based knowledge regarding problems and needs assessment, and the available instruments to tackle spatial inequalities. Because EU funding is regarded as highly necessary, a lack of ensured access (increased support for applications to larger sums) could breed resentment among the most underfunded areas of GAL – Mara Natur.

What is needed?

- In the larger scheme, administrative reform, as the economy and demography of the region vastly changed, while territorial administration has not. Propositions for such reform include merging the smallest LAU with the closest cities. Perhaps this conclusion is triggered by the occurrence of the GAL as an experiment on territorial development.
- Increased capacity of local public administrations through permanent budget for employees who will handle external projects, while decreasing the

bureaucratic processes for EU and national funding, which need to be more substantive and need-based oriented instead of competitive.

- While most stakeholders agree that there is still a need for investment in infrastructure development and maintenance, the factor that could speed up the reduction of territorial inequalities is the presence of solid economic investors in other areas besides urban centres.

Uneven development, as product and premise of capitalism that generates spatial injustice, is sustained by state politics that acts on the behalf of creating a market economy, i.e., that supports marketization, privatization, and the formation of the banking sector, which were the conditions of Romania's accession to the European Union, and generally speaking of its integration into the contemporary stage of global capitalism. Therefore, **spatial injustice, created by trans-local forces in several forms is hard to reduce by the means of a locality, of local resources, or of 'local communities,' even if the latter might be mobilized around socially sensitive development goals and around attracting private capital and EU funds that the accomplishment of these goals needs.** In addition, must be noted that state politics informed by market fundamentalism can hardly be committed at the same time to cohesive and inclusive territorial development. What it does at most out of this contradiction, is to justify the creation of inequalities as the price to be paid for development, and it creates the legal frameworks for project-based social interventions. In the context of neoliberal governance and (anti)welfare regimes, these are implemented by private organizations or structures of public-private partnerships, which at their turn can hardly eliminate the continuously reproduced effects of the structurally created social and territorial disparities.

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## 6. Annexes

### 6.1. List of Indicators <sup>xiv</sup>

There is no statistical data available at the spatial level of the cases addressed by the RE-LOCAL research in Romania. The table from below provides data for the lowest spatial level at which data is provided by the National Statistical Institute, Tempo-online (accessible here: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, accessed 10 February 2019)

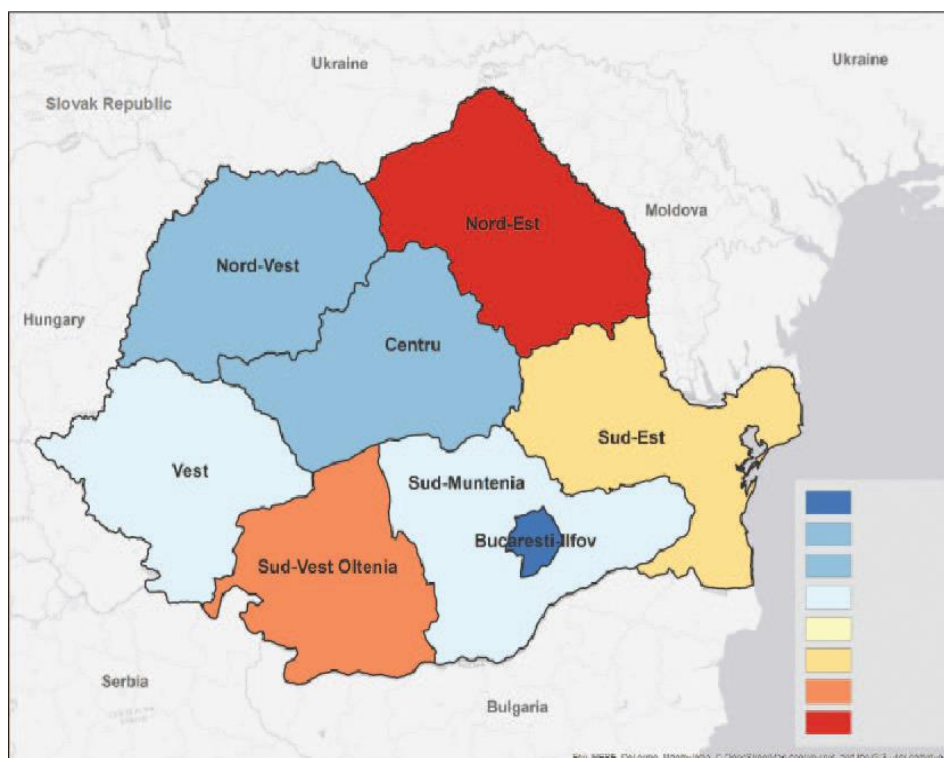
		CASE 1 (LAU: Cluj-Napoca; NUTS3: Cluj county; NUTS2: N-V dev region)	CASE 2 (LAU: Codlea; NUTS3: Braşov county; NUTS2: Centre dev region)	CASE 3 (Second district; LAU/NUTS 3: Bucharest municipality; NUTS2: Bucharest-Ilfov dev region)	CASE 4 (LAU: Baia Sprie; NUTS3: Maramures county; NUTS2: N-V dev reg)
<b>Indicator 1_1</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Income of households – development regions (NUTS 2), 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester of 2018	4764 RON	4402 RON	6699 RON	4764 RON
	Income/ persons – development regions (NUTS 2), 2017	1319 RON	1337 RON	1886 RON	1319 RON
<b>Indicator 4</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Economic activity rate– counties (NUTS3), 2017	78.1%	73.6%	97.8%	67.31%
<b>Indicator 5</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Employment rates	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Indicator 6</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Unemployment rates – development regions (NUTS2), 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester of 2018	2.3%	3.6%	2.9%	2.3%
<b>Indicator 7</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Youth unemployment rates – development regions (NUTS2), 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester of 2018	12.1%	24.2%	12%	12.1%
<b>Indicator 8</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Long term unemployment rates	NA	NA	NA	NA

<b>Indicator 10_1</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Life expectancy – counties (NUTS3), 2017	77.27 years	77.04 years	77.88 years	74.88 years
<b>Indicator 14</b>					
<b>Name</b>	NEET	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Indicator 24_1</b>					
<b>Name</b>	Total population – resident population, counties (NUTS3), 2018	704.759	551.183	1.827.810	463.354
<b>Indicator 28</b>					
<b>Name</b>	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion – development regions (NUTS2), 2017	26.4%	25.7%	25%	26.4%

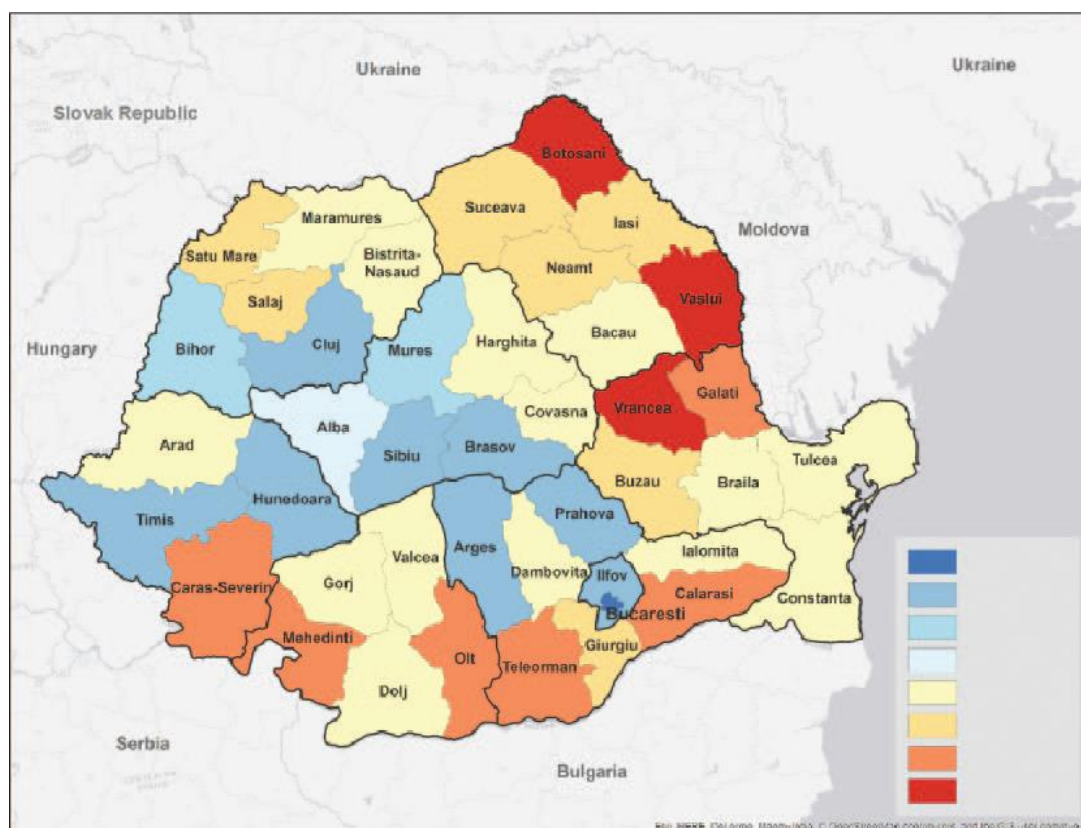
## 6.2. Regional disparities in Romania

### 6.2.1. Poverty - from an interregional and intraregional perspective

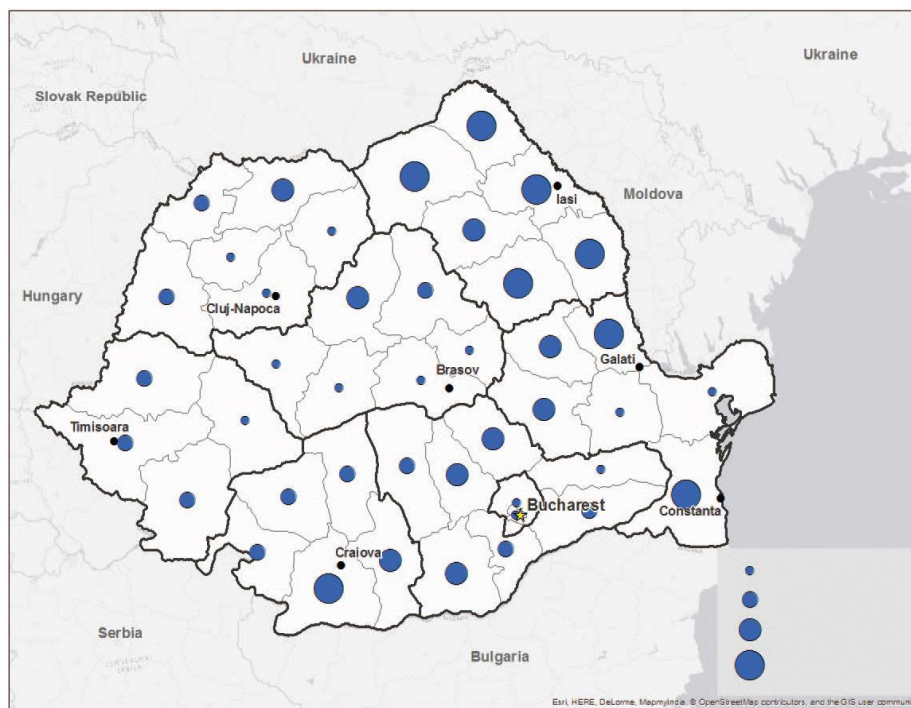
Analysis reveal that the developmental disparities in Romania should be viewed in a more nuanced way, and the awareness about the inter-regional inequalities should be completed with the acknowledgement of the intra-regional ones. In 2016, the World Bank launched its poverty maps made in Romania and among others a policy brief discussing about the territorial manifestations of poverty viewed from an inter-regional and intra-regional perspective (World Bank 2016). These maps combine microdata from the 2011 population census and the 2011 EU-SILC survey. The areas marked in red on these maps are the poorest, while the territories indicated by dark blue colour are the least poor.



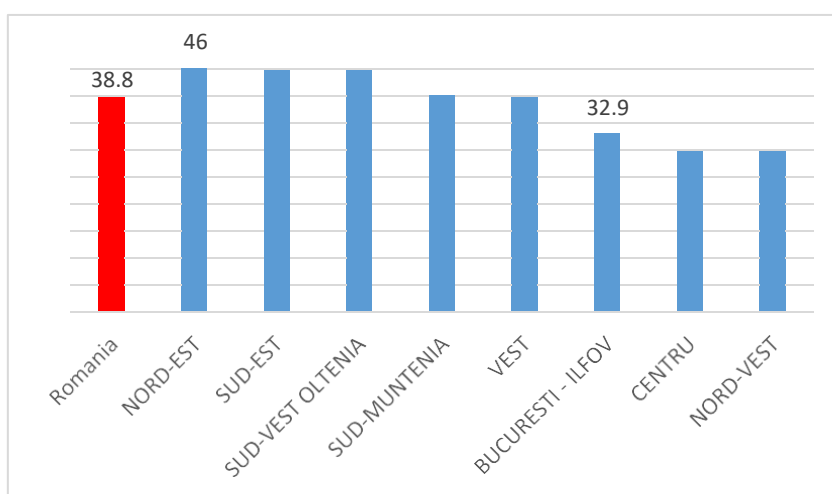
**Map 1** At-Risk-of-Poverty Rates, Romania - Development regions (NUTS 2)



**Map 2** At-Risk-of-Poverty Rates, Romania - Counties (NUTS 3)



**Map 3** Population Living below the Poverty Threshold, Romania



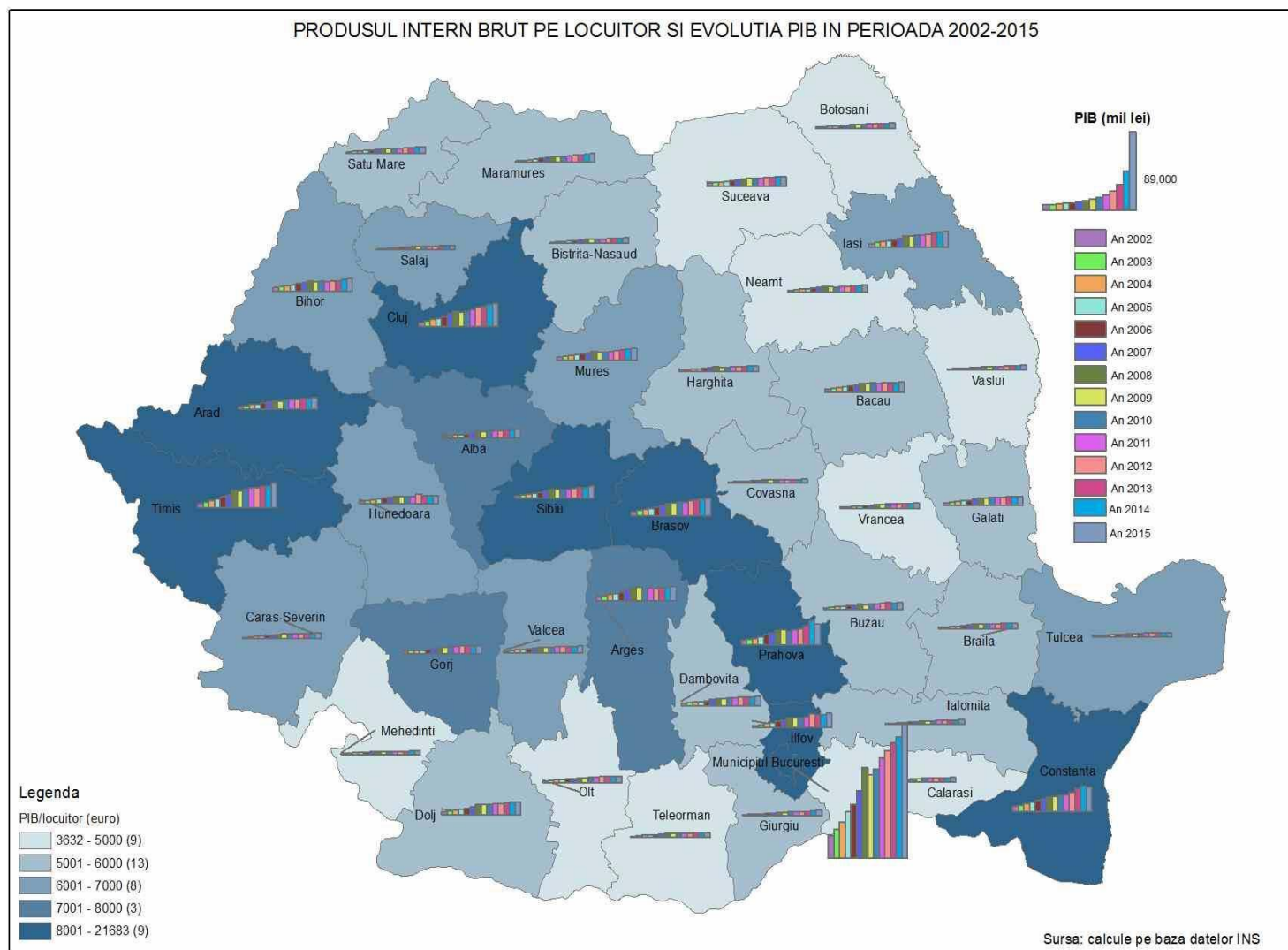
**Figure 1** - Rate of risk of poverty and social exclusion according to development regions in 2016 (%)

Source: *Raport privind starea teritoriului*, Report regarding the state of the territory, 2017, p. 42.

Romania – Northeast – Southeast – Southwest Oltenia – South Muntenia – West – Bucharest Ilfov – Centre – Northwest

## 6.2.2. The Gross Domestic Product

According to the European Regional Yearbook, 2017 with one exception all the development regions of Romania are to be classified under the category of less developed regions, because in each of these the GDP per inhabitant was less than 75 % of the EU27 average. The exception is Bucharest-Ilfov, which was included into the category of more developed regions, where GDP per inhabitant was more than 90 % of the EU27 average. Map 4 from below shows not only the GDP per inhabitant of the counties, but it also suggests the degree to which it increased in time (from 2002 to 2015).



**Map 4 – GDP per inhabitant and its evolution between 2002-2015**

Source: *Raport privind starea teritoriului*, Report regarding the state of the territory 2017, p. 46

### 6.2.3. Population - across regions and localities<sup>xv</sup>

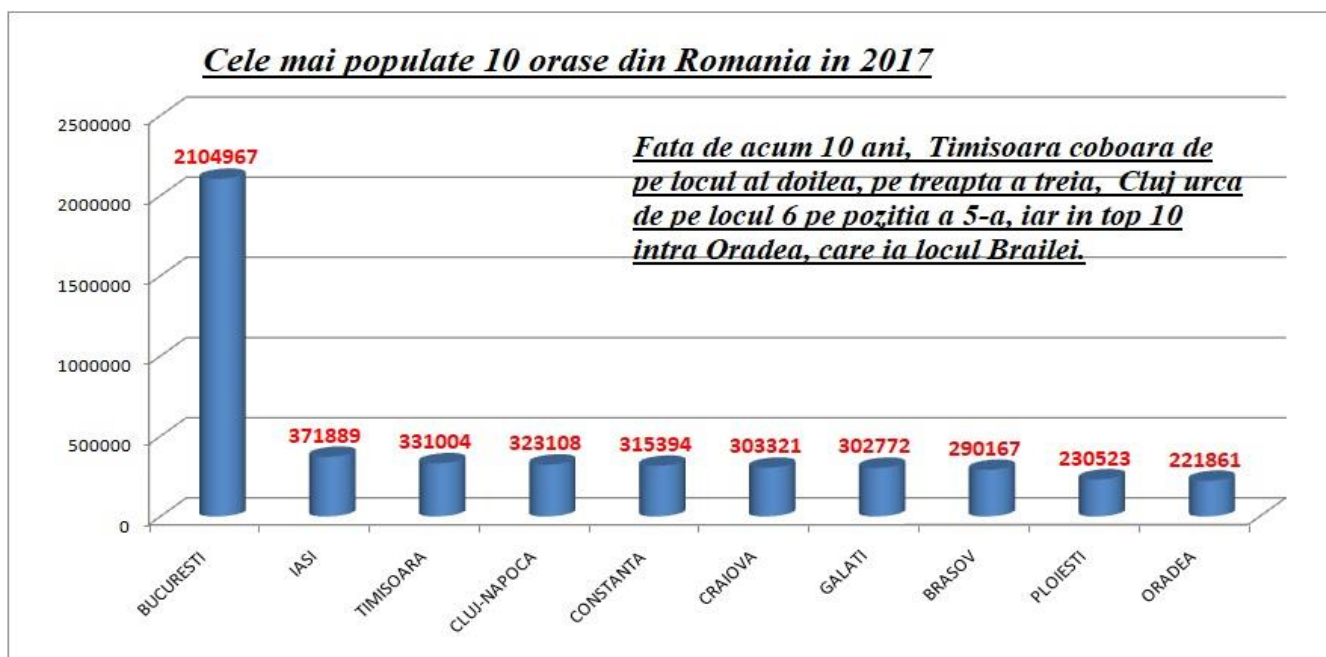


Figure 2 - The most populated 10 cities from Romania in 2017

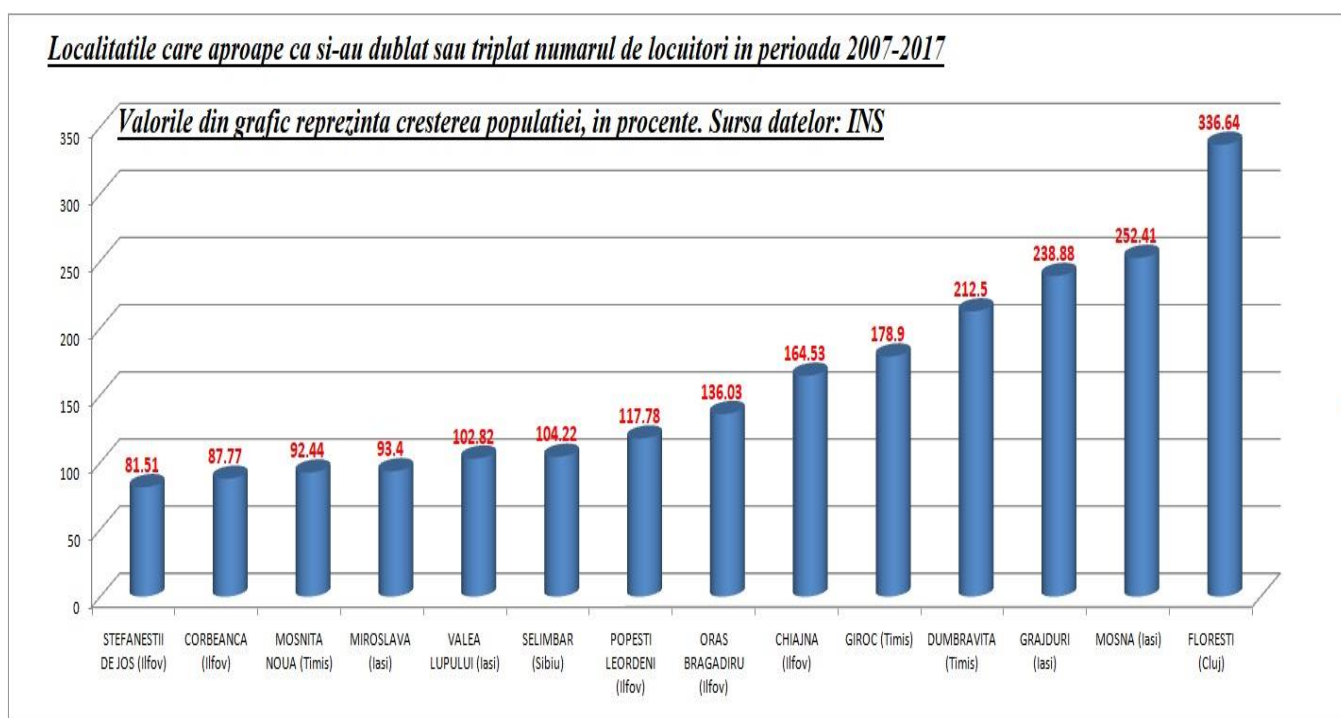
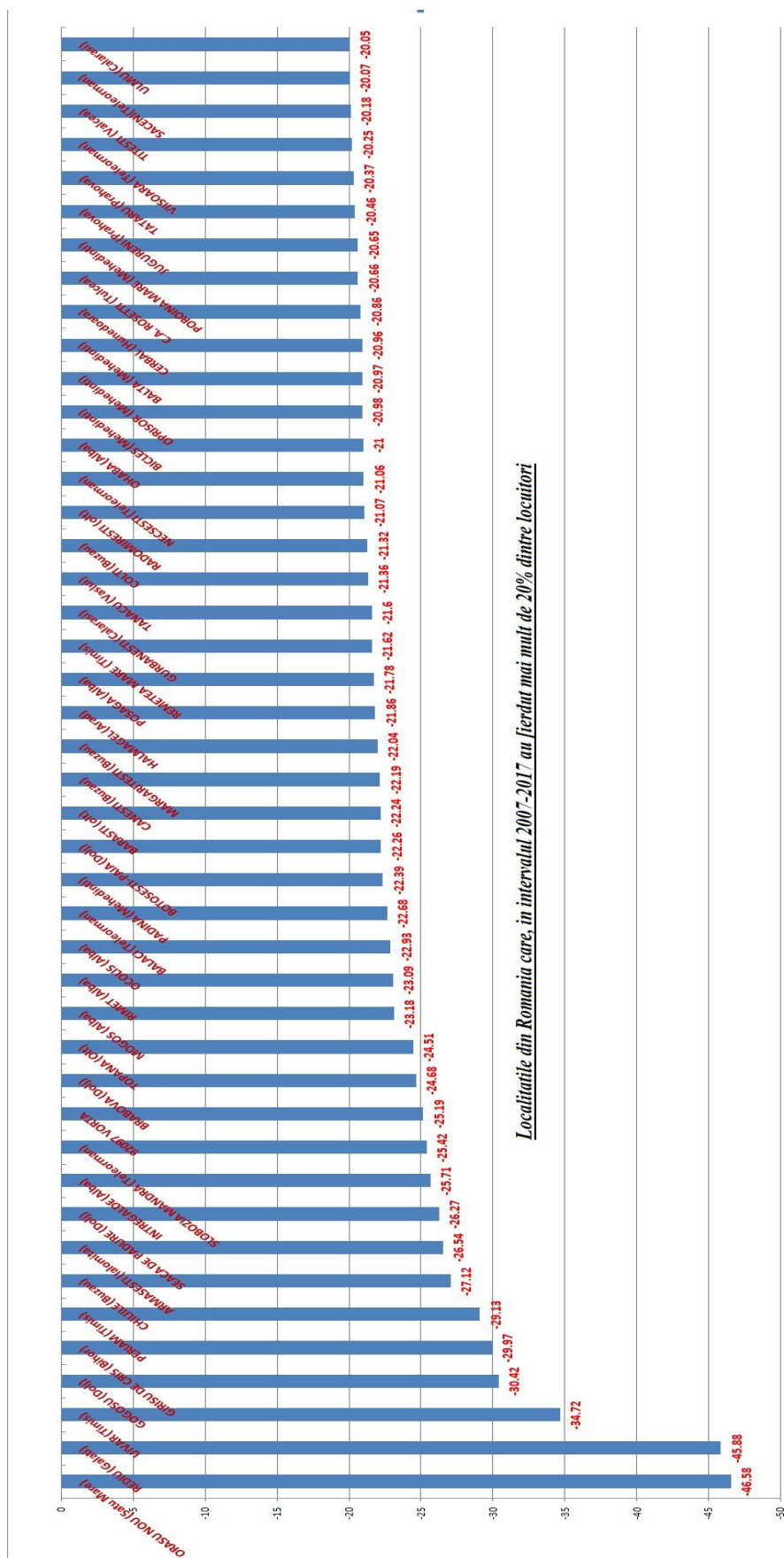


Figure 3 - Localities that doubled their population in the period 2007-2017



**Figure 4 - Localities that lost more than 20% of their population in the period 2007-2017**

**Tabelul 3. Numărul populației pe regiuni la recensământul din octombrie 2011 și un scenariu prospectiv pentru următorii 50 de ani (fără migrație)**

Regiunea	Numărul populației la începutul anului – în milioane locuitori						Redu cere 2012- 2060- %
	2012*	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	
1. Nord-Est	3,15	3,10	3,01	2,88	2,70	2,47	-22
2. Sud-Est	2,40	2,33	2,20	2,04	1,85	1,63	-32
3. Sud-Muntenia	3,00	2,87	2,69	2,49	2,26	1,99	-34
4. Sud-Vest Oltenia	1,98	1,89	1,75	1,60	1,43	1,23	-38
5. Vest	1,73	1,68	1,57	1,44	1,30	1,13	-35
6. Nord-Vest	2,50	2,45	2,34	2,19	2,01	1,80	-28
7. Centru	2,25	2,21	2,12	2,00	1,85	1,67	-26
8. București-Ilfov	2,04	2,02	1,91	1,77	1,62	1,43	-30
A. România-ca sumă a regiunilor	19,04	18,54	17,61	16,43	15,03	13,35	-30
B. România-proiec-tare distin-ctă	19,04	18,55	17,63	16,46	15,06	13,40	-30
Diferență A-B în %	0,0	-0,1	-0,1	-0,2	-0,3	-0,4	...

\* Datele de la 20 oct. 2011  
Sursa: anul 2012 – CCRPL 2011, 2012; ceilalți ani - proiec-tări ale autorului (ipotezele – în text)

**Table 5 - Population according to regions (millions), 2011 Census and a prospect scenario for the next 50 years without considering migration**

**Tabelul 1. Numărul populației regiunilor la recensământul din octombrie 2011 și valorile estimate ale natalității și mortalității generale în anul 2012\***

Regiunea	Numărul populației - în mii locuitori-	Rata natalității -născuți la 1000 locuitori-	Rata mortalității generale -decese la 1000 locuitori-	
1. Nord-Est	3149	10,3	12,4	
2. Sud-Est	2400	9,3	12,4	
3. Sud-Muntenia	2999	9,0	13,9	
4. Sud-Vest Oltenia	1978	8,2	13,4	
5. Vest	1730	8,2	13,4	
6. Nord-Vest	2495	10,2	11,9	
7. Centru	2251	10,3	11,7	
8. București-Ilfov	2042	11,1	11,7	
<b>România</b>	<b>19044</b>	<b>9,7</b>	<b>12,4</b>	

\*estimarea natalității și mortalității generale în anul 2012 are la bază populația de la recensământul din 20 octombrie 2011 (date provizorii), adoptată și pentru 1 ianuarie 2012, rate de fertilitate pe vârste corespunzătoare unei rate a fertilității generale de 1,33 copii la o femeie și valori ale speranței de viață la naștere de 70 de ani la bărbați și 77 de ani la femei (cele trei valori sunt cele din anul 2010).

Sursa: numărul populației: CCRPL 2011, 2012; calcule ale autorului pentru cele două rate.

**Table 6 - Population according to regions (thousands), 2011 Census, and estimated values of natality and mortality rates in 2012**

**Tabelul 2. Scăderea populației pe regiuni între recensămintele din anii 1992 și 2011 și componentele scăderii – în mii persoane**

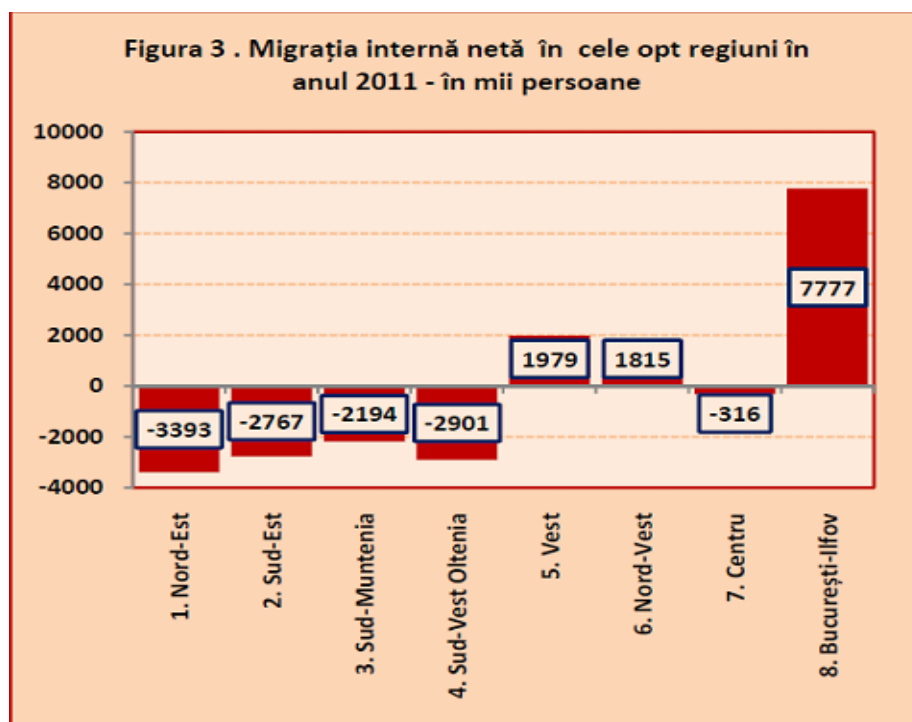
Regiunea	Scădere totală	Componentele scăderii:		
		Scădere/creșterea naturală	Migrație internă netă	Migrație externă*
1. Nord-Est	-593	91	-104	-580
2. Sud-Est	-560	-76	-16	-468
3. Sud-Muntenia	-561	-213	-30	-318
4. Sud-Vest Oltenia	-479	-155	-30	-294
5. Vest	-383	-132	73	-324
6. Nord-Vest	-412	-93	-17	-302
7. Centru	-451	-43	8	-416
8. București-Ilfov	-318	-122	115	-311
<b>Total**</b>	<b>-3755</b>	<b>-742</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3013</b>

\* inclusiv o fracțiune din populația stabilă neînregistrată la recensământul din octombrie 2011;

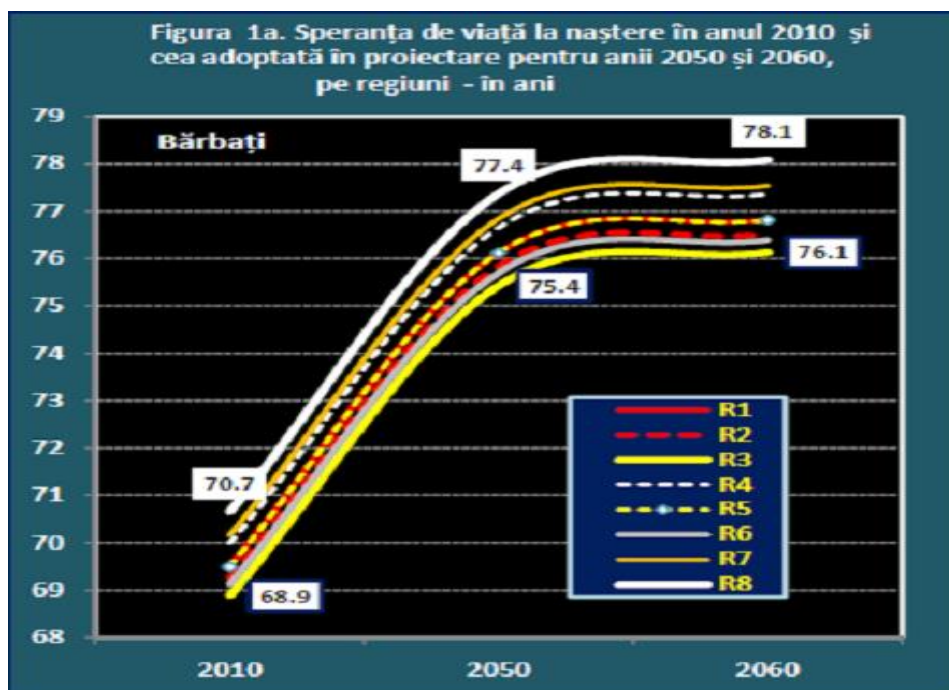
\*\* nepotriviri minore la însumare pot apărea prin rotunjiri.

**Sursa** (datelor primare): publicații ale Institutului Național de Statistică asupra recensămintelor populației din anii 1992, 2002, 2011 și asupra mișcării naturale și migrației interne pe județe din anii 1992-2011

**Table 7 – Decrease of the population in regions between 1992 and 2011 Censuses, and the components of the decrease (natural, internal migration, external migration)**



**Figure 4 – Net internal migration in the eight regions in 2011 - thousands of persons**



**Figure 5 - Life expectancy in 2010, and projections for 2050 and 2060, according to regions (R1-R9)**

### 6.2.3. Employment<sup>xvi</sup>

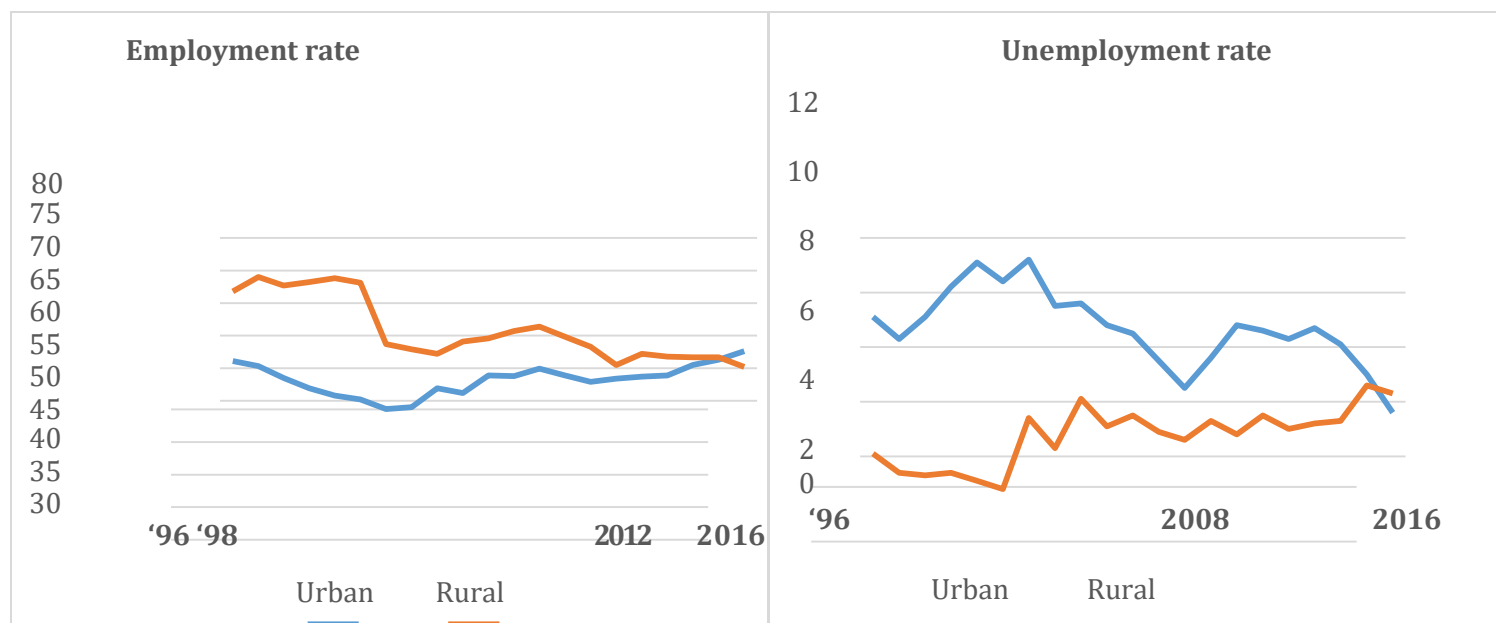
According to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, Romania has 19.64 million inhabitants. According to the labour force register, the active civilian population as at 1 January 2017 was 8 735 800, representing 44.5% of the country's resident population. Out of the total active population, 54.6% were men and 45.4% were women.

The employed civilian population stood at 8 317 600, of whom 5 223 800 were salaried employees. Most employees were working in the services sector (3 241 700 people), while 1 857 700 persons were employed in industry and the construction sector. The number of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries was 124 400. In the 2nd quarter of 2017, the employment rate of the working age population (15-64 years old) was 65.5%, with a higher rate for men (73.2%, compared to 57.7% for women).

Two different sets of data concerning the unemployment rate are calculated in Romania. The ILO unemployment rate is calculated by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) using the definition provided by the International Labour Organization. In August 2017, this rate was 5.1%, according to the monthly INS statistics bulletin of October 2017. The rate of registered unemployment, determined by the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), is calculated on the basis of the number of unemployed people registered in the ANOFM database. At the end of August 2017, this rate was 4.2%, corresponding to 366 500 registered unemployed persons.

In what regards the differences between the eight administrative regions, it is to be observed that each region has certain specific features with regard to its economic structure, which is why certain sectors play a predominant role in the development of each region. In the North-East and South-West regions, a large share of the population is engaged in agricultural activities. The civilian population is employed mainly in industry and the construction sector in the West and Centre regions, and in the services sector in the Centre, West and Bucharest-Ilfov regions. There are also several areas which have significant tourism potential (Bucovina in the North-East region, the Black Sea coast and the Danube Delta in the South-East region, etc.). At the end of August 2017, the highest rates of registered unemployment were recorded in the South-West region (7.1%) and the South-East region (6.0%). The lowest rates of registered unemployment were recorded in Bucharest (1.2%) and the West region (2.2%).

The main types of businesses on the labour market: companies (limited liability companies (SRL), joint-stock companies (SA), partnerships (SNC), simple partnerships (SCS), joint-stock partnerships (SCA), sole traders (PFA) and family associations). The main categories of employers are multinational companies, profit/non-profit state-owned companies, private companies and NGOs. According to the 2017 Coface CEE Top 500 Companies study, the largest companies in Romania in terms of turnover are: Automobile Dacia SA, OMV Petrom Marketing SRL, OMV Petrom SA, Kaufland România SCS, Rompetrol Rafinare SA, Rompetrol Downstream SRL, British American Tobacco Trading SRL, Carrefour România SA, Lidl Discount SA, and Lukoil România SRL.



**Figure 6** – Evolution of the rate of employment, and unemployment rate between 1996-2016, according to residency (rural or urban),

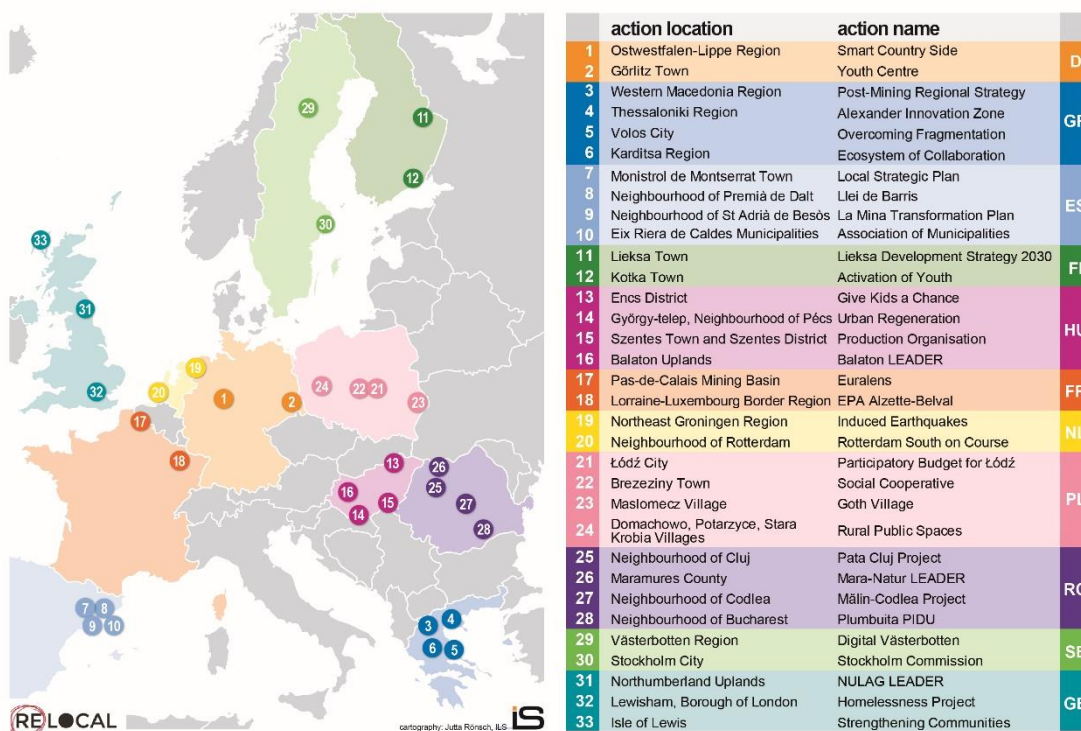
Source: Raport privind starea teritoriului, Report regarding the state of the territory, 2017, p. 44

## The RELOCAL Project

EU Horizon 2020 research project '**Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development**' –**RELOCAL** aims to identify factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures.

In the past, especially since the economic and financial crisis, the European Social Model has proven to be challenged by the emergence of spatially unjust results. The RELOCAL hypothesis is that **processes of localisation and place-based public policy** can make a positive contribution to spatial justice and democratic empowerment.

The research is based on **33 case studies in 13 different European countries** that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice. The cases were chosen to allow for a balanced representation of different institutional contexts. Based on case study findings, project partners will draw out the factors that influence the impact of place-based approaches or actions from a comparative perspective. The results are intended to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.



The RELOCAL project runs from October 2016 until September 2020.

Read more at <https://relocal.eu>

Project Coordinator:



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Contact:

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- <sup>i</sup> In the understanding of the RELOCAL research, the selected ‘Actions need to address spatial justice. The action can be a place-based or community-based development action; or a participatory cohesion strategy for improving living conditions and promoting a more balanced and sustainable development.... The actions can be policy-driven actions, initiated by a governmental body or non-governmental organizations..., or collective actions initiated by local communities... They should have an identifiable impact on the locality.’ (RELOCAL Manual for Case Study Research, 2018: 10).
- <sup>ii</sup> The RELOCAL research uses the following definition of ‘Localities’: ‘Localities are functional units, which can range from city regions to smaller functional urban areas. These localities are the starting points for empirical analysis including multiple territorial and governance levels they comprise or are embedded in (i.e. national, regional, small-area, local community, household and individual)’ (Grant Agreement, 2016: 151).
- <sup>iii</sup> Defined by Law 315/2004 - Law regarding regional development in Romania.
- <sup>iv</sup> Defined by the National Program for Local Development (*Programul Național de Dezvoltare Locală*, PNDL). PNDL is described here: <http://www.mdrap.ro/lucrari-publice/pndl>, accessed on 4 January 2019.
- <sup>v</sup> This term was used in the Territorial Development Strategy of Romania (*Strategia de Dezvoltare Teritorială a României*, SDTR), see <http://www.sdtr.ro/>; <http://www.mdrap.ro/dezvoltare-teritoriala/-2979>
- <sup>vi</sup> See <http://www.mdrap.ro/dezvoltare-regionala/politica-de-dezvoltare-regionala>
- <sup>vii</sup> See <http://www.mdrap.ro/dezvoltare-teritoriala/prezentare-general-a-domeniului>
- <sup>viii</sup> The name of the governmental structure dealing with social issues could be mentioned here as an exception (Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, *Ministerul Muncii și Justiției Sociale*, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/>); however, the two sets of matters (territorial and social) being treated separately is not having an effect on territorial policies.
- <sup>ix</sup> These terms are used in the subtitle of SDRT (2016).
- <sup>x</sup> As an exception, there might be mention of the results of the research project ‘Spatialization and racialization of social exclusion. The social and cultural formation of “Gypsy ghettos” in Romania in a European context,’ which was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0354, 2011-2016 (Vincze, 2013, 2018).
- <sup>xi</sup> The national initiatives mentioned in this chapter took place in a context in which Romania tried to fit into the relevant discursive frameworks elaborated and promoted in the European Union. As it is well-known, the territorial policy in the EU is, on the one hand, linked to its regional policies as early as the Treaty of Rome from 1957 and the founding of the European Economic Community; and, on the other hand, it is connected to the European cohesion policy that entered into force with the Single European Act of 1986 and became more prominent with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. Last, but not least, one should note that it was the Treaty of Lisbon, which in 2008 introduced a third dimension of EU cohesion, i.e., territorial cohesion, completing the already existing social and economic convergence objectives.
- <sup>xii</sup> The decentralization process represents an ongoing concern of the Romanian government. This is reflected in the National Reform Program, the main instrument of the European Commission to monitor the fulfilment of the ‘Europe 2020 Strategy’ objectives, but also in the General Strategy of Decentralization from 12 April 2017, as well as in the National Strategy for the consolidation of public administration 2014–2020, approved through Governmental Decision no. 909/2014 that was an ex-ante conditionality for the 2014–2020 financial programming period.
- <sup>xiii</sup> During the times of actually existing socialism, there was a political emphasis on reducing disparities between the counties, and, as a result, the growth rate of industrial production in the traditionally poor counties of Romania was impressive. In the 1980s, the less developed counties (Botoșani,

Vaslui, Maramureş, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Dolj, Olt, Giurgiu, Teleorman) were supposed to achieve an overall level of production per inhabitant equal to the national average. Statistical data show that Romania had entered 'the transition' with a relatively low level of regional disparities, compared to the new Member States, but that these disparities increased rapidly. The first analysis of regional disparities in post-communist Romania has been made under the PHARE program for the period March to July 1996. It allowed the spatial localization of poverty and under-development in the country's two main areas: Northeast (which includes virtually all of the historical region of Moldova) and South (which is the largest agricultural area of the country called the Romanian Plain). The second report followed specifically to analyse trends on the evolution of sectoral imbalances in the period 1990 to 1994, in order to identify the major causes and significant changes. In this variant, 12 indicators, grouped into five categories were used.

<sup>xiv</sup> The precise definitions of all indicators can be found in RELOCAL D 2.1.

<sup>xv</sup> <http://cursdeguvernare.ro/analiza-regionalizarea-romaniei-o-abordare-demografica.html>

<sup>xvi</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=9545&countryId=RO&acro=lmi&lang=en&regionId=R00&nuts2Code=%20&nuts3Code=&regionName=National%20Level>