



**Call for Papers "The European Green Deal: moving to action
Opportunities and challenges for the European citizens"**

INTEGRATING THE GREEN DEAL TARGETS INTO THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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Brussels, November 2021

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With the financial support of the European Parliament



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Green Deal has set out ambitious 2030 climate and environmental targets for the European economy, particularly its agricultural sector. One of the most important issues in the agri-food industry and its supply chain is the existence of by-products, treated as wastes and discarded immediately to waste disposal. This treatment might lead to loss of possibility in gaining economic value from them. Implementation of a circular economy (CE) could prevent the economic value loss, since the circular economy utilises said wastes as resources for other processes. The purpose of this paper is to present several opportunities and challenges at the national level on how the European Green Deal and the CE would impact national agriculture. The paper would examine the key relevant papers on CE and Green Deal along with the characteristics of Romanian agriculture. The purpose would be to outline several tools and policy recommendations that can be adopted for implementing the concept of CE in Romanian agriculture as well as the role that the CAP have in this process.

Social Media summary

The paper focuses on what a circular economy is and on the tools and policy solutions that can be adopted for implementing the concept of CE in Romanian agriculture as well as the role that the CAP have in this process.

Keywords

#circulareconomy #futureofcap #eugreendeal #Romania

Short bio

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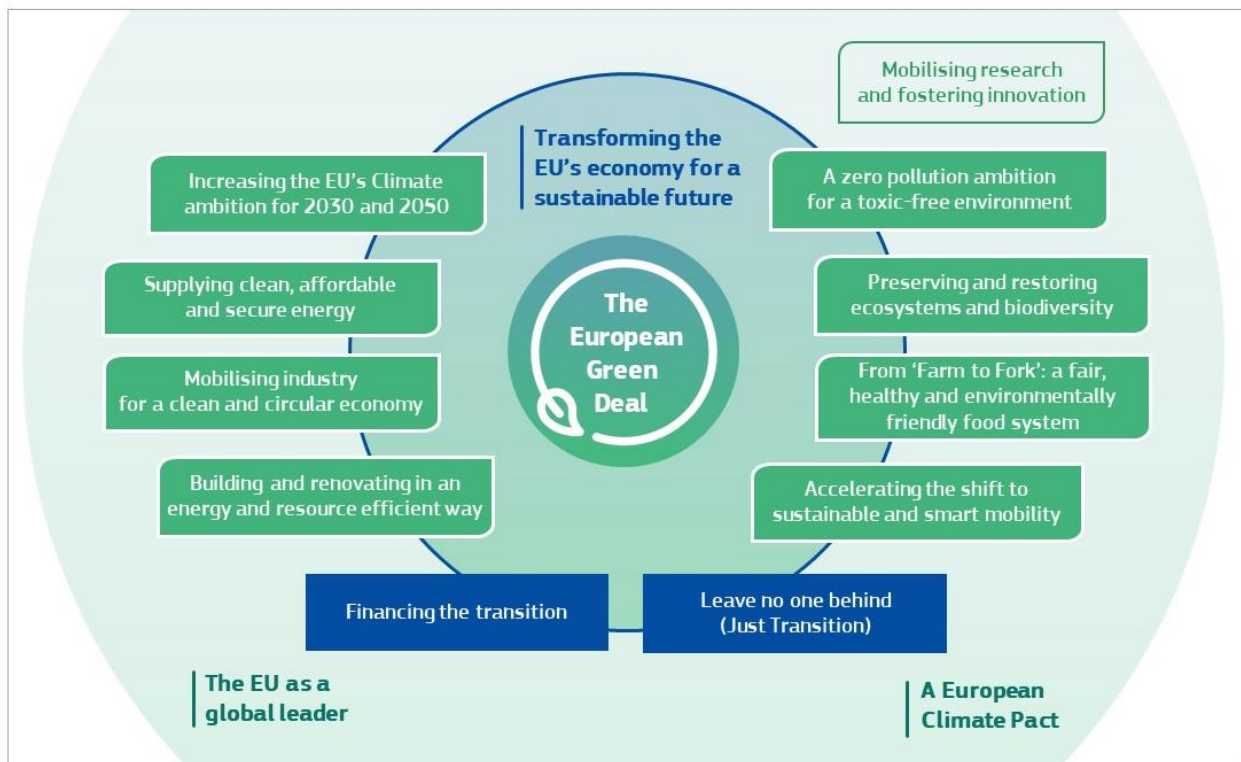
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1. Introduction

The European Green Deal is a growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a prosperous, fair, competitive and resource-efficient economy, with no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, zero pollution and a decoupling of economic growth from resource use. It aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts while also responding to the urgent challenges of the environment.¹

The EU's new growth strategy is setting the path for a fundamental transformation of Europe's economies and societies, promoting the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy, restoring biodiversity, lowering pollution and mobilizing research and innovation to foster a just and sustainable societal transition aiming at 'leaving no one behind'.

Figure 1. Diagram of the European Green Deal



Source: Communication from the Commission, 2019²

¹ Communication from the Commission, *The European Green Deal*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2019%3A640%3AFIN> Last visited on 3 October 2021.

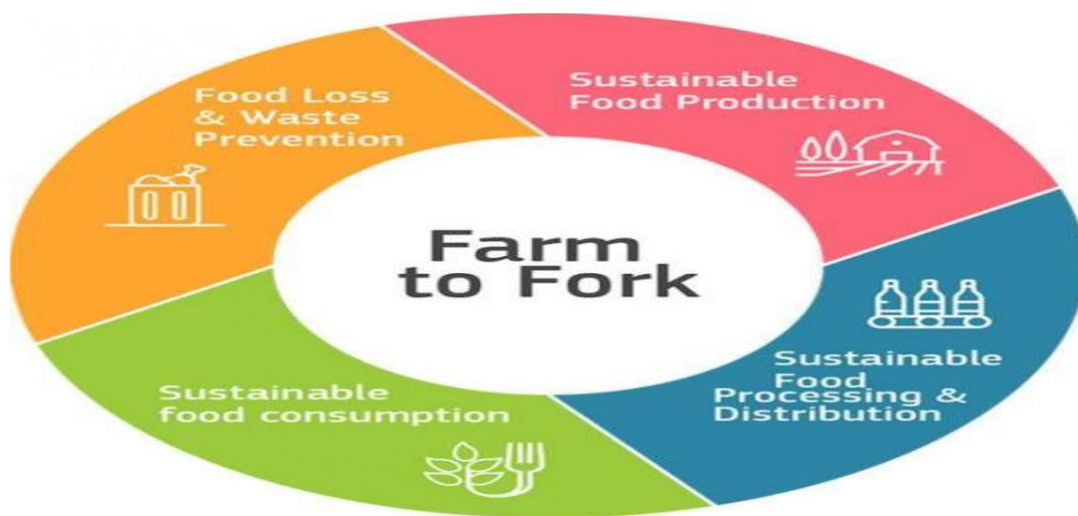
² Communication from the Commission, *The European Green Deal*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2019%3A640%3AFIN> Last visited on 3 October 2021.

In the framework of the Green Deal, the European Commission adopted several communications addressing issues relevant to agriculture and rural areas, including the Farm to Fork (F2F) and Biodiversity Strategies published in May 2020.

The biodiversity strategy and the 'farm to fork' concept are at the heart of the European Commission's proposed Green Deal, which aims to make the EU a climate-neutral economy by 2050.

The Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy, the EU's flagship food policy, sets concrete targets for greening the sector, including a 50% reduction in pesticide use, a 50% reduction in antimicrobial sales and a target to use 25% of land for organic farming.

Figure 2. Farm to Fork diagram



Source: European Commission, 2020³)

2. Rethinking CAP Strategic Plans in light of the EU Green Deal

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) plays a key role in supporting Europe's agricultural sector – even more at present due to COVID-19 pandemic that is also putting a strain on the resilience of European farmers. It will be an important instrument in managing the transition to sustainable food production systems and strengthening the efforts of European farmers to contribute to the climate objectives of the EU and to protect the environment. Moreover, given that agricultural land and forest cover 80% of the EU territory and that a substantial share of EU funding for biodiversity comes from the CAP, the CAP will play a major role in supporting the achievement of the EU biodiversity commitments for 2030⁴.

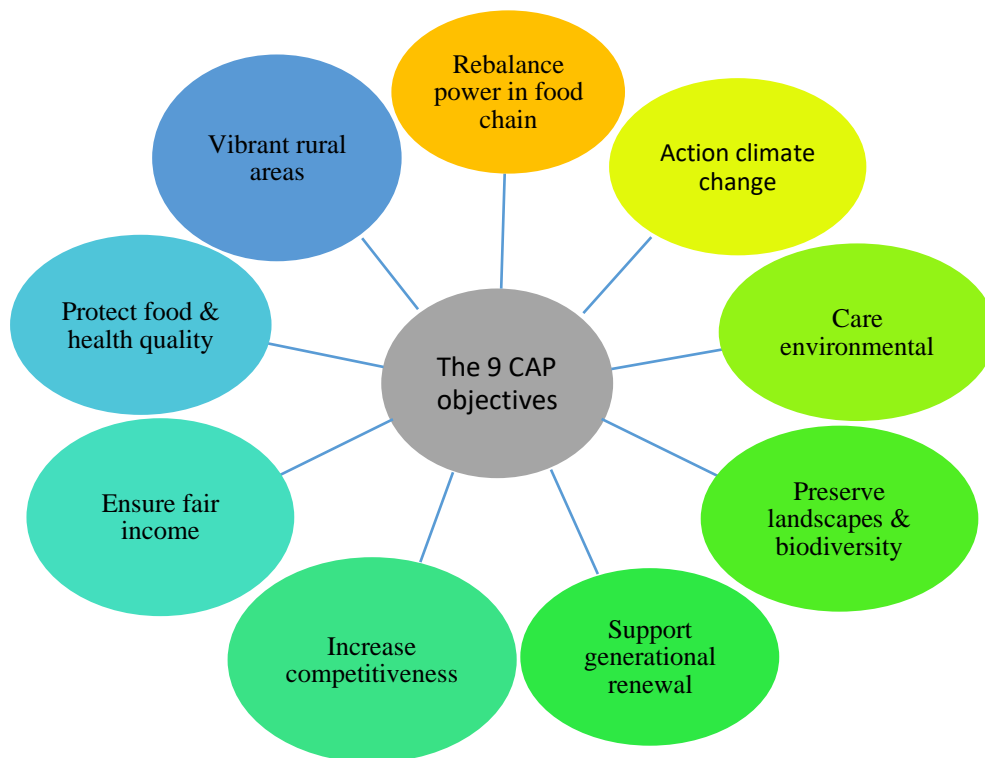
³ Communication from the Commission (2020), *A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system*, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF Last visited on 2 October 2021

⁴ Commission staff working document (2020), *Analysis of links between CAP Reform and Green Deal*, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming->

The legislative proposals provides for an agricultural policy designed to deliver on three general objectives:

1. to foster a smart, resilient and diversified agricultural sector ensuring food security;
2. to bolster environmental care and climate action and to contribute to the environmental - and climate- related objectives of the Union;
3. to strengthen the socio-economic fabric of rural areas. The proposal translates and operationalize these into nine specific objectives, covering all three dimensions (economic, environmental, and social) of sustainability, as well as a crosscutting objective on knowledge and innovation⁵.

Figure 3. The objectives of the proposed CAP Strategic Plan Regulation



Source: Commission staff working document, 2020⁶

As illustrated in the figure above, the specific objectives are already in line with the focus of the European Green Deal in relation to food systems, especially when it comes to:

[fisheries/sustainability_and_natural_resources/documents/analysis-of-links-between-cap-and-green-deal_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/sustainability_and_natural_resources/documents/analysis-of-links-between-cap-and-green-deal_en.pdf) Last visited on 2 October 2021

⁵ Communication of the EC (2020), *Recommendations to the Member States as regards their strategic plan for the Common Agricultural Policy*, available at: [EUR-Lex - 52020SC0391 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexUriCommPdf.do?uri=CELEX:52020SC0391:EN) Last visited on 1 October 2021

⁶ Commission staff working document (2020), *Analysis of links between CAP Reform and Green Deal*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/sustainability_and_natural_resources/documents/analysis-of-links-between-cap-and-green-deal_en.pdf Last visited on 2 October 2021

- Increased contribution of EU agriculture to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Improved management of natural resources used by agriculture, such as water, soil and air;
- Reinforced protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services within agrarian and forest systems;
- Effective sustainability of food systems in accordance with societal concerns regarding food and health on e.g. animal welfare, use of pesticides and antimicrobial resistance;
- Ensuring a fair economic return and improving the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

To reach these specific objectives of the CAP, the future legislation requires each Member State to draw up a single CAP strategic plan. In its plan, the Member State will analyse the situation on its territory in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis), as well as its related needs, in respect of these objectives. It will determine an intervention strategy, design interventions on the basis of the EU framework with quantified targets for their implementation to address the identified needs. This whole will be based on well-established evidence (e.g. studies) and data, taking into account the national and regional contexts.

The erosion of biodiversity occurs due to increasingly specialized and simplified agricultural systems and rural landscapes, using larger plots of land and the widespread application of chemical inputs. Soil degradation and nutrient flows in water and the atmosphere have reached alarming levels. With the possible exception of phosphorus and antibiotics, past trends show that it will be extremely difficult to achieve the climatic and environmental targets of the Green Deal without a substantial inflexion of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)⁷.

Improving resource efficiency, as well as promoting the circular economy is the key to address both production concerns and the environmental factor.

3. The case of Romania

In the context of the European Green Pact, Romanian agriculture will have to face multiple challenges in terms of farm profitability, development and consolidation of agricultural entrepreneurship, as well as obtaining productions that ensure, on the one hand, the internal strategic reserve and, on the other hand, increase the relevance and competitiveness of Romanian farmers in the EU market.

In the same way, the new European regulations can offer real opportunities for Romanian agriculture, in the direction of modernization, capitalization, development of innovation and digitalization, but also the transition to a circular economy, by ensuring the synergy of agriculture with other related areas, such as green energy, environmental protection, agrotourism, etc.

Considering its dependence on climatic conditions, agriculture is, without doubt, the most vulnerable sector of the economy. Climate instability is one of the main causes of unstable harvests, representing therefore a risk for agriculture. In addition to this, in Romania we can also

⁷ European Parliament (2020), The Green Deal and the CAP: policy implications to adapt farming practices and to preserve the EU's natural resources, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU\(2020\)629214](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2020)629214) Last visited on 2 October 2021

count other factors such as: inefficient agricultural subsidizing, lack of capital investment, excessive fragmentation of agricultural land and a low irrigation system.⁸

3.1. Romanian farmers' concerns regarding the European strategy

To meet the targets, the EU proposes⁹: reducing dependence on pesticides, antimicrobials, over-fertilisation, but also developing organic farming and reversing biodiversity decline.

However, the geographical, biological and technological peculiarities of Romanian agriculture put our country in a vulnerable situation at European level, involving Romanian farms in backroom games, which often turn into external leverage in EU negotiations, affecting the development potential of national agriculture.

In the context of the European Union's dependence on vegetable protein, the cultivation of soya can represent an opportunity for Romanian farmers, by supplying European demand and the possibility of Community exports, with an impact on the profits of Romanian farms.

Although Romanian agriculture is undergoing an accelerated process of integration into the large European agricultural family, by increasing the prosperity of Romanian farms, Romanian farmers still have to face strong, sometimes unfair, competition from outside the EU and fluctuations in cereal prices, which can make an agricultural year either unprofitable or export crops at disadvantageous prices.

We could highlight a few threats¹⁰ that could arise in terms of the objectives of the F2F strategy:

- as regards the target of 50% reduction of pesticides by 2030 is not considered feasible and will directly affect the yield of European farmers, from 10-40% for at least 7 crops, as farmers will not have sufficient protection solutions at their disposal and those withdrawn by the EU will not be replaced in time by alternatives.
- pesticides approved for organic farming will be used in much higher quantities than in conventional farming.
- restricting growth and limiting access to innovation, with the risk of creating bottlenecks in production and adequate food supply.
- the reduction in the competitiveness of European agriculture, which will compete with the large trans-oceanic producers who will have new and innovative genetic techniques at their disposal.
- for Romania, the reduction of the percentage of active substance (as)/ha equal for each EU country is disadvantageous, as our country uses 0.7 kg asa/ha, while the EU average is 2 kg as/ha.

⁸ MIRESCU, Livia (2012), *Romanian wine sector in the context of climate change*, The Research Institute for Agriculture Economy and Rural Development, Bucharest

⁹ Communication from the Commission (2020), *A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system*, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF Last visited on 5 November 2021

¹⁰ *Analiza SWOT, Planul Național Strategic 2021-2027* [SWOT Analysis, The National Strategic Plan], available at: https://madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/2020/analiza_swot_pns-versiunea_ii.pdf Last visited on 5 November 2021

- the increase in cereal imports from former Soviet states and the unequal competitiveness of Romanian farmers.

3.2. Why is rural development more important for Romania than the other objectives?

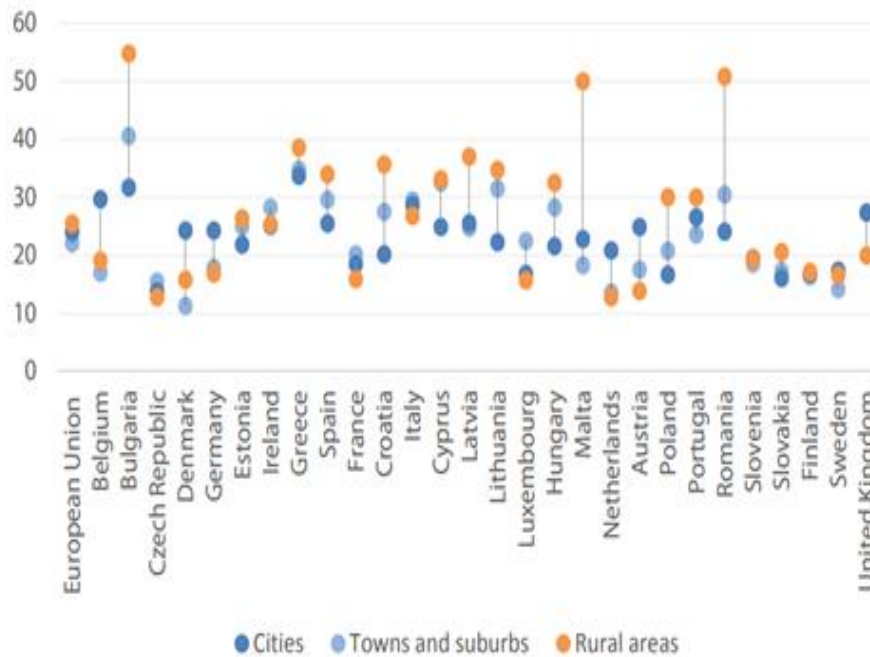
For a start, it covers several areas of interest, such as: fostering competitiveness, ensuring sustainable resource management, but also maintaining jobs. Moreover, rural development encompasses all activities aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas. Although difficult to achieve, rural development can have a greater national impact than we can imagine. Firstly, it can reduce poverty by increasing and supporting agricultural activities, which can lead to the development of industries. We can achieve sustainable economic development if we attract European funds or international investment. In these ways, the Romanian countryside could increase its value on the socio-economic map of the EU. In this way, the possibilities of reaching EU standards become greater and greater.

Between 2014-2020, Romania's rural development strategy was part of Europe 2020. The Europe 2020 strategy aims to recover the EU economy and is underpinned by a series of reforms to create a solid foundation to support economic growth and job creation. And at national level, rural development has taken the form of the National Rural Development Programme which aims to support the sustainable economic and social development of rural areas. But Romania has many shortcomings in rural areas, facing obstacles in reaching its economic and social potential because GDP per capita in rural areas is 50% lower than the EU's target.

In addition to the RDP, rural development is supported by other strategies and projects. Also, all CAP objectives form an interdependent circuit. For example, competitiveness in the agricultural sector can enhance the performance and revitalisation of rural areas, create jobs and is essential. If we speak of a high and worrying degree of poverty in villages compared to other EU countries, we deduce that these elements are neglected in such areas, and development stagnates, both rural and economic. In fact, we are talking about stagnation and backwardness in several areas in some villages, and as a consequence we have mass migration from the countryside to the city, resulting in negative demographic dynamics.

As we can see in the graph below, Romania, compared to EU Member States, still has a high degree of poverty in rural areas, which shows the need to continue the process of rural development and modernization of this area full of potential.

Figure 4. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by degree of urbanisation, by country, 2015



Source: Eurostat¹¹

Given the current situation in Romania, we can conclude that, although efforts have not ceased, they must continue in order for the Romanian countryside to reach its potential. Appropriate strategies and instruments are still needed to support farmers, but also to preserve nature and promote the agricultural sector among young people.

Similarly, the "Farm to Fork" strategy should provide an opportunity to strengthen farmers' position in the food chain. This strategy must be seen as a whole, as the circular economy, bioeconomy, forestry and energy policy are closely linked to the food system.

3.3. Perspectives of circular economy in Romania

According to a EC Communication in 2017 on the future of the agricultural sector and agriculture, CAP is directly linked to the circular economy which states that "CAP can help reduce food waste and food losses by (...) supporting-eliminating in a bioeconomy circular"¹². The main idea that emerges is that, in the future, CAP can no longer ignore the circular economy and that any future plans must take it into account.

There is still not enough evidence to show that the future CAP will provide enough elements to ensure that EU agriculture is truly part of the circular economy, in addition to some

¹¹ Eurostat, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/sdg_01_10a Last visited on 2 October 2021.

¹² Communication from the Commission (2017), *The Future of Food and Farming*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017DC0713> Last visited on 2 October 2021

fairly general statements. However, there is still time: “Due to the ongoing negotiations (...), the provisional start date of the proposed CAP reform has been pushed back to January 1, 2023”¹³.

With this in mind, we need to correlate the current state of development of Romanian agriculture with that of other Member States. The 2018 warning issued by a number of Romanian experts remains valid: “A CAP reform can take place, but it is desirable that the decrease in funds for less developed countries (including Romania, which also has an important agricultural sector) be as small as possible; it should be stressed that the CAP does not yet imply equity between Member States”¹⁴.

Romania is also paying attention to the circular economy. A 2018 study talked about the need to first have the necessary legislative provisions in place to move forward: “Promote a national plan on sustainable production and consumption, which can be done on its own or in close connection with the national plan on circular economy”¹⁵.

This would materialize in official documents, as the current Government Programme talks about the need for a national strategy for the circular economy, but without many specific references to the agricultural sector. Current official documents are still rather unclear on these links when they refer to the circular economy, but this may change in the future.

The circular economy within the agri-food system in Romania aims at three major targets¹⁶:

1. Plant biomass, which is the main element of the agri-food industry and the driving force behind the carbon cycle. Romania has a significant bioresource processing sector, with significant availability of biomass from agriculture for obtaining electricity, heat, fuels, etc.
2. The use of by-products from agriculture, processing and consumption that should be recycled within the agri-food system. This concerns, among others, soil quality, carbon sequestration in the soil, use of agricultural production for renewable energy production, production of organic fertilisers and biomaterials.
3. Maximising the potential of livestock, technological development and cultural changes in consumption habits can have a substantial effect on the availability and production of low-cost quality feed for livestock. The use of such feed can contribute to obtaining higher quality and higher quantity feed in a circular agri-food system.

¹³ European Commission (2021), *CAP transitional regulation: 2021-22*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/transitional-regulation_en Last visited on 3 October 2021

¹⁴ DĂIANU, Daniel (coord.), Amalia FUGARU, Gabriela MIHAILOVICI, Clara-Alexandra VOLINTIRU (2018), *Cadrul Financiar Multianual post-2020: riscuri și oportunități pentru România* [The multiannual financial framework post-2020: risks and opportunities for Romania], European Institute of Romania

¹⁵ TARTIU, Valentina Elena (coord.), Mihaela ȘTEFĂNESCU, Ana-Maria PETRACHE, Cătălin Răzvan GURĂU (2018), *Tranziția către economie circulară. De la managementul deșeurilor la o economie verde în România* [The transition towards a circular economy. From waste management to a green economy in Romania], European Institute of Romania

¹⁶ CHEREJI, Aurelia-Ioana (2021), *Agricultura românească – o abordare circulară* [Romanian agriculture – a circular approach] in *România sustenabilă, concept și instrumente – suport pentru o transformare circulară a economiei românești* [Sustainable Romania, concept and instruments – support for a circular transformation of the Romanian economy], Club România

To support increased sustainability and future innovation for a resource efficient circular economy in the food and drink industry, the European Commission's policies¹⁷ recommend the following:

- Taking measures to prevent food waste that address the whole food chain;
- Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goal on food waste at EU level;
- Develop a common methodology for measuring food waste in the EU in line with global standards;
- Establish a stakeholder platform on food waste involving all actors in the food chain and Member States;
- Clarifying EU legislation to facilitate food donation;
- Searching for options to improve understanding of labelled data without compromising food safety and quality;
- Maximising the value of raw materials by allowing more materials to remain in production or be classified as by-products;
- Promoting continuous improvement of the environmental performance of food and drink products throughout their life cycle;
- Establish green public procurement criteria that respect the overall life cycle sustainability performance of food and drink products on a consistent, objective and scientifically reliable basis;
- Keeping waste as an energy source as a waste management option where justified by life cycle design;
- Promoting investment in R&D;
- Focus on consumer education and changing public attitudes towards waste reduction.

We should note a number of small steps in the direction of promoting the circular economy in the national agricultural sector, often under external impetus. During debates on this topic, a number of challenges for the implementation of the circular economy in Romanian agriculture have been identified, such as:

- Cooperation/funding - association - cooperation - access to finance for technologies;
- Resistance to change. Applying a legislative framework that is both stimulating and coercive;
- Farmer education in this field;
- Promotion of the concept, its understanding, examples of best practices;
- Building the ecosystem “Circular agriculture”.

Based on the results of the discussions we can highlight the following key ideas:

- Romanian agriculture generates large amounts of waste due to inefficient use of by-product side streams;

¹⁷ *The Green Deal and the CAP: policy implications to adapt farming practices and to preserve the EU's natural resources*, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/629214/IPOL_STU\(2020\)629214_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/629214/IPOL_STU(2020)629214_EN.pdf), Last visited on 5 November 2021

- Responsible consumption and production: ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, in line with SDG12 set out at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 20+ 2015). This requires a systemic approach and cooperation between actors in the entire supply chain, from producer to final consumer. It requires consumer involvement through awareness raising and education on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, providing consumers with appropriate information through standards and labels and involvement in sustainable public procurement, among others;
- In comparison with other EU countries, the agricultural sector in Romania has a high share in gross value added (GVA), but lags behind in terms of labour productivity;
- The most important thing integrated oil management does is protect the environment and save resources.

It is also worth noting that the circular economy is flagged as an opportunity in the SWOT Analysis of the National Strategic Plan 2021-2027. It can, according to the authors, generate increased economic performance and income, improve productivity, competitiveness and sustainability, mitigate and enhance adaptation to climate change or minimise waste.

There is a strong incentive to have a low environmental impact of the farming system, while reducing production costs and providing healthy food for European citizens. Despite the appeal of the circular economy, sometimes seen as a silver bullet that can help achieve these goals, transforming the agricultural system into a circular economy is not such an advanced process. It requires active collaboration on the part of European and national authorities, as well as a continuous effort on behalf of all relevant actors involved. We need to have a coordinated action plan at all levels.

There is much scope for effective use of CAP and national agricultural policies to support the implementation of the circular economy, particularly in areas such as education, investment, developing short supply chains or promoting cooperation between relevant stakeholders.

If Romania develops its know-how, it can also become a promoter in the region of the circular economy approach in agriculture, especially on innovative activities such as environmental monitoring and the promotion of high added value activities: research, organic production, new products incorporating know-how¹⁸.

4. Policy recommendations

- *There is a wide range of investments that Member States should promote through national strategic plans, e.g. in new technologies for adapting farms to climate change, digitisation, precision farming, water storage, etc. and which are particularly relevant for larger farms, which risk being affected by redistribution, degressivity and capping of direct payments;*
- *Another particularly useful form of support are risk-sharing financial instruments for investments, which should be accessible to farms of all sizes. Small farms should be prioritised for direct payments because of the social and ecosystem services they provide. Access to credit, facilitated by risk-sharing financial instruments, could make an essential*

¹⁸ CHEREJI, Aurelia-Ioana (2021), *Agricultura românească – o abordare circulară* [Romanian agriculture – a circular approach], in *România sustenabilă, concept și instrumente – suport pentru o transformare circulară a economiei românești* [Sustainable Romania, concept and instruments – support for a circular transformation of the Romanian economy], Club România

contribution to increasing the competitiveness of farms and developing the entrepreneurial environment in rural areas;

- *In particular, Romania, which has favourable conditions, should continue to encourage the cultivation of soya, in tandem with the planned expansion of irrigated areas, but should also give a boost to other crops that are suited to its soil and climate (such as sorghum or chickpeas) and for which there is a growing market;*
- *Greater flexibility for the Member State to set (through strategic plans) mandatory practices for farmers (and hence more ambitious voluntary practices) and implementation rules are welcome proposals, as this can take into account national and regional specificities. However, strengthened cross-compliance should be accompanied by continued efforts to train and educate farmers and farm workers in the application of good agricultural practices so that the effect of climate action funding allocations is maximised;*
- *The biggest hurdle for young farmers continues to be the limited availability of land to buy or rent. Similarly, social innovations to support new farmers and access to land (e.g. new ways to reduce waste, hatchery farms), gender equality in agriculture, could be better facilitated through a fairer distribution of the CAP budget. Second pillar funding should be increased to provide targeted support for young farmers and new farmers entering the sector (e.g. tax benefits).*

5. Conclusion

It is important to articulate the CAP architecture with the sustainable development goals (SDG) through the Green Deal actions. To do so, the National Strategic Plans must clearly distinguish the measures and expenses targeting global public goods and global issues from the measures targeting local public goods and local development supports. The stakes at the EU level are clear with few favourable trends in organic farming development and a decline in antimicrobial use, and big challenges regarding the recent trends in GHG emissions and sequestration, pesticide use and the increase in overweight and obesity rates.

However, several Member States diverge from the EU average. A clear view of the different MS regarding each Green Deal target is necessary, firstly, to calibrate their NSP and secondly, to calibrate the effort sharing between MS. In NSP, the proposal clearly combines the mandatory requirements of the new conditionality and the eco-scheme measures, which are optional for farmers. However, the articulation between eco-scheme and the rural development measures, especially the agri-environment and climate measures, must be better elaborated and explained.

Efforts have been made in several European countries to decrease the use of pesticides. However, climate change does not help (pesticides will be an insurance tool for bad weather and new diseases), and innovations are needed. There are fewer opportunities to reduce pesticides on the same crop than changing the crop mix or even the land use. Plus, the reduction in pesticides would be more efficient for the environment at the landscape level rather than at farm or plot levels.

Concerning biodiversity, the European Commission should specify precisely what the 10% of high-diversity landscapes features are. However, it is more and more documented that 10% is a minimum target area in order to reach more significant effects. There should be also more focus on biodiversity outside of these protected areas. Subsidies for organic farming have mainly led to

an increase in organic land in the EU and, globally, the EU seems to be on track to increase its organic land share¹⁹.

Given the general objectives of the CAP, the new green architecture can provide an extremely useful tool for the national planning. Romania has yet retained the advantages of biodiversity and it may be use it to be a frontrunner in EU as regards this type of policy²⁰.

Romania's concern for the development of circular agriculture continues, thus, in the context of the CAP 2021-2027, the cooperation within the operational groups of the various associative forms or LAG partnerships is the key element for the orientation of actions on bioeconomy projects, the efforts being focused on the application of bioeconomy principles in the development of rural areas, in the valorisation of biomass as a renewable biological resource, in the large-scale implementation of the circular economy, in the strengthening of horizontal and vertical partnerships for the development of short supply chains and local markets.

The existence of a Farmers' Advisory Programme is a fairly advanced point in the new CAP, coming as it does to support farmers who need advice and information from reliable sources. I believe that, in this area, farmers are not very well informed or do not have the support they need to access European funds for their business, nor the knowledge to develop another kind of agriculture.

On the other hand, the agricultural industry in rural Romania needs considerable investment in modernising the technologies used and in training people to use them. This increases productivity, decreases working time and can also attract young people to the industry. At present, people in rural areas, who own small farms or are engaged in subsistence farming, still use traditional methods in this field which require more labour than modern ones.

Rural development can change the way new generations view the countryside, farming and its importance. Many young people tend to avoid such areas because the general view of agriculture is not promoted to its true value. New generations need digitisation, modernisation and easing of the work process to achieve more consistent and faster results. In this respect, Romania should focus more on what rural areas mean and the problems they raise, here we refer to the high level of poverty, the lack of education, a below average standard of living, low incomes and the lack of jobs.

In conclusion, an important aspect to be covered in the new financial year should be attracting and supporting young farmers and facilitating business development in rural areas. In order to cover this aspect, we can argue from the perspective of creating jobs and attracting young people to the agricultural sector, i.e. the need to promote policies in rural areas to increase the quality of human resources in agriculture and the food industry. Personally, I believe that we can achieve this result either by strengthening agricultural education, i.e. investing in agricultural high schools, or by promoting values and young farmers. What is needed is encouragement and support for those who show interest and enthusiasm in such areas, by which I mean not only financial support but also moral support.

¹⁹ European Parliament (2020), The Green Deal and the CAP: policy implications to adapt farming practices and to preserve the EU's natural resources, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU\(2020\)629214](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2020)629214) Last visited on 2 October 2021

²⁰ CHEREJI, Aurelia-Ioana (2019), A (sustainable) CAP after Brexit and after Paris Agreement. Views from Romania, *Lucrări științifice, seria I, volumul XXI*, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334289812_A_SUSTAINABLE_CAP_AFTER_BREXIT_AND_THE_PARIS_AGREEMENT_VIEWS_FROM_ROMANIA Last visited on 5 November 2021

For Romania, agriculture is a promising field with growth potential, even in difficult agricultural years our country is among the leading producers of large crops. It is equally important that production increases in line with the profitability of farms and that investments are subsequently made in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Synthesizing the existing literature and today trends, it should be stressed that the fusion between environmental challenges, the increased transformation of society's consciousness towards its greening and the need of shorter supply chains would prove to be the main tool for promoting the circular economy into the agricultural sector both at the EU and the national level.

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