

Present situation

Romania is a country located at the crossroads of Central, Eastern and Southeastern of Europe. Romania's natural landscape is almost evenly divided among mountains (31%), plains (33%), and hills (36%). These varied relief forms spread rather symmetrically from the Carpathian Mountains, which reach elevations of more than 2,500 meters, to the Danube Delta, which is just a few meters above sea level.

Romania's Carpathians are differentiated into three ranges: the [Eastern Carpathians](#), the [Southern Carpathians](#) or [Transylvanian Alps](#), and the [Western Romanian Carpathians](#). Each of these ranges has important distinguishing features.

Mountain areas are offering important ecosystem services, not only to mountain communities but also to inhabitants of the surrounding lowlands and the whole society.



Number of counties with mountain area = 27 counties

Number of mountain localities = 658 localities (20% from the country's surface)

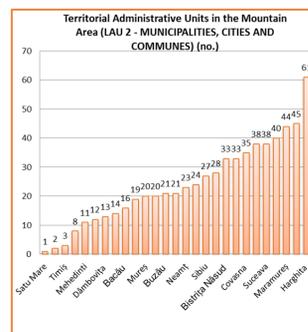
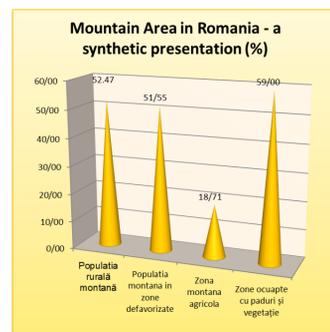
Mountain population (inhabitants) = 3.354.041 inhabitants

Rural population in the mountain area = 52.47% from total population in the mountain area (Romania's rural population = 44.94% from total)

Rural mountain population in less-favoured areas = 51.55%

Number of mountain households = 954.922 households

Mountain agricultural surface (ha.) = 2.900.000 (18,71% from total)



In Romania, **mountain area have to be a territory of special national, strategic, economic, social and environmental interest**. Romanian authorities recognizes the existence of specific natural conditions, of the differences between the mountain area communities as well as the application of the principle of solidarity for these territories.

The Law of Mountain Area was adopted in August 2018 by the Romanian Parliament and establish that the mountain area will be protected by the sustainable and inclusive development process initiated, led and controlled by the population of the mountain area with the support of the Romanian state, via the development of specific economic activities that ensure the preservation of the traditions, of the cultural identity, the protection of the cultural heritage, the maintenance of the biodiversity and the protection of nature and landscapes in order to increase the attractiveness and quality of life in mountain area.

National Strategy for Sustainable Development a Mountain Area (2014-2020), which follows reducing the imbalance between favored and disadvantaged mountain regions, marked by permanent natural constraints. Objectives: increasing the economic competitiveness, attractiveness of the mountain area and stabilizing the population, improving the quality of environmental factors and conserving biodiversity, as well as preserving and exploiting cultural resources. This strategy is in line with policies and programs at European level, and the new programming period focuses on mountain areas. Thus, there is a wide range of plans and specific measures to support farmers in these areas.

During t 2014, was approved Strategic Guidelines for sustainable development of the area underprivileged mountains (2014-2020). The general terms established by this memorandum are: 1. Increasing economic competitiveness; 2. Increasing the attractiveness of the mountain area; 3. Improving the quality of environmental factors from disadvantaged mountain area and conservation of biodiversity; 4. Conservation and capitalization of resources.

Institutions: **Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development**, **National Association for Rural Development - ROMONTANA**, **Mountain Forum in Romania**, **the communal peasant associations from several counties in the Eastern Carpathians**. All these institutions are able to raise funds for their purpose: development of the rural-mountain area of Romania., Agency for Mountain area, which also has a center adult education (former CEFIDEC) and represents "the light at the end of the tunnel", that is the hope that, in the near future, it will have a favorable absorption of European funds which is addressed to the Romanian mountain rural..



Actual issues

The general issues of mountain area, in Romania:

1. migration, climate change, ecological imbalances, due to the inadequate exploitation of resources and poor urban designs;
2. demographic disparities and the diversity of the territories
3. natural and specific constraints in the areas with influence on agricultural production
4. unsustainable management of forests and other specific resources;
5. low accessibility and proximity of social, medical, educational and transport services;
6. unforeseeable natural hazards in the mountain area;
7. lack of connectivity between associative forms, producer associations, agricultural cooperatives, producer groups etc;
8. a very few food products labeled with the mention "mountain product";
9. a lack of adequate financial instruments for farmers, processors, small entrepreneurs from the mountain area.

The main problem of mountain area, in Romania: **DEFORESTATION**.

Almost 300,000 hectares of forest were felled in Romania between 2001-2016, according to an online platform called Global Forest Watch, which publishes interactive maps based on images provided by NASA satellites.

Economic problems:

- income losses resulting from the enforcement of some extensive management measures on agricultural lands targeted on achieving some environmental objectives (biodiversity conservation, water and soil protection);
- income losses resulting from the enforcement of practices specific to ecologic agriculture;
- income losses born by farmers because of natural and specific constraints which are present in areas with influence on agricultural production.

The strategic factors for a future mountain policy in Romania are: political involvement, creation of relevant knowledge and social participation. Also, it is important that Romania to be involve in CAP - Common Agricultural Policy. This policy aimed to promote the economic, social and environmental development of the countryside. Its budget, 11% of the total EU budget, allocated along three axes. The first axis focused on improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sector through support for restructuring, development and innovation. The second one concerned the improvement of the environment and the countryside through support for land management as well as helping to fight climate change. Such projects could for example concern preserving water quality, sustainable land management, planting trees to prevent erosion and floods. The third axis concerned improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity. The policy also provided support to the [Leader rural development methodology](#), under which Local Action Groups designed and carried out local development strategies for their area. Member States distributed "second pillar" funds through Rural Development Programme actions.

