

## **THE INTELLECTUALS' OPINION REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF ROMANIA INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The sociological study emphasizes the fact that the investigated persons are sceptic as regards the carrying out of the objectives of integration into the European Union. In order to have a more stable economy premises closer to the European ones should be provided; the de-inflation process should be continued and a stricter financial discipline should be observed by companies with a view to maintaining a proper economic policy and attaining economic stability. The major changes that are going to occur in Romania should take into account the increase of labour productivity and the quality of products and services. A collective effort must be done in order to accomplish transition and head towards a modern society.*

**KEY WORDS:** *integration, community, cooperation, negotiation, economic environment, durable development.*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** *A14*

### **1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE INTEGRATION**

Romania's need to integrate into the European Economy has been linked to the need of achieving a rapid economic growth in order to catch up with the economically developed countries. Romania has significantly progressed along its path towards the European Union. One of the most important stages along the path Romania has gone through towards the West is NATO integration.

The European Union is today the result of the cooperation efforts started half a century ago in the attempt of founding a safe and prosperous society. Since then, cooperation has extended to various fields; nowadays, the European Union represents a forum for debating and settling matters of interest for the entire European community.

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Romania has become a member state of the European Union on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The quality of member state implies both rights and obligations. All these are rooted in the treaties and legislation adopted by the European Union since its foundation up to the present moment which are incumbent on every member state of the European Union. The next stage is the target date of Romania's integration into the Schengen space on March 2011.

The idea of creating a peaceful community has been issued by Robert Schuman, minister of Foreign Affairs, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1950. This is the historical moment considered to have settled the foundation of cooperation among the old enemies and to have surpassed war resentments and past burdens. Accordingly, a new process has been launched in the international relations of mutually exerting sovereignty. The plan was not known by the decisional factors of coal and steel industry and completely unknown by the public opinion in France and Germany.

The vanquished and the conquerors of the last war organized themselves starting from a new principle of international relations: the transfer of sovereign rights in certain economic branches and the administration of these branches by institutions having an over-national character. The new Community – through small but steady steps - intended to initiate the building of Europe starting from the economic field.

The institutional system of the first European Economic Community included the High Authority comprising nine members appointed by the governments of the member states, yet completely independent from them, the Council of ministers representing the member states but having restrained powers, and a Parliament Assembly comprising deputies of the parliaments of the member states.

The first economic community represents the first step of the French and German reconciliation. The interest was according to the importance of the event. After installing the High Authority in Luxembourg, the United States and Great Britain designated their representatives. Certain authors speak about the increased enthusiasm among economic elites; nevertheless, integration policy quickly emphasized certain subordination relations, especially regarding national and financial interests (Bibere, 1999, pp.32-33).

The foundation of the United Europe was an answer to the problems determined by the Second World War due to the tensions among certain European states as well as to the potential economic problems connected with their reconstruction effort.

Schuman declaration differed from the previous unification solutions of Europe due to the assimilation of an idea belonging to Jean Monnet – who, in the French government of that time, was responsible with his country's reconstruction – that stated the equal participation of the two states within a new entity that would first coordinate coal and steel industries of the two countries and settle the foundations of a future European federation.

Starting from this proposal formulated by Robert Schuman as a public declaration, six European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands) signed the treaty in 1951 in Paris. The treaty, in force since 1952, founded the first European Community, namely the European Community of Coal and Steel (E.C.C.S.). The community's institutions are the following: the High Authority

(over-state institution), the Special Council of Ministers, the Court of Justice, and The Common Assembly.

Both the European Economic Community (C.E.E.) and the European Community of Atomic Energy (C.E.E.A.) were settled by "Rome Treaties" in 1957 among the seven member states of the European Community of Coal and Steel. The European Community gradually increased its number of members and it is the most important among the communities including a varied and vast area of activities having an economic character; it also has association relations with a lot of states all over the world.

Maastricht Treaty of the European Union, in force since November 1<sup>st</sup> 1993, enlarged the area of European construction from the economic union to the political one. The treaty approaches monetary union, the idea of accrediting new mutual policies, the notion of European citizenship, foreign policy, and security policy.

The political process that determines the extension is but a part of integration. The most difficult part of the process starts when the candidate states begin to consider and implement legislative and constitutional changes necessary with a view of integrating.

The preparation of acceding to the statute of a full member of the European Union also implies the subject of adapting the constitution. The only obligation that is imposed to candidate states during the period that precedes integration is to transpose community legislation to the national juridical system. Accordingly, a lot of countries have changed their constitutions. Integration targets the increase of economic development and the carrying out of certain high parameters of future and global security of the member states.

## **2. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

The research has been done on a sample of 90 subjects. The target population represented three social and professional categories (engineers, teachers, and economists) living in the Jiu Valley. The sample had a non-aleatory character according to the shares depending of specialization: engineers – 30 subjects, teachers – 30 subjects, and economists – 30 subjects. As regards the methodology, we have employed the direct sociological investigation (interview) as a method of getting information. As a research device we have used the interview protocol which included 26 questions. Out of the 26 questions, 4 questions were factual, and the rest of 22 targeted the subjects' opinion on the research topic.

The subjects' distribution according to sexes shows almost equal percents: 53% - female population and 47% - male population.

The structure of population depending on the age variable is graphically displayed by Figure 1.

As the above graph shows, the research included persons belonging to all age categories.

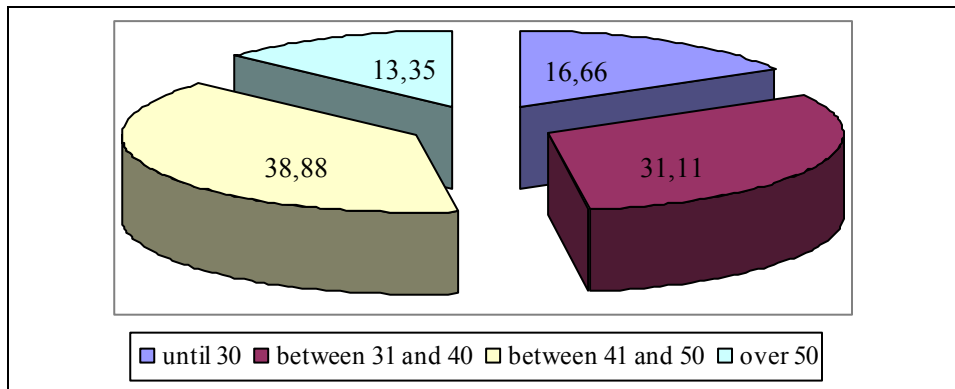


Figure 1. (%) Population Structure by Age

### 3. RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Population is satiated of promises and we should also consider the poverty of Romanian society and nowadays economic crisis. Accordingly, most of the investigated population (figure 2) considers that we have but poorly prepared to carry out the criteria of integration (institutional changes, struggle against corruption, proper legislation, efficient public administrations, modern European education, accelerated health reform). The strategy of economic development suffers of lack of coherence and, as a result, the achievements in the field of macro-stabilization and unequal performances in the field of economic growth are fluctuant, inflation and unemployment have attained alarming percents. People consider that the present economic environment is not enough stable so that it can stimulate internal and external savings and investments. The program of making profitable economic and restructuring activities as well as reform and macro-economic instability are going to last several years.

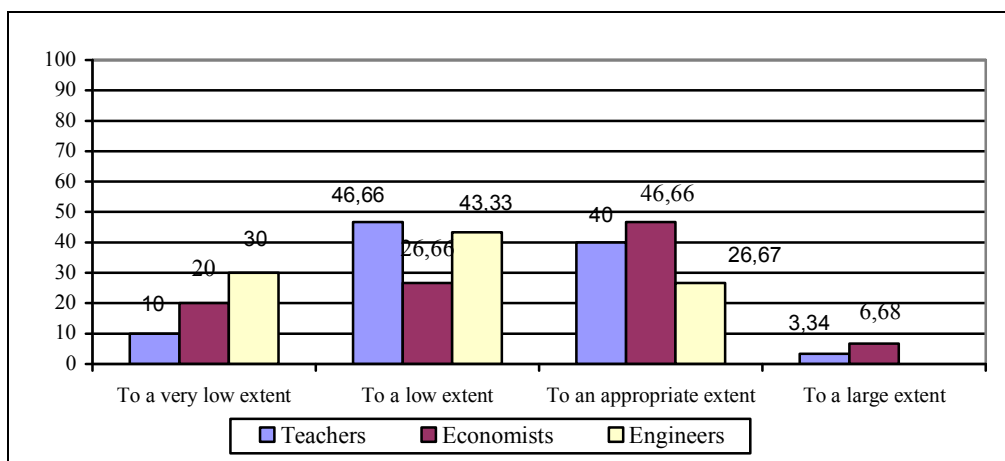
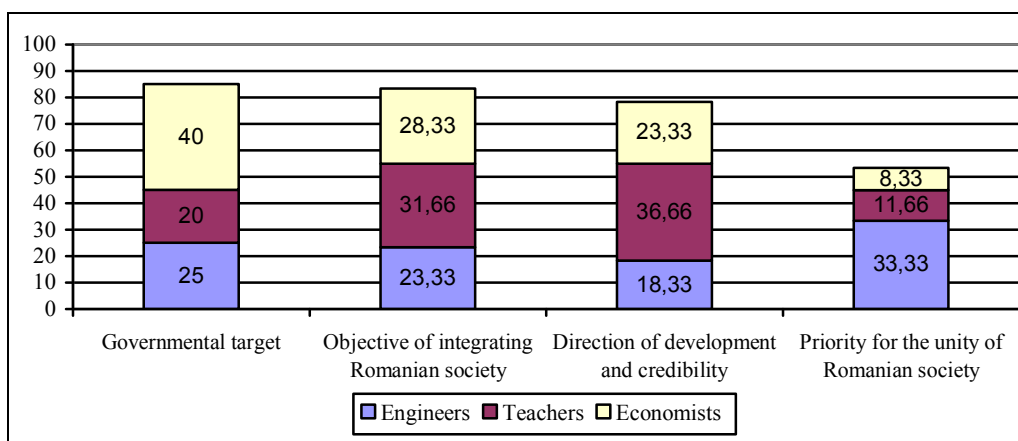


Figure 2. (%) The Population Readiness for Carrying Out the Integration Criteria

Romania has had as a main objective its integration into the European Union since 1989. This objective is not perceived in the same manner by all individuals. Less than two tenths of the subjects consider that the objective of integrating into the European Union has been a priority which is going to govern the unity of the entire Romanian society. Such a unity comprises the cooperation of politicians, of those dealing with the economy; the civil society, the academic community, and local administration that might be able to identify the most viable solutions capable of making Romania overpass the last years crisis. Unfortunately, not all of them believe in this opportunity. The most confident in the unity of Romanian society are the engineers who represent one third as compared with the economists that perceive this option to a smaller extent, namely less than one tenth (Figure 3).



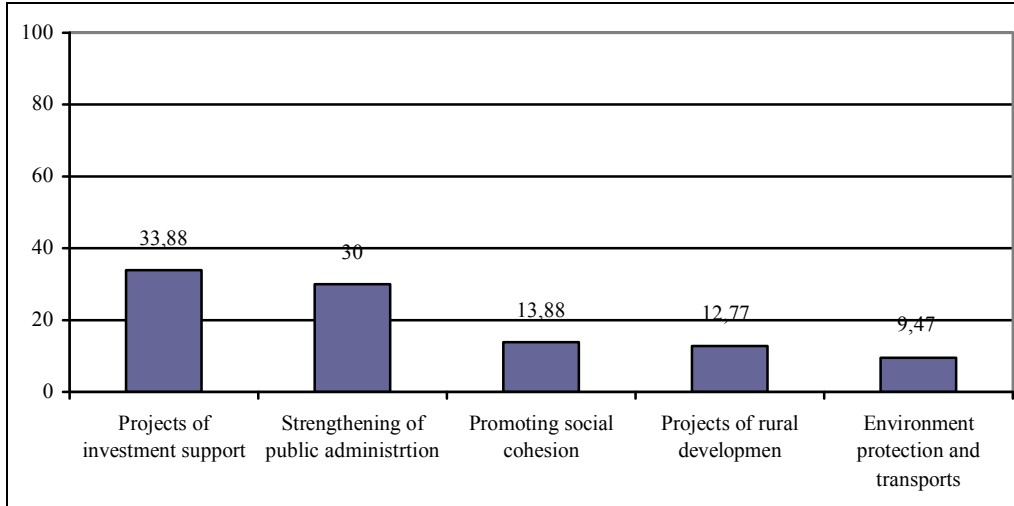
**Figure 3. (%) Opinions Regarding the Object of the Integration into the E.U.**

Less than one third of the interviewed persons consider that the objective of integration is a new dimension of Romania's development, consistency, and credibility. More than one third considers that integration has been an objective of the Romanian society. Almost one third of the subjects perceive integration as being only a governmental target. Economists support this issue to a larger extent than the other two social and professional categories.

As regards the importance of funds distribution towards certain fields of durable development, one third of those who answered the questions consider that the funds should be directed towards the projects of investment support followed by those regarding the strengthening of public administration and public institutions. Fewer subjects took into consideration the funds meant to promote social cohesion and the projects of developing agriculture and rural environment.

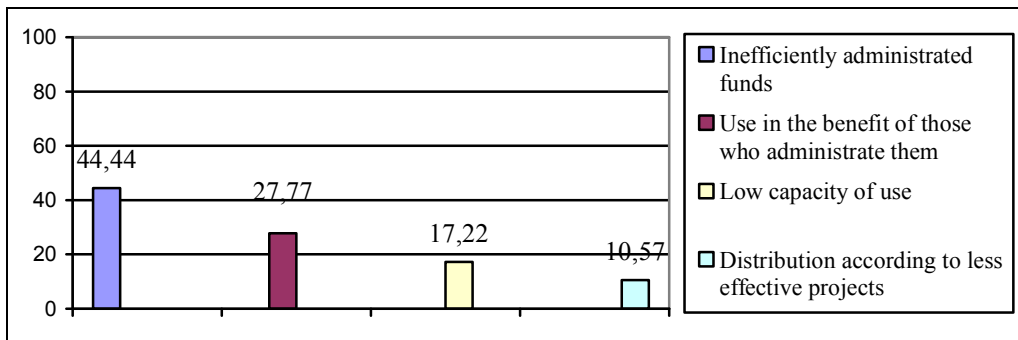
One can notice the fact that the interest in developing the Romanian village (figure 4) is rather small. Out of the three categories of subjects, only the teachers and the engineers showed an increased interest in the development of agriculture and rural environment (three fifths, namely more than two tenths) as compared with the economists who show a decreased interest in developing rural environment. Only 1.66% of them consider this option.

One third of the subjects consider that funds use should focus both on strengthening public administration and institutions and on projects of investment support so that the previous ones might efficiently work within the union.



**Figure 4. (%) Funds Directing towards Certain Fields of Development**

A lot of debates and speculations have been determined by the funds correct and proper use. Accordingly, almost half of the subjects consider that funds are administrated inefficiently and irresponsibly; more than one third consider that they are used for the benefit of those who administrate them; more than three fifths consider as decreased the ability to use those funds, while one tenth consider the funds are distributed to less effective projects (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. (%) Considerations upon the Manner of Using the Funds**

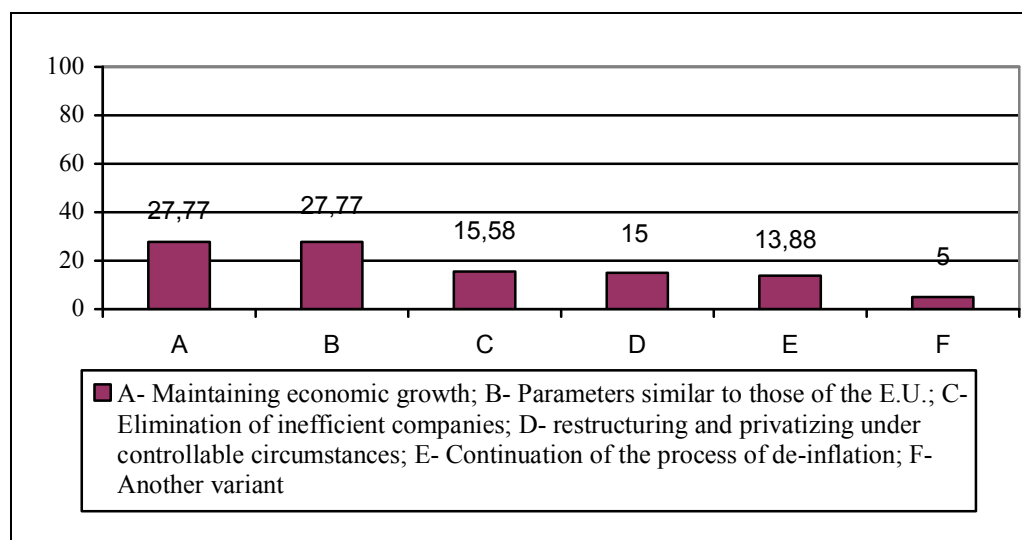
Due to the fact that there are a lot of persons who grew rich overnight, suspicion regards both the manner the funds are administrated and those who administrate them.

All agreements, conventions or treaties stipulate that the unique market is the main element that should be gradually and under various forms founded. One third of the subjects consider that the integration into the European market means the elimination of all impediments in goods, services, and labour circulation.

Labour, services, and goods circulation targets the improvement of the living standard of the employees within the communities, their right to residence as well as their similar treatment with that of the other employees. Cultural cooperation is promoted with a view to increase mutual understanding among member states.

One third of the subjects consider that the integration into the European market represents an opportunity of selling Romanian products. It depends on the extent to which we are capable to turn them to good account and determines the getting of an increased labour productivity and general living standard as the unique market offers a larger field of activity regarding the promotion of those companies manufacturing high quality products at lower prices.

At the same time, the unique market allows a higher mass production that determines the increase of the profits, contributes to the more efficient use of capital investments in modern productive devices capable of making productive capacity grow; labour is also more rationally and efficiently used.



**Figure 6. (%) Favourable Opportunities Determining the Development of the Management of Private and State Companies**

The perception upon the continuing and maintaining economic growth in order to build a market background favourable to the development of the management of private and State companies is grasped by more than one third of the subjects. More than two tenths consider that the policies directed towards providing parameters closer to the European ones on the internal market are essential. Three fifths consider that the elimination of inefficient companies determines the foundation of a background favourable to developing the management of private and State companies (Figure 6).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The research emphasizes the fact that the investigated persons are skeptical as regards the carrying out of the objectives of integrating into the European Union.

In order to have stable economy parameters closer to the European ones should be provided; the process of de-inflation should be continued and a firm financial discipline should be imposed to companies with a view to maintaining a proper economic policy and to attaining economic stability.

The main changes that are going to occur should take into account the increase of labour productivity and the quality of goods and services. A collective effort should be undertaken in order to conclude transition and to head towards a modern society.

At the same time, through adopting and strictly implementing the laws, Romania is going to make one significant step towards the strengthening of the State, of its institutions with a view to modernize our society as a whole according to European values.

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