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A Study of Romania's Territorial Division and Regional Development

Păun Ion OTIMAN¹, Nicoleta MATEOC-SÎRB², Camelia MĂNESCU³,
Teodor MATEOC⁴, Vasile GOȘA⁵, Adrian BĂNEȘ⁶

Abstract

The complex and extremely important topic of the administrative division of Romania is again of interest after the firm statements of the new Government (2012) concerning the imminent adoption of the law concerning the regionalisation of the country. If, after the Law 151 from 1948 and the Law 315 from 2004 concerning the regional development in Romania were passed, they were extremely slow to be put into administrative practice and used to support sustainable development, to attract and use European funds (the fundamental reason of the policy of regional development in the European Union), regionalising Romania nowadays seems to be completely different. Older concerns concerning the optimisation of the administrative division of Romania and the analysis of the present development regions determined us to present, below, a few points of view on the matter. The present study focuses on the need to justify regional development economically, socially, legally, historically, geographically, and from the point of view of the traditions, but completely independent from political influence, administrative interests, etc. The study presents the points of view of its authors, which are confident that it could be improved by economists, sociologists, historians, geographers, jurists etc. and submitted to Romanian decision-

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makers (Parliament, Government, etc.) as possible variants, as alternative solutions that support this legislative initiative of great importance for Romania.

Keywords: regionalisation; cultural identity; globalisation; territorial unit; development regions; representativity;

Introduction

After signing the pre-adhesion agreement to the European Union and after Romania started accessing pre-adhesion European funds (such as PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD), the Romanian Government had to draw up and implement a law on the regionalisation of the country (the administrative division into development regions) to comply with the European legislation in the field, legislation according to which each region (NUTS-2) should have, statistically, a population of 800,000-3,000,000 inhabitants (Mateoc-Sîrb, 2004).

Law 151 from 1998 distinguished, in Romania, eight development regions corresponding to the European statistic system NUTS-2 (Mateoc-Sîrb & Mănescu, 2012). Though the European regulation was extremely permissive as far as the number of inhabitants was concerned (800.000- 3.000.000 per region), Romanian decision-makers, statistically overzealous, but without any consistent economic basis and without taking into account such important grounds as history, culture, geography, “divided” Romania into eight development regions while adopting an original system of naming macro-regions as regions. Thus, for the NUTS 1 level, they used a coded system (RO 1, RO 2, etc.), and for the NUTS 2 level, they established such names as West, South, Centre, North-East, without taking into account the traditional historical names of the regions, unlike other European Union Member States that have kept the traditional names of their regions, e.g., Germany with its lands Bayern, Baden-Württemberg; France, where there are the regions (provinces) Ile-de-France, Alsace, Lorraine, Corse, Côte d’Azur; Spain, with its historical provinces Galicia, Navarra, Aragon, Cataluña, Castilia (Otman et al., 2006). In Romania, the level of micro-regions that would correspond to NUTS 4 or (LAU 1) has not been organised yet, though in the administrative practice such divisions exist: this is the case of the areas circumscribed to the Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA) or of the micro-regions made up conjecturally, based on volunteer partnership of communal administrations within economic, cultural, social, or environmental projects.

In the European vision, NUTS 4 covers the level of micro-regions, representing the *basic level of territorial development policies upwards* (Barnier, 2003). In Romania, it is necessary to organise the micro-regions (NUTS 4, LAU 1) by delimitating the traditional areas where the inhabitants have the same trades inherited from generation to generation, and where activities rely on natural

resources of the areas, such as țara Moților, țara Făgărașului, țara Almăjului, țara Hațegului, Oaș, Penteleu, Mărginimea Sibiului, etc. (Man & Mateoc-Sîrb, 2007). Most specialists in the field believe Romania should make an option for other forms of regional organisation, i.e. based on decentralised, effective, subsidiary territorial administration that support the inhabitants. As far as Romania is concerned, the Law 151 from 1998 concerning regionalisation totally removed national history, culture, tradition, and geography and partially disrespected economic principles: this makes it a true error and a defiance of the historical making up and consolidation of the Romanian State.

Macro-regionalisation of Romania. Law 151 from 1998 does not define Romanian macro-regions such as stipulated by the European NUTS Nomenclature List. Through later regulations, Romania adopted macro-regionalisation making up macro-regions by „attaching”, to each macro-region, two development regions, as follows: (1) Macro-region 1 RO₁ (Regions North-West, Centre); (2) Macro-region 2 RO₂ (Regions North-East, South-East); (3) Macro-region 3 RO₃ (Regions South-Muntenia, Bucharest); (4) Macro-region 4 RO₄ (Regions South-West-Oltenia, West) (Anuar statistic, 2011). Important notice: If we overlap Macro-region 1 (Regions North-West and Centre) over the territory impacted by the Vienna Dictate from 1940, we can notice they overlap 75-80%.

Question: Would it not have been better from all points of view to divide Romania administratively and territorially into macro-regions that correspond to the historical Romanian Provinces, i.e. RO₁ – Moldova, RO₂ – Muntenia, RO₃ – Transylvania?

Brief History of the Evolution of the Administrative Division (Regionalisation) of Romania

Romania has had its own experience in the field of administrative division (regionalisation) *ever since the first half of the 20th century*. It was based on the historical fact of the making up of the Romanian State through successive unions until the Great Union of 1918 of the historical provinces (territorial cradles of the Romanian people) that resulted into the nationally unitary State of Romania.

After the Great Union of 1918 and until the World War II, Romania's territory was divided administratively into the following units: *provinces* (9), *counties* (71), *small rural districts* (433), *urban communes* (179), made up of *municipiums* (24), *county chief towns* (47), *towns* (108), *rural communes* (9,007) made up of *villages* (15,348), *hamlets* (1,050) and *other settlements* (424) and of *sub-urban communes* (72).

The structure of the provinces per counties in 1936 was as follows: (1) *Oltenia*: Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, *Romanați*, Vâlcea; (2) *Muntenia*: Argeș, Brăila, Buzău,

Dâmbovița, Ialomița, Ilfov, *Muscel*, Olt, Prahova, *Râmnicu Sărat*, Teleorman, *Vlașca*; (3) *Dobrogea*: Constanța, Tulcea, *Caliacra*, *Durostor*; (4) *Moldova*: Bacău, *Baia*, Botoșani, *Covurlui*, *Dorohoi*, *Fălticeni*, Iași, Neamț, *Putna*, *Roman*, *Tecuci*, *Tutova*, Vaslui; (5) *Bessarabia*: Bălți, Cahul, Cetatea Albă, Hotin, Ismail, Lăpușna, Orhei, Soroca, Tighina; (6) *Bucovina*: *Câmpulung*, *Cernăuți*, *Rădăuți*, *Storojineț*, Suceava; (7) *Transylvania*: Alba, Brașov, *Ciuc*, Cluj, *Făgăraș*, Hunedoara, Mureș, *Năsăud*, *Odorhei*, Sălaj, Sibiu, *Someș*, *Târnava Mare*, *Târnava Mică*, *Trei Scaune*, *Turda*; (8) *Banat*: Caraș, *Severin*, Timiș-Torontal; (9) *Crișana and Maramureș*: Arad, Bihor, Maramureș, Satu Mare (Academia RSR, 1966).

In 1939, the Government appointed by King Carol II made, only three years later, a new, uninspired administrative division, giving up in a considerable measure the territorial division of the country per historical provinces. According to this division, Romania was divided into 10 regions, 71 counties, 431 small rural districts, 179 towns of which 16 *municipiums* and 9,016 *rural communes*, made up of 16,084 *villages* and 659 *hamlets* (Mateoc-Sîrb et al., 2008). After World War II, in the year 1948, The Communist Government of Dr. P. Groza achieved the regionalisation of the country, which lasted until 1968. Thus, Romania was organised administratively and territorially into *regions* (16), *districts* (150), *towns* (183) and *communes* (4,259). The last major administrative reform in Romania was based on Law 2 from 1968, when regions and districts were abolished and Romania's territory was divided into 40 counties. Nowadays, Romania has 41 counties (an additional one was established before 1989) and the Municipium of Bucharest.

Law 151 from 1998 distinguished eight development regions with no administrative status or legal personality, but corresponding, formally and forcefully, statistically alone, to the European system of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – NUTS 2, with a population between 800,000 and 3,000,000 inhabitants (Oțiman, 2006). Later on, after Romania's adhesion to the European Union (2007), the eight development regions were grouped into four macro-regions corresponding to the organisation level NUTS 1.

Upon more thorough analysis, the present administrative division into eight development regions copies most of Charles II division of 1939 (Region West (1998) – Region Timiș (1939); Region South-West (1998) – Region Olt (1939); Region Centre (1998) – Region Mureș (1939); Region North-West (1998) – Region Someș (1939) and most of the region North-East (1998) – Region Prut (1939)).

In Romania, there were concerns about the territorial development of the country even when the economy was centralised. Starting with 1976, they have developed a unique State National Plan based on the enforcement from the centre of a territorial economic development model. The goal was to reduce differences in development between the counties with the unique criterion of the level of

economic development because of the forced industrialisation of all the counties without taking into account such criteria as economic efficacy. There was exaggerated diversification of the types of industries at county level, as well as the appearance of several mono-industrial localities dependent on a single (smaller or larger) industrial enterprise mainly from such industries as heavy, chemical, or machine building, with no environmental protection whatsoever.

The population active in agriculture decreased dramatically: it was drawn by industrial activities in the urban areas. Population migration from the rural to the urban area resulted in major social disturbance such as demographic pressure hard to control on the towns undergoing the process of industrialisation. The emphasis laid on the “reduction of the disparities no matter the costs” and the investment policy based mainly on the use of labour in industry – an industry that was quantity-oriented and not relying on economic efficacy and competitiveness – was the main cause of the decrease of economic growth in the ninth decade of the 20th century. Despite the forced industrialisation and economic growth, the counties that were “traditionally” poor (Botoşani, Vaslui, Călăraşi, Olt, Giurgiu, Teleorman) continued to be affected by the migration of the population that kept high all over the ‘70s and the ‘80s, which turned Romania into a unique country among Central and East-European countries. The negative effects of this economic policy were yet to become visible ever since the ‘70s, and they aggravated in the ‘80s and well after 1990 (Mateoc-Sîrb, 2004). The mutations in Romania’s economy and its decline after 1989 made the solution for territorial issues – the main concern of a regional development policy – hard to support since the entire country has become a “priority” because of the general restructuring issues. As far as the population employment rate is concerned, agriculture is still the main economic branch. At the end of the year 2010, the share of the population employed in agriculture was 30%, with agriculture and forestry dominating most of regional economies (Mateoc-Sîrb et al., 2007).

General Remarks Concerning Region Delimitation

Delimiting a region or area is a complex matter; it is conditioned by the following aspects: *territorial homogeneity, availability of statistics data, and proper organisational structures* (Oțiman, 2007).

Territorial homogeneity refers to geographical, historical, economic, and social criteria and to the community of interests, traditions and customs, folklore, language, dialect and speech of the population.

Availability of statistics data is vital in the analysis and diagnosis of a region. Starting from the information sources at regional level, we can define goals that can qualify a region for a certain development state. Through processing, statistics

data should identify those regions that have socio-economic issues and help define the regional development policies that facilitate regional development projects.

Proper organisational structures are necessary to avoid overlapping of authorities efforts. A region should be administered (lead, governed) by a centre (institution) with proper organisational structures relying on effective financial mechanisms (Mărăcineanu, 2003).

In delimiting a region (territorial unit), we need to *take into account its natural limits* and, if possible, overlapping the administrative region and the geographical region characterised by certain features such as relief, climate, waters, resources, economy whose interaction results in a well-defined, distinct area among other areas. As for the policy of regionalisation in the European Union, it is worth keeping in mind the principle referring to the judicial, economic, social, and cultural relationship between nation and region. There is no way regional development policy can replace or substitute the national policy of development; on the contrary, the two policies should complete each other. The regional development policy should necessarily, legally and economically, be subordinated to the national and European policy of development on the whole.

Classification of the Regions. Typology of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

They have adopted, in the European Union, a regional classification called Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (the so-called NUTS) (Zaman, 2003). The peculiarity of the NUTS regions consists in the fact that they rely mainly on institutional divisions (i.e. on administrative units). NUTS are based on statistics reasons of data collecting; practically, access to data is organised at five different area levels, from the largest (macro-regions, NUTS 1) to the smallest (NUTS 5) units (Vincze, 2000). NUTS levels 1, 2 and 3 are differentiated depending on the demographic thresholds shown in *Table 1* below.

Table 1. Demographic thresholds per NUTS levels

Level	Minimum number of inhabitants	Maximum number of inhabitants
NUTS 1	3,000,000	7,000,000
NUTS 2	800,000	3,000,000
NUTS 3	150,000	800,000

Source: European Union Report 1988

Regions classified as NUTS include both urban and rural areas. The European Commission publishes, every three years, a report on the socio-economic situation and development of the NUTS regions in the European Union Member States.

The Report concerns all levels, from the level NUTS 1 to the level NUTS 3, while for the levels NUTS 4 and NUTS 5 they use administrative units specific to each country apart, called LAU 1 (Local Administrative Units) for NUTS 4 and LAU 2 for NUTS 5 (Man & Mateoc-Sîrb, 2007). Regions in the European Union according to NUTS and LAU in the year 2007 are shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Systematisation of the regions according to NUTS and LAU in the European Union Member States in 2007

Country	NUTS 1		NUTS 2		NUTS 3		LAU 1 (NUTS4)	LAU 2 (NUTS 5)
Austria	3	Gruppen von Bundesländern	9	Bundesländer	35	Gruppen von Politischen Bezirken	-	2,357
Belgium	3	Regions	11	Provinces	44	Arrondissements	-	589
Bulgaria	2	Rajon	6	Planning Regions	28	Oblasti	264	5,329
Cyprus	1	-	1	-	1	-	6	613
Czech Republic	1	Uzemi	8	Oblasti	14	Kraje	77	6,249
Denmark	1	-	5	Regioner	11	Landsdeler	99	2,148
Estonia	1	-	1	Regions	5	Groups of Maakond	15	227
Finland	2	Mannner-Suomi, Ahvenanmaa/Fasta Finland, Aland	5	Suuralueet/Storomraden	20	Maakunnat/Landskap	77	416
France	9	ZEAT+DOM	26	Regions + DOM	100	Departements	3787	36,683
Germany	16	Länder	39	Regierungsbezirke	429	Kreise	1457	12,379
Greece	4	Groups of development regions	13	Development regions	51	Nomoi	1034	6,130
Holland	4	Landsdelen	12	Provincies	40	COROP regio's	-	443
Hungary	3	Statisztikai nagyregiók	7	Tervezési-statisztikai régiók	20	Megye + Budapest	168	3,152
Ireland	1	-	2	Regions	8	Regional Authority Regions	34	3,441
Italy	5	Gruppi di regioni	21	Regioni	107	Province	-	8,101
Latvia	1	-	1	-	6	Reģioni	33	527
Lithuania	1	-	1	-	10	Apskritis	60	518
Luxembourg	1	-	1	-	1	-	13	116
Malta	1	-	1	-	2	Gżejjer	6	68
Poland	6	Regiony	16	Wojewodztwa	66	Podregiony	379	2,478
Portugal	3	Continente + Regiones autonomas	7	Comissões de coordenação regional + regiões autonomas	30	Grupos de concelhos	308	4,260
Romania	4	Macroregiuni	8	Regiuni	42	Județe + București	-	3,174
Slovakia	1	-	4	Oblasti	8	Kraje	79	2,928
Slovenia	1	-	2	Kohezjske	12	Statistične regije	58	210
Spain	7	Agrupacion de comunidades autonomas	19	Comunidades y ciudades autonomas	59	Provincias + Ceuta y Melilla	-	8,111
Sweden	3	Grupper av riksomraden	8	Riksomraden	21	Län	-	290
United Kingdom	12	Government Office regions; Country	37	Counties; Inner and Outer London; groups of unitary authorities	133	Upper tier authorities or groups of lower tier authorities (unitary authorities or districts)	443	10,664
UE-27	97		271		1,303		8,398	121,601

Source: Official Journal of the European Union, 2007

Discussion

Principles and Features of a New Administrative Division (Regionalisation) of Romania

Regional policy addresses mainly the economic and social fields; as a result, delimiting the regions should be designed and done so that it makes it meet economic and social development programmes.

The regions thus delimited should meet several criteria, such as: *economic* and *geographic* (natural and man-made resources, relief, climate, vegetation), *functional* (they should function as a system with its own specific individuality and self-regulating internally, among their own component parts and inter-regionally with the neighbouring systems), *political and administrative* (administration facilities, communication means, promotion of subsidiarity) and *historical, cultural and traditional* (identity issues, cultural issues, etc.) (Văcărel, 2004).

Regional appurtenance is a humans' individual response resulted from individual identity feelings. In most people, there are strong feelings of identity appurtenance related to the *place of birth* (village, town), *region*, and *province* they belong to and up to a feeling of *national, European, etc. identity*. Sociologists and historians have shown through case studies the fact that there are, in Romania, both typical geographical regions and areas of mental socio-cultural and historical-traditional resonance which, in time, got to be called *tări* “countries”: Țara Moților, Țara Lăpușului, Țara Năsăudului, Țara Zărandului, Țara Almăjului, Țara Făgărașului, Țara Hategului, Țara Oașului, Țara Bârsei, Țara Chioarului etc. (Oțiman, 2006).

Three basic elements define these “countries”: (1) *representativity*, i.e. defining and individualising them as functional units related to cultural, social, economic, etc. criteria; (2) *unity and cohesion*, that allow detachment and deep differentiation from the neighbouring areas through strong cohesion forces and the nature of its inner relationships; (3) *coverage* of the entire territory as a geographical area that is well determined and within which cultural phenomena are easy to identify since they are specific (Manoliu, 1998).

There are, among the villages of such a “country” – in fact, a small popular organisation, a small local Romania on the national land – a certain type of relationships that constitute another kind of social and spiritual borders as strong – if not even stronger than – former ones. This is also reflected in the group awareness of the individuals that define themselves through their appurtenance to an area and that tend to differentiate from the other areas. Though socio-historical development of the population of such a “country” has awakened in time the awareness of belonging to a certain area, to a small country with specific ethnographical features, national consciousness also developed in parallel: it broadened

from the socio-religious community to the idea of belonging to a single nation, with language identity, similarities of clothing and dress, settlements and households, skills and habits, work and aspirations (Mirescu, 2006).

This type of relationships cannot be ignored; they are natural responses of the citizens that explain most of the *cultural identity* of the peoples.

Regionalisation cannot be seen *statistically* alone or only through the prism of developmental balance through the absorption of European funds, as stipulated in the Law 151 from 1998 (London, 2001). In our opinion, regionalisation is, first of all, an *economic* and *identity* issue for most of the population in a certain region. Aware of the fact that *there is no perfect regionalisation*, we believe that *regionalisation based on statistics principles or on political or (only) ethnical interests is an administrative failure*. Another major factor of Romanian regionalism dysfunction is the *financial prerogative of the regions*. As long as the pillar of administrative decentralisation and the functioning of sub-state structures do not yet rely in Romania – according to the financial philosophy of the EU – on regional and local self-financing, *regionalisation and decentralisation in Romania are merely fiction*. At the reunion in Lomé, they have pointed out the distinct trend towards the regionalisation of rural development, which is also confirmed by the establishment, in several countries, of regional organisations that are autonomous in their economic and social development. The Bogota Report established the list of criteria that support region delimitation aiming at their economic development: (1) size (population, area); (2) natural borders; (3) transportation systems; (4) social and natural factors; (5) homogeneity and complementarity of the production factors.

Alternatives to the Present Romanian Development Regions

The amendments to the law concerning the development regions should, in our opinion, cover the following aspects: (1) delimiting, on Romania's territory, all the structures stipulated by the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS 1 and NUTS 4 (LAU 1)); (2) at the level of NUTS 1 (macro-regions, provinces or regions) we should delimitate the three historical Romanian Provinces (Muntenia, Moldova and Transylvania); (3) at the level of NUTS 4 (LAU 1), we need to clearly delimit micro-regions (areas) by turning back, if possible, to the small rural districts of the inter-war period. Regionalisation, as a process, can be seen from different perspectives: economic (development), legal, political, administrative, cultural, ethnic, etc. that is more and more obvious in the European context. Regionalism is a complex phenomenon that occurred naturally as a response to the unprecedented evolution of another phenomenon over 50-year old now: European integration, a component of globalism (be it European alone). Therefore, we believe that (political, economic, commercial, cultural, and even

legal) regionalisation and globalisation are parallel phenomena resulting in contradictory effects that could be related to the European continent seen as *unity in diversity*.

The more and more obvious regionalisation trends – that go to the debate about the transition of Europe *from a reunion of States to a reunion of regions* – is but the natural response of maintaining cultural, traditional, historical identities, on the one hand, and of balanced economic development regionally and inter-regionally, on the other hand. Romanian local authorities (commune, county, and region ones), using the principle of decisional subsidiarity, can enhance and support the process of investing and of creating jobs through investment facilities according to the local economic and ecological pattern. To do so, we suggest a few variants of delimiting development regions that fully observe the NUTS criteria established by the European Union: NUTS 1 should cover the macro-regions with between 3 and 7 million inhabitants, NUTS 2 the development regions with between 800,000 and 3 million inhabitants, and NUTS 3 the regions with between 150,000 and 800,000 inhabitants corresponding to the present counties of Romania and also to the economic development requirements that stipulate that each macro-region (province), region and county should cover *poles, axes, clusters, and vectors of economic and social development*. Below is part of the variants suggested by the research team that could be taken into account by decision-makers at both national and local levels.

A. New variants of delimitation (1st, 2nd Versions)

Table 3 shows a possible model of administrative-territorial delimitation of Romania, which totally respects the NUTS criteria set by the European Union and by economical criteria.

Figure 1 reflects the data from the table 3, respectively a new delimitation with three macro regions of NUTS 1 and eight regions of NUTS 2, which covers the functional counties from NUTS 3 and which nearly respects the structure of the formal historical provinces of Romania (1–Moldova; 2 – Muntenia; 3 – Bucharest-Ilfov; 4 – Dobrogea; 5 – Oltenia; 6 – Banat/Crisana; 7 – Transilvania; 8 – Maramures/Satmar).

We consider taking the geographical and historical names as the best option because the traditional provinces cover all the defining aspects of the respective space, such as natural resources, anthropic and socio-cultural aspects, all of these contributing at the economical recovery of the so defined areas.

Table 3. Development regions of Romania –1st version

NUTS 1 (Province)(population/county)	NUTS 2 (Districts)	NUTS 3 (Counties)	Population (2010)
I.Muntenia (9568210)	2. Muntenia	Teleorman	397990
		Călărași	311898
		Ialomița	286980
		Brăila	357614
		Argeș	639157
		Dâmbovița	529781
		Prahova	812844
		Buzău	480222
	Giurgiu	280125	
	Total		3816486
	3. Ilfov	Ilfov	321007
		București	1942254
	Total		2263261
	4. Dobrogea	Tulcea	245899
	Constanța	723796	
Total		969695	
5. Oltenia		Mehedinți	291051
		Gorj	376179
		Dolj	702124
		Vâlcea	406555
		Olt	462734
	Total		2238643
II.Moldova (4706273)	1. Moldova	Botoșani	447107
		Iasi	825773
		Vaslui	449524
		Galați	608904
		Suceava	708433
		Neamț	562122
		Bacău	714641
	Vrancea	389769	
Total		4706273	
III.Transilvania (7156815)	6. Banat - Crișana	Timiș	679695
		Caraș-Severin	320840
		Arad	454922
		Bihor	592561
	Total		2048018
	7. Transilvania	Mureș	580228
		Sibiu	425322
		Harghita	324890
		Covasna	222434
		Brașov	598313
		Bistrița-Năsăud	317247
		Cluj	691048
		Alba	372265
	Hunedoara	461450	
Total		3993197	
8. Maramureș-Sătmar	Sălaj	241014	
	Satu-Mare	364104	
	Maramureș	510482	
Total		1115600	

Source: Own processing;



Figure 1. Version 1 of delimitation of development regions

Second version is proposing three macro regions, respectively Muntenia, Moldova and Transilvania in the NUTS-1, taking into consideration that the regional membership is an individual reaction of the people, which is justified by the individual's feelings of identity, by belonging to a group or to a community, adding that the great majority of people show a strong feeling connected to identity. At the level NUTS-2, nine regions were bounded (see table 4).

Table 4. Development regions of Romania –2nd version

NUTS 1 (Province) (population/county)	NUTS 2 (Districts)	NUTS 3 (Counties)	Population (2010)	
I.Muntenia (9568210)	2. Getică	Gorj	376179	
		Vâlcea	406555	
		Argeş	639157	
		Dâmboviţa	529781	
		Prahova	812844	
		Buzău	480222	
		Total		3244738
	3. Ilfov	Ilfov	321007	
		Bucureşti	1942254	
		Total		2263261
	4. Dobrogea	Tulcea	245899	
		Constanţa	723796	
		Total		969695
	5. Dunăre	Mehedinţi	291051	
Dolj		702124		
Olt		462734		
Teleorman		397990		
Giurgiu		280125		
Călăraşi		311898		
Ialomiţa		286980		
	Brăila	357614		
	Total		3090516	
II.Moldova (4706273)	1.1. Prut	Botoşani	447107	
		Iaşi	825773	
		Vaslui	449524	
		Galaţi	608904	
		Total		2331308
	1.2. Siret	Suceava	708433	
		Neamţ	562122	
		Bacău	714641	
Vrancea		389769		
	Total		2374965	
III.Transilvania (7156815)	6. Banat - Crişana	Timiş	679695	
		Caraş-Severin	320840	
		Arad	454922	
		Bihor	592561	
		Total		2048018
	7. Transilvania	Mureş	580228	
		Sibiu	425322	
		Harghita	324890	
		Covasna	222434	
		Braşov	598313	
		Bistriţa-Năsăud	317247	
		Cluj	691048	
		Alba	372265	
		Hunedoara	461450	
		Total		3993197
	8. Maramureş-Sătmar	Sălaj	241014	
		Satu-Mare	364104	
		Maramureş	510482	
	Total		1115600	

Source: Own processing;



Figure 2. Version 2 of delimitation of development regions

We mention that Moldavia and Muntenia were delimited by economical reasons and by taking into consideration the forms of relief. Moldavia was divided in two districts: Prut and Siret, the delimitation being made parallel to the Oriental Carpathians, along two rivers: Siret and Prut, as reflected in the figure 2. Muntenia, the Southern part of Romania, was also divided in three regions by economical reasons, and by following the forms of relief, respectively the sub Carpathian counties from the south of the country, the Getic region, the plains throughout the Danube, the seashore, the Danube and Dobrogea with the two counties: Tulcea and Constanța.

B. Optimization variants for the current development regions (1st, 2nd versions)

The following two options proposed are trying to optimize the already existing regions of development, proposing the change of the regions' names and the transfer of some counties from a region to another.

Table 5. Development regions of Romania– 1st version

NUTS I (Province) (population/county)	NUTS 2 (Districts)	NUTS 3 (Counties)	Population (2010)
I. Muntenia (9568210)	2. Muntenia	Teleorman	397990
		Giurgiu	280125
		Călărași	311898
		Ialomița	286980
		Brăila	357614
		Argeș	639157
		Dâmbovița	529781
	Prahova	812844	
	Buzău	480222	
	Total		4096611
	3. Ilfov	Ilfov	321007
		București	1942254
	Total		2263261
	4. Dobrogea	Tulcea	245899
		Constanța	723796
Total		969695	
5. Oltenia	Mehedinți	291051	
	Gorj	376179	
	Dolj	702124	
	Vâlcea	406555	
	Olt	462734	
Total		2238643	
II. Moldova (4706273)	1. Moldova	Botoșani	447107
		Iași	825773
		Vaslui	449524
		Galati	608904
		Suceava	708433
		Neamț	562122
		Bacău	714641
	Vrancea	389769	
Total		4706273	
III. Transilvania (7156815)	5. Transilvania	Mureș	580228
		Sibiu	425322
		Harghita	324890
		Covasna	222434
		Brașov	598313
		Bistrița-Năsăud	317247
		Cluj	691048
		Alba	372265
	Hunedoara	461450	
	Total		3993197
	6. Crișana– Maramureș	Sălaj	241014
		Bihor	592561
		Satu-Mare	364104
	Total		510482
	7. Banat	Timiș	679695
		Caras-Severin	320840
		Arad	454922
Total		1455457	

Source: Own processing;

The first option of optimization is proposing the delimitation of three macro regions and eight districts, named after the already known countrysides and provinces, which groups the functional counties, but grouped, by taking into consideration the existence of the natural and anthropic resources which allow their self support. (see table 5)



Figure 3. Version 1 of delimitation of development regions

Figure 3 mirrors data from table 5. The three macro regions of Romania are the historical provinces: Muntenia, Moldova, Transilvania, with eight regions. *Muntenia* province covers four districts from the Southern part of Romania: Muntenia, Ilfov, Dobrogea, Oltenia. Each of this districts totally covers 18 counties. Muntenia district is divided in the following counties: Teleorman, Giurgiu, Călărași, Ialomița, Brăila, Argeș, Dâmbovița, Prahova, Buzău. Ilfov district includes Ilfov and the capital city of Romania, București. Dobrogea district contains the seashore of Romania with two counties: Tulcea and Constanța. Oltenia district encompasses Mehedinți, Gorj, Dolj, Vâlcea, Olt counties. *Moldova* is the North-Eastern geographic and historical region of Romania, with Moldova district, including the following eight counties: Botoșani, Iași, Vaslui, Galați, Suceava, Neamț, Bacău, Vrancea. *Transilvania* is one historical region in the central part of Romania which encompasses historical regions of Transilvania, Crișana-Maramureș, Banat, which covers 16 present day counties, as follows: (1) Transilvania district holds nine counties: Mureș, Sibiu, Harghita, Covasna, Brașov, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Alba, Hunedoara; (2) Crișana-Maramureș district is divided in: Sălaj, Bihor, Satu-Mare, Maramureș counties; (3) Banat district covers the counties of the Western part of Romania: Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Arad.

Table 6. Development regions of Romania –2nd version

NUTS 1 (Province) (population/county)	NUTS 2 (Districts)	NUTS 3 (Counties)	Population (2010)
I. Muntenia (9568210)	2. Muntenia	Teleorman	397990
		Călărași	311898
		Ialomița	286980
		Brăila	357614
		Argeș	639157
		Dâmbovița	529781
		Prahova	812844
	Total		480222
	3. Ilfov	Ilfov	321007
		București	1942254
		Giurgiu	280125
	Total		2543386
	4. Dobrogea	Tulcea	245899
		Constanța	723796
	Total		969695
5. Oltenia	Mehedinți	291051	
	Gorj	376179	
	Dolj	702124	
	Vâlcea	406555	
	Olt	462734	
Total		2238643	
II. Moldova (4706273)	1. Moldova	Botoșani	447107
		Iași	825773
		Vaslui	449524
		Galați	608904
		Suceava	708433
		Neamț	562122
		Bacău	714641
	Vrancea	389769	
Total		4706273	
III. Transilvania (7156815)	5. Transilvania	Mureș	580228
		Sibiu	425322
		Harghita	324890
		Covasna	222434
		Brașov	598313
		Bistrița-Năsăud	317247
		Cluj	691048
		Alba	372265
	Hunedoara	461450	
	Total		3993197
	6. Crișana– Maramureș	Sălaj	241014
		Bihor	592561
		Satu-Mare	364104
		Maramureș	510482
	Total		1708161
7. Banat	Timiș	679695	
	Caraș-Severin	320840	
	Arad	454922	
Total		1455457	

Source: Own processing;

For the second optimization option, the proposal preserves the same delimitations based on geographical and historical criteria, but also economical criteria. We specify that the regionalisation can't be considered only statistically speaking or by the balance of development through the absorption of European funds, as has been done in Romania by Law 151/1998.



Figure 4. Version 2 of delimitation of development regions

Figure 4 shows the data contained in the table 6. This option is proposing Ilfov region, the Ilfov-București area, but because of economical reasons suggests also including the Giurgiu county, which could be the region’s reserve of food and agriculture and in the same time could allow the development of this vulnerable and economical dependent county on the Bucharest municipality. Aware of the fact that perfect regionalisation doesn’t exist, we consider that the regionalisation only by statistic principles it is an administrative failure. Also, we mention that the regions must function after the financial philosophy of EU, and by regional and local self-financing, which allows the implementation of some projects related to the economical and social needs of the citizens from the region.

Conclusions

Regionalisation and globalisation are parallel phenomena with adverse effects that could be assimilated to the formula “Europe as unity in diversity”. In the context of globalisation, *Romania must preserve, through national programmes, its history, customs and traditions and everything else related to the national State if it wishes to preserve the national identity of its inhabitants.* This should be

done no matter the physical borders exigencies and, above all, no matter the globalisation of the economy. As far as the inclusion of the regionalisation in the new Constitution of Romania and the regulation of the administrative division of the country, it is important, first of all, to delimitate the attributions of each administrative level, to avoid overlapping and, above all, centralism that has produced so much damage so far in Romanian administration and in the promotion of subsidiarity. In the hierarchy of the regional, county, local, etc, prerogatives, we need to take into account the legislation of different European country with similar Constitutional stipulations. The variants of administrative we have presented above take into account the European Union criteria for regionalisation: first, economic and, second, historical, geographical, cultural, traditional from Romania's modern, democratic period.

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