

SUMMARY

The habilitation thesis with the title "**Research on supporting the sustainable development of rural areas through agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities**", developed in accordance with the legislation in force based on the Regulation on the support of habilitation theses and the co-optation of doctoral supervisors in the Doctoral Schools of the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca (RU 48), is based on the research activity carried out throughout my teaching and research career, which helped me to accumulate skills and experience in relation to economic activities in rural areas, which can contribute to its sustainable development.

The idea of approaching this topic is based on the research undertaken during the doctoral internship, which marked my future research concerns. The analysis of the functioning of the national agricultural market in the perspective of Romania's integration into the European Union, carried out as part of my doctoral thesis, led me to direct my future research towards the rural area, a fact that helped me understand that it, through its structure and activities, is particularly complex and the understanding of the problems and challenges it faces and will face in the future, from an economic-social point of view and aspects related to the preservation of authenticity and the natural environment are far from being solved.

The justification of the research related to the habilitation thesis is based on the belief that, in the time interval that has passed since the defense of the doctoral thesis until now (20 years), I have matured as a researcher, I have consolidated my knowledge about the rural space and, I understand the need to support agricultural and non-agricultural activities in this space through various mechanisms and measures that can contribute to its sustainable development.

The sustainable development of rural areas at European and national level, pursues, in the long term, three main objectives: the stimulation of competitiveness in agriculture and forestry (which can be achieved by increasing the economic efficiency at the agricultural holding level, at the market level and at the branch level), ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and actions in the field of climate (related to the crisis and the need for the rational use of resources, climate change and reducing pollution) and achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, (by supporting and encouraging non- -agriculture to contribute to the

creation and maintenance of jobs and thus contribute to increasing the stability of incomes for the rural population).

The development and support of the contemporary rural economy, on a global, European and implicitly national level, is a complex, ongoing, challenging problem for the states (governments) of the world. Humanity is facing a paradigm related to this space. On the one hand, it is desired (necessary) to preserve the rural space from an economic, social, and ecological point of view, but on the other hand, the overall evolution of society requires us to diversify and modernize the activities and living conditions in the countryside. The balance between the two trends can be supported (and is indeed supported), through unitary measures at the European level. The Romanian rural economy must thus align with current European trends and requirements.

The first part of the habilitation thesis includes scientific, professional and academic research and achievements (supported by the professional training I benefited from during the years of study and after), in the form of a study on supporting the sustainable development of rural areas through agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities - agricultural. I have summarized my research concerns, on this section, in two main directions:

- economic efficiency in agricultural production,
- the role of tourism in supporting the economy of the rural area.

The results of the undertaken research were capitalized by the elaboration and publication of scientific papers at national and international conferences, participation in workshops and round tables that took place in the academic environment. Through these activities, I sought to identify the possibilities for the development of the agricultural and non-agricultural economy in the Romanian countryside, which would lead to the improvement of the working and living conditions of the inhabitants of this area and determine its sustainable development.

Economic efficiency is an objective that must be included in the activity of any economic agent. In agriculture, however, it has certain particularities, given the development of the production process, aspects that I consider to have been adequately covered in the qualification thesis.

Within the second direction of research, I sought to emphasize the special importance that tourism has (in the case of the Romanian countryside), in the sustainable development of this space. Adapting and improving the forms/ways of conducting rural tourist services, aligning them with the motivations for which the tourist prefers the Romanian village are particularly important. The quantification of the impact of tourist

activities, of the various forms of tourism practiced (rural, agritourism, ecotourism, etc.), on the sustainable development of the rural community and the orientation of rural development policies to the specifics of the Romanian village based on the principles of sustainability are essential in the contemporary period. The development of integrated rural tourism activities that lead to the sustainable development of the rural community, the reduction of urban-rural gaps and the improvement of the quality of life are absolutely mandatory now and in the future in the national economy. I believe that the increase and stabilization of the incomes of the rural population as a result of the development of tourist activities, their subordination to the principles of sustainability must be considered by every rural community in which tourist activities can be carried out in various forms.

The second part of the habilitation thesis includes the presentation of the evolution of the teaching, research and academic activity up to now and the perspectives, future directions of action, regarding the development of the professional career. I have presented the measures I have in mind for each segment separately.

The development of a successful university career in the future will be based on carrying out a quality didactic activity and strengthening academic recognition - through the carried out research activity. These directions of personal professional development will contribute to increasing the visibility of the University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timișoara, of the Department "Economy and Company Financing" within the Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism where I carry out my activity.