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## **THE NEW CONCEPT OF BIOECONOMY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The aim of the paper is the presentation of the bioeconomy concept and the state of the implementation at EU level. Based on data available at the level of the European Commission (EC), the European Parliament and other European bodies with responsibilities in this field, we offer a broad image of the concept and its evolution.

The term as such has been used since the 90s by geneticists Cabot J.E. and Martinez R., but their work has referred to their research in genetics (Birner, 2018). Earlier in the 60s, the economist Zeman used the term "bioeconomics". The American economist of Romanian origin Roegen N.G. also wrote about bioeconomics/bioeconomy in an article from the 70s, in which he concluded from personal professional experience that "unlimited growth would not be compatible with the basic laws of nature". Moreover, another Romanian scientist, Antipa G., used the term bioeconomy in the 30s in one of his works published in the "Bulletin de la section scientifique" of the Romanian Academy entitled "La biosociologie et la bioeconomie de la Mer Noire", that was printed in 1933. Recently, the bioeconomy was promoted after 2000 by Patermann Ch. through his initiatives, debates, and conferences.

Presently, there are different definitions for bioeconomy. For example, the EC states that "bioeconomy comprises those parts of the economy that use renewable biological resources from land and sea – such as crops, forest, fish,

animals, and micro-organisms – to produce food, materials and energy” [8].

BIOEAST Initiative (an initiative at CEE countries’ level) says, “the bioeconomy encompasses the production of renewable biological resources and their conversion into food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy independently of the processing technologies. It thus includes agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food and pulp and paper production, as well as parts of chemical, bio-technological and energy industries” [4].

In a personal way, the concept can be defined like: A complex system composed of natural resources and their transformation processes, which belong to biology, and which contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of people in a sustainable way, based on knowledge, forethought and empathy. Independent of these definitions, the future of humanity will have to focus on this concept and what derives from it.

For European countries, whether they are EU countries or non-EU countries, the bioeconomy will play an important role in their national economy, through the policies and strategies promoted. Not all EU countries have created a national bioeconomy strategy. At the end of 2019, only ten EU countries had developed a strategy dedicated to the national bioeconomy, and another 6 had a national dedicated bioeconomy strategy under developing [6].

If we exclude UK, because of BREXIT, only nine EU countries have a national bioeconomy strategy. In general, EU member states in CEE are at various stages in the creation and implementation of their national bioeconomy strategies in line with the bioeconomy strategy established at EU level in 2012. At the same time, non-EU countries are still trying to elaborate their policies and strategies to align with international trends. To date, no non-EU country in Eastern Europe has developed and implemented a bioeconomy strategy.

The EC adopted the Strategy "Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe" in 2012. The goal of the document is to emphasise the importance of the bioeconomy for Europe in addressing major societal and economic challenges and to create a more favourable environment for its realisation (EC, 2012).

In 2018, EC launched the new Bioeconomy Strategy for a Sustainable Europe. Actually, it is an update of the old Strategy, based on the objectives from the political program of former President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans of the EC. The document is called “A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment-Updated Bioeconomy Strategy”. The 2018 update of the Bioeconomy Strategy aims to accelerate the deployment of a sustainable European bioeconomy so as to maximise its contribution towards the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Agreement [6].

In CEE, only Latvia has a Bioeconomy Strategy. Other five (Croatia, Czech Rep., Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia) have strategies under development and the

rest have other related bioeconomy policies and strategies. In order to promote the creation of bioeconomy strategies in the CEE countries, in 2014 the BIOEAST Initiative was launched, at the proposal of the Visegrad countries. These countries were joined by: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia. BIOEAST Initiative, «offers a shared strategic research and innovation framework for working towards sustainable bioeconomy in the Central and Eastern European countries» [4]. Through the BIOEAST Initiative, CEE countries set the vision for 2030 to develop knowledge and cooperation based circular bioeconomy, which helps to enhance their inclusive growth and to create new value-added jobs especially in rural areas, maintaining or even strengthening environmental sustainability. Based on this collaboration, the BIOEAST Initiative won the project BIOEASTsUP (H2020 Project «Advancing Sustainable Circular Bioeconomy in Central and Eastern European countries») which aims at supporting CEE countries in their bioeconomy development.

The results of this research offer a large perspective on the bioeconomy at the level of the EU and the CEE countries, including Romania, with their own characteristics, opportunities and challenges for the near future. Nowadays, in addition to all the unresolved issues in the world, such as climate change, migration, food security and others, the COVID-19 pandemic adds other topics of debate to the agenda of national governments or international organizations (Voicilas, 2020). Clearly, this pandemic will bring changes in national and international policies and strategies. Perhaps this is the right time for many countries in Europe or the world to reconsider their strategies and adopt or adapt policies to EU regulations in the field of the bioeconomy, because from our point of view this is the future for a right attitude towards nature, a cleaner and safer world for humanity.

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## **NIGERIAN LAW IN PANDEMIC TIMES**

Consequences of the well-known world's pandemic under which we still live had their impact on every country. The global community has got one more reason for its internal differently directed changes to give a rather quick reaction for its further existence and development in conditions of the fight against COVID-2019 [1, p. 439]. Due to this fact, Nigerian law is on the way of its transformation to be effective for the further development and prosperity of the state and welfare of the people.

The pandemic gave the following six key human rights messages to mankind:

1. Protecting people's lives is the priority; protecting livelihoods helps us do it;

2. The virus does not discriminate; but its impacts do;

3. Involve everyone in your response;

4. The threat is the virus, not the people;

5. No country can beat this alone; VI. When we recover, we must be better than we were before [2, p. 7–20].

Effective state governance requires the solidarity, cooperation and collaboration of regional and global actors. Accordingly, beyond supporting the priorities of states and regional bodies such as the AU, regional and global actors should step forward to contribute to alleviating the socio-economic costs of COVID-19, including debt relief measures [3].

Nigeria's federal government should urgently develop a plan to deliver social and economic assistance to the tens of millions of people who will lose income due to COVID-19, particularly informal workers who lack an adequate