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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FROM ROMANIA IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND E-LEARNING

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# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FROM ROMANIA IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND E-LEARNING

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## Rezumat

Într-un raport publicat recent de către Fondul Monetar Internațional se precizează că "după două decenii de reformă cu performanțe dezastruoase, România a făcut progrese remarcabile în stabilizarea, creșterea economică și reducerea sărăciei în anii 2004-2008". Lipsa de performanță economică între 1990 și 2000 explică, într-o anumită măsură, starea actuală a societății bazate pe cunoaștere în România. În concluziile raportului se arată că România se află în spatele altor țări din Europa Centrală și de Est, dar că există domenii care ar putea aduce o schimbare în bine în viitorul apropiat. Lucrarea prezintă atât o radiografie a societății actuale cât și o viziune proprie a căilor de acțiune ce ar putea fi întreprinse în anumite domenii pentru o dezvoltare durabilă a economiei românești.

**Cuvinte Cheie:** administrație publică, societatea cunoașterii, societatea informațională, eLearning.ă

## Abstract

In a recent report published by the International Monetary Fund noted that "after two decades of reform with disastrous performance, Romania has made remarkable progress on stabilization, growth and poverty reduction over the last four years". Lack of economic performance between 1990 and 2000 explains to some extent values for the current state of knowledge society (KS), in Romania. In the report's conclusions on the Information Society in our country state that Romania is behind other countries in Central and Eastern Europe but there is still a rapidly growing presence of mobile phones, Internet use, the use of computers connected to Internet by companies and investment expenditures and equipment and the number of employees in companies using the Internet has doubled in the construction industry and has seen significant growth in trade.

**Keywords:** Public Administration, Knowledge Society, Information Technologies and Communication Platforms, eLearning

**JEL Classification:** H19, M19

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As outlined in a recent report published by the World Bank, after two decades of reform with disastrous performance, Romania has made remarkable progress on stabilization, growth and poverty reduction over the last four years. In Global Information Technology Report prepared by the World Economic Forum, Romania registered the most significant progress in Europe, a similar situation as recorded in Ireland. Lack of economic performance between 1990 and 2000 explains to some extent the figures for the current state of knowledge society (KS), in Romania. Following figure is representative of the economic situation of our country in recent decades.

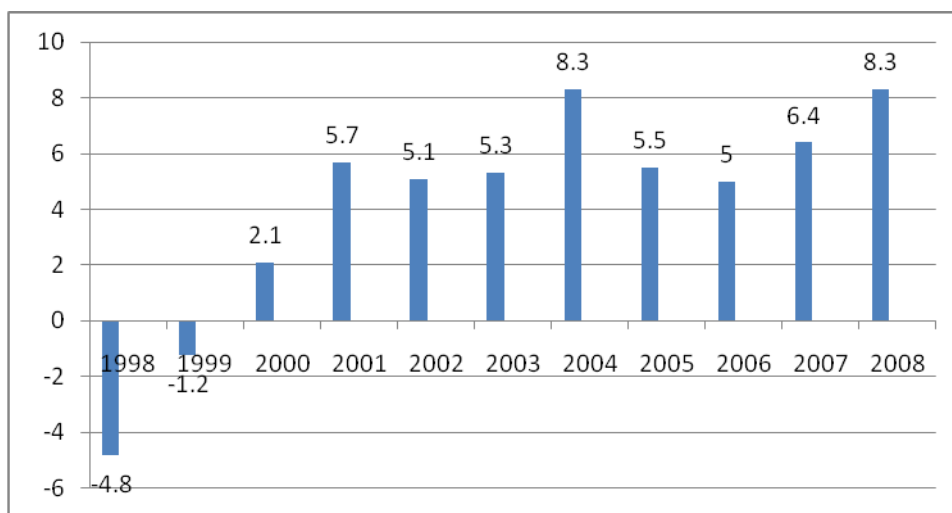


FIGURE NO. 1. ECONOMIC GROWTH OF ROMANIA IN THE LAST DECADE  
SOURCE: IMF, WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK DATABASE

According to the annual report of the European Commission in 2007 on the digital economy - i2010 as *Evaluating the development of Information Society in Romania Report* (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2009, from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr08210.pdf>, "in 2000-2004 period, productivity growth has been driven up to over 50% of the integration of information and communication technologies at EU level

## 2. CONTENTS

In Romania, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCIT) as Intermediate Body for Promotion the Information Society is to manage the structural funds allocated by the European Union under Priority Axis III - "ICT for public and private sectors" of the Operational Program "

Increase of Economic Competitiveness "(SOP - ECA) from 2007 to 2013, as outlined in the *Order of Minister - National Strategy on implementation of universal service* retrieved May 28, 2009, from <http://www.mcsi.ro/> .

In a report evaluating the state of development of the Information Society in Romania developed by MCIT states that a review of methodologies available on various websites that deals with topics of information society shows a wide variety of them and that virtually every study introduces circuit in a new vision on how the assessment of the degree of preparedness of a company in relation to the information society so that studies which intend to undertake a comprehensive assessment of a country in terms of the Information Society (SI) is limited to analysis in general the following 5 sections:

1. Access to ICT resources;
2. Education and research;
3. Using ICT in Society;
4. Use of ICT by businesses and government;
5. Legislative environment.

Conventional term „Information Society” refers to a society in which information is obtained by relatively quickly and easily while the „knowledge-based society” is a society in which the most valuable assets are intangible investments (Webster, 2006). European Commission (EC) proposed in 2002 a set of indicators to be used by each country to characterize the state of development of the SI as follows:

1. Indicators relating to the use of the Internet:
  - Access and use by consumers of the Internet - Access and organizations use their Internet
  - Cost of Internet access
2. Public services available online
  - E-Governance
  - E-Education
  - E-Health
3. A dynamic e-business
  - Commerce On-line
  - The degree of use of Internet in business

4. A secure infrastructure / degree of coverage of broadband communications. According to the methodology outlined in the Government, which complies with the EC recommendations, the use by citizens of the Internet is measured by 2 indicators namely:
- The percentage of households / number of people with Internet access at home and
  - The number of people who use the Internet regularly.

Are concerned only persons in age group 16-74 years and who accesses the Internet at least once a week from any access point. Companies are ranked according to their size (small, medium and large) and by activity according to NACE classification. Cost of Internet access is shown on different segments and types of slots subscriptions on any type of connection, including broadband. For characterization of electronic governance (e-Government) EC has established 20 basic services that are evaluated through the degree of online availability, of which 12 citizens and 8 for business.

Regarding education on line (e-Learning) indicators used are: number of computers in schools / colleges / universities and the institutes of education connected to the Interior, and the percentage of companies using the Internet for employee training. In determining the level of penetration of technology in health services (e-Health) to take into account the percentage of the population aged over 16 years using the Internet to seek information about health and the doctors who keep electronic records of patients and their disease.

To characterize the business environment towards the widespread use of Internet and quantifying the progress made in this direction is used as an indicator of the basic number of companies using electronic commerce in their income and the value of electronic commerce, only those organizations which last 3 months have ordered goods and services electronically, receiving orders, payments made and received invoices online.

Indicators that determine the degree of preparedness of the business environment and are:

1. Number of organizations which have their own Web page;
2. Percentage of organizations that use at least 2 security checks;
3. Number of persons in the total number of employees who use computer in daily work;
4. Number of organizations that have a broadband connection to the Internet;
5. Number of organizations that have a local area network (LAN) using Internet or intranet for

internal communication;

6. Number of organizations that receive orders on-line where the value exceeds 1% of total orders;
7. Number of organizations whose IT systems are linked automatically to IT systems of suppliers or customers;
8. Percentage of organizations using the Internet to access banking services and / or financial;
9. Percentage of organizations that have products marketed through electronic markets on the Internet.

To determine the level of security of networks and transactions, using the percentage of Internet users (individuals and companies) who have faced problems of security and fraud related to the particular credit cards, viruses, and for unauthorized use of personal information , unauthorized access of the mailbox, etc.. Another indicator is taken into account the number of people who have installed security systems on personal computers or have updated existing ones in the last 3 months preceding the survey.

To assess the clarity and taking into account the recommendations and methodology of the World Bank report proposed five groups of parameters: (i) Policy, (ii) Access, (iii) Education, (iv) the Company, (v) Economics. Each of them are analyzed and quantified the level of performance recorded on a scale from 1 to 4. Conclusions of the report is true that Romania registered progress from year to year. Thus if the 2001 peak level of performance is reached only for training of specialists, two years later to be achieved two maximuri Trade Policy at the ICT and content with local relevance.

Since it is considered that today, all indicators have reached the maximum level of performance on the website no longer exists MCTI reports on the progress of information society. Intermediate Body for Promotion the Information Society (OIPSI) created by MCIT, according GD 497/2004, is intended only to coordinate the implementation of structural funds dedicated to the ICT sector, funds allocated by the European Union who have access to both companies and the Romanian authorities in order to increase use of new information technologies and communications in Romania.

At European and international level there is developed a series of methodologies and procedures that quantify the state of a nation each year. Such a report is "e-readiness rankings 2008" conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit's.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

1. Romania to recognize the merits of the formation of well-trained professionals and a workforce skilled in the use of IT.
2. It is appreciated outsourcing production of applications software and equipment to companies specialized.
3. Event phenomenon division digital ( "digital divide") by reduced accessibility of Internet technology.
4. Lack of trust of the population to accept and use new technologies of information and communication.

Despite the rapid improvements in the area (ICT), the World Bank uses the Networked Readiness Index (Nri) to measure "the degree of preparedness of a nation or community to benefit from ICT developments". Nri comprises three aspects: environmental assessment of ICT offered by a country, the preparation and use of ICT among stakeholders. The score obtained by our country is 5.46 of 10 possible points to an increase of 14 hundredth over the past year and a girl almost two years ago.

In terms of social cohesion in Romania, the biggest challenge is the development of rural areas where he lives approximately 46.4% of the total population and lack of technology has generated significant levels of access and use of electronic services (Rosca, Stoica and Micu-Ghilic, 2009).

A report on particularly important in Europe is "The Lisbon Review 2008 - Measuring Europe's Progress in Reform." In this report are presented in the form of performance charts by individual member countries of the EU versus the United States and East Asia. As can be seen in the figure below, a country is compared eight dimensions each dimension on a scale from 1 to 7. A high performance assumed to have a higher score on each dimension so that the final area of geometric figure to be higher. The blue is the performance of each country and in gray and black are the performance standard in the U.S. and East Asia. Romania does not see that outperforms the two references to a chapter where France, Germany or Finland is approaching the area just ahead of U.S. on certain dimensions.

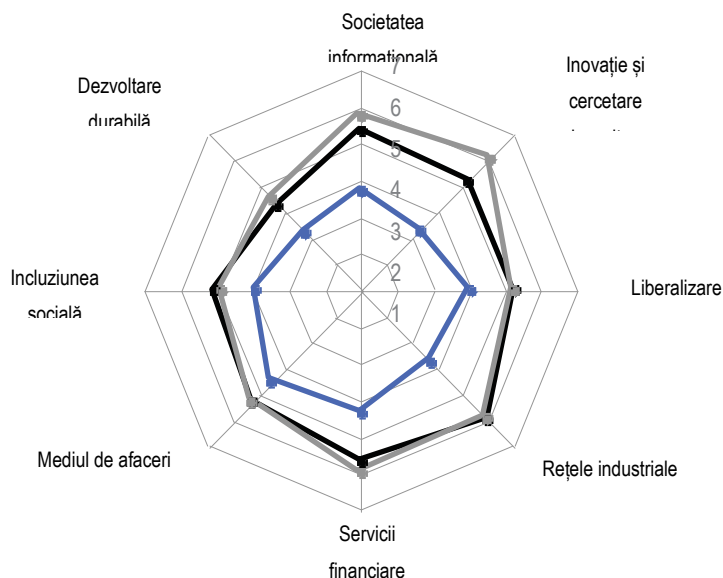


FIGURE NO. 2. ROMANIA'S PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF THE LISBON STRATEGY COMPARED WITH THE U.S. AND ASIA  
 Source: "The Lisbon Review 2008 - Measuring Europe's Progress in Reform"

According to reports (Feather, 2008), both at EU level and globally we may hope, keeping the upward trend, as in the next three-four years to get to overcome the classification. Interestingly, however, to see where the increases recorded in international reports. In "Annual Report of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Romania is observed the following situations:

1. Economic growth but positive time in a dynamic slowed slightly over the first interval. Outlined the main features of the type of growth in the last 8 years:
  - maintaining the trend of positive growth;
  - infusion capital in the economy, particularly in certain sectors such as real estate and land market;
  - maintaining a high level of consumption of the population, due to rapid growth in incomes, sometimes index of labor productivity growth, but in terms of recording a deficit of labor on large sections of the qualification and not least, the expected wage increase with the accession to the EU;
  - continue the development of services (trade, financial services and banking, construction, real estate intermediaries, etc.);

- deterioration of the contribution of exports to overall economic growth (from -4.6 to -6.4 percentage points, as shown in the Annual Report NBR), which led to growing imbalances in the country trade balance.
2. According to information provided by the National Institute of Statistics and National Bank of Romania in the annual publication "Romania in figures" and in the Annual Report for 2008, the main macroeconomic indicators continued to consolidate the positive developments in previous years, the fact fully illustrated by the annual rate of growth in 2008, which amounted to 8.3%.
  3. Services sector contributes 50% of the Gross Domestic Product training, keeping weight to a continuous growth in recent years. Also, it is notable contribution to the growing construction sector, with a value of 9.1%. Agriculture and industry sectors contribute less in 2006 than in GDP, with 6.6%, 23.5%, respectively.

In the report's conclusions on the Information Society in our country state that Romania is behind other countries in Central and Eastern Europe but there is still a rapidly growing presence of mobile phones, Internet use, the use of computers connected to Internet by companies and investment expenditures and equipment and the number of employees in companies using the Internet has doubled in the construction industry and has seen significant growth in trade. Contribution that ICT brings to economic growth is achieved by using a priority at the firm. Use of ICT is likely to stimulate the development of extensive and intensive the production of goods and services.

Regarding the extensive development, ICT offers the opportunity for Romanian companies to access new markets, on regional and global, or to promote and sell products and services electronically. Intensive development due to decreased production costs, management and disposal, due to the use of ICT, which can result in a significant increase in the productivity factors used.

Although Romania has decreased in recent years, the gaps on the Information Society by developing the ICT industry, the infrastructure (hardware, software, means of communication) and applications and services, penetration of information and communications technology has a quite low due to both a poor application, due in part to low purchasing power of population, education and ICT poor and low availability of infrastructure in terms of access and use of the price.



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