Heritage as an alternative driver for sustainable development and economic recovery in South East Europe

The Sustainable Local Development in Romania - Key Issues for Heritage Sector

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Abstract

The increasing interest for local development came amid global economical, social and political changes. The globalization and the international economic crisis, the increasing phenomenon of relocation of businesses, internal structures of large industrial groups, and institutionalizing local autonomy as a European principle made the discussions about local development to be the subject of interest to the academic world, but especially for policy makers. For Romanian public policy, the sustainable local development became a strategically tool to sustain the heritage sector (public and private) and constitutes the goals of national strategies on social and economical development. Our paper aim is to reveal the level of Romanian sustainable local development in the context of European principles applied and to analyze the impact at the local communities as an important means of valuing regional and local heritage. This vision of the community about its future development should be shared with all relevant actors at local and translated into a set of specific objectives and a clear action plan to provide good governance. The paper includes some explorative conceptual aspect focused on theoretical and practical analysis of sustainable local development, using the empirical data provided by the strategic documents and by Euro stat in order to respond to the following aspects: to highlight the scientific literature concerning the sustainable local development; to analyze the legal requirements (European and Romanian rules) of local development and heritage in Romania; to analyze from economical point of view the impact of local development and the implications on the local and regional heritage.

Keywords: development; sustainable; heritage; communities; local strategies.

1. Introduction

Sustainable development is a controversial concept, with lots of meanings. A classical definition of sustainable development was produced by the Brundtland report (named Our Common Future) in 1987 and implies the meeting
the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This definition is considered political fudge (Middleton et al., 1993) with the aim to gain the debate between social, economical and environmental issues. The sustainable development is a result of a link between the socio-economic issues and environmental problems to do, with the poverty and inequality about the healthy future of the humanity. From this point of view, the concept was named as unashamedly and anthropocentric (Lee, 2000). Despite all this debates, the sustainable development remains a strategically tools for the authorities at local, regional, national or global level as an interconnection between economy, environment and society (Hardi, Zdan, 1997). Even if this model was criticized like having a conceptual simplicity (Giddings, Hopwood, O’Brien, 2002), the sustainable development must be discussed as a concept at a border between people, environment and economy.

The sustainable development is based on five principles (Haughton, 1999):

- Futurity – inter-generational equity;
- Social justice – intra-generational equity;
- Bordering responsibility – geographical equity;
- Procedural equity – people treated openly and fairly;
- Interspecies equity – importance of biodiversity.

These principles give more substance to the idea of sustainable development linking the people and their needs with the environment and provide a useful basis for the different trends of this concept, including the heritage as a as a sum of visions, values, culture, people, needs, aspirations. For the present paper, the sustainable development is considered as a tool for the policy makers at local, national and European level to provide equity and to sustain the heritage sector. For our paper the heritage sector is interpreted as a sum of values of local communities about the good life, about the well-being one with each others, about how the authorities know to do the best to increase the standards of living. From this point of view, the local development strategy is a participatory tool that involves the entire community, and whose objective is to provide economic development. In most cases, local development strategy is a step in the long term, the future projection of the community. This vision of the community about its future development should be shared with all relevant actors and translated into a set of specific objectives and a clear action plan.

2. The framework of local sustainable development in Romania

In Romania, the concept makes its appearance with the emergence of territorial decentralization and de-concentration phenomena of public services. Even though in the literatures of our country the information on this concept is recent, local development policies existed before 1989, but in a different vision. The economic globalization, the international economic crisis, the increasing phenomenon of relocation of businesses, internal structures of large industrial groups, institutionalizing local autonomy led to increased interest in local development (Matei, Anghelescu, 2009). The local development is considered at the intersection of several areas of intervention, besides local economic policies and urban policies and the landscaping and other policies (Constantinescu, Sporis, 2006). The concept of local development is defined as a particular form of regional development, one in which endogenous factors are central (Coffey, Polese, 2005). In Romania, regulatory requirements on the organization and implementation of local development activities and state institutions authorized in this regard are contained in a series of acts occurring after 1989. The first regulatory matter was the local government Law no. 69/1991 concerning local public administration, organic law adopted prior to the occurrence of the act fundamentally. For reasons that require ensuring full compliance with constitutional and European original law was amended and supplemented by Law no. 24/1996, because in 2001, local public administration Law no. 69/1991, republished, to be replaced by Law no.215/2001(in effect today with some revisions). Powers conferred by the Law no. 215/2001 concerning local public administration to the authorities in the field does not solve all problems that arise in local communities, but by setting the five principles (autonomy, legality, responsibility, cooperation and solidarity), these problems can be more easily controlled and resolved. Another provisions concerning the local development were adopted through the Law no. 151/1998 on regional development in Romania and setting out: the institutional framework, principles, objectives, skills and tools of regional development policy in Romania. This law is the main instrument of governing this very important public action – local development. The distinction between local and regional development is not in the objectives contained in the underlying policies, but simply the level at which they are funded and
implemented. In the international law on local development, the main international document is the European Charter - "Exercise autonomous local power", adopted in Strasbourg on 15 October 1985. In it, the signatories consider that: local is one of the main foundations of any democratic regime, the right of citizens to participate in public affairs management, part of democratic principles common to all Member States of the Council and this right may be exercised in the most directly at the local level by local authorities empowered existence with real responsibilities can provide an efficient administration and closest to the citizens, the defence and strengthening of local authorities in the various countries of Europe represent an important contribution to building a Europe based on the principles of democracy and decentralization. International Paper also states that the exercise of public responsibility must rest preferably those authorities which are closest to the citizens, that have encouraged local community initiatives to solve any problems as concerns directly, that the local national economic policy entitled to the resources of their own that they may dispose freely. As such it is stated that at least part of the financial resources of local communities must come from royalties and taxes that they have the power to fix the limits of national laws and in those communities financially weak state must intervene vigorously to remove existing deficiencies. The sustainable development strategy in European Union was launched by the European Council in 2001 at Gothenburg and renewed in 2006 aiming to improve the well-being for the presents and future generation and increasing the quality of life. To support the aim of this strategy, the reports of Eurostat based on a set of socio-economical indicators (GDP per capita, the level of poverty, social inclusion, public health, demographic changes etc.) constitutes the base for the future policies. The Eurostat published three monitoring reports, in 2005, 2007 and 2009. These reports chart progress in the implementation of strategy and the key challenges at the level of member states. The report of Eurostat concerning sustainable development in European Union (2011 monitoring report of EU sustainable development strategy) from 2011 shows that the objectives of strategy provide a relative assessment of whether the EU is moving in the right direction. Creating a development strategy requires structural changes and local governance particularly where a strategic framework, namely a local development strategy can help organize it.

The need for local development strategies resulting from several reasons, including (Gercheva, 2011):

- A complex and multi-faceted feature of local development;
- Legal requirements;
- Efficient and effective management of business and local resources;
- Promoting democracy, decentralization and good governance at local level;
- Developing a common vision and long-term regional development and its alignment with national priorities;
- Establish dynamic partnerships.

Local development strategy comprises a set of mechanisms and processes that together provide a system for developing participatory vision and goals for local sustainable development in accordance with the local heritage (culture, visions, policies, common law etc.), and to coordinate the implementation and review. It also provides a framework based on the results, vision, goals, objectives, targets and metrics and methodology for social and economic integration. Strategy may not be a unique initiative, but it requires a participatory process underway, monitoring, learning and continuous improvement (Gercheva, 2011). An effective strategy for sustainable development meets the aspirations and capabilities of government, civil society and the private sector to create a vision for the future, and work tactically and progressively towards him. Identify and based on "what works" approach improves the integration between and provides a framework for making choices where integration is not possible. These local development strategies enable active coordination of development processes taking place in the territory, taking into account local characteristics, changes in the external environment and enable proactive approach, carried out in an innovative, regional development processes (Malton, 2003).

3. The local development strategy in Romania. Key facts and figures

In Romania the concept of local development strategy has found, at least so far, a little practical application for those involved in community development processes being used increasingly in the literature. Even here one can observe a certain reserve towards it, probably due to habit remaining reserves during local development was coordinated at the local level, based on a strategy to differentiate different development alternatives, but
communities fit into a general development plan drawn up centrally. Moreover, the general development plan targets achieved were fixed and did not think in terms of programs to be implemented and requiring a multidimensional approach to the problem concerned. Local development strategy goals are set general objectives, referring to the great quality guidelines defined by the leading corporate. These goals allow the community group leaders to establish their own vision of the future community. Therefore it is very important that members of the community to know the local development strategy goals. However, a qualitative assessment of future communities is sufficient, but sometimes quite vague. Therefore it is necessary to establish the goals initially set. This is achieved by the objective function. In the strategic horizon, the objectives will be achieved targets, measuring the possible failure of the strategic plan. We also need to be realistic targets set in terms of the capacity to support the communities and possible restriction for external environment.

3.1. The research framework

The goal is to give the city its inhabitant’s virtue and happiness, as the Greek philosopher Aristotle defined the role of the city (polis) in the lives of those who live it. Much later, the city seems to have become an amalgam for inexplicable problems, and its role as guarantor of townsfolk welfare is increasingly questioned. With urban issues, city administrators have tried to come up with solutions from various, only the last five decades the implementation stage in turn to the philosophy of urban reconstruction, vindication or regenerating. Recent years have seen a paradigm shift in urban planning, regional policy mechanisms initiated by the European Union by making a new philosophy of integrated approach to all problems in the same city unique integrated urban development process, and that it promotes a strong participation public decision-making process, assumes the role to give to the city the primordial existential essence: to be a safe, healthy and sustainable for all its inhabitants. With the integration of Romania in the European Union, it was necessary to establish local development strategies so that all administrative units in developed and less developed regions receive substantial funding for investment effort in the development of local or regional reach their expected efficiency and align others' communities in the European Union. Local development strategy is an action plan for medium and long terms that are set directions and fields that are oriented towards community development effort. It is characterized by at least seven main features of heritage: picture of the future, creativity, flexibility, activity, designed for action-oriented, change-oriented, sustainable earnings.

3.2. The purpose of the research

The research proposed an analyze of local development strategy for the period 2009-2014 in Iasi, Romania, with reference to the positive and negative results that led or lead local development strategy, solutions and directions for its efficiency. Iasi is the main urban centre in north-eastern of Romania, with a population of about 350,000 inhabitants, according to the census of 2011 and is the fourth largest city in Romania. Iasi is a major economic and trade centre; its main industries are metallurgy, medicines, textiles and food. The banking sector and the information they have gained momentum in recent years, many banks and software companies are present in the city. Also, Iasi is recognized as a university city, the oldest university from the country, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University (founded since 1860).

3.3. Research Methodology

To find the answer in the research based on purpose, we used appropriate methods to allow analysis of the situation on the ground and ultimately provide solutions for a more efficient development strategy. First we use bibliographic documentation by consulting numerous articles in professional journals on local development strategies of cities, respectively Iasi strategy, projects implemented, specific studies and reports about it. Some of these bibliographic sources were accessed through the Internet on the pages of local institutions. In the second step we used the analysis of the results included in the studies and reports of completed projects and finalizing that have been implemented since the implementation strategy.

3.4. Research Hypotheses

In this brief context of the emergence and amplification term local development strategy theme aims to provide
an analysis of the local development strategy in a particular city, using as a case study Iasi. In the action we started from a set of assumptions, which are presented below:

- Local Development Strategy of Iasi for the period 2009-2014 had a positive impact on the increasing the number of jobs;
- The local development strategy led to the creation and development of business support structures, technology transfer and promoting new industries, creative;
- The local development strategy has had a positive impact on infrastructure and territorial air;
- The local development strategy has had a positive impact on increasing the living standards of residents and ensuring the institutional quality assurance and environmental protection.

3.5. Specific objectives of the research-discussion

The raid carried out in the vastness of the field of local development, we propose four specific objectives of the research:

**Objective 1. The presentation of local development strategy of Iasi**

Local development strategy of Iasi is a plan to achieve strategic mission and performance goals, with the implementation stage of 5 years period, from 2009 to 2014. The overall objective of the local development strategy Iasi is *metropolis of knowledge, culture, economic competitiveness and performance services*, which refer to the transformation of Iasi metropolitan area of economic, academic and academic tradition, a community developed polycentric, a regional pole of knowledge and competitiveness. The strategic objectives of the proposed development for the period 2009-2014 refer to: increasing economic competitiveness through the creation and development of business support structures and promotion of new industries, creative; developing regional infrastructure and air; improving social services through the creation, rehabilitation and modernization of related infrastructure, to ensure a high standard of living of community; recovery historical and natural heritage to develop tourism potential; ensure environmental protection and quality in order to increase the standard of living of the inhabitants; creation and development partner structures between public and private entities border / transnational / interregional. Action Plan (2009-2014) for the metropolitan area of Iasi, involves partnership approach of the development on medium and long term. This partnership aims at a new offer opportunities for housing, recreation and relaxation for all the citizens, business opportunities, investments can provide more consistent than a city, location, academic and research institutions the most advanced in support of development, the only level able to address and solve an effective scale environmental issues, can mobilize and fundraise for a network infrastructure to promote sustainable territorial development.

**Objective 2. Activities and actions taken to implement local development strategy**

The strategy represents a broad range of activities planned and subsequently implemented to achieve objectives established in the medium and long term. It aims orientation organized efforts for the successful achievement of goals. In this respect, it helps to plan the necessary resources in scheduling activities and actions, the distribution of responsibilities in establishing the legal frame that carries those activities that will lead to achievement. Planning efforts and actions are dedicated to solving immediate problems, disasters likely to occur in the community or an opportunity to operate an economic advantage. Initiate planning process resulted in the forming of the work team, which will be composed of representatives of interest groups in the respective area of the local government and specialized consultants. Data collection and analysis were performed by the Iasi County Council together with civil society organizations, associations and others, with the specific actions: determining economic base of Iasi, assessing the structure and needs of the labour market, examining the opportunities and constraints economic development and local institutional capacity assessment. Most of the data collected were made directly from the developers of the local development strategy (municipalities and private companies). It may be noted that besides the implications for development agencies in these activities, it requires some cooperation with specialists in the fields for which these
local development projects are elaborate. They must be able to specify the technical and financial details to ensure the conditions for the implementation of projects, and to support local authorities, local development agencies to build local capacity for implementation of the programs included in the development strategy.

Objective 3. Analysis of the positive and negative outcomes of the local development strategy

By establishing and implementing the projects contained in the local development strategy, they have had a positive impact or a negative impact on urban and rural development. To attend these objectives the local authorities implemented some projects with impact on community level. The first project is conducted annually using Iasi City Hall, County Council and specialized companies through strategic objective is the development of creative industries fairs, exhibitors and international festivals. Through this project, Iasi year becomes more attractive for residents and tourists, increasing the value of European tourist town, which attracts additional income to the local budget. A major project for the local development of the city is Iasi International Airport Modernization which must be implemented in the period 2010-2014. So far this project has been achieved: upgrading passenger terminal, runway landing, and the certificate airport opened to international traffic, the opening of the Airport Travel Agency, a highly qualified working staff and an increase in the number of international flights. In 2010-2012 were initiated numerous projects to increase economic competitiveness through development of human resources. With the County Council, County Agency for Employment, business and academic seminars were organized to initiate those who want to start a business and built partnerships between research departments in the field of inventions and artificial intelligence centres research abroad. In the last two years the city has developed territorial infrastructure projects due to funding European funds. Projects were started: repave the main roads, paving sidewalks, modernization of water supply and wastewater. In the period 2010-2012 Iasi accounted for an increase in environmental quality and tourism through forestation and spatial planning, the creation of tourist information centre for the promotion of cultural heritage, conduct information campaigns on environmental protection and many other projects that led to urban development. With the strategy they promoted health and improving access to public services for child protection and youth in 2009-2013 by reducing the urban-rural disparities in the health and social services, making a circuit of medical caravans and development of training programs for specialists’ implications for the social services system. These approaches are inadequate for the development of health and social in Iasi. Identifying key issues in the analysis strategy is: poor training of those who carried strategy, the decline of farming, not using proper tourist potential and loss of traditional products, cultural heritage, youth migration to other urban and social services of poor quality. Implementation of projects with impact at the micro-region runs with movement difficulties due to lack of practice in partnership working and the lack of qualified human resources.

3.6. The results of research

To evaluate the results and effects are used a number of criteria and indicators for measuring the impact of local development. Set of criteria and indicators for measuring impact are set depending on the particular study area. The criteria for measuring impact are: the adequacy, effectiveness and consequences of the strategic plan. Following the implementation of the local development strategy in Iasi was a significant increase in the level of local development in certain sectors. The most significant increases occurred in territorial infrastructure, environmental and social. Were completed nine local development projects conducted by local budget financing and the European Union have had a positive impact on the city so far and 7 projects are being finalized (e. g. Agreement zone Ciric, Archimedes-clean and efficient public transport, Mobility management Scheme, Increasing accessibility to the economic and commercial centre of the Growth Pole etc.). All these goals to date have increased the city's image, relaxation and leisure activities and additional revenue to the state budget. Impact of road network development in the cultural, historical and tourist is positive so far. This is because: reducing urban pollution caused by the movement of vehicles through the rehabilitation of 16 roads; rehabilitation of 20,000 square meters of green areas; rehabilitation of 109 square meters of related pedestrian streets; rehabilitation of 3.629 km tramway in the street Copou-Triumph and Gabriel Muzicescu; purchase of 50 new buses equipped with air conditioning and GPS; support touristic sector by improving accessibility cultural and historical tourism objectives; creating jobs by starting the project; modernizing tourist route in the city that contribute to the brand image of the city as Cultural Capital of Moldova (the historical region of Romania where the city of Iasi is placed); completion of 10,409 square feet of bicycle lanes. The economic strategy led to positive results in most of the increase in work people instead of 106000-108165, thereby decreasing
the number of unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits to 15,260 people. By employing 2,000 people, the unemployment rate reached 5.16%. The quality of housing in Iasi increased both in terms of increasing per capita housing space and network expansion efforts water and gas on European funded projects started. The development and modernization of the international airport passenger terminal Iasi, increased number of flights, which are now able to process 150 passengers per hour for domestic flights and 100 passengers per hour for foreign flights using streams and separate waiting rooms for boarding distinct. Flow for domestic and externs arrivals allows a minimum waiting time of entry into the airport, and passenger baggage. Create tourist information centre and website led to a better promotion of the Moldovan capital value cultural, historical, economic and religious context of Europe, which allowed knowledge of the area and attracted tourists.

4. Conclusions

Local development strategies make it possible to conduct development processes taking place in the territory, taking into account local characteristics, changes in the external environment and enable proactive approach, carried out in an innovative territorial development processes. Develop strategies is one of the most important steps that support local and regional development processes, edifying medium and long term are directions and fields that are oriented towards the development effort of the village. In Romania the local development strategy has a low practical applicability, which is probably due to habituation remaining period it was coordinated locally but community fit into the overall development plan drawn up centrally. This development plan targets achieved were fixed and not thinking in terms of programming that would be put in place requiring a multidimensional approach to the problem concerned. Through research conducted in this paper we have identified and presented in a consistent, synthetic conceptual foundations of the local development strategy, the most important models used in local development and analysis of impact of the implementation of the local development strategy of the city of Iasi. A simple solution would be to streamline the strategy implications capacity of local actors to self-support and control their living environment in which they live. The capacity building includes: access to information, participation in local decision making, accountability of public institutions and capacity of local self-organization. Actions can take place in this regard are: strengthening the capacities of local initiative groups by attending City Council meetings, exposure to the local government issues and organizing public meetings that they are accustomed to participation in decision-making. Enhancing human capital action by organizing trainings in project management, development of micro-regional partnerships and the creation of mechanisms for local participation in the local public administration (better communication between public institutions and community) that the presentation of good practices in other communities in Romania and the European Union. Step description of the strategy and projects implemented on the website Iasi City Hall for information and promote transparency is a last resort for its efficiency.

References

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