

Demo-geographic characteristics

South development Region is located in the South part of Romania, with a surface of 34,453 km² (14,45% from the country' surface), composed by 7 counties (Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova and Teleorman). In the South, the region has an external border with Bulgaria. The relief is characterized by the predominance of the low altitude relief: plains and watermeadows-70.7%, hills-19.8% and about 9.5% mountains.

In 2004, the total population of the seven counties was of 3,342,042 inhabitants, which represented 15.4% of the total Romanian population. The population density is 97.0 inhab/km², a higher value compared to the national average (90.9 inhab/km²). The urbanization level is 41.4%, below the national average, because, except Prahova County, the majority of the population lives in rural areas.

South region had, in 2004, a settlement network composed of 43 cities (out of which 16 municipalities), 488 communes and 2030 villages. Most of the cities (27) have less than 20,000 inhabitants, most of them with a poor urban infrastructure, similar to the rural areas. There are only 2 cities over 100,000 inhabitants (Ploiesti and Pitesti). The territorial distribution shows a large concentration of the cities in Prahova county (14) and more reduced in Giurgiu (3).

Employment and migration

In 2004, the rate of the employed population was 35.4% of the region population, under the national average (38.0%), the highest values being registered in Arges (38.9%) and Teleorman (37.1%), in the other counties being comprised between 31% and 37%.

The employment rate by economic sectors at regional level indicates a high level of the employed population in agriculture (39.4%) but with a decreasing trend, and a low level of the employed population in industry (29.5%) and services (31.1%). The southern counties have mainly agricultural activities, with a high level of employed population in agriculture: Teleorman, Giurgiu (58.8% and 57.7%) and Calarasi (51.5%) Prahova and Arges have a high level of employed population in industry and services.

In 2004, the unemployment rate was 7.4% at regional level, with similar differences between the southern and the northern part, the highest unemployment rate being registered in Ialomita (10.4%) and Calarasi (8.8%) and the most reduced in Prahova (6.6%) and Dambovita (6.7%). The lack of jobs in rural areas causes both a massive migration towards Bucharest and the migration of young people towards Western Europe, therefor the villages and the small cities are depopulating.

Regional economy

In 2003, the regional GDP registered 1964.4 euro/inhabitants (2420.5 euro/inhab the national value). At county level, the highest values are registered in Arges (2550.9 euro/inhab) and Prahova (2282.6 euro/inhab), while the most reduced is registered in Calarasi (1449.2 euro/inhab). The essential characteristic of the region is represented by the partition in two sub-areas with different socio-economic and geographic individualities.

The high level of industrialization characterizes the northern part of the region (Arges, Dimbovita and Prahova counties), Prahova ranking first in the country, as it regards the industrial production. The main problems that characterize this area are linked to the industrial units decline, which generates a high unemployment rate. The closing of certain economic units in mono-industrial areas determined the development of serious social problems, especially in some mono-industrial urban localities: Mizil, Moreni, Plopeni, Urlați, Costești and Câmpulung Muscel.

The industry contribution to the regional GDP is over 30%, especially if is taken into consideration the share of the chemical and petrochemical industry (Prahova and Arges), machines, transport equipments, construction materials (Prahova, Arges and Dimbovita), textiles, confections and food industry. Ploiesti, Pitesti and Targoviste cities act both as growth development poles and as polarizing centers for new industrial activities, besides the existing traditional activities, including the foreign investments.

The southern part of the region (Călărași, Giurgiu, Ialomița and Teleorman) is traditionally underdeveloped, representing the second poverty area in Romania (the first being in North East Region). This area is characterized by the predominance of the population occupied in agriculture. Also, the component counties are characterized, as relief, by the predominance of plain. In the '70, the whole area supported an artificial industrial development. Currently, the area is affected by the severe impact of the transition process towards the market economy, through the closure of the majority of the representative industrial units. This situation characterizes all the county capitals and the neighbouring areas of the next cities: Turnu Măgurele, Zimnicea, Alexandria, Videle, Giurgiu, Oltenița, Călărași, Slobozia and Fetești.

The industry represents the most important economic sector of the region, if it is considered that the industrial enterprises realized 45.9% from the total regional turnover (2003). At county level, the highest industrial turnover is realized in Prahova (38%) and Arges (33.3%), the last county being Calarasi (4%). There are 11 industrial, scientific and technologic parks (which represent 30% of the total number of parks), 5 of them being located in Prahova County.

The agricultural potential of the region in general and of the southern part especially is very important (71.1% from total area is represented by agrarian land, out of which 80.2% arable land).

There are also important foreign investments in the Region: Renault – Pitesti, Holcim – Campulung Muscel, Samsung COS – Targoviste.

Infrastructure

Transport

The region has a well-developed public, European, national and county roads network, comprising 11,999 km (15.1% from the total length) and a railway network with 1703 km (15.4% of the national network). Danube, European fluvial corridor, facilitates the links of this region with other cities, which belongs to this hydrograph basin.

As it regards road transport, the region has a well-developed network, ensured by 5 European roads (E574, E81, E70, E85 and E60) and by the motorways A1 (București - Pitești) and A2 (București – Constanța, partially exploited), but only 29.1% of the total public roads are modernized. At county level, the highest rates of modernized public roads are registered in southern counties Teleorman, Ialomița, each of them with over 33%. These values are generated by higher rates of the national roads in the southern part of the region (over 23%), compared with the northern part (under 20%). In the northern counties (Argeș, Dâmbovița and Prahova), beside the national roads, which cross the counties, there is a dense counties and communal roads network (less modernized, compared with the national ones), compared with the southern part of the region. This explication is supported by the higher density of the public roads registered in Argeș – over 43 km /100 km², compared with the southern counties density (under 40 km / 100km²).

The region has a well-developed railway network, its territory being crossed by railway route I (București-Timișoara), II, III, IV, V and VI (it has a common route up to Ploiești), VII (București-Galați), VIII (București-Constanța) and IX (București-Giurgiu).

The region benefits from the advantage offered by the main European navigation river corridor, the Danube, but is less used both because of reducing the industrial capacity of the city-ports and the lack of the passenger navy transport.

Public utilities

The municipal streets have 3347 km length (14.27% of the national length), out of which 58.3% are modernized. At county level, the highest rate of the modernized municipal streets is registered in Dambovita (69.8%) and the lowest in Ialomita (42.8%).

The drinkable water for localities supply is ensured by surface and underground water, 29.7% from the localities benefiting from water system supply (out of which 43 cities). At county level, there are big discrepancies: for example, if Dambovita and Giurgiu have over 40% localities connected to the water supply system, Ialomita and Teleorman have under 10%.

The main characteristic of the water supply system, especially in urban areas, is the high level of the pipelines degradation and, sometimes, its under dimension, compared with the required water volume.

The wastewater sewerage networks are presented in 4.6% of the total number of localities, including the 43 cities of the regions, but most of them are underdeveloped, under dimensioned and degraded. Intra regional, only Giurgiu County exceeds the national average (9.05%), the others counties registering no more than 4.3%. The wastewater treatment is another major problem, generated especially by the obsolete equipments and technologies.

The existing natural gas network ensures the delivery to only 7% of the total number of regional localities and 70% of the cities. The territorial distribution of the localities connected to the natural gas network shows the obvious difference between North and South, the third northern counties concentrating 94.5% from the localities connected to the natural gas network.

The thermal energy distributed in centralized system exists mainly in urban centers. During the last years it declined because of the expensive cost of production and transport. Thus, the majority of the population prefers the individual heating systems, more feasible and efficient. In 2003, there were public heating distribution systems in 1.4% of regional localities, mainly concentrated in Arges and Prahova.

Green areas of the regional cities comprise 1773 ha (8.6% from the national average), meaning 13 m²/inhab, higher in Ialomita (20 m²/inhab) and lower in Giurgiu (only 3.6% m²/inhab).

Regarding urban transport of passengers, the region disposes of 26 km of tramways (in Ploiesti) and 20 km of trolleybus (Targoviste and Ploiesti), the entire rolling stock having 647 vehicles, out of which 82.3% are buses.

Environment

Due to the high level of industrialization and concentration of industrial pollutant activities, the region's north area is characterized by problems at the level of all environment components, having a negative impact on the quality of live and living conditions.

Regarding the water management, there are noticed the following disabilities:

- The inadequate technical stage of waste water treatment plant and the usage of obsolete technologies
- The region has important water supply sources (454 localities benefit of water networks, the distribution network having a length of 6,299 km). However, the water supply networks have an advanced usage level, the underdimensioned influencing the necessary of water supply volume
- 94 localities out of which 42 towns benefit of sewerage networks for waste water, most of them obsolete and underdimensioned in comparison with the current needs.

A special problem is the waste storage, the region having only a few adequate waste deposits that are located especially within the urban centres. So far, within the region there is not a complex and modern system, capable to realise the separation, processing, salvaging and elimination of sewerage, including incineration.

Education

The education structure in South Muntenia Region can provide for all levels of education, in 2004 being registered: 594 kindergarten, 1092 primary and secondary schools, 188 high schools, 12 vocational and apprenticeship education schools, 11 post high schools and 5 universities. 57% of the education units are located in Arges, Dambovita and Prahova counties.

The main problem of these education units is represented by the obsolete buildings and their low level of endowment, that do not allow the existence of optimal conditions for an adequate and efficient education process. Moreover, the hostels are insufficient for undertaking the pupils from rural areas and have a low level of endowment.

Health

The health public sector had in 2003 the following types of units: 58 medical clinics, 6 polyclinics and 63 hospitals. The number of health units is higher in Arges, Dambovita and Prahova counties, where there are concentrated more than 65% of the total number, due to the high percentage of population, 60,2% of the total region population being located in these counties.

A characteristic of the health system is the low level of medical staff with university degrees and the inadequate endowment with medical techniques and medicines. The infant mortality rate, one of the basic statistic indicators reflecting the quality of the health system, has the highest level in the country: 19.3 – alive born alive per 1000 births (16.7 – alive born per 1000 births – national average). The highest values are registered in Ialomita (24.9 per 1000births) and Calarasi (24.8 per 1000births) counties – reflecting the insufficient development of the health infrastructure especially in the south of the region, while Arges (15.8 per 1000births) and Dambovita (15.3 per 1000 births) counties have lower values, being more developed.

Social services

As an effect of the industrial restructuring, the region is characterized by a significant number of social problems: SE ranks the second after NE as it regards the number of single parent families (41642); the region has the oldest population in the country. Starting with 2005, 7947 children are protected in family type institutions (64.11%) or residential services (35.89%). At the end of 2004, there were 10443 children with disabilities, out of which only 2403 were benefiting from reintegration services. Arges and Ialomita counties do not have any provision facilities for social canteens or home care services.

Areas in difficulty

The industrial restructuring of the last 15 years generated the closing of some industrial units in mono-industrial areas, leading to severe social problems in the adjacent areas of the localities: Mizil, Plopeni, Urlați, Valea Călugărească, Șotânga, Costești, Stoienești și Câmpulung Muscel - in northern counties, but also in some localities in southern counties: Turnu Măgurele, Zimnicea, Alexandria, Videle, Giurgiu, Oltenița, Călărași, Slobozia și Fetești.

The economic-social problems appeared also within rural localities focused on mining industry, located in Subcarpathians area, some (Filipești and Ceptura) being declared in the past as problem areas in order to encourage the investments by offering fiscals advantages. Unfortunately these measures had a reduced socio-economic impact on the localities, still needing ample actions for socio-economic growth.

The fifth industrial restructuring area was identified within South Region. Located in North –West region, the areas include also the towns of Arges (Costești, Colibași, Câmpulung Muscel, Curtea de Argeș, Pitești and Topoloveni) and Dambovita (Fieni, Găești, Moreni, Pucioasa, Târgoviște and Titu) counties.

Development potential

South Region has an important economic development potential, differentiated between the northern and the southern parts of the region. Thus, in the northern part there are underground resources represented by oil and natural gas, coal, salt, which, through processing and trading could increase the added value in the region. On the other hand, in the southern part of the region there are large agricultural areas that can contribute to the specialized agricultural development, according to the local pedological conditions.

Regional tourism potential if capitalized in an adequate manner and respecting the principles of sustainable development, can essentially contribute to the social and economic development of the region. The most important areas with significant tourist potential are:

- Mountain resorts located in Prahova Valley – Bucegi massive, the tourist localities and the natural protected areas from the mountain neighborhood.
- Regional spa resorts (Slănic Prahova, Vălenii de Munte, Pucioasa, Câmpulung - Muscel etc) Danube, with a potential that can be valorized as an alternative to the mountain tourism, practiced in the northern part of the region.

SOUTH REGION

Indicators to characterize the development level and the economic potential - 2004-

INDICATORS	Region	Counties ¹						Romania
		AG	CL	DB	GR	IL	PH	
I. Population, employment, unemployment								

¹ AG (Arges), CL (Calarași), DB (Dambovita), GR (Giurgiu), IL (Ialomita), PH (Prahova), TR (Teleorman)

I.1 Total population (absolute figures)	3,342,042	647,437	318,588	538,126	288,018	293,102	829,026	427,745	21,673,328
Urban population (%)	41.4	48.1	38.9	30.1	31.0	45.5	50.9	33.4	54.9
Rural population (%)	58.6	51.9	61.1	69.9	69.0	54.5	49.1	66.6	45.1
Migration sold	-2,144	-426	-265	-164	545	-14	-549	-1,271	-10,095
I. 2 Employment									
Active population in total population (%)	38.2	41.7	34.5	39.7	32.6	36.7	37.3	40.4	40.6
Employed population in total population (%)	35.4	38.9	31.5	37.1	30.3	32.9	34.8	37.1	38.0
Employed population by economic sectors:									
Agriculture (%)	39.4	30.1	51.5	38.0	57.7	50.7	24.4	58.8	32.0
Industry (%)	29.5	37.6	21.4	29.0	15.4	19.2	39.4	18.1	30.0
Services (%)	31.1	32.3	27.1	33.0	26.9	30.1	36.2	23.1	38.0
I.3 Unemployment									
Unemployment rate by December 31 st 2004 (%)	7.4	6.8	8.8	6.7	7.3	10.4	6.6	8.0	6.3
Feminine unemployment rate by December 31 st 2004 (%)	6.5	6.6	6.3	6.0	6.1	8.9	6.3	6.4	5.6
Percentage of unemployed not benefiting from indemnities by 31 December 2004 (%)	54.3	35.9	73.0	57.1	71.5	67.1	35.1	72.5	59.3
II. Economic development									
II. 1. GDP / inhabitant (2003) – euro	1,964.4	2,550.9	1,449.2	1,794.6	1,290.5	1,956.4	2,282.6	1,518.9	2,420.5
II. 2. Labour productivity (2003) - euro	3706.8								4,625.3
II. 3. FDI (mil.euro)	1,273								15 040
II. 4. Business infrastructure (industrial, scientific and technologic parks)	11	1	-	2	2	1	5	-	36
II. 5. SMEs									
IMM/ 1000 inhab (No.)	13.6	16.7	12.3	10.1	10.6	11.7	17.1	10.5	19.3
IMM total (absolute fig)	45,306	10,833	3,912	5,434	3,060	3,447	14,184	4,436	418,499
Out of which: Manufacturing (%)	13.4	14.3	11.0	15.7	11.6	12.9	14.1	9.9	13.6
Constructions (%)	6.02	5.7	5.3	5.4	6.6	4.3	8.0	2.6	6.2

Services (%)	75.8	76.8	73.9	75.8	73.4	71.4	76.0	79.7	77.5
SMEs structure by size:									
Micro (%)	87.8	88.1	87.9	87.6	89.5	86.0	86.9	90.6	88.0
Small (%)	9.5	9.3	9.5	9.4	8.3	10.9	10.1	7.5	9.6
Medium (%)	2.6	2.49	2.47	2.85	2.15	2.98	2.92	1.84	2.4
Attractivity rate	20.5								
III. Infrastructure									
III. 1 Transport									
Public roads density (km /100 sqkm)	34.8	44.1	43.2	25.7	46.6	26.3	25.2	30.8	33.3
Modernised public roads in total public roads (%)	29.1	20.6	26.4	34.9	24.0	39.0	39.8	34.8	26.3
III. 2 Public utilities									
Localities with water supply network in total number of localities (%)	29.7	29.0	30.3	45.5	42.7	8.9	33.9	10.7	-
Localities with sewerage network in total localities (%)	4.6	3.3	3.1	3.7	9.1	4.7	4.2	2.4	-
III. 3 Education									
Number of schools	1,892	353	113	243	129	118	691	245	14,396
III. 4 Health									
Number of hospitals (**)	61	17	6	7	5	4	14	8	425
III. 5 Social services									
Number of institutions providing for social services	466	11	5	121	6	6	17	300	13747
III. 6 Tourism									
Accommodation units (no)	394	102	8	41	15	20	195	13	3,900
Existing capacity (places)	22,494	4,493	566	2,406	1,006	2,906	10,523	868	275,941
Functioning capacity (places - days)	6,437,757	1,162,154	197,440	785,716	213,153	625,006	3,227,991	226,297	53,988,640