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**The Strategic Planning of the Romanian Energy
Sector (2016-2022): Potential Contributions to the
European Energy Policy and Efficiency Instruments
(SUMMARY)**

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Summary

Introduction

In the recent history of the Romanian energy political discourses, a series of statements expressed the aim of developing the field both for national reasons (increasing domestic production), as well as regional (consolidating Romania as an alternative transit route for energy flows to the European Union), the Romanian state having the opportunity to position itself as a key player in the process of strengthening regional energy security. Thus, at the level of national strategic planning processes, 2016 marks the beginning of a new stage that aims to develop effective planning tools, which continue at the end of 2022. The paper aims to study the contribution that Romania can have in the European process of consolidating energy security, starting from the assumption that Romania enjoys, at this time, the opportunity to develop its status as an energy-producing European country, while also having an important role at the regional level.

What is the importance of the topic? Starting from several energy market key factors (such as the reduction of conventional energy resources share as part of the new sustainable policy directions, the growing demand, the energy crisis effects on prices, and geopolitical insecurity), the intensification of the energy threats of the European Union as a whole, but also of the Member States increases. Other strategically determining factors are the various types of threats facing European energy infrastructure, unprecedented competition across the supply chain, increasing and more efficient use of energy as a foreign policy instrument (such as the statements of the Russian Federation in the context of the war in Ukraine highlighting Moscow's influence on energy resources imported by the European Union)¹. In addition to national policies, the entire external context intensifies the contribution of the energy sector in the development process of Romania, respectively of its relationship with the European Union, being necessary for the definition and implementation of public policies that simultaneously support both vectors of development.

In the current context, the European Union is facing a growing demand for energy, volatile prices, and energy supply disruptions, effects that can be completely removed by implementing a coherent and effective European strategy. Thus, the security of supply becomes vital. More than

¹ „Putin says Russia can redirect energy exports away from the West”, *Reuters* (13 April 2022), <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-putin-energy/putin-says-russia-can-redirect-energy-exports-away-from-the-west-idUSR4N2W200P>.

that, eliminating the vulnerability of the European gas market is even more necessary as, in recent decades, the Russian Federation's strategy has focused on securing access to this market through the Western European channel and that of Eastern European states. According to numerous statements by Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto from 2018 until now, if Hungary is not supplied with gas from exploiting Black Sea reserves or other European sources, the only option for the Hungarian state will be to continue the Russian gas import line. This argument is very important, especially given that, in 2018-2021, the choice to continue with imports of Russian gas was, for Hungary, the most plausible and cheap option, as evidenced by the recent maintenance of this option. Under the long-term agreement (15 years) signed in 2021 with the Russian Federation, Hungary imports approximately 4.5 mm³ of natural gas per year².

Thus, the solution in the implementation process at the European Union level is to strengthen the construction as a single player from an energy point of view. Because of this, the research will also focus on the internal political level of the European Union by analyzing the institutional system of the energy sector from the perspective of the main objective of the European Energy Strategy in relation to external actors: a Union united in external energy threats, which has been repeatedly supported by the European Commission in order to create and strengthen a European Energy Union, laying the foundations for intense energy cooperation between Member States.

Romania can have a role in providing alternative energy resources to the European Union on two supply chains: the first concerns the opportunity for a regionally active role in determining an actual reduction in the dependence of the building on external sources by exporting any excess of exploited natural gas from the Black Sea. The second refers to the development of the Romanian energy sector, which is strongly interconnected with the sectors of the other Member States. To determine the steps to be taken, an analysis of strategic energy planning at the national level is needed, as well as the role of state institutions managing energy policy, with an exclusive focus on natural gas resources.

² „Hungary agrees on option for more Russian gas shipments, oil transit fees”, *Reuters* (11 April 2023), <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/hungary-agrees-option-more-russian-gas-shipments-oil-transit-fees-2023-04-11/>.

The Topic of the Research

Given the recent energy resources discovered, Romania can make a real contribution to the European energy security and efficiency sector. Also, the possession of new offshore gas reserves has constantly changed the dynamics of the energy policy challenges that Romania has faced in recent years, the objective of their capitalization being still untouched, which requires an analysis of institutional capacity. Based on the theory of national strategic planning, the research will briefly analyze the main features of the public planning framework while insisting on current effects.

The thesis starts with the role that Romania can play in the process of the European Union to improve energy security. Developments in the strategies of the European Union and Romania demonstrate the intention of each actor to improve his strategic planning process. In the context of various external threats, the building aims to gain independence from supplying the necessary energy resources. Romania also aims to strengthen its regional role, being the Member State with the highest degree of independence from Russian gas. Thus, both the energy policies of the European Union and those of Romania will be researched to determine the strategic areas on which future actions should focus, and a series of efficiency tools that should be implemented at the national level will be proposed.

Research Questions, Objectives and Assumptions

The central question from which this research starts can be defined as follows: What are the strategic planning capacities in the energy sector held by Romania, and how can they be improved? Thus, the research aims to highlight the level of institutional competence, analyzing Romanian public institutions' capacity for strategic planning in the energy sector. More than that, the assumption by the General Secretariat of the Government through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of milestone 402 on the implementation of a new system of strategic management and strategic planning in all ministries³ shows the need for an improvement in the current strategic planning system, which is strongly fragmented.

The secondary research questions will provide answers to the following issues:

³Secretariatul General al Guvernului [General Secretariat of the Government]. *Jaloane, ținte și investiții asumate de Secretariatul General al Guvernului prin Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență [Plans, targets and investments assumed by the General Secretariat of the Government through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan,], 2.* <https://cutt.ly/KJLZiXu>.

1) What strategic objectives do the European Union and Romania plan for strengthening regional energy security, and what are the implementation tools?

2) What is the energy sector's national strategic planning process, and what are the particularities?

3) What measures would support the improvement of the efficiency of the Romanian strategic planning so that Romania can develop its necessary skills and actively contribute to strengthening the energy security of the entire building?

Thus, the main research objective focuses on determining some tools through which Romania's strategic planning can be improved to reduce its energy security challenges. Adjacent, as a secondary objective, the Romanian energy policy's position at the European Union's level will be analyzed, compared to the degree of interconnectivity and energy interdependence between the member states. Also, from the point of view of the literature, the paper aims to analyze the Romanian energy sector, a less studied topic in Western literature.

A wide range of literature has been used to provide detailed answers to these research questions. It is noted that most of the existing literature on national planning of the energy sector does not highlight the case of Romania in particular.

The central working hypothesis is that the existing strategic planning process at the public sector level is not an efficient one, as demonstrated by the lack of forecasting actions/prevention and a strong delayed reaction to energy security threats (for example, there is still no national energy strategy that includes the level of possible exogenous contingencies). The scientific approach highlights arguments supporting that Romania's role in strengthening European energy security can be developed through the efficiency of national strategic planning.

Secondary hypothesis 1: Romania has real potential to actively contribute to creating/implementing/evaluating European energy policies through its expertise and the natural resources held.

Secondary hypothesis 2: Romania's inefficient strategic planning process has delayed the capitalization of national natural gas resources, with substantial adverse effects on investment decisions from the business environment.

Methodology

The methodology focuses on qualitative methods to highlight the efficiency of national strategic planning. The main methods are the *case study* and *SWOT analysis*. The case study applies

to the analysis of the Energy Union's integration process, the research of the offshore law file, and the effects of the Romanian strategic planning at the level of the Three Seas Initiative. The advantage of the case study method is given by the fact that it allows a more detailed and in-depth analysis of the studied phenomena, appealing to other qualitative methods such as document analysis (relevant drafts and legislative documents both at the level of Romania and at the level of the European Union), the latter having as research tool content analysis. At the same time, the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, respectively, of the opportunities and threats related to the institutional context in the Romanian energy sector (*SWOT analysis*) has the role of thoroughly researching all these aspects to determine and subsequently propose a set of tools through which the strategic planning process can be improved.

Regarding the parameters of the analysis, the research focuses only on natural gas resources to streamline the analytical process and draw specific and relevant conclusions. The reason for choosing this type of energy resource is that, from the perspective of owning natural resources, this level is much more relevant than oil. The analyzed period is established between 2016-2022, the year 2016 representing the beginning of an intense approach within the Romanian political discourse of exploiting new gas resources.

Regarding the scientific approach's self-assessment, the paper's limits come from the available literature on the Romanian energy sector. The available papers focus exclusively on energy resources and infrastructure development in the region rather than emphasizing elements of strategic planning.

A critique may insist that not all actors involved in the legislative process of energy policies have been integrated into the analysis, this aspect being a new research direction. The strategic planning process cannot anticipate all alternative possibilities and business planning tools are not fully applicable to the public sector. However, the paper argues that a complex approach to strategic planning, based on the experience of the private sector, emphasizes the elements needed to improve strategic planning processes in the public environment. These tools can be a starting point for shaping effective strategic planning, not being limited to the energy sector.

The main methodological difficulty comes from the fact that the study period overlaps with the present action plan, a critique being that the development of current events can be unpredictable and can spontaneously determine a contradiction of the sustained thesis. For example, European energy policy is entirely redefined, especially by strengthening the European Union's energy security vis-à-vis external actors. There are some trends in integration at the level of the European

institutions. However, the interests of state actors in the energy field are far too strong to lead to rapid integration at the Union level. The counterargument of such a critique is supported by the fact that an analysis of the current stage of the European and Romanian energy field is essential for efficient strategic planning of future actions.

The Theoretical Course

The paper begins with an introduction to the chosen issue, detailing the methodological aspects and offering a motivation for choosing the topic and the analysis topic. The first chapter addresses several currents and theoretical notions in strategic thinking and planning, energy security, and European integration theories to combine them into a theoretical model applied after scientific research.

The second chapter aims to analyze the perspective of European energy security, emphasizing the stage in which European integration has reached this field, a topic of substantial importance for the security of all Member States, including Romania. Thus, the studied period will start with the last decade from the previous century (relevant for the definition and implementation of European energy packages) until now. This characterization of European energy policy is necessary for determining the role that Romania can play in the process of strengthening European energy security (being one of the least dependent states in this point of view, with the potential to become, through interconnection projects and strategic investments, supplier of natural gas resources from the Romanian continental shelf of the Black Sea, but also a transitional state for non-EU resources). Thus, the question arises: How is the European energy system integrated, and what developments can be expected? How vital are national interests in energy policy? Can this be considered more governed by the nationalist policies of the Member States, or is there real integration at the Union level? The approach considers that full Community integration is a long and challenging process to implement, such an analysis being a priority for future adjustments.

The third chapter highlights Romania's importance for the success of the implementation of regional energy projects, the case study focusing on its contribution to the regional dynamics related to the Three Seas Initiative platform. Subsequently, it will define the stages of national natural gas market liberalization and the potential of recent offshore natural gas discoveries. Given that the Ministry of Energy is the leading institution responsible for defining energy policies, the organizational structure and its strategic planning process will be analyzed, insisting on good practice models at the European level.

The fourth chapter analyzes the effectiveness of strategic planning tools, highlighting the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to this level in 2016-2022. Given the importance of integrating a model of energy policies adapted to the specifics of the Romanian economy, a series of visions regarding Romania's economic development model will be highlighted, belonging to the academic and business environments. Finally, several tools will be determined to streamline national planning, proposing tools that can be implemented to achieve this goal. Thus, a series of clear directions will be highlighted that the Romanian institutions should follow to streamline national planning and strengthen the energy status at the level of the European Union.

The Current State of Knowledge in the Field at National and International Level

The concept of strategic planning appeared in management studies and was applied later in national planning. Initially, the American analyst Paul Bracken proposed the analysis of national security by analogy with concepts such as control over the competition, barriers to entry and exit, restructuring of the organization, emergence of new competitors, need to reallocate resources, market focus and not on product (by region and not on resources).

Generally, national thinking and planning in the Romanian space needs to be researched more. Applying the concepts of strategic thinking and strategic planning in the management area of the national energy field is a new way of research. There needs to be a comprehensive analysis of how strategic planning in the energy field is defined at the level of Romanian institutions. Moreover, the analysis of how Romania can stand out on the strategic energy map is important for the Romanian academic environment and the European one. Compared to other Western states, Romania is less studied from this perspective.

From the point of view of European policies, European energy policy instruments are a relatively new area of analysis, especially in the context of the recent creation of the European Energy Union in 2015, which determines the need for a topical analysis of integration processes.

Arguments and Conclusions

Owning considerable natural resources does not ensure economic development, the capitalization of resources being deeply dependent on the institutional capacity. The efficient

exploitation of natural resources can only be done in a favorable national context (both economically and politically). The quality of governance is a critical feature that determines different developments of similar national energy systems. In this context, the public policies have the role of ensuring favorable conditions for the capitalization of energy resources, outlining both the fiscal environment in which the activities take place (the taxation applicable to operating activities, processing, and marketing of natural resources), as well as the legislative environment (the regulatory framework applicable to these activities).

In an increasingly interconnected international context, effective national strategic planning is paramount. In the European space, the caution of strategic planning is more critical as other regional actors (other European Member States or the European Union seen as a unitary actor) can have much stronger indirect effects than in a case of energy cooperation. To streamline the energy transition process at the EU level, it is necessary to implement effective strategic planning tools, considering the effects of energy policies on complementary sectors.

The creation of the Energy Union is a new stage of European integration, with energy policies defined based on a holistic perspective, accumulating aspects of educating citizens and reducing energy poverty with environmental and industrial issues. Member States' economic development is based on economic models that correlate the energy transition with digitalization, technology, efficient management of state-owned companies, (re)professionalization of human capital responsible for strategic management, supporting the innovative sector, and most importantly, implementing an integrated planning process between local and national authorities.

Although the recent practice of isolated nationalist visions, concerns about ensuring energy security at the construction level have led to a real integration of the economic sector with natural resource management while increasing the degree of interconnection between national energy systems. The European Union's strategies integrate tools to combat the various external energy threats, with the building intending to ensure its energy independence by integrating national systems based on a common legal framework and developing renewable resources.

Romania has an energy advantage at the regional level through its onshore and offshore resources, representing a transit space for regional energy flows. Plans for developing transport routes in the Black Sea region (BRUA, Vertical Corridor, North-South Corridor) highlight that this area is vital to the EU's goal of diversifying natural gas sources.

To contribute to the EU's efforts to achieve energy security, Romania must ensure an efficient management of natural resources based on sustainable and competitive development. The main issues facing energy sector planning are currently outlined around:

- uncertainty (insufficient information and volatility of the European and international environment);
- regional interconnection level (unforeseen threats deriving from the national interest, having a significant impact increased in the context of new border conflicts);
- fragmentation of the strategic planning process, diminishing its efficiency.

While applying the concepts of strategic planning, it can be stated that the Romanian system has elements characteristic of the strategic planning process (there are departments within the ministries that have defined a series of strategic and assumed documents), but further action is needed to make it more efficient. The current model is characteristic of standard planning, noting a continuous practice of ignoring changing environments and not defining insurance strategies. It omits the possibility of alternative environments that can determine exogenous contingencies resulting from current events (such as war on the borders of Romania). Changes in national policy only occur after changes in the reference environment are more pronounced, reducing the efficiency of adaptation tools.

The period 2016-2022 is characterized by strategic planning not adapted to the national and European market context. At the level of the central administrative apparatus, a coherent policy for ensuring energy security has not been defined, and the decision-making process establishes only instruments of retroactive action. The reformulation of energy strategies was made according to the existing dynamics at the level of the ruling political class. Thus, starting from 2018, from a resource management perspective, the Romanian institutions transit towards medium and long-term planning. The strategic planning process results have improved in recent years due to the precise rules imposed by European standards (such as the requirements for defining programmatic documents). This process should be strengthened to eliminate any revisions suggested by the European institutions.

However, the vision of the academic environment demonstrates the failure to capitalize a maximum of benefits from the exploitation of offshore natural gas resources due to the maintenance of a non-competitive tax regime in the period 2018-2020. In an ideal scenario, a coherent legislative framework and a competitive fiscal regime determined 2018 a positive impact of 1.08% on the GDP growth rate (approximately 2.19 million annual euro) while ensuring intersectoral economic

development. Considering the four major categories of deficiencies defined in the Romanian literature, a series of tools can be determined to improve Romanian strategic planning, such as the inclusion of strategic planning and performance indices in the public decision-making process, the implementation of results-based development strategies, ensuring efficient implementation based on qualitative governance and a concordance between strategic planning and budgetary allocation to achieve the objectives set.

In conjunction with this conclusion, business associations have consistently supported the need to assess the impact of energy policies before their implementation, ensuring the national distribution network's modernization in integrating new energy technologies (hydrogen and biomethane) using available European funds. The business environment also proposes as a priority the support of vocational education, together with the professional reconversion of the categories affected by the energy transition, to professionalize the human resources necessary for the dynamics of the current energy sector. From a regulatory point of view, companies continued to articulate that state interventions in how prices are formed can negatively affect the development of investment projects.

Research demonstrates the need to introduce improved methods of strategic planning. These methods are needed to implement effective solutions to combat short, medium, and long-term challenges, focusing on restructuring the energy environment to achieve the strategic objectives (reduction of natural gas imports, ecological transition). Even if planning methods cannot eliminate future threats, effective strategic planning can significantly reduce their harmful effect through concrete, quantifiable measures.

Thus, how can Romania improve its national strategic planning? First, lessons need to be taken to develop a coherent and stable legislative framework. It is found that, at present, the Romanian energy sector is planned insufficiently from a strategic point of view, and the energy potential is not being reached. To eliminate these vulnerabilities, unitary planning at the level of all business segments integrates the energy sector as a component of defining all public policies. It is important to highlight the interdependence between national sectors and the social dynamics that affect the energy sector (policy to support vulnerable consumers, capping/compensating prices for household consumers). In addition, an integrated national strategy would align and combine all sectoral objectives while providing a better allocation of resources through both short-term planning and in the medium and long term (ideally, reaching levels of 5, 10, and 30 years).

National institutions must go beyond reactive planning and simple management of public policies, evolving towards institutional innovation and proactive interaction with the market. Ongoing collaboration with economic actors can ensure a coherent partnership by adjusting and transposing critical opinions from the business environment into the national legislative framework and the processes of institutional internal organization while ensuring their correlation with market prerogatives. From the perspective of economic market mechanisms, national energy actors are already facing external threats similar to economic actors: external competition (discoveries of other natural gas areas in Europe and worldwide), excessive government regulation (implementation of capping/compensation mechanisms), and unstable economic context (successive economic crises generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy price crisis and the war in Ukraine).

Concerning legislative stability and the perception of the business environment, it is recommended to define legislative frameworks that do not support state intervention in market mechanisms not to distort the expected strategic results. Actual market development takes place when no regulatory instruments such as clearing/capping schemes are used, at the same time as applying practical solutions to combat the possible adverse effects of public policies (for example, providing benefits to vulnerable consumers directly, following an in-depth assessment of the condition of vulnerable consumer, based on nationally established criteria). Currently, the capping/compensation scheme is applicable until March 2025, as there is no market impact assessment.

Moreover, regaining investor confidence and providing adequate prices to consumers is mandatory. The effects of the legislative process of the Offshore Law exemplify the fact that poor national planning can jeopardize national interests and delay project implementation, causing losses to the national budget. Also, for the real success of offshore projects, planning must ensure sustainable tools for the use of royalties to be established before operating activities and to be respected by all future governments to ensure coherence and waste low financial.

The trading of part of national resources on the national market can be ensured by streamlining the energy system and not by imposing restrictions that severely affect the market economy. As a result of the legislative restrictions of 2018, a year later, natural pricing mechanisms were already affected, with natural gas imports becoming cheaper than their production. Thus, the

volume of natural gas imports increased (about 6% only in the first half of 2019⁴), and further market liberalization imposed higher costs on domestic and non-household consumers.

Also, transparency on the stakeholder integration (business environment, citizens, NGOs, civil society, academia) would provide the necessary context for assessing the progress of public institutions. The timeframe allocated to public debates must be determined according to the importance of the draft law, together with the size and complexity of the proposed legislative texts, starting from a period of 10 days for legislative texts proposing minor changes to the regulation of some aspects in the energy sector and providing a minimum of 30 days for debating and improving proposals of programmatic documents. Increasing this range can give market players more opportunities to present innovative ideas and constructive criticism, significantly affecting the efficiency and coherence of the national legislative framework.

The governance of state-owned companies can be improved by applying public administrators of energy resources to the same responsibilities related to private economic agents. To eliminate the effect of creative destruction, inefficiently managed state-owned companies should be restructured, and their work should be closely monitored, along with encouraging the active participation of citizens in the planning, construction, implementation, and evaluation of energy policies. A critical aspect is given by the real reconversion of the coal industry (see the Oltenia and Hunedoara) plants and their connection with other competitive industries (such as agriculture). All information on managing these resources should be available, together with the results of evaluating these stages. Continuing the efforts to list these companies on the Stock Exchange can determine the efficiency of internal processes and the provision of new sources of liquidity.

Moreover, at the level of the national public sector, there is a visible lack of specialized human resources in all sub-domains of strategic planning, starting with the design of the national strategy, adjusting the strategic part to the budgetary limits and the international geopolitical context, and continuing with the continuous evaluation of the implementation process. Given that the expertise of the human resource involved in the implementation of the green transition is vital for the actual development of the energy sector, the importance of defining public policies focused on professionalization is noted, retention of specialists and inclusion of resources made available

⁴ Comisia Națională de Strategie și Prognoză [The National Strategy and Forecast Commission], *Despre situația producției și consumului de gaze în România Securitatea și profitabilitatea sectorului* [About the situation of gas production and consumption in Romania Security and profitability of the sector], 8, https://cnp.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Studiu_Gaze_CPE.pdf.

following the transition from polluting to non-polluting fuels. Promoting the diversification of analysis centers in the energy industry can be a complementary solution for ensuring the import of innovation and expertise in the public system.

From a budgetary point of view, a multi-annual allocation of investments related to strategic projects can prevent the lack of financial resources characteristic of the implementation phases. The one-year budget allocation harms the results because it depends on the annual budget restructuring and involves a segmented planning process each year, using more resources.

Although there are a multitude of EU instruments that provide non-reimbursable funds, a few issues continue to stop the effective absorption by the Romanian authorities. European directives must be transposed into national law in a timely manner to ensure consistency of rules and standards. The effective implementation of programmatic documents (PNRR, PNIESC) must be complemented by the promotion of decarbonisation projects, especially given that the multitude of European financial instruments increases competition between Member States, providing the resources needed for accelerated development. Better absorption of these funds leads to the adjustment of the national energy mix according to the energy transition directions, the Romanian energy sector enjoying the opportunity to combine two or more renewable energy sources (solar, onshore, and offshore wind, hydroelectric). As tools to support investment projects in the energy sector, it is recommended to remove administrative barriers, special taxes and establish clear policies, with real benefits on increasing security of supply and meeting climate goals.

Externally, the updating of the European Gas Directive during Romania's presidency of the EU Council, the statement from Sibiu (May 2019), and the success of the Romanian representative in introducing the eligibility of gas projects for subsidy under the Fair Transition Mechanism underline the powers of the central administrative apparatus to manage political files of European importance. It is necessary to continuously promote Romania's energy interests at the level of the European institutions, especially in times of crisis. During the period studied, the Russian Federation used the advantage of its energy resources to influence the policies of European states dependent on Russian deliveries. Moreover, even though Ukraine received EU candidate status in July 2022 (being in the process of adapting the market to European standards, the regional context

led Transgaz to abandon the second interconnection project with Ukraine through the Gheraiești pipeline – Dolhasca Siret⁵.

The strategic objective of interconnecting the national energy system with European infrastructure is being translated into reality by Transgaz through its ambitious investment project. In addition to the existing connections with the Republic of Moldova (Iași-Ungheni), Ukraine (Isacea-Negru Vodă 1), Hungary, and Bulgaria (BRUA), the project provides for interconnection with Serbia through the Recaș-Jimbolia pipeline (with a completion deadline of 2024)⁶. Despite delays in the execution of projects (see BRUA I pipeline, Onești-Gherăiești gas pipeline), they have been completed. In addition to completing national infrastructure development projects, it is also necessary to eliminate any delays in the political sector, affecting competitiveness with other competing pipeline networks. An eloquent example is the current transformation of Turkey into an energy hub for Russian gas, with the TurkStream pipeline proposing a triple flow compared to the BRUA for feeding southern European states.

Following the SWOT analysis, the studied period highlighted fragmented legislation composed of temporary solutions that deal with the effects and induce new challenges for stakeholders without providing medium and long-term predictability. The need for defining a comprehensive national energy strategy has been noted, with no mechanisms for turning weaknesses into strengths and protecting against possible vulnerabilities while stimulating domestic production and effectively implementing diversification plans. However, Romania enjoys many opportunities that can determine a rapid evolution of the energy sector through the simultaneous development of several types of renewable resources.

In the process of defining public policies, public actors must ensure compliance with the principle of decarbonizing industrial processes and support economic actors through sustainable measures, integrating the energy resources of the future (green gases, hydrogen, offshore and geothermal wind energy) in an efficient system that encourages the active participation of stakeholders and the professionalization of specialists.

In conclusion, the proposed solution for the efficiency of the Romanian energy sector is given by an overlap of energy policies (exploitation of existing resources and exploration of new

⁵ SNTGN Transgaz SA, *Planul de Dezvoltare a Sistemului Național de Transport Gaze Naturale 2022 – 2031* [The Development Plan of the National Natural Gas Transport System 2022 – 2031], 63, <https://www.transgaz.ro/sites/default/files/Downloads/Planul%20de%20Dezvoltare%20al%20Sistemului%20National%20de%20Transport%20Gaze%20Naturale%20pentru%20perioada%202022-2031-%20revizuit%202023.pdf>.

⁶ Idem.

reserves, development of energy infrastructure, increasing energy efficiency, and implementing new technologies) with fiscal policies (financial support for private sector implementation of green principles based on a competitive tax regime) and economic policies (restructuring of energy companies state, supporting the development of complementary industries to the natural gas sector), together with a qualitative restructuring of the administrative apparatus (limitation of the responsible authorities, streamlining stakeholder collaboration procedures and establishing corporate governance control mechanisms). Finally, it is necessary to create strategies from a proactive perspective that anticipate the possibility of threats and provide timely intervention tools. Creating strategic planning standards applicable to all public institutions would provide clarity and universality.

The proposed efficiency tools are a starting point for defining better articulated strategic documents based on capitalizing on the strengths of the Romanian energy system and constructing measures to reduce the appearance of adverse effects as much as possible. Given the complexity and interconnection of the energy field with other sectors, the paper envisages researching the general aspects encountered in the practice of the last six years. A possible impact assessment on the application of these instruments may be a future research direction, especially given that specific measures related to them are being implemented.

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