



European Network for
Rural Development

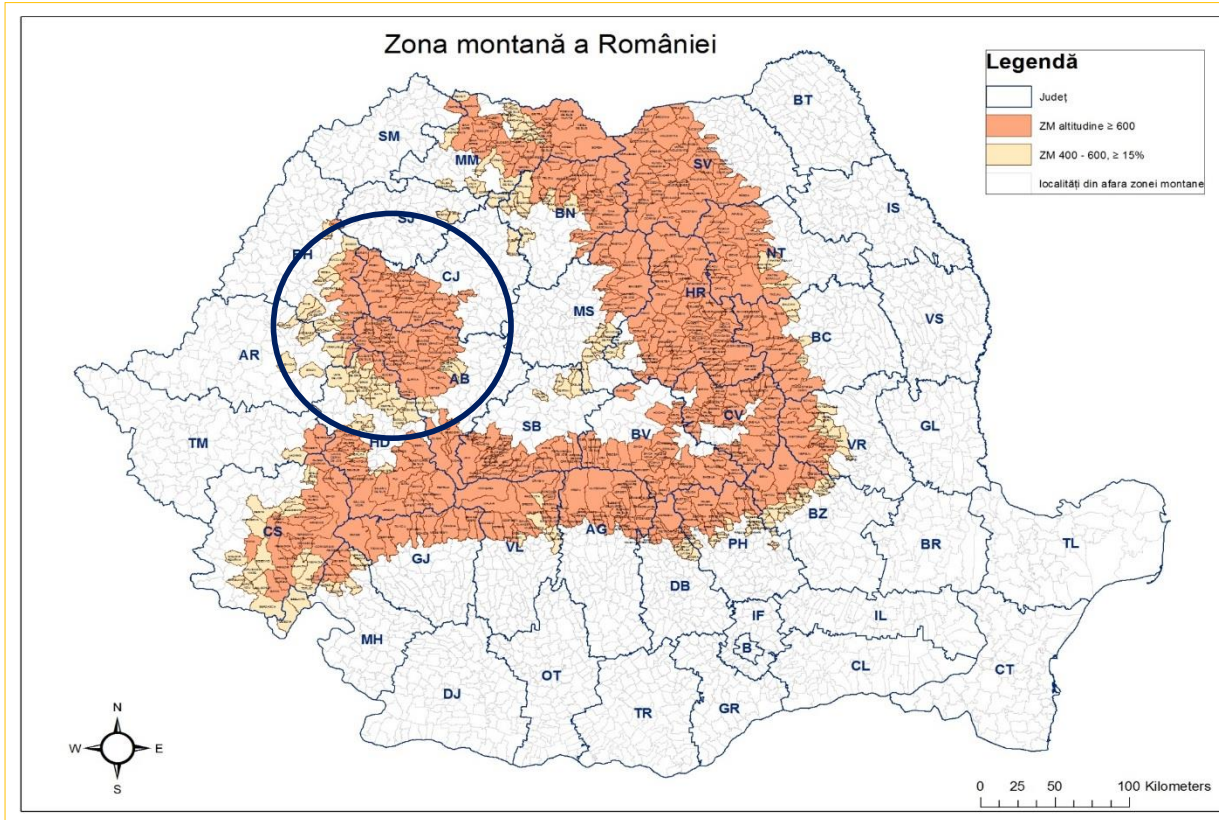
Fighting depopulation in Apuseni Mountains area in Romania

Brussels – 05.21.2019



#RuralDepopulation

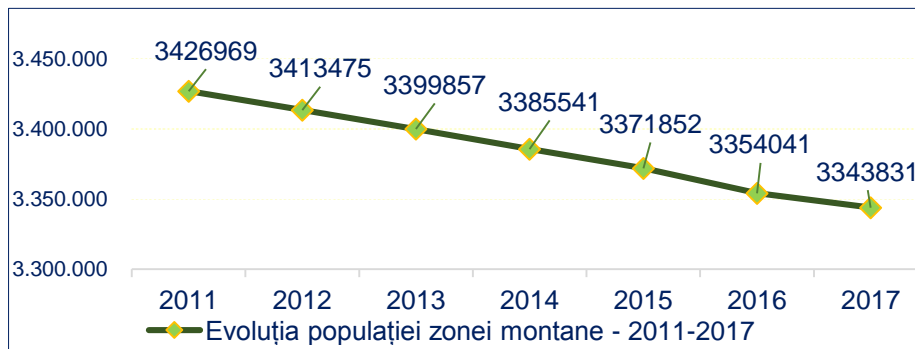
Apuseni Mountains area key facts



Source: MARD 2018

- The most inhabited mountainous region of Romania
- Total area of 14.513 sq. km.
- 553.200 inhabitants
- 176 administrative units
- 6 counties
- Predominant rural area: only 17 urban administrative units
- Low population density: 38 inh. / sq. km vs 90 inh. / sq. km. national mean

Apuseni Mountains area main challenges



- The tendency of young people to leave the mountains area;
- Accelerated exit of farmers; farm and land abandonment;
- Poorly developed infrastructure
- Predominant rural area with reduced number of jobs and limited prospects for employment
- Agriculture based mainly on wood exploitation, grazing and livestock production
- High isolation degree
- Insufficient valorization of natural and cultural potential
- Existence of micro-zones with high degree of poverty that requires integrated pilot programs

Apuseni Mountains area

Disadvantages	Advantages
Smallholder farmers with low productivity	Traditional quality products
Harsher and riskier agri-climatic conditions; climate change	Unique natural resources: high value pastures, medicinal plants and herbs, fruits and berries
Weak developed transformation of primary products from farms	Mountainous pastoralism
Weak logistic infrastructure	Cultural landscape
Hindered access to markets	Potential of social innovation
High-age structure of farmers	Low cost of farmland and real-estate
Traditional know-how farming	Strong social cohesion and local cooperation

Apuseni Mountains area local initiative



- Intercommunity Development Association “Moții – Țara de piatră” was created
- 5 county councils: Alba, Cluj, Hunedoara, Arad, Bihor
- 86 mayors are members
- 746 localities represented
- Approx.. 450.000 inhabitants represented
- Bottom-up approach

Objectives for mountainous agriculture and higher level:

- Protection and conservation of natural resources;
- Ensuring a balanced density of population in mountainous areas;
- Creation and conservation of quality jobs;
- Creation and protection of access infrastructure;
- Putting in place a **territorial strategy** for catalyzing specific economic activities
- Implementation of an agriculture-centric economic development program, that will combine economic, social and environmental development Elements.

Integrated Territorial Development at the initiative of local communities



To achieve his stated objectives, the Intercommunity Association “Moții – Țara de piatră” is looking at a wide range of agriculture-centric on and off farm investments for:

- Improving produce handling / market access logistics;
- Improving quality and safety of agricultural products;
- Realizing community-based investments to enable economic rural infrastructure;
- Improving communal grasslands and pastures;
- Management, aggregation and processing of medicinal plants from mountainous forests;
- Other investments which can improve the rural economic dynamic in the Apuseni.

Use of the tools made available by EU, as **ITI and CLLD**, for 2021-2027 programming period, is the right path to follow for the Association.

Integrated Territorial Development: where we are / next steps



- The Intercommunity Development Association is discussing with the World Bank to get support as Reimbursable Advisory Service (RAS) for strengthening the Association's capacity;
- RAS will support preparation for use of the ITI, CLLD and for the programming period 2021-2027
- An integrated program as a pilot is targeted

Proposal:

- For the 2021-2027 programming period DG Agri and DG Regio should ensure integrated ITI type dedicated funding for mountainous areas
- The Association is ready to propose a pilot project for Apuseni mountains financed from the technical assistance of DG Agri & DG Regio



Thank you for your attention!