

greenACT

PREFACE

GreenACT is a 20 months' project designed to enhance ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION and AWARENESS of YOUNG PEOPLE through the organisation of SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME to familiarize young people with the idea of environmental citizenship, based on the fact that the future depends on each and one of us by acting responsibly and positively towards our environment and developing sustainable solutions for addressing environmental challenges. In a period where Earth faces the consequences of climate change and global warming crisis and the need for mitigation of climate change is emerging, Green-ACT aims to support further these YOUTH INITIATIVES and raise more awareness in the 6 countries, by educating young people on environmental issues, inspire them in developing a firm ecological mind-set, and invite them to have a positive impact in their communities as active agents.

The partnership is composed of 6 partners from 6 countries: Romania, Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Portugal

Furthermore, it aims:

- To promote the idea of establishing SUMMER SCHOOLS for raising young people's environmental awareness;
- To set up the GreenACT MOVEMENT (a network of young activists) for coordinating their actions and engaging citizens;
- To build/increase the capacity of partner organizations to take action regarding the reduction of waste in the partner countries by encouraging local communities to recycle and reuse.
- To equip youth workers with new sustainable environmental skills in order to empower more young people;
- To facilitate brainstorming on challenges and possible solutions of topics such as alternative forms of socio-economy, biodiversity and food production, sustainable production and consumption, transport, etc.

The National Report template will be developed in each partner country with the purpose of presenting young people's knowledge and perceptions and the gaps in Environmental policies in each partner country. The following report is going to be based on the results gathered from the questionnaire and the desk research that were conducted in each partner country.

The National Report template follows the below given structure, proposed by the Intellectual Output leader partner, D.G.T. Association, in order to allow an easier comparability of reported information and outcomes across GreenACT partner countries and includes the following chapters (that each will have 3 subchapters)

:

- Chapter 1: Survey findings based on the environment issues and protection in Romania
- Chapter 2: Desktop research results detailed as well as the background research on the policies in Romania
- Chapter 3: Conclusions and further impact on a national level in Romania

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN ROMANIAN	5
INTRODUCTION	6
1. Survey findings on the topic of environment protection based on the answers of young people in Romania	7
1.1. Survey findings in Romania	7
1.2. Future impact of those findings and knowledge of the young population in Romania	12
2. Desktop research results detailed as well as the background research on the policies ROMANIA	13
2.1. Desktop Research in Romania	13
2.2. Background research on the policies in Romania	14
3.CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FURTHER IMPACT	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the already taken important steps in terms of implementing policies at a national level, there is still a long way to go, as proven both by the Questionnaire assessed to Romanians, as well as the already developed Desk Research. As shown from the Desk Research, the main issues that the Government and the Ministry have to deal with are caused by the lack of consistent financial support, faulty implementation of certain policies, laws or legislations, by not following the already given guidelines that insure a proper and sustainable implementation and a proper administrative capacity.

Despite the fact that significant EU funding has been made available to improve the situation in a variety of environmental sectors, it appears that there is still much space for improvement in terms of administrative capability and project planning, implementation, and prioritization. As a result, despite the enormous demands in the environmental area, there is a risk of money being lost due to either decommitment or reallocation of funding to other priorities. Low efficiency characterizes public investment, notably in the preparation and prioritization of projects.

Regarding the best practices in Romania, in correlation to policies, action programs and initiatives, according to the Environmental Implementation Review Report, Romania has managed to make some progress in 2019. In the West sector through the adoption of the National West Management Plan in December 2017 and the setting up of a National Waste Committee to strengthen and better coordinate actions in the sector. Further actions are needed to meet the EU targets and develop sound projects. When it comes to the Water Legislation sector, even though there have already made some noticeable changes, there is still room for improvement in terms of the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the quantity and quality of drinking water. Several green infrastructure projects have come to fruition.

Connect Carpathians – Enhancing landscape connectivity for brown bear and wolf through a regional network of NATURA 2000 sites in Romania is a notable example. The project, which spans from September 2013 to February 2019, aims to improve landscape connection in a western Romanian natural corridor.

In terms of the survey findings, our team managed to gather 50 eligible completed questionnaires. All people fit into the age range of 18 to 30, being more man than woman as respondents. As questions, they were easily accessible for everybody, no matter their level of knowledge or scholar, as they were all answered. The questions were meant to target 3 main aspects of an individual's life, as well as to focus on their knowledge over the national and European policies, laws and implementations. The survey was a success, as it can represent a reliable source of information for the ongoing project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN ROMANIAN

În ciuda pașilor importanți deja luați în ceea ce privește implementarea politicilor la nivel național, mai este încă un drum lung de parcurs, dovadă atât din chestionarul adresat românilor, cât și de Desk Research-ul deja dezvoltat. După cum se arată în Desk Research, principalele probleme cu care guvernul și ministerul trebuie să se ocupe sunt cauzate de lipsa unui sprijin financiar consistent, implementarea defectuoasă a anumitor politici, legi sau legislații, prin nerespectarea orientărilor deja date care asigură o implementare adecvată și durabilă și o capacitate administrativă adecvată.

În ciuda faptului că s-au pus la dispoziție fonduri UE semnificative pentru a îmbunătăți situația într-o varietate de sectoare de mediu, se pare că există încă mult spațiu de îmbunătățire în ceea ce privește capacitatea administrativă și planificarea, implementarea și stabilirea priorităților de proiect. Drept urmare, în ciuda cererilor enorme din zona de mediu, există riscul pierderii banilor, fie din dezangajare, fie din realocarea finanțării către alte priorități. Eficiența scăzută caracterizează investițiile publice, în special în pregătirea și prioritizarea proiectelor.

În ceea ce privește cele mai bune practici din România, în corelație cu politicile, programele de acțiune și inițiativele, conform Raportului de revizuire a implementării mediului, România a reușit să facă unele progrese în 2019. În sectorul vestic prin adoptarea Planului național de gestionare vest în decembrie 2017 și înființarea unui comitet național de deșeuri pentru a consolida și coordona mai bine acțiunile din sector. Sunt necesare acțiuni suplimentare pentru a îndeplini obiectivele UE și a dezvolta proiecte solide. În ceea ce privește sectorul legislației în domeniul apei, chiar dacă au făcut deja unele modificări vizibile, există încă loc de îmbunătățire în ceea ce privește punerea în aplicare a Directivei privind tratarea apelor uzate urbane și cantitatea și calitatea apei potabile. Mai multe proiecte de infrastructură ecologică s-au realizat.

Connect Carpathians - Îmbunătățirea conectivității peisajului pentru ursul brun și lupul printr-o rețea regională de situri NATURA 2000 din România este un exemplu notabil. Proiectul, care se întinde din septembrie 2013 până în februarie 2019, își propune să îmbunătățească conexiunea peisagistică într-un coridor natural din vestul României.

În ceea ce privește rezultatele sondajului, echipa noastră a reușit să adune 50 de chestionare eligibile completate. Toți oamenii se încadrează în vârsta cuprinsă între 18 și 30 de ani, fiind respondenți mai mulți bărbați decât femei. Ca întrebări, ele erau ușor accesibile pentru toată lumea, indiferent de nivelul lor de cunoștințe sau de erudiți, deoarece toate acestea au primit răspuns. Întrebările au fost menite să vizeze 3 aspecte principale ale vieții unui individ, precum și să se concentreze pe cunoștințele acestora asupra politicilor, legilor și implementărilor naționale și europene. Sondajul a fost un succes, deoarece poate reprezenta o sursă fiabilă de informații pentru proiectul în curs.

INTRODUCTION

The following National report was based on both the Questionnaire conducted in Romania and on the Desk Research. The Questionnaire in cause contained around 37 questions split into 4 sections: personal information, personal actions, local activities and national and EU laws and policies. The Questionnaire was centered around nowadays environmental problems, questions on the same topic, with the purpose of both getting the level of knowledge of the participants, as well as raising awareness on the used topics for the less informed people that took part in it. The last part of the Questionnaire also focused on some policies implemented on the European Union's level in order to also test the participants' knowledge on a bigger scale, not only on national one. The Desk Research was based on the outcomes of the Questionnaire, as well as on researches and policies conducted on national level through time. The Desk Research was realised after a research conducted on national level, which resulted as the following: even though Romania has taken a lot of important steps in implementing policies, there still are some considerable gaps recorded, creating some big and harsh challenges for the Government and the Ministry of the Environment such as the lack of financial support, faulty implementation of certain policies, laws or legislations, the improper follow-through the already given guidelines and the lack of a proper administrative capability and project planning. Both the Questionnaire and the Desk Research will be further explained below in this National Report.

1. Survey findings on the topic of environment protection based on the answers of young people in Romania

Key findings of Chapter 1:

- Development of the questionnaire
- Personal aspects and knowledge
- Community lifestyle and actions
- National and EU laws and policies

1.1. Survey findings in Romania

The survey got 50 answers, out of which 52% were men and 48% were women, all of them aged between 18 and 30. Survey's questions tackled 3 main points of an individual's life, as well as their knowledge when it comes to policies, implementation and laws on both national and European level. The survey was based on 3 sections, personal, community and national/european level. Each section then pinned down questions targeted to some specific areas of life. The Questionnaire was developed out of the need to know the level of environmental knowledge on each partner country of the targeted group in order to create a database, later to be used for the Desk Research and the National Index. By the creation of this database, we were able to produce a more accurate flow of information to sustain the later on developed reports. The participants were selected randomly in order to have a wider range of answers, as they come from different backgrounds, different levels of education, different areas of the country and different workplaces. The Questionnaire was spread among the young adults using social media, mainly sending it directly to people, in order to avoid the situation where people would just simply ignore it, as not a lot of them are interested in environmental related things.

The first section focused on personal aspects, personal knowledge, as well as personal habits or behaviour in terms of ecological aspects, actions that they do, as well as beliefs that they have. The first few questions focus mainly on the behaviour part, a concrete example being "how often do you sort your waste at home?" where the majority (32%) used number 3 from the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "never" and 5 being "always". Another example to sustain the topic was "do you think that climate change affects your life?" where people opted for numbers 3, 4 and 5, using the extremities of the scale as: 1 being "strongly disagree", while 5 being "strongly agree". As the last question of this section, we asked the participants to give us a small explanation on why they think climate change affects their lives too, in order to see if they are aware or not and to what level they do realise the importance of the above mentioned issue.

The second section focused on their communities, behaviour and the concrete activities that are done on a micro level. As punctual questions, we asked the participants if they are aware if there are any recycling points in their cities or if their town has drinkable tap water, where the majority offered us a positive response, approximately 86%, respectively 82% of them. We have also asked the participants to

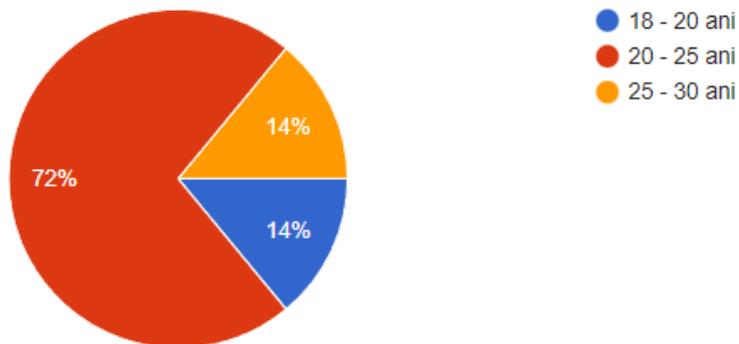
pick the top 3 ecological problems they consider that might happen on their local level, where the majority of the answers were the soil/ground pollution, meaning the incorrect or faulty disposal of garbage in public areas and air pollution, followed up by the fact that there aren't too many green areas in the communities. We have also asked them to explain their choices and the majority of the answers were centered around the existence of human beings, urbanisation or activities that people do. In another question, we asked more precisely who they thought was responsible for the local problems, where the majority (35%) replied with "people's activities through urbanisation". This section also focused on ecological knowledge of the community, how they think it could be improved and who would be the most successful in having a bigger impact on the community.

The last section of this questionnaire focused on both national and European Union level of knowledge on ecological topics, laws and policies. We started by asking them to select the top 3 ecological problems that they consider to be the worst on national level, where the participants replied mainly with "illegal deforestation", "air pollution" and again soil/ground pollution, meaning the improper disposal of garbage on mountain paths, sea shore or public places. This time we have asked them to write 3 solutions for the above mentioned problems, some of them focusing more on penalties/fines for the people that do any kind of harm to the environment, followed up by offering educational programs to residents when it comes to their behaviour and how it affects their surroundings. We have asked the participants if they think that their country applies some policies from the European Union in terms of environment protection based on circular economy, climate changes, preserving the natural capital, as well as quality of life and health assurance, where the majority picked number 2 on the scale, where 1 means totally disagree and 5 means fully agree.

Below you can find some concrete examples of questions and their answers from each section of the questionnaire. We have tried to make the questions as user friendly and as approachable as possible for everybody, in order for the participants with a lower environmental level of knowledge to not feel overwhelmed by the difficulty level.

Vârsta

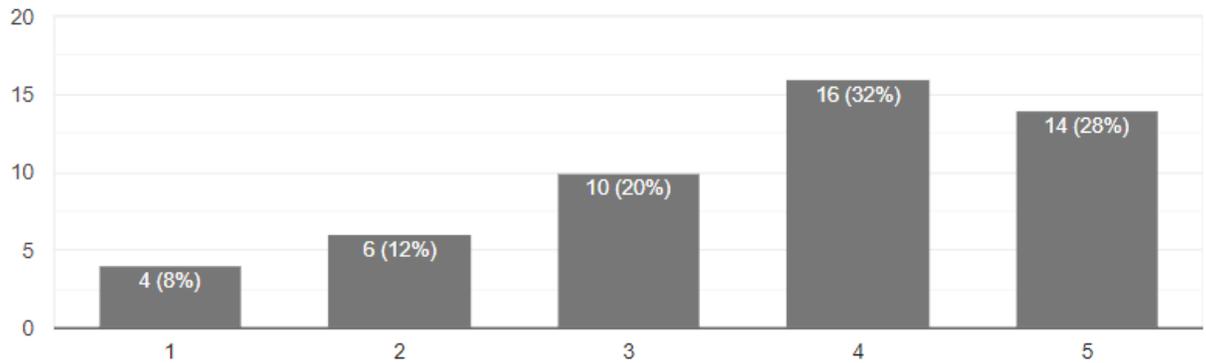
50 responses



The above graphic shows the age allocation for the participants that undertook the Questionnaire. The majority of them (72%) are between 20 and 25 years old, followed by 18-2- and 25-30 years old people.

Cât de des îți sortezi deșeurile de acasă?

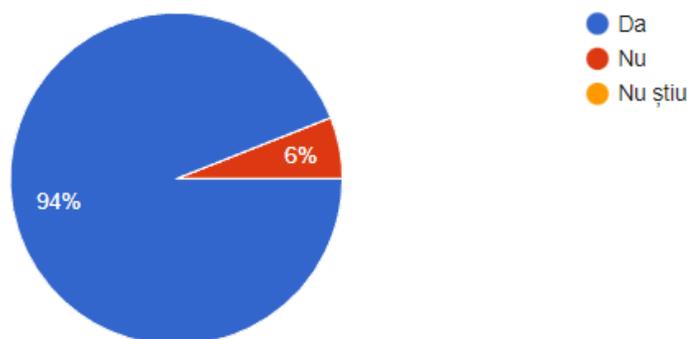
50 responses



The above graphic shows the answers given to the question “how often do you sort your home waste?”, where the participants had the option to pick a number from a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means never and 5 means always. The majority opted for number 4, meaning frequent.

Orașul tău are containere separate pentru deșeuri?

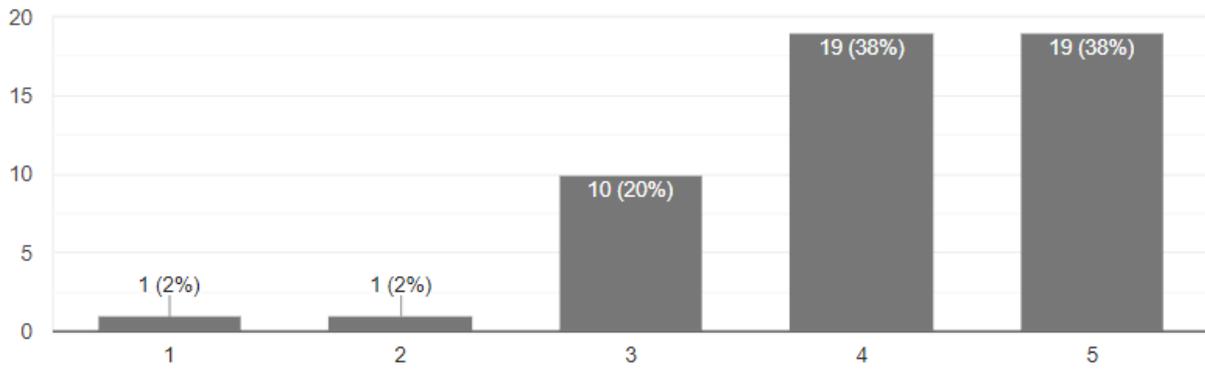
50 responses



The above graphic shows the result of the question “does your town have separate recycling containers for waste?”, where the majority of the participants (94%) gave a positive answer.

Cât de importante crezi că sunt cele 17 obiective de dezvoltare durabilă pentru țara ta? Mai multe informații despre acestea găsești aici: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

50 responses



The above graphic shows the results of the question “How important do you think that the 17 sustainable development goals are for your country? More information about these SDGs <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>”, where number 1 means unimportant and number 5 means very important, surprisingly the majority of the participants opting for number 4 and 5, meaning that they either have heard before about the 17 sustainable goals, either they have realised their importance after reading about them.

1.2. Future impact of those findings and knowledge of the young population in Romania

The survey was conducted, as previously stated, with 50 participants from Romania from different age ranges, different backgrounds, areas of the country, as well as different workplaces/professions in order to achieve a more accurate overall look of the national perspective in terms of ecological and environmental problems.

The majority of the participants already had, as proven by their answers, a slightly higher than average level of knowledge when it comes to environmental issues, laws, policies, behaviours and generally speaking awareness of their surroundings, their lives impact and improvements. The participants already had a sense of empowerment in regards to the changes and beneficial adjustments that can be done on a national level, as shown in the last part of the second section, as well as on the last section of the Questionnaire.

When it comes to future impact, hopefully the participants that had a slightly lower level of knowledge realised the gaps that they have and they will try to improve them. When it comes to the participants with a better level, we strongly hope that they will later on try to aim for an even better level, or even take concrete actions when it comes to environmental issues. As stated by some participants in the last part of the questionnaire, where we asked them to give us a feedback or any suggestion that they might have, we have received replies such as “was a pretty good experience, however it has bought a red flag when it comes to the acknowledgement of the environmental problems” or “a good questionnaire that makes you aware of the problems that our country is facing when it comes to environmental issues and how little we are informed and aware of it”. Most likely, as a positive outcome of this survey, the people that participated will try to overcome themselves by showing interest on different environmental topics.

2. DESKTOP RESEARCH RESULTS DETAILED AS WELL AS THE BACKGROUND RESEARCH ON THE POLICIES ROMANIA

Key findings of Chapter 2:

- Legislations, policies and laws
- Policies implemented
- Impact of those policies.
- Brief budget allocations

2.1. Desktop Research in Romania

Although Romania has already taken some important steps in terms of implementing policies at a national level, as developed in the desktop research, there still exist some gaps.

Some of the biggest challenges that the Government and the Ministry of Environment have stumbled upon are the lack of consistent financial support, faulty implementation of certain policies, laws or legislations, not following the guidelines all the way through and not having a proper administrative capability in order to properly sustain the implementation process of each policy.

Despite the fact that significant EU funding has been made available to improve the situation in a variety of environmental sectors, it appears that there is still much space for improvement in terms of administrative capability and project planning, implementation, and prioritization.

Regarding the best practices in Romania, in correlation to policies, action programs and initiatives, according to the Environmental Implementation Review Report, Romania has managed to make some progress in 2019. In the West sector through the adoption of the National West Management Plan in December 2017 and the setting up of a National Waste Committee to strengthen and better coordinate actions in the sector.

Further actions are needed to meet the EU targets and develop sound projects.

When it comes to the Water Legislation sector, even though there have already made some noticeable changes, there is still room for improvement in terms of the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the quantity and quality of drinking water.

Several green infrastructure projects have come to fruition.

The project, which spans from September 2013 to February 2019, aims to improve landscape connection in a western Romanian natural corridor.

2.2. Background research on the policies in Romania

These policies are easily accessible to everybody, whereas the main source of documentation came from the internet, from reliable sources.

As stated in the 2017 EIR report, there are still difficulties to be resolved in terms of administrative capability, and this can be seen in many environmental sectors.

The fact that Romania, despite only joining the EU in 2007, is one of the countries with the highest level of environmental violations, mainly in the areas of waste and wastewater management , and air pollution , indicates that implementation remains the main challenge.

The legislation's implementation on the ground remains a difficulty, owing to a lack of planning, coordination, and enough financing, among other factors.

In numerous sectors, notably waste management and waste water treatment, the lack of effective law is an issue.

Romania is urged to make better use of EU funding to address these issues, as well as to enhance the coordination of its administrative procedures and to guarantee that environmental initiatives are adequately prepared and prioritized.

Overall, legislation has been implemented at a slow pace.

The implementation of projects, including environmental projects, has been severely hampered due to insufficient planning for land acquisition, utility relocation, delayed/contested tendering procedures, and general contract management difficulties caused by a lack of administrative and technical capacity.

The Commission chose Irish specialists to assist their Romanian colleagues since Ireland had effectively overcome a comparable crisis in waste management approximately 10-15 years ago.

The Irish specialists shared their knowledge with the Ministry of the Environment, as well as at a workshop with representatives from the National Environmental Protection Agency, the National Environmental Guard, and county councils.

Furthermore, the Irish specialists gave guidance on how to tackle the problem strategically and effectively manage the process.

Romania has appointed responsible authorities for genetic resources and implemented fines for infringements of the EU ABS Regulation, which transposes the Nagoya Protocol's mandatory compliance procedures into the EU legal system.

Romania has yet to submit its first report to the Commission under the ABS Regulation.

The present institutional framework, according to Romania's Department for Sustainable Development, is not suitable for the implementation and monitoring of SDGs .

Existing funding shortages in sectors like waste management, green infrastructure, and biodiversity are causing delays in the proper implementation of EU environmental laws and regulations.

According to the Commission's 2018 "Early Warning Report," the country is at risk of failing to meet the 50 percent municipal trash recycling objective by 2020. Recycling and resource efficiency are still poor in Romania, and a large number of substandard landfills must be closed and rehabilitated.

The effective conservation and protection of Natura 2000 sites is required for the implementation of the Nature Directives.

The Natura 2000 network in Romania needs an adequate administrative capacity structure as well as up-to-date information and data.

Romania is currently failing to meet the requirements of the Directive on Urban Waste Water Treatment.

According to the most recent reporting, just 2.5% of Romania's waste-water load was collected in compliance with the Directive , with six agglomerations meeting the secondary treatment criteria and only one meeting the more rigorous treatment requirements.

By the end of 2013, 189 agglomerations had failed to meet the collection criteria, and almost 200 had failed to meet the treatment standards set out in this Directive.

While Romanian legislation fully mirrors EU environmental criteria, its implementation on the ground is hampered by a lack of planning, coordination, and enough money, among other factors.

According to the Environmental Implementation Review, Romania made significant progress in environmental protection in 2019:

- in the waste sector, with the adoption of the national waste-management plan in December 2017 and the setting up of a National Waste Committee to strengthen and better coordinate actions in the sector.

Further actions are needed to meet the EU targets and develop sound projects.

- to meet the standards set by EU water legislation.

There is scope, however, for further improvement with regard to implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the quantity and quality of drinking water.

According to The Environmental Implementation Review the most important are:

- Rural Development EAFRD funds total EUR 3.252 billion under the national rural development program, accounting for 40% of the entire budget for environmental measures.

The Rural Development Programme has a sound intervention logic that connects to its contribution to environmental legislation implementation.

Romania introduced new sub-measures under its agri-environmental commitments in 2018, aimed at protecting agricultural lands that are important feeding grounds for the Lesser Spotted Eagle , ecological refuges on arable land for common bird species, and agricultural lands that are important protection areas for the Great Bustard .

- The EUR 224 million available for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for 2014-2020 contains more than EUR 168 million for allocation to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund .

Romania had secured agreements for EUR 1.2 billion for CEF projects by the end of 2017.

- Since the program's inception in 2014, Romania has benefited from Horizon 2020 financing. As of January 2019, 343 participants had been awarded a total of EUR 55.5 million for projects related to environmental challenges under the Societal Challenges work programs. Climate and biodiversity expenditure is evident across Horizon 2020, in addition to the work programs described above.

Projects accepted for funding in all Horizon 2020 working programmes in Romania included EUR 44 million for climate action and EUR 6 million for biodiversity-related initiatives until December 2018. .

- The LIFE project 'Connect Carpathians – Enhancing landscape connection for brown bear and wolf through a regional network of NATURA 2000 sites in Romania' aims to improve landscape connectivity for brown bear and wolf.

- The European Investment Bank is a European EIB loan to Romania in total of almost EUR 10.4 billion¹²⁴ between 2013 and 2017. The EIB group invested EUR 1.31 billion in Romania's economy just last year.

In Romania, the EFSI mobilized more than EUR 652 million in January 2019. This is expected to result in an additional EUR 2.7 billion in investments¹²⁶. GreenFiber International SA, a producer of recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate, will receive a EUR 7.5 million EFSI loan from the EIB.

- Environmental funding at the national level In 2016, Romania spent EUR 1.064 billion for environmental protection, a 33.4 percent reduction from 2015¹²⁷. Waste management operations received 47.4 percent of these subsidies .

Wastewater management received EUR 233 million while pollution abatement received EUR 294 million .

Between 2012 and 2016, the general government spent EUR 6 120 billion on environmental protection.

3.CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FURTHER IMPACT

The National Report came as a mix between the Questionnaire and the Desk Research, both conducted on a national level amongst people aged between 18 and 30. The Questionnaire was mainly centered around 3 important sections as follows: personal aspects and actions, community actions and both national and European Union level of knowledge on ecological topics, laws and policies. The survey contained questions easy to understand, in order to give the opportunity to the participants with lower awareness and knowledge level to answer it, without feeling anxious or concerned about their level, but also to make them realise that they can improve themselves on the used topics. Besides testing their knowledge, the survey also had the purpose to raise awareness amongst the participants on the ecological problems our country is facing.

The Desk Research was based on a template applied to all partner countries in this project, filled with national aspects concerning environmental issues and acknowledgement. The already mentioned report focused around the policies, laws and their implementation on national level, as well as on how they were found and how reachable they are to the public. The Romanian Desk Research was easy to conduct, as the majority of the information was easy to find, however, it has unfortunately brought to the surface a lot of faults, inequalities and bad aspects on some already existing policies, or even the lack of them or misimplementation.

The above mentioned two reports formed the already treated paper, the National Report.