

# The Social – Economic Evolution of Prahova County

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## Abstract

*In Romania, the administrative structure comprises a regional and a local level. The regional level comprises 41 counties and the local one is split into 265 of cities, out of which 84 municipalities and 2,688 communes.*

*Each development region includes several counties. The development regions are not territorial-administrative units, they do not have legal personality, being the result of a free agreement between county and local councils.*

*“That is interregional and intraregional disparities and imbalances noticed in the economic development of all countries have occurred during history as a result of an uneven geographical development. Some parts of the national territories have been neglected or have impeached a certain delay compared to regional development”<sup>1</sup>.*

**Key words:** *regional development, economic and social disparities, sustainable development*

**JEL Classification:** *O10*

## Introduction

Prahova County set out “as priority developmental areas the development of the transport infrastructure, environment, economic and social infrastructure, development priorities which are concentrated on the sectors eligible for structural assistance. The strategic goal is represented by sustainable economic, social and balanced development of the county, by reducing disparities (between the urban and rural areas, between urban centers and adjacent areas, and within cities, between areas attractive to investors and the unattractive one) and by increasing the economic and social cohesion, by increasing the county’s inhabitants’ prosperity and standard of living”.<sup>2</sup>

“Through the regional operational program 2007-2013 (Priority Axis 1 - Supporting sustainable development of cities - urban poles of growth) “The Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova” has been created”<sup>3</sup>.

The three pillars of sustainable development of the territory of the Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova have the basis on the physical social, economic and environmental infrastructure,

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<sup>1</sup> I u h a s , V . , *Dezvoltarea economică regională*, Editura Emia, Deva , 2004.

<sup>2</sup> *Planul de dezvoltare durabilă a județului Prahova în perioada 2007- 2013*.

<sup>3</sup> *Planul integrat de dezvoltare al Polului de Creștere Ploiești – Prahova*, Chapter 3.

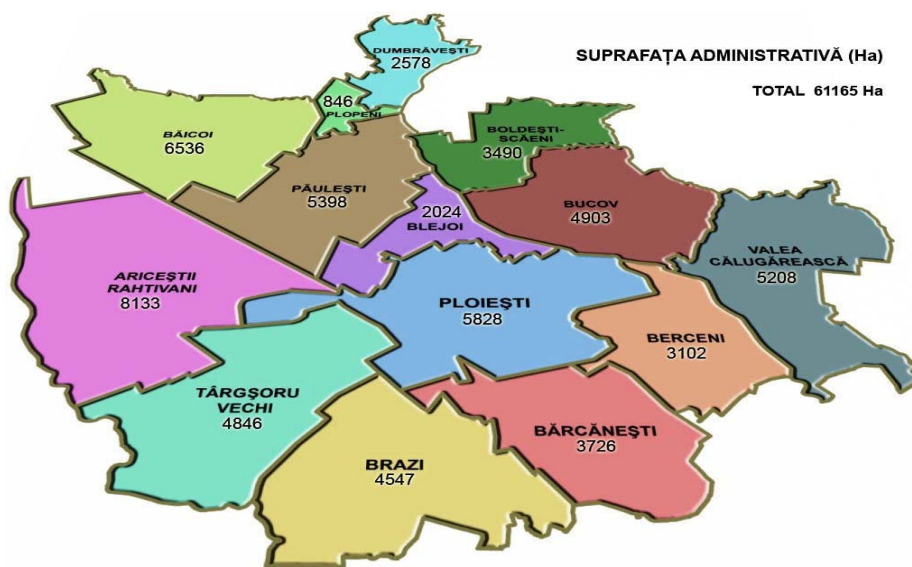
funded by the Regional Operational Plan, Sectorial Operational Plans and the National Plan of Regional Development, other public and private sources.

For the development of this pole the following<sup>4</sup> are to be achieved:

- road infrastructure in the conditions of Pan - european Corridor IV, but also to make traffic easier (which reduces the degree of pollution) and to attract new business within the territory pole;
- sustainable development of the business environment (to attract new investments in the field of renewable alternative energy - green energy);
- social rehabilitation of the infrastructure: to provide physically or economically disadvantaged people services and utilities, decent living conditions, health services etc.

The Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova is located in Ploiești and consists of an “urban center” represented by Ploiești municipality and “its zone of influence”, composed of 3 cities and 10 communes with 58 villages<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding the profile of neighborhood network, the Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova has the following composition:



**Fig. 1.** The administrative – territorial composition of the Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova

Source: County Council Prahova

The Agency for Regional Development South has registered by March 2012 885 of projects which are part of the Growth Pole Ploiești – Prahova.

For three of these projects financial assistance has been received, projects shown in the table below.

<sup>4</sup> *Planul integrat de dezvoltare al Polului de Creștere Ploiești – Prahova* – Chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Planul integrat de dezvoltare al Polului de Creștere Ploiești – Prahova* – Chapter 1 –

Table 1. Projects that received funding

No.	Project	Beneficiary	Budget (lei)	
			Total	Non-reimbursement assistance
1.	Increasing the traffic capacity by means of the link road between DN 1 and DN 1B, through the development of the belt county DJ236, in the northern part of Ploiești city	Prahova County	43.912.185,38	27.278.828,22
2.	Rehabilitation/modernization and specific equipment of the Emergency Center “Cireșarii” Ploiești – special assistance is provided for 50 children in difficult situations	Administrative-territorial Unit Ploiești	8.684.387,97	6.768.453,68
3.	Building the Ploiești Vest municipality Park, including driveways and specific utility network	Ploiești	93.684.950,15	70.739.838,97
<b>Total – lei -</b>			<b>146.281.523,5</b>	<b>104.787.120,87</b>

Source: ADR SUD

At the same time, the town of Băicoi will sign the first contract for the modernization and specific equipment of the Care and Support Center disabled adult people in Liliești.

## Demo-geographic Features

Prahova county is located on either side of the 45<sup>0</sup> parallel, in the South - East of Romania, being bordered in the north by Brașov county, in the east by Buzău county, in the West by Dîmbovița and in the south by Ilfov și Ialomița counties.

The administrative residence of the county is *Ploiești municipality*, as it is one of the most important cities both in the county and the country, lying at the shortest distance from the capital (almost 60 km and 45 km from the largest airport in Romania - the International Airport “Henri Coandă” Otopeni).

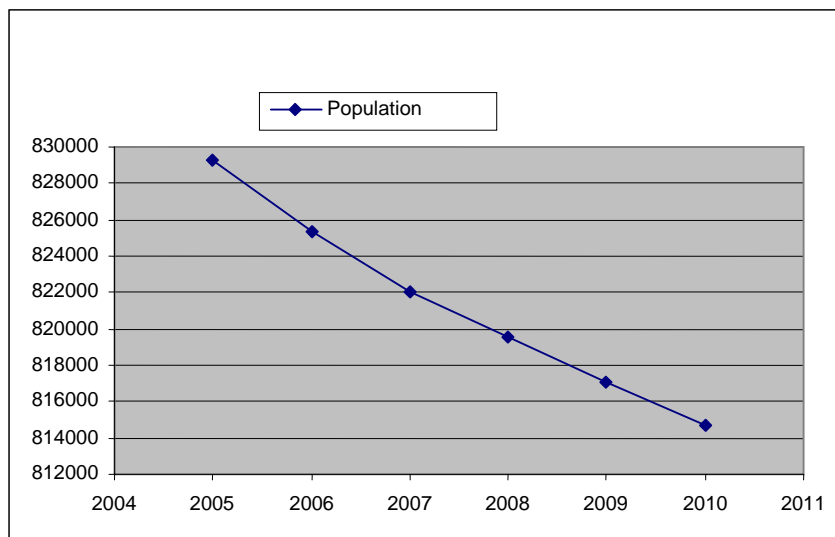
It is known as “the black gold capital”, the city being an old center of oil industry, having four refineries and other industries related to this branch.

Prahova county has an area of 4,716 kmp, which represents 2% of the country’s territory.

*The administrative structure* of Prahova county consists of two municipalities (Ploiești and Câmpina), 12 cities (Azuga, Băicoi, Boldești-Scăieni, Breaza, Bușteni, Comarnic, Mizil, Plopeni, Sinaia, Slanic Prahova, Urlați and Vălenii de Munte) and 90 communes.

## The Population of Prahova County

The population of Prahova county on January, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 was of 814,689 *inhabitants* (see graph no. 1). Compared to the county’s surface, the population density is 172,4 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>.

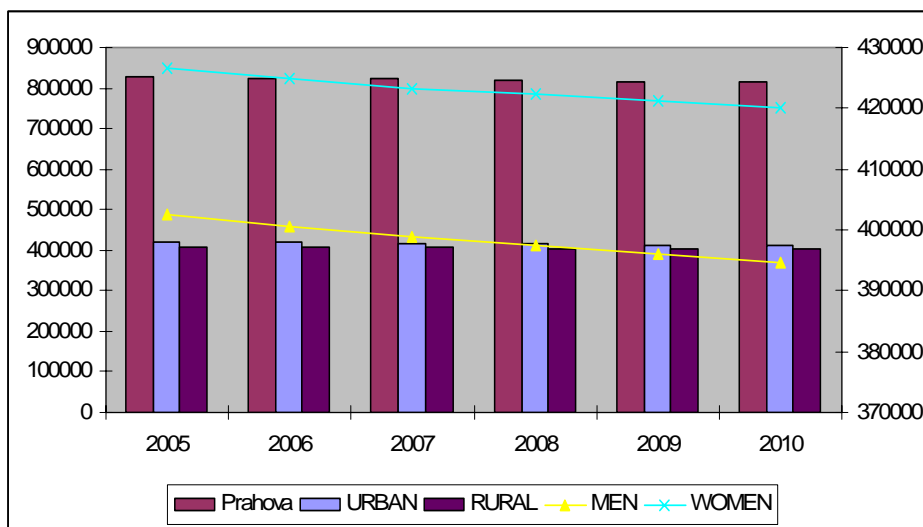


**Graph 1.** The evolution of Prahova County's population

Source: author's own representation

Urban areas are inhabited by 409,996 people, and 404,693 inhabitants live in rural areas, the degree of urbanization being of 50.3 % (in Region South-Muntenia, of which Prahova county is a member, rural area population is predominant, as it is about regions with large plain areas, which need agricultural activities).

Prahova county population is mainly represented by females (51,56%), as far as sex distribution is concerned, which means that the ratio female/male is 100 to 93 (see graph 2).



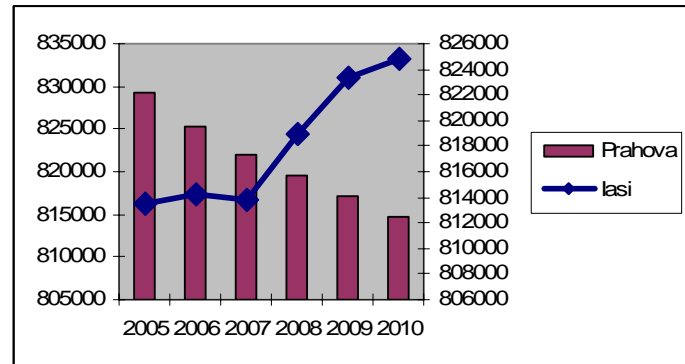
**Graph 2.** The population evolution in Prahova – urban and rural area -2005-2010

Source: author's own representation

Regarding the number of births, in 2010 this was 7.197 while deaths number was 9.963, meaning that the natural rate is negative (-2766 people). Compared to 2009, it can be noticed a decrease by -524 de people (-2242 people in 2009).

Starting from 1990 the county's population recorded a continuous decrease, which resulted in a loss in 2009 of the first position among counties in the country, in favor of Iași county (see

graph 3). The drop in population was accompanied by a significant mutation in the age structure, the demographic aging process becoming more and more visible.



**Graph 3.** The population evolution in Prahova and Iași counties 2005-2010

Source: Department of Statistics Prahova

## Labor Force

The employment resources in Prahova county in 2010 were of 533,0 thousand people ( 25,53 % of the resources of Region South), representing 65,42 % of the county's population, and *the active civil population* was 313,6 thousand people (58,84 % of the work resources), out of which: employed population 286,7 thousand people (91,42 % of the active civil population) and 26.9 thousand unemployed people and other people registered for a getting a job (8,58 % of the active civil population).

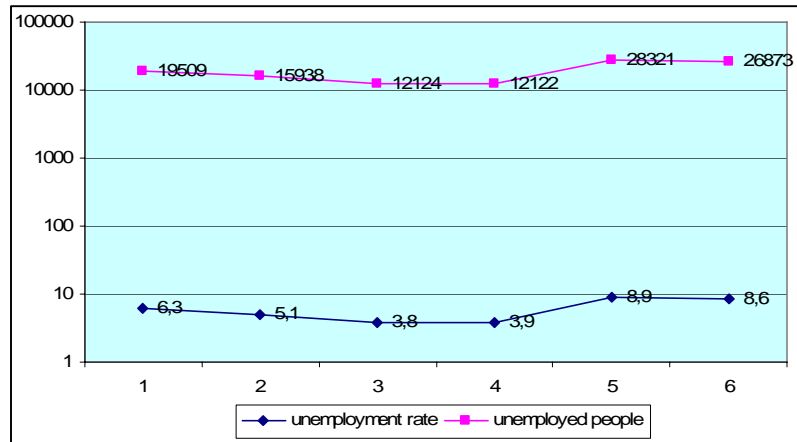
At the end of 2010 there were registered 26,873 unemployed people and the unemployment rate in Prahova county was 8.6 % (within the region rate, which is 8,8 %, but it exceeds by 1.8 percentage points the unemployment rate at national level). Compared with 2009 a reduction can be noticed in both the number of unemployed people (by 1448 people) and the unemployment rate by 0.3 percentage points, at the county level.

According to data provided by the County Agency for Employment<sup>6</sup>, “the number of unemployed people registered at the end of December 2010 was 26873 persons. Compared with November 2010, the number of unemployed persons registered by the County Agency for Employment was lower with 1905 people. Of the total number of recorded unemployed persons, women represent 43.8 %. Unemployment rate / recorded in December 2010 was 8.4 % (8.9 % in December 2009). Female unemployment rate was 8.4% (8.6% in December 2009), while male unemployment rate was 8.4% (9.2% in December 2009)”.

But, although unemployment rate has fallen, the lack of jobs in rural areas causes a massive departure to Bucharest and young people's migration to the Western Europe, and thus, villages and small towns get depopulated.

The decline of the industrial establishments and the closure of some enterprises have generated a high unemployment rate and led to the appearance of serious economic and social problems, particularly in mono-industrialized urban areas such as: Mizil, Moreni, Plopeni and Urleți.

<sup>6</sup> Agenția Județeană pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă Prahova.



**Graph 4.** Unemployed people's evolution in Prahova county 2005- 2010

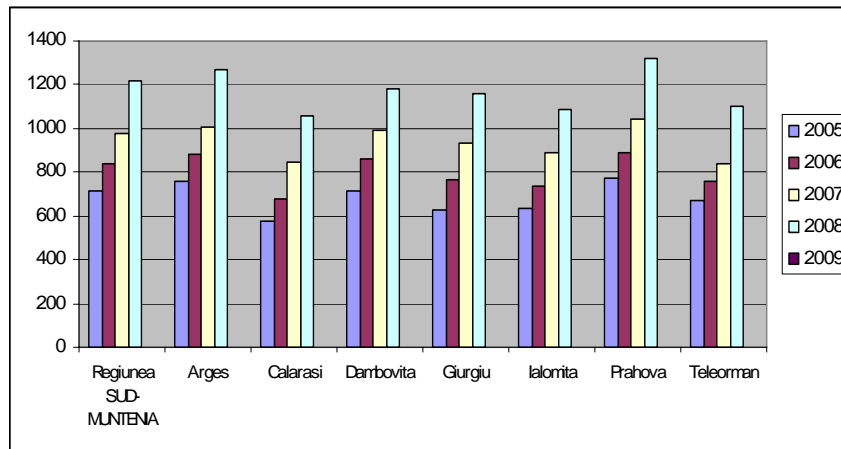
Source: Department of Statistics Prahova

As regards the distribution of unemployed people, according to sex, it is noticed that a high share is recorded at male level, i.e., 56.2 %, while for females the share is 43.8 % of the number of unemployed people in Prahova county.

## Wage Gain

The average gross wage<sup>7</sup> gain in December 2010 was 1882 lei/employee. The average net wage gain was 1367 lei/employee, 5.0 % higher compared with November 2010. Compared to December 2011, the average nominal net wage gain has decreased by 0.6 %. The real wage gain index, compared with the same period of the previous year, recorded a decrease of 8.0 %

The monthly average nominal net wage gain in Prahova exceeds the region average (see the graph no. 5).



**Graph 5.** The monthly average nominal net wage in 2005-2009

Source: author's own representation

<sup>7</sup> Direcția Județeană de Statistică Prahova.

## Agriculture

Prahova county is located in an area in which vegetable growing, fruit growing, viticulture and farming are important economic activities.

The basic objective underlying the activity in agriculture is the recovery and the creation of conditions for re-launching agriculture, in accordance with the natural economic and human potential which Prahova county has, in order to ensure food safety of the population and to create available goods for export.

**Table 2.** The structure of the land in 2010

- ha% -

Agricultural surface	272.834	57,25
Forests and forestry land with vegetation	151.332	31,76
Waters and puddles	13.100	2,75
Roads and railways	9.167	1,92
Yards and buildings	22.488	4,72
Non-productive land	7.599	1,60
Total land	476.520	100

Source: author's own version

As regards agricultural area, in 2010, the arable land represents 52,88 % , while orchards and fruit growing nurseries only 3.71 % (see Table no. 3).

**Table 3.** The agricultural area of Prahova county by category of service in 2010

- ha -

- % -

Arable land	144.267	52,88
Grassland	71.677	26,27
Meadows	38.641	14,16
Vineyards and vine nurseries	8.134	2,98
Orchards and tree growing nurseries	10.115	3,71
Total agricultural surface	272.834	100

Source: author's own version

The main crops are: cereals for beans, sunflowers, soya beans, potatoes, sugar beets, vegetables, tomatoes, onion, fodder and green fodder, cabbage, and melons.

## Infrastructure to Support the Business Environment:

Prahova county has mainly attracted attention in the construction of industrial parks, except S.C. "Ploiești Industrial Park" S.A., Prahova Industrial Park SA, Ploeni Industrial Park SA, Brazi Industrial Park S.A, to which the main shareholder is the Prahova County Council; there are also two private parks, with the primary aim of building infrastructure and utilities needed to attract domestic and foreign investment, job creation, and of promoting sustainable regional development.

Their facilities are determined by the park infrastructure, namely inside access roads and facilities such as water, gas, electricity, sewerage system, etc. Services provided to partner firms within the parks are surveillance, communications, salubrity, transport, and economic-financial consultancy.

Another advantage is the placement of the parks which allows access to DN1 and the railway line.

## Conclusions

As a result of the study, we have identified some of the problems faced by Prahova County, namely:

- the industrial restructuring in the last 22 years has led to the closure of industrial establishments, which has caused the appearance of serious social problems in the areas neighboring the following localities: Mizil, Plopeni, Urlați și Valea Călugărească.
- in rural localities which concentrate on the extractive industries - Filipești and Ceptura - that have been declared unfavorable areas the measures undertaken by the authorities had a reduced impact on the economic and social situation of the concerned areas, which requires new action for economic and social recovery
- the factors which have influenced the evolution of the labour force were not only economic, but also demographic, political, social etc<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, we have tried to show a few directions of action which help achieve the economic and social sustainable development of Prahova county.

The main directions of action are:

- stimulating small and medium-sized enterprises with private capital (programs for development of the small and medium-sized enterprises sector in productive and services' areas, specific to the rural environment );
- removing the isolation of some localities by improving technical equipment and by integrating the area in the major infrastructure networks (ways of road and rail transport, communications);
- stabilizing population by providing a life framework comparable to the other areas of the country;
- developing organic farming and diversifying agricultural production.
- The existing legislative framework provides local administrative units with the possibility to reach their economic-social objectives by means of sustainable development plans.

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## Evoluția economico –socială a județului Prahova

### Rezumat

*În România, structura administrativă cuprinde un nivel regional și un nivel local. Nivelul regional cuprinde 41 de județe iar nivelul local este structurat în 265 orașe, din care 84 municipii, respectiv 2.688 de comune.*

*Fiecare regiune de dezvoltare cuprinde mai multe județe. Regiunile de dezvoltare nu sunt unități administrativ-teritoriale, nu au personalitate juridică, fiind rezultatul unui acord liber între consiliile județene și cele locale.*

*“Problemele regionale, respectiv disparitățile și dezechilibrele interregionale și intraregionale în nivelurile de dezvoltare economică ale țărilor au apărut în decursul istoriei ca urmare a unei dezvoltări geografice neuniforme. Anumite părți din teritoriile naționale au fost neglijate sau au acuzat o anumită întârziere, în raport cu dezvoltarea regională<sup>9</sup>”.*

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<sup>9</sup> Iuhas, V., *Dezvoltarea economică regională*, Editura Emia, Deva, 2004.