



ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA
UNIVERSITY OF IAȘI



FACULTY OF ECONOMICS
AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Co-funded by
the European Union



NEXTSTEP EU SCIENTIFIC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

29th - 31st of May 2025



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACT BOOK

IAȘI, ROMÂNIA



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

On behalf of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași (Iași, Romania), we are pleased to have you as participants in the **2025 NextStepEU International Conference “Challenges, Opportunities, and Policies for Sustainability in the European Union”** organized as a **hybrid event** within the Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union”, on **29th – 31st May 2025**, in **Iași**.

The Conference aims to foster the dissemination of and constructive dialogue around innovative, interdisciplinary, applicable high-quality research which has the potential of delivering sound policy proposals for a better and more sustainable European Union. The conference is an actual ‘call for ideas’ that targets the EU policy making process, in the sense of delivering viewpoints, recommendations, solutions to either enhance the quality of and synergies between existing EU policies, or to propose new approaches of tackling specific issues of economic, social or environmental nature that the EU has to deal with. We believe that this European scientific event will have the potential to attract innovative and interdisciplinary research with an emphasis on forwarding sound policy proposals for achieving sustainable development in the European Union.

CONFERENCE TOPICS

The conference addresses the following (non-restrictive) topics:

1. Emerging economic, societal and environmental challenges for European policy making
2. Financial intermediation and sustainable finance practices in the European Union
3. Adapting business management to a dynamic European policy landscape
4. Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship: driving sustainable growth in the EU
5. Strengthening public administration practices and regulatory framework for enhanced sustainability

Within the conference, a **Students’ Roundtable** is organized on the 31st of May 2025. Bachelor and master’s students will present full scientific papers or essays on the general topic of the conference (or in line with the specific topics) in front of their peers, as means of further exploring and expanding their understanding on a major and topical European issue, that of the practical challenges of ensuring sound policies for the sustainable development of the European Union countries and the potential solutions to overcome these challenges.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union” (NextStepEU), under whose patronage the conference is organized, seeks to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide as well as to foster dialogue between the academic world and society, including local and state level policy-makers, civil servants, civil society actors, representatives of the different levels of education and of the media.



Acknowledgement

This project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. The support is provided under the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union (Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union”, NextStepEU, grant decision number 101085160 / 31.08.2022).



Scientific Committee

Constantin-Marius Apostoaie, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Irina Bilan, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Claudia Gabriela Baicu, Institutul de Economie Mondială, Academia Română
Eugenia Busmachiu, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Republic of Moldova
Ana-Maria Bercu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Sebastian-Bogdan Căpraru, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Gualter Fernandes Martins Câmara, University of the Azores, Portugal
Elena Cigu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Ludmila Cobzari, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Republic of Moldova
Sorin-Nicolae Curcă, Institutul de Economie Mondială, Academia Română
Adina Dornean, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Denis Hyams-Ssekasi, University of Bolton, United Kingdom
Veneta Hristova, University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria
Iulian Ihnatov, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Stanimir Ivanov Kabaivanov, University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria
Andreea Apetrei Kalveram, Catholic University of Valencia, Spain
Piotr Komorowski, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
Adrijana Martinovic, University of Rijeka, Croatia
Veneta Metodieva Markovska, University of Food Technologies, Bulgaria
Alexandru Maxim, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Seyed Mehdian, University of Michigan-Flint, USA
Antonio Minguez Vera, University of Murcia, Spain
Francisco Flores Muñoz, Universidad de La Laguna, Spain
Mihaela Onofrei, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Ada-Iuliana Popescu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Cristina-Teodora Roman, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Nicu Sprincean, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Ovidiu Stoica, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Mihaela Tofan, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Milena Trenta, Universidad de La Laguna, Spain
Andrii Verstiak, Yurii Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine
Piotr Wolejsza, Maritime University of Szczecin, Poland
Bogdan-Gabriel Zugravu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

Organising Committee

Coordinator

Constantin-Marius Apostoaie, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

Members

Irina Bilan, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Ana-Maria Bercu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Sebastian-Bogdan Căpraru, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Nicușor Căraușu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Elena Cigu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Adina Dornean, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Alexandru Maxim, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Nicu Sprincean, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Elena Suman, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Carmen Toderășcu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
Anca Vatamanu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

Conference Venues

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași
Carol I Boulevard no. 11, Iași, Romania
University House (Casa Universitarilor din Iași)



Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
Carol I Boulevard no. 22, Iași, Romania
B413, 1st floor





CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



UNIVERSITY HOUSE ('CASA UNIVERSITARILOR' DIN IAȘI)

Thursday, 29th of May 2025

09.00-10.00: **Registration** | Lobby Registration Point

10.00-10.15: **Opening Ceremony** ([Link](#)) | 'Ion Simionescu' Hall

Rector's Representative

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

Alexandru Maxim

Vice-Dean, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Constantin-Marius Apostoaie

NextStepEU Project Manager

10.15-11.15: **Plenary Session I** ([Link](#)) | 'Ion Simionescu' Hall

Debora Greco

Innovation Hubs and Urban Regeneration, Fondazione G. Brodolini, Italy

**Designing Effective Ecosystems for Social Enterprises:
Challenges and Policy Recommendations**

Luis Cervilla

European network of Disability Work Inclusive Social Enterprise (D-WISE), Spain

**The Role of the Social Economy Sector in Fostering Employment and Labor Inclusion
for People with Disabilities Across Europe**

Elena Vasiliu

"Alături de Voi" Foundation, Romania

Session Moderator

11.15-11.30: **Coffee Break** | University House Restaurant

11.30-12.30: **Plenary Session II** ([Link](#)) | 'Ion Simionescu' Hall

Antonia Loncar

Communication and EU Affairs Expert (Freelancer), Belgium

From Green to Clean: Discovering European Path to Sustainability

Inna Alexeeva Alexeev

SANFI (Santander Financial Institute) / University of Cantabria, Spain

Sustainable Development Goals in the Banking Sector: A Case Study on Spain

Denis Hyams-Ssekasi

University of Bolton, United Kingdom

Session Moderator

12.30-14.00: **Lunch** | University House Restaurant

14.30-16.30: **Parallel Sessions** | Tracks 1 ([Link](#)), 2A ([Link](#)) and 4A ([Link](#)) – University House

18.00-20.00: **Gala Dinner** | University House Restaurant



Friday, 30th of May 2025

09.15-09.30: **Registration** | Lobby Registration Point

09.30-10.00: **Coffee Break** | University House Restaurant

10.00-12.00: **Parallel Sessions** | Tracks 3 ([Link](#)) and 5A ([Link](#)) – University House

12.00-13.00: **Lunch** | University House Restaurant

13.00-15.00: **Parallel Sessions** | Tracks 2B, 4B and 5B – University House

17.00-18.30: **Highlights of Iasi City Centre - walking tour** | Departure from UAIC Building B



FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (BUILDING B)

Saturday, 31st of May 2025

08.45-09.00: **Registration** | Lobby Registration Point B1

09.00-10.30: **Students' Roundtable** | B413 (UAIC Building B, 1st floor)

10.30-11.00: **Coffee Break** | B1 hallway (UAIC Building B, 1st floor)

11.00-12.00: **Students' Roundtable** | B413 (UAIC Building B, 1st floor)



CONFERENCE TRACKS

Track 1: Emerging economic, societal and environmental challenges for European policy making

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Rodica Perciun, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Iulian Ibratov

Track 2A: Financial intermediation and sustainable finance practices in the European Union

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Bogdan Căpraru, Lect. Ph.D. Nicu Sprincean

Track 2B: Financial intermediation and sustainable finance practices in the European Union

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Eugenia Bușmachiu, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Constantin-Marius Apostoae

Track 3: Adapting business management to a dynamic European policy landscape

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Silviu Mibail Tiță, Lect. Ph.D. Dumitru-Nicușor Cărbușu

Track 4A: Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship: driving sustainable growth in the European Union

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Denis Hyams-Ssekasi, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Elena Cigu

Track 4B: Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship: driving sustainable growth in the European Union

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Irina Bilan, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Alexandru Maxim

Track 5A: Strengthening public administration practices and regulatory framework for enhanced sustainability

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Ana Maria Bercu, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Carmen Toderașcu

Track 5B: Strengthening public administration practices and regulatory framework for enhanced sustainability

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Bogdan-Gabriel Zugravu, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Dan Lupu

Special Track: Students' Roundtable

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Adina Dornean, Assist. Prof. Ph.D. Elena Suman



DETAILED PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

Thursday, 29th of May 2025

Track 1: Emerging economic, societal and environmental challenges for European policy making

Location: 'Ion Simionescu' Hall and online ([LINK](#))

Schedule: 29th of May 2025, 14.30 – 16.30

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Rodica Perciun (National Institute for Economic Research, ASEM, Republic of Moldova)
Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Iulian Ihnatov (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

ATTITUDES TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

RODICA PERCIUN

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
perciun.rodica@ase.md

VICTORIA IORDACHI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
iordachi.victoria@ase.md

OLGA TIMOFEI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
timofei.olga@ase.md

Abstract: As a candidate country for the EU, the Republic of Moldova must align itself with a series of policies and standards that are essential for full integration into the European Union, including Environmental Policies, Climate Change Policies, and Circular Economy Policies. The aim of the research was to provide an overview of the population's attitude towards the ecological transition and the circular economy, identifying the level of awareness and understanding of these reforms. To achieve the proposed objectives, general scientific methods were applied: synthesis, critical analysis of materials, as well as analytical methods such as surveys, interviews, statistical data processing, graphical methods, comparison, grouping, etc. The study was based on data collection from a sample of 1419 participants to capture a clear image of public opinion. The survey was structured to address 30 key questions regarding: awareness of the circular economy, perception of sustainability policies, and the willingness to adopt sustainable behaviours. The study results highlight a positive attitude toward the concepts of sustainability and environmental protection, but this does not always translate into concrete actions or responsible consumption behaviors. Although there is a general awareness of the importance of environmental protection, it is not fully reflected in the daily behaviors of the population. Specifically, a moderate interest is observed in easily implementable eco-friendly measures that provide immediate cost-saving benefits, such as energy conservation or basic recycling. However, measures that require significant investments or specific infrastructure, such as selective waste collection or the use of alternative energy sources, are less frequently adopted. This underscores the importance of active governmental support and incentive policies to encourage sustainable changes at the national level. In the context of the Republic of Moldova, insufficient information and limited access to energy-efficient equipment result in high energy consumption in households. Furthermore, recycling remains in its early stages, largely due to structural and governance challenges in waste management. In many regions of the country, the lack of resources and adequate infrastructure at the local authority level hinders the development of an efficient and sustainable waste management system. Despite the fact that most respondents claim to frequently use reusable products, a significant percentage of individuals still do not use them at all or use them very rarely. This behavior highlights the lack of environmental education and financial incentives for adopting new technologies, which leads to low awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of environmental policies and the circular economy. Based on the survey results, the study identified several important directions for sustainability policies that should be considered, such as: improving education and awareness, supporting sustainable behaviors, active community participation.



Keywords: circular economy; sustainable development; environmental policies; ecological transition.

JEL Classification: M38; O10; Q01, Q50.

Acknowledgment: The research was conducted under Project 20.80012.7007.10SE, “Social Impact Analysis for the Deposit Return System for Recyclable Packaging in the Republic of Moldova”.

INNOVATIVE POLICIES AND CHALLENGES IN ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE EU

BRIGITTE STEINHOFF

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
steinhoff.brigitte@t-online.de

Abstract: Current policy innovations and socio-technical factors influence the provision of sustainable, affordable housing in the European Union. The issue of rising cost burdens, overcrowding, housing shortages and environmental needs, all of which have important social and economic impacts on lower and middle-income groups, is of particular concern. This article examines why affordability remains an enduring challenge despite the EU's commitment to reducing environmental impacts and social inequalities. This article draws on a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, policy analysis, existing academic literature, and EU-wide statistical data to capture current housing trends. The theoretical framework uses sustainability concepts (environmental, social and, economic) and affordability benchmarks to evaluate how policy innovations and construction practices affect housing. Preliminary results show that effective policy measures such as targeted subsidies, inclusive land-use planning and advanced construction technologies can improve both the cost-effectiveness and environmental performance of affordable housing. Initial findings suggest that collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities and private developers, improves the implementation and long-term viability of projects. The incorporation of sustainable construction practices has been demonstrated to reduce carbon emissions whilst also promoting social equity and community resilience. Comprehensive policy reforms that incorporate multi-stakeholder collaboration and ongoing monitoring of affordability and sustainability targets represent a potential mechanism for effecting meaningful change. Future research will expand the empirical dataset to include diverse urban and rural areas, and test innovative construction techniques and financing models to develop evidence-based affordable and sustainable housing strategies.

Keywords: affordable housing, sustainable development, European Union policy.

JEL Classification: O21; Q56; R31.

CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

BRANKICA TODOROVIC

University Business Academy in Novi Sad, Faculty of Contemporary Arts, Serbia
brankica.todorovic@fsu.edu.rs

Abstract: Urban transformation of cities can lead to a disruption of the concept of sustainable urban development. The 2030 Agenda, under Goal 11 and Target 11.4, emphasizes the importance of culture for sustainable development and the strengthening of efforts to protect and preserve global cultural and natural heritage. Defining the framework of Cultura 2030, its goals, and indicators should enable further contribution of culture to sustainable development and the assessment of the transversal contribution of culture to sustainable development. The construction of buildings that use sustainable materials promotes modern living and working conditions, as well as, inclusivity, which encourages the establishment of creative embassies as official institutions. The research objectives of this paper are: 1) Analysis of the contemporary approach to the contribution of culture to sustainable development: the Cultura 2030 framework, 2) Overview of the key guidelines of the Cultura 2030 framework and the 2030 Agenda for contributing to sustainable development, and 3) Contribution of cultural projects to sustainable development: Culture Europe and other initiatives.

Keywords: urban transformation; cities; culture; sustainable development; SDG.

JEL Classification: Q56; R11; Z10.



IS MORE ALWAYS BETTER? HOW TO SELECT RISK ADJUSTERS IN HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETS

CAMILO ANTONIO ARIAS CAMACHO

Universidad de la Sabana, Economics Department, Colombia
camilo.arias@unisabana.edu.co

Abstract: Risk adjustment formulas are essential to health insurance markets. They mitigate risk selection incentives for health insurers by allowing premiums to reflect expected healthcare costs based on enrollee characteristics. Current formulas can underpredict spending for specific groups, leading to under-compensation for insurers and potentially impacting fairness and access to care. In response, many countries are modifying risk-adjustment systems to improve accuracy. This often involves incorporating additional variables into the payment formula. However, selecting the correct variables for these formulas poses a significant policy challenge because adding variables can also weaken incentives for cost control. This paper proposes a novel methodology for variable selection that addresses this challenge. We explicitly consider the costs associated with selecting different variables: increased supervision, unnecessary service utilization, upcoding practices, and reduced incentives for disease prevention. We use econometric techniques to identify the optimal subset of variables from a rich dataset encompassing health conditions and sociodemographic information for over 10 million Colombian health insurance enrollees. This data-driven approach equips regulators with a multidisciplinary framework for calibrating risk-adjustment systems. It balances the need to mitigate risk selection with the practical limitations of cost and data integrity.

Keywords: risk adjustment; health insurance markets; variable selection.

JEL Classification: I130; I110; I180.

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

PEDRO BAÇÃO

University of Coimbra, CeBER, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
pmab@fe.uc.pt

ANA CONCEIÇÃO

University of Coimbra, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
uc2020223672@student.uc.pt

MARTA SIMÕES

University of Coimbra, CeBER, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
mcsimoes@fe.uc.pt

Abstract: The European Union is facing what some, like the European Parliament or the European Policy Centre, identify as a housing crisis characterized by rising housing prices and rents and a dearth of affordable housing. Between 2015 and 2023, house prices in the EU rose on average by 48%, and rents rose by 18% on average over a similar period (2010-2022), outpacing inflation. Beyond its concerning direct effects on household well-being, the housing crisis may also pose long-term risks to macroeconomic performance. Escalating housing prices and rents can result in resource misallocation and shortages of highly skilled labor in key places, ultimately hindering innovation and slowing economic growth. Against this backdrop, we conduct an empirical assessment of the relationship between access to housing and economic growth in the European Union, using data from 21 member states spanning the period from 2000 to 2019. To this end, we estimate an ad hoc growth regression, using the share of housing expenditure in household final consumption as our explanatory variable of interest. We hypothesize that this variable exerts a negative effect on our dependent variable, which captures economic growth, measured as the log difference of real GDP or real GDP per capita. For the control variables—selected based on relevant prior literature—we include a comprehensive set comprising investment, human capital, government consumption, trade openness, institutions, financial development, social expenditure on housing, inflation, and unemployment. The empirical results, derived from a fixed-effects estimator with Driscoll and Kraay corrected standard errors to account for cross-sectional dependence and heteroskedasticity, reveal that an increase in the



share of housing expenditure in household final consumption exerts a moderately negative and statistically significant effect on economic growth. These findings underscore the potential macroeconomic benefits of policy interventions aimed at enhancing access to housing eventually mitigating excessive housing cost burdens.

Keywords: access; housing; economic growth; European Union.

JEL Classification: C33; O18; O47.

VAT SYSTEMS IN THE EUROPEAN AGRI-FOOD SECTOR: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND LESSONS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

OLGA TIMOFEI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
timofei.olga@ase.md

VICTORIA IORDACHI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
iordachi.victoria@ase.md

RODICA PERCIUN

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
perciun.rodica@ase.md

Abstract: The value-added tax system in the agri-food sector represents a strategic fiscal instrument in the context of the Republic of Moldova's European path. This research aims to capture the essence of European fiscal approaches in the agri-food domain, tracing potential connections with the future of Moldova's fiscal framework, identifying defining characteristics, structural disparities, and functional convergences. The research conducts a comparative analysis of fiscal models from countries with economies similar to the Republic of Moldova – Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, and the Baltic states – which have undergone processes of transition and European integration. The study methodologically evaluates the configurations of differentiated rates, administrative mechanisms, certification and traceability systems, as well as the degree of digitalization of fiscal processes. The results of the study substantiate the implementation of a differentiated fiscal framework along the agri-food value chain, consolidated through advanced certification systems and digital technologies. The anticipated benefits of fiscal reform are quantified, including the reduction of the VAT gap, strengthening competitiveness, and ensuring the accessibility of essential food products. The research conclusions position the modernization of the VAT system in the agri-food sector as an integral element of the structural transformation of the Moldovan economy in the process of convergence with European standards.

Keywords: value added tax; agricultural sector; European integration; fiscal modernization; Republic of Moldova.

JEL Classification: H25; Q18; P35; H29; O13.

Acknowledgment: The article was developed within the framework of Subprogram 030101 „Strengthening the resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of the economy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the accession process to the European Union”, institutional funding.

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FUNCTION OF ACHIEVING THE SDGs

BRANKICA TODOROVIC

University Business Academy in Novi Sad, Faculty of Contemporary Arts, Serbia
brankica.todorovic@fsu.edu.rs

Abstract: The corporate governance model should develop and encourage the sustainability of companies and their contribution to achieving the SDGs. The UN Global Compact helps companies achieve the SDGs by guiding them toward global priorities: climate action, gender equality, human rights, labor and decent working conditions, the fight against corruption, and sustainable financing. Additionally, reporting on ESG practices, which include new business



norms related to greenwashing, greenhushing, and greenwashing, as well as, sustainable financing, positively impacts responsible business practices and long-term stability. The research objectives are: 1) Analysis of achieving global priorities of corporate sustainability and contribution to achieving SDGs based on the analysis of the UN Global Compact, SDG Stocktake, and Agenda 2030. 2) Progress in achieving the Indicators of EU green resilience: Climate change and adoption, Ecosystems, biodiversity, sustainable and Sustainable use of resources, and the Indicator of EU geopolitical resilience: Financial globalization. 3) Key components of the corporate sustainability model from the perspective of the future contribution of companies to the SDGs, and, 4) Examples of best practices and corporate initiatives contributing to climate actions and SDGs.

Keywords: corporate sustainability; sustainability; financing, SDGs.

JEL Classification: O12; Q01; Q54; Q56.

AT THE CROSSROADS OF SUSTAINABILITY: SHIFTING PRIORITIES IN EU ENERGY LAW AND POLICY

ADRIJANA MARTINOVIĆ

University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law, Croatia
adrijana.martinovic@pravri.uniri.hr

NARDA KRNETIĆ BLEČIĆ

University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law, Croatia
narda.krnetic.blecic@pravri.uniri.hr

Abstract: The multiple crises currently faced by the EU have intensified tensions between the conflicting goals of energy policy, commonly referred to as the "energy trilemma." The core objectives of EU energy policy, energy security, internal energy market, and sustainability, are increasingly at odds. Following the Letta and Draghi reports, a noticeable shift in EU energy policy is emerging, with the European Commission prioritizing competitiveness goals. The latest, fifth energy package of the EU, known as "Fit for 55," includes both energy and climate goals, such as the liberalization of the energy market and decarbonization targets. However, with the new European Commission policy placing a clear emphasis on the competitiveness of the EU, the question arises as to whether the forthcoming legislation will prioritize only the internal energy market and security of supply, potentially pushing aside sustainability. The publication of the Action Plan for Affordable Energy, as part of the Clean Industrial Plan, along with the European Steel and Metals Action Plan, signals the direction of future energy law and policy. This raises the critical question: Is it possible to counterbalance sustainability and competitiveness and create laws and policies without sacrificing or ignoring sustainability concerns? This article aims to explore how the EU law, specifically the EU Treaties, can act as a limiting factor to policy choices. The research will primarily rely on the normative-dogmatic and axiological methods.

Keywords: EU energy law; "energy trilemma"; sustainability.

JEL Classification: K32.

RURAL TERRITORIES AS SUSTAINABILITY LABS: ADAPTING DIGITAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIES FROM CHINA TO THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

DIEGO ACOSTA GIJÓN

University of Seville, Doctoral Program in Economic, Business and Social Sciences, Spain
dieacogij@alum.us.es

DANIELA-TATIANA AGHEORGHIESEI

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
dta@uaic.ro

OVIDIU STOICA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
ostoica@uaic.ro



Abstract: This paper argues that rural territories in Europe, often viewed as lagging or structurally disadvantaged, possess unique potential to serve as experimental laboratories for sustainable development. By integrating community-driven entrepreneurship, social economy practices, and digital technologies within adaptive governance frameworks, these regions can become strategic drivers of inclusive and place-based transitions. The core hypothesis builds on evidence from rural China, where digital financial inclusion, platform-based governance, and targeted investment in social infrastructure have demonstrably improved rural resilience and institutional capacity. While the Chinese model reflects a distinct sociopolitical context, its mechanisms—particularly those related to digital enablement and local participatory models—offer adaptable insights for the European Union’s cohesion policy and rural innovation strategies. Through a comparative and exploratory approach, the article assesses how these tools can be recontextualized to support SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) in Europe’s rural peripheries. It proposes that rural areas, when supported by appropriate infrastructure and participatory governance models, can actively shape sustainable futures—moving from recipients of top-down development to co-creators of territorial resilience, economic justice, and socio-ecological regeneration.

Keywords: social economy; rural digitalization; SDG 8; adaptive governance; territorial cohesion; policy transfer.

JEL Classification: Q01; R11; L31; 035

SHORT- AND LONG-RUN GROWTH EFFECTS OF AI ADOPTION ACROSS THE OECD

JOSHUA DUARTE

University of Coimbra, CeBER, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
joshua.duarte@fe.uc.pt

CARINA FREITAS

University of Coimbra, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
uc2023188528@student.uc.pt

MARTA SIMÕES

University of Coimbra, CeBER, Faculty of Economics, Portugal
mcsimoes@fe.uc.pt

Abstract: Although technological progress is a key driver of modern economic growth and long-term improvements in living standards, its effects have often materialized with a delay. This lag is frequently due to adjustment costs, such as the need for complementary investments and workforce training, or the time it takes for induced sectoral shifts to fully take effect. This study explores these dynamics in the context of artificial intelligence (AI), whose rapid rise and increasing adoption have sparked high expectations about its potential to enhance macroeconomic performance and overall well-being. To investigate the short- and long-run effects of AI adoption on economic growth and standards of living we consider a sample of 35 OECD countries observed annually over the period 1995-2017 and estimate a panel autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model. The evidence found confirms that AI adoption is already translating into faster growth in the short run, suggesting that firms and sectors are fast adjusting to this new technology with its broad applications, and resulting also in long run improvements in standards of living measured as real GDP per capita. These findings are robust to the consideration of different proxies for AI adoption (patents vs. scientific publications), estimation procedures, allowing for a higher number of lags and additional control variables, and survive a coefficient stability analysis using expanding windows. Given the extraordinary scale and depth of the transformations AI may bring, and as its adoption continues to accelerate, its impact on economic growth and living standards remain uncertain; however, our findings lend support to the more optimistic outlooks with its positive growth effects already materializing in the short run.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; technological progress; economic growth; OECD; panel ARDL.

JEL Classification: C33; O33; O47.



Track 2A: Financial intermediation and sustainable finance practices in the European Union

Location: 'Trineu Mihălcescu' Hall and online ([LINK](#))

Schedule: 29th of May 2025, 14.30 – 16.30

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Bogdan Căpraru (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

Lect. Ph.D. Nicu Sprincean (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

CLIMATE-RELATED FINANCIAL POLICY AND SYSTEMIC RISK

ALIN MARIUS ANDRIEȘ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Romania

alin.andries@uaic.ro

STEVEN ONGENA

University of Zurich, Department of Banking and Finance, Switzerland

Swiss Finance Institute, Switzerland

KU Leuven, Faculty of Economics and Business, Belgium

NTNU Business School, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), United Kingdom

steven.ongena@bf.uzh.ch

NICU SPRINCEAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Romania

sprincean.nicu@uaic.ro

Abstract: We examine the relationship between climate-related financial policies (CRFPs) and banks' systemic risk. Using a sample of 458 banks in 47 countries over the period 2000-2020, we document that more stringent CRFPs are detrimental to overall financial stability and contribute to increased system-wide distress. These findings raise the possibility that overly stringent green finance policies could lead to a disorderly transition. In addition, measures that restrict banks' exposure to carbon-intensive counterparties, both directly and indirectly, may lead to less lending to the real economy and higher lending rates. The latter increase, in turn, could lead to significant credit losses, reduced bank profitability and other spillover effects with the potential to undermine systemic resilience. However, the implementation and ratification of the Paris Agreement, more robust adaptation strategies to cope with climate shocks and a higher incidence of natural disasters and a larger number of people affected by extreme climate events may counteract the amplifying effects of CRFPs on systemic risk. Moreover, banks with stronger environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments experience less systemic distress when exposed to green financial policies. Our findings have critical policy implications for public authorities formulating green financial policies to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Keywords: systemic risk; climate change; climate-related financial policy.

JEL Classification: G21; G32; Q54.



IMPLEMENTATION OF ESG CRITERIA IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT: FROM EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE TO MOLDOVAN REALITIES

OLGA TIMOFEI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
timofei.olga@ase.md

VICTORIA IORDACHI

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
iordachi.victoria@ase.md

RODICA PERCIUN

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
perciun.rodica@ase.md

Abstract: With the emergence of European sustainability reporting frameworks such as CSRD and SFDR, incorporating Environmental, Social, and Governance principles has become crucial for maintaining corporate competitiveness. Given Moldova's candidate status for European Union membership, harmonizing with ESG benchmarks constitutes a fundamental objective for fostering economic convergence. This investigation aims to provide a comparative analysis of ESG implementation practices in the European business environment and evaluate the transition process of Moldovan companies towards these standards. The methodological approach includes systematic analysis of specialized literature, study of European regulatory documents, and analysis of case studies of European and Moldovan companies. This methodology enables identification of current trends and comparison of experiences from different economic contexts. Findings indicate that the majority of European asset managers offer ESG-compliant funds, while executive leaders consider ESG a significant competitive advantage. In contrast to this situation, Moldova shows that a limited number of pioneer companies implement GRI standards and report according to sustainability principles. At the same time, awareness of ESG criteria among Moldovan companies is growing, motivated by the need to align with international practices and anticipation of future regulatory requirements. The study reveals that successful ESG implementation requires adoption of international standards, investment in education, and integration of ESG into business strategies to facilitate access to European markets.

Keywords: ESG criteria; business environment; European experience; Republic of Moldova; implementation; corporate strategies.

JEL Classification: M14; Q56; F64; G11; O52.

Acknowledgment: The article was developed within the framework of Subprogram 030101 „Strengthening the resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of the economy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the accession process to the European Union”, institutional funding.

EVOLUTIONARY INSIGHTS IN THE DYNAMICS OF ASYMMETRIC ECONOMIC SHOCKS

SORIN-NICOLAE CURCĂ

Romanian Academy, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, Doctoral School of Economics,
National Institute of Economic Research “Costin C. Kirițescu”, Center for Financial and Monetary Research
“Victor Slăvescu”, Romania
Institute for World Economy, Romanian Academy, Romania
sorin_curca@yahoo.com

Abstract: This paper examines the issue of asymmetric economic shocks from the perspective of evolutionary economics. Its main objective is to highlight how the processes of learning, adaptation, natural selection and co-evolution shape the responses of economic systems to asymmetric economic shocks. Economies are viewed as complex adaptive systems characterized by heterogeneity of its component parts, uncertainty and self-organizing processes. Economic shocks are thus no longer understood as causing temporary deviations from equilibrium, but as phenomena that may underlie permanent structural reconfigurations and differences in the trajectories of



economies. The different ways in which economic systems respond to shocks are investigated, emphasizing, among others, the role of institutions, the learning capacity at the level of the economic system in general and economy-specific adjustment mechanisms. From this perspective, the focus shifts from the magnitude and/or speed of the shock to the capacity of economic systems to adapt, innovate and win in the face of its occurrence. The paper also explores how public policies can influence evolutionary adaptation processes. It encourages the creation of an economic governance framework in which institutional experimenting, cooperation between distinct economic systems, and flexibility in decision-making are present. All these are explained by referring to the specific case of the EU economies. The approach is different from that of traditional models, highlighting the importance of “exploiting” the specificities and dynamics of each economic system. The paper also reveals that the impact of the asymmetric economic shocks depends on the capacity of key actors (economic, institutional) to learn and adapt to uncertainty and change. The used methodology includes defining concepts by sufficiency predicates and logical analysis.

Keywords: asymmetric shocks, evolutionary economics, adaptability, natural selection, European Union.

JEL Classification: E32; O43; R11; P16.

DOES GENDER DIVERSITY ON THE BOARDS OF INDEPENDENT FISCAL INSTITUTIONS MATTER FOR ACHIEVING BETTER FISCAL OUTCOMES?

BOGDAN CĂPRARU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
Romanian Fiscal Council and National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
csb@uaic.ro

ANTONIO MINGUEZ-VERA

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Murcia, Spain
minver@um.es

NICU SPRINCEAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Romania
sprincean.nicu@uaic.ro

Abstract: In this paper, we examine the relationship between female representation in the leadership structures of independent fiscal institutions (IFIs) and a country's fiscal performance. Using an original, hand-collected dataset of 18 European IFIs from 2012 to 2020, we document that a higher share of women on IFI boards is correlated with better fiscal outcomes. The mechanisms at play may be related to their higher risk aversion, lower attractiveness to competitive environments, and greater caution relative to their male counterparts, giving rise to less optimistic budget forecasts and more realistic fiscal recommendations, which in turn may lead to a more prudent use of public resources by the government. In the same vein, women have been observed to prioritize the future more than men, and this forward-looking perspective can translate into more prudent budget management and long-term policy planning when women hold public office. In addition, we find that gender diversity contributes positively to better compliance with the numerical fiscal rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, but with a one-year delay. Also, we analyze how different thresholds (20%, 25% and 40%) for the proportion of women on IFI boards are related to improved fiscal aggregates. The results show that the 20% threshold yields statistically insignificant results, and for the other two thresholds, the estimated coefficients are significant, especially for the 40% threshold, which also has the largest magnitude. Our results have critical policy implications in the context of the current review of the European fiscal framework, pointing to the need for the existence of some minimum standards for IFIs to increase their effectiveness, with a focus on institutional governance.

Keywords: fiscal performance; gender diversity; institutional governance; independent fiscal institutions.

JEL Classification: E62; J16; H60.



EXPLORING THE FINANCE-GROWTH NEXUS IN THE EU: EVIDENCE FROM PANEL DATA

LILIANA CERNAVCA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
liliana.cernavca99@gmail.com

Abstract: Despite the obvious relationship between the level of development of financial intermediation and economic growth rates, which has been investigated in a large number of studies, both theoretical and empirical, no consensus has yet been reached regarding the existence, intensity, and direction of this relationship. Therefore, the aim of our research is to examine empirically the relationship between financial development and economic growth in the member countries of the European Union (EU28) over a period of 22 years (2000–2021). To investigate this relationship, we employ a panel data approach, starting with a baseline model estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) with fixed effects for both countries and years, which helps control for unobserved heterogeneity and time-specific shocks. We also estimate a dynamic specification using the System Generalized Method of Moments (System GMM), which allows for the inclusion of lagged dependent variables and better accounts for dynamic economic processes. Financial development is examined through both the institutional and market-based components of the financial system. Specifically, we consider indicators reflecting the development of financial institutions and financial markets, across three key dimensions: depth, access, and efficiency. The results from both the static and dynamic models indicate a negative and statistically significant relationship between financial development and economic growth in the EU28. This suggests that higher levels of financial intermediation may not always be conducive to economic growth and, in some cases, may even hinder it—possibly due to inefficiencies, resource misallocation, or structural imbalances within the financial system. Additionally, we investigate whether the relationship between financial development and growth is non-linear by testing for the presence of a threshold effect.

Keywords: financial development; economic growth; causality; EU countries; panel data.

JEL Classification: E44; G21; O11; O16; O43.

GREEN INVESTMENTS' IMPACT ON THE IMPORTS OF RECYCLABLE RAW MATERIALS: EVIDENCE FROM AUSTRIA, FRANCE, ROMANIA, POLAND, BULGARIA, AND THE EU

GEORGE-CORNEL DUMITRESCU

Institute for World Economy, Romanian Academy, Romania
george.dumitrescu@iem.ro

Abstract: Using log-log linear regression models and quantitative analyses, the research focuses on the relationship between environmental protection investments of the total economy (EPI) in million euros, as the independent variable and imports of recyclable raw materials (IRRM), in tonnes, as the dependent variable. This analysis covers the EU as a whole and five member states, namely Austria, France, Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria, from 2014 to 2021, a period for which longer time series were identified at Eurostat. The research also explores the dynamics of the selected indicators in the same time frame. It investigates whether increased environmental investment impacts the volume of imported recyclable raw materials and aims to identify relevant tools for the green transition, particularly from the perspective of achieving strategic open autonomy in the EU. The results show a positive and statistically significant relationship between EPI and IRRM in Austria at a 95% confidence level. The regression equation indicates that a 1% increase in investment results in a 0.2% increase in the import volume. A nonlinear model that uses the squared investment log improves the model's explanatory power, suggesting accelerating effects at higher investment levels. In contrast, the linear relationship was negative and statistically significant at a 95% confidence level in France and Romania. Thus, an increase in environmental investment is associated with a 0.2% and 0.5% decrease in imports of recyclable raw materials, respectively. In Austria, France and Romania, the models passed the assumptions of linear regression (heteroskedasticity, autocorrelation, nonlinearity, and normality) without major violations, supporting the statistical reliability of the results. The analysis does not reveal a statistically significant relationship between the two selected variables in Poland and Bulgaria. The relationship

may be neutral or undefined in these countries, due to delayed or indirect effects of investment, differences in institutional effectiveness, or other mediating factors such as trade policy, infrastructure, or market maturity. However, the results indicate heterogeneous patterns among the analysed countries. In Austria, such investments may stimulate import growth due to its mature recycling capacity and higher integration into the international flows of recyclable raw materials (RRM). By contrast, in France and Romania, EPI seems to reduce IRRM by enhancing recycling capacities, a result in line with the EU's goal of reaching open strategic autonomy. For more clarity, further research should focus on the root causes of these heterogeneities.

Keywords: environment; investments; recyclables; trade.

JEL Classification: Q56; F18; C21.

FINTECH AS A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION BANKING SECTOR

MIHAELA IZURIC

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
mihaela.izuric12@gmail.com

CONSTANTIN-MARIUS APOSTOAIIE

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
marius.apostoaie@uaic.ro

Abstract: In the contemporary landscape of financial services, the rapid evolution of financial technologies (FinTech) has significantly reshaped the sector, stimulating innovation and sustainability within the foundations of the banking sector. The aim of this paper is to find out to what extent FinTechs promote sustainable financial intermediation in the European Union, with a particular focus on the Central and Eastern European countries. The central research question is: How does FinTech contribute to enhancing the sustainability of financial intermediation in the European banking sector? Our methodological approach involves employing a multiple linear regression model with data from several Central and Eastern European countries and covering 2019-2023. The dependent variable-bank size (employed as a proxy for intermediation capacity) – is tested against a set of FinTech – specific indicators (digital transaction volumes, FinTech penetration rates, and innovation indices) while controlling for macroeconomic and institutional variables. Aspects of sustainability such as openness, digital efficacy, financial accessibility, and environmental considerations influence it and looks at how FinTech adoption affects bank fees, operational effectiveness, and financial access for marginalized populations. It also looks at the risks that come with digital security and governance. According to the study, FinTech can increase accessibility to financial services and enhance sustainability by digitizing banking procedures. Concerns exist, nevertheless, about the necessity of a suitable regulatory framework and safeguarding users against cybersecurity threats. In addition, the paper also examines the current legal framework in the European Union, proposing harmonized implementation solutions both in terms of fintech in banking activity and the relationship with the sustainability dimension. The conclusion emphasizes how important it is to have suitable laws and regulations that support ethical innovation and guarantee the incorporation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in the banking industry, these being implemented through innovative business models, leaving traditional ones in the shade. By combining 3 dimensions: banking, technology and sustainability, the green light is given to the field for research and steps are taken towards a new world of money.

Keywords: FinTech; sustainable banking; digitalization; inclusion.

JEL Classification: G21; O33; Q56.

Acknowledgment: This research was performed with the support of the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union (Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union”, NextStepEU, under grant decision number 101085160 / 31.08.2022). This work reflects only the views of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRANSITIONING FROM LINEAR TO DIFFERENTIAL MORTGAGE INTEREST CALCULATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM ISRAELI MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSEHOLDS

ELDAD BAR LEV

Independent Researcher in Economic and International affairs, Israel

eldad2503@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper investigates the economic consequences of transitioning from linear to differential mortgage interest calculations, particularly focusing on the experiences of Israeli middle-class households. The study addresses housing affordability and economic inequality in alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal 10. Employing a mixed-method approach, including qualitative analyses of monetary policy documents and quantitative assessment of mortgage repayment data, the study demonstrates that differential calculation methods significantly increase repayment unpredictability, financial strain, and vulnerability to economic shocks among middle-class borrowers. Key findings indicate repayments can rise by 10% to 25% during periods of increasing interest rates, negatively affecting household budgets, reducing savings, and raising default risks. Policy recommendations include ensuring transparent disclosures, introducing interest rate caps, and promoting financial literacy. These findings underscore the critical role of stable mortgage policy in safeguarding middle-class economic resilience.

Keywords: mortgage interest; linear vs differential calculation; middle-class households; housing policy; Israel.

JEL Classification: E43; E52; G21; R21.



Track 4A: Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship: driving sustainable growth in the European Union

Location: 'Vespasian Pella' Hall and online ([LINK](#))

Schedule: 29th of May 2025, 14.30 – 16.30

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Denis Hyams-Ssekasi (University of Bolton, United Kingdom)

Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Elena Cigu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

MIHAELA ONOFREI

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

onofrei@uaic.ro

FLORIN OPREA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

foprea@uaic.ro

ERIKA-MARIA DOACĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

doaca.erika@yahoo.com

Abstract: Entrepreneurship plays a particularly important role in both developed and developing countries. However, in recent years, the negative impact of this sector on the environment has been highlighted. Therefore, through the measures that the entrepreneurial environment must implement, green entrepreneurship can thus contribute to generating new opportunities for sustainable development. Thus, with the diversification of needs, demands and requirements that are constantly growing, commercial, production and industrial activities have also increased. In this situation, the entrepreneurial environment has an overwhelming contribution to economic growth and societies, but causing negative effects on the environment: environmental pollution, toxic emissions, depletion of natural resources, etc. The implementation of digital technologies is an essential factor for sustainability. Therefore, entrepreneurs who create and innovate contribute to economic growth, helping to solve environmental and human problems. The concept also brings into discussion green financing that contributes to ecological entrepreneurship. In this sense, green financing, respectively green entrepreneurship, produce for the business environment both a series of benefits and constraints, through the obligation to comply with certain measures. Companies that implement sustainability strategies have loyal customers, permanently having competitive advantages. These aspects create for the business environment both financed benefits and the possibility to innovate and grow. Thus, green entrepreneurship is a relatively new concept that must be continuously developed, identifying optimal solutions to environmental challenges. The need for environmental awareness, along with entrepreneurial initiative, is the engine of the green economy. Therefore, supporting and promoting this concept contributes to preventing economic and environmental crises, improving human well-being, and reducing environmental risk. The purpose of this paper is to identify the main factors supporting green entrepreneurship, along with the increase in digitalization in the entrepreneurial environment. Thus, through this analysis we want to identify the impact of green financing on the business environment, respectively on sustainable development, determining the relationship between green entrepreneurship and economic growth.

Keywords: green entrepreneurship; green finance; sustainable development; circular economy.

JEL Classification: G41; L26; Q01.



EMPOWERING SMALL-SCALE FARMERS IN MOLDOVA: EXPECTATIONS FROM SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

DUMITRU STRATAN

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
dumitru.stratan@gmail.com, stratan.dumitru.r9bb@ase.md

Abstract: Small-scale farmers in Moldova play a critical role in the national economy, yet face persistent challenges such as climate change, limited market access, and lack of financial literacy. Agricultural extension services and farmers' associations have emerged as key support mechanisms, though their effectiveness is limited by institutional fragmentation, underfunding, and weak communication channels. Based on a combined analysis of 218 respondents from structured surveys and consultations, this article investigates farmers' expectations from supporting associations and outlines necessary reforms to enhance relevance, efficiency, and impact. Findings suggest that associations must shift towards proactive service delivery models that prioritize digital integration, inclusive training, and stronger advocacy capacities. Moreover, in Moldova the urgency for one-single force that represents farmers become a stringent need, especially with the establishment of the public institution Center for Agriculture and Rural Counselling.

Keywords: extension; agriculture; farmers; farmers' associations.

JEL Classification: Q12; Q14.

ENERGY SECURITY OF A SMALL OPEN ECONOMY IN A POLYCRISIS ENVIRONMENT

PIOTR KOMOROWSKI

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
p.komorowski@uksw.edu.pl

BARTOSZ STACHOWIAK

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
b.stachowiak@uksw.edu.pl

Abstract: This study explores the complex relationship between energy transition and energy security in small open economies, especially in the context of overlapping global crises – geopolitical conflicts, economic instability, and climate change. It emphasizes that energy security is not only vital for economic stability but also increasingly strategic in a fragmented global landscape. Countries heavily reliant on energy imports are particularly exposed to external shocks, rising production costs, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The transition to green energy, while essential for climate goals, may itself generate new disruptions if not managed properly. The paper argues for the urgent need to diversify energy sources, invest in sustainable infrastructure, and strengthen regional and international cooperation. For small economies with limited resources, long-term energy resilience is critical, involving not only infrastructure security but also societal adaptability in the face of systemic and unpredictable threats.

Keywords: energy security; energy transition; small open economies; green energy infrastructure.

JEL Classification: Q43; Q48; F63.



THE UNDERVALUED PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE ENTERPRISE - THROUGH THE DILEMMA OF “DESKS”

IVAN STOYANOV

St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Economics, Bulgaria

i.stoyanov@ts.uni-vt.bg

Abstract: The physical environment of the enterprise is taken for granted, but not with essential importance for group and interpersonal dynamics. The physical side refers mainly to occupational health and safety. The issue has been taken as a leading one in European Parliament policy since the 1980s. It is a key element of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. The focus is on prevention and securing the physical health of workers. The psychosocial aspect remains unappreciated or underestimated by the governing bodies. The mental-cognitive impact of the physical environment is acknowledged, but does not have the weight of the physiological, on employee satisfaction, according to a number of managers. The question of the properties and stresses of the physical environment of the organization is limited by the paucity of research on the topic, especially on the intrapersonal structure of individuals. Within the present study, we will focus on a case study of the problem posed. We focus on an over-centered, small-scale dilemma of the "messy versus tidy desk." Focusing on a specific case study, serves as our basis for tracing the relationship between situational positioning to the generative impact of the physical environment and its functions on the employee. The study allowed us to demonstrate the relationship of the physical and the intangible in individual job satisfaction and motivation at the level of perception, emotion and formulated individual interpretation.

Keywords: physical environment; dilemma; management; understandings.

JEL Classification: M12; Z13; D23.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM AND TAXATION

ELENA CIGU RUSU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

elena.chelaru@uaic.ro

DENIS HYAMS-SSEKASI

University of Bolton, United Kingdom

db4@bolton.ac.uk

Abstract: The entrepreneurial system is essential for a state's sustainable development, and its formation significantly relies on the current public policies shaped by the political and social ideologies within which the state operates. The entrepreneurial ecosystem encompasses various socio-economic factors; it fosters innovation-driven initiatives and improves resources for entrepreneurial support. This approach offers crucial elements for a deeper understanding and enhancement of the performance of both regional and national economies. This study aims to identify the causal relationship between the entrepreneurial system and the public financial system, particularly from a fiscal perspective. It utilizes a comparative approach based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses within European states in contemporary society, specifically the knowledge society. The methodological framework incorporates qualitative sequential methodology, engaging in empirical analysis that ensures coherence and viability for our study, alongside quantitative methods that include econometric models based on panel data for European nations. The current empirical findings indicate that the fiscal system serves as a significant determinant of the development of the entrepreneurship ecosystem and vice versa. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the significance of fiscal consolidation policies and provides an overview of the taxation responsibilities of both central and local governments concerning the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This paper contributes to the existing theoretical perspectives regarding the impact of fiscal policy and its implications on the entrepreneurial ecosystem in fostering economic growth.

Keywords: entrepreneurial ecosystem; fiscal policy; socio-economic determinants; sustainable development.

JEL Classification: L26; H21; H25.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ROMANIA

RALUCA BÂRZU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
barzudraluca@gmail.com

Abstract: This study explores the critical role of entrepreneurship in fostering economic growth in Romania, particularly in the context of its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system. The research provides a comprehensive literature review on how entrepreneurial activity influences key economic indicators such as GDP growth, employment generation, and competitiveness. Drawing from academic sources and institutional reports, the paper emphasizes the significance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), foreign direct investment (FDI), and regional disparities in shaping Romania's economic development. Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a key driver of economic progress, as it encourages innovation, job creation, and adaptability in times of crisis. Studies by Bălan (2015), Roibu (2017), and others highlight the positive correlation between entrepreneurial activities and national economic growth. However, Romanian entrepreneurs face persistent challenges, including bureaucratic hurdles, limited access to financing, and an underdeveloped entrepreneurial education system. These obstacles are compounded by institutional instability and corruption, as noted by the European Commission (2019).

SMEs are identified as the backbone of the Romanian economy, contributing significantly to the GDP and employing over 60% of the private workforce. Despite their potential, SMEs encounter structural difficulties such as market access limitations and excessive regulation. Scholars like Bordean (2018) argue that internationalization and digitalization are vital for enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of Romanian SMEs. The study also investigates the impact of FDI on entrepreneurship, concluding that foreign investments contribute to knowledge transfer, technology advancement, and integration into global value chains. Works by Moraru (2013) and Ludoșean (2012) support the notion that FDI can stimulate entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly in economically advanced regions. This relationship becomes even more evident when analyzing regional disparities; developed counties like Cluj and Timiș benefit from better infrastructure and higher FDI flows, while less developed areas struggle due to labor migration and lack of investment.

Methodologically, the research employs thematic content analysis using Atlas.ti software to structure and interpret qualitative data. The analysis is categorized into three main themes: entrepreneurship, economic growth, and regional differences. Visualization tools such as word clouds, bar charts, and conceptual maps are used to illustrate key relationships and sentiment trends in the literature.

In conclusion, the study affirms that entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in Romania's economic development. For its full potential to be realized, a strategic approach is needed—one that includes reducing bureaucracy, expanding access to finance, promoting entrepreneurial education, attracting FDI, and addressing regional inequalities. Implementing these policy measures could transform entrepreneurship into a central pillar of sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Romania.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; SMEs; regional disparities; economic growth.

JEL Classification: L26; O40; M13; F21; R11.

WHAT VARIABLES INFLUENCE CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN ROMANIA? A REVIEW OF THE LATEST MODELS

LIDIA-AMELIA FRUNZĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
amelia.vatamaniuc@gmail.com

IULIANA OBREJA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

Abstract: What are the variables that influence consumers' perception of social enterprises (SEs) in Romania? This article seeks to identify the key factors shaping the purchase intention of socially responsible consumers by analyzing various theoretical models addressing socially responsible behavior, with a focus on the Theory of Planned Behavior. Out of more than 20 models reviewed, four key frameworks were selected: SRCB (Roberts,



1995), CnSR (Quazi et al., 2015), CSR (Ocampo et al., 2014), and SRPD (Webb et al., 2008). These models enabled the identification of 18 initial variables, later refined to 13 by eliminating redundancies and organizing them into two central dimensions: (1) consumer social responsibility variables, including purchase intention, social norms, and collective impact awareness; and (2) human values variables, such as empathy, community orientation, and personal ethics. The proposed model highlights that SE consumers' perceptions are influenced not only by rational factors like price or quality but also by normative and affective elements, such as belief in the social impact of SEs and alignment with personal values. Additionally, the Romanian legislative framework and European policies supporting the social economy play an indirect role by enhancing SE visibility and legitimizing their activities in the eyes of consumers. The findings suggest that adapting international models to the local context requires integrating specific cultural variables as well as a focus on "human factors." This research provides an empirical foundation for developing a suitable model to analyze consumer perception of SEs in Romania, offering valuable insights for both academic inquiry and practical application in marketing strategies tailored to SEs.

Keywords: social enterprise; perception; social economy; social consumer.

JEL Classification: M14; M30; M31; M37; O35.

FROM SELF-STARTER TO CHANGE-MAKER: LINKING ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

ANDREIA GABRIELA ANDREI

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
andrei.andreia@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines how entrepreneurial mindset and eco-consciousness influence youth participation in European society amid current socio-economic challenges. Drawing on data collected within Citeuropass project 2022-1-FR01-KA220-HED-000088786 from university students enrolled across Bulgaria, France, Romania, and Slovakia, we investigate the relationship between these key competencies and young people's active engagement in community affairs. Our findings reveal that entrepreneurial thinking—characterized by innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking behaviors—directly enhances social participation, suggesting that individuals with self-starter mentalities are more likely to engage in community activities and public initiatives. This relationship aligns with the concept of "civic capitalism," where entrepreneurs integrate social missions into their business approaches. Simultaneously, environmental ethics demonstrates significant influence on social engagement, fostering a stronger sense of duty and community values among young Europeans. Young people who demonstrate green responsibility develop deeper connections to their communities, ultimately leading to more active participation in democratic processes. The interconnection between these competencies creates an effective framework that enhances young people's societal contribution and life satisfaction. These findings contribute to understanding how to foster youth engagement in European society and validate EU initiatives such as the Union of Skills Strategy that emphasize the development of transferable skills. By cultivating entrepreneurial competencies and eco-consciousness among youth, educational institutions and policymakers can enhance community engagement and strengthen democratic participation across European communities.

Keywords: entrepreneurial mindset; eco-consciousness; youth participation; community engagement; European Union.

Acknowledgment: This work was supported by the Citeuropass project 2022-1-FR01-KA220-HED-000088786, financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



Friday, 30th of May 2025

Track 3: Adapting business management to a dynamic European policy landscape

Location: 'Ion Simionescu' Hall and online ([LINK](#))

Schedule: 30th of May 2025, 10.00 – 12.00

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Silviu Mihail Tiță (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

Lect. Ph.D. Dumitru-Nicușor Cărașu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING PRACTICES IN BULGARIA: CHALLENGES AND ALIGNMENT WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

PETYA PETROVA

St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Economics, Bulgaria

p.petrova@ts.uni-vt.bg

Abstract: Sustainability is a key concept in today's business world. Driven by growing environmental awareness and social commitment, sustainability reporting has emerged as a crucial business tool for transparency and accountability to disclose environmental and social commitments, as well as their environmental and social impacts. Driven by a deep concern for the well-being of future generations, the European Union (EU) is actively engaged in encouraging companies to report on their complex social and environmental impacts and the inherent risks they pose to the environment and society. The EU has also developed a comprehensive regulatory framework. However, the specific implementation and evolution of this framework has varied across its different Member States, reflecting their unique national contexts and priorities. This paper aims to identify the prevailing practices adopted by Bulgarian companies in reporting on their sustainable initiatives and activities. In addition, it seeks to outline the main challenges and obstacles these companies face in effectively disclosing this important information to stakeholders. Methodology: A mixed methods approach has been adopted, combining the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative methods are used in particular for in-depth content analysis of publicly available sustainability reports, annual reports and financial statements of a representative sample of Bulgarian companies. Through systematic in-depth content analysis techniques, the research aims to identify the key themes, different perspectives, and underlying factors that significantly shape the current landscape of sustainability reporting practices in Bulgaria. A holistic understanding of the current state and dynamics of sustainability reporting in the specific Bulgarian context is ensured by this integrated methodological approach.

Key findings: Bulgarian companies are currently in the formative stages of adopting and establishing sustainability reporting practices. While there is an upward trend in the number of companies starting to apply recognised sustainability reporting frameworks and guidelines, it is generally observed that the reports are less comprehensive in scope and detail when compared to the sustainability disclosures produced by their counterparts in more established EU Member States. The key challenges faced by Bulgarian companies in this area are multifaceted and include a notable limitation of readily available expert experience and knowledge in sustainability reporting, significant difficulties in accurate and reliable collection and rigorous validation of relevant environmental, social and governance (ESG) information, and a perceived lack of strong internal or external motivation to prioritise comprehensive and detailed disclosure of data on implemented sustainable practices and their results.

Keywords: sustainability reporting; Bulgaria; CSRD.

JEL Classification: M14; Q56; Q01



ON INTRAPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

VENETA HRISTOVA

St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Economics, Bulgaria

vhristova@ts.uni-vt.bg

Abstract: In recent years, research related to ecosystems in business and entrepreneurship has attracted intense attention. Ecosystems function through complex relationships that have a different nature and concern both their overall functioning and the maintenance of stability in it. Similar to natural ecosystems, business ecosystems and entrepreneurship ecosystems are crucial for understanding the dynamics of the modern economic environment. The purpose of the study is to analyse state-of-the-art in entrepreneurial ecosystems studies and models and based on this to present a conceptual framework of an intrapreneurial ecosystem. The methodology used is content analysis, which allows for insight into the essence and content of both the system as a whole and its constituent elements and the relevant connections and interactions between them.

The promotion of entrepreneurship has become an essential component of the economic development of cities, regions and countries around the world, and in recent years we have increasingly associated it with the construction, successful functioning and measurement of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Many authors argue that in the modern global economy, every community has the real opportunity to become a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, and there are already enough examples in this direction. The entrepreneurial ecosystem consists of various elements that form a community through interaction with each other (individuals, groups, organizations and institutions), but also encompasses environmental determinants that influence the way these participants work and connect. The paper analyses some of the most commonly used models of what the entrepreneurial ecosystem consists of and how it functions. New trends arising from the development of digitalization, which focuses on the digital aspects in them, are also indicated.

The implementation of intra-company entrepreneurship processes is associated with synchronizing the efforts of multiple individuals and structures in the company, so that existing development opportunities are realized in profitable realities. The functions and roles of the structures and individuals of decisive importance for the development of the intra-entrepreneurial ecosystem are summarized. This allows a new reading of the parameters of the intra-entrepreneurial process, which in turn significantly assists in clarifying the elements of the intra-entrepreneurial ecosystem and deriving connections and dependencies between them.

The focus in building the overall ecosystem of intra-entrepreneurial is on creating a functioning environment for entrepreneurial activities within the organization with the aim of a flexible and innovative work environment, generating constant new solutions, products and services in unison with the strategic goals of the company. Such an ecosystem is characterized by a supportive culture, resources, and structures that allow employees to generate innovations and stimulate new initiatives, similar to the way entrepreneurs work in an external environment. The concept emphasizes the importance of internal dynamics and relationships that facilitate intrapreneurial behavior, leading to innovation and competitive advantage for the organization. An intrapreneurial ecosystem is a complex structure that combines different elements to stimulate and support innovation and growth in an organization. They interact with each other, creating a favorable environment for the development of new ideas and projects. In published research, the models that visualize and prove the connections and interdependencies within intrapreneurial ecosystems are not many and often focus on a specific type of intrapreneurship. A view of the conceptual framework of the intrapreneurial ecosystem is presented, based on one of the most commonly used models in this direction, developed by Isenberg (2011). The elements of the ecosystem are examined through the prism of the intrapreneurial concept of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; ecosystems; intrapreneurship; intrapreneurial ecosystem elements.

JEL Classification: L260; M140; M100



FRAUD RISK DETECTION USING RANDOM FOREST ALGORITHMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MARIA-COSMINA IORDACHE

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
mariacosmina.iordache@gmail.com

IOAN-BOGDAN ROBU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
bogdan.robu@feaa.uaic.ro

Abstract: In the current context of accelerated digitalization and increasing pressure on companies to adopt sustainable practices, detecting the risk of financial fraud becomes not only a necessity with significant implications for sustainability, but also a fundamental strategy for strengthening corporate governance and achieving sustainable development goals. The detection and prevention of financial fraud are traditionally based on auditing financial statements, statistical models, and rule-based systems; however, these useful methods often face limitations when confronted with increasingly complex fraud techniques. To this end, Random Forest algorithms provide innovative solutions by leveraging machine learning techniques and ensuring high accuracy in handling large datasets. This research aims to analyze the applicability and efficiency of the Random Forest algorithm in identifying fraud risk, as well as the implications of this approach for the pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, environmental, and governance. Based on data extracted from the financial and non-financial reports of energy sector companies listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange, a predictive model based on the Random Forest algorithm will be developed to detect nonlinear relationships and differentiate companies with a high risk of fraud. The analysis of the model's performance and variable interpretation highlights the fraud-prone profile and the risks to companies' financial transparency. The results demonstrate the robustness of the Random Forest algorithm in identifying nonlinear relationships and connections between financial indicators, thus providing a valuable analytical tool. Furthermore, the paper argues that integrating artificial intelligence technologies into audit processes enhances financial efficiency and investor confidence, facilitating companies' alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. This research emphasizes the importance of artificial intelligence in corporate governance and proposes a methodological framework for fraud risk assessment in the context of sustainable development. Additionally, the findings demonstrate the usefulness of Random Forest algorithms as a powerful and interpretable tool for improving fraud risk detection systems, contributing to a true and fair view of annual reports.

Keywords: Random Forest; fraud risk; machine learning; sustainable development goals.

JEL Classification: C38; C55; M42

ASSESSMENT OF REGIME SWITCHING MODELS FOR EU MEMBER STATES

STANIMIR KABAIVANOV

Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, Bulgaria
stanimir.kabaivanov@uni-plovdiv.bg

VENETA MARKOVSKA

Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, Bulgaria
veneta.markovska@uni-plovdiv.bg

Abstract: Laying the foundations of a sustainable future requires to understand lessons of the past. In times of economic turmoil and fundamental changes in supply chains and political relations, it is equally important to detect when environment has started to behave differently. In this paper we assess various econometric approaches to study regime changes or major financial and economic indicators of EU countries. A comparison of applied methods allows to find out those that stand out in precision and flexibility and can be used to better forecast and prepare for the near future. Preliminary results indicate that regime switching can help better understand changes in the national and regional economic conditions and also test for robustness EU-wide policies.

Keywords: Hidden Markov Models; regime shifts; restricted Boltzmann machines; recurrent neural networks.

JEL Classification: C01; C52; C53.



ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE IMAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AS AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION

NATALIA TURCANU

Moldova State University, Republic of Moldova

natalia.turcanu@gmail.com

Abstract: In recent years, the global demand for sustainable and nature-based tourism has intensified, giving rise to an increased interest in ecotourism as both an environmentally responsible travel model and an economic development tool. Despite its considerable natural and cultural assets, the Republic of Moldova remains underrepresented on the international ecotourism map. This research addresses the following key question: To what extent can the image of the Republic of Moldova as an ecotourism destination contribute to its economic development, and how can this image be strategically enhanced?

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining a qualitative content analysis of Moldova's tourism promotion materials and activities with quantitative data from national and international reports on tourism flows, economic indicators, and ecological assets. Furthermore, an expert interview was conducted to evaluate stakeholders' perceptions – both domestic and foreign – of Moldova's ecotourism potential. Using SWOT and PESTLE analytical frameworks, the research identifies internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that influence Moldova's positioning as an ecotourism destination.

The results reveal a growing interest in Moldova's rural and natural tourism offerings, especially among eco-conscious travelers from neighboring EU countries. However, the current national image is fragmented and lacks coherence, often emphasizing wine tourism while overlooking biodiversity hotspots and community-based ecotourism initiatives. Key findings also suggest that enhancing the country's image through targeted branding, digital storytelling, and partnerships with international tour operators can significantly increase tourism revenue and promote regional development. Ecotourism, when properly supported by public policy, has the potential to generate jobs in rural areas, incentivize biodiversity conservation, and improve Moldova's international visibility.

The implications for policymakers are substantial. A coordinated national strategy to brand Moldova as an ecotourism destination – backed by investments in infrastructure, environmental education, and regulatory frameworks – can turn image into impact. Moreover, ecotourism could serve as a pillar for Moldova's green economy transition and help align tourism development with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: ecotourism; economic potential; national image; Moldova; sustainable development.

JEL Classification: Q26; L83; O21; R11

THE IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS ON ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

ROBERT-NARCIS BOTOȘINEANU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

botorobert@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper explores the profound impact of disinformation and fake news on electoral campaigns conducted via social media platforms. In the current digital age, political marketing has undergone a transformative shift, increasingly relying on social media not only for promotion and engagement, but also for shaping public opinion and electoral outcomes. While these platforms offer unprecedented reach and interactivity, they have also become fertile ground for the spread of fake news – intentionally misleading or fabricated information presented as legitimate journalism. The first part of this study synthesizes the existing literature on political marketing within the context of social media, focusing on case studies from the United States, particularly Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's campaigns. It identifies the foundational elements of online political communication, best practices, and platform-specific strategies, particularly emphasizing Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The analysis also highlights how social media contributes to personal branding, targeted messaging, and voter mobilization. The core of the research involves a two-stage qualitative

study. In the first stage, a content analysis of 10 fake news articles and 10 real news articles was conducted using sentiment analysis and textual pattern recognition tools. The findings show that fake news stories tend to employ more emotionally charged and negatively toned language, while real news articles aim for neutrality and objectivity. The second stage comprises semi-structured in-depth interviews with 48 participants, divided equally between age groups under and over 35. Respondents were exposed to manipulated and authentic news visuals to assess emotional response, memorability, and media consumption behavior.

The study found that younger respondents were generally more adept at recognizing fake news but also more emotionally reactive to sensationalist content. Conversely, older participants showed a tendency to trust content based on familiarity or perceived authority. Facebook emerged as the most influential platform for both exposure to and sharing of fake news. Furthermore, expert interviews provided critical insights into the mechanisms behind fake news proliferation, including algorithmic amplification, confirmation bias, and the erosion of journalistic standards. Based on these findings, the dissertation proposes a practical guide for political campaign teams to manage and counteract fake news in online environments. In conclusion, the research underscores the urgent need for enhanced media literacy, regulatory oversight, and platform accountability to safeguard democratic processes from digital manipulation and misinformation.

Keywords: political marketing; social media; fake news; electoral campaigns; disinformation.

JEL Classification: D72; M31; M38; L82

NAVIGATING ETHICAL AND HUMAN-CENTERED CHALLENGES IN AI ADOPTION: A LITERATURE-BASED FRAMEWORK

IULIA POSTOLACHI

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

iolia.postolachi@student.uaic.ro

Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of society. These changes, at every level, bring undeniable technological and economic benefits—but also complex challenges. AI systems must be designed to be safe, so that risks and disruptions have minimal negative impact on society. This study aims to explore the major challenges associated with AI adoption, focusing on two important dimensions: ethical and social implications and human factors. The analysis is grounded in a review of the specialized literature from fields such as technology ethics, digital sociology, and AI-supported marketing.

Recent literature increasingly highlights a variety of ethical and social issues. Some of these challenges may trigger a chain reaction, escalating into new forms or levels of risk. Unclear accountability, algorithmic bias, privacy violations, limited public understanding of AI, the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups, and the dual-use potential of AI are among the most frequently discussed concerns.

From a human factors perspective, the most relevant recent challenges include over-reliance on AI systems, job displacement, the anthropomorphization of intelligent technologies, difficulties in integrating human-machine roles, AI-related anxiety, and cultural disparities in how technology is perceived. This paper emphasizes the importance of embedding human-centered principles in every stage of the decision-making process when designing or implementing AI systems.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; ethics; human-centered design; social impact.

JEL Classification: O33; M31; D83; Z13



SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BY BUSINESS GAMES

SILVIU MIHAIL TIȚĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
silviutita@yahoo.com

Abstract: Business games are considered by many researchers to be modern methods of education for anyone who wants to learn from mistakes, without fear of losing large amounts of money or family relationships, friendships, etc. They are relevant for the sustainability of the training of business administration students, because a practical experience in a simulated competitive environment offers the advantage of learning by doing, but in addition it can test a series of students' skills and behaviors, even if the economic environment proposed by the game is a restrictive one, having implemented in many cases the significant basic processes of a business as well as the relationships between them. The experience gained through this form of education remains in the cognitive mind of the alumni, as perhaps one of the different disciplines compared to the traditional forms. In order to support this concept, the European Union allocates significant resources for the development and application of business games, which is why the EuReDiSkills project has the aim of identifying and adapting different educational strategies to the training needs of the new generations of future European citizens.

Keywords: business games; simulations; learning by doing.

JEL Classification: H11, H83, M12, M54, O15, O23

SUSTAINABILITY REGULATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY: BETWEEN COMPLIANCE, INNOVATION AND RESILIENCE

CARMEN TODERAȘCU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
carmenoderascu@gmail.com

IERONIM ȘTEFAN

University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economics "Eugeniu Carada", Institute of Financial Studies, Romania
stefan.ieronim.georgian@gmail.com

Abstract: Amid the growing momentum of climate policies and the commitments outlined in the European Green Deal, the insurance industry in the European Union is undergoing a profound structural transformation. This paper investigates the impact of EU sustainability regulations – such as the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) – on the business models, corporate governance, and risk strategies of insurance companies. Using a mixed-method approach, the research assesses the level of compliance, capacity for innovation, and degree of resilience of the European insurance market in response to sustainability demands. Business responses from various EU member states are compared, highlighting differences in pace, vision, and digital infrastructure. The findings reveal a structural tension between regulatory pressure and market dynamics, while also pointing to emerging opportunities for reimagining the insurance sector within a sustainable and responsible framework.

Keywords: sustainability; EU regulation; insurance industry; innovation; corporate governance.

JEL Classification: G18; G22; K22; O20



Track 5A: Strengthening public administration practices and regulatory framework for enhanced sustainability

Location: 'Vespasian Pella' Hall and online ([LINK](#))

Schedule: 30th of May 2025, 10.00 – 12.00

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Ana Maria Bercu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Carmen Toderășcu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SPENDING ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ADELINA-ANDREEA SIRITEANU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

siriteanuadelinaandreea@gmail.com

Abstract: The EU member states want to offer their citizens a harmonious life from 3 perspectives, namely social, economic, and environmental. This study investigates the impact of the greenhouse effects and investments on public spending. The greenhouse gas emission variable is included in observing environmental sustainability, and variable investments consider the beneficial effect on the economy. Public spending on education, science and research and development (R&D) are considered to bring positive effects on the sustainable development of a country, from the social effect point of view. This variable with Real GDP per capita-control variable and Direct investment in the reporting economy are used as o control variable. We use the ordinary least squares method and MG, PMD and DFE model (ARDL model). We will analyse the European country in the period 2005-2020, and we will use the Stata program. From the OLS method we conclude that 61.5% of the variation of general government expenditure variables is explained by the independent variables included in the model. And Gross domestic expenditures on research and development (R&D) has a positive impact on the general government expenditure. From the ARDL model we concluded that a unit change in investment is associated with a 0.360 increase in general government spending. In this case, the investments and general expenditures of the governments show a direct relationship.

Keywords: public spending; greenhouse gas emissions; investment; European Union countries; ARDL model.

JEL Classification: H52; G23; O16.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN ROMANIAN MUNICIPALITIES

COSMIN ILIE UNGUREANU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Doctoral School of Economics and Business

Administration, Romania

ungureanu.cosmin@gmail.com

Abstract: Public procurement represents one of the main factors through which government and local public administrations guarantee the smooth operation of public institutions, leading to meeting the demands of the community and citizens. Public procurement eats up a high percentage of GDP. Public procurement organization structures within local public administrations affect the performance of the institution itself in either a positive or negative manner. Another basic assumption in this study is that these departments are organized in a manner such that they are effective. The purpose of this research study is to explain the organizational structures and functionalities of public procurement institutions within Romanian municipalities, guided by the question: What are the most frequent forms in which public procurement institutions are structured and operate in Romanian municipalities? Based on a previously constructed questionnaire, 102 Romanian municipalities were approached, and 6 sector municipalities within Bucharest and the General City Hall of Bucharest were also included.

The survey addresses, among others, the procurement system structure, the hierarchical organization of the system, the public procurement functions organization, and task delegation in the public procurement procedures. The comparison of the responses will enable an understanding of how such structures are organized, the extent to



which priority is attached to this role by the municipalities, and the adoption of procurement procedures within such bodies. Besides, this work is an effective instrument for decision-makers seeking to evaluate how far internal structures are effective compared to similar structures found in other municipalities.

Keywords: public procurement; municipalities; analysis.

JEL Classification: H57; H41.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS AND THE NEED FOR ALIGNMENT

RĂZVAN-IONUȚ CROITORU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Doctoral School of Business Administration, Romania
croitoru.razvan@staff.uaic.ro

ANA MARIA BERCU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
bercu@uaic.ro

Abstract: This article investigates the interdependence between human resources development (HRD), performance indicators and good governance in local public administration (LPA) in Romania, with a focus on mayoralties in the North-East region. The study, motivated by the need to improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness, uses a qualitative methodology, based on the analysis of data collected through a questionnaire administered to secretaries-general. The analysis explores respondents' perceptions of performance appraisal systems and training programmes, identifying strengths and challenges in the implementation of HRD strategies. The preliminary results highlight a declarative commitment to the HRD, but also several limitations related to the adaptation of training programs to the concrete needs of the administration, the objectivity of the evaluation systems and the use of performance indicators to promote good governance. A relevant aspect identified is the need to align performance criteria with the principles of good governance, such as transparency and accountability. The conclusions highlight the need for reforms in the HRD system, providing concrete recommendations for improving human resources management practices and strengthening administrative capacity at local level.

Keywords: performance indicators; human resources development; local public administration; good governance; administrative efficiency.

JEL Classification: H11; H83; M12; M54; O15; O23.

Acknowledgment: The European Commission's (EACEA) support to produce this publication, through Jean Monnet Module. Project 101127556 — EU Resilience Digital Skills - EUREDiSkills — ERASMUS-JMO-2023-HEI-TCH-RSCH, does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS. HOW DO WE FINANCE THEM?

ANDREI DASCĂLU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
a.dascalu85@gmail.com

Abstract: Public investments are one of the main assets that can provide an advantage to local public administrations in times of crisis and help communities become more resilient to financial shocks. Budgetary planning is therefore of particular importance, since investments take time and, above all, a predictability of the funds required. In this respect, not only the attention paid to the local budget development section, but also the ability to attract funds from multiple sources to cover the local public investment expenditure, becomes important. In this paper we will examine the structure of local budgets in localities in Romania from the perspective of the

attention paid to the development budget and the financing capacity of public investments in times of crisis. This paper will also focus on identifying and explaining alternative sources of financing public investments in times of crisis and their classification according to the account criteria, i.e. economy to the local budget. Knowing that local budgets are almost always under pressure from operating expenses and that the investment section is often marginalized, it is important that the decision-maker in local public administration knows all the advantages and disadvantages of alternative sources of financing for public investment in times of crisis, in order to make the most appropriate decisions.

Keywords: investments; crisis; financing; budget; administration.

JEL Classification: H27.

TAX DIGITALISATION IN ROMANIA, THE WAY TO LOWERING TAX EVASION AND TO A PAPERLESS ADMINISTRATION

RUXANDRA-FLORINA BUDREALĂ

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Faculty of Finance and Banking, Romania
ruxandra.budreala@gmail.com

Abstract: Romania is currently investing a high amount of resources in the tax digitalisation of the administrative and tax system, with the aim to reduce tax evasion and to increase the tax revenues collected at the state budget. Through this digitalisation process, not only that taxes will be collected in a more efficient way and underground economy will be gradually reduced, but also the bureaucracy will be reduced having in view that for the past 4/5 years communication with the tax authorities is made by taxpayers in an electronic manner, not being necessary anymore to go physically at the tax office, or to print/copy documents in order to present them to the tax office worker. Having in view the above, tax digitalization in Romania is also an important pillar in the process of reducing paper consumption both for the administrative offices, but also at the level of taxpayers, considering that communication and submission of any tax related documents can be made electronically, without the need to print several copies of the documents/files and submit them physically or to send them via post/courier services. The aim for this paper is to emphasize the secondary benefits of the tax digitalization process, especially in consideration of the goal of having a paperless tax administration.

Keywords: tax evasion; digitalisation; paperless; sustainability.

JEL Classification: H20; H26; D73; Q56.

POLARIZED EUROPE: ANALYSIS OF RIGHT-WING INFLUENCE AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THE EU

MILENA TRENTA

University of La Laguna, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication, Spain
mitrenta@ull.edu.es

LENIN JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ PEÑATE

University of La Laguna, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication, Spain
lrodripe@ull.edu.es

ELENA CRESPO GARCIA

University of La Laguna, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication, Spain
alu0101404899@ull.edu.es

Abstract: Political polarization in Europe has been increasing in intensity, and its consequences are far-reaching. It undermines social cohesion, increases distrust in institutions, and fuels hostility between different political groups. This polarisation poses a significant challenge to the prevailing democratic consensus that representative democracy constitutes the optimal form of governance, as well as to the European consensus on the importance of unification.

Affective polarization, where supporters of different parties' harbor animosity towards each other, is becoming more pronounced in Europe's multi-party systems. This dynamic has the potential to engender escalated partisan hostility, thereby impeding endeavors to address common challenges. Additionally, economic shifts and social exclusion contribute to conspiracy beliefs and ideological tensions.

This paper explores the intersection between public concerns, the political messaging of new leaders and parties, and political polarization within the EU. Our main goal is to explore online search trends across various European territories that have witnessed a growing political polarization in recent years, particularly a growing influence of right-wing parties, which have been gaining ground across Europe, driven by factors such as economic uncertainty, immigration concerns and dissatisfaction with traditional political elites. This shift is reshaping the political landscape and sparking debates about democratic values and the balance between nationalism and European integration.

Using ARFIMA (Autoregressive Fractionally Integrated Moving Average) models, this research captures long-memory patterns in search trends, providing a perspective on the temporal persistence and predictability of political attention. Fractal analysis is applied to evaluate how ideological orientation and national context affect online visibility and engagement.

Preliminary results suggest that right-leaning political actors exhibit distinct digital footprints, shaped by public anxieties and the strategic framing of political messages. The use of ARFIMA models proves effective in identifying subtle, non-obvious patterns in public sentiment, highlighting their potential as tools for future research in political communication and polarization.

Keywords: political polarization; EU; public sentiment trends; ARFIMA model.

JEL Classification: C22; D72; F50.

SUSTAINABILITY OF PUBLIC FINANCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

VIORICA POPA

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute of Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
popa.viorica@ase.md

Abstract: This study investigates the sustainability of public finances in the Republic of Moldova through the lens of economic resilience, with a focus on the interplay between fiscal policy, institutional capacity, and macroeconomic stability. Drawing on theories of fiscal sustainability and resilience economics, the paper employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of fiscal indicators (e.g., debt-to-GDP ratio, primary balance, and tax effort) with a qualitative assessment of institutional reforms and policy responses. The analysis is based on national budgetary data, IMF and World Bank reports, and recent academic literature. Findings reveal that while Moldova has achieved relative fiscal consolidation in recent years, its public finances remain vulnerable to external shocks and domestic structural weaknesses, including limited revenue diversification and high dependence on external financing. The paper argues that enhancing fiscal resilience requires a coherent framework that integrates counter-cyclical fiscal policies, institutional strengthening, and long-term investment in economic diversification. The research contributes to the broader discourse on fiscal sustainability in small, open, and transition economies. The article was developed within the framework of Subprogram 030101 „Strengthening the resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of the economy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the accession process to the European Union”, institutional funding.

Keywords: fiscal sustainability; economic resilience; public finance; fiscal policy; macroeconomic stability.

JEL Classification: E62; H62; H63.



EU'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS IN THE FACE OF THE “TRANSATLANTIC TARIFF WALL”

IULIA MONICA OEHLER-ȘINCAI

Institute for World Economy, Romanian Academy, Romania
oehler.sincai@gmail.com

GEORGETA ILIE

Institute for World Economy, Romanian Academy, Romania
georgeta.ilie@iem.ro

Abstract: Starting with the Trade Policy Review Communication - An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy, the European Union (EU) has focused more and more on the environmental dimension of its trade and investment relations. As the EU and the United States (US) “have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship and enjoy the most integrated economic relationship between major players in the world”, strengthening the bilateral cooperation EU-US has been high on the agenda. However, various bilateral issues have been difficult to solve. The Global Arrangement on Sustainable Steel and Aluminium (GSA), negotiated since late 2021, had not been concluded before the initial deadline of October 2023. At the same time, negotiations for a critical minerals agreement (CMA) started in 2023 but did not advance as smoothly as intended. That would have allowed European companies to benefit from green subsidies provided through the Inflation Reduction Act. The specific measures adopted by the Trump 2.0 administration have shaken the confidence of the Europeans in a fair-trade relationship with the United States. The 25% tariff on steel and aluminium imports announced on February 10 and the additional “reciprocal” 20% tariff announced on April 2, for almost all imports from the EU, generated various reactions in the EU, but not a coordinated final answer. Based on the report by Mario Draghi, “The Future of European Competitiveness”, the new European Commission 2025-2029 is prepared for a more evident interventionist approach, helped by both offensive and defensive instruments. However, the EU suspended the retaliatory 25% tariffs on US goods after the White House decided to impose a 10% duty on European imports, instead of 20%, until July 2025. There were various calls for action, such as the French proposal to suspend European investments in the US. One of the few concrete actions of the EU was the decision to impose long-awaited fines on the American Big Tech companies Apple and Meta.

Based on this evidence, the present paper's main objective is to assess the potential consequences of the new protectionist wave of the US administration on EU-US bilateral trade, taking into account also their environmental goals. In this respect, there are also identified some relevant aspects related to the bilateral trade in environmental goods and services. The trade flows will definitely be affected, but differently, according to the competitive advantages of each part. The recent measures taken by the US are expected to generate distortions in bilateral trade in goods and services, which could affect the EU's environmental objectives, caused by the reprioritisation of actions by the EU's main trade and investment partner. Although recent measures and statements by the US administration show that environmental goals have been overshadowed by the desire to solve trade deficit issues, for the EU, the environmental objectives remain a priority.

Keywords: EU environmental objectives; US tariff policy; trade policy; environmental goods and services.

JEL Classification: F13; F18; O24.



Track 2B: Financial intermediation and sustainable finance practices in the European Union

Location: 'Trineu Mihălcescu' Hall

Schedule: 30th of May 2025, 13.00 – 15.00

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Eugenia Bușmachi (National Institute for Economic Research, ASEM, Rep. of Moldova)
Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Constantin-Marius Apostoaie (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH, FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN FINANCE: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

BOGDAN GABRIEL ZUGRAVU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
zugravu@uaic.ro

ANCA FLORENTINA VATAMANU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
anca.vatamanu@uaic.ro

Abstract: This paper presents a comprehensive investigation into the relationship between economic growth, financial development, and green finance, with an emphasis on their collective role in promoting sustainable development. As economies around the world face increasing environmental pressures alongside the pursuit of economic expansion, understanding how financial systems can support both objectives has become a critical area of study. The analysis draws on both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to explore how financial development can serve as a catalyst for economic growth, while also examining the extent to which green finance, comprising environmentally focused investments, green bonds, and sustainable banking practices, can mediate this relationship in a positive and transformative way. By evaluating cross-country data, the study identifies key patterns and regional disparities in the adoption and impact of green finance initiatives, while also assessing the role of institutional quality, policy frameworks, and regulatory environments in facilitating or hindering progress. The findings suggest that robust financial systems, when aligned with strong environmental governance and targeted green finance policies, can significantly enhance the transition to low-carbon economies without compromising growth. Moreover, the research underscores the necessity of integrating sustainability considerations into financial sector reforms and macroeconomic planning to ensure long-term economic resilience and environmental well-being.

Keywords: green finance; renewable energy consumption; financial development; European Union.

JEL Classification: Q42; Q43; O16; O38.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RISK IN CEE COUNTRIES

DUMITRU-NICUȘOR CĂRĂUȘU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
nicusor.cararusu@uaic.ro

Abstract: A stable national currency is an important factor in fostering international trade, foreign investments and economic growth in a country. Economic partners tend to prefer stable currencies in international trade as managing foreign exchange risk will introduce an additional unwanted variable in the economic environment. In the case of Central and Eastern European countries, the local currencies have undergone several periods of volatility and uncertainty in the modern period, as managing foreign exchange risk is a key factor in the business environment. Therefore, we use a series of Value at Risk historical simulations and G-ARCH based models to test foreign exchange risk for CEE countries. Our results reveal that local importers are more exposed to foreign exchange risks than exporters, in all CEE countries, in the whole period of analysis 2005-2025. Furthermore, we find that the foreign exchange rate risk was higher in the global financial crisis of 2008-2010, rather than other turmoil periods like global

pandemic, or the Ukraine war. In case of local currencies, the Hungarian economy is more exposed to foreign exchange rate risk, followed closely by the Czech Republic and Poland, while the Romanian local currency was the most stable local currency in the region. While factors like exchange rate regime, current account deficit, and economic development of a country play a key role in mitigating foreign exchange rate risk, authorities and especially local business need to consider means of reducing exposure and cost associated with foreign exchange risk.

Keywords: foreign exchange rate risk; Value at Risk historical simulation; Central and Eastern European Countries; risk management.

JEL Classification: F10; F31.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCE PRACTICES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

EUGENIA BUȘMACHIU

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Faculty of Finance, Republic of Moldova
eu_busmachiu@ase.md

Abstract: Global and national policy priorities include climate change, environmental responsibility, transparency, and governance. The need for investment and society's awareness level are constantly growing. This trend reflects a need to integrate significant sustainable elements and the financial system into financial decision processes and promote appropriate national policies to align the Moldovan agenda with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and EU standards and regulations. There is an urgent need for clear standards and transparent practices to drive a greener future. In reality, there is no common methodology for analysing and assessing financial sustainability. Promoting the policies needed to ensure financial sustainability varies depending on the challenges faced by each country. In the last years, financial sustainability in the Republic of Moldova has become a structural trend involving impact measures on the financial sector, citizens and business environment, greening of the public investment, energy, climate change and environment protection, etc. The paper is focused on national policy issues and measures taken to ensure the development and promotion of sustainable finance, and an analysis of the environmental concerns.

Keywords: sustainability; European Integration; finance; climate; governance; social responsibility.

JEL Classification: G18; Q01; F65; E22

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY. A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

RALUCA STOICA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
stoica.raluca@feaa.uaic.ro

JESUS HEREDIA CARROZA

University of Seville, Spain
jheredia1@us.es

Abstract: The application of Artificial Intelligence expanded in the last few years (especially following the appearance of ChatGPT) and consequently its use started to raise concerns about the energy consumption issues, as well as sustainability issues, more broadly speaking. As a result, an increasing body of literature is nowadays investigating this new area. Using the systematic literature review methodology and the bibliometric analysis, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the scientific production in the field of artificial intelligence connected with its impact on sustainability. Our research identifies the main discussions and trends reflected in articles indexed in Web of Science Core Collection, the most relevant database in social sciences, focusing especially on the last five years.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI); sustainability; systematic literature review, bibliometric study.

JEL Classification: O33; Q01.



CAPITAL CONTROLS AS EXCHANGE RATE MANAGEMENT TOOL: A REVIEW

IULIAN ROMEO IHNATOV

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
iulian.ihnator@uaic.ro

CONSTANTIN-MARIUS APOSTOAIIE

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
marius.apostoaie@uaic.ro

Abstract: Emerging Markets frequently face volatility in capital flows, which may generate a significant threat to the financial stability. Capital controls may play a role as instruments in managing exchange rate fluctuations, specifically for EMEs that are characterized by structural imbalances. Our analysis indicates that while capital controls can be effective in the short term, their long-term efficiency continues to be debated. The paper identifies main factors influencing the success of these measures, connections with broader macroeconomic policies and the limitations and potential unintended consequences of using such tools. This review contributes to ongoing discussions about optimal policy design under conditions of global financial uncertainty.

Keywords: capital controls; exchange rates.

JEL Classification: F32; F31; F41.

Acknowledgment: This research was partially supported by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union (Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union”, NextStepEU, under grant decision number 101085160 / 31.08.2022). This work reflects only the views of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

AI AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE IN THE EU

BOGDAN FÎRȚESCU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
firtescu@uaic.ro

Abstract: The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into financial intermediation is transforming the European Union's financial sector, reshaping traditional practices and unlocking new opportunities for sustainable finance. This paper examines the multifaceted implications of AI adoption in financial intermediation, focusing on its impact on efficiency, risk management, and the advancement of sustainable finance practices. AI-driven technologies, such as machine learning algorithms, predictive analytics, and robo-advisory systems, are enhancing decision-making processes, optimizing capital allocation, and improving access to financial services. However, they also introduce challenges, including ethical concerns, data privacy risks, and potential systemic vulnerabilities. In the context of sustainable finance, AI facilitates the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria into investment strategies, enabling more precise measurement of sustainability risks and opportunities. Yet, the lack of standardized frameworks and potential biases in AI models could undermine these advancements. Drawing on recent developments in the EU's regulatory landscape, including the Artificial Intelligence Act and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (AIASFDR), current paper explores how policymakers can balance innovation with stability and inclusivity. By also analyzing audit(ing) role combined with stakeholder perspectives, we propose recommendations to ensure AI supports resilient and sustainable financial systems in the EU, aligning with the region's ambitious green transition goals.

Keywords: AI streamlines financial driven services; AI risks; AI and auditing; responsible AI implementation.

JEL Classification: M42; G40; H20



Track 4B: Social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship: driving sustainable growth in the European Union

Location: 'Vespasian Pella' Hall

Schedule: 30th of May 2025, 13.00 – 15.00

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Irina Bilan (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Alexandru Maxim (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

EMPOWERING GENERATION Z AS ACTIVE ACTORS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PEOPLE PERSPECTIVE) . A DESIGN THINKING APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND INNOVATION IN ROMANIA

ANCA MARIA CLIPA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
anca.clipa@uaic.ro

ADRIANA SAPARIUC (TUDURUȚĂ)

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania

CĂTĂLIN IOAN CLIPA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
c_clipa@uaic.ro

Abstract: The study explores Romanian Generation Z's perceptions of sustainability concerning the people dimension and how it might be addressed through the application of Design Thinking. It represented a method for involving youth in current major issues for sustainable development and related needed innovation for people well-being in sustainable constructive relations. It is a user-centred method and participatory qualitative research that can transform education into a space for co-creation, where Generation Z actively contributes to shaping the sustainable future for peoples' approach to the European market. The proposals of interventions have resulted from Design Thinking endeavours through the active involvement of participants that considered: empathy by understanding diverse perspectives and inclusion, issues, and needs, brought creative problem-solving by generating multiple resolutions while communicating and engaged in iterative learning and teamwork, empowerment through overcoming limiting constraints. Findings highlight the critical potential of youth in shaping future practices and suggest a model for integrating Design Thinking into education to foster civic engagement, sustainability, and empowerment as key enablers. By positioning Generation Z not only as beneficiaries but as co-creators of sustainable futures for citizens and students, the paper proposes a practical framework for embedding sustainability into educational and innovation ecosystems in Romania. The implications offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders.

Keywords: Z Generation; design thinking; sustainable development.

JEL Classification: I25

ACCOUNTING ETHICS AS A FOUNDATION FOR BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY IN A DYNAMIC EUROPEAN POLITICAL CLIMATE

CIPRIAN APOSTOL

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
ciprian.apostol@uaic.ro

Abstract: The accounting profession involves the production and verification of accounting information, which is vital for users' decision-making. Sometimes, the accounting professional is faced with ethical dilemmas such as: pressure from management, confidentiality vs. public interest, conflict of interest etc. Famous cases of ethical breaches in accounting are also well known: Enron (USA, 2001), WorldCom (USA, 2002), Satyam (India, 2009).



In this context, ethics in accountancy, which entails the observance of a set of moral and professional principles that guide the behaviour of accountants in the work they perform, is essential for maintaining public confidence in financial information and ensuring transparency, fairness and accountability in financial reporting. Lack of ethics can lead to financial collapses, loss of jobs, criminal sanctions and that is why accountants must not give in to pressures and must act with integrity, even if it is inconvenient at the moment, because ethics is not optional, but imperative in the accounting profession. If, until now, ethics in accounting implied respecting traditional rules such as integrity, objectivity, confidentiality, professional competence etc., with the development of the digital era, it has taken on new dimensions and also involves protecting digital data, understanding the risks of technology, avoiding the abuse of automation, maintaining critical thinking and constant adaptation. At the same time, at a time when more and more companies are being forced to adopt environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance reporting standards, the shift to circular economies and sustainable business models require accounting professionals to understand and implement the integration of ethical, social and environmental dimensions in the process of preparing and reporting economic and financial information. Taking into account the importance of ethics in accounting (it provides confidence in the information provided, prevents the risks of fraud and manipulation of financial data, maintains and develops professional reputation), a number of national and international bodies have published some standards or codes of ethics for accountants. Thus, the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) has published the International Ethics Code of Ethics for Accountants (IESBA Code), the International Standards on Auditing (ISA) requires auditors to understand clients' IT systems and to take into account digital risks and, at national level, the Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania has developed the CECCAR Code of Ethics. In order to capture the main aspects of the evolution of accounting in the context of the ethical dilemmas that have arisen as a result of digital development, as well as new demands for sustainability and social responsibility, we used non-participatory observation as a study method, and the whole approach involves descriptive and comparative analysis. The data used are from various sources, such as literature, relevant institutions, but also from practical work. The originality of the study lies in the fact that we have access to the latest information on the current state of ethics in accounting, in the context of the profound transformations produced in the current stage of economic and social development.

Keywords: accounting ethics; sustainability; digital development.

JEL Classification: M40; M41; M42

ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

OANA URSU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
ursu.oana@uaic.ro

ELENA CIORTESCU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
elena.cojocaru@uaic.ro

Abstract: This paper starts from the premise that education is fundamental in the achievement of sustainable development, as also put forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established by the United Nations in 2015. SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and stronger institutions) account for the need to train future professionals, equipping them with the skills needed in reaching these goals, thus emphasizing the instrumental role played by higher education. Furthermore, we argue that intercultural competence and global communication are part of the essential toolbox that students need to acquire in order to be prepared to respond to the challenges of globalization and keep up with the dynamics of the world we live in. Therefore, given the prominence English enjoys as a lingua franca in both academic and professional contexts, we argue that students need to be equipped not only with the linguistic skills, but also with communicative and (inter)cultural competences. Besides the linguistic aspects involved in ELT, we believe that English language teaching is, in fact, a vehicle for cultural exchange and global engagement, which is likely to meet the need for quality education, ensuring “inclusive and equitable quality education and promote(ing) lifelong learning opportunities.” (SDG4). Thus, our aim is to identify ways in which Intercultural communication can serve as a tool in achieving the UN’s SGDs, with a focus on SDG 4 and 16. In so doing, we will explore the strategies that English language teachers in higher education can rely on in order to enhance intercultural



and global communication skills, with a focus on Master students enrolled at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, within the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași.

Keywords: intercultural and global communication skills; ELT; SDGs; higher education.

JEL Classification: Q01; Z13

EXPLORING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF SMART LOCKER IMPLEMENTATION IN E-COMMERCE SUPPLY CHAINS

ALEXANDRU MAXIM

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
maxim.alexandru@uaic.ro

TEODORA ROMAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
throman@uaic.ro

Abstract: Last-mile parcel delivery for e-commerce transactions represents one of the most challenging and costly components of the supply chain. For small to medium-sized items, out-of-home delivery options, such as pick-up and drop-off points and smart lockers, offer significant operational efficiencies and reduced costs for companies. Smart lockers are unattended systems, often integrated into public buildings or strategically placed, allowing consumers to collect parcels at any time, free from store opening hours. This flexibility and lack of personnel distinguish them from service points. The adoption of smart lockers varies significantly globally, with Romania showing seemingly exceptional adoption trends. Understanding the motivations and inhibitors of smart locker adoption among retail consumers is crucial for developing efficient logistics strategies.

This paper presents an analysis, based on a systematic literature review and a summary of existing data from existing studies, to identify the determinants of smart locker usage intention, as explained through various theoretical frameworks. Results from the reviewed studies indicate that factors such as convenience (geographical, temporal, effort), reliability influence consumer intention to use smart lockers, often mediated by perceived value and reduced transaction costs. Other relevant factors include service diversity, social influence and price.

By minimizing traffic volume and distances travelled in the last mile, smart lockers contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution, being considered one of the most promising options for more sustainable delivery. Beyond the environmental and consumer benefits, smart lockers also offer substantial advantages for carriers. By consolidating delivery locations, they can reduce operational costs, eliminate failed delivery attempts, and improve efficiency.

These findings underscore the importance of supporting smart locker infrastructure. Policymakers can play an active role by subsidizing locker placement (especially "white label" to encourage collaboration) and facilitating access to suitable locations. Focusing on improving locker convenience, reliability, and security, as well as promoting the economic and environmental benefits, can stimulate consumer adoption. Increased collaboration among logistics service providers and e-commerce retailers, potentially facilitated by public policies, is essential for achieving a dense and efficient locker network, thereby maximizing benefits for all stakeholders and contributing to urban sustainability goals.

Keywords: smart lockers; greenhouse gas emissions; consumer adoption.

JEL Classification: Q55; Q56; L81; L87.

Acknowledgment: This research was partially supported by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union (Jean Monnet Module "Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union", NextStepEU, under grant decision number 101085160 / 31.08.2022). This work reflects only the views of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



GENDER DIVERSITY ON EU CORPORATE BOARDS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ADINA DORNEAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
amartin@uaic.ro

ANTONIO MINGUEZ VERA

University of Murcia, Faculty of Economics and Business, Spain
minver@um.es

CARMEN MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ NICOLÁS

University of Murcia, Faculty of Economics and Business, Spain
cm.hernandeznicolas@um.es

Abstract: In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The European Union (EU) is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda and the EU member states are already leading the implementation of its 17 SDGs. The fifth goal of the 2030 Agenda is gender equality, respectively SDG5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. According to this goal, increasing women's leadership roles and investments in gender equality are crucial at national, regional, and global levels.

In this context, with the aim to reduce gender gap on corporate boards, until December 2024, member states had to adopt national rules implementing the measures of the Directive on gender balance on corporate boards of listed companies (the so called “Women on Boards” Directive). According to the Directive, at least 40% of non-executive board seats or 33% of all board seats for listed companies must be occupied by women by the end of June 2026. Previously to the Directive, according to Deloitte (2022), in 2020 seven EU countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Portugal, and Greece) had mandatory national quotas for the underrepresented sex for listed companies (women), nine countries (Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, and Sweden) favoured a softer approach, and the other 11 member states did not take any significant action (no mandates).

This paper aims at analyzing comparatively the impact of the type of regulation on the rate of women on boards for the EU largest listed companies. For this purpose, we divided the EU countries into three groups (no mandates, soft law and hard law). Using descriptive analysis, the results show that in the countries with hard and soft quotas it was registered an increase of women participation in boards, compared with countries without regulation in the field. Also, in those countries where binding quotas were introduced (in the last 10 years), considerably more women were appointed. Consequently, we consider that the implementation of the “Women on Boards” Directive by EU countries will contribute to the accomplishment of the gender equality goal and at the same time to the sustainable development.

Keywords: board gender diversity; board gender quotas; sustainable development.

JEL Classification: G38; J16; K38; M14



LABOUR TAX WEDGE, LABOUR UNIONS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY IN THE EU

IRINA BILAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
irina.bilan@uaic.ro

SEBASTIAN LAZĂR

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
slazar@uaic.ro

Abstract: The paper investigates the effect of the difference between before-tax and after-tax wages (labour tax wedge) on different stages of entrepreneurial activity and the moderating effect of labour unions. Using data for 27 EU countries over the 2002-2021 period, we find that the labour tax wedge negatively affects new and established business owners rate, while having no effect on very early-stage entrepreneurs (nascent entrepreneurs). The negative impact increases both in statistical and economic significance as the business matures, suggesting that once a business grows, any increase in the tax wedge has a more pronounced adverse effect on entrepreneurial activity. Regarding early-stage entrepreneurial activity, no significant effect was detected, except for opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, which, compared to necessity-driven entrepreneurship, is more likely to engage in the formal sector. Regarding the labour unions, at the same level of tax wedge increase, the negative effect on entrepreneurial activity decreases when labour unions are stronger, indicating a potential safety net effect.

Keywords: labour taxation; labour unions; entrepreneurship; EU countries.

JEL Classification: H24; J30; L26



Track 5B: Strengthening public administration practices and regulatory framework for enhanced sustainability

Location: ‘Vespasian Pella’ Hall

Schedule: 30th of May 2025, 13.00 – 15.00

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Bogdan-Gabriel Zugravu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)
Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Dan Lupu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

IMPACT OF EU LAW AND THE JURISPRUDENCE OF THE ECHR ON THE STATES MEMBER SYSTEM OF PROTECTION FOR TAXPAYERS' RIGHTS. RECENT CHALLENGES IN ROMANIA

MIHAELA TOFAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
mtofan@uaic.ro

Abstract: Public authorities endeavor to maximize collection of income to the public budget collides with taxpayers' legitimate resistance and is limited by various legal mechanism, such are the protection of the fundamental rights and the general framework of the rule of law. Among the scenarios used by the state to efficiently manage this resistance, there are some which raise intense arguments both from theoretical and jurisprudential perspective. The paper addresses the state responsibility to insure legitimate and facile return of the sums where the fiscal obligations are collected by unjustified performance or based on the unfair regulation. The focus of the research is the interference of the termination of rights in the tax law and the protection of property as a fundamental right. The investigation carried out is based on the Romanian recent experience concerning the return on the excise duties on vicious conduct, from the perspective of the EU law fundamental hierarchy and the ECHR principles and jurisprudence for the protection of property. The research hypothesis is that the taxpayer right to return of the illegitimate collected tax lays within the scope of general protection of the property. The research points the valid result, based on the analysis of the opinion expressed on the debates carried out both in doctrine and jurisprudence. The context of this discussion has a bid potential impact for the alignment of the Romanian legal framework to the European taxpayer's protection standards.

Keywords: tax return; termination of right; property protection.

JEL Classification: K34; K11.

MOTIVATION – A KEY FACTOR FOR ENHANCING CIVIL SERVANTS' ENGAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

ALIC BÎRCĂ

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Republic of Moldova
alicbir@yahoo.com

CHRISTIANA BRIGITTE SANDU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
christiana.balan@uaic.ro

Abstract: This paper addresses motivation as a determining factor in civil servants' engagement. Although motivation is a construct widely discussed in the literature, it remains topical as it is researched from different perspectives and in certain contexts. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the civil servants' motivation, at the initiation stage of the process of accession to the European Union, has become essential for achieving the objectives set. It is precisely during this period that there is a need for greater involvement and dedication of civil servants in the practical transposition of EU directives. Maintaining the increased engagement of civil servants can be ensured through appropriate motivation of civil servants.



Motivation is a complex construct, characterised by a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The present scientific endeavour aims to investigate the relevance of motivational factors on the civil servants' engagement in the Republic of Moldova. The intrinsic motivation of civil servants is determined by several intrinsic factors such as: autonomy, responsibility, pleasure, value and work significance. The mentioned factors have a direct impact on work engagement, through which civil servants realise their impact on the quality of public policies developed in relation to the requirements of the European Union. For many civil servants, full involvement in activities that have as their final effect the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, represents a sentiment of dedication and professional and civic fulfilment. In turn, extrinsic motivation of civil servants is influenced by such factors as: organisational justice, employee relations, rewards and punishments, work content, etc. Extrinsic motivational factors are equally important for increasing the commitment of civil servants, as they require greater intellectual effort, appropriate rewards and an adequate work climate to achieve the goals of Moldova's accession to the European Union. Frequently, it has been shown that, in contrast to extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors can have a greater impact on the civil servants' engagement. Therefore, the civil servants' motivation is a complex construct and different factors may relate differently to work engagement.

Keywords: motivation; intrinsic factors; extrinsic factors; work engagement; civil servants; Republic of Moldova.

JEL Classification: H83; J45

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS IN THE FISCAL FIELD IN ROMANIA AND EU MEMBER STATES

ELENA SUMAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
elena.suman@uaic.ro

Abstract: The digitalization process initiated at the level of the European Union has involved multiple reforms within the fiscal administration, as well as efforts to increase taxpayer compliance. New technologies have had positive effects in terms of reducing tax administration costs, curbing tax evasion, and improving the collection of fiscal revenues. This paper aims to inventory the measures already implemented, the effects propagated throughout the fiscal system, and the future directions to be pursued in the process of increasing the efficiency of the tax system, both in Romania and in other EU member states. Furthermore, this article will present an empirical analysis of the correlation between digitalization indicators and those related to the reduction of tax evasion and the improvement of taxpayer compliance, highlighting recent developments in this area.

Keywords: tax audit; SAF-T; tax evasion.

JEL Classification: H21; H26; H30.

CONVERGENCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURES IN EU COUNTRIES

DAN LUPU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
dan.lupu@uaic.ro

Abstract: The governments of European countries are trying to allocate increased amounts for the financing of public education, with funding starting from 4.39% of GDP in 1990 to 5.03% of GDP in 2021. Public education remains a priority for all EU member states, but there are significant differences between nations: Eastern European countries spend the least, while Nordic countries spend the most. Education significantly influences economic growth, research and development, and the productivity of production factors.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is convergence in public spending on education in the EU28. The analysis period for the EU28 countries is 1990-2022, the longest period used in the specialized literature. To the author's knowledge, there are currently no similar studies that have examined the issue of financial convergence regarding education expenditures in the EU28. The analysis methodology involves the use of sigma

convergence for the longest analysis period, 1990-2022. The analysis sample includes a number of 28 EU member countries, analyzed both globally and separately by clusters (West vs. East). The financial convergence indicators considered for the analysis include public allocation for education as a percentage of GDP and public spending per student calculated in Euro/student. Following the analysis of public spending as a percentage of GDP, it is evident that there are significant differences between subperiods and clusters of countries: until the 2000s, an accelerated convergence can be observed for all types of countries; in the period 2000-2012, a major divergence can be observed between West and East countries; in the period 2012-2014, the phenomenon of convergence temporarily resumes, only to manifest the highest divergence between European states from 2015 onwards. Regarding the analysis of the indicator public spending per student calculated in Euros, a greater discrepancy is also observed within the periods: until the 2000s, an accelerated convergence can be observed; after this period, divergence begins to manifest slightly, and after 2012, divergence reaches its peak, with Western and Eastern states evolving completely differently.

Following the analysis conducted in the study, significant differences were obtained regarding fiscal expenditures between the different categories of states, with the Western states showing the largest difference. The difference between West and East states is very pronounced after the 2000s, especially after 2010, remaining continuously large and even significantly increasing over the period. The greatest convergence occurs until the period 2000-2002, especially among the Western states. This may be due to the support shown by these states for public education through serious financial allocations throughout the entire period. The low convergence for the Eastern states can be explained by the inadequate involvement of the state in public education.

Keywords: public education; convergence; EU countries.

JEL Classification: H52; O47.

ECONOMIC CRISES AND THEIR IMPACT ON FINANCIAL REPORTING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

ALEXANDRA TANASĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

alexandra31tanasa@economic2.ro

Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of economic crises on the evolution and transformation of accounting practices, emphasizing that financial reporting could amplify their effects through mechanisms of valuation, recognition, and presentation of accounting information. The study explores the adaptability of accounting systems in situations of extreme shock, highlighting that accounting practices undergo a complex process of adjustment in contexts of economic instability, influenced by pressures from the political, economic, and institutional environment. The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of a literature review in order to provide a clear understanding regarding the dynamics of accounting reforms and paradigm shifts in financial reporting in context of global crisis, focusing on the 2008 financial crisis and on the health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. It argues that crisis periods present both challenges and opportunities for redefining the role of accounting in society, with particular emphasis on the transparency, relevance, and accountability of financial data. This paper aims to contribute to the strengthening of the literature on the resilience of accounting in the context of economic uncertainty and to propose directions for reflection on future reforms in accounting regulation.

Keywords: accounting practices; economic crises; resilience; financial reporting; accounting reforms.

JEL Classification: M40; M41; M49.



FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT OR SOVEREIGN BORROWING? ASSESSING THE GROWTH IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FINANCING SOURCES IN MIDDLE-INCOME ECONOMIES

IRINA BILAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Iași, Romania
irina.bilan@uaic.ro

FATIMA-EZZAHRA RAFIE

Mohamed First University, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences
University Research Laboratory in Instrumentation and Organizational Management (LURIGOR), Morocco
fatima-ezzahra.rafie@ump.ac.ma

MOSTAFA LEKHAL

Mohamed First University, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences
University Research Laboratory in Instrumentation and Organizational Management (LURIGOR), Morocco
mostafa.lekhal@ump.ac.ma

Abstract: External financing plays a critical role in supporting the economic growth and development objectives of nations, particularly in the context of less developed economies that often face constraints in mobilizing sufficient domestic resources. This study aims to comparatively assess the impact of foreign direct investment (FDI) and sovereign external borrowing on economic growth in middle-income countries. Using a panel dataset covering 60 countries over the period 1999-2023, we draw on data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators and International Debt Statistics, as well as The Conference Board Total Economy Database. To ensure robust empirical analysis, we employ a set of panel data estimation techniques, including fixed effects (FE), two-stage least squares (2SLS), and the generalized method of moments (GMM).

Our findings indicate that FDI has a positive and statistically significant effect on economic growth in both the short and medium term (over 3- and 5-year horizons), while sovereign external borrowing exerts a negative impact over the same time frames. Further analysis reveals that the beneficial effects of FDI are primarily transmitted through increased gross fixed capital formation, which enhances productive capacity. Conversely, sovereign external borrowing tends to negatively affect growth by contributing to a decline in total factor productivity, likely due to inefficient resource allocation or debt overhang effects.

These results suggest that middle-income economies should prioritize attracting productive FDI inflows by ensuring a stable investment climate and facilitating infrastructure development. At the same time, caution is warranted in the use of external public borrowing, which should be aligned with productivity-enhancing investments and subject to strong fiscal governance. Sound macroeconomic management and improved debt transparency are essential to mitigate the adverse effects of external borrowing and support sustainable long-term growth.

Keywords: foreign direct investment; sovereign external debt; economic growth; middle-income economies.

JEL Classification: F21; F34; O40

Acknowledgment: This research was partially supported by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union (Jean Monnet Module “Guiding Steps for the Next Generation of Smarter and More Engaged Citizens in a Sustainable European Union”, NextStepEU, under grant decision number 101085160 / 31.08.2022). This work reflects only the views of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Special Track: Students' Roundtable

Location: B413, Building B

Schedule: 31st of May 2025, 09.00 – 12.00

Chairs: Prof. Ph.D. Adina Dornean (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

Assist. Prof. Ph.D. Elena Suman (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania)

* * *

SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION, AND GREEN FINANCING IN EUROPEAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

BOGDAN-ȘTEFAN CERNAT

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

bogdan.stefancernat@gmail.com

Abstract: In a European Union oriented towards sustainable development mechanisms, public administration is responsible for shaping, implementing and monitoring green policies. Climate change, social challenges and the dynamics of digitisation are putting pressure on traditional governance structures and forcing a reconfiguration of the way public institutions operate. Beyond the existing legislative and policy framework, sustainability in public administration increasingly intersects with the need for institutional innovation and the effective use of green finance, which are becoming key tools in reform processes. This paper analyses the conditions, challenges and examples of good practice in the European area of administrative innovation and sustainability, with a particular focus on green funding and the institutional capacity to absorb and manage these funds. The main aim is to explore the relationship between sustainability, innovation and funding in public administration in the EU, through a contextual analysis including both Romania and other Member State. The methodology is of a qualitative nature, based on documentary analysis of relevant policies at European and national level, coupled with the interpretation of secondary data on administrative performance and the degree of utilisation of green funds. The work is relevant in the current European context characterised by structural reforms, digital transformations and climate change pressures.

Keywords: innovation, sustainability, green finance, public administration.

THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC SPENDING ON EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES: CHALLENGES AND OPORTUNITIES

ALEXANDRA-VICTORIA CERGUȚĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania

cergutaalexandra783@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper analyzes the relative efficiency of public spending on education among European Union countries, with particular emphasis on the challenges and opportunities that shape the effective use of resources. The study adopts a comparative approach, evaluating separately the two components of the education system: compulsory education (primary and secondary levels) and optional education (tertiary), using an output-oriented non-parametric Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) under the variable returns to scale (VRS) framework. The efficiency analysis is based on tailored input–output models, where public expenditure per student serves as the input, and educational outcomes—such as PISA scores, graduation rates, tertiary attainment, and graduate employability—serve as outputs. The results show that, on average, European countries are more efficient in the use of funds allocated to compulsory education than to tertiary education. Some countries, such as Ireland, Estonia, and Lithuania, achieve full efficiency at both levels. In contrast, Romania ranks near the bottom of the sample, with an average efficiency score of 0.746, indicating a potential for more than 25% improvement in the use of public resources. These findings underscore critical challenges, including unequal performance across member states and limited outcome-based allocation mechanisms. This topic becomes particularly relevant in the current geopolitical context, where governments face pressure to reduce education spending and reallocate resources toward the defence sector. However, these findings also highlight significant opportunities to improve the efficiency of public spending on education, such as the adaptation of education systems, the increasing



awareness of the positive effects generated by investments in education, the expansion of hybrid learning models, the effective access to available European funds, and the development of public–private partnerships. All these factors contribute to creating a favorable environment for optimizing the use of resources.

Keywords: efficiency in education, public spending, European countries, challenges, opportunities.

DETERMINANTS OF PUBLIC SPENDING ON HEALTHCARE IN EU COUNTRIES

VIRGINIA CERNOPOLC

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
virginia.cernopolc@gmail.com

Abstract: This study analyses the economic and demographic factors influencing public health expenditures in European Union countries during the period 2014–2023. Using a fixed-effects multiple linear regression econometric model, the authors investigate the relationship between public health expenditures and macroeconomic indicators. The model explains approximately 58.5% of the variation in expenditures within each country (R^2 within). The results highlight that the most influential variables are: population (positive effect), unemployment rate (negative effect), inflation (positive effect), the share of the young population (positive effect), public debt (positive effect), and the pandemic (strong positive effect). Surprisingly, GDP per capita does not have a significant effect on health expenditures, contrary to classical economic theory. Therefore, economic factors and external shocks such as the pandemic exert significant pressure on the financing of healthcare systems, and their sustainability depends on the efficiency of resource allocation and the adaptability of public policies.

Keywords: public health expenditures, European Union, demographic factors, economic factors, COVID-19 pandemic.

THE IMPACT OF EU EASTERN EUROPEAN BANK M&A ANNOUNCEMENTS ON STOCK RETURNS

LUCIAN GÎSCĂ

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
lucian.gisca2003@gmail.com

Abstract: The banking sector is in a continuous process of consolidation in search of returns of scale, liquidity, solvency and risk diversification, driven by the continental European financial system, that emphasizes the vital importance of banks in the corporate financing process through their role as main intermediaries. This process is exacerbated in Eastern Europe, a region which is less concentrated due to the relative „youth” of its banking sector, characterised by numerous mergers and acquisitions, which lead to externalities that transcend the capital markets and induce effects on the real economy. Therefore, it is imperative to determine the impact of M&As on the banking sector using the event study methodology, thus ascertaining the added value provided by the operational efficiency benefits. The results reached from the analysis show the lack of a significant effect, both positive and negative, of M&As on stock returns, which leads to a positive assessment of the economic sustainability of mergers in the eastern part of the EU due to the macroeconomic advantages provided by these processes (in case of a lack of monopolistic tendencies). Furthermore, this can encourage the penetration of this market by western banks, thus further integrating the European financial markets and providing a framework for better cohesion in the European Union.

Keywords: banking sector, mergers, acquisitions, event study, Eastern Europe.



TAX HARMONIZATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

ELENA MĂDĂLINA MĂLĂIET

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
madalinamalaiet01@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper examines the European Union (EU) tax policy, with a focus on the current challenges and prospects of harmonizing direct and indirect taxes. Despite the common objectives of strengthening the Single Market and reducing economic gaps between Member States, tax harmonization remains a complex and controversial process. Structural divergences between national economies, tax competition, uneven levels of development and reluctance to cede fiscal sovereignty are the main obstacles to effective coordination. The study shows, by comparing tax policies across Member States, how the lack of harmonization affects government revenues, investment and budgetary stability. The analysis of the evolution of VAT and corporate tax rates reflects the wide variety of national approaches, which makes it difficult to create a unified tax framework. In this context, the Fiscalis program is an important step towards cooperation, facilitating the exchange of information and promoting common tax practices, but progress is still slow and fragmented. Looking to the future, the paper highlights the need for an ambitious, phased and adaptable European tax strategy. A possible trajectory would involve establishing a uniform minimum framework for the taxation of profits and consumption, strengthening instruments to combat tax evasion and setting up compensation mechanisms to support countries with lower tax capacity.

Keywords: fiscal policy, tax harmonization, indirect taxes, direct taxes, European Union.

DETERMINANTS OF BANKING PERFORMANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

MELENA MÎȚU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
mitumelena@gmail.com

Abstract: The performance of the banking system is a fundamental pillar in promoting long-term economic sustainability and ensuring financial stability across the European Union. In an environment marked by growing economic volatility, regulatory changes, and mounting sustainability challenges, understanding the key drivers of banking performance has become more crucial than ever. This study proposes an empirical investigation into the main determinants that influence the efficiency and profitability of banking systems across EU member states during the period 2000–2024. Using an econometric approach, the research will examine the impact of various explanatory variables, classified into bank-specific, industry-specific, and macroeconomic factors, on core performance indicators such as Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE). The study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable finance by identifying the structural and contextual elements that can enhance the resilience of financial institutions. Furthermore, it provides a foundation for policy interventions that support a more stable, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented banking sector. Looking ahead, future research may build upon this framework by integrating additional dimensions such as green finance initiatives, digital innovation, and ESG-driven strategies, to better align banking performance with the European Union's long-term sustainability objectives

Keywords: banking performance, bank-specific factors, industry-specific factors, macroeconomic factors, regression model.



THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN FUNDS IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

EMANUELA-ADRIANA NECHIFOR

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
emnechifor@yahoo.com

Abstract: This paper aims to analyze the role of European funds in the sustainable development process, contributing to both the recovery of economic gaps between the regions of Romania, and those between it and the rest of the members of the European Union (EU). Through European funds, some of the most beneficial changes towards sustainable development have been initiated, these combined with a multitude of revisions of different nature, either legislative or institutional, which were quite difficult to digest, but without which, we would not have reached the point where we are now, the transformations of the Romanian economy and society being substantial in this direction. Thus, the funds and programs offered by the EU have played a central role in this regard, an aspect that is supported by the positive evolution of GDP per capita during the period 2007-2024. The results obtained highlight the fact that European funds truly represent the instruments through which we have ensured alignment with the EU's objectives that are aimed at sustainability and the reduction of economic and social disparities.

Keywords: sustainable development, European funds, GDP per capita, reducing disparities.

CBDC, INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE NEW PARADIGM IN EUROPEAN MONETARY POLICY

ANDREEA ROJNIȚA

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
andreearojnita964@gmail.com

Abstract: The digitization of the monetary system is a continuous evolution, and transaction efficiency and reduced costs are becoming more and more a priority. Although the concept of digitized currency is no longer a new one, the given topic remains to be discussed and researched in various aspects. Current trends such as central bank digital currencies highlight the major transformations of the global financial system, thus reflecting the challenges and their impact on the economy. Therefore, the connection between CBDC (central bank digital currency), sustainability and innovation are increasingly being analyzed, especially in the context of the European Union, where the green and digital transition are central pillars of future policies. This paper proposes for analysis the potential of CBDCs to redefine the paradigm of European monetary policy, focusing on the interaction between digitalization and financial sustainability. The main advantages of CBDCs in promoting transparency, reducing emissions and supporting green policies will be identified, as well as the related challenges – from sustainable digital infrastructure to the risks of financial exclusion.

Keywords: Central Bank Digital Currency, sustainability, innovation.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TAX SYSTEMS: EVIDENCE FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

PETREA V. MARIUS

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
petrea.marius2004@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper undertakes a rigorous comparative analysis of the structural transformations within the tax systems of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, with the objective of elucidating the multifaceted impact of economic, political, and demographic developments on fiscal architectures. Against the backdrop of heterogeneous national trajectories and intensifying global economic pressures, the study integrates fundamental theories of taxation, encompassing principles of fiscal equity, efficiency in tax collection, and the behavioral implications of diverse tax



regimes, as analytical lenses. These theoretical constructs underpin a comprehensive evaluation not only of the direct correlation between taxation and GDP but also of the complex interdependencies linking fiscal policy decisions to internal market dynamics and external macroeconomic conditions. The research reveals how CEE tax systems have evolved in response to shifting economic paradigms, demographic transitions, and institutional reforms, highlighting the interplay between domestic policy environments and supranational influences. In this context, it situates fiscal adaptation within broader regional and global contexts, illustrating how taxation serves as both a reactive and proactive tool of economic governance. By uncovering the adaptive capacity and strategic orientation of tax policies across the region, this study contributes critical insights into the design of resilient, equitable, and growth-oriented fiscal systems in an era marked by uncertainty and transformation. The findings offer valuable implications for policymakers aiming to recalibrate tax structures in line with contemporary socioeconomic imperatives.

Keywords: fiscal reform, tax systems, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries.

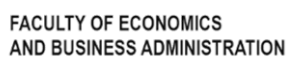
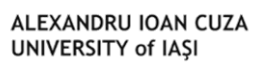
ANALYSIS OF THE MACROECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CREDIT RISK IN EUROPEAN UNION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

IRINA VÎRLAN

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
virlanirina95@gmail.com

Abstract: The banking sector plays a fundamental role in driving economic growth, maintaining a state's financial stability through financing and consolidation mechanisms. The stability of this sector represents a key condition for the proper functioning of the economy, particularly in the context of exposure to various risks. The objective of this research is to analyse the impact of macroeconomic conditions on credit risk, measured by the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio. The study focuses on the banking sector in the European Union member states over the period 2000–2003. Empirical results derived from the application of a linear regression model reveal that economic growth (GDP), the inflation rate, and the budget deficit have a negative influence on credit risk. Conversely, the unemployment rate, the volume of domestic credit extended by banks to the private sector, and the level of public debt show a positive relationship, contributing to the deterioration of the quality of bank loan portfolios.

Keywords: non-performing loan, macroeconomic factors, linear regression model, European Union.



NOTES

[illegible]