

## SUMMARY

The paper presents an approach to the competitiveness of the agri-food sector from the perspective of three dimensions, namely: economic, social and environmental, in order to reflect a complete and sustainable vision of economic development, which integrates all the essential elements that influence the agri-food sector in the long term. This approach reflects a wider concept called "sustainable competitiveness" that promotes increased competitiveness while contributing, at the same time, to economic prosperity, social well-being and environmental protection.

The paper brings together the main results obtained within ten scientific papers developed within interdisciplinary research teams after the completion of the doctoral thesis and published in various formats. Starting in 2012, after the defense of the doctoral thesis, entitled "*Integration of Romania's agri-food system in the agriculture of the European Union*", the research interests focused on the agri-food sector financing and was materialized in the post-doctoral thesis completed in 2015, entitled "*Improving the financing system of the Romanian agri-food sector through the efficient use of European funds*".

Later, I continued the scientific concerns of the doctoral and postdoctoral thesis, especially on the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in terms of ensuring sustainable development. The research questions that have marked scientific interest are the following: How can the balance between increased competitiveness and sustainable development be achieved? Do non-reimbursable European funds represent financial instruments that can lead to the increase of sustainable competitiveness? Could economic prosperity be an interconnected element with environmental protection and social well-being? Is it enough for these elements to be addressed separately, considering the objectives of sustainable development, in the context of the Europe 2030 Strategy? These are some of the questions that marked scientific interest and generated scientific research activities. The scientific contributions presented in the research within the habilitation thesis bring their contribution both to the development and expansion of knowledge in the field of Economics, and to the formulation of practical solutions for decision-makers. The work is structured in four sections, each of which is structured in chapters and sub-chapters, depending on the topic addressed, as follows:

**SECTION I - THE SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC** is structured in two chapters:

**CHAPTER I. ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** is a synthesis of the main scientific contributions from

the specialized literature, on conceptual approaches, the role and importance of competitiveness. In order to identify the links between competitiveness, environmental protection and social well-being, within the specialized literature, a bibliometric analysis was carried out on the concept of "sustainable competitiveness", in which a series of common elements were identified, as well as scientific arguments that demonstrate that the economy can be sustainable through efficient use of resources and innovation.

**CHAPTER II. EUROPEAN FUNDS – INSTRUMENT FOR ENSURING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS** is an analysis of the financial support of the European Union to ensure the sustainable competitiveness of the member states. The European Union and the governments of the member states allocate significant funds in order to ensure competitive and sustainable economies. Therefore, the research aims at the financial allocations and their absorption, by thematic objectives, for each member state, in two programming periods, respectively 2014 – 2020 and 2021 – 2027.

**SECTION II. RESEARCH RESULTS REGARDING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** includes three chapters in which the ten most representative scientific papers from the personal portfolio, published after obtaining the doctorate and approaches with the issue of the agribusiness economy, with an emphasis on the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, are presented from the perspective of three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. These works contain articles, book chapters and studies summarizing the results obtained within interdisciplinary research teams, which brought together knowledge and experiences from different fields and which allowed a complex approach to the issue of competitiveness. The titles of the personal list of scientific works that approach with similar issues are numerous, the selection of the ten scientific works considered the topicality of the themes, as well as the usefulness of the research approach at the community level, usefulness validated including by the number of citations of these works.

**CHAPTER III. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF COMPETITIVENESS** brings together the research results of five scientific works that deal with economic competitiveness, as a priority at the European Union level and a key factor for ensuring economic growth and sustainable development. At the same time, the results obtained demonstrate the complexity of agri-food sector competitiveness, which includes many other aspects compared to the economic ones.

**CHAPTER IV. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF COMPETITIVENESS** centralizes the research results of two scientific papers that approaches with the social perspective of competitiveness. This is an essential component of economic competitiveness, since only through the social component can one act effectively and jointly, so that the best results can be obtained in economic activities.

**CHAPTER V. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF COMPETITIVENESS** sums up the research results of three scientific papers that approaches with the environmental perspective of competitiveness. Economic growth and environmental protection are complementary and interdependent, finding a significant and positive relationship between innovations in terms of sustainability and competitiveness, as they are associated with economic efficiency, as well as with obtaining a competitive advantage.

**SECTION III. UNIVERSITY CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL** includes university professional achievements subsumed by the concern for the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in the context of sustainable development, as well as the main career objectives, in the three main directions: teaching activity, research activity and administrative activity.

**SECTION IV. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES** include the list of the main bibliographic references consulted and cited within the habilitation thesis, as well as for the presented scientific works.