The role of inter-municipal cooperation in sustainable development: Local representatives' mot ivations to participate, impact and impediments encountered in Constanța County, Romania

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Abstract:
The present research aims to explore the role and importance of the inter-municipal cooperation structures developed in Romania, focusing on the activity of these cooperation structures in Constanța County. The main objectives of the study are: (1) To investigate the activity of intercommunity development associations in Constanța County; (2) To identify the main reasons that motivated the administrative-territorial units from Constanța County to enter into a intercommunity development association or in an metropolitan area association; (3) To analyze the factors that limit the inter-municipal development capacity; and (4) To analyze the intentions of the local authorities to involve in other inter-municipal cooperation forms in the future. The most important findings of the study are: the representatives of the local communities affiliated in an Intercommunity Development Association present a high degree of satisfaction regarding the involvement in the structure and its impact. The main reasons for local government to be part of an association are the development of public services and increased access to EU funding. The study also revealed that the main impact of the local communities' involvement in these associations is the increase in citizens' quality of life. Also, the main impediments of the Intercommunity Development Associations are the administrative procedures and the economic and social context.

Keywords: *intercommunity development associations, sustainable development, cooperation*