

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE IN THE COUNTIES AT THE ROMANIA-BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER AREA**

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**Abstract:** *Romania is divided in administrative terms in counties, cities (some cities have municipality status) and communes. In the southern part of Romania there are 7 counties (Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta) bounded by the Danube and the Black Sea (Constanta). These counties are very heterogeneous in terms of development, although natural conditions are very similar. There are 45 cities and municipalities, with a wide variety of numerical dispersion (-3 fewest in Giurgiu, most -12 - Constanta county). In the period September-November 2013 data from 45 cities we collected (a total of 265 indicators covering the entire socio-economic local lifetime) from official sources: the prefecture institutions, local government, the National Institute of Statistics, county employment agencies, the National Office for Trade Register). Through this paper we intend to analyze part of the data collected to identify and compare the action of local authorities and the degree of development of the seven counties in terms of urbanization and the development of local public services in the major urban settlements of each county - municipalities. Such analysis performed allows us to draw conclusions about the relationship between local public services, administration actions and urban development.*

**Keywords:** urban development, public services, counties, municipalities, towns

### **SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

"The word sustainability (supporting) has its roots in Latin, *subtenir* meaning "to stem / retain" or "support from below". A community must be supported from the bottom-by the current and future inhabitants. People need to take care of their community"(Muscoe,M, 1995).

The first definition of sustainable development appeared in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled "Our Common Future" (Brundtland, 1987): "the development that seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Since the Commission was chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, it remained known as the Brundtland Report. This concept has crystallized over time, over many decades, in in-depth international scientific debates and it got political meanings in the context of globalization. Sustainable development has become an objective of the European Union since 1997, when it was included in the Maastricht Treaty and the 2001 during the Summit of the Goetheborg the Sustainable

Development Strategy of the European Union was adopted. The Report "Our Common Future" can be considered the starting point of a global partnership constituting a political turning point for the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainability refers to the ability of the society to operate continuously in the future, without leading to resource depletion, with three major key components: environment, society and economy. The concept of sustainable development is the result of an integrated approach of policy and decision makers' factors, in which the environment protection and long-term economic growth are seen as complementary and mutually dependent. Social factors determine certain attitudes towards the environment, with consequences on affecting pressures on ecological systems. But this is neither the starting point nor the end of the conceptual development process.

Urban sustainable development also involves choosing appropriate ways of organizing cities to meet the target needs interested in urban development. It is believed that sustainable urban development has reached its finality when the business community and the citizens are satisfied with the economic-urban social environment, when the expectations of visitors and investors are met (Kotler et al., 2002). Urban sustainable development is an indispensable element in strategies for economic development of cities, contributing to setting the overall vision of the strategy. It helps cities meet several objectives (attracting new national / international companies, strengthening industrial infrastructure, tourism development etc.) while the need to maintain or decrease public spending and to face competition for attracting new investors.

The main goal of urban sustainable development is the extraction of activities with potential beneficial effects for the community and maximizing the satisfaction of target market segments. The central thesis of urban sustainable development is that, despite internal and external forces with which they are struggling, communities have the ability to improve their relative competitive positions (Racoviceanu, S., Țarălungă, 1999).

Therefore, even if it relies on one field and one type of privileged actions, local development cannot be the object of an isolated, unilateral policy. In other words, interventions in favor of local development cannot be defined otherwise than in a broad sense, incorporating actions traditionally targeting different fields. Since local development is, at the same time, economic, social and cultural, for its achievement it is necessary to intervene both public and private agents, from the economic and social sphere, and even some forms of their association.

The success of the local community, in the economic and administrative framework is in close correlation with its capacity of adapt to the mechanism of the regional or national market, which are in permanent change. The change process takes place in conditions given to the area, such as: geographical, historical, cultural, social, administrative factors.

In some EU countries, the large autonomy available to the local collectivities, derived from the decentralization process, favors vertical competition and same-level collectivities within the local development process.

Local development, the process that implies the partnership between the local authorities, the business environment and the non-profit organizations, which have as main objective to stimulate investments, which, in their turn, generate sustainable development.

Local development focuses on the existing potential of the area or of the locality and identifies the organizations that can and must contribute to the increase of the local community

potential. The actions performed during the local development process must have a positive impact on the viability of the entire locality and not only over one sector of the local economy.

Local development refers to the capacity development of a local community to stimulate economic growth, by creating new jobs, but also conditions for the capitalization on the traits and opportunities pertaining to the rapid changes occurring at the economic, social, cultural, technological level.

*„The basis of any local development process is represented by the local development strategy within which the characteristics of the area must be the most important”*(Matei, L, Anghelescu, S, 2009).

Strategic planning has a double mission: to mobilize the potential public and private partners at the local level and to achieve a balance between the structures composing local development. „The local development strategy is the action that views opportunities as requirement of the local community, fact which imposes the taking of measures, depending on the specific of the area:

- rehabilitation and modernization of the existing infrastructure
- expansion of investments in the infrastructure, key-factor in achieving any type of development
- development and promotion of SME’s, sector which leads to rapid economic growth
- promotion of the activity of the economic branches requested by the local collectivity and which have ensured the necessary resources
- assignment of the necessary resources for the financing of the human capitals
- expansion and development to markets
- development partnerships between the public and the private sectors
- financial support for certain public interest utilities” (Matei, L, Anghelescu, S, 2009).

The authorities participating to local development resort to the identification and capitalization of their own resources and of the resources specific to the area, but they also intervene with correction measures in case occurrence of dysfunctional ties during the development process.

Therefore, local development presupposes the existence of a normative-procedural framework, of a public-private partnership and of a viable strategy, in accordance to the population’s needs.

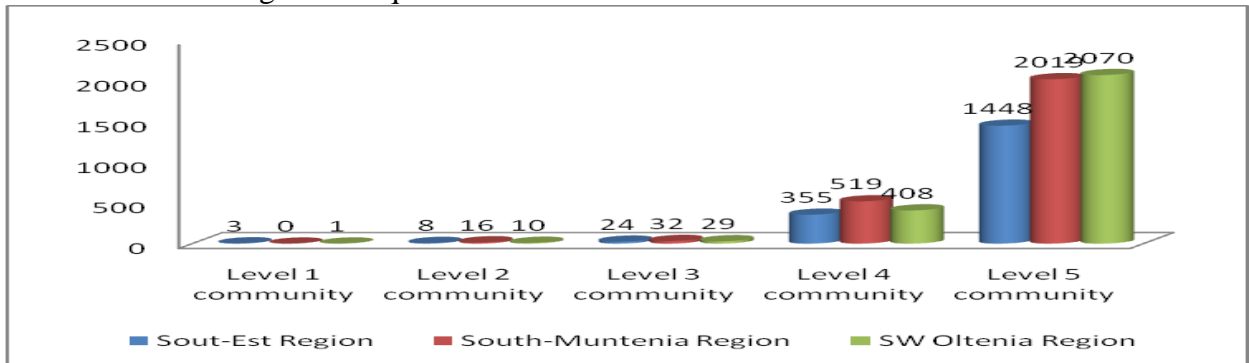
Local development diversifies and enriches the activities on a given territory by mobilizing the resources and energies existing in the area. Result of the efforts of a population, local development means the application of an economic, social and cultural development project (Dinca Dragos, 2005).

## **THE DEVELOPMENT REGIONS REPRESENTED IN THE ROMANIA-BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER AREA**

7 counties are part of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area: Constanta (SE Region), Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi (South-Muntenia Region), Dolj, Mehedinti, Olt (South-West Oltenia Region). In what concerns the research methodology used, the quantitative analysis was employed, with the following indicators:

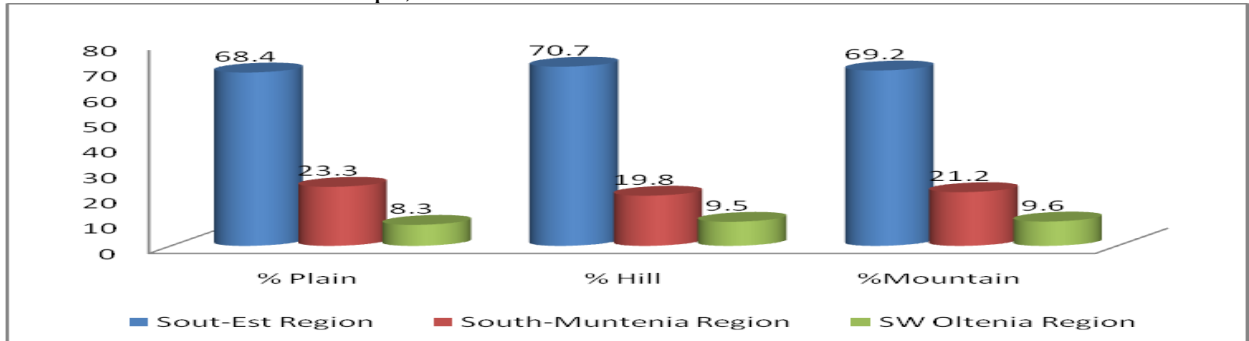
- Locality network;
- Geographic conditions;
- Programmatic documents of the local authorities;
- Local economy and the work force;
- Population;
- Water and sewerage supply;
- Gas supply;
- Public lighting;
- Cleaning;
- Emergency situation services.

From the perspective of the network of localities and the geographical conditions, the 3 above-mentioned regions are quite close to one another.



Graphic no.1 Network of localities in the 3 regions

The average height in the regions represented in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area is of 210 m (SE Region), 263 de m (South-Muntenia Region) and 241 m (SW Oltenia Region). In what concerns the landscape, the situation is as follows:



Graphic no.2 The landscape in the 3 regions

Other indicators also reveal great similarities between the 3 development regions:  
(Data sources: National Agency for Meteorology and the Regional Development Plans)

**Table 1 Analysis of certain geographical factors, as well as of the existence of programmatic documents**

	Value South-East Regi	Value South-Muntenia Re	Value South-West Oltenia R
Temperatures recorded	11,2	10,4	11,3

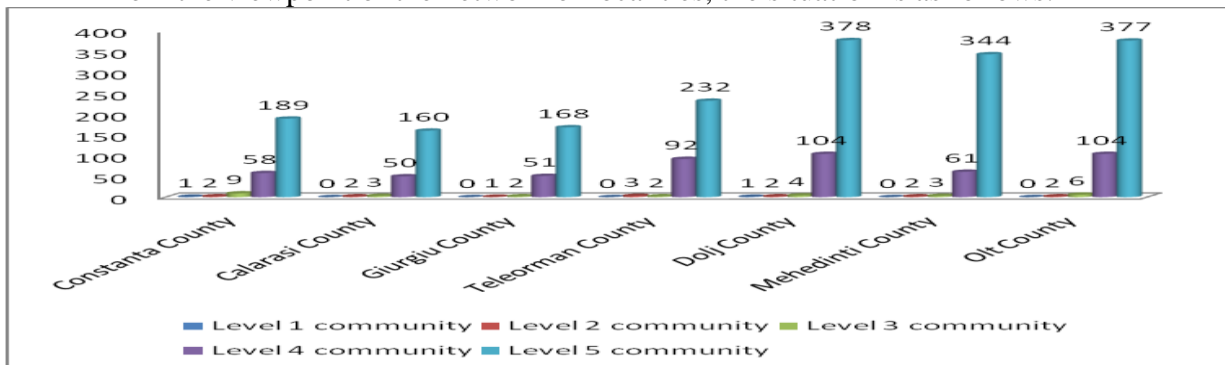
Level of precipitations	645	823	722
Evapotranspiration recorded	912	1038	1021
Humidity level	72	69	71
Population density – no. of inhab km <sup>2</sup>	78,45	94,1	79,8
Existence of a development strateg gas service (Yes/No)	NO	NO	NO
Existence of a development strateg public lightingservice (Yes/N	NO	NO	NO
Existence of a development strateg cleaning service (Yes/No)	NO	NO	NO
Existence of a development strateg emergency situations service (Ye	NO	NO	NO
Existence of a development strateg region	YES	YES	YES

### COUNTIES IN THE ROMANIA-BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER AREA – STATE ASSESSMENT

In the southern part of Romania there are 7 counties (Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, and Constanta) which have as common point the bordering by the Danube and the vicinity with Bulgaria.

#### 3.1. The locality network

From the viewpoint of the network of localities, the situation is as follows:

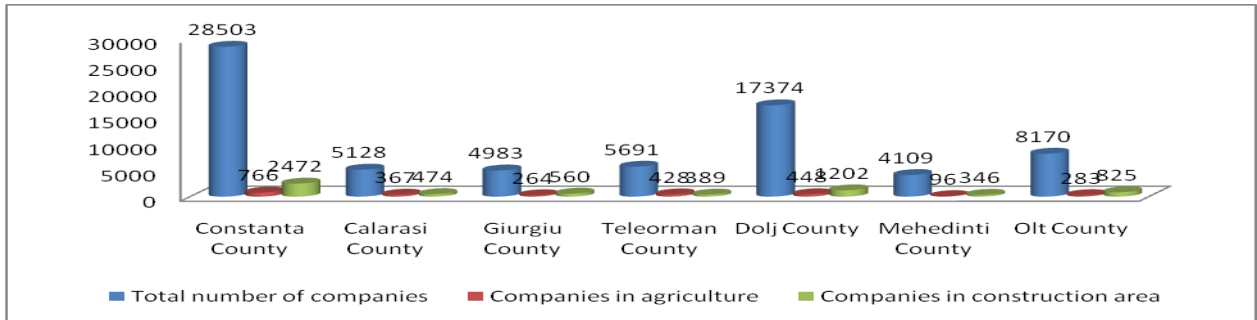


Graphic no.3 Network of localities

It is seen that the counties in the western area of the cross-border region have a higher number of localities, without a correlation between this indicator and the surface. Thus, Constanta County is the second as surface, but has the lowest number of localities, but the highest number of towns and municipalities and the most numerous population.

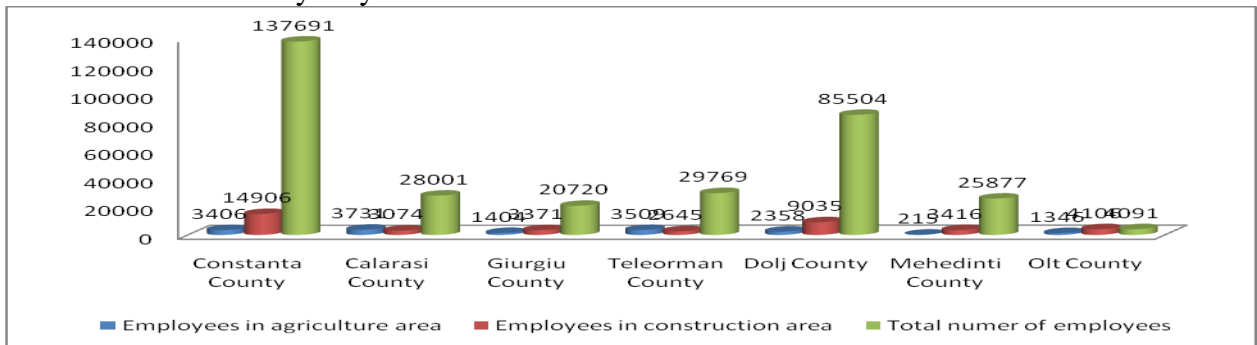
#### 3.2. Local economy and the work force

From the perspective of the economic activity there are large discrepancies between the 7 counties: in Constanta and Dolj there are the most trading companies, and these counties are the only ones with rank 1 localities.



Graphic no.4 Trading companies

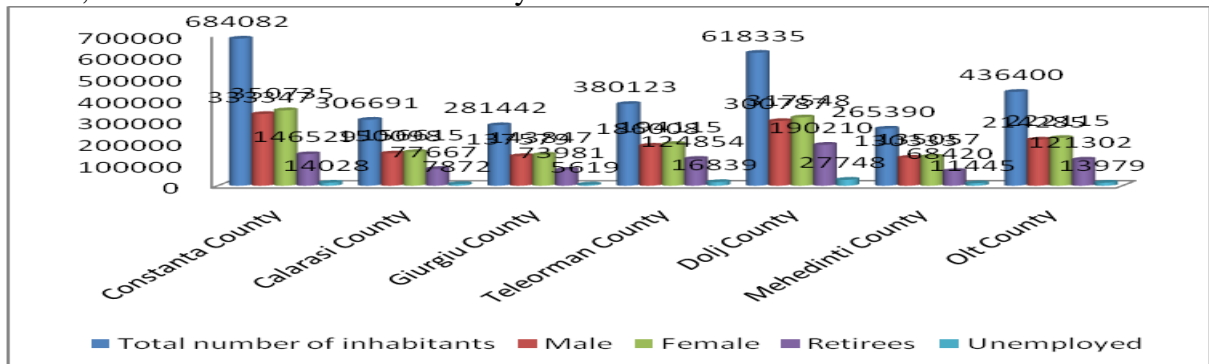
Mehedinti County is the least developed from the perspective of this indicator. There is a direct connection between the number of trading companies and the situation of employment. The two statistics are synonyms.



Graphic no.5 Number of employees

### 1.3. Population

There are significant discrepancies with respect to the number of inhabitants in the 7 counties. Constanta has the highest number of inhabitants – 684082, and Mehedinti the lowest – 265390, without a direct link to the county surface indicator.



Graphic no.6 Population statistics

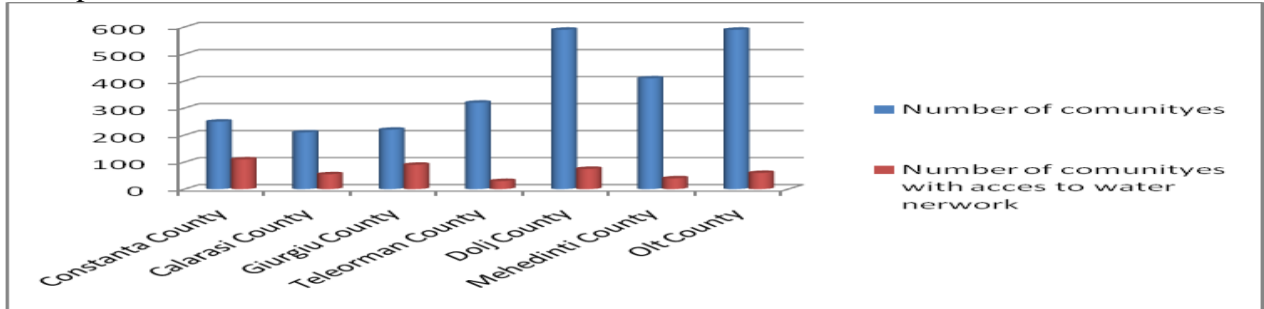
It is established that there is no proportional relationship between the number of inhabitants, the number of trading companies and the number of employees. As example, the

population ratio between Constanta and Mehedinti is of 2.57, and the ratio of companies in the two counties is 6.93.

#### 4. THE PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE COUNTIES OF THE ROMANIA-BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER REGION

##### 4.1. Water supply and sewerage

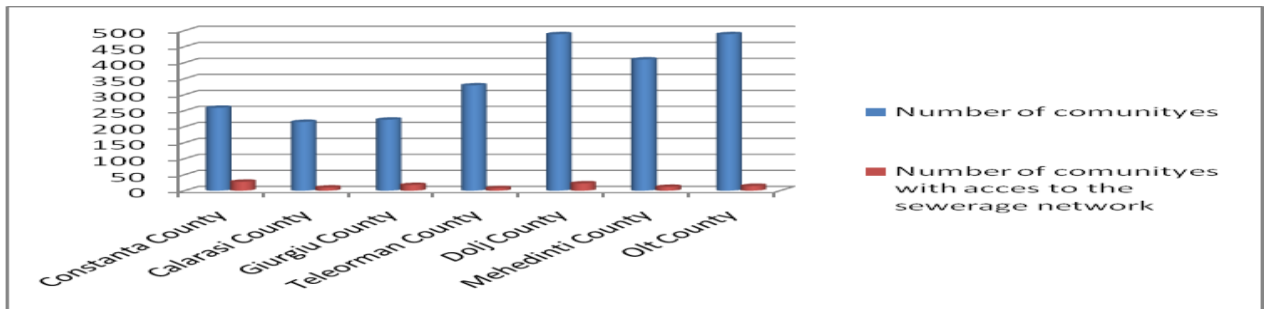
As far as water supply is concerned, Giurgiu County has the best number of localities – number of localities with access to water supply ratio. But in what concerns the total length of the water and sewerage supply networks, the counties with important economic activity are in the top.



Graphic no.7 Situation of the water supply

Table 2 Total length of the water supply network (transport and distribution) (km)

ATU name	Constanta	Cal	Giur	Teleor	Dolj C	Mehed	Olt Cou
Total length of the water supply network (transport and distribution) (km)	2972	114	14	898	19	86	1315



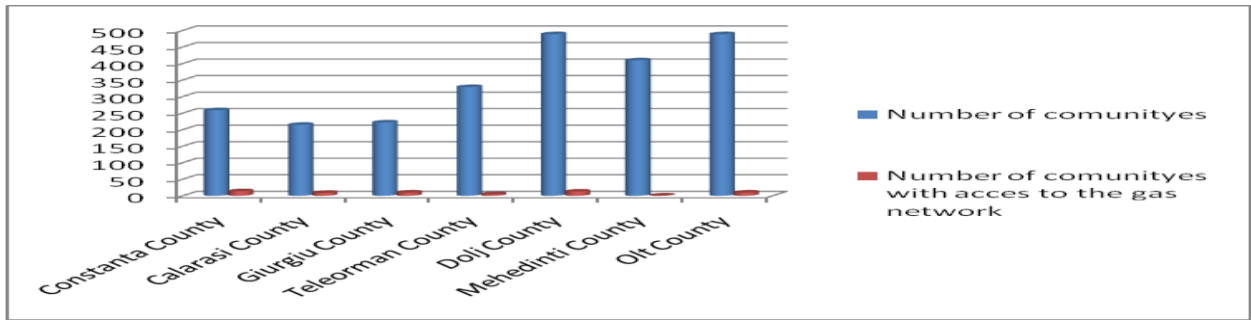
Graphic no.8 Situation of the sewerage services

Table 3 Total length of the sewerage network (km)

ATU name	Constanta C	Calarasi	Giurgiu C	Teleorman	Dolj C	Mehedinti C	Olt Co
Total length of sewerage network (km)	1204.6	171	200.4	231	709	201	338.

##### 4.2. Gas supply

This service is little accessible in the 7 counties. In Mehedinti one locality has access to gas supply. In general, the rural space has no access to such a service.



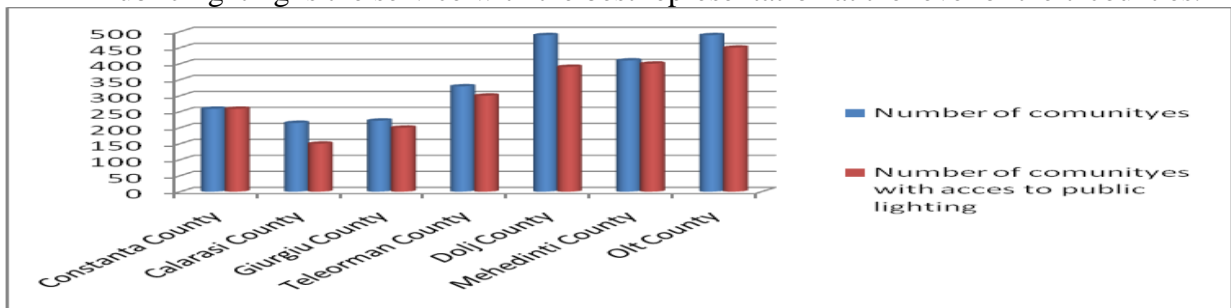
Graphic no.9 Situation of gas supply

Table 3 Total length of the gas network

ATU name	Consta Cour	Calarasi C	Giurgiu C	Teleorman C	Dolj Co	Mehedinți	Olt Cou
Total length of network (km)	834.4	233.	249	243	633.7	23.7	331.8
Existence of development for the gas service at the level (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

#### 4.3. Public lighting

Public lighting is the service with the best representation at the level of the 7 counties.



Graphic no.10 Situation of public lighting

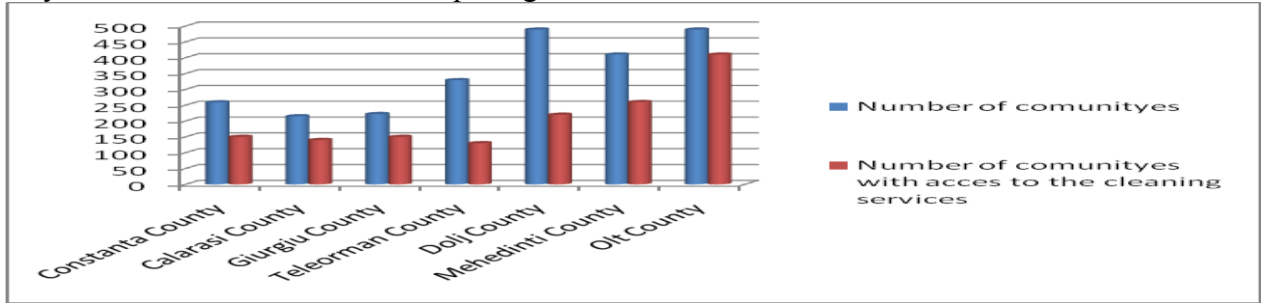
Table 4 Existence of a development the strategy of the public lighting service at the county level

ATU name	Constanta C	Calarasi C	Giurgiu C	Teleorman	Dolj Co	Mehed Cour	Olt Cou
Existence of development strat the public lighting at the county (Yes/No)	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

#### 1.4. Cleaning



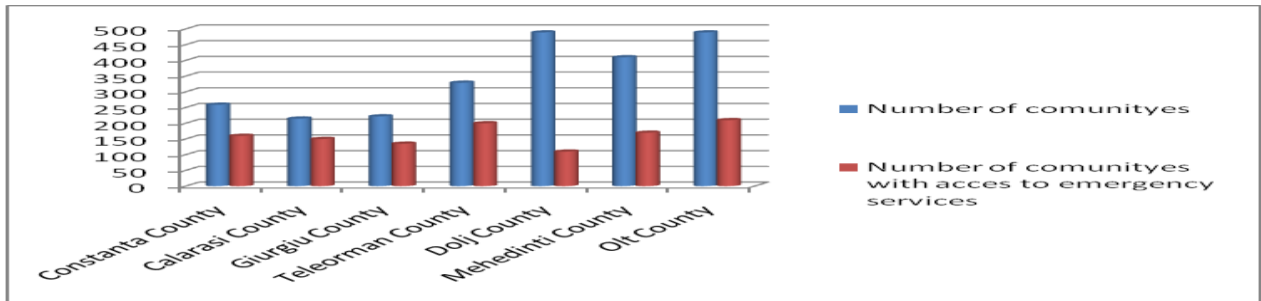
Paradoxically, the cleaning services are not organized in all localities in the counties or they do not cover all localities composing the ATU's.



Graphic no.11 Situation of cleaning

#### 4.5. Emergency situation services

Even though there is an obligation regarding the functioning of emergency situation services in each locality, the situation is far from satisfactory. In most cases, due to the lack of staff, the local authorities did not assign job openings to this type of services.



Graphic no.12 Situation of emergency services

## CONCLUSIONS

The development regions in the cross-border area present numerous similarities from the perspective of the indicators analyzed, which leads to a possible consideration of the current development regions for the construction of administrative-territorial regions.

The network of localities in the 7 counties analyzed is disproportionate between the counties in the western part and those in the eastern part. However, we notice that within the same development region the situation is balanced (similarities between the counties Dolj, Mehedinți, Olt and between the counties Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi).

The large towns play the role of development centers, the most developed counties being those where there are rank 1 locality – Constanta and Dolj. Here there are the highest number of trading companies, employees, but also population. Still, there is no proportional ratio between the number of companies and the number of employees.

There are wide discrepancies between the counties in matters of population, economic development, and access to public services.

Paradoxically, there is no direct connection between the economic activity and the quantity of public services (case of Giurgiu County).

The public services analyzed are little accessible in the 7 counties, a significant number of localities having no access to them. The nonexistence of the primary services – water supply, sewerage, gas supply, also represents an obstacle in the path of economic development.

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