



ULST Timisoara
**Multidisciplinary Conference on
Sustainable Development**
21-22 May 2026



THE ECONOMY OF HUNEDOARA COUNTY: CURRENT STRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

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Abstract: *The paper entitled "The Economy of Hunedoara County: Current Structure and Sustainable Development Prospects" aims to analyze the economic configuration of Hunedoara County in the context of structural transformations generated by the transition from an industrial economy to a diversified and service-oriented one. The study highlights the main characteristics of the local economy, with a focus on the dominant sectors, the evolution of economic indicators and the role of factors influencing regional development. The economy of Hunedoara County faces a series of challenges, including the decline in the active population, labor migration and the relatively low level of private investment. However, there are significant development opportunities, generated by access to European funds, the valorization of tourist heritage and the implementation of policies oriented towards innovation and digitalization.*

• Introduction

Currently, the economy of Hunedoara County is in a process of adapting to new European and global economic requirements, being influenced by phenomena such as digitalization, green transition, development of the service-based economy and the need to increase regional competitiveness. In this context, identifying sustainable development directions becomes essential for capitalizing on the economic and social potential of the county. Hunedoara County has multiple resources that can support a sustainable development model, such as natural and cultural heritage, tourism potential, renewable energy resources, educational infrastructure and favorable geographical positioning. An important aspect is the need to adapt the workforce to the current demands of the labor market. The economic restructuring process has highlighted the importance of vocational training, occupational reconversion and the development of digital and technical skills. In this regard, educational institutions and employment bodies have an essential role in supporting the transition to a competitive and sustainable economy. In the case of Hunedoara County, sustainable development involves both the economic reconversion of former industrial areas and the capitalization of economic areas with high potential, such as tourism, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, the circular economy and services based on innovation and digitalization.

• Material and method

The research on the current structure and sustainable development prospects of the Hunedoara County economy involved the use of a complex methodology, based on the collection, processing and interpretation of economic, social and territorial information relevant to the analysis of regional development. The research used both primary and secondary data sources, in order to provide the most complete picture possible of the economic and social situation of Hunedoara County.

• Results and discussions

The industrial sector continues to hold an important share in the county's economy, but the restructuring of mining activities and the reduction of traditional industrial capacities have led to a decrease in the number of jobs in the industry. The mono-industrial areas of the Jiu Valley have been affected by processes of economic and social decline, manifested by increased unemployment, population migration and reduced investments.

At the same time, the service sector has experienced progressive development, especially in areas such as trade, transport, education, health and administrative services. The increase in the share of services reflects the adaptation of the local economy to new economic trends and structural changes specific to the modern economy.

Tourism is an area with high potential for sustainable development. Sites such as Corvin Castle, Deva Fortress, Retezat National Park and Dacian historical sites attract a significant number of tourists annually and contribute to the development of the tourism services sector.

From a sustainable development perspective, the transition to a green economy represents a major opportunity for the county. Hunedoara County can benefit from investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, green mobility and the rehabilitation of land affected by industrial and mining activities.

• Conclusions

The economy of Hunedoara County is going through a complex process of structural transformation, determined by the economic and social changes produced in the last decades. The reduction of traditional industrial activities has generated economic and social difficulties, but has created, at the same time, the premises for the development of new economic areas based on services, tourism, innovation and sustainable development.

Sustainable development of Hunedoara County involves the intelligent valorization of local resources, supporting innovation and investments, protecting the natural and cultural heritage and permanent adaptation to contemporary economic and technological changes. Only through a strategic and integrated approach can the county become an example of sustainable economic transition and regional revitalization in a European context.