

THE ROLE OF CLUSTERS IN THE REGIONAL CRISIS PROGRAMS. REGIONS OF ROMANIA AND UKRAINE

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Abstract

The basis of a regional anti-crisis policy is to create a system of crisis prevention and mild leakage, to ensure a stable, free of sharp ups and downs, development of regional industries. Under the impact of the crisis (as in the pre-crisis period, under the influence of competition) and to ensure profitability, companies are forced to seek lines of cost optimization, one of which is the creation of new clusters and the restructuring of the existing clusters.

Keywords: economics cluster structure, regional anticrisis programs, economic development.

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Clustering has already reached more than 50% of the of major countries economies; it serves as a new vector of the world system capitalism development. A. Toffler, citing the example of Italy, called clustering the «new wave» of the capitalism development [1, p. 76]. The overall process of the world economy globalization influences the clusters, increasing their competitiveness in the global market.

The economics cluster structure exercises a significant influence on the whole economic policy of the state. First of all, it is connected with the support of the science, risk-taking innovation, export activity, creating the necessary infrastructure and education. The policy which relies on the development of clusters is leading to increase competitiveness of the state. Typical example - the economic policy of Finland, based on clustering. Over the past ten years the country took the first place (from 102 before the country) in the competitiveness ranking, overtaking such key states as the United States, Germany and Japan [3, pp. 16-19]. Due to the high-performed clusters, which are supported by the innovative structures, little Finland, with a total of 0.5% of the world's forest resources, provides 10% of world exports of

wood products and 25% of paper. On the mobile communications market, it provides 30% of mobile communication equipment world exports and 40% of mobile phones [1, pp. 82].

Typically, the region enterprises working in the same or related industries have a close contact (common suppliers of raw materials, components, the general labour market, general financial resources, a unified regional production and social infrastructure) because of the territorial community that is the main source of cooperation maintaining competitiveness.

The definition “cluster” is commonly used in English-speaking countries - USA, Great Britain, etc., in several European countries, such as Italy, France, Germany, Denmark it is replaced by the term “industrial area”. Regional clusters are a concentration of business firms, independent service firms, including their suppliers, the knowledge, technology and know-how creators (universities, research institutes, engineering centres), the coupling of market institutions (brokers, consultants), financial institutions, industrial and social infrastructure, as well as consumers who interact with each other in a single chain of value creation, while closely being related to a specific region (in this case, an administrative unit is not a clear region boundary).

Using the theory of cluster management as a regional anticrisis programs instruments caused by a number of reasons: the regional authorities changing role to increase their autonomy, lack of regional differentiation of fiscal development of priority sectors of the region's economy, the need to strengthen the role of economic factors and reduce of the administrative, the close contact between participants in the cluster because of the territorial community. The cluster serves as an objective phenomenon in the geographical aspect and in a single internal information sphere, which is closely related to the external. Complex combination of competition and cooperation is formed in the clusters. They exist as if in different spheres, and supplement each other, especially in the innovation process. Interaction with the domestic cluster consumer is based on the competition with the outside cluster consumer, as a rule - in cooperation with a unit supply and distribution logistics single window.

In recent years, the special significance of the processes of clustering purchased in countries with economies in transition, especially in the countries - the new EC members. For these countries, the OECD and the EC Secretaries have established a special program designed to implement projects on a cluster model. Partial financing for projects also has been done by EBRD. The secretaries of the EC initiated a separate program within the CEI (Central European Initiative), through which the two countries-EC members, notably Italy and Austria, were invited to establish both national and transboundary cluster structures for the 17 countries participating in CEI.

According to declaration of 1997 „On strengthening economic cooperation in Europe” and “Work Plan”, which specifies it, the appropriate assistance to European countries with economies in transition was designed to create new production systems based on networks and clusters, which exists nowadays [2, p. 14].

Among the examples of timely science-based programs is a regional cluster project Maramuresh Chamber of Commerce (Chamber of commerce and industry Maramuresh) (Romania). The project is based on the definition of the cluster formation branches of the region, as well as the selective selection of businesses that will form the basis of the cluster schools to ensure the cluster with skilled workers, the elements of information and social infrastructure in the region. The project we have identified as the new, functions of which are to demonstrate the business community and local executive bodies, the possibility of such an organization. Further initiatives to create regional clusters will have to come from them. To create the new transnational cluster formation the series of workshops were carried out in the town of Baia Mare (Romania). Seminars cover the issue of “study of the possibilities for the creation of clusters in the region of Maramuresh (Romania) - Transcarpathian (Ukraine)” and were conducted from August 2007 till October 2008 under the project financed by the EC: “RU-ECONdb-CLUS - Romania-Ukraine: The local socio-economic sphere development ensuring”.

The study for the intensification of economic development of transboundary region of Maramuresh (Romania) - Transcarpathian (Ukraine) was the general project objectives by identifying the general opportunities for future economic cluster type agglomerates. In this context it was supposed to analyze the specialization of at least 6000 companies in the region by surveying nearly 200 of them, using special research instruments and methodological approach. The work was carried out as part of a joint working group to develop a database analyzed by member companies of potential clusters.

Affiliate of the group included interested parties: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Maramures region, Romania (Maramuresh Chamber of Commerce and Industry) was elected as a beneficiary; CCI Transcarpathian region, Ukraine (Transcarpathian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) was an associated partner; North Baia Mart University, Romania (North University of Baia Mare), Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas, Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Petroleum and Gas), Chernivtsi National University named after Yuriy Fedkovych, Ukraine (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University) of which the authors, the Romanian Agency for Foreign Investment (Romanian Agency for Foreign Investment) as associated participants.

The result of the questionnaire was to determine the 4 key sectors of the region the potential for the creation of clusters (woodworking, light industry, mechanical engineering,

electrical engineering and electronics) and 2 back-up (food, glass and ceramics). The proposed structure provides both the reduction of the cluster external resource dependence and the reorientation of sector structure with primarily commodity orientation, which is based on the woodworking development. It is natural that the clusters are defined at the places with the best prospects for their development - the resource base (wood resources, mineral resources, and qualified specialists) and large enterprises.

Proposals shaped by the authors taking part in seminars 2007-2008 contained teaching and the resulting correction. For example, one of the criteria for selection of enterprises to the regional clusters, we believe, should be the dynamics of the subject - the revenue growth rate, the dynamics of returns, the degree of renewal of machinery and equipment, introduction of innovations, the age of workers. Evaluation of applicants solely on the basis of statistical indicators (size of earnings, capitalization, cost of capital, number of employees), without considering the dynamics, as for us, distorts the results, and the cluster formed exclusively by large companies use violent strategy can borrow conservatism and bureaucracy. The introduction of new dynamic companies, even those who are not leaders in volume, but also demonstrate the rapid development of the region will ensure the formation of the modern regional cluster.

Also, in our point of view, it is unreasonable to limit specialization of clusters only by the producers; it is necessary to draw here the service sphere, such as, for example, tourism, banking, education. The presence of the tourist cluster and its support is a strong factor increasing the demand for industrial cluster - light industry, and development of regional brands – “Production Baia Mare”. In the time of crisis tourism is losing its positions, and till 2011-2012 the world tourism industry can lose up to 15-20% of pre-crisis circulation [4]. According to the UNWTO information “tourists will increasingly use the services of cheap companies, choose to travel short distances and reduce the terms of rest”, which gives a chance to Romania and Ukraine to strengthen their positions due to the high quality cheap rest, as well as the mutual exchange of tourists. Creating a regional tourist cluster in the regions of Maramuresh (Romania), Transcarpathian (Ukraine) will provide an opportunity for several years to withdraw the companies from the start phase to phase of maturity till 2020, when UNWTO gives optimistic outlook tourism market updates, and get a fully functioning cluster as well.

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