

## AGRICULTURE - CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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**Abstract:** Agriculture today enjoys of a particular attention in all countries of the world, regardless of the level of economic development. In the contemporary world, the most economically developed countries are also the largest producers and exporters of agricultural products. The purpose of the paper is to emphasize: the particularities of agriculture have changed the European agricultural map after the accession of the new member states; the percent of the agriculture in GDP is different: so it represents 2% from GDP in the old Member States and 3% in the new Member States; agriculture, being an element of the economic system, largely depends and creates dependence on the other elements of the system; agriculture can become the engine of Romania's development.

**Key words:** agriculture; rural area; functions; development

### INTRODUCTION

The main features of the European rural area captured by the specialists refer to the defining aspects on multiple levels: [1,4,9,10]

- In terms of *economic structure*, in rural area agricultural activities occupies, usually, the largest areas, agriculture being the "backbone of the rural". Agriculture occupies usually the largest rural territory, because in some areas (mountain, piedmont) forestry together with related forestry activities (forest holdings, woodworking, crafts, forest resource processing industries, etc..) is predominant both territorial and occupational. Also, in mountainous, coastal and delta areas prevailing are agrotourist, recreational fishing and hunting activities.

- The countryside is, *in terms of employment*, especially a manufacturing space in which primary sector activities have a relatively high proportion of economically point of view. Most part of the professions practiced in rural areas are practical professions, manual, some requiring multi-qualification training. Employment in services, administrative activities, social, etc.. is reduced as proportion. A large part of the population which work entirely in unproductive sector has also a productive activity, generally in agriculture. It is an important feature of the rural population to work together in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

- In rural area is predominantly private, family, *property*, compared with urban-industrial areas, and public and private property of the state is limited. Division of private property in rural areas, developing a sense of ownership had a number of positive impacts on rural residents' entrepreneurship.

- Rural area in terms of *population density* and *size of human settlements* is more airy, more humanized. Rural area has a social life more closely, citizen participation in community affairs is more pronounced.

- In terms of *landscape*, the rural area, through his natural structure, ventilated scenery, flora and fauna is far more beautiful and healthier for people. Tranquility, peace, climate, fresh air, soothing landscape of social calm can not be quantified to measure rural habitat. The natural landscape of rural area constitutes an invaluable heritage of humanity.

- Life in the countryside, more than in any other social medium, is placed on a set of rules emanating from centuries-old life, traditions, customs and culture. Rural way of life, traditions and customs, together form local or regional popular culture. Social and

cultural life, rural characteristics, is unmatched heritage of humanity, element, along with the economy and ecology, gives the true size and value to rural area.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In order to implement the purpose of the present scientific paper, the authors of the paper were used as methods of work: data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The particularities of agriculture have changed the European agricultural map after the accession of the new member states.

The percent of the agriculture in GDP is different: so it represents 2% from GDP in the old Member States and 3% in the new Member States

The characteristics of agriculture determine taking in consideration of its function within a national economy and determine its place according to its importance, reflected in a series of macroeconomic indicators (for example the share of agriculture in GDP, the share of employed population in the total employed population, the share of agriculture in the volume of exports, etc.). Assuming the existence of a relatively representative agricultural sector within a national economy, its functions are generally valid, but the place and role of the sector differs in relation to its size, determined by: land and livestock.[2, 12]

The main functions of agriculture can be considered to be:

- food function;
- the socio-economic function of participation in the process of growth and economic development;
- the function of environmental protection and sustainable development.

The food function of agriculture, in a global context, is fundamental to the mankind, through the fact that, agriculture supplies basic agricultural products for human consumption, both directly and through processing, satisfying the physiological needs of nutrition of humans and animals.

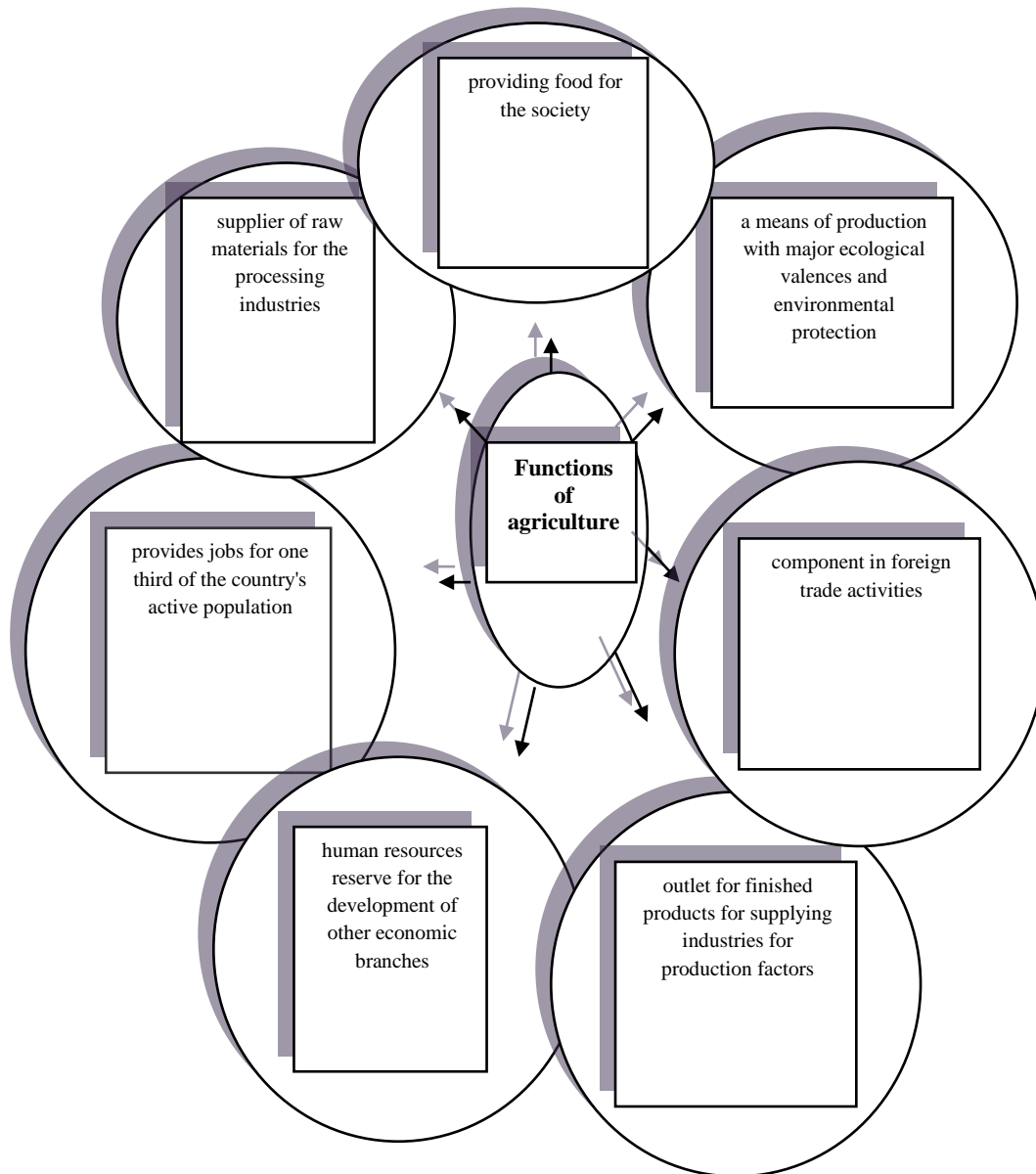
Agriculture is at the same time a source of income, jobs, and can be a favorable business environment, taking in consideration natural resources more accessible and therefore cheaper.

Regarding the socio-economic function of agriculture, it is considered that it can be highlighted by analyzing the dynamics of a system of structural indicators of measurement:

- the share of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added;
- the share of the employed agricultural population in the total employed population;
- the share of agriculture in the stock of fixed capital;
- the share of agriculture in total investments;
- the share of agricultural exports in total exports;
- share of food expenditure in total household consumption expenditure.

The function of environmental protection and sustainable development is practically the ability of agriculture to contribute in a overwhelming measure to environmental protection and environmental factors that basically define it: soil, air and water.

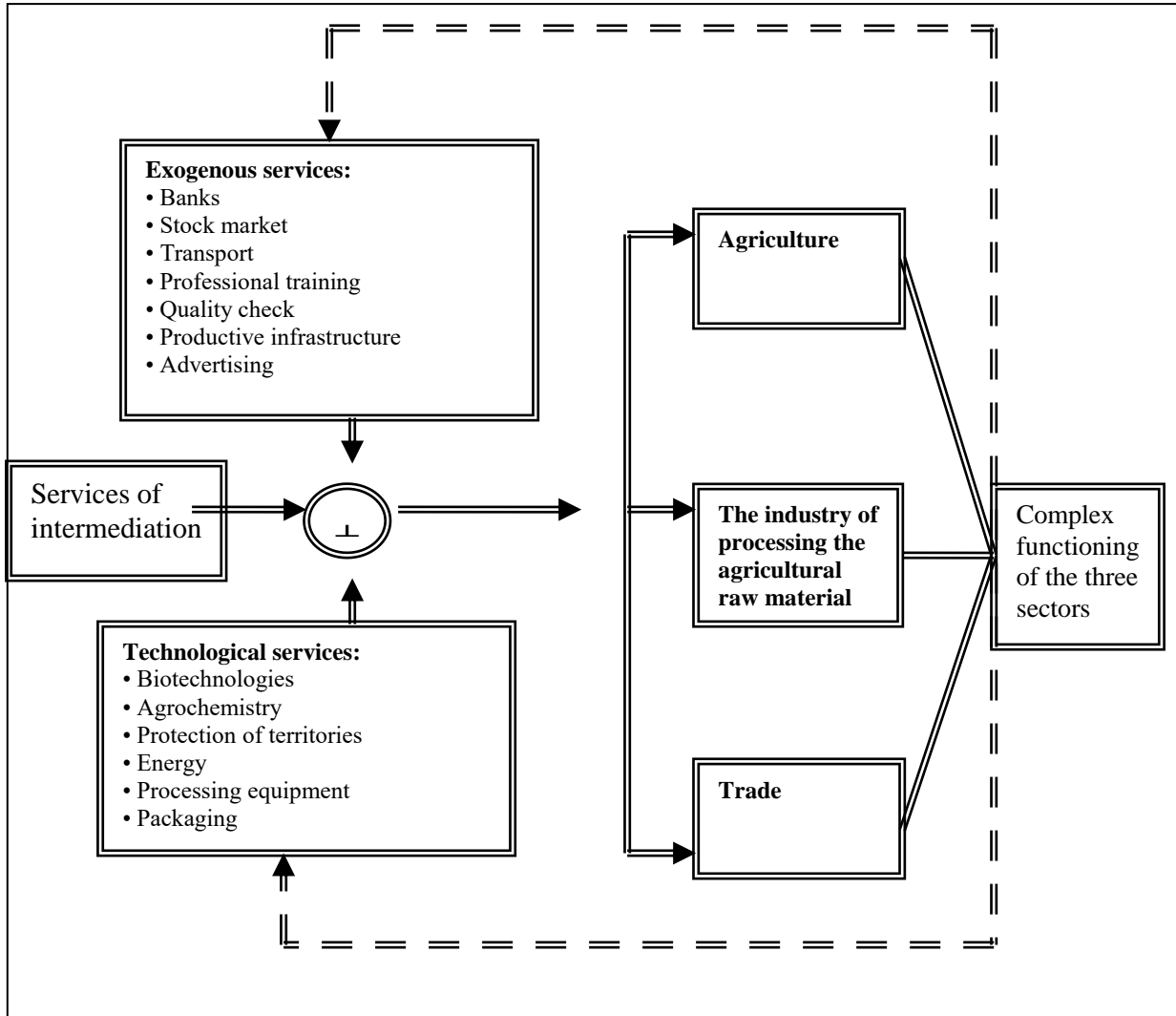
At the level of the human society, agriculture has a number of functions, which, on the one hand, determine the role that it has, and on the other hand, it specifies the main directions of use of the products that it produces.



**Figure 1. Agriculture functions**

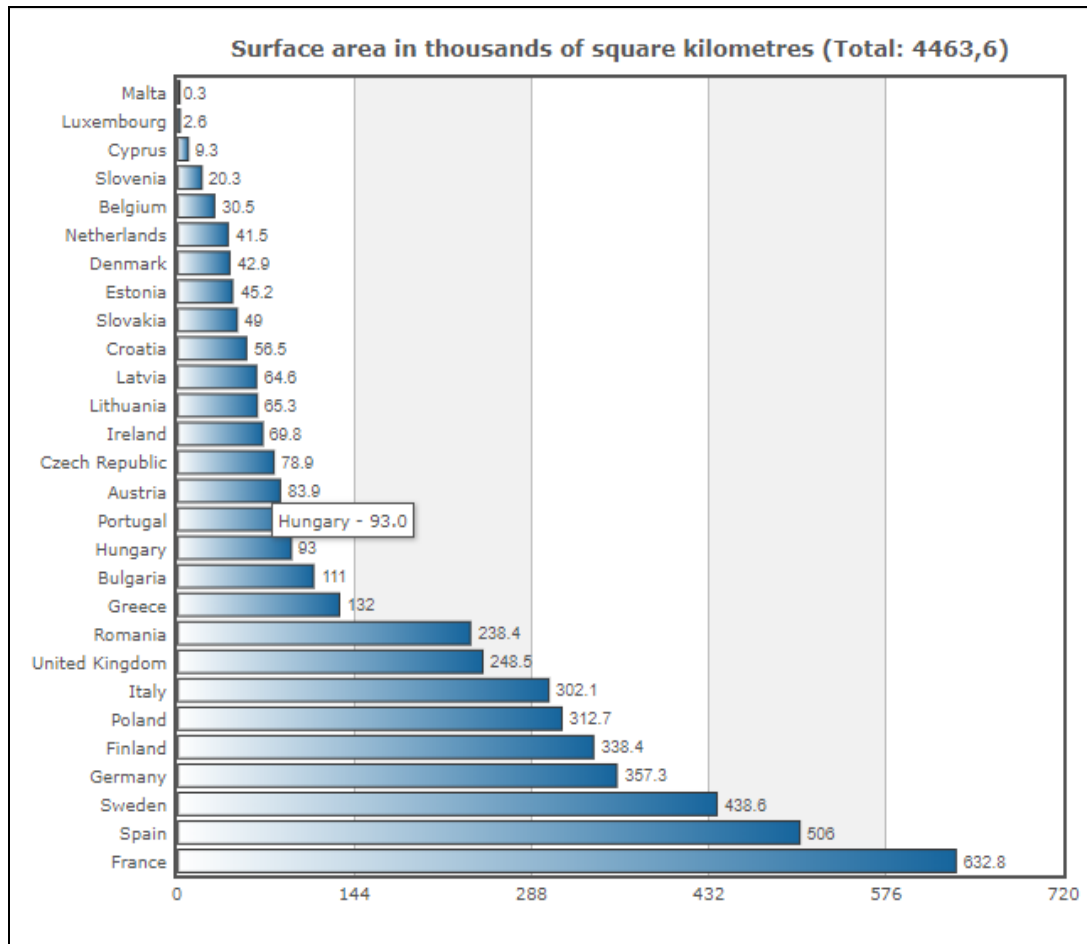
Agriculture, being an element of the economic system, largely depends and creates dependence on the other elements of the system. Success, failure of agriculture is the result of several vectors: intermediary services, exogenous services, technological services. These, as a whole, have a certain impact on agriculture, on the processing industry of agricultural raw material, trade. In the triad of agriculture-processing-trade, agriculture is often disadvantaged. [11,13]

The purpose of agriculture as a branch can be addressed in a broad and narrow sense. Considering agriculture as an open system, it can include all activities carried out in rural areas, including processing industry of raw materials, services for agriculture and agro-industrial activities, activities related to infrastructure, social, cultural and environmental activities. In a narrow sense, the branch of agriculture is created from two sub-branches: plant production and animal production.



**Figure 2. Agriculture-processing-trade triad**

Regarding Romania the arable surface area per capita places Romania in the first countries in Europe, with 0.43 hectares per person, which reveals the particularly high potential for agricultural output and to improve its structure, a potential that needs to be better capitalised, given the growing demand for food, existent in the world.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 3. Surface area in thousands of square kilometres**

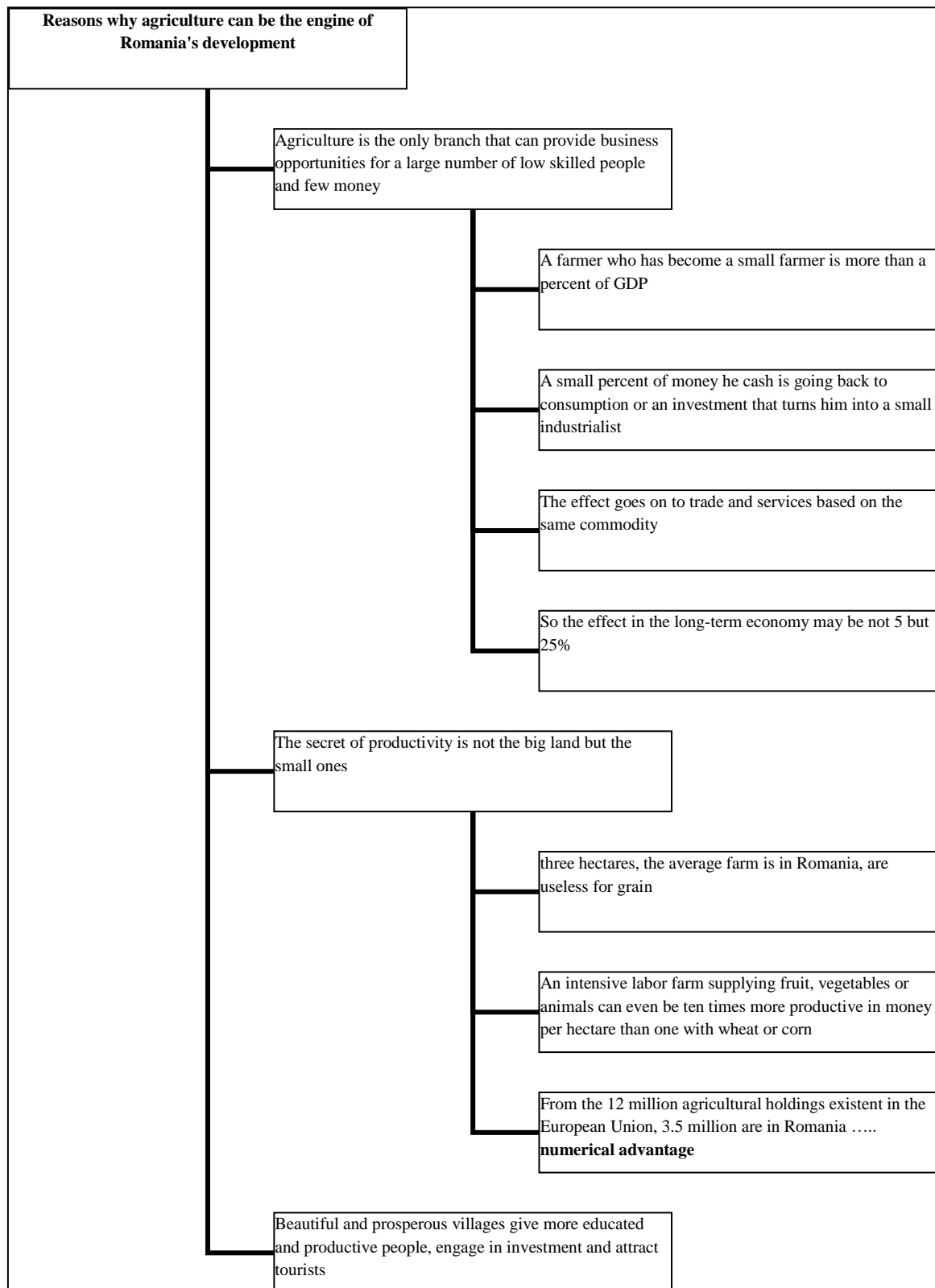
Source: <https://europa.eu/european-union>[15,14]

In general, the statistics confirm that agriculture is a key branch for underdeveloped economies. But also the specialists consider that in particular conditions of Romania, agriculture can become the engine of our country's development, for various reasons: [3,6,7,8]

- Agriculture is the only branch that can ensure opportunities for many low skilled people and few money. A farmer who has become a small farmer represents more than a percent of GDP: a small percent of money he cash is going back to consumption or an investment that turns him into a small industrialist. And it goes on to trade and services based on the same commodity. So the effect in the long-term economy may be not 5 but 25%.

- Both socialist and conservative propaganda support the idea that the secret of productivity is represented by the small lands not by the big lands. Certainly three hectares, as the Romanian average farm has, are useless for grain. An intensive labor farm supplying fruit, vegetables or animals can even be ten times more productive in money per hectare than one with wheat. So in conclusion we have a huge, numerical advantage. From the 12 million agricultural holdings existent in European Union, a large number, meaning 3.5 million are found in Romania.

- Very important is the fact that villages, generally give more educated and productive people, engage in investment and attract tourists. As half of the Romanians live in the country, an urban living standards mean, implicitly, the country's approach to western standards.



**Figure 4. The main aspects that support the development of Romania through agriculture**

## CONCLUSIONS

From statistic analysis of EU member states, results that around a third of EU farmers (35.3%) were conducted other income generating activities than farming. Although for some Member States, rural or urban character of the regions does not seem to be directly correlated with greater or lesser weight to this indicator, however it can be seen that in the case of Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia and the Netherlands, the largest share of farmers involved in other activities can be found predominantly in rural area. There is also a significant difference between regions with rural character and urban character, at the EU-27 level. The largest share of farmers performing other activities is found in Slovenia and Sweden (70%) compared with Belgium and Luxembourg, where the rate is much lower (20%).

According to European Commissioner for Agriculture "we have twice as much arable land per capita than the EU average, one million hectares of arable land lying uncultivated but nevertheless 28% of the population (the rural active) produces 6% of GDP.

In the production structure of agriculture branch, crop production is predominant, accounting, in 2011, a percent of 70.8% from the total value of production, compared to 28.5% as are the animal production and only 0.7% agricultural services.

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