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# COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH QUALITY – A NEW CHALLENGE FOR ROMANIA

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# The former **PASSIVE - REPRESSIVE** **APPROACH OF QUALITY** in Romania [8] (I)

The former “socialist” rule kept Romania isolated from the Western World for almost half a century (1945-1989).

After 1960, Romanian companies (large, medium and small, all State-owned) were obliged to introduced the so-called State „Quality Control” as expression of ***Passive-Repressive Approach of Quality***. It involved:

1. *Over 12,000 mandatory State national standards* (called “State Standards” - STAS)
2. *Legislation and rules implementing exclusively the State „Quality Control”*
  - According to the former legislation, all Romanian industrial companies were State owned and compelled to adopt, since their founding, the microeconomic “Quality Control” approach (frequently understood and achieved, thanks mostly to the lack of resources, as only “Inspection” approach) – which is still in force in some of today companies.
  - The “Quality Assurance” approach was implemented before 1989 only in few companies, operating mainly in the nuclear, aeronautics, electronics and defence sectors.
  - The “Total Quality Management” approach principles and practices were, until recent years, practically ignored in Romania.

## The former **PASSIVE - REPRESSIVE** **APPROACH OF QUALITY** in Romania [8] (II)

3. Establishment and operation of **quality central and local governmental agencies** (the so-called “*State General Quality Inspectorate*”- IGSCCP or “*Quality Police*”) aimed to over-check manufactured products and.... to punish - especially financially - companies’ staffs and employees found “guilty” for not having provided quality products.

These three above mentioned features characterized the so-called “**passive-repressive approach of quality**“, a former **State quality policy** that was specific to Romania and to other centrally planned economies from Europe and Asia, during some decades (1960 – 1990).

- Many Romanian quality professionals now agree **that this approach came in Romania (and in other ex-“socialist” countries) from USSR that, in turn, imported it - after the Second World War - from USA.** (“*The US approach has historically been command-and-control oriented. This might be the result of a history of political and military management as a basis for business management.*” [FOSTER].
- This situation was reflected in a negative way as well in the educational system as in creating a solid quality culture, especially regarding prevention versus detection/ correction attitudes and behaviours.
- **In December 1989, this Romanian authoritarian approach was abandoned and the “Quality Police” dismantled. But their counterproductive heritages – especially mentalities, attitudes, behaviours, etc. – still remained...**

# JURAN's souvenirs from Central and Eastern Europe [5](I)

- “I did consulting (*during the years '70, ND*) in six Eastern European Socialist countries: **Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia.**
- I learned that ***Socialist economies operated in ways quite different*** from their non-Socialist counterparts.
- ***The central government*** owned the means of production and distribution. The key business goals – capital investment, how much to produce, pricing and so on – were set by central government planning ministries.
- Industry was organized into ***producing ministries***, each of which was granted a monopoly over its sector of the economy. Much investment was made to meet ideological and political goals.
- There were ***central control ministries*** over key elements of the economy. Some had the *after-the-fact mission* of assuring that the national goals were met. Other exercised *before-the-fact control* on such matters as hard currency.”

# JURAN's souvenirs from Central and Eastern Europe [5](II)

- ***“Quality was generally poor in the Socialist countries.***
- ***In Russia, I identified five levels of quality.*** Goods for the military and space programs were of *high quality*. Goods for export were less so – *generally adequate but not competitive* with the best in the world market. Domestic consumer products were often *poor*, and domestic consumer services were frequently *dreadful* – involving waiting in long lines, discourteous and indifferent clerks, and other indignities.
- I concluded that ***the Socialist countries had some common reasons for poor quality:***
  - **There were widespread shortages of goods**
  - **Quantity of production had a higher priority than quality**
  - **Their technology was old**
  - **They lacked internal competition**
  - **Their focus was on meeting standards and specifications rather than on customer satisfaction**
  - **They lacked an organized approach to quality improvement**
  - **They had a mindset relative to “controllability” – they believed that achievement of quality rested chiefly with the workers rather than with the system”**

# JURAN's souvenirs from Central and Eastern Europe [5] (III)

“My discussions with government officials and industry managers led me to conclude that ***the Socialist countries were doomed to live in poor economies.*** *The division of power among all those central ministries greatly hindered decision making and coordination. The inability to solve problems* such as the shortages created an ***atmosphere of blame, mistrust, and secrecy.*** (Shortages led consumers to practice hoarding and barter.)”

“I also became skeptical about the emphasis on ideology and exhortations to retain the loyalty of the workers. I thought ***the regimes were failing to make adequate use of powerful human instincts such as acquisitiveness, greed, and competitiveness.*** In the United States, we set few limits on the exercise of those instincts; in the case of greed, those limits are not enough to prevent the emergence of outcomes that are widely regarded as unfair. I have often told managers in the Socialist countries: *“In America we make too much use of human greed; in your country, you don't make enough use of it!”* They seldom contested that assertions, even though their ideology frowned on encouraging the use of human greed.”

# New legislation and structures in Romania [7]

- After 1990, like other Central and Eastern European countries, Romania was facing the great challenge of rapidly implementing and adjusting its accreditation and certification systems according to the *EU Quality System* as well as implementing **quality standards** and **quality management systems** in its private and state owned companies.
- In order to cope with these objectives, between years 1990-2006, new legislation was adopted and new infrastructures were established in the fields of
  - standardization,
  - certification and accreditation,
  - metrology and
  - consumer protection.

# CNSMC - the National Commission for Standardization, Metrology and Quality (I)

- In **February 1990**, a transitional, short-lasting governmental agency – ***the National Commission for Standardization, Metrology and Quality (CNSMC)*** - employing over 3000 people, within six organizations, and managed by a Minister State Secretary, was established, in order to identify and develop necessary legislative and institutional changes, compatible with democracy, free market economy and EEC policies [6],[7],[8].
- During its only two-years activity (**till August 1992**), the CNSMC elaborated over 20 draft Laws and Government Decisions on topics like **standardization, metrology, certification, accreditation and consumers protection** (a new concern in all emerging European democracies intending to become “capitalist countries” with “consumer societies”).
- These drafts attempted to start the harmonization of Romania’s legislation, standards, structures and procedures with those of EU Member States.

# CNSMC - the National Commission for Standardization, Metrology and Quality (II)

- In **1991**, the CNSMC sent to Romanian Government **a national quality policy proposal** (document published by the *Romanian Government Bulletin*, no. 30/1991).
- No answer was received from the Government, but in **August 1992**, the Romanian Government .... dismantled CNSMC (by Governmental Ordinance - GO 18/92) and promulgated three important GO: on **standardization** (GO 19/1992), on **metrology** (GO 20/1992) and on **consumers' protection** (GO 21/1992), as well as a Governmental Decision - *GD 167/1992* on **national quality certification system**.
- All GO were put in force immediately, but their approval by the Romanian Parliament came only **two years later** (by Law - L11/1994).
- According to these new regulations, **most of national Romanian Standards (SR - former STAS) became voluntary, the fundamental universal rights of consumers were officially recognized/ granted, a new governmental agency - the Office for Consumers Protection (the forerunner of today ANPC) and its network - were established, and over 100 non-governmental associations for consumers protection were founded within most important cities of Romania.**
- **Thus, the Romanian Government decided in 1992 to transfer gradually most of its former quality responsibilities and to involve itself in only few quality matters, especially in standardization and certification** (through IRS - the Romanian Standardization Institute, a former governmental agency), **metrology** (through BRML – the Romanian Office for Legal Metrology) and **consumers' protection** (through OPC – the Consumers' Protection Office).

# Basic regulatory measures [7] (I)

Between years 1995-2006, some dozens of **basic regulatory measures** were promulgated in the areas of quality assurance/ certification and of consumers' protection; the most important were the following (L – law; GD – Government Decision), *most in order to comply with Communautaire Acquis*:

- **L 10/1995** - on *constructions' quality* (and its related GD 272/94, 392/294, 393/94)
- **GO 38/1998** - on the *accreditation* activity (approved by **L 245/2002**)
- **GO 39/1998** - on the *standardization* activity - deciding the long time claimed separation of regulation, standardization, certification and accreditation functions (introduced by GD 167/1992) (approved by **L 355/2002**)
- The former governmental agency IRS - Romanian Institute for Standardization was replaced by a non-governmental organization, the **ASRO – Standardization Association of Romania** ([www.asro.ro](http://www.asro.ro)).
- The **RENAR - Romanian Association for Accreditation** ([www.renar.ro](http://www.renar.ro)) started to work and was recognized at national and European levels
- **GD 166/2001** - establishing **ANPC - the National Authority for Consumers' Protection** ([www.anpc.ro](http://www.anpc.ro)), as successor of OPC – the Consumers' Protection Office, created in 1992

# Basic regulatory measures [7](II)

- **Law 245/2004 on general product safety** (transposing the European Council **Directive 2001/95/CE** of 3 December 2001)
- **Law 240/2004 on liability for defective products** (transposing the Product Liability **Directive 85/374/EEC** of 25 July 1985 and the **Directive 1999/34/EC** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 1999, amending it)
- **GD 396/2003 on assurance of safety of toys' users** (transposing the Council **Directive 88/378/EEC** of 3 May 1988 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning the *safety of toys*)
- **GD 457/2003 on assurance of safety of electrical products' users** (transposing the so-called "Low Voltage Directive" i.e. the Council **Directive No. 73/23/EEC** of 19 February 1973 on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States concerning the *safety of low voltage equipment*)
- **Other Laws and GDs** transposing in Romania the **Acquis Communautaire** provisions (till 2006).

# The actual Romanian Quality Infrastructure [7]

- Thus, between years 1992-2007, a large ***national quality infrastructure*** was built in Romania mostly on a private basis. It includes today :
  - **over 150** accredited *testing laboratories*
  - **some dozens** of products/ systems/ people *certification bodies* (accredited in Romania or in UE Member States)
  - **some** accredited *inspection bodies*, as well as
  - **over 100** *consultancy/ education and training organizations* for Management Systems
- The actual ***Romanian quality infrastructure*** is currently employed **in order to generate customers' trust in products/ services and their providers** - mostly through **third party certifications** and through **accreditations**. **Over 10.000 organisations** were certified ISO 9000 till end 2007.
- In 2000, it was established in Bucharest the "**J.M.JURAN Romanian Quality Award Foundation**" (by 11 non-governmental organizations, including RFQP) which awarded **19 companies and other organizations**, till end 2007.
- Unfortunately, till 2007, **no Romanian organization succeeded to be awarded the European Quality Award (by EFQM)** - despite some candidatures registered during the last years.
- There are **no national plans and programs** for quality promotion and improvement

# SOME OF TODAY'S ROMANIAN MYTHS ON ISO 9000 STANDARDS

- <ISO 9000 is a “product standard“.>
- <ISO 9000 means an international “authorization“.>
- <ISO 9000 certification is compulsory.>
- <The implementation of a Quality Management System according to standards ISO 9000 should be followed by its certification.>
- <ISO 9000 is a very expensive, time consuming, paper-based and useless approach.>
- <ISO 9000 is a mean to reduce the bureaucracy within the public administration.>
- <ISO 9000 is to be implemented mainly within big industrial companies; therefore, it is not adequate for services providers, as for example educational or health organizations.>
- <ISO 9000 management systems are means to reduce the paperwork.>

# COMPETITIVENESS

## = the capacity to be competitive

- **The competitiveness may refer to:**
  - a product/ service,
  - a company (“at MICROECONOMIC LEVEL”)
  - the economy of a State, of a region, etc. (“at MACROECONOMIC LEVEL”)

**The competitiveness of a product/ service** is representing its ability *to be sold on a given market* (being thus *relative* to this market conditions), comparatively with other similar products/ services

- **The ENABLERS of the product/ service competitiveness may be:**
  1. **TEHNICAL ENABLERS** (i.e. product/ service characteristics)
  2. **FINANCIAL ENABLERS** (i.e. price, payment conditions, etc.)
  3. **SUPPORTING ENABLERS** (i.e. after sale service, maintenance, users’ training, spare parts availability, etc.)
  4. **TRADING ENABLERS** (i.e. delivery delay, delivery conditions, distribution network, etc.)

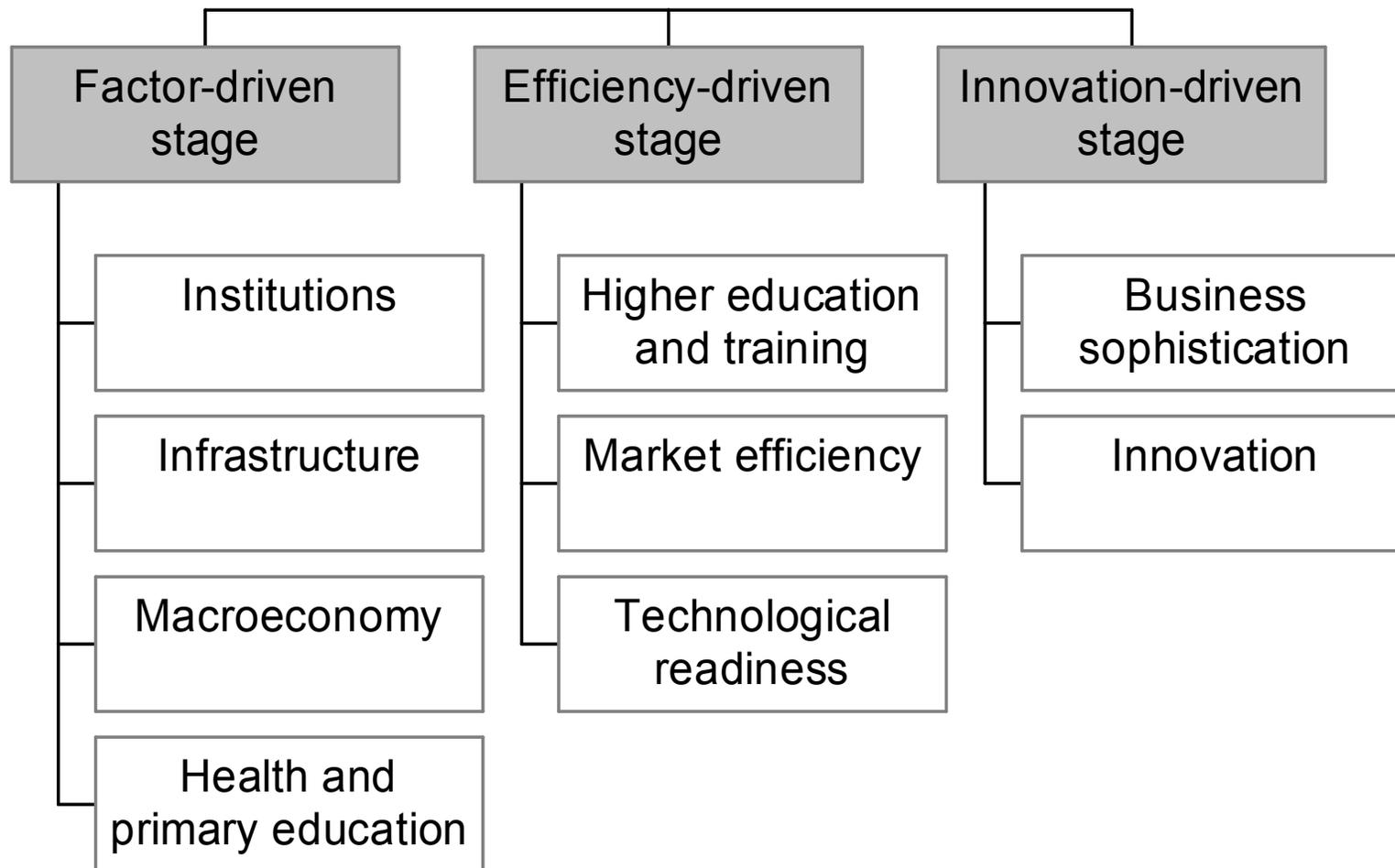
# What is “COMPETITIVENESS” at MICROECONOMIC LEVEL?[1]

- “A firm is competitive if it can produce **products and services of superior quality** and **lower costs** than its domestic and international competitors. Competitiveness is synonymous with a firm’s **long-run profit performance** and *its ability to compensate its employees and provide superior returns to its owners*
- Competitiveness includes both **efficiency** (reaching goals at the lowest possible cost) and **effectiveness** (having the right goals). It is this choice of industrial goals which is crucial. Competitiveness includes both the ends and the means towards those ends
- Industrial competitiveness is the ability of a company or industry to meet **challenges posed by foreign competitors**
- Competitive advantage at firm level is the ability to consistently and profitably deliver **products and services which customers are willing to purchase** in preference to those of competitors
- Competitiveness implies **elements of productivity, efficiency and profitability**. But it is not an end in itself or a target. It is a powerful means to achieve *rising living standards and increasing social welfare, - a tool for achieving targets.*”

# What is “COMPETITIVENESS” at MACROECONOMIC LEVEL?[1]

- “The ability of a country to achieve *sustained high rates of growth in GDP per capita*”
- The ability of a country to create **added-value** and thus increase national wealth by managing assets and processes, attractiveness and aggressiveness, globality and proximity, and by integrating these relationships into an **economic and social model**
- National competitiveness refers to a country’s ability to create, produce, distribute and/or service **products in international trade** while earning rising returns on its resources
- Competitiveness should be seen as a **basic means** to raise the *standard of living, provide jobs to the unemployed and eradicate poverty*
- Competitiveness is the degree to which a nation can, *under free trade and fair market conditions*, produce **goods and services which meet the test of international markets**, while simultaneously maintaining and expanding the **real incomes of its people over the long-term”**

# Michael Porter's three stages of development [1],[3] (1)



# Michael Porter's three stages of development [1],[3] (2)

“As nations develop, they progress in terms of the characteristic of their competitive advantages and modes of competing. This process can be described as a *sequence of stages*, each with a *different set of economic characteristics and challenges*.

1. In the **Factor-Driven Stage**, the competitive advantage is based exclusively on ***endowments of labour and natural resources***. This supports only relatively low wages.
2. In the **Investment/ Efficiency-Driven Stage**, *efficiency* in producing ***standard products and services*** becomes the dominant source of competitive advantage. Economies at this stage *concentrate on manufacturing and on outsourced service exports*. They achieve higher wages, but are susceptible to financial crises and external, sector-specific demand shocks.
3. In the **Innovation-Driven Stage** the ability to produce ***innovative products and services*** at the global technology frontier using the most advanced methods becomes the dominant source of competitive advantage. At this stage, the *national business environment* is characterised by strengths in all areas. Institutions and incentives supporting innovation are also well developed, increasing the efficiency of cluster interaction. Companies compete with unique strategies that are often global in scope, and *invest strongly in advanced skills, the latest technology, and innovative capacity.*”

# Actual Romania's comparative advantages [1]

- “Romania’s comparative advantages, for the moment, are in **“factor-driven” activities** (based on endowments of labour and natural resources) and **“investment-driven activities”** (where the government can still take a leading role in deciding which industries to target and in accumulating capital for investment).”
- “Romania’s presence in **“innovation-driven”** activities is marginal at the moment. However, *the ability to create, distribute and exploit knowledge and information* is now regarded as a key factor underlying the economic growth and the competitiveness of firms in many developed countries.”

# Global Competitiveness Index [2]

- In its *Global Competitiveness Report 2006-2007*, the World Economic Forum created **nine pillars** around **Michael Porter's three stages of development** [1], [3]
- The rankings of the *Global Competitiveness Index* are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the **World Economic Forum** together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report. For 2007/2008 year, over 11,000 business leaders were polled in a record **131 countries**.
- According to this index, for 2007/2008 year, the **FIRST seven most competitive countries** of the world are the following: 1.USA, 2.Switzerland, 3.Denmark, 4.Sweden, 5.Germany, 6.Finland and 7.Singapore.

# Global Competitiveness Index Rankings of former “socialist countries” [2]

	2007 - 2008	2006 - 2007		2007 - 2008	2006 - 2007
ESTONIA	27	26	AZERBAIJAN	66	62
CZECH REPUBLIC	33	31	VIETNAM	68	64
CHINA	34	35	UKRAINA	73	69
LITHUANIA	38	39	<b>ROMANIA</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>
SLOVENIA	39	40	BULGARIA	79	74
SLOWAK REPUBLIC	41	37	MONTENEGRO	82	n/a
LATVIA	45	44	GEORGIA	90	87
HUNGARY	47	38	SERBIA	91	n/a
POLAND	51	45	ARMENIA	93	83
CROATIA	57	56	MACEDONIA, PR	94	84
RUSSIA	58	59	MOLDOVA	97	86
KAZACHSTAN	61	50	MONGOLIA	101	89
UZBEKISTAN	62	n/a	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	106	82

# Romania's position according to the World Economic Forum [1](1)

(FOR EACH DETERMINANT - **1st number is Romania's rank out of 8 countries** (Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Italy, Turkey, Croatia, and Tunisia); **2nd number is Romania's rank in the world out of some 125 countries**)...

NOTES: - Here bellow are shown only some determinant examples:

- Each determinant may be considered also as an enabler of competitiveness

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Quality of air transport (6-90)
- Quality of electricity supply (7 - 81)
- Quality of port facilities & inland waterways (7 - 76)
- Quality of railroads (7 - 59)
- Quality of general infrastructure (8 – 101)

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Quality of math and science education (2 - 11)
- Quality of management and business schools (6 - 70)
- Local availability of specialized research and training (6 - 44)
- Quality of educational system (4 - 51)

# Romania's position according to the World Economic Forum [1](2)

## **MARKET EFFICIENCY**

- Wage-setting procedures (1 - 28)
- Relation between pay and worker productivity (2 - 37)
- Intensity of local Competition (4 -59)
- Flexibility of hiring/firing of workers (6 -87)
- Efficiency of dispute settlement laws (6 - 88)
- Choice of management based on nepotism or merit? (7 – 108)
- Possibility of raising money by issuing shares on local stock market (6 - 79)
- Prevalence of trade barriers (5 - 69)
- Brain drain (7 - 113)
- Impact of taxes to work or invest (7 – 109)
- Labour-employer relations (8 - 120)

## **BUSINESS SOPHISTICATION**

- Local supplier quantity (5 - 68)
- Willingness to delegate authority to subordinates (5 - 65)
- Local supplier quality (6 - 69)
- Availability of scientist and engineers (3 - 41)
- Quality of scientific research institutions (6 - 67)
- Quality of intellectual property protection (6 - 80)
- Business R&D collaboration with universities (7 - 77)

# Most exported today Romania's products [1]

- Articles of apparel, accessories, not knit or crochet
- Electrical, electronic equipment
- Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc
- Iron and steel
- Boilers, machinery; nuclear reactors, etc
- Footwear, gaiters and the like, parts thereof
- Vehicles other than railway, tramway
- Furniture, lighting, signs, prefabricated buildings
- Articles of apparel, accessories, knit or crochet
- Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal
- Articles of iron or steel
- Plastics and articles thereof
- Aluminium and articles thereof
- Ships, boats and other floating structures
- Rubber and articles thereof
- Fertilizers
- Organic chemicals
- Inorganic chemicals, precious metal compound, isotopes
- Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing etc
- Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment

# Major **STRENGTHS** of actual Romania's economy [1]

- High quality of science and math education
- Strong FDI (*Foreign Direct Investment*) inflows
- High share of arable land
- High share of irrigated land in total arable land
- FDI efficient source of technology transfer
- Low impact of organised crime on business
- Low public debt
- Efficient regulatory framework for cross-border trade
- Low costs and administrative burdens for starting a business
- Efficient administrative structure for acquiring licences
- Overall low administrative burden on business sector
- Ease of hiring and firing

# Major WEAKNESSES of actual Romania's economy [1] (1)

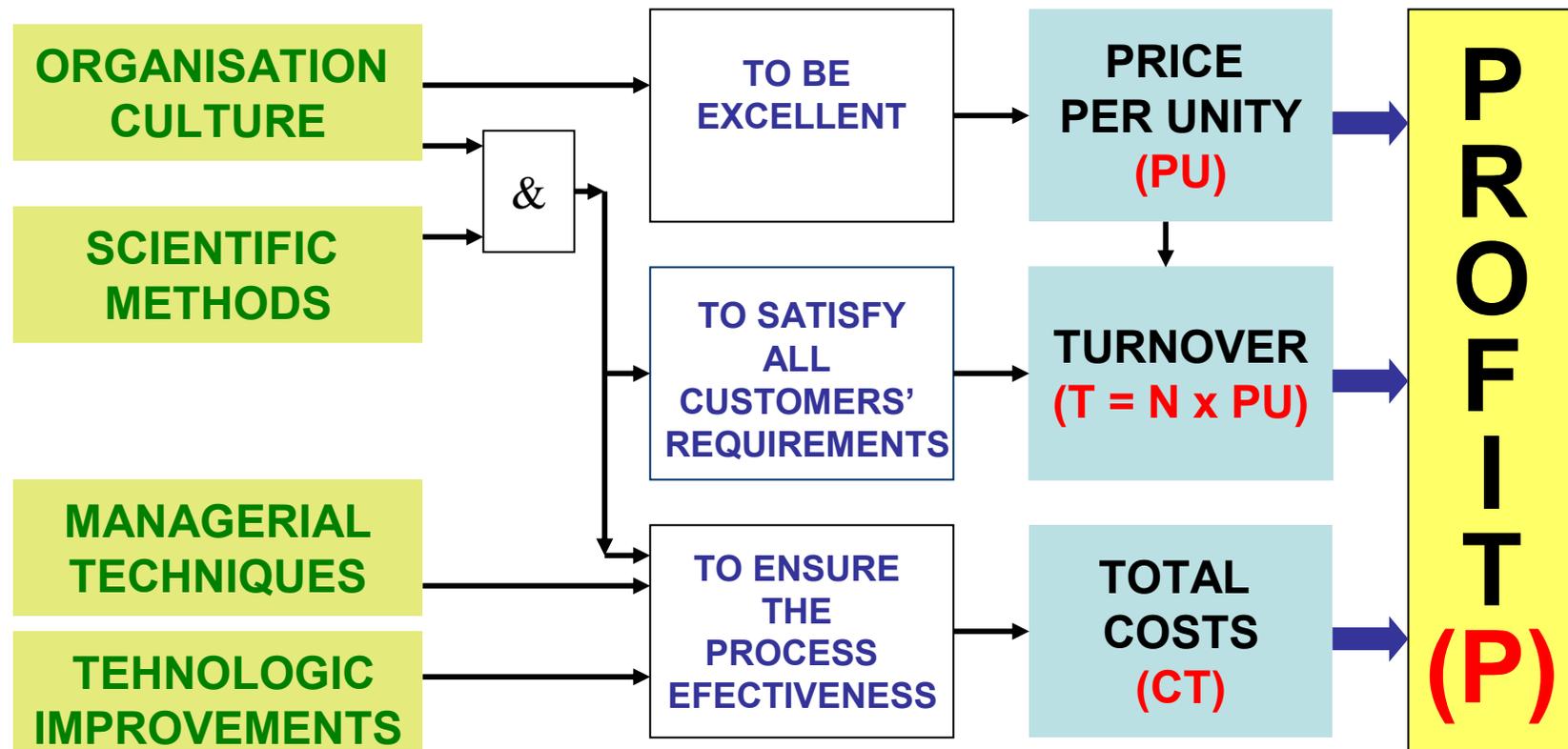
- Low public spending on education
- Low expenditure per student in tertiary education
- Serious problems due to brain drain
- School enrolment, above all in secondary schooling
- Low savings
- Low gross fixed capital formation
- Low domestic credit by banking sector
- Low domestic credit to private sector
- High fragmentation of farming plots
- Large share of inefficient subsistence farming
- Low fertilizer use in agriculture
- Low overall productivity in agricultural sector
- Excessive employment in agricultural sector

# Major WEAKNESSES of actual Romania's economy [1] (2)

- Excessive internet access price
- Low availability of telephone mainlines
- Low quality of infrastructure
- Low expenditure on R&D
- Low share of researchers in total labour force
- Almost no patent applications
- Disconnect between public research undertaken at universities and the private sector research
- High corruption
- High/increasing unit labour costs
- Appreciation of real exchange rate
- Excessive costs involved in cross-border trade
- Closing business lengthy process
- Inefficient tax system posing significant burden to business sector
- Still significant share of administered prices in CPI (Consumer Price Index)

# PROFITABILITY

= the capacity to generate profit



$$P = T - CT$$

# CONCLUSIONS

- The analysis made in [1] shows that *Romania finds itself for most indicators at an intermediate position*. However, there are some fields where ***Romania has considerable strengths, which could help to increase competitiveness*** (inclusively through QUALITY) and to formulate a national export strategy.
- The transition to a free market economy involved for Romanian companies also the transition from **Inspection and Quality Control** to **Quality Assurance** (ISO 9000) and **Total Quality Management** (i.e. the European and Romanian Quality Award criteria and Excellence Models).
- In Romania there are **no National Quality Policy, no National Quality Programs**, and quite **no campaigns** of public awareness, promotion and demonstration of the advantages and importance of quality to *competitiveness across Europe*.
- Very few **books published abroad on quality matters** were translated and published in Romania ; no **doctorate (Ph.D) diploma in Quality Management area** can be issued in Romania because this field is not officially recognized by the Education Ministry.
- Despite the fact that the European Union has declared the support for European quality in the resolution of the Board of Ministers in 1994, **after the year 2000 there were in EEC no more structure and concern for the definition and implementation of an EUROPEAN QUALITY POLICY** (which could be a model for Romania too!).
- **We need in Romania a substantial co-operation effort of the Romanian Government (through the involved central and local public administrations) and of existing non-governmental quality organizations, unions and universities, with the contribution of the business community, in order to promote and develop the COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH QUALITY of the Romanian economy...**
- **I am convinced that EEC, EFQM and EOQ could help them in an effective way!**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION !**