

October 27

sustainability
national
day
in
Romania



"is the day when we slow down the pace of our daily activities and look for solutions for a sustainable society", SAR, 2023

Source: <https://ambasadasustenabilitatii.ro/>

Why October 27?

On October 27 Constantin Brâncuși's famous sculpture "The Endless Column" or "Column of Infinity" was unveiled, a powerful symbol for sustainable Romanian thinking that we must (re)discover in our efforts to ensure a sustainable future for current and future generations.

Whose initiative?

October 27 has become Sustainability Day¹ in Romania, at the initiative of the Embassy of Sustainability in Romania (ASR), with the support of the Department for Sustainable Development - Government of Romania.

ASR is a non-profit association that promotes, since 2018, sustainability and the development of competences, programs and specific partnerships between entities from the business environment, civil society and the public sector in Romania, in order to align with the 2030 Agenda and achieve the objectives of sustainable development.



The Endless Column, sculpture by Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957)
Source: Department of Sustainable Development

¹The Law no. 157/2023 established Sustainability Day in Romania on October 27

Sustainability in Romania



Source: [Department of sustainable Development](#)

"... the transformation into reality of the new concept of sustainable development is intrinsically linked to the promotion of knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to the edification of the society based on knowledge and innovation and, implicitly, to the improvement of the quality of life. Thus, education, in its broadest sense, becomes the indispensable factor and a real driving force in the fulfillment of all the SDGs".

[Declaration of the Romanian Parliament regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, 2016](#)

- 2015** Romania, as a member of the United Nations and the European Union, adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, next to another 192 Head of State and Government and High Representatives at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit through UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1
- 2016** The Parliament of Romania was the first of 176 parliaments of the Inter-parliamentary Union which expressed its support for the 2030 Agenda, through the joint Declaration² of the Assembled Chambers.
- 2017** The Government Romania decided to establish the **Department of Sustainable Development** under the Prime-minister office, as the national coordinator in implementing the set of 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 2018** **Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030**³ was drawn up under the direct coordination of the DSD with the contribution of ministries and other central institutions, local authorities, regional development agencies, academic and university forums, national institutes of R&D, employers' associations and trades unions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, and other bodies of civil society and interested citizens.
- 2019** The Government Romania decided to establish the **Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development**, which includes all ministers headed by the Prime Minister
- 2020** The Government Romania decided to establish the **Consultative Council for Sustainable Development**, which includes 34 experts from academia, research institutes, and civil society covering all 17 SDGs
- 2021** The Department of Sustainable Development set up the network of **22 Hubs for Sustainable Development** in all ministries, with approx. 90 specialists
Coalition for Sustainable Development was established for ongoing dialogue with representative segments of civil society and includes more than 145 organizations, large companies, SMEs and NGOs
- 2022** The Government Romania decided to adopt the **National Action Plan** for the implementation of Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030
Instruments:
 - 99 National Indicators for Sustainable Development
 - SDGs open data platform
 - 105 experts of sustainable development
 - Romanian Code of Sustainability

² [Declaration of the Romanian Parliament regarding the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (in Romanian)

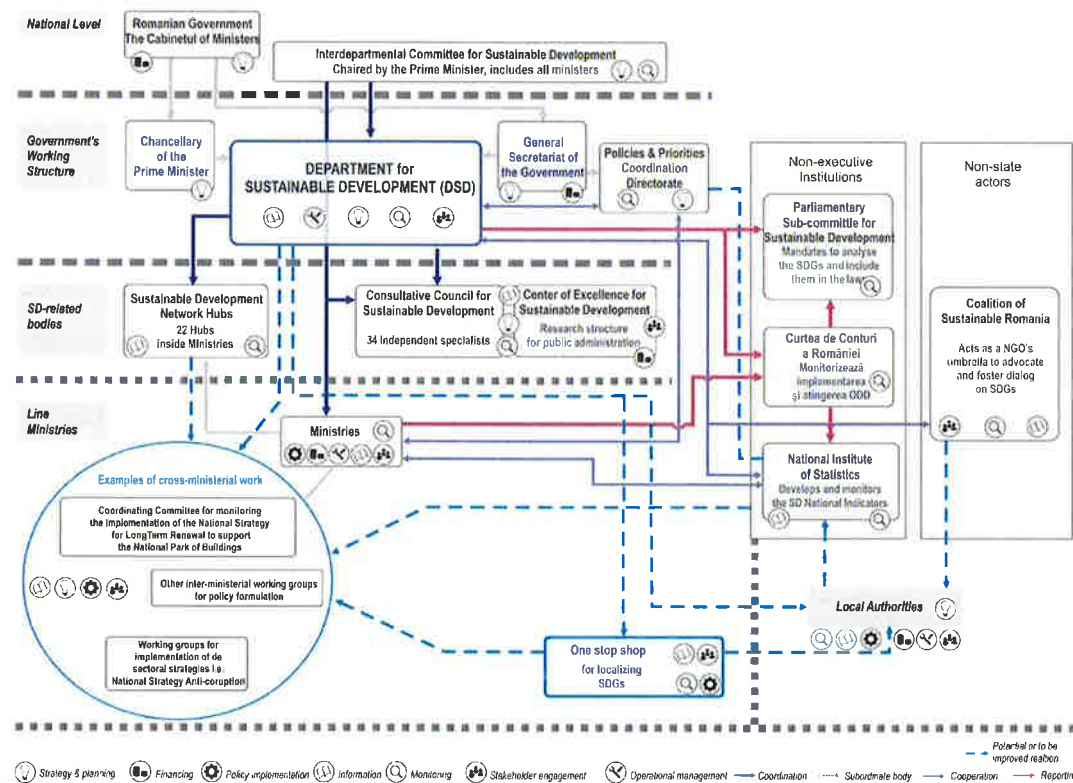
³ Government Decision No.877/2018

Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development



"A successful implementation requires a consolidated legislative and institutional framework with functional mechanisms and clearly defined roles."

[The Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, Chapter III - Implementation and Monitoring](#)



Institutional Governance Framework for Sustainable Development and Functionalities
Adapted from Report: OECD Scan of Institutional Mechanisms to Deliver on the SDGs

For the StrengthRO-SDGs governance framework, in recognition of innovation and excellence in public administration as well as for a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the UN DESA nominated the Government of Romania, through the Department of Sustainable Development, as the 2021 winner in the category Enhancing the effectiveness of public institutions to reach the SDGs.

Legislative Framework for EDS

Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030

The **Strategy** transposes all 17 SDGs to the national context and guides the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in all sectoral policies. It is based on the premise that sustainable development requires a mindset which, once adopted by the citizen, will help create a more equitable society defined by:

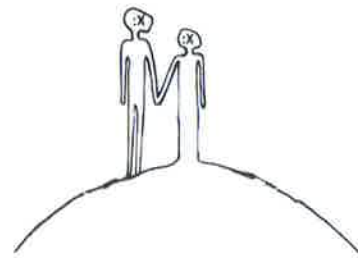
- balance and solidarity, and the ability to cope with the changes brought about by current global, regional and national challenges,
- the state's concern for its citizens, and the citizens' respect for public institutions, for their peers, for moral values, and for cultural and ethnic diversity, for a sustainable society.

The **National Action Plan** is the umbrella document which clearly defines the directions, key actions and timeline to be followed in the Strategy implementation. At the same time, empowers all stakeholders engaged in achieving the goals to adopt concrete actions for each SDG for which they are accountable, giving them the basis for independence in formulating individual policy choices.

Priority Direction 2 aims to adapt school and university programs in the sense of promoting and implementing the principles of sustainable development, including training for the occupation "expert of sustainable development" and other complementary occupations, by Actions 8÷11.

The Project "Educated Romania"

Prior to the adoption of the new legislative package, the necessary reforms of the education system were foreseen in 2021, in the project "Educated Romania". Thus, supporting and developing a network of Green Schools, making functional the concept of "Green School" and identifying innovative educational formulas for future



"The Strategy aims to achieve the following:

***to ensure** access by all children to equitable and quality pre-school, primary, and secondary education leading to relevant and effective outcomes;*

***to increase** substantially the number of youth and adults with relevant skills;*

***to promote** employment in decent jobs and entrepreneurship; and **to guarantee** that every pupil gains the relevant skills to promote sustainable development."*



Source: Academy of Economic Studies – Bucharest, November 22, 2022

Ceremony of the first 150 graduated "sustainable development experts"

generations of students, these were the objectives of the Green Schools: Eco-education, through experiential learning, in schools (re)configured as environmentally friendly spaces and motivating and involving students in solving environmental problems are the two basic functions of "Green School".

Law on Pre-university Education & Law on Higher Education

The adoption of [Law on Pre-university Education](#)⁴ and [Law on Higher Education](#)⁵ has allowed the launch of the much-needed reforms to the education system, as set out in the project "Educated Romania", a guarantee of a better future for all children and young people in Romania.

Equity, performance, investment, respect and safety are some of the key elements that the legislative package has translated into coherent and predictable measures, thus responding in a real way to the needs of students throughout their educational pathway. Coherent solutions are proposed, in line with the requirements of the beneficiaries of education, with a view to a unitary and systematic regulation of the field, in order to solve the problems identified in the national education system. At the same time, the two laws are conceptualised in such a way that Romania has a legal framework to support the process of accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The new education legislative package, which puts in practice the Romanian President's initiative to build an "Educated Romania", is the result of the efforts made by specialists in education sciences, teachers, parents, pupils and students, decision-makers, NGOs and society as legal stages of elaboration and approval.

The main directions of reform have been clarified - practically no pupil, no child, no young person will be left behind.

From the perspective of securing financial support, the adoption of the legislative package of education laws is one of the milestones achieved by the Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan - Component 15: Education, and the Ministry of Education.

It has been allocated one of the largest budgets from these European funds. A plan of measures will build on the documents delivered by the World Bank under the Technical Assistance Contract - Component 3 - Assistance to strengthen education governance. Education laws are also the enabling condition for accessing investments financed by the Education and Employment Operational Programme - a Strategic Framework for the education and training system at all levels.

In the European and national context of the green and smart transition, in the perspective of the European Education Area and with a view to achieving sustainable development goals, Law 198/2023 regulates the Green Schools Network. Educational units meeting the criteria for inclusion in the network of green schools will be granted the status of „green school”.

National Strategy for Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023-2030

The [Strategy for Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023 - 2030](#)⁶ sets clear actions to increase the level of education and awareness among children and young people regarding sustainable development and environmental responsibility. The educational institutions become strategic partners in building a sustainable future. Students and educators will receive full support to

understand how serious the climate crisis is, to be aware of its causes and effects, and to find ways to enhance society's response to these challenges.

Through education on climate change and the environment, the Ministry of Education promotes a sustainable lifestyle by developing eco-social skills.

⁴ Law No 198/2023, in Romanian

⁵ Law No 199/2023, in Romanian

⁶ Government Decision No. 59/2023

Financial support for EDS

The Ministry of Education has been allocated 3.6 billion euros for kindergartens, schools, high schools, universities and children's clubs. Over 2.7 billion euros have already been contracted in nine calls, including reducing school dropout, digitalizing universities, complementary services for disadvantaged groups, dual education, developing the network of "green schools," purchasing green minibuses, equipping pre-university classrooms, labs, and workshops, and outfitting with Smart Labs.

In September 2023, there were launched 11 calls for RRRP project submissions worth over 2.9 billion euros. The largest call launched is for pre-university education equipment.

For the first time in the history of the Romanian education system, an amount of over 1 billion euros has been allocated for equipping schools and related units, in line with the vision of "Educated Romania" Project.

Examples of measures funded by Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan are the construction and development of a pilot network of "green schools," as well as the rehabilitation

rehabilitation of educational institutions and the construction of new ones in line with the "green school" concept. The aim is to reevaluate practices at the educational institution level related to:

- Selective waste collection
- Water management
- Renewable energy
- Implementation of curriculum offers for sustainable development and environmental education
- Green skills development for students and all staff in "green schools"
- Community involvement in environmental protection activities
- Establishing partnerships with local authorities and other interested institutions.

The Ministry of Education plans to acquire 3,200 electric school buses system-wide. The total general amount available for the purchase of green minibuses under this RRRP investment is 250 million euros, following an additional 50 million euros for the achievement of assumed RRRP indicators.

EDS in Romania

National Curriculum

Topics related to ESD in pre-university education are addressed from preschool to post-secondary formal education, including VET, as well as in higher education. The core theme of EDD is included/integrated into subjects/modules in the core curriculum or as optional curriculum for the following subjects: Environmental Knowledge, Natural Sciences, Civic Education, History, Biology, Geography, Technological Education, Ecology and Environmental Protection, Sociology, Philosophy, Entrepreneurial Education, Civic and Entrepreneurial Culture, Financial Education, Environmental Improvement, Project Management, Intercultural Education, European

Education, and the History of National Minorities in Romania. Climate change, the environment, and sustainable development are primarily addressed in school curriculum programs at the school's decision, while they are dealt with cross-cuttingly in the core curriculum within chapters (examples: Energy and Life, Chemistry and Life, Substances in Nature, Human Health and the Environment, etc.) or in the context of general information related to climate and the environment, primarily at the secondary level. The issues of interest are addressed in different components of the subject curriculum: specific competencies, learning activities, and content.

National Program "Green Week"

Educational institutions and organizations involved in organizing and implementing the "Green Week" program receive support from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Forests. The "Green Week" program spans over five consecutive working days during the school year and is carried out based on planning, as decided by each educational unit, in accordance with the provisions of the Minister of Education's order regarding the school year structure, applicable for the respective school year.

Within the "Green Week" program, educational activities are conducted to enhance understanding of concepts related to sustainable development, climate change prevention, and environmental protection. Among other things, the program contributes to the development of the following competencies among preschoolers/students through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary investigation of the surrounding reality, creating responsible behaviors towards the environment by developing their ability to:

- Understand and use basic environmental and climate change concepts to be aware that climate change is an emerging global issue, as well as to understand measures to combat it.
- Understand environmental legislation and the role of authorities, institutions, companies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in addressing climate change and protecting the environment.

"Green Schools" Network

The [platform](#) has been operational since the beginning of 2023 and is the result of a collaboration agreement between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment, Waters, and Forests, the Authority for Digitalization of Romania, Code for Romania Association, and the Special Telecommunications Service.

- Understand climate change in a global, systemic context and its connection to other areas / issues / themes such as irresponsible natural resource exploitation, pollution, food waste, waste management, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity, forests and terrestrial life, water and aquatic life, natural disasters, green energy, social justice.
- Explore/investigate the natural environment and have a positive relationship with the natural world.
- Make decisions and take daily actions considering their impact on the planet, adopting a behavior that protects and improves environmental quality, including responsible use of natural resources.
- Adapt to extreme weather events and respond to potential natural disasters.
- Initiate and conduct individual and/or team civic actions to combat climate change and protect the environment.
- Contribute in the future to the development of public policies and the creation of new technologies that address climate change and environmental protection.

The "Green Week" Program contributes to achieving educational goals in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) by providing a significant experimental context in which both teachers and preschoolers/students are encouraged to express their creativity and combine theory with practical applications in daily life.

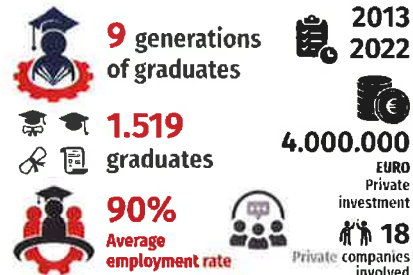
The Climate and Sustainability Department within the Presidential Administration was involved in mobilizing relevant institutional factors in the development and implementation of this platform, including the parties to the agreement.

EDS initiatives in Romania

Local community contribution

The first vocational school in Romania, with a 10-year tradition, is the result of the partnership between Braşov Municipality, Braşov County School Inspectorate and the Non-governmental Association Fit for Future. This is a developing school, operating in dual system, currently having 762 pupils, 57 teachers, 19 partner-economic operators. The school's activity is based on a strong connection with the economic environment of Braşov county.

Source: [VNR Romania 2023](#)



Results of the Professional German School Kronstadt
Source: www.sgk.ro

Primary School no. 11 in Buzău has become the first circular school in 2020. The project funded from European Regional Development Fund, which aimed at increasing the energy efficiency in public buildings was implemented at the initiative of Buzău City Hall. The school uses rainwater for household use, as an intangible reserve for fire and through drip irrigation in an experimental plant cultivation sector in the teaching greenhouse. The power consumption is ensured by photovoltaic panels, LED lamps and motion sensors are used for indoor and outdoor lighting, and the surplus produced during the holidays can be fed into the national electricity grid and put money into the school's account. Heating is provided by heating pumps which extract the thermal energy from the ground. Thus, more than 2000 pupils learn, notice, acquire and apply the circular economy principles, including by collecting waste separately by seven fractions. Buzău was thus the first local community in Romania with a circularity strategy, [2020-2030 Strategy for the transition to circular economy Buzău](#).

Source: [VNR Romania 2023](#)



Primary School no. 11 Buzău, Buzău County
Source of photo: Andreea Beatrice



Teaching greenhouse of the Primary School no. 11 Buzău,
Source of photo: Livia Mărculescu

"United Waters of Romania", a project initiated in 2019, consolidates an alliance of organisations concerned with democratising water access, participatory water management, promoting nature-based solutions, educating young people and valuing natural and cultural heritage. To increase the public interest in this regard, UWR carried out awareness, education and activation actions, establishing the communities' emotional connection to water. More than 25,000 inhabitants in 40 towns took part in festivals with the water topic, where children found out how boats are built and what can do to protect the waters.



Alba County, Mureş River
Sursa foto: Florin Duşulescu

Source: [VNR Romania 2023](#)

Initiatives of the Department for Sustainable Development

2020 : The SDGs book for kids

The project is dedicated to preschool children (between 3 and 6 years old) and is a volume with drawings and themes related to the 17 SDGs, made by the artists and talented children of the KreaKids studio in Târgu Secuiesc, Covasna County. Each drawing has a brief description, made in an accessible language, understandable by all, of the SDG with which it is correlated. Drawing will stimulate children's imagination and creativity by developing artistic and fine motor skills. The drawing books were distributed to the units subordinated to the Ministry of Education, through the County School Inspectorates in 2020.



2020: The Map of SDGs with comics

The project is dedicated to primary and secondary school students and consists of a map with 18 worksheets, in the form of comics, of which one sheet has general information about sustainable development and the other 17 sheets present each SDG in close relation to the targets SNDDR.

The map was made in 18 languages, respectively in all the languages of the national minorities and distributed in the network of County School Inspectorates and in over 9,000 school units.

The project encourages, in a friendly manner, the understanding of the neighbor, the appropriate way to communicate, to behave in a way that is socially acceptable, to assimilate notions and knowledge about society, the environment, rights and responsibilities as adolescent and later as an adult.



Since 2020: Education at height / Drone-Based Education

It is the first national project that brought the SDGs to life through lessons transmitted in real time (live) by drone, from different regions of Romania, by local teachers and is aimed at secondary school students. The project with national coverage, is supported by the Department of Sustainable Development within the Government of Romania and developed in partnership with Aspire Teachers and the Cartierul Creativ Carolina Association and reached 34 lessons followed by more than 3,000 schools and 6,500 students.



Education at Height-YouTube

Initiatives of the Department for Sustainable Development

Since 2021: ESDW

The *European Sustainable Development Week* is an European initiative to facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform. Department for Sustainable Development has organized special events in Romania since 2021.



Since 2021: Sustainable Development Gala

The *Sustainable Development Gala* is an awareness and information program, at the national level, regarding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda. The program will last for 7 years, and each year will award the champions of one of the fields the following: 1. Education; 2. Fairness; 3. Health; 4. Water; 5. Climate changes; 6. Consumption and production; 7. Digitization. This programme is developed in partnership with Romanian Television.



Since 2022: Green Week

The *Green Week* is a national Programme in schools, initiated by Ministry of Education.

The Department of Sustainable Development supports this programme since 2022, with ideas and topics for educational activities in relation with the SDGs.



Ministry of Education





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