A STUDY ON ORGANIC FOOD MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract:

This paper aims to provide an analysis of available data on organic food market in Romania given the premises and with its growth insights.

As it is known, organic agriculture is a sustainable form of agriculture, a production system implemented in accordance with the principles of the lasting development as well. The organic farming in Romania has been officially recognized and regulated since 2000. An overview on Romanian organic farming is introduced and the data show organic market has increased in Romania in the last decade, but its sales volume was not so significant raised as in other European countries. Beyond that organic production as quantitative registered data is lower, still is mostly imported foodstuffs, with higher added value, while the Romanian exports consist mainly of raw materials. Although it is considered organic food industry as an evolved industry globally, in Romania is not sufficient developed.

In this regard the national market for organic food is still at an emerging stage of development. Nevertheless, the same main constraints for the organic market development have been identified, demonstrating that management and marketing tools should be adapted for organic growth in the food chain.

Key words: *organic farming, organic food, food market, Romania*

JEL Classification: M31, Q11, Q13

1. Introduction

Organic agriculture is a sustainable form of agriculture, an agricultural production system implemented in accordance with the principles of the lasting development. Although the scientific basis of farming ecologically type has been done during 1920…1960s, as agricultural practice it was used from ancient times (Toncea et al 2010).

Biological technologies are applied in organic farming and succeed to harness the agricultural potential in terms of biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. Organic production involves implementation of all those agricultural procedures, which consist of eliminating the use of synthetic chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, stimulants and growth regulators etc.); but without genetically modified organisms, nor other complementary substances or chemical additives. Although there are sensitive differences among the concepts of "organic agriculture", "ecological farming" and "biological agriculture", in accordance with Regulation (EC) 834/2007 and Regulation 889/2008 of the Commission, it is accepted a common terminology with similar meanings in the UE countries. For example, in Romania it has been agreed and used the term „ecological farming".

Organic agricultural production and distribution of the organic crop areas related to total agricultural lands varies from one continent to another by regions and from country to country. In this respect, in a ranking by continents Europe is in second place after Oceania with a share for organic area of 27 percent and 11.5 million hectares. But by regions with the largest areas of organic agricultural lands Europe follows in the third place after Africa and Asia (Willer & Lernoud 2015). Available data (Willer & Lernoud 2015) show that the largest organic producers from the European Union (EU) reported in 2013 based on agricultural surface cultivated and certified organic (over 9 percent) are: Austria, Sweden, Estonia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Italy and Finland.

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Although organic farming systems have beneficial effects on environmental recovery or protection, inclusive contribute to biodiversity conservation, it has found that these agricultural activities are less efficient from economical point of view especially in the short term. Therefore, to foster organic production in the European Union a specific financial support scheme for organic farming is provided through Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) transposed into national and European regulations. Since 2004 European Action Plans for Organic Food and Farming (2004; 2014) have been established, as specific tools for sustainable development of the organic agro-food sector as whole as well as addressing to organic food market through information and promoting activities.

Production and trade of organic food have been self-regulated in the EU, US, Canada, Japan and other countries aiming to ensure transparency of the organic food market. Consequently, food may be marketed as "bio" only if they are obtained in accordance with organic production procedures and are properly certified. Regional and national laws concerning organic food comprise requirements relating to: define the production methods and food processing in organic agri-food system; labeling of organic food; trade, including the import of organic products from third countries; inspection, control and certification system for operators involved in organic farming.

2. Organic farming in Romania

Organic farming in Romania has been officially recognized and governed starting with 2000. Registration of the producers in organic farming is mandatory; and ecological agriculture must cover two stages: conversion to organic production and its certification afterwards. Thus, registered operators in the organic farming undergo a process of converting agricultural system under strict organic production rules. Management of organic units involves planning, monitoring and control of agro-food production, but also specific techniques of agri-business to be use. For instance, the business of organic food requires planning and adequate managing of acquisitions and sales through selection of suppliers and customers, distribution channels and other marketing actions. Organic food goods are labeled specific with logos for identification of ecological certified products.

The control and certification of organic agro-food products in Romania are made by inspection and certification bodies as private ones and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in accordance with the provisions of Order no. 181/2012 and Regulation (EC) no. 834/2007; for example 14 such certification bodies have operated under the umbrella of MARD in 2015 (MARD 2015).

According to data given from the inspection and certification bodies, the number of registered operators in organic farming has remained relatively constant in 2006-2010 within limits of approx. 3100…4200, then increased rapidly until 2012, year after what the figures gradually began to reduce (see Table no. 1).

Table 1. The number of operators certified in organic farming (Romania, 2010-2014)*

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. operators	3155	9703	15544	15194	14470

* Source: MADR, 2015b

Majority (95 percent) of the registered operators in agricultural farming are producers, either in crop production, livestock and aquaculture or wild collection. Figures on processor operators, retailers and importers / exporters are much lower. For instance, organic food processors represented about 2 percent of registered operators in 2010, and their share reached only 0.7 percent in 2012. Regarding food importers, in the year 2012 only three specialized operators were registered, but their number is not relevant in terms of the sales volume. It is

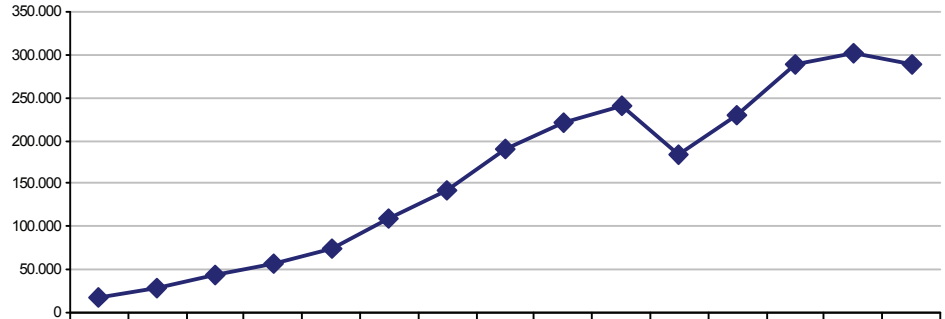
worth mentioning that, in accordance with the provisions of Order MARD No. 1253/2013 for approval the rules on the registration of operators in organic farming, certain retailers who sell pre-packaged organic food are exempt from registration in organic farming system, with condition to declare its own activity at County Agriculture Directorates. Probably this is an additional reason for what the total number of registered operators has decreased since 2013.

Despite the fact that operators' number is not relevant for assessing the total trade volume of organic food, it can be said that the structure of operators gives certain information about food production in terms of its type as range or quality, meaning that in Romania are produced mainly agricultural products of vegetal or animal origins, namely crops and other plants, livestock, aquaculture products or through valorization of wild collection, which are sold especially as raw materials, the secondary processing sector being insufficiently developed to manufacture organic food with higher economic value.

Organic farming in Romania has experienced a sinuous evolution in general, but obviously with a relative upward trend. As a share, Romanian organic farming represents around 2 percent, taking into account its agricultural potential and certified organic surfaces. At European level, based on this criterion namely the share of organic farming, Romania ranks 25th among the EU-28, followed by Bulgaria, Ireland and Malta (Willer & Lernoud 2015).

Evolution of the agricultural sector expressed by the total area cultivated in organic farming for the 2000-2014 period is depicted in graph no. 1. Except for period 2010-2011 when the certified organic surfaces have decreased due to the economic crisis that affected the national economy as a whole, organic farming has had a constant growth rate. Obviously, the growth rate of organic lands was significantly higher in the period 2000-2009 because of reporting basis. For example, growth rate in 2013 reported to 2003 was 427 percent, while for the same year in 2013 compared to 2008 was only 36 percent. In 2014 the total organic surface was 289,251.79 hectares, significantly higher than in 2012 but lower than in 2013 (rate 2014/2013= -3.95%).

Graph no. 1. Total surface in organic farming (Romania, 2000-2014)



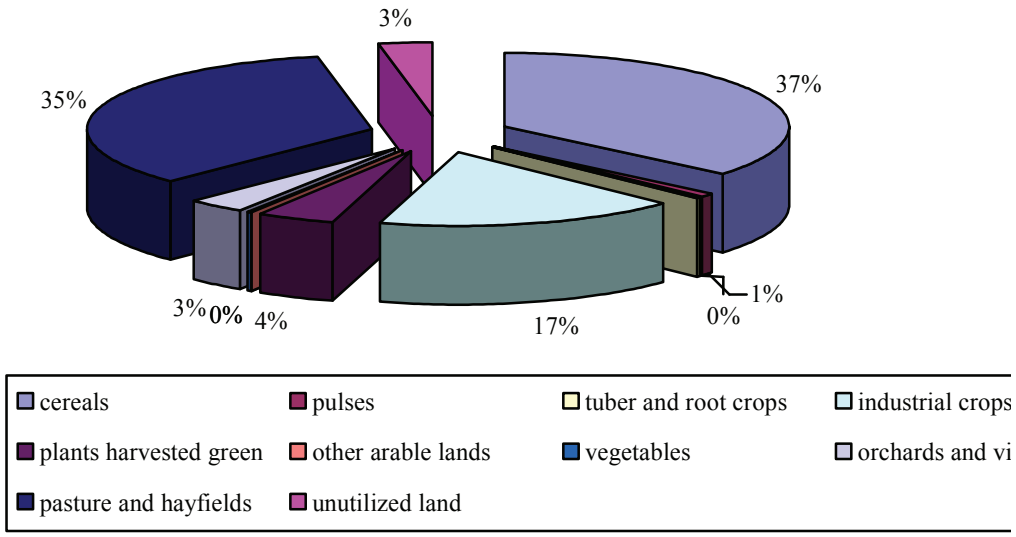
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
total surface, ha	17.43	28.80	43.85	57.20	73.80	110.1	143.1	190.1	221.4	240.0	2E+0	2E+0	3E+0	3E+0	3E+0

Based on information from certification and inspection bodies; source: MARD 2015b

Comparative analysis of organic crop production, expressed in tones, has revealed there is not a direct correlation between cultivated area growth and crop production, probably due to climatic changes from year to year and productivity. For instance, although the organic arable land used for cereals was almost the same in 2006 and 2009 (5114.4 to 5179.9 thousands hectares* / * MARD data), cereals production in 2009 was lower with 14 percent in comparison with harvest in 2006. But then the figures communicated by the certification bodies and available from the MARD indicated a total area of organic arable lands without mentioning in-conversion areas. According to data from Willer & Lernoud (2015) about half of total organic areas used for cereals has been in-conversion during 2013.

Distribution of organic arable lands by crop group shows the main cultivars reported, namely: wheat, rye, barley, oats, maize and sorghum, rice, sunflower, rapeseed, soybean, sugar beet, potatoes, vegetables (field and greenhouses), bearing vineyards and fruits (plums, apples, pears, peaches and nectarines, cherries and sour cherries, apricots, nuts, strawberries etc.). The data communicated by the certification and inspection bodies towards MARD indicated a fluctuation in the share of both croplands surface and production of the main agricultural products. However, more than one third of overall organic cultivated areas accounts for cereals, followed by industrial crops, plants harvested green (vegetables) and fruit production. Distribution of Romanian organic lands by types and crops categories in 2013 is illustrated in graph no. 2.

Graph no. 2. Distribution of main organic lands by types and crops categories (Romania 2013)



Based on data from certification and inspection bodies; source: MARD 2015b

A decrease of organic cropland in use for cereals has been reported in 2014 with 102,531.47 hectares, value even less than in 2012 but still with a share of over 35 percent compared to the total area under organic farming. Significantly higher croplands surfaces have been recorded in 2014 compared with 2013 for technical plants and vegetable in detriment of permanent crops and unutilized land. It should be noted that Romania is listed among the countries with the largest organic oilseeds areas (rapeseed, sunflower, soybean) together with China, Kazakhstan, United States, Ukraine and Canada since 2013, with an organic rate of 3-5 percent (Willer & Lernoud 2015).

Apart from total area of organic farming, wild collection surface plays an important role in Romania and has roughly increased twofold from 944,546.2 thousands hectares in 2013 to 1,787,548.25 thousands hectares in 2014, meaning almost 23 times higher than in 2010. Based on Organic statistics 2013 Romania has been ranked seventh in top ten countries worldwide with the largest areas of wild collection (Willer & Lernoud 2015).

Livestock production has fluctuated quite significant over the 2000-2014 period. Organic livestock sector developed in the private ownership system has begun to be more supported by state subsidies for agriculture in 2004 in the detriment of crop production. Consequently in 2007, a number of 2986 from a total of 3836 registered operators in organic farming (producers, processors and distributors) represented livestock farmers, most of them being cows' breeders.

Agricultural holdings with organic livestock in Romania are distributed by species on cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry (laying hens). Potential organic livestock production has been assessed either by livestock (animals' population), live weight of animals intended to be slaughtered for consumption, or animal production expressed by milk, eggs or wool. According to MARD data, evolution of livestock has indicated an increment of livestock till 2006 especially in terms of cattle, swine and poultry, after which a gradual depletion has been registered towards 2010; but number of sheep and goats increased significantly after 2007. Data from 2010 was not completely updated to the public. It can be assumed that livestock decrement in 2006-2010 period is related to reducing areas of pastures and hayfields certified in organic farming. It is noteworthy that for the same reference period, European organic livestock has nearly twofold.

A particular attention should be granted to beekeeping because apiculture plays an important role; number of organic beehives exceeds 85225 and total production of honey bio has exponentially increased in the last decade. Thus, by the end of 2012 Romania has been ranked sixth in top 10 countries worldwide with the largest number of organic beehives following Zambia, Italy, Bulgaria, Brazil and France.

Organic fisheries and aquaculture is not enough assessed; data driven analysis cannot be used to diagnose adequately its trends.

3. Aspects of business management in organic production

In the last 15 years many specialists stated that organic farming is a viable alternative to intensive agriculture for Romanian farmers due to particularities of Romanian agriculture after 1990s and additional financial support through specific schemes for sustainable agriculture systems.

As mentioned previously, a shift of agri-food enterprises towards organic farming involves two main stages, namely: conversion to organic production and its certification afterwards. Therefore it is necessary to ensure a suitable allocation of all resources, such as material, financial, economic, informational and human ones; that requires an adequate management for both business and lasting development. Finding and applying the best technical and economic solutions in the management of these companies is not only a condition for judicious management of the company, but also a requirement for the proper carrying out of the process of inspection - certification.

Accordingly, any entrepreneur wishing to do business in organic farming should develop its policy and strategies on the basis of information aimed at internal and external environment of enterprises, taking into account the constraints and development opportunities. Regarding organic food production, different patterns of management approach have been defined, which are applicable from a careful analysis of all available information, taking into account both benefits and the strengths, but also difficulties and threats, including a creative- innovative approach. Whatever management approach, planning is an essential step. In this particular case, planning is not just a function of management, but also a requirement in view of conversion and certification processes for complete compliance with the standards of organic farming. For example, the agricultural unit conversion plan should be based on cross-examination of all existing data, taking into account the following aspects: history of the field / farm; soil fertility; social environment; level of theoretical and practical training of the producer; equippment and willingness to invest; constraints (Toncea et al 2012). Based on this analysis, the organic business is planned and technical solutions are established, which will be subsequently submitted for approval by the inspection body. The manufacturer in organic farming must prepare a report on the resources allocated (production units, conditions and areas for harvesting, storage and packaging); and annual plans and programs of production and / or processing, which will be approved by the inspection and

certification body. Following the approval of the production management plan, the operator already registered in organic farming will implement the approved management plan for conversion and certification in organic farming system. Certification system consists of audits (initial audit, certification audit and surveillance visits). Accredited inspection and certification body will assess and monitor the compliance of organic products and processes throughout all food chain.

As noted, driven management commitment is an essential feature of doing business in organic farming; and all activities are documented with the aim of verifying its compliance by inspection and certification bodies. Moreover, any substantial amendments to the annual plans of production and / or processing (as regards crops changing, surface or estimated production; or products which the operator intends to process directly or through third parties etc.) must be notified to the inspection and certification body by 31 May each year. All these requirements ensure a more rigorous control of organic production, but a less flexible system in terms of managerial decision.

Another important aspect of the management of organic agri-food units focus to an adequate and consistent management of all resources in order to achieve objectives. In this regard, a suitable budgeting is very important to be manage because materials and supplies used in the relevant sector may fluctuate during an agricultural year both in terms of availability and cost.

So it, a careful management of organic production requires not only adequate planning of activities and resources, but a proper selection of suppliers for the purchase of raw materials, technology etc. that must comply with Romanian and EU rules. It should be noted that the list of raw materials allowed to be used in organic farming can vary considerably from one European country to another country, because certain items from EU regulations are interpreted and implemented differently in Member States into national legislations. But these specific issues of national law must be taken in mind when organic production is expected to be harnessed to export.

Traceability is a component of quality management, but an explicit requirement in the organic food system allowing products certification, surveillance of organic market, and sustainability in a globalized food markets. In this respect, Mol and Oosterveer (2015) identified factors that determine and influence different four traceability systems, applied particularly in sustainable agri-food supply chains.

On organic food chain there are many management types and strategies that can be applied through using specific instruments. Based on studying of organic agri-food market in Germany, Muenchhausen and Knickel (2014) showed that business logic tends to rely on the set of values and initiatives taken by individual entrepreneurs on the organic market, and the development of the food chain depends largely on marketing strategies and tools which are used to differentiate their products and increase market share.

4. Premises and growth insights for organic food market in Romania

In a general sense, organic food are agricultural products (of vegetal or animal origin), unprocessed or processed, obtained by the organic production rules; in the case of processed food, they must contain organic ingredients min. 95 percent (reported mass). However, in regions and countries where organic farming is regulated, can be traded only food goods labeled organic, which are certified as such.

In last decades the organic agricultural production growth has created also conditions for the supply of organic food. Global organic food market has grown since the early 1990s; nowadays the demand is still greater than the supply. Obviously the largest organic producers by regions and countries are not necessarily the biggest traders or consumers, and the United States (US) is an example in this sense. Studying sales evolution of the organic food goods globally an increase of 170 percent in 2012 compared to 2002 was registered (Eco Advancing Agric. 2013).

As regards the European Union as a market, is at second place globally after the US with a market share of 40 percent. Sales volume in the EU at the end of 2013 was of 22.2 billion euro with an increase of 6 percent over the previous year (Willer & Lernoud 2015). It seems that the most traded commodities in the European organic food market are eggs, followed by baby food and meat substitutes (soy products).

Figures on import/export volumes by countries at European level are not always updated reason for which organic agri-food market development cannot be assessed properly in its entirety. However, the biggest European market in terms of sales of organic products is considered Germany (sales volume representing approx. 33 percent of total EU-28), followed by France, Britain and Italy. As noted, Germany is one of the major organic food markets in Europe but meantime represents a country with a significant production in organic farming. Nevertheless Germans import from other states from 6 to 94 percent of agri-food raw materials. For example, as regards of cereals which are subsequently processed in Germany, over a quarter of the wheat, respectively, more than half of the corn have been imported from countries such as Romania, Ukraine and Hungary.

In terms of organic food consumption in the EU, expressed by amounts allocated to purchase these products bio, Denmark, Austria, Germany and Sweden are on the top list as average expenditures per inhabitant.

Whilst Romanian organic farming has been developed as agricultural production, partially subsidized by the CAP intervention measures, organic food market has not experienced the same growth rate. If in terms of cultivated acreage, organic farming is approx. 2 percent of national agricultural production, organic food market expressed in sale volumes are below 1 percent on the domestic food market. As shown, although production in organic farming has increased in Romania in the past 15 years, the sales volume of organic food did not increase as significantly as in other European countries.

Demand for organic food is quite low on domestic market; but price of organic food is generally about 30 to 100 % higher than the price of conventional products. Therefore both market share of organic products on the Romanian food market and consumption per inhabitant have remained scanty. Yearly consumption of organic products per capita revealed that in 2013 a Romanian spent an average only 4 euros for organic products, while a Danish used 163 euros and a German had a budget of 93 euros on organic food.

Romanian trade figures in absolute values regarding organic food market vary from one source to another, but overall trends are similar.

Organic market has represented 1 percent of the food market in the 2008-2009; due to encouragement of the annual growth in the previous period it has been expected at that time an increasing tendency towards next 4-5 years to double market quota. The upward trend in organic food market in the period 2006-2009 has been justified by various reasons related to public health and welfare taking into account the need for environmental protection. Additional to these a long series of food scandals, including products withdrawn, has contributed so that the trust of conventional food has dropped. Studies on Romanian consumer demands for organic food choice highlighted that these products were preferred mainly based on the following criteria: food safety and product quality; social responsibility for sustainable development; adopting a healthier lifestyle; and belonging to a social group considered superior.

But economic crisis has come and organic food sector has been affected thereupon. Although this market is mostly addressed to people higher educated and with bigger incomes, organic food sales volumes declined after 2010 and then have stagnated, so as to yearly sales of approx. 80 million euros were estimated in 2011-2013. Afterwards market share of organic food retails reached 0.7 percent (reported to Romanian food market) in 2013.

In the 2002-2014 period the local organic agricultural production was valorised mainly for export. Thus, in 2003-2004 more than 90-95 percent of Romanian organic production was exported especially on the European market in countries such as Holland, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland. But in 2007 organic products accounted for about 8 percent of the total agri-food goods exported by Romania (Toncea et al 2012). An increase of organic products volume for export was registered in 2009, which represented an increment in million euros up 20 percent compared to 2007. Value of export sales has increased in 2010-2013 to approx. 200 million euros, but main organic products exported remain agricultural products unprocessed and with a lower economic value. Among Romanian organic products, which are exported to the European market it mentions: cereals (corn, wheat), technical plants (rapeseed, sunflower, soya), fruits (apples, grapes, berries), wine, pork, vegetables - mushrooms, spices. In recent years a great success has registered honey and cheese (cascavalio, Schweizer and sheep cheese).

Whilst exports mainly consist of raw materials and half-finished products in Romania are imported preponderant organic foodstuffs with higher added value through processing, such as ground coffee, brown sugar, dessert products, prepared soymilk - tofu, creams, bakery specialties etc. Most imports of organic products come from the EU-15, excepting the coffee or sugar cane that are supplied by third countries.

Organic food industry is considered as an industry already evolved globally, but organic food production in Romania is not sufficiently developed. Reduced number of processors and their production capacities as well as lower volume of local organic food that are processed and traded in both domestic and international markets show that Romanian organic food processing is still developing. Basically, Romanian organic food market currently as a whole is in an emerging stage while most Western European countries have already reached a stage of maturity.

Organic food goods commercialised in Romania are labelled specifically namely additional organic logos (see graph 3) and information on traceability are provided. For example, logo ,, ae " as property of MARD, ensures that respective food comes from organic farming and is certified as such by a certification authority approved by MARD. Obviously only registered operators in organic farming in Romania by MARD have the right to use the logo ,, ae " for labelling organic products, which they achieve or sell. Since 2010 there is additionally an EU organic farming logo for pre-packed foodstuffs produced within the European Union through which certified organic foodstuffs are recognized in the whole EU.

Figure no. 1. Organic logo of food products in Romania

In order to ensure products traceability, usage of EU organic farming logo must be followed by mentioning where agricultural raw materials have been farmed and a code number of the control bodies.

Commerce with organic food products means it is made only by traders registered with the MARD (see exceptions according to Order MARD no. 1253 of 2013). Organic food products can be sold through different distribution channels from which Romanians use:
1. directly from farm;
2. box scheme;
3. through supermarket and hypermarket chains (DM, Carrefour, Billa, Metro, Kaufland etc.);
4. specialized stores/ organic shops (wholesale or retail);
5. organic online market;

6. trade fairs and exhibitions;

7. farmers' markets and seasonal ones.

Although existing channels have not been fully exploited still, in other European countries in last years have developed new distribution systems such as food service (Horeca type) through public institutions (with reference to social food service - canteens, schools, hospitals, military) or specific activities that promote organic farming in rural tourism.

Marketing studies have shown that choice of distribution channels is critical for business success at microeconomic level, but also macroeconomic one. Importance of marketing channels differs among Member States of EU. In countries such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Hungary and Czech Republic the highest sales (between 60 and 80 percent of the total) are made through supermarkets and hypermarkets as well as in non-specialized stores; while in other countries like Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Luxembourg, Ireland, Netherlands and Spain the organic food market is dominated by direct sales and specialized shops. It is difficult to assess on which of these channels are most appropriate since both categories lies to leading countries with regards to consumption of organic products both in terms of quantity (sales volume) and growth rate of retail sales in last years. Perhaps consumption habits, traditions and national peculiarities are significant in this respect. However some specialists have formulated opinions on organic market that it will be developing faster and more sustainable if organic goods will be sold mainly through supermarkets in comparison with the direct sale and specialized shops. Indeed, the availability and purchase possibilities are easier to be accomplished in supermarkets and the offer of organic products can be more varied; but it should not be underestimated nor the advantages of direct distribution channels.

By comparing organic offer within supermarkets and specialized stores the organic assortment consists of thousands (1000-8000) products in Western European countries (Richter 2006), while in Romania are provided on shelves up to 30-50 organic products, which demonstrates a limited access to organic products on the Romanian market.

In Romania, like France, Germany, Belgium, Spain etc. direct sales in all forms represents the most used distribution channel for organic products, having many advantages for both consumers and farmers (best prices, acquisition of seasonal and fresh products, local products promotion, direct relationships between producers and consumers etc.). Direct selling can be achieved by two methods: "farmers to the city" (local markets, fairs, etc.) and "consumers to farm" (farm gate, agro-ecotouristic farms etc.).

It noticed that participation in trade fairs is essential for operators to promote organic food products and sign agreements. In Europe there are two yearly international agro-ecological fairs large-scale, namely BIOFACH Nuremberg (Germany) (http://www.biofach.de) and SANA Bologna (Italy) (http://www.sana.it). The most representative fairs for organic agricultural producers in Romania are IndAgra Food & Drink (http://www.indagra-food.ro) and IndAgra Farm (http://www.indagra-farm.ro) of Bucharest, AGRARIA Cluj Napoca (http://www.agraria.info.ro) and ExpoAgroUtil of Constantza (http://www.expoconstanta.ro/expozitii/EXPOAGROUTIL/14/).

Nationally there are several state organizations and private professional ones, which have been involved in promoting the principles and concepts of lasting development and organic farming. Among active organizations mention: Romanian Association for Sustainable Agriculture (ARAD), Organic Farmers Association of Romania "Bioterra", Bio-Romania Association, Resource Centre for the Promotion and Marketing of Organic Products (EcoR). Moreover, it should be noted that in order to promote organic farming products, the European Commission provides support of up to 50 percent of those organizations conducting outreach programs for promoting organic products on the internal market and in third countries (v. Reg. (EC) 501/2008 and Reg. (EC) no. 3/2008).

Although various outreach campaigns were done for training of producers and consumers to be encouraged to turn towards an organic supply, it was observed that these activities have mainly echoed among specialists and farmers. Information and promotion actions addressed to final consumers failed to have visible effects in terms of an adequate awareness of Romanians consumer about organic goods. Unfortunately, it is still widespread opinion that products from households or sold through farmer markets are organic products, which is not correct and moreover organic market development has been hampered by this misunderstanding.

Eco-marketing as a form of social marketing has not been used enough for improving the image of organic food in the Romanian market nor harmonization long-term interests of consumers in the context of sustainable development and environmental protection.

Richter (2006) has quoted five main constraints for the development of an organic food market that they have been estimated since the late 1990s as:

1) lack of professional marketing,
2) reduced role of conventional supermarket chains as potential promoters of the market,
3) lack of public support in marketing,
4) limited size of supply batches,
5) lack of market transparency.

As a consequence several European research projects have included recommendations aimed at improving the access on organic food market through policies of: pricing (cut prices for premium products), promotion (marketing plans well balanced) and distribution (increased availability through supermarket chains).

As is depicted foregoing, Romanian organic market is facing both with limited availability to a wide supply of food goods, lack of involvement and lower awareness of consumers regarding organic products, their socio-economic and environmental impact on long term, and many issues on management and marketing associated overall activity of registered operators in organic farming.

5. Conclusions

National market for organic food is still at an emerging stage. In this study the major constraints for development of Romanian organic market were identified as to the same which meet on mature markets, demonstrating that management and marketing tools should be adapted to increase the production of organic products in the whole food chain.

Future development of new markets for Romanian organic products, added value through processing of agricultural products from organic farming and / or increment of market share at national level create opportunities for many operators.

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