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**THE QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT AND THE NEED  
OF REFORM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACETS OF LIVING CONDITIONS IN ROMANIA**

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**Abstract:** *In 2019, four major cities from Romania were included in the world quality of life ranking: Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara, Iasi and Bucharest (it is a ranking that includes 226 cities, in which the first place is positioned Canberra, while the last place is occupied by Caracas). The quality of life index used represents an estimate of the overall quality of life by using an empirical formula that takes into account eight indicators: the purchasing power index, the pollution index, the ratio of the price of housing and income, the cost of life index, the safety index, the health care index, the transport time index and the climate index. It should be stressed, however, that on the one hand, in any process of measuring the quality of life are used not only the objective indicators, which describes the conditions of life, but also the subjective indicators, which assess the state of life through a perception „filtered by expectations, aspirations, values”, who rather targets the happiness, the satisfaction with life. On the other hand, the concept of quality of life is a multidisciplinary one, its definition being a wider one if we think about the multitude of indicators that should be used. The present article proposes only a description of the housing conditions in Romania in the European context, using the latest statistical data who directly affecting the living conditions of the Romanian population.*

**Keywords:** *degree of urbanisation, dwelling type, housing affordability, housing conditions, living environments, material living standards, objective indicators, overcrowded rate, subjective indicators, the climate index, the pollution index, the ratio of the price of housing, the safety index, quality of life*

**JEL Classification:** *A14, I32*

## 1. Quality of living

When discussing issues related to the quality of living, we do not think only of the insured utilities or their quality. The concept integrates a multitude of aspects that complements with the construction of a habitat where the civilized individual of the modern world is trying to assemble a balanced environment of his living conditions.

On the one hand, this also explains why in the housing quality assessments we encounter data concerning aspects related to the structure and infrastructure of the house: the quality of the roof of the dwelling or walls, the lack of space (overcrowding), the existence of basic utilities (water and gas, electricity), the presence of sanitary facilities / bathrooms in the house.

On the other hand, such assessments may extend the analysis framework to data related to the residential context (the area where the dwelling is located): how much noise (ambient noise) is around of the area we live in, how large are the values of the atmospheric pollution or how safe is in the area we live in.

We can illustrate with some examples from 2016 the ones outlined above as follows:

- On average, about 16.6% of Europeans lived in an overcrowded home;
  - Higher levels of overcrowding have been declared for eastern and southern European (EU Member States) and especially in urban areas.
- About 15.4% of the EU-28 population reported in 2017 that it lived in a dwelling with major infrastructure problems;
- 8.7% of the EU-28 population was unable to ensure their home warm in the cold season;
- 17.9% of Europeans complained about the high levels of noise pollution, 14% of pollution and about 13% of violence or vandalism;
- 11.1% of Europeans allocated more than 40% of the available income for housing (in Greece, 40.5% of the population was in this situation in 2016).

### 1.1. Housing conditions

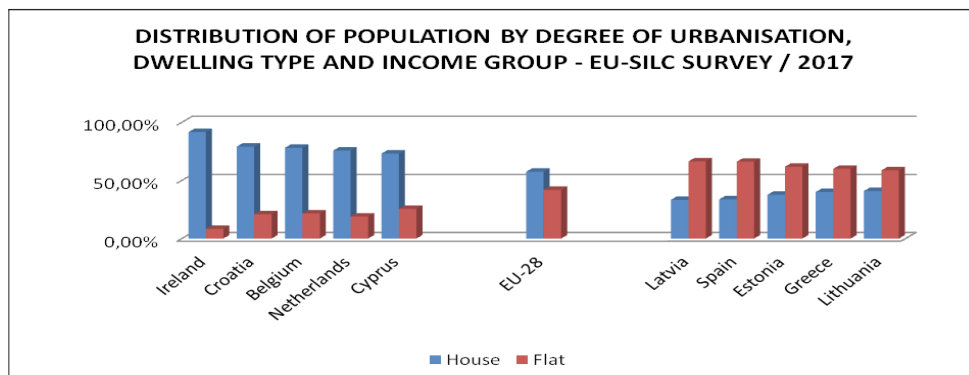
„In the context of material living standards and well-being” housing is one of the most important characteristic. Practically, each individual would like to afford:

- Adequate housing of decent quality,
- In a safe environment,
- Adequate space “for its occupants to live, eat and sleep”.

Here are the main features of living in the EU-28 area according to Eurostat data of 2017, for the UE-28 population:

#### a. Europeans tend to live more in houses than in flats

Figure 1. Distribution of population by degree of urbanisation, dwelling type and income group



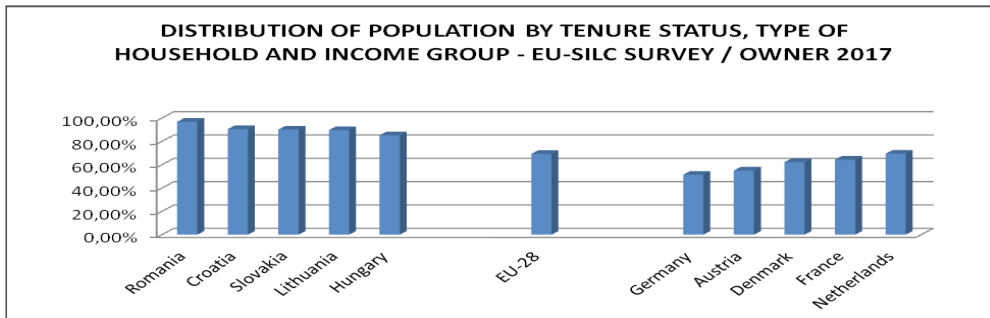
Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017a)

- In 2017 the distribution of the UE-28 population was as follows: 41.7% in urban areas, 27.3% in rural areas and 31% in towns and suburbs;
- 57.50% of the EU-28 population lived in 2017 in houses (41.9% in flats);
  - The highest values was recorded in Ireland, where only 8,3% of population live in flats.
- The smallest values were registered in the Baltic countries, Latvia ranks the top - 66.4% of population live in flats;
  - **Romania** finds itself in the current European trend, **65.9% of population lived in houses in 2017, while 34.1% in flats.**
- 16.2% of the EU-28 urban population lived in houses in 2017;
- **In 2017, only 5.8% of the urban population in Romania lived in houses.**

#### b. Generally the european population lives in owner-occupied dwelling

- 69.3% of the EU-28 population lived in 2017 in an owner-occupied dwelling, while 30.7% were tenants (42.8% owners with documents + 26.5% mortgages or borrowed);
- **Romania ranks first in the European Union in terms of the percentage of the population living in an owner-occupied dwelling – 96,8%** (Croatia – 90.50%, Slovakia – 90.10%, Lithuania – 89.7% and Hungary – 85.20%);
  - To the other pole were Germany – 51.40%, Austria – 55%, Denmark – 62.20%, France – 64.40% and the Netherlands – 69.40%;

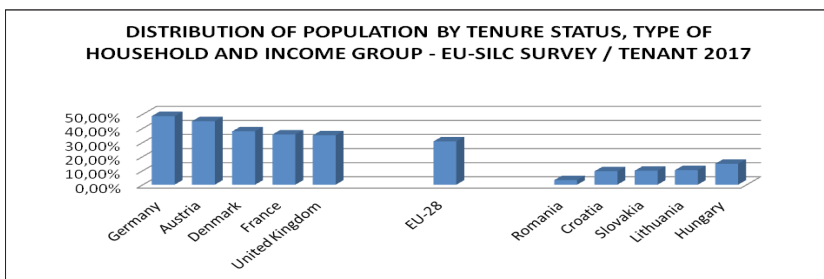
Figure 2. Distribution of population by tenure status, type of household and income group



Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017b)

- **In Romania, approximately 3.2% of the population lived with rent in 2017;**
  - To the other pole was Germany with the highest values – 48.6% (Austria – 45%, Denmark – 37.8%, France – 35.6%, Great Britain – 35%).

Figure 3. Distribution of population by tenure status, type of household and income group / Tenant



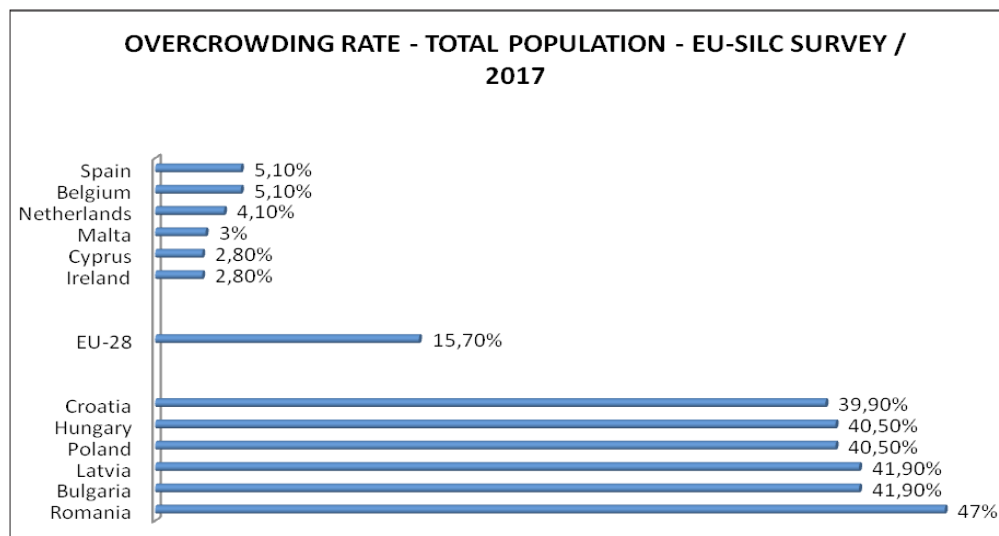
Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017b)

**c) In 2017, approximately 15.7% of the EU-28 population lived in overcrowded housing**

A person is considered as living in an overcrowded household if the household does not have at its disposal a minimum number of rooms equal to the sum of:

- One room for the household;
- One room per couple in the household;
- One room per single person aged 18 and more;
- One room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age;
- One room per single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category;
- One room per pair of children under 12 years of age).
  - **In Romania about 47% of the population lived in overcrowded housing in 2017;** (Bulgaria – 41.9%, Latvia – 41.9%, Poland – 40.5%, Hungary – 40.5%, Croatia – 39.9%);
  - To the other pole were Ireland and Cyprus, with an overcrowding rate of only 2.8% (Malta – 3%, Holland – 4.1%, Belgium – 5.1%, Spain – 5.1%);

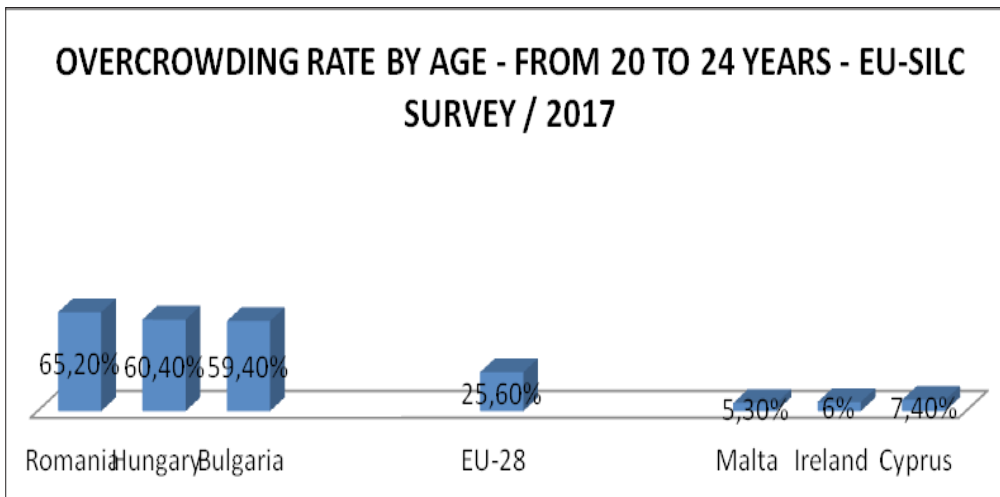
Figure 4. Overcrowding rate – Total population



Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017c)

- **At the EU-28 level people aged 20-24 years had the highest overcrowding rate in 2017 – 25.6%;**
  - **Romania took first place in this age group, 65.2% of people aged between 20-24 years lived in 2017 in overcrowded housing** (Hungary – 60.49%, Bulgaria – 59.40%);
  - To the other pole was Malta for which only a population of 5.3% of this age segment lived in 2017 in overcrowded dwellings (Ireland – 6%, Cyprus – 7.4%);

Figure 5. Overcrowding rate by age- from 20 to 24 years



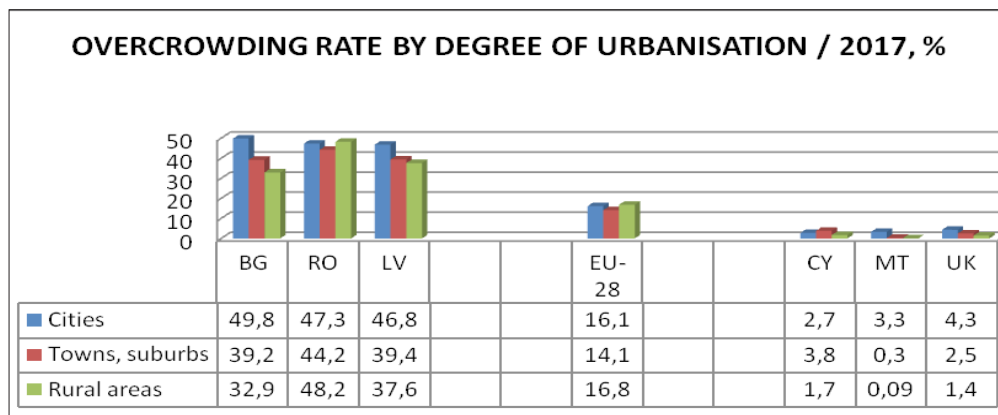
Source: *Ec.europa.eu (2017d)*

- **People aged 16-19 years were in 2017 the most exposed to overcrowding in Romania – 71.2%** (Bulgaria – 66.4%, Hungary – 64.2%);
- Very high scores were recorded in Romania in 2017 and for the people aged 15-25 (68.9%) and those aged between 16-24 years (68.3%).
- **At EU-28 level people aged 65 years and above recorded the lowest overcrowding rate in 2017 – 6.2% (in Romania – 18.7%);**
- **At the EU-28 level female people are generally more exposed to overcrowding than male;**
  - The most exposed female persons were in 2017 aged between 12-17 years – 25.6% (for male persons there was a 25% overcrowding rate);
  - **In Romania in 2017 74.3% of female aged 12-17 years lived in overcrowded conditions;** equally high levels of overcrowding rate

were also recorded for female aged between 15-19 years (72.8%) and 16-19 years (71.4%).

- The rate of overcrowding varies greatly in the EU-28 in terms of urbanisation. Thus, in 2017 it lived in overcrowded conditions approximately **16.1% of the population of large cities, 14.2% of the population of suburbs and small towns and 16.8% of the population of the rural area**;
  - **The overcrowding rate was approximately 7-10 percent higher in the urban environment than in the rural environment** in Denmark (14.8%/4.7%), Czech Republic (20.1%/10.7%), Sweden (18.8%/8.4%) and Italy (31.4%/24.4%);
  - There were exceptions from the pattern described above (the overcrowded rate was much higher in small towns and suburbs than in major cities) – Slovakia (42.5%/34.3%) and Spain (5.6%/5.3%);
  - The largest overcrowding rate in the urban area was registered in Bulgaria – 49.8% (at the opposite pole the lowest values of the overcrowding rate were recorded in Cyprus – 2.7%, Malta – 3.3% and UK – 4.3%);
  - **In the urban environment Romania recorded in 2017 an overcrowding rate of 47.3 %**; in suburbs as well as in small towns approximately 44.2% of the population of these areas lived in 2017 in overcrowded conditions;
  - For Romania the situation is not better in rural areas where almost half of this population lives in overcrowded conditions (48.2%);

Figure 6. Overcrowding rate by degree of urbanisation

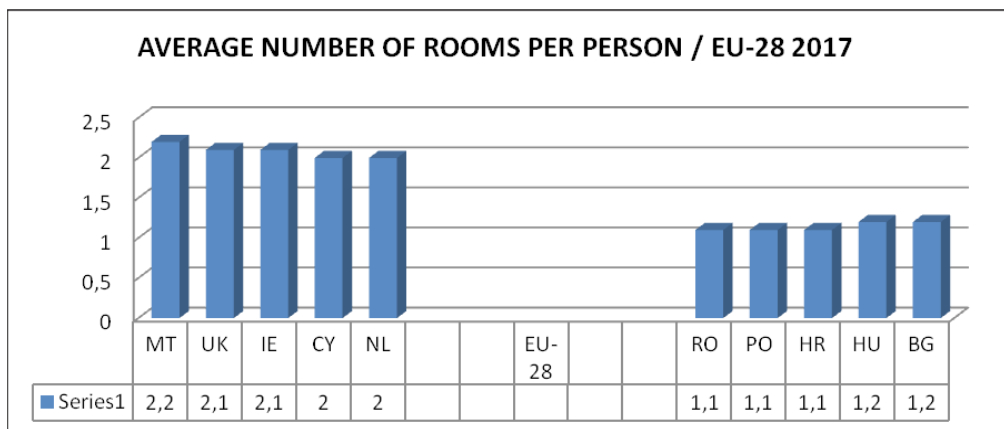


Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017e)

**d) On average a person who was living in 2017 in the EU-28 was owning about 1.6 rooms**

- There are still discrepancy between the EU-28 states:
  - Progress in some countries is up to 0.9-1.1 points for countries like Malta – 2.2, UK – 2.1, Ireland – 2.1, Cyprus – 2, the Netherlands – 2, while for the former communist states the situation remains unchanged: Romania – 1.1, Poland – 1.1, Croatia – 1.1, Bulgaria – 1.2, Hungary 1.2;

Figure 7. Average number of rooms per person



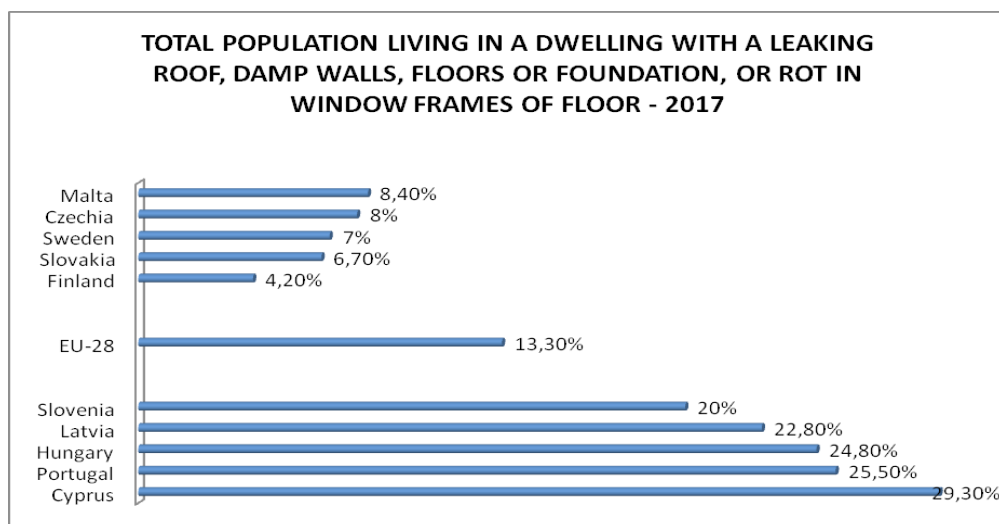
Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017f)

- **Generally the number of rooms/person is larger in rural areas than in the urban areas** (in major cities positive deviations from the European average were recorded especially in Malta (+ 0.6), Cyprus (+ 0.5) and Belgium (+ 0.4);
- In 2017 in the EU-28 the average number of rooms per person was higher for owners (1.7 rooms/person) than for tenants (1.5 rooms/person);
- **In Romania, in 2017 the average number of rooms per person was higher for owners of houses (1.1 rooms/person) than for tenants (0.8 rooms/person);**

**e) Approximately 13.3% of people who have lived in 2017 in the EU-28 area had infrastructure problems at home (roofs, walls, floors, windows, etc.)**



Figure 8. Total population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor



*Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017g)*

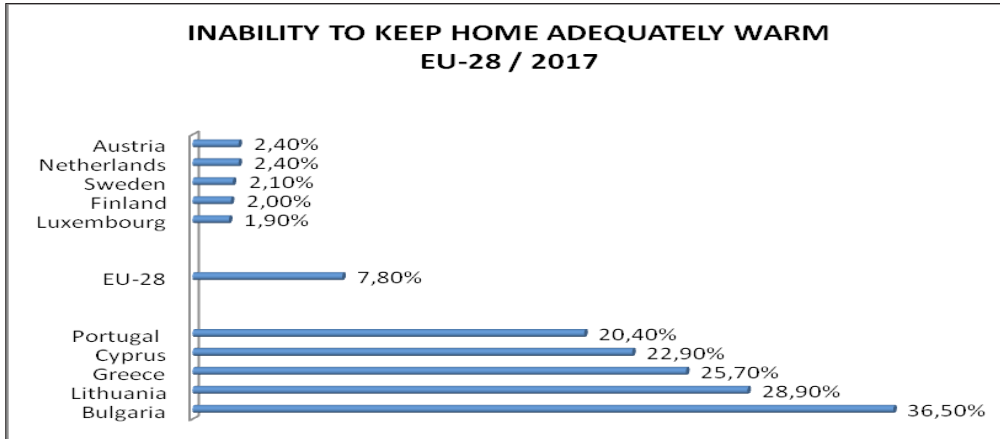
- The population most affected was those under the age of 18 (14.7%),
- Also households with three or more adults with dependent children (15.7%);
- In Cyprus, about three out of ten people have had in 2017 large problems for the maintenance of the infrastructure of the houses in which they live (29.30%);
- Similar problems were recorded in Portugal (25.5%), Hungary (24.8%), Latvia (22.8%) and Slovenia (20%);
- At the opposite pole was Finland (4.2%), Slovakia (6.7%), Sweden (7%), Czech Republic (8%) and Malta (8.4%) with values far below of the European average;
- **Romania was in 2017 below the European average, about one Romanian in ten was registered with problems related to the infrastructure of the houses in which they live (11.1%).**

***f) Approximately 7.8% of the EU-28 population was incapable to keep their home adequately warm in 2017***

- The highest values were recorded in Bulgaria (36.5%), Lithuania (28.9%), Greece (25.7%), Cyprus (22.9%) and Portugal (20.4%), where the average European value was exceeded by a percentage between 13%-29%;

- **In 2017 in Romania approximately 11.3% of the population was incapable to keep their home adequately warm;**
- At the opposite pole were states such as Luxembourg (1.9%), Finland (2%), Sweden (2.1%), Holland (2.4%) and Austria (2.4%) with values far below the European average.

Figure 9. Inability to keep home adequately warm



Source: *Ec.europa.eu (2017h)*

- **18.4% of the poor population of the EU-28 (with income in the area of poverty threshold) could not ensure in 2017 the warm suitable for the dwelling;**
  - In some states, the situation was more than alarming for the population in extreme poverty, about half of them had huge difficulties in ensuring the warm during the winter: Bulgaria – 59.5%, Cyprus – 46.8%, Greece – 45.3%;
  - In the other pole were states such as Luxembourg (1.9%), Finland (2%), Sweden (2.1%), Holland (2.4%) and Austria (2.4%) with a small percentage from the poverty population who had difficulties in ensuring the warm during the winter;
  - **In Romania, approximately 17.4% of the poor population had in 2017 difficulties in ensuring normal warm conditions during the winter.**

### 1.2. Living environments

Complementary, housing conditions are affected of the quality of the residential housing environment. Noise, pollution, crime, violence and vandalism are all

so many factors that influence the living conditions. For the year 2017 Eurostat data showed that:

- For around 17.5% of the EU-28 population **the noise was one of the most serious environmental problems**;
  - Highest values (over 20%) were registered in Germany (26.1%), the Netherlands (25.6%), Malta (24.9%), Portugal (23.5%), Luxembourg (21.6%) and Greece (20.1%);
  - **In Romania, approximately 19.3% of the population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affecting the quality of residence is noise pollution.**
- For approximately 14.1% of the EU-28 population pollution and misery (the presence of rubbish) have been catalogued as some of the worst environmental problems;
  - Highest values (over 20%) were registered in Malta (26.5%), Germany (24.6%), and Greece (20.3%);
  - **In Romania, about 14.6% of the population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affecting the quality of residence is pollution and misery.**
- For about 12% of the EU-28 population crime, violence and vandalism were catalogued some of the most serious environmental problems who affecting the quality of the dwelling;
  - Highest values (over 20%) were registered in Bulgaria (23.6%), Germany (24.6%), and Greece (20.3%);
  - **In Romania, about 11.3% of the population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affecting the quality of the dwelling is crime, violence and vandalism.**

### ***1.3. Housing affordability***

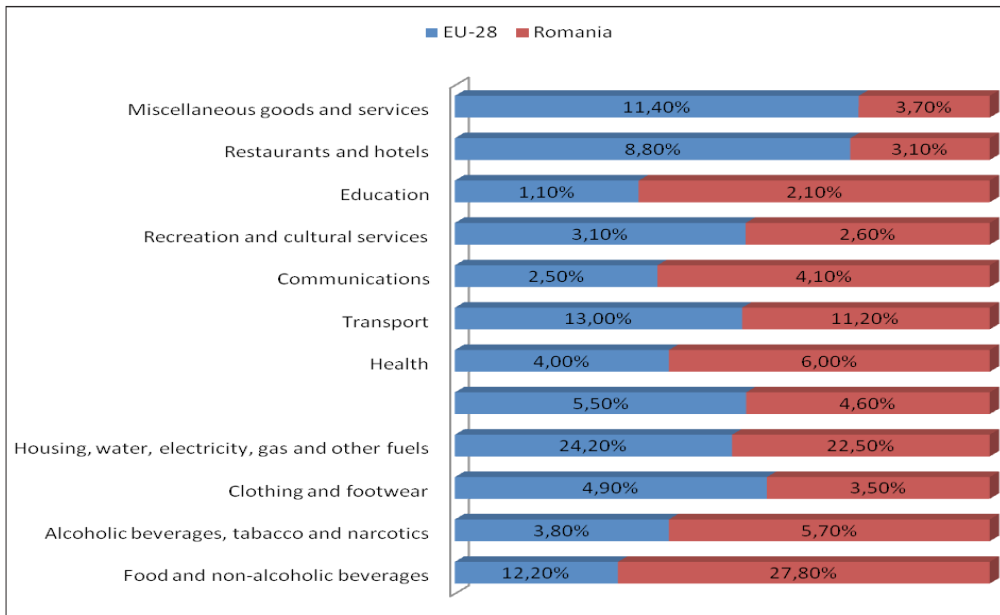
In many cases housing costs are the most important component of monthly expenditure for households, affecting some of the expenses for certain basic needs (which are often cancelled or postponed). For the year 2017 Eurostat data showed that:

- Approximately 10.4% of the EU-28 population have spend at least 40% of the household income for housing (the highest value was in Greece - 39.6%);
- Relatively high values above the European average were also recorded in Bulgaria (18.9%), Denmark (15.7%), Germany (14.5%) and **Romania (12.3%)**;

- At the opposite pole were Malta (1.4%), Cyprus (2.8%), Ireland (4.5%), France (4.7%) and Estonia (4.8%) with values located far below the European average;
- The situation was very complicated for poor population, **approximately 37.9% of this population have spend in 2017 at least 40% of household income for housing;**
  - The most serious situation was recorded in Greece where 89.7% of this population have spend in 2017 at least 40% of income household for housing;
  - In Romania approximately 36.3% of the poor population have spend in 2017 at least 40% of household income for housing.

The consumption of goods and services in households differs from one country to another. The information can be analysed according to the classification of individual consumption for purposes (COICOP), where division 04 covers dwellings, water, electricity, gas and other fuels. Figure 10 is relevant to compare the behaviour of the Romanian consumer to that of the European in general.

Figure 10. Final consumption expenditure of households by consumption purpose



Source: Ec.europa.eu (2017i)

## Conclusions

- In 2017, 28.9% of Romania's population lived in urban areas, 46.5% in rural area and 24.6% in towns and suburbs;
- Romania is found in the current European trend, 65.9% of the population lived in 2017 in houses, while 34.1% in flats;
- Romania is the country with the most housing owners - 96.8%;
- However, approximately 47% of the Romanian population lived in 2017 in overcrowded dwellings;
- In Romania, generally the number of rooms/person is larger in rural areas than in the urban areas;
- The average number of rooms per person was in 2017 in Romania higher for owners of houses (1.1 rooms/person) than for tenants (0.8 rooms/person);
- In Romania approximately a Romanian in ten was registered in 2017 with problems related to the maintenance of the infrastructure of the houses in which they live (11.1%);
- In 2017 approximately 11.3% of the Romanian population was incapable of ensuring the warm of the home in winter;
- About 19.3% of the Romanian population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affected the housing quality was the noise pollution;
- In Romania, about 14.6% of the population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affected the housing quality was the pollution and misery;
- In Romania, about 11.3% of the population complained in 2017 that a serious environmental problem who affected the housing quality was the crime, the violence and the vandalism;
- Approximately 12,3% of the Romanian population have spend in 2017 at least 40% of household income for housing.

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