

# The Dynamics of Regional Inequalities in Romania. Comparative Analysis between the major Crises – Financial and Sanitary

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**ABSTRACT:** In Romania, the issue of economic inequalities and regional convergence is one of the current important topics on which the attention of economic specialists and the decision-making factors is focused. In the actual context, the regional policy in Romania is implemented at regional level, the regions being formed by counties that have voluntarily associated on the basis of a convention signed by the representatives of the County Councils, respectively of the General Council of Bucharest. After the year 2000, the development regions faced two major crises: the global financial crisis (2008-2009) and the one caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). Both crises have caused important effects at regional level and both have been supported by a number of territorial strategies and policies, to which there was added the cohesion and regional development policy financed by the EU Structural Funds. The paper is based on the analysis of the differences between the regions of Romania, in the period 2008-2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, by highlighting the differences between the dynamics of certain indicators, of the analysis of the GINI coefficients for measuring inequalities, trying to answer the question which of the two crises, financial or health, affected the level of territorial inequalities more and what was the evolution of the regions of Romania in these two sub-periods. Regarding the financial crisis versus the pandemic one, in the majority of the indicators, it was shown that the values of the Gini Coefficients in the 2020-2022 were higher than the ones in 2008-2010 and also after the COVID-19 crisis the tendency of increased disparities was maintained. The only domains that were least affected by the pandemic were demography (rural population), transportation infrastructure and economic potential (companies with 10-49 employees).

**KEYWORDS:** regional inequalities, convergence, GINI Coefficient, NUTS 2 Regions, COVID-19 pandemic crisis, economic-financial crisis.

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