## **UNECE**

# Romania

# **Environmental Performance Reviews**







#### UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

# ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

## **ROMANIA**

Third Review



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## **Foreword**

The Third Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Romania builds on the substantial experience accumulated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and its member States in using the EPR tool to regularly assess progress achieved in reconciling national economic and environmental objectives. Over a quarter of a century, EPRs have resulted in: stronger institutions for environmental governance, management and performance; improved financial frameworks for environmental protection; advanced environmental monitoring and information systems; better integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies; strengthened public participation; enhanced environmental awareness; and increased international cooperation. EPRs bring together good practices and a wealth of experience from all ECE member States in a mutually enriching learning exchange.

Overall, Romania advanced well in setting the conditions necessary for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since the last review, Romania adopted a new Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 and established cross-sectoral governance and institutional structures, notably the Intergovernmental Committee for Sustainable Development and the State Department for Sustainable Development. The country has updated its environmental legislation by adopting several new laws and amending existing legislation. The environmental policy framework was also updated. Priority issues requiring further attention by Romania, as identified in the EPR, include: the promotion of sustainable development and support of the cross-cutting work of the Department for Sustainable Development; the streamlining and stabilization of the environmental legal framework; the improvement of interministerial cooperation to ensure continuity and coherence in environmental policy; the strengthening of regulatory and compliance assurance mechanisms; the boosting of strategic planning and implementation efforts to address climate change and biodiversity loss; the guarantee of public participation in decision-making on environmental matters; and the enhancement of open access to environmental information. Furthermore, the Third EPR highlights the need for: more strategic management of water resources; the expansion of the solid waste integrated management systems to cover the entire country; the greening of the economy through green public procurement and private sector participation; the building of resilience to climate change; and support of the path to a low-carbon economy and society.

Romania's Third EPR was conducted during the challenging times of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. To help the country address concerns related to pandemics, the EPR recommends the improvement of air quality and raising awareness about the negative health impacts of air pollution as a critical factor in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 and other future possible airborne threats, and adapting procedures to ensure effective public participation in decision-making on environmental matters in times of pandemics.

I would like to highlight the richness of the Third EPR of Romania, addressing 54 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and making 61 recommendations. I trust that the third review will serve as a powerful tool to support decision makers and policymakers as well as representatives of civil society in their efforts to improve environmental governance, management and performance and achieve the SDGs in Romania.

ECE wishes the Government of Romania further success in carrying out the tasks involved in meeting its environmental objectives, including through the implementation of the recommendations in the third review. I also hope that the lessons learned from the peer review process in Romania will benefit other countries throughout the ECE region.

Ms. Olga Algayerova

United Nations Under-Secretary-General Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

## Preface

The Third EPR of Romania takes stock of progress made in the governance and management of the environment since the second review in 2012, assesses the implementation of the recommendations of that EPR and makes new recommendations for the country to implement. In addition, the Third EPR looks into developments related to the country's attainment of relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The review covers legal and policy frameworks and compliance assurance mechanisms. It also focuses on greening the economy, environmental information, monitoring and assessment, environmental democracy and education for sustainable development (ESD). At the domestic—international interface, it includes a substantive analysis of the country's participation in and commitments to international agreements, as well as its climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Furthermore, the EPR addresses issues of specific importance to Romania related to air protection, water management, waste and chemicals management and biodiversity and protected areas. Finally, the review includes an assessment of 54 SDG targets, including nine targets being reviewed in several chapters from different perspectives. In some cases, a comprehensive analysis of SDGs and targets is hindered by the lack of data and information.

The Third EPR of Romania began in May 2019 with a preparatory mission to agree on the structure of the report and the schedule for its completion. A team of international experts took part in the review mission from 3 to 11 December 2019. Romania received the draft report for comments in September 2020 and, in October 2020, it was submitted to the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for consideration. During its meeting on 20–23 October 2020, the Expert Group discussed the draft report with a delegation from Romania, focusing on the conclusions and recommendations made by the international experts. The recommendations, with suggested amendments from the Expert Group, were then submitted for peer review to the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-sixth session on 9–10 November 2020, which was attended by a high-level delegation from Romania. The Committee adopted the EPR recommendations.

The Committee and the ECE secretariat are grateful to the Government of Romania and its experts who worked with the international experts and contributed their knowledge and expertise. ECE would also like to express its deep appreciation to the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the German Federal Environment Agency for their support by providing funds through the Advisory Assistance Programme for their financial support to this review.

Sincere thanks also go to Hungary and Portugal for having provided their experts to this review. Furthermore, ECE is grateful to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for its support of this review.

In addition, ECE takes this opportunity to thank Austria, Germany and Switzerland for their financial support to the EPR Programme and expresses its deep appreciation to Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro and Switzerland for having provided their experts for the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews, which undertook the expert review of this report.



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