

LAND RECLAMATION IN ROMANIA. HISTORICAL RETROSPECTION AND PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. *In Romania from about 15 million hectares of agricultural land and 9.7 million hectares of arable land, 5.3 million hectares are affected by soil erosion, 5.5 million hectares are affected by excess humidity and 5.5 million hectares are affected by drought. Prior to 1990, 3.1 million hectares were equipped for irrigation, 3.1 million hectares for works to check excess humidity and only 2.2 million hectares for soil erosion control. After 1990, several rehabilitation projects were carried out, but most of them dealt with irrigation. The latest National Program of 2016 provides for an area of 2 million hectares for irrigation, especially in the Danube Floodplain. There are no rehabilitation programs for soil erosion control or excess humidity, other than the ones partly included in the irrigation systems.*

Keywords: land reclamation, retrospection, history.

1. Introduction

Expert studies have shown that on more than half of Romania's agricultural land three natural calamities produce significant harvest losses. These are drought, excess humidity and soil erosion. For farmers the most visible is drought, which almost every year causes damage in one region or another during one of the vegetation seasons. In order to combat the drought, as early as the end of the 19th century some proposals for large-scale irrigation equipment were made but were not implemented (Lup, 1997). As far as excess humidity is concerned, since the 18th century, more than one million hectares have been drained but the problem has not been solved throughout the country (Lup, 2014). While in the western and south-western parts of the country drainage and regularization of watercourses works are made, throughout the rest of the country, ponds and fisheries are set up, and small vegetable areas are equipped for irrigation, while the works against soil erosion are almost unknown. At the beginning of the 20th century, studies were developed for large-scale irrigation equipment but were not finalized. Among these we mention the work titled *Irrigation Studies in Romania* by engineer V. Roșu, 1907, for an area of 150,000 ha and engineer Al. Davidescu's *For the Irrigation of 1,773 Thousand ha* (Lup, 1997). However, the two world wars prevented works on large areas. Only after the seizure of political power by the communist-totalitarian regime in 1945, and then after the nationalization of all the country's wealth, elaborated works to combat drought, excess humidity and soil erosion became possible.