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The Quality of Public Services - Management of Urban Markets in Romania

Carmen Chasovschi[a], Angela Albu[b]*, Carmen Nastase[c], Carl Mohr[d]

* Corresponding author: Angela Albu, angelaa@seap.usv.ro

[a]Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania, carmenc@seap.usv.ro [b]Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania, angelaa@seap.usv.ro [c]Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania, carmenn@seap.usv.ro [d]Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania, carl@mohr.ro

Abstract

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The market and the way it looks now, is built on two pillars, consumers and economic agents, to which a third is joining: the public authorities. In the present study we have dealt with urban markets, regarded as trading places for a variety of products, but, at the same time, as social spaces for the community and business support-spaces for small manufacturers. The transition from agro-food markets to urban markets is a dynamic and on-going process, requiring a thorough study that would allow for responsible management, in terms of consumers and retailers as well. Current customers have changed their purchasing behaviour, the assessment criteria for products and for the conditions offered in consumer outlets. It is therefore necessary for management to adapt to the dynamic changes that characterize markets, to meet customer requirements, to ensure their safety and protection in the purchasing process and increase their satisfaction. We have tried to offer an accurate and updated image on the local agri-food markets in Romania, identifying at the same time ways to optimize the existing conditions in the context of promoting sustainable development of urban markets and with the final goal of enhancing consumer protection.

Keywords: Integrated urban markets; public services; responsible management; local development.

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1. Introduction

The urban markets are some of the few urban areas that have preserved their functionality over the decades, and have developed their facilities and range of products. However, many of those still have a long way to go, as compared to similar markets in other European countries.

The concept of "agri-food" can be interpreted as being inconsistent with the reality of current markets: most of the times, the space arranged for selling agri-food products was extended step by step, in an uncontrolled process, by creating additional spaces for the distribution of non-food products, by opening small outlets, fast food restaurants and bars. Moreover, since they are mostly located in the centre or in accessible points, markets have become a socializing space for consumers and the local community.

Since Romania has been trying to eliminate inconsistencies in terms of development in all areas, the administration of urban markets and the local authorities are also starting to pay more attention to the optimization of the services provided. In order to catch up, one has to start with the apprehension of how urban markets currently function in the EU and, additionally, with what the urban markets in EU countries want to become in 20 years' time. The vision of market development in Romania must be ambitious enough so that it would not be in the position of permanently recovering from a late start. In the European countries, there are on-going debates about "green buildings", "smart cities", "smart buildings", sustainable solutions and energy optimization (Widman, 2012, p. 31), while in Romania, the normal operating framework of the markets is still being debated, along with standards of hygiene, proper access for retailers and consumers and improved infrastructure.

The research presented in this article was conducted by the authors in cooperation with a team of experts from the Suceava Municipality as part of the project "Sustainable urban markets", co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Program from the Inter-regional Cooperation Program URBACT II 2007-2013, implemented by the municipality of Suceava. The research was planned and implemented with the support and cooperation of the municipal representatives as well as representatives of the market administration, while the authors ensured the coordination of the conducted research and of the participatory workshops. The methodology used in the strategic analysis was the PESTLE technique for the focus groups, moderated workshops with the support of the PCM (Project Cycle Management) technique and the research based on the investigation of the direct beneficiaries of the market.

The paper will present the research findings on the services delivered by the urban markets from Suceava, focusing on the link between the current state of the markets and the safety, satisfaction and protection of the consumers.

Although the research has focused primarily on three permanent urban markets of Suceava City (the county of Suceava, located in the North-East of Romania), the research findings can be extrapolated for the majority of the existing city markets of Romania, and we may consider the study as being relevant.

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2. Sustainable urban markets in the European context. From agri-food markets to integrated markets

Agri-food markets have always been not only a place for exchange, but also a place for socializing, a central point of the city and a vivid place of the community. Nowadays, when retail outlets (hypermarkets, supermarkets, discount stores) have reached the top positions with revenue increases estimated between 2% -4% for 2014 (Primăria Suceava, 2013) in the sale of mass consumption food and goods, agri-food markets are trying to reinvent themselves and to reaffirm their place in the community, in the history and social environment of the city where they are located.

A European program that encourages this "re-shaping" of the city markets and their roles is the URBACT (http://urbact.eu/en/about-urbact/urbact-at-a-glance/urbact-in-words/) program of learning and European networking, promoting sustainable urban development. Extended to 500 cities, 29 countries and 7000 active participants, this program ensures the optimal cooperation of urban centres in identifying solutions to the current urban challenges, and in finding new, sustainable and sensible solutions. One of the advantages bestowed by this program is that it provides a uniform level of knowledge in terms of urban development issues and the free circulation of know-how in the partner countries involved.

A clear picture of what markets should be about is described by Partrige (2013, p.1), who states that “the urban markets could become centres of social, environmental and economic change. The markets generate flows of people, traffic, economic activity, contribute to the development of trade in the surrounding areas, stimulate tourism and strengthen local cohesion”.

The "State of art" document mentions that the debate on the urban markets problem is a relatively recent development, the approach being closely related to other areas, such as agriculture, urban areas, public administration.

The complex roles urban markets should play are depicted in Fig. 1, which graphically renders a possible enhancement of the market as a tourist attraction and place of socialization, a social and community development centre, an urban development pole and a central point that can constitute an example for the efficient use of resources.

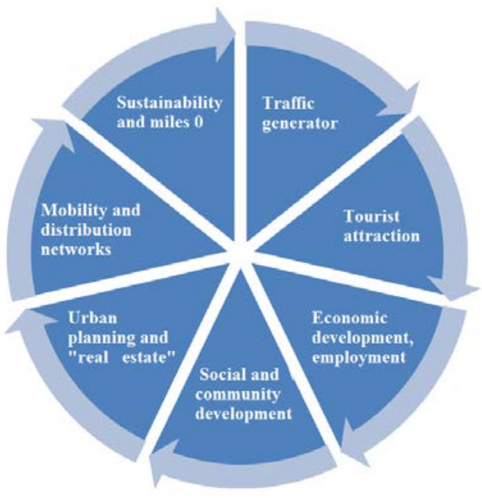

Fig. 1. Urban market, integrated concept (Source: adapted from Urban Markets. Strategic Analysis Guidelines, www.urbact.eu/project, p.3).

The transition to a complex urban market, with its array of relationships and influences, shown in figure no. 1, is to be achieved by integrated measures, adapted to the needs of consumers and retailers, but also in the conditions imposed by the local community and by the physical space where the markets are placed.

Although the research has focused primarily on three permanent urban markets of Suceava City (the county of Suceava, located in the North-East of Romania), the research findings can be extrapolated for the majority of the existing city markets of Romania, and we may consider the study as being representative.

3. Urban agri-food markets in Romania

Local markets in Romania are currently perceived as "public domain spaces that are available to local producers and traders of agri-food products, as outlets situated in well-known locations with good commercial venue and tradition (according to "Information press conference September 26, 2013. Sustainable Urban Markets - URBACT II 2007-2013").

In Romania, the market trade of products and services is governed by Government Decision no. 348 of 18th of March 2004, Government Ordinance no. 99/2000 concerning the commerce with products and services on the local market, Law no. 650/2002, the Law of public administration no. 215/2001, Government Ordinance no. 71/2002 regarding the organization and functioning of public administration of public and private domain of local interest, approved by Law no. 3/2003, and art. 6 of the Government Decision no. 21/1992 on consumer protection, republished, with subsequent amendments.

According to GD no. 348/2004 the types of markets that can be organized in public areas are: agri-food and farmers markets, fairs, rural markets, folk festivals, mixed markets, temporary markets, and flea markets. The regulations only stipulate the general operating framework, facilities and trade organizations. The conditions for consumers and traders, however, depend largely on the funding that public administration have at their disposal and also depend on the city market management. From this point of view, the exchange of experience and best practices at a European level can bring significant advantages.

Currently, the attractiveness of the market is rather low because of the precarious access infrastructure, trade-related infrastructure, the lack of major investments in the rehabilitation and modernization of the markets in providing quality goods and related services, but also because of the variety of products and services offered by supermarkets and shopping malls (Primăria Suceava, 2013).

As we have mentioned, the markets retain features that differentiate them from other types of trade. They preserve elements of local culture, make reference to urban identity, invigorate local production and social life in the area, have an economic and employment impact and can become models of sustainable development (Manole et. al., 2003, p. 97; Martin, 2010, p. 21).

When discussing the relationship between markets and its customers we need to distinguish between two separate categories of beneficiaries, as shown in Figure 2.

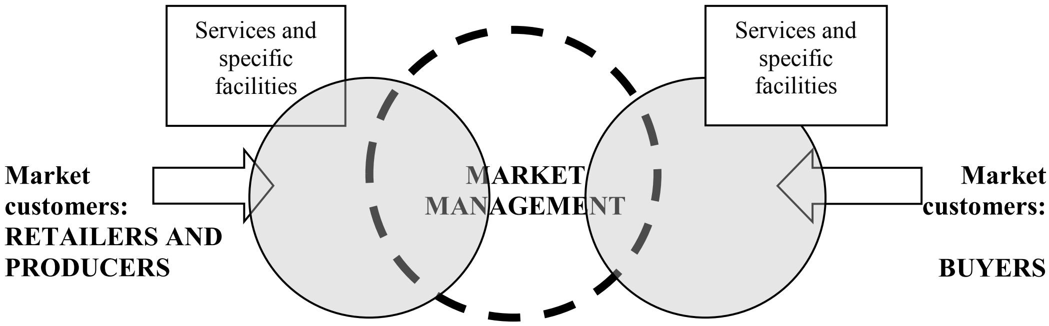

Fig. 2. Sellers and buyers in the relationship with the management of urban markets (Source: author's own representation)

Each of the above categories - sellers and buyers - benefit from different services from the markets, and the facilities also differ, depending on each case. For example, the customers' access infrastructure is different as compared to the sellers' access infrastructure, which shall provide access for freight cars and for handling of goods. This is just one example of the range of services and facilities which must be managed separately and adapted to the special needs of the target group.

A modern management of urban markets must be based on a set of principles oriented towards consumers and towards those who provide products for the agri-food markets, paying additional attention to both categories of market customers: modernizing the management, upgrading facilities and endowments, adapting services to consumers' demand, promoting healthy consumer habits and practices, promoting fresh products and their nutritious properties, participation in social, cultural and charitable activities, food hygiene and clear establishment of the products' origin, sustainable methods of waste disposal (Martin, 2010). To this, we might add a participatory strategic development and the strategic communication oriented towards all stakeholders.

Even if the concept of urban market currently includes trade in non-food products and various services, the main category of goods sold here are foodstuffs, either unprocessed or as processed products ready for consumption. Despite all the measures taken by the European authorities to ensure the traceability of food, as well as food safety and security, over the past 10 years, the European market has faced a number of serious problems – the "mad cow" disease, bird-flu virus and others that have lowered the consumer's trust in purchased foodstuff from unsecured sources. The European food security strategies and consumer protection for the period of 2007 - 2013 (European Communities, 2007) and for the following one, 2014-2020, have the consumers' needs as central objectives and the provision of adequate protection under these highly dynamic market conditions (European Communities, 2012). Regardless of where they do their shopping, either in a convenience store, at the market or online, the European consumer must be protected as well, but this cannot be achieved without the responsible behaviour of the stakeholders - retailers, distributors and authorities.

According to authors Pouliot and Summer (2009) the food traceability has a critical role in maintaining the reputation of the markets where the products are sold, the reputation of producers and in ensuring consumer protection. In their study, the authors identified a number of risks that arise in the chain of food selling, risks that can be kept under control and even reduced to insignificant values by means of an effective and responsible management performed by manufacturers, distributors and authorities. The urban markets, as modern types of trade, are able to provide the necessary conditions in order to preserve the nutritional and hygienic properties of food so that their consumption is safe for the consumer.

4. Research on the urban market management, services and facilities

Starting from the analysis of the concept of integrated market and from the best practices models of the urban markets in Barcelona, London, Torino, Pecs, Dublin, Toulouse, Wroclaw and the Attica region, (Adams & Arnkil, 2013) the research objectives were formulated as follows: (O1) conducting a review of the current situation concerning the development stage of urban markets in the Suceava city (specific infrastructure and facilities, categories of offered services) through field survey and discussions with relevant interest groups that are part of the local group support (GLS), initiated by the project coordinators; (O2) Investigation of the opinions of the two categories of markets beneficiaries – retailers or small producers and buyers – regarding the safety and quality of facilities and market administration; (O3) Analysis of the influences of external factors in the development of sustainable urban markets (PESTLE), by consulting relevant stakeholders; (O4) Identification, in cooperation with the municipality and markets administration, of the positive and negative critical points in future development.

The research was conducted in three stages during the period May to August 2013. The methods used were direct observation and field study (stage I, May 2013), questionnaire-based surveys (phase II, May-June and September 2013) and moderated workshops for the PEST and SWOT analysis (stage III, July-August 2013), together with the final data processing and the final recording of the observations and additions from GLS representatives.

The first stage of the research has enabled a diagnosis of the current situation regarding the services and the facilities. The synthetic picture used was based on the features list as shown in the GD 348/2004 and the presence in the territory of the functionality of the points specified in art. 7 of Chapter 3, "Managing trade in markets and fairs" and art. 8 Chapter IV "Location and operation of markets" was checked.

During the second stage, an investigation was conducted on the consumers and on the sellers' perception from the three markets in the study. In order to achieve the research objectives, we have used qualitative and quantitative techniques, questionnaires comprising both closed questions (dichotomous and with Likert scale) and open questions. The optimization of the response time was also considered, by taking into account the traffic and the intense activity of both buyers and sellers on the market, as well as an easier subsequent centralization of the answers. The questions addressed the extent to which the administration and the facilities of the market meet the specific needs of the target groups described. The items included in the questionnaire were based on the results of the first stage of analysis of the situation in the field and the issues risen by the GLS members or by the people who have been questioned in the field visits.

The survey was preceded by a pilot study from which five questions were reformulated. The surveys in the field were conducted in two stages, in June and in early September 2013, with a final result of 243 questionnaires validated for buyers (for all three markets) and a final number of 210 questionnaires validated for retailers. The sample was chosen randomly, the chances of achieving a representative sample being reduced because of the lack of statistical data regarding the structure and characteristics of the customers. The centralization and the processing of the collected data were done separately for each of the three markets (central, and two located in the neighbourhoods of the city), as the features and the standards differ in each of them.

The results for the central market will be presented below, as this location has the highest degree of similarity in terms of positioning, surface and features with other city markets located in other urban centres in Romania. The questions for traders referred to the arrangement and appearance of the market, current market infrastructure, display facilities, the possibilities of storing the goods, specific access and supply infrastructure, lighting, sanitation and drinking water, access among the stalls, characteristics of construction, optimal use of resources. The sample consisted of 85 respondents, 70% of which had been working in the market for more than 6 years. We have found a polarization towards medium-level indexes on the Likert scale. More than 53% of respondents believe that the overall framework of the activities is disadvantageous and 77% believe that improving the layout and appearance of the market would encourage an increase in sales. Only half of the surveyed sample was satisfied with the display infrastructure and with the cargo storage (52%), with the access (53%), lighting (53%) and the existing equipment in terms of sanitation and running water (63%). The rest said that the situation is not acceptable, but that they were accustomed to the existing conditions. The main complaints were related to: the current state of the roof, its extension to the areas currently uncovered, the need to improve the general appearance, construction of driveways for merchants and buyers, modern bathroom facilities (with public toilets, sinks, hot water) and cold storage for perishable products, improving the access in the roundabout area and traffic lights for pedestrian crossings. The local producers' ability to display their goods was assessed as high and very high, probably due to the location and diversity of the supply of goods in the same location. Other responses related to the poor quality of services focused on the access of buyers with special needs (disabled, elderly, and mothers with children) as well as the access for the freight cars that supply the stalls, the appearance of the commercial space around the market and the insufficient number of recycling bins.

In terms of buyers, the sample was of about 243 people, 124 men and 119 women, of which 37% aged between 56-75 years, about 27% between 36-45 years and 46-55 years and about 10% aged between 20-35 years; 60% had graduated from high school and from university, while the rest had graduated from secondary or primary education, 33% were retired, 30% were employed in the private sector, 23% in the public sector, while 13% were unemployed and/or students. Of all the interviewed persons, 33% were interested in the bakery sector, 23% in vegetables and fruit, 30% in meat and meat products, and only 7% were interested in dairy products and derivatives and 7% in flowers and ornamental plants.

For the central market, a number of 92 questionnaires have been centralized. From this, it appears that for 27% of the people, the buying decision depends on the option to support local producers and traders that have fresher merchandise, for 23% on the quality guarantee, for 10% on the variety of goods, and for 10% on the negotiated price. As for the general framework in which trade takes place in the market, the following discouraging factors have been noted, in descending order: poor quality of the merchandise, improper display space, low diversity, traders' attitude, lack of parking facilities, location of available parking space, cleanliness and poor hygiene of displayed merchandise. The overall quality of the market on the components described by the Likert scale was appreciated mostly as low and average, lower indices being given for : market access infrastructure, access among the stalls, temporary waste storage and disposal, access for people with special needs, access to sanitation facilities, traffic on nearby streets and access roads, appearance of the commercial area around the market, display of promotional billboards, cleanliness of alleys and market space and optimal use of resources.

As concerns the market as a place for socializing, 33% of the respondents answered that, if upgraded, the market may become a place to socialize, with parks, rest and recreation areas, pedestrian areas and sites for gastronomic experience. Suggested improvements for markets consisted in: constant visits by city council officials, local promotion, the organization of an annual market festival, the encouragement of domestic producers by the authorities.

The results clearly indicate the actions to be targeted in the future, within the approach established according to European standards for consumer services. The intervention methods are different and, for a better consumer protection and safety, consumer protection factors must be taken into account (Dinu, 1999): the government (through legislative and institutional framework, rules and regulations, control and inspection, sanctions) producers (involved in quality, reliability, maintainability, cost, guarantees), consumers (protection of health, safety, security, affordable price, environment protection, quality of life), trade unions (social supervision, support actions, promotion, related NGO's (associations, federations) as well as information, education, training and representation.

In order to develop a participatory action plan, three focus groups that included GLS representatives in discussion groups were held. The structure of this local support group is diverse, with both public institutions and NGO representatives from the business environment, consumers and traders being represented. Their structure is shown in Table no.1. Focus groups were organized at the initiative and with the support of the municipality, in order to create the premises for developing a local action plan for the development and modernization of the markets.

Table 1.. Members participating in the focus groups structure

Organizations participating in the focus group	Local authorities	Institutions with the role of monitoring and controlling the markets	Producer representatives NGO	Civil society representatives NGO	Business environment	Educational and research institutions	Media
Number of organizations	3	4	1	3	5	2	2

The methodology used was the one recommended by Urbact (Campbell, Partridge, Soto, 2013), PESTLE analysis, SWOT analysis and PCM (Project Cycle Management). The mode of action has pursued five progressive stages: listing of relevant PESTLE analysis factors (political, economic, social, technical, legal, environmental), identification of relevant sub-factors, identification of the impact on a scale of 1-10, formulating actions that may offset or optimize the estimated impact, as applicable.

Table 2. PESTLE analysis resulting from the focus group

POLITICAL FACTORS	ECONOMIC FACTORS
Fiscal policy Trade policy Regional policies Social inclusion policy Environment protection policy Rigorous enforcement of the legislation Neutrality and stability Thematic shops	Budget constraints Development of distribution channels Supply chain development External funding mechanism Internal funding mechanism Integrated system for temporary markets Stimulation of related products and services Establishment of new national/international thematic market Creating new local brands Collaborations and partnerships Creating new jobs Stimulating competition for the creation of high quality products
SOCIAL FACTORS	**TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS**
Attitude towards food markets Personal values of buyers Socializing and leisure Consumer views Preference for certain brands Cultural role of markets Lifestyle Consumption habits Demographic changes Campaign to educate and inform people to use local products	Introduction of technologies and equipment in market trade Rapid changes in technology and machinery Promoting markets with new technologies Digital communication Energy efficiency technologies
LEGAL FACTORS	**ECOLOGICAL FACTORS**
Legislation for small producers Market specific legislation Labour legislation Legislation for traditional products Legislation for organic products Legislation for quality control	Improper aspect of public space Resources that cannot be reused Waste management system Organic products Energy efficiency Organic products are most popular on the market

Source: Suceava Municipality, Results of the URBACT workshop, Press release on 26th of September 2013, p. 4

Following the centralization of the PESTLE analysis, the following conclusions were drawn, based on the working group interventions:

1. *Political factors*: the greatest impact on the functioning of the markets is represented by the rigorous compliance with the legislation, thus achieving a stable market, with a fair competition and with secured quality of products. Trade policies regulating the market and environmental policies improving the quality of life and better use of resources also have a very important impact. Another large impact on urban markets is represented by regional policies, promoting and developing specific economic activities and political stability and neutrality, creating a favourable framework for the development of sustainable projects, especially ensuring continuity in economic development. Team members stated that fiscal policies have a great impact on encouraging economic growth or employment or, on the contrary, discouraging economic activities. Social inclusion policies are also important and could increase cultural refinement and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

2. The analysis of the *economic factors* has revealed that a major impact on the community is represented by internal and external funding mechanisms, and the creation of new jobs. Budgetary restrictions, through budgetary fluctuations, affect the continuity and sustainability of urban markets, an integrated flywheel markets system through a consistent presentation of the market concept is needed, and the increased collaboration and partnerships lead to the development of the flow of goods.

The supply chain development, a better stimulation of production and related services, the existence of specialized stores that address target groups also have a considerable impact, and, likewise, the encouragement of the competition for the development of high quality products leads to a more diversified supply and offers a wider range of choice. Other factors that have an impact on the development of sustainable urban markets are the setting of new national and international themed markets that enable the development of new temporary or permanent themed markets and the creation of new local brands that enhance the local image.

3. *Social factors* identified and considered as having a major impact on urban markets are the preference for certain brands, consumer behaviour, and the orientation of traders towards trading and promotion training courses that are very important in urban market activity. Consumer opinions, their lifestyle, socialization and leisure and campaigns to educate and inform the public on the consumption of local products have been identified to have a rather considerable impact. Religious factors (fasting, ceremonies) have an impact on market supply and demand because adaptation is based on religious events and periods. And factors such as: the attitude towards food market, the personal values of buyers, demographic changes and the impact of the market on the surrounding area have been identified as having a moderate impact. The cultural role of the markets was identified as having a low impact on the development of sustainable urban markets.

4. The study of the impact of *technological factors* on the community and on the development of urban markets has revealed that a major factor is the introduction of trading technologies and equipment on the market, as product and producer identification represent food safety. Other identified factors with a strong impact are: rapidly changing technologies and equipment that lead to cost efficiency and reduced environmental impact, promoting markets through new technologies, computerization and digital communication means better and faster public information and promotion of websites by connecting with new media technologies (electronic billboards - minimum / maximum price, exchange rates) and energy efficient technologies reduce the harmful impact on the environment and better use of water and resources.

5. The team responsible with the *legal factors* identified several sources that have an impact on markets, namely the existence of legislation on small producers provides better sustainability of small and medium-sized businesses; the existence of specific market legislation gives priority to local producers; traditional and environmental products legislation leads to the increased quality of the supply and enhances the image of local products. Equally important is the product quality control legislation, as it improves the medium and long term health of the population.

6. The last factors of the PEST analysis are the *environmental factors* that also have an impact on the markets. Thus, a major impact on the development of urban markets is induced by the inappropriate appearance of public areas, partly due to poor education of the population, lack of waste recycling and conservative mentality of the consumers and producers in terms of the environment. The existence of a waste management system has a significant impact on the environment and on the consumer as well. The use of organic products reduces costs, increases comfort and the quality of life and reduces pollution. The competition between manufacturers will change over time as 'organic' products are becoming increasingly popular on the market.

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The internal analysis for permanent and temporary markets took into consideration the strengths and the weaknesses, and focussed on the following elements: the infrastructure for clients, the infrastructure for commercial activities, the connection with the local economy, the market as a place for socialization of the local community, attractiveness and promotion, and tourist attractiveness. For three permanent markets (Central market, Burdujeni market, George Enescu market) we developed an internal factor analysis - strengths and weaknesses (Table 3.)

The analysis identified a number of common features with those derived from the questionnaire applied in the 3 markets to buyers and sellers. All three phases have highlighted important points for future market development that would ensure security and improved consumer satisfaction. The centralized information could be used in making a local action plan which will be implemented in the future. The diverse sample structure enabled the coverage of a complex range of problems and results that have addressed a wide range of causes and factors which influence the development of urban markets.

Table 3. Internal factor analysis - strengths and weaknesses

INTERNAL FACTORS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Customer infrastructure Commercial infrastructure	- good positioning from the city centre and from the main city areas - easy road access	- inadequate sanitation facilities for customers - difficult conditions in winter and during periods of bad weather - current standards of public restrooms and poor hygiene standards - lack of parking space, other than behind the market - no heating in winter - lack of ventilation in summer - inadequate parking infrastructure - improvised facilities - insufficient equipment suitable for the safe storage of food (refrigerators, air conditioners) - dusty outdoor space (driveways, roads) - improper maintenance - inadequate flooring, improper for bad weather - improper waste disposal points
Connection to the local economy	- existence of specific legislation on food related health hazards - good representation of local producers - involvement of local authorities in encouraging the access of the producers and the removal of intermediaries from the market	- lack of taxation in certain commercial activities
Socializing place for the local community	- direct contact with the producers, socializing	- lack of waiting space, recreation and rest in nearby areas - improper space allocation - lack of public transport, bicycles or non-polluting vehicles - low, irregular traffic from neighbouring municipalities - inadequate access for specific needs groups (disabled, mothers with children in strollers)
Attractiveness and promotion	- traditional decoration elements (ceramic scales) -preservation of traditional market values	- unattractive and chaotic promotion of neighbouring shops - poor overall aspect of nearby areas
Tourist attractiveness	- use of specific local events to attract tourists	- no possibility of tasting traditional products or products marketed to tourists

5. Conclusions

By summarizing the above information, we can state that the research findings have provided a complex set of data that will be the basis of future market development, with focus on the real needs of the stakeholders, retailers and consumers alike. At present, the trends are favouring the sales of food products in the markets by the local producers. Procopie and Bobe mentioned an enhancement of direct trade from producers to consumers in the European developed countries after the 80s, because more and more clients preferred food and agri-food products “natural” and traditional. (Procopie & Bobe, 2008, p. 72).

We could say that the dynamics and the complexity of urban markets hinder its management as a business unit. This aspect has to lead to an improvement of the logistic activities through customer service, volume and structure of demand forecasts, information management, product handling, processing of orders, transport management and storage areas (Dinu, 2008, p.5). Not in the least, in the future, the markets have to develop Custom Activities Management oriented towards the identification, selection, retention and development of relations with customers (Surcel & Bologa, 2008, p. 89).

Efficient management could only be achieved through a system of cooperation between relevant decision makers, interest groups, NGOs and representatives of the consumers and of the small producers. Another aspect that poses difficulties in the management of the markets is their lack of specific boundaries. Visitors / buyers increasingly associate the market not only with the strictly defined area where food selling facilities are located, but also with the surrounding area which includes extensive parking facilities, rest and leisure facilities, catering, kiosks and retail stores with similar or different purposes than of those located within the market. Thus, the adjacent area becomes an expanding area. The units managing the markets, most often local authority subsidiaries, must be aware that they cannot develop a modern space that ensures consumer safety and satisfaction without consulting the consumers and the interest groups.

Some of the solutions suggested by the research findings were anticipated by government representatives and local government markets, which admit that efforts should be focused on implementing participatory planning methods for further development. Moreover, the development approach must remain dynamic and encouraging of the constant desire to improve the additional services provided to consumers.

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