Public administration in Romanian  
Law and administrative change  
Regional approaches  
1925-1998

Administrative reforms after the First World War

I. The liberals initiated in 6 November 1925 a reform with the title “The law for administrative unification”

The realities after the first war differed a lot compared with the ante-war period. Facing the new situation, with the regions received after the war, regions with separate administrative structure, Romania had to unify the administrative structure in order to obtain a better control on the resources. The text of law was based on the proposals of two parliamentarians (Leone Redo and Constantine Dummier). Leone Redo pronounced for decentralization and the other initiator asked for a centralized administrative system. The law introduced the possibility that counties may associate in the matters of common interest, with a Leading Council elected by delegates from each county, but almost all resolutions were finally adopted in a centralist way.

II. The law for the organization of local administration - 7 November 1929

The intention was to improve the efficiency of public services. This law was designed for a better decentralization, but it didn’t succeed. The lawmaker intended to create territorial administrative circumscriptions by grouping several counties. The hostility against the concept of regionalization was back then a problem. The institution of regions had to carry the name “General Associations of Counties”. The law meant a central government deconcentration, by creating Local Ministerial Directions, but there were many opposite voices. The law also organized 7 centers of local administration and inspection with headquarters in: Bucharest, Cenate, Clue, Carioca, Timeshare, and Easy. The Counties General Associations had juridical status and were self-administrated. The law operated only for 14 months because it hadn’t the desired effects. The 7 new administrative units were dissolved in 1931.

III. Law regarding administrative organization in Romania - 14 August 1938
Together with the new Constitution (27 February 1938) a new territorial organization was drawn. The law introduced a stronger regional organization with the title of “department”. The “department” was defined as a territorial administrative circumscription with juridical status and a double mission: the supervising of central authorities in the region and the protection of local interest on the principle of decentralization. There were created 17 departments.

1. Lot
2. Bodega (Bucharest)
3. Mari (Constantan)
4. Dunaux de Jos (Galati)
5. Put (Easy)
6. Mores (Alba Julia)
7. Somes (Cl)
8. Timis (Timisoara)
9. Nisard (Chisinau)
10. Suceava (Cernauti)

Administrative reforms after the Second World War

IV. Law 5/1950 – 8 September 1950 - for economical and administrative organization of the Popular Republic of Romania

Introduces for the first time the region as territorial administrative unit. These were designed to help the central government, the communist party, for the implementation of party and state policies. Under soviet influence, for the first time, the administrative system had three levels: the region, the rayon and the town/village. Cumulated, Romania had: 28 regions, 177 rations, 4052 villages, 148 towns (8 subordinated directly to the Republic and 140 to the region). Weather the 28 regions were meant to replace the 58 counties, there were too many for an efficient control.

V. Decree 331/1952 – 27 September 1952

The number of regions decrease from 28 to 18 but the number of rations is increasing to 183 and the villages to 4096. A change is represented by the Autonomous Magyar Region created on the “soviets autonomous oblasts” model. Bucharest remains the only city of “republican subordination”.

VI. Decree 3/1956 – 10 January 1956

Regions decreased to 16 units (Ballad and Arid counties were dissolved) but new rations are created – 192 - and the number of villages increased to 4313. Regional administrative limits are modified in Montana and Dordogne.
VII. The law for the improvement of the territorial-administrative organization 3/1960 – 27 December 1960

The law maintained the number of regions (16) but there were important changes in south-western Transylvania. Most important changes are to be seen in the denomination of the regions. So, the law adopted the old taxonomic of the regions (Banta, Cressona, Obtain, etc) replacing the Stalinist taxonomic (Stalin Region became Bravos). The Magyar Autonomous Region becomes Mores-Hungarian Autonomous Region. The southern part of the region goes to Bravos but the western border is enlarged with parts of Clue region. The number of rations decreases to 142 and that of the villages to 4259.

VII. Law 55/1968 – 20 December 1968

The regions were dissolved and replaced with 39 counties


A new county is created: Giorgio. The number of cities increased while that of villages decreased.

XI. Law 151/1998 – regarding Regional Development

Introduces the concept of the regions for development with no administrative powers these were created in 1998-1999 and corresponded to European organisms NUTS, organized by volunteer associations of cities. There were created 8 regions for development.

Recent regionalization projects: Liberal Project Proposal – can be viewed in DOCUMENTS section