

# CONVERGENCE AND DISPARITIES UNDER THE EU COHESION POLICY: NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT REGION OF ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the impact of European Union cohesion policy on the North-West Development Region of Romania during the 2014-2020 programming period, with data extending to 2023 (n+3). The research analyzes economic and social indicators including GDP per capita, foreign direct investment, labor productivity, material deprivation, and poverty risk to evaluate regional convergence toward EU averages. Findings reveal significant progress in macroeconomic indicators, with GDP per capita rising from 25% to 41% of the EU average and substantial improvements in social conditions. However, the analysis identifies concerning intra-regional disparities, with urban poles like Cluj-Napoca and Oradea capturing disproportionate shares of both public and private investment. This creates a pattern of „multi-scalar divergence” where overall regional convergence masks growing internal inequalities. The paper concludes that while EU cohesion policy has successfully supported regional development, addressing territorial imbalances requires more sophisticated, place-based approaches that consider multiple spatial scales simultaneously.

**Key words:** cohesion, regional development, North-West Development Region, economic growth, social cohesion

**JEL Classification:** R11, R50

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