



Conference

Research and analysis in international relations and European studies

(The Romanian Academy, Bucharest)

– EVENT REPORT –

On November 17th, 2011, the European Institute of Romania, the Black Sea University Foundation, the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy and the Institute for International Studies of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca organised the conference with the topic “**Research and analysis in international relations and European studies**” at the Romanian Academy.

The opening session started with **Mr. Dan Berindei**'s speech, Vicepresident of the Romanian Academy, who identified the issue of research in international relations as one of the main concerns of the Romanian Academy. Founded in 1866, the Romanian Academy is intended to be a national cultural parliament that offers a framework for debates which can bring an answer to the challenges faced by the current society. International relations have a primordial importance for the elements of a system, only apparently anarchic, to work properly. In his view, Romania must be present and have a say in all the aspects regarding international relations due to its historical experience, native intelligence and ability to cope with a reality imposed by a society in a permanent change.

Ambassador Liviu Bota, chairman of the official session, restated the idea expressed by Mr. Dan Berindei by referring to the glorious past of the country and to the present generation's duty to follow the example of the ancestors. This conference is intended to be the first in a series of conferences governed by a *vision* meant to change the current view regarding the research field and to become the catalyst of a common state of mind among those involved in the research and analysis of international relations and European studies. After 1989, the importance of research in Romania was felt as an acute necessity, dictated by changes in the international system. Therefore numerous research institutes, as well as NGOs which activate in the field of international relations, and university departments for training specialists were created. However, the research and analysis field is characterised by lack of balance, lack of efficient dialogue between institutes and researchers, amplified by the limited access to information and the misuse of material and human resources. A good research is an objective one, which increases credibility for the formation and implementation of foreign policy. This is why the main objectives of this conference are: to create a database in Romania in the field of international relations and European studies, to increase the importance of research on national policy by creating an Advisory Council gathering representatives of the academic environment, to develop the cooperation among institutes and to facilitate their access to international databases and, last but not least, to organize annually a full-scale event on international relations issues.

Mr. Iulian Chifu, Presidential Advisor for Strategic Affairs, Security and Foreign Policy, welcomed the recognition of the international relation field by the Romanian Academy, stressing out that Romania is relevant in research areas, but the international relations area is not working as a field in itself, because of the multitude of related fields (security studies, strategic studies, intelligence) for which there is no well-defined methodology. Mr. Chifu proposed that this conference should be a catalyst for all nationally relevant academic centres and schools, including the less known ones from Craiova, Timișoara or Constanța. Next, he made a review of the priority fields: the sociological method (important studies on nationalism, post-conflict reconstruction, state building), the historical method (important studies regarding evolutions in post-Soviet area), the mathematical method and the discontinuity method, societal security priorities, studies based on experience and expertise. Mr. Iulian Chifu emphasized the





importance of absorbing research funds, but also of creating, within the ministries, a new position of *integrator* who requests topics, absorbs the results of the research and forwards them to the competent authorities. It is important to accept that in Romania there are forces able to complete major projects.

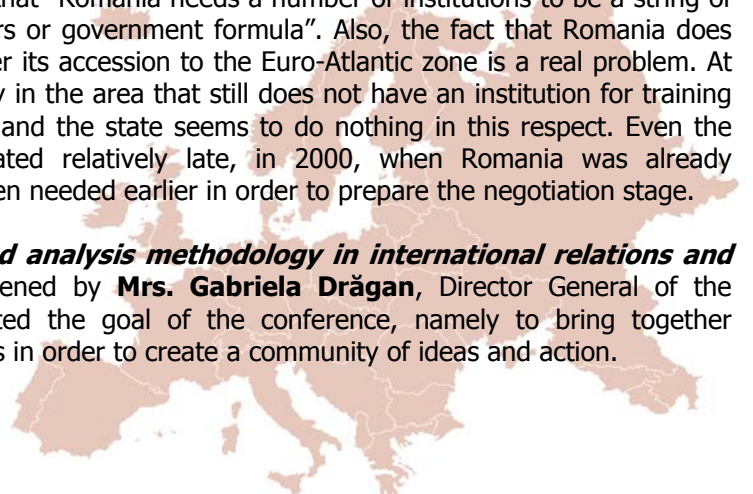
Mr. Leonard Orban, Minister for European Affairs, started his speech by mentioning that it is difficult to distinguish between European affairs and international relations because these fields overlap. He welcomed the initiative of organizing such a conference as an answer to a need resulted from the increasingly unpredictable dynamics of the international environment. Strictly in the field of European affairs, the situation does not look too good, since Romania is not currently able to substantiate a clear position regarding its priorities neither on short and very short term nor on long or very long term. On December 9th, at the European Council in Brussels, it will be discussed the possible modification of the European Union Treaty from the perspective of strengthening the political governance, in addition to the economic one, which would confirm a two-speed Europe. The Romanian position is still uncertain. Also, Mr. Leonard Orban noted the poor expertise in European affairs, stressing out the difficulty of finding experts to make in-depth analysis. In the ending of his speech, Mr. Orban emphasized the idea that Romanian decision-makers must have at their disposal the necessary instruments to substantiate their positions, so that they can really have a say during negotiations.

Mr. Doru Costea, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out the necessity for cooperation between research institutes and government structures and institutions, as the lack of horizontal communication is extremely risky. In addition to his colleagues' speeches, Mr. Costea said that there are several questions related to international dynamics which concern us directly or indirectly and which we should know how to manage: what is going to happen with NATO after adopting of the new strategic concept, which are the Middle East developments after the Arab spring, which are the implications of moving the center of gravity in Asia. Also, the internal problems we face have ceased long ago to be only internal ones. Like any other state from the international system, Romania has connections and interests, but it only depends on us to identify and properly use them in order to act. In order to find the correct answers, the right questions have to be asked. And to get the best results it is necessary to efficiently explore the resources, both information and real resources. In this regard, it is essential to increase the access to the business community in order to support initiatives which can be turned into investments.

Mrs. Rolanda Predescu, Director of the National Authority for Scientific Research, highlighted the idea that it is needed a real focus of research efforts for substantiating the European policies, with emphasis on competitiveness. For Romania, it would be essential to link the national policies with the increase of Romania's economic competitiveness at European and global level. The win-win principle (which ensures the succes of an international relation) and the focus on cooperation in science and technology are the basis for using the sustaining potential of national policies of. Mrs. Predescu also stressed out the need of financial support, even in times of crisis, outlining the national research plan which provides real support for these research areas.

Mr. Dan Dungaciu, Director of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, stressed out the idea that "Romania needs a number of institutions to be a string of continuity between different political colours or government formula". Also, the fact that Romania does not succeed in building its own project after its accession to the Euro-Atlantic zone is a real problem. At the same time, Romania is the only country in the area that still does not have an institution for training experts in the international relations field, and the state seems to do nothing in this respect. Even the European Institute of Romania was created relatively late, in 2000, when Romania was already negotiating EU accession. It would have been needed earlier in order to prepare the negotiation stage.

The first session, entitled *Research and analysis methodology in international relations and European studies*, was chaired and opened by **Mrs. Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General of the European Institute of Romania, who stated the goal of the conference, namely to bring together important actors that implement the policies in order to create a community of ideas and action.





There are institutes that create insufficiently prepared studies, but which have various justifications for this, some of them appropriate. Therefore the main purpose is to avoid fragmentation. It is very important for Romania that the actors work together in order to play a role at regional level. Mrs. Dragăn invoked the lack of pragmatism and realism in some studies in this field, and also the risk of a weak organization in the dialogue among research institutes.

Mr. Radu Carp, Director of the Romanian Diplomatic Institute, identified as the main challenge in the research field the lack of correlation between state institutions and research and analysis institutes, to which the absence of a unitary methodological standard is added. The Committees of the Ministry of Education have a too short history and the criteria for selecting doctoral committees remain a mystery. Radu Carp identified a number of factors that lead to a very dark picture regarding international relations in Romania, including the lack of a publication specially addressed to this field and the institutional rigidity which does not offer an opportunity to young people trained outside the country in innovative fields of international relations. We must find constructive solutions for the future of this field which will be our image for the future, and the specialists and experts in this area could contribute to strengthening the voice of Romania in the world.

Mr. Andrei Mocearov, Director in the Chamber of Deputies, coordinator of the parliamentary research department, identified the dynamics of the methodology in the field of international relations as being in a powerful change, highlighting the shift from descriptive analysis to quantitative and strategic analysis. He also made suggestions for improving the quality of the studies, as the European Union's status as a geopolitical actor as well as the power relations in Europe must be reflected into the studies in international relations.

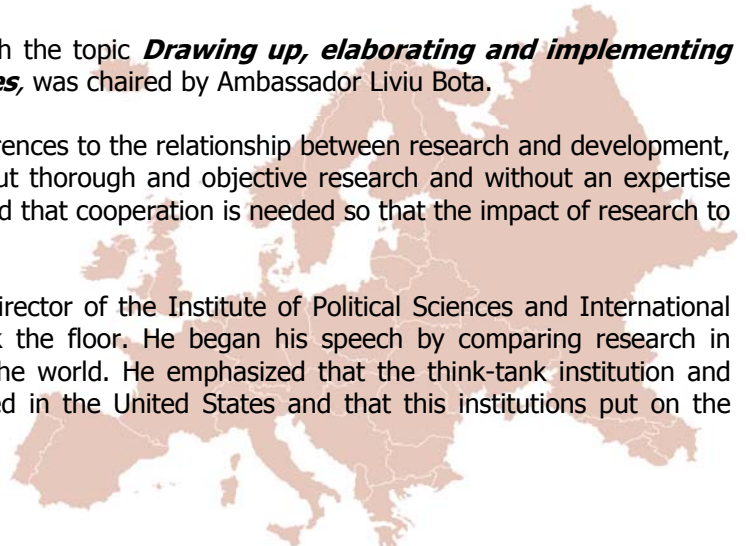
Mr. Liviu Mureșan, President of the EURISC Foundation, urged the institutes of the Academy to be more active in the field of research and analysis both in the country and abroad, and the private sector to become involved by financing projects that might offer Romania the possibility of international affirmation. Mr. Mureșan stressed out that the global crisis could be turned into an opportunity to use the national, European and global expertise, including the preparation of decisions in international relations and security.

The first session ended with the speech of **Mrs. Gabriela Drăgan** who summarized the activities of the European Institute of Romania: research and analysis, training, communication and translation. Her presentation focused on the studies elaborated in the Strategy and Policy Studies Project (SPOS) 2011. This year's research topics cover the following fields: agriculture, tax, economy and social policy. The studies present topics of national and European interest, as well as the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in the framework of the post-2013 budgetary perspective, the budgetary implications of Romania's accession to the Euro Plus initiative and/or to the Euro zone, the economic growth and public finances sustainability, and the analysis of EU social policies from the perspective of private/supplementary pensions and of aging population.

The second session of the conference, with the topic ***Drawing up, elaborating and implementing international policies/European policies***, was chaired by Ambassador Liviu Bota.

Ambassador Liviu Bota made a few references to the relationship between research and development, stating that progress is not possible without thorough and objective research and without an expertise used for solving problems. Moreover, he said that cooperation is needed so that the impact of research to achieve the desired ambitions.

Next, **Professor Dan Dungaci**, PhD., Director of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, took the floor. He began his speech by comparing research in Romania with research in other parts of the world. He emphasized that the think-tank institution and many other institutions have been invented in the United States and that these institutions put on the





agenda of the policymaker the main ideas circulating in the world, while Europe is faced more often with the lack of serious research institutions. Regarding Romania, Professor Dungaciu mentioned that one of Romania's weak points is the lack of institutions of continuity, of vision, and of project, emphasising at the same time the need for people who can provide a new perspective and "food for ideas".

With reference to the Academy's institutes, the IPSIR Director believes that nowadays they have an undeniable prestige, but the substance of this prestige has to be continuously built and strengthened. And to make this happen, Romania could seek partnerships with other countries in order to generate and deliver new ideas.

Furthermore, Mr Dungaciu outlined the main projects undertaken by the institute he leads, such as "Russia and its neighbours". The other projects are related to proximal neighbourhood and from this point of view he mentioned that sometimes we come to know better what happens in foreign countries than in the neighbourhood and therefore, in Romanian publications focusing on international relations we find out little about what happens in our neighbourhood. Regarding the expertise in Romania, the IPSIR Director finds important for Romania to become a provider of expertise, at least in some areas and he emphasises that the Academy institute is able to conduct long-term projects and has the needed funding base.

Regarding research, **Ambassador Sergiu Celac** expressed his own view stating that nowadays research can be applied in more varied situations, but there has to be a unification without any subordination of what is really valuable in scientific research, even more when currently there is a division between "living archive" (opened for research) and "dead archive". He also noted a lack of appetite for strategic thinking, so that "the existence of a strategy means a long-term vision from which you don't have to turn up". This is why Ambassador Sergiu Celac highlighted that the lack of appetite for strategy costs us very much, it still costs us and it will certainly cost us in the future.

Following the series of speeches, **Professor Vasile Puşcaş, PhD.**, Director of the Institute for International Studies of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, began his speech with a brief overview of his institute and then expressed his point of view concerning the research compared to the field of international relations. Firstly, he expressed his opinion about Romania's market, indicating a problem related to demand from the perspective of the analytical references that institutes can provide and, especially, the lack of a strategic vision. This makes the market quite narrow and poorly built, as Romania is oriented more towards the European and American market than the Southern one. Secondly, the Director of the Institute for International Studies of the Babeş-Bolyai University said that in international relations the theoretical research is particularly important, as it is seen as a way of transmitting generalizations, and what would lead today to the loss of rigor is precisely the informational and methodological explosion. That is why, from the point of view of contemporary governance, Professor Vasile Puşcaş highlighted that both the government formulas and the corporate one need professional analysis. Finally, Professor Vasile Puşcaş expressed his willing for cooperation, stressing out that Romania has expertise and another form of research management should be applied in our country, so that, by contagion and correlation in the international relations system, to have significant changes over the decision-makers.

From this point of view, **General Mihai Ionescu**, Director of the Institute for Political Studies of Defence and Military History, stressed out the fact that in this moment we should focus on training young people for research and that research should be the main concern for them. Furthermore, General Ionescu made a brief overview of the achievements and projects of his institute. He also provided details on the network they had set up, network based on the regions of interest for Romania and described the bilateral research networks they had created on the following regions: Europe, Middle East, Africa, USA, China, Russia, with a special focus on the regions of interest for Romania (the Balkans and the wider Black Sea region). Last but not least, the Director of IPSDMH presented the research made in military reforms of the Romanian army and the two journals of the institute.





After a brief overview of the activity of the Centre, **Mrs. Oana Popescu**, Director of the Centre for conflict Prevention and Early-Warning, said that information and communication should always go in both directions. From this point of view, she noticed two aspects: the long-term vision, namely, a clear and continuous foreign policy and the responsiveness in relevant moments. According to her, the participants to this communication flow are the decision-makers who do not debate before making decisions and the institutions which do not ask the civil society. She also noted that the internal conditions of the institutions are a real problem which must be taken into account and that the public institutions have been recently infected by some sort of secrecy. Next, Mrs. Oana Popescu emphasized that there is no significant difference between the intellectual and professional capacity of professors and students from Romania and those from abroad. Furthermore, she mentioned that if we refer to foreign standards, we can easily notice that in Romania there is no research and that often the professors are not practitioners, and the programmes and universities are not connected internationally. In her opinion, the lack of connection and cooperation among institutes is due to reduced funding, because the institutes fight for the same funding. So there is little cooperation but competition. With reference to the expertise in Romania, Mrs. Popescu noticed that there is no serious expertise for areas of interest such as China, Middle East, North Africa, Japan, South Korea or Turkey and that the foreign policy is more and more connected to economics. From this perspective, Mrs. Popescu believes that the business environment must be an active participant, not necessarily a research funder. Finally, she stressed out that it is important to identify the research possibilities and directions. And this can be done by organising working groups to follow the conferences and debates, in which can participate all those interested.

Alexandra Dobra, MA student at the University of Cambridge, member in the League of Romanian Students Abroad, delivered a speech on the future of research, highlighting that we are witnessing a new world order. Moreover, she mentioned three important research areas: the paradigm transformation of the concept of state, the analysis of political risk and the importance of norms as power vectors. In terms of research, the opinion of Mrs. Alexandra Dobra was that research must identify the state faults in order to establish their international position, concluding that research is an art and the key for success is to find the rhythm for it to become viable.

In the conclusions following the two sessions, **Mr. Iulian Fota**, Presidential Advisor for National Security, highlighted that the Romanian Academy should focus on research in international relations field. Today the troubled global framework has put to work the intellectual area in the West. In the context of globalization, which brings along alternative structures of thinking, Mr. Fota compared the Western research methods with the research system in Romania, admitting that, in Romania too, "research should be one step ahead of the executive" in order to really become visible. Moreover, Mr. Fota stressed out that the lack of financial resources should not become an excuse for the lack of research, because it costs nothing to think and "every individual is a research institute", especially since nowadays there is a multitude of communication channels and the Internet has revolutionized the way in which a research can be undertaken. So, as Mr. Iulian Fota states, "we must do what we have to do, not only what we can do, without complaining for the lack of funds for research". Finally, Mr. Iulian Fota emphasized that the problems that need to be solved are known, but it will be crucial to find solutions for them by answering to the essential question: „How to do it?”

In the end, **Ambassador Liviu Bota** restated the objectives presented in the conference opening, stressing out that these will be implemented, and thanked the audience for participation.

Report by
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