

interview \_\_\_\_\_

in this issue \_\_\_\_\_

## Leonard Orban

President of EIR's Administration Board



The European Parliament elections in 2014 are considered by some specialists as a way of legitimizing extremist parties in the European Parliament. Do you consider these fears valid? To what extent would they harm the legislative process?

Yes, I believe these fears are justified. In many EU member states, there are euroskeptical and even europhobic political formations which are well-ranked in opinion polls. In the context of the crisis in the European Union, these formations have been either consolidated or have been created and have reached to a point

where they have become influential, to some extent, for the political evolution in their countries. In this context, it is not unlikely that these political parties will obtain over 20% in the elections for the European Parliament (EP). Therefore, the decision process at the European level will be significantly influenced.

After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EP has become a very important institutional actor, almost all the decisions at the European level being taken through the co-decision procedure, hence with the approval of the Parliament. Consequently, any blockage or delay in the European Parliament may have negative effects on the decision-making process at the European level. I expect all strategies of the main political groups in the Union to be amended in such a way as to avoid possible blockages by acting (and voting) unitarily ...

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EU \_\_\_\_\_

## The Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On 8 January 2014, a press conference was held at the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, marking the launch of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The event was attended by H.E. Mr. Grigorios Vassiloconstandakis, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic in Romania, H.E. Mr. Titus Corlăţean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ms. Angela Filote, the new Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Romania ...

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"Romania's participation in the European decision-making process can and should be improved. There is a need for a profound internalization of EU issues in the steps that we take at the national level; at the same time it is of utmost importance to improve the image of our country at the European level."

**Seven years after the accession to the European Union, what would be, in your opinion, the balance between the strong and weak points with respect to Romania's participation in the decision-making process at the European level?**

Contrary to some impressions which seem to persist at the level of public opinion, our country's influence on the European decision-making process does exist and there are plenty of situations in which Romania has managed to play and continues to play an important part in the shaping of decisions at EU level.

However, Romania's participation in the European decision-making process can and should be improved.

There are many directions which require such actions. I would mention only two.

First of all, there is a need for a profound internalization of EU issues in the steps that we take at the national level, in the political and administrative field, as well as at the level of society. Thus we will have more numerous and more efficient zones for influencing the European decisions than at present.

Secondly, it is of utmost importance to improve the image of our country at the European level. We have an image deficit which, sometimes, has a negative effect on Romania's influence on the decision-making process. It is obvious that the enhancement of a country's image requires a lot of time

and consistency in action.

**Taking into account the high level of distrust regarding Romania on the part of European officials, as well as the mostly negative reports of the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification, how do you think our country can recover its credibility in front of the European institutions?**

We must note the fact that, after more than seven years since Romania's accession to the European Union, the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification (CVM), in fact a mechanism through which the European Commission monitors the evolution in the justice and anticorruption in our country (and in Bulgaria) is maintained. In addition, Croatia joined the Union on 1 July 2013, without such an instrument.

It is a paradox that the existence of the CVM has had an undisputed beneficial effect upon the functioning of the judicial system of Romania but, on the other hand, it has sometimes created difficulties for Romania in the decision-making process at the European level. In order to close the monitoring under the CVM, Romania needs, in particular, a commitment on the part of the entire political class in order to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and to intensify the fight against corruption, as well as efforts from all components of the judicial system to improve their activity.

Since 2012, Mr. **Leonard Orban** is an **Associate Professor**, holding the "Economic, social and territorial cohesion in European Union" course at the Romanian-American University. He is also **partner** at Orban-Biriş European Consultants, a firm specializing in European affairs and European funds.

From September 2011 to December 2012, Leonard Orban was **Minister of European Affairs**, in charge of European affairs and European funds.

Between 2010 and September 2011, Mr. Orban was **Presidential Adviser** for European Affairs within the Romanian Presidential Administration.

In January 2007 he became **the first Romanian Commissioner in the European Commission**. Between January 2007 and February 2010, Leonard Orban was Member of the European Commission, responsible for Multilingualism.

Starting with May 2001 and until the end of the accession negotiations of Romania to the European Union and the signing of the Accession Treaty to the European Union, in April 2005, **Leonard Orban was Deputy Chief Negotiator and Chief Negotiator with the European Union** in the Ministry of European Integration.

Mr. Orban continued to coordinate the preparation process for Romania's accession to the European Union as **Secretary of State in the Ministry of European Integration** from December 2004 to December 2006.

During 1993 - 2001, Leonard Orban was **Parliamentary Adviser** on European and International Affairs at the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania.

In 2002, he was awarded the National Order "Star of Romania" in grade of Knight, for his contribution to Romania's accession to NATO.

Leonard Orban has graduated the Faculty of Mechanics, University of Braşov and the Faculty of Management, Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest.

**In your capacity as the new President of EIR's Administration Board, how would you assess the role of the institute and what would be the courses to follow for our future activities in order to have a better communication in the European affairs?**

The European Institute of Romania (EIR) already has a distinct voice in the Romanian landscape of EU affairs. In order to support my claim I would like to state just two of the institute's "products". Therefore, the impact studies under the direction of EIR are well-known and much appreciated. Furthermore, the debates organized under the auspices of the institute have represented an important contribution to the process of communication on European issues. I believe that, based on this solid foundation, EIR's activity can be improved. Of course, the communication component is very important and, therefore, as President of the EIR Administrative Board, I intend to help intensify the efforts in this regard.

I believe that the topic of these debates can be broadened to approach politically sensitive issues, such as those related to the position of Romania in the EU (along the lines of some of the questions that you have addressed in this interview).

In addition, the involvement of representatives of the entire Romanian society in these debates is required. Moreover, media coverage on these communication actions is important, therefore, attracting media partners in our approach would be very useful.

I have mentioned just a few of my ideas to help improve the communication in the European affairs field and I am convinced that we will be able to achieve this goal.

**Interview by Oana Mocanu  
(15 January 2014)**

EIR

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## EIR Communication in European Affairs



The European Affairs communication events organized by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) in 2013 have brought to the interested public's attention European subjects and themes which are considered important both at the national level as well as at European Union level.

*The launch of the Strategy and Policy Studies SPOS 2012* took place during a conference organized on 11 April which was attended by Mr. George Ciamba, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Leonard Orban, former Minister of European Affairs; Mrs. Gabriela Drăgan, General Director of EIR as well as by the coordinating authors of the research teams. Thematic debates were also held in the first semester on three of the four SPOS 2012 studies.

In May, EIR in partnership with EURISC Foundation and Friedrich Ebert Foundation organized the conference entitled *"Food and water resources security: between European perspectives and national realities"*. Another important event was the debate organized together with the University of Craiova on the regionalization process (*"Which way goes regionalization? Between administrative performance and functional territories"*, 25 June).

As regards the bilateral collaboration, two experts' forums were organised: the Romanian-Polish Forum organized in partnership with the Polish Institute of International Affairs -PISM (*Romanian - Polish Strategic Partnership: Sharing Mutual Visions*, 11 September) and the first *Roundtable EURT Romania-Germany* (5 November, in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation). Moreover, for the second consecutive year, the European Institute of Romania was partner of the Institute for Eastern Studies (Warsaw) in organizing a debate during the 22nd edition of the Economic Forum that had taken place in Krynica (*Food security: a challenge of the 21st century*, 3 September).

In line with the tradition started at the EIR 10th anniversary conference (in December 2010), *the EIR Annual Conference, also hosting the fourth edition of the EIR Excellence Awards* has taken place on 12 December. The event, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on the *European Union and its Neighbourhood*. The fourth edition of EIR Excellence Awards was dedicated to several personalities in the European Affairs.

Special attention was given in 2013 to the management and implementation processes of the two projects coordinated by the Communication and Marketing Department. Thus, under the *technical assistance provision contract for the purpose of organizing communication events on European subjects*, concluded between EIR and the European Commission Representation in Bucharest, between January-July 2013 *six roundtables and two national conferences were organised*. The project ended on 20 July 2013.

Regarding the *Europe Direct Bucharest European Information Centre*, on 8 March 2013 the Centre activities were officially launched during a debate organized by EIR together with EC Representation in Romania and the European Parliament Information Office.

The activity of communication in European Affairs is also achieved by the two communication instruments: *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* (RJE) and *EIR Newsletter*. RJE is targeted on stimulating the debate concerning the European integration process and the role of Romania in an enlarged Europe. The fields of interest of RJE (<http://rjea.ier.ro>) range from analysis of EU current issues (institutional building, economic and monetary affairs, internal market, energy, migration, security etc.) to the effects of the European integration process on the new member states (with a particular focus on Romania) and the investigation of EU's relations with other global actors. The *EIR Newsletter*, an electronic monthly Romanian and English language publication, has as its core objective the improvement of the Institute's visibility ([http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/form\\_newsletter](http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/form_newsletter)). The Newsletter subscribers can read articles about the events, publications and training programmes of EIR, as well as opinion articles from experts regarding European themes of national interest.

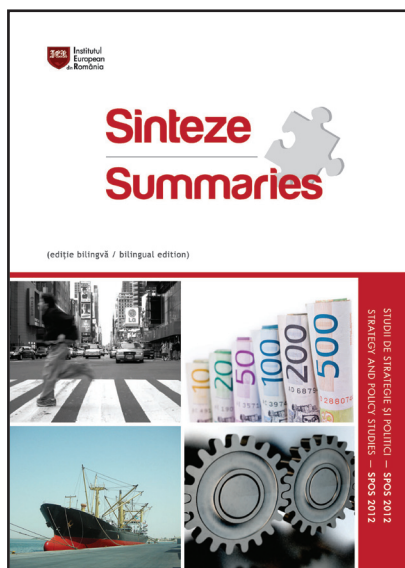
EIR has been nominated at *the category of the most active members of the Bi-Regio Communicators Network* at the anniversary conference of the REGIO Programme, as recognition of its role in the European Information Communicators Networks.

For more information about the activities and communication instruments used in European Affairs, please visit [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro), the official website of EIR which since 2013 has a new more user-friendly interface.

Florentina Costache

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## Studies and Analyses at the European Institute of Romania in 2013



2013 has been a year in which the traditional programs of the Studies and Analyses Unit merged with new projects, relevant both for the Romanian general public as well as for the more specialized one, particularly interested in the field of European Affairs.

The four Strategy and Policy Studies developed in the framework of the annual specialised SPOS programme, targeted subjects which are particularly topical for the current Romanian and European reality: *The gradual liberalization of the electricity and gas markets and the impact of this process on the Romanian economy, Roma inclusion policies in EU Member States, The assessment of the impact of free movement of Romanian workers in the EU from 1 January 2014; realities and trends from economic, occupational and social perspectives at the national and European levels and Romania's competitive advantages on the EU internal market.*

Another significant objective of the unit was to broaden the collaboration scope with similar institutes and organisations from abroad and to capitalise on the specialised expertise, by tackling topics that are relevant for the current European and international context. This component has been achieved through collaborations with studies and research-oriented institutes working on European affairs or international relations, in the EU and beyond, such as: CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies) - Brussels; the Turkish-Asian Centre for Strategic Studies (TASAM); the Italian Institute for International Relations (Istituto di Affari Internazionali - IAI) - Rome; the Swedish

Institute for International Relations (UI); the Polish Institute for International Relations (PISM), etc.

Topics tackled in the framework of these collaborations included: the architecture of European foreign policy in a multi-speed Europe, the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership, cooperation in the Balkans, etc.

It is worth mentioning the contribution of the Studies and Analyses Unit to the European Global Strategy Initiative (EGS), with a paper called *“Towards a European Global Strategy, Through Coordinated Regional Approaches”*, which benefited from a wide dissemination in the EPIN network ((European Policy Institutes Network).

During the second half of the year, upon the invitation of the Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute and VoteWatch Europe, EIR has joined the research project entitled *“European Parliament Votes that Shaped EU and National Politics 2009 - 2014”*, which sets to explore, in a series of *papers* and themed seminars, the main European and national debates associated with the Euro-Parliament elections in May 2014, as well as the key topics of interest for the citizens of the Member States. The project will continue in 2014 and will conclude with a conference in Brussels just before the election day, and with the publication of the reports drawn up by the participating institutes.

A notable moment was represented by the organisation, in September, in cooperation with the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM - Warsaw) and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Embassy in Bucharest, of the



conference “*The Romanian-Polish Strategic Partnership: sharing a common vision*”. The event benefited from the participation of His Excellency, Mr. Titus Corlăţean, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency, Mr. Radostaw Sikorski, his Polish counterpart. The debates held during the seminar were later developed in a *Policy Paper*, jointly elaborated by EIR and PISM experts and collaborators.

In November 2013, experts of the Unit attended the German-Romanian Forum entitled “*Navigating the EU through Difficult Waters. German and Romanian Perspectives*”, which was organised by the Friedrich Ebert Romania Foundation, alongside the German Institute for International Relations and Security (SWP) and EIR.

Agnes Nicolescu

## EIR Training Programs

2013 was a year of changes, reflected in the activity of the Training Unit, offering a wider range of courses, while maintaining the traditional programs of training in European Affairs.

The traditional programs, dedicated to general training (*Trainer*, etc.), but aiming especially to go further into some topics specific to the field of European affairs (*Specialisation in European Affairs, European Union’s normative system, Area of freedom, security and justice - visas, asylum, immigration between Schengen and Lisbon*), intended for the staff of specialised public institutions, elicited the same interest as in 2012.

As a response to the constant interest for the European funds topic in Romania, in 2013 EIR organised new sessions of the specialisation programs for *Project Manager*, with direct applicability in managing projects financed from European funds, and *Expert in Accessing European Structural and Cohesion Funds*, which focuses especially on the development of competencies required for the identification, accessing, drawing up, carrying out and implementation of a successful project. The courses are authorised by ANC (National Authority for Qualifications).

Another program of interest and related to European topics was *Training in competences for Computer Assisted Translation*, delivered mostly by EIR’s trainers, based on over 10 years of experience in translating the *community acquis* and the case-law of the CJEU and ECHR. This course was completed with a pilot training project *ECHR - procedural and admissibility conditions of applications*, based on the practical expertise gained by trainers with the ECHR.

In 2013, the collaboration with *Ecole Nationale d’Administration (ENA), the Embassy of France in Romania and the French Institute in Bucharest* continued as part of the *Multiannual Training Program in French for Romanian Civil Servants*, financed by the *International Organisation of Francophony (OIF)*. Within this partnership, new sessions of the program intended for the preparation of the Romanian specialists of public institutions for the competitions for employment in the European institutions were delivered, as well as a pilot session dedicated to persons who have already passed the written exam and are preparing for the interview.

Two thematic seminars, namely *Évaluation des programmes des fonds structurels* and, respectively, a seminar dedicated to social policies in France and Europe, *Quelles politiques sociales en Europe?*, were also organised. All these programs were delivered in French, attracting great interest from the target audience.



The course organised in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, namely *Institutional Ethics and Integrity*, proved to be a successful pilot program. Starting from the provisions of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the course was intended for civil servants with competencies in the field, offering them an integrated approach on the prevention of and fight against corruption in public institutions, focusing on international anti-corruption standards and on the objectives of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the application of Law No 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest and concrete elements regarding the anti-corruption fight through administrative and criminal-law instruments.

The goal of the Training Unit for 2014 is to successfully continue to organise the programs on the agenda, designed to ensure a high-level specialisation of civil servants in public administration, as well as to initiate other programs of current interest for the training needs.

At the end of 2013, the Training Unit initiated the procedure for questioning representatives of central and local public administration in order to identify the training needs for the period 2014-2016, an analysis made by the institute every two years, with a view to constantly adapt to demands and needs.

For further details, please visit the Training Unit’s web page: <http://ier.ro/activit%C4%83%C8%9Bi/formare-%C3%AEn-afaceri-europene.html> and the general website of the European Institute of Romania [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro).

Gigi Mihăiță

## The activities of the Translation Coordination Unit in 2013

In 2013, the activities of the Translation Coordination Unit (TCU) focused both on translation and revision, as well as on other types of activities such as terminological research, interpreting, article writing, providing training for interns, performing as trainers in the training programmes organised by the European Institute of Romania (EIR).

Pursuant to the Trilateral Protocol of Cooperation agreed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Superior Council of Magistracy and EIR, the translation and/or revision activities focused mainly on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Other types of documents, such as Romanian legislation, internal and/or confidential documents, were also translated.

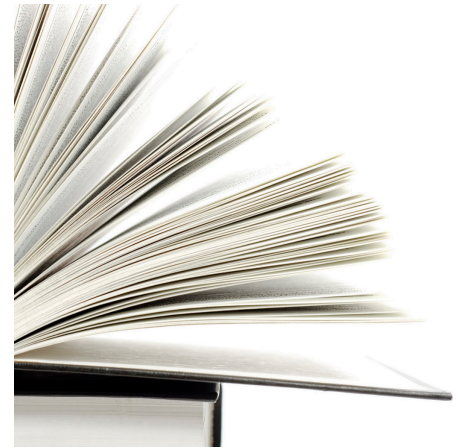
In 2013, over 7 700 standard pages were translated/ revised.

With the support of the Superior Council of Magistracy, a large number of the translated cases were uploaded to HUDOC (<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>), the online database of the European Court of Human Rights. As concerns the number of translated documents available online, the Romanian language ranks second, after Turkish, apart from the official languages (English, French).

Another type of activity was to classify about 200 ECHR cases by the Convention Article(s) to which the case relates and by keywords.

Part of the TCU's staff also provided interpreting services during certain events organised by EIR, trained interns or provided training within the programme "Development of competencies for the translation and revision of legal texts". The staff was also involved in organising the debate *The ECHR case-law: ways to disseminate and inform*, on the occasion of issuing the third volume of *Culegere de jurisprudență CEDO - cauze recente împotriva României* (European Court of Human Rights Reports - recent cases against Romania), published in 2012.

As regards the terminological research, at the end of 2013, the terminological database contained more than 31 000 validated entries, available free of charge on EIR's website.



Laura Mihăilescu

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## The first year of activity of the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre, hosted by the European Institute of Romania



Starting with January 2013, the European Institute of Romania is the host institution of the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre (CIED Bucharest) which is financed by the European Commission through its Representation in Romania. Europe Direct Bucharest, among other 30 similar information centres in the country, is part of the Europe Direct Romania Network set up for the 2013-2017 period, as one of the primary communication instruments of the European Commission.

Taking into consideration its mission and objectives (such as facilitating the access of the Bucharest-Ilfov region citizens to European information and promoting an active citizenship during the 2013 European Year of Citizens) Europe Direct Bucharest, besides its information services, organized twenty-six events and participated to another twelve. Some of the

activities organized are: European information sessions and creative workshops for highschool and University students in the Bucharest and Ilfov area (followed by an awarding festivity), outdoor activities, events with children from foster care centres. In addition, the Centre organized campaigns for promoting the European elections and debates on: "Young people's mobility in the European Union: how can we manage this process?", "The Europe 2020 Strategy and EU progress - priorities for Romania", "The European Citizenship Initiative: Be an active citizen!", "How can we bring more EU structural funds to Romania?", "How can we overcome the economic crisis?", "Financing opportunities and the role of entrepreneurship", "Finding a job - the primary challenge of young graduates".

Moreover, the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre representatives have participated in research and visit studies, trainings and annual general meetings organized by the European Commission Representation in Bucharest.

In 2013, CIED Bucharest has written and published six newsletters, the latest being a holiday special edition reporting on the festivity “Christmas in Europe” organised with the participation of the children from “Pinocchio” Foster Care. Moreover, two brochures have been published: *European Citizenship Initiative* and *EU Immigration Policy*

- *effects on the labour market*. Along with the information about these activities, the new website of Europe Direct Bucharest provides the latest European information, as well as study opportunities for the youth, among other things.

For more details, please visit the Europe Direct Bucharest website, at: <http://europedirectbucuresti.ier.ro/>

Diana Filip

EU

## The Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On 8 January 2014, a press conference was held at the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, marking the launch of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The event was attended by H.E. Mr. **Grigorios Vassiloconstandakis**, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic in Romania, H.E. Mr. **Titus Corlăţean**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ms. **Angela Filote**, the new Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Romania. Ambassadors of EU member states in Bucharest were also present.

H.E. Ambassador Vassiloconstandakis briefly presented the main principles and objectives that will guide the Greek Presidency, taking this opportunity to thank Lithuania, which held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union until 31 December 2013, for the activity it undertook and for the manner in which it handled the issues on the agenda.

Greece takes up the Presidency of the Council of the EU in a delicate time for Europe. Because of the restrictive fiscal policies, unemployment, the level of recession and the intensity of the crisis, a significant segment of European citizens loses its faith in EU institutions and in their capacity to design and implement an effective economic policy that would meet all needs.

Going through a crucial phase of transition, the European Union must face some challenges regarding stability and prosperity. Therefore, the priority framework of the Greek Presidency includes the promotion of policies and actions for achieving economic growth, combating unemployment, promoting structural reforms, economic and social cohesion, deepening of economic and EMU integration, as well as tackling external challenges, including EU expansion.

The upcoming European Parliament elections are also another factor that sets the context for the Greek Presidency.

In short, the main goals<sup>1</sup> of the Greek Presidency of the Council are as follows:

1. Strengthening the civic engagement and society in the European Union, through policies and initiatives in response to the current problems of citizens. The activity of the Greek Presidency will focus on issues such as: mobility of EU citizens and European security (both internal and



external), employment, cohesion, the ultimate goal being the consolidation of the European model and the development of a “common destiny” for all EU citizens.

2. Deepening the European Union, in particular the EMU, by promoting policies and actions to improve initial deficiencies in the architecture of the euro area which were exposed by the ongoing crisis. The effort will be centred on protecting the euro currency and initiating a concrete progress with respect to the banking union, all future actions respecting the principles of the Single Market, in a procedure open also to EU member states from the non-euro area.

3. Expanding civil rights, gradually constructing European democracy and consolidating EU democratic legitimacy.

There will also be a permanent dialogue with Italy, which will take over the presidency on 1 July this year.

H.E. Minister Titus Corlăţean expressed his belief that the Greek Presidency mandate will bring good results to the European Union, while expressing his support for the priority agenda of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU.

*“The efficient management of the economic crisis, the deepening of European integration and the consolidation of EU’s profile as a top global player are some of the challenges we have ahead during the Greek Presidency”<sup>2</sup>.* In this context, H.E. Mr. Titus Corlăţean emphasized the importance of advancing EU-USA negotiations for the signing of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and commended Latvia’s accession to the euro zone.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gr2014.eu/eu-presidency/the-greek-presidency/programme-and-priorities>

<sup>2</sup> <http://mae.ro/en/node/24040>



H.E. Minister Corlăţean used this opportunity to salute, once again, the abolition of all labour market restrictions for Romanians (as of 1 January 2014), according to Romania's Treaty of Accession to the European Union. Furthermore, he mentioned some of the regional projects (the Danube Strategy and those regarding the Black Sea connection to European maritime projects), as well as the "Sustainable Development of the Blue Economy of the Black Sea" conference, these initiatives having a high potential in stimulating economic growth.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also welcomed the initialling of the Association Agreement and of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement by the Republic of Moldova during the Vilnius Summit in November 2013, as recognition of "the determination of the Republic of Moldova to follow the

*European path tenaciously, in spite of any pressures*". The chief of Romanian diplomacy stated that the future actions of the Republic of Moldova in the European process will consist in the visa regime liberalization and the signing of the Association Agreement as soon as possible. Moreover, he claimed that Romania counts on the support of the Greek Presidency in the process of accomplishing these goals.

At the end of his intervention, Mr. Titus Corlăţean wished success to the Greek Presidency team in attaining all the aims on the agenda, stating also that "Solidarity and confidence are the key words. Let us place the values of the Union and its citizens at the centre of our actions"<sup>3</sup>.

Florentina Costache

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## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: 13-16 January 2014 Plenary Session, Strasbourg



Source: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_parliament/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/european_parliament/)

This session was marked by debates on the review of the Lithuanian Presidency and the programme of the Greek Presidency. MEPs also tackled topics such as the future of the European Union's enlargement, public procurement, etc.

Both Antonis Samaras, Prime Minister of Greece, and José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, considered that Greece has got enough resources to pursue its role in the EU, that it has proved to be resilient and determined, gaining a unique experience since the crisis started. In Greece, the results of the social and economic reforms have begun to show and the European Commission will continue to support the efforts made by the Greek people. The agenda of the Greek Presidency includes: jobs, Single Market, Economic and Monetary Union, labour mobility.

On this occasion, President Barroso reiterated that the reform has already produced results in Spain and Portugal, drawing attention to the social implications of the crisis, given the fact that it cannot be overcome under the circumstances of a high unemployment rate. Regarding the EU budget, it must also be perceived as a source of investment policy. In order to achieve economic growth and job creation, the reform process needs a single mechanism, in which the intergovernmental approach is completed by the endeavours undertaken by EU's institutions to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union. Financial market discipline, data protection, the rule of law, new forms of energy are general objectives that must support EU's policies and freedoms.

Freedom of movement is a part of the European citizenship, a pillar of the Single Market, contributing to economic growth and creating new jobs. That is why President Barroso insisted on the principle that European citizens have equal rights and are not divided into first and second class citizens. In fact, in its Communication issued in November 2013, the European Commission has stated that it supports the freedom of movement through concrete measures. Once again, President Barroso conveyed a message of unity, integration and compliance with the principles laid down in the founding treaties.

During their interventions, MEPs insisted on the fact that the slight increase of 0.6% in the Greek economy is not sufficient, but that it proved wrong the pessimist forecasts that Greece might exit the euro zone or even the EU. MEPs drew attention again to

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<sup>3</sup> <http://mae.ro/en/node/24040>



EU's exposure to migration along the Mediterranean coasts and to the fact that maritime security must be subject to measures adopted in this field.

Members of the European Parliament and Commission and Council representatives have discussed the complexity of the issues related to EU citizens' freedom of movement, a privileged topic on the current session's agenda. The last restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians regarding the access to the labour markets of certain Member States have expired on 31 December 2013. They have come into force on Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the EU (January 2007).

Other reports presented by EP's committees dealt with topics related to environment, biodiversity protection, public health and food safety, by referring to carbon capture and storage in Europe, by developing and applying the existing technology, as well as fighting against wildlife crime.

For more information, please visit <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

Mariana Bara

## The European Council of 19 - 20 December 2013



Source: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/europeancouncil\\_meetings](http://www.flickr.com/photos/europeancouncil_meetings)

'Defence matters.' This statement, addressed by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, marked the opening of the December 2013 Council, which focused heavily on *European security and defence policy*. For the first time since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council held a thematic debate on defence. It identified priority actions for stronger cooperation. This debate was preceded by a meeting with the NATO Secretary-General, during which he presented his assessment of current and future security challenges and welcomed the ongoing efforts and commitments by the EU and its member states as being compatible with NATO's objectives.

During the reunion, the decisions on the Single Resolution Mechanism were welcomed, being considered a cornerstone of the future Banking Union. The economic situation was reviewed, as well as the progress in implementing the Compact for Growth, Jobs and Competitiveness<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, recent initiatives towards building a Banking Union were welcomed. This project, which includes a supervision and resolution mechanism, supported by a deposit guarantee for citizens, faces a vote in the European Parliament, ideally before its term ends in May.

As regards the main topic of the reunion, EU leaders have endorsed new plans to tighten defence cooperation, improve military capabilities and inject new life into the defence industry. They discussed ways to develop, use and share assets in order to help Europe better defend itself against modern security threats, despite the fact that the pressure on military spending remains high. This approach includes boosting the efficiency and visibility of EU missions abroad<sup>2</sup>. European leaders announced plans to work together on remotely piloted air systems - or drones -, satellite communications, air to air refuelling and cyber defence. The aim of these projects is to create new jobs and stimulate growth in the industry. By June 2014, a Cyber Defence Policy will be elaborated, as well as a Maritime Security Strategy. On top of that, the current system of financing operations will be reviewed with a view to improve its current limitations, when possible.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2013/12/19/divisions-over-eu-defence-and-banking-plans-at-brussels-summit/>

The European Council has identified a set of priority actions focused around three objectives: increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy); enhancing the development of capabilities and strengthening Europe's defence industry.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the major international affairs topics, the Council expressed its concerns about the crisis in Ukraine, where thousands of people have been protesting since the government refused to sign the Association Agreement and the Free Trade Agreement with the EU. It has been underlined that the signing possibility remains on the table and Russia should not feel threatened by the arrangement.<sup>4</sup>

During the meeting, France was praised for its efforts to help avoid a civil war in the Central African Republic. The European leaders expressed their deep concern about the crisis and they have tasked the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to draft a proposal on ways in which the EU can handle the current situation.

Last but not least, the Syrian crisis was also addressed, before the January 22 conference in Geneva. There is a commitment to mobilize additional funds (€ 2 billions) to provide more aid to the millions of refugees and displaced people.

The next European Council is scheduled for 20-21 March 2014.

**George Mihaiu, intern**

<sup>3</sup> <http://european-council.europa.eu/home-page/highlights/security-and-defence-policy-high-on-the-agenda-at-the-european-council?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140244.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140244.pdf)

## Promo

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The European Institute of Romania, in partnership with the Ministry of National Education, will organise an **accredited training for 323 teachers in the field of European Affairs**, financed by the European Commission through the European Commission Representation in Romania.

This training programme is open to teachers of primary, secondary and high school who teach school topics in which the European Union is subject lesson or part of a lesson of Geography, History, Civic education, Civic Culture and any other school subject from the optional curriculum.

Under this programme, one training session of two days will be organized in each of the centres: Bucharest, Bacău, Timișoara, for each of the three education cycles.

Sessions are carried out as follows: **Bucharest 7 to 12 April 2014, Bacău 14 to 19 July 2014, Timișoara 28 July - 2 August 2014.**

For more details visit the link: <http://www.ier.ro/stiri/selec%C5%A3ie-cadre-didactice-pentru-cursul-preg%C4%83tirea-cadrelor-didactice-pe-tematici-europene-bucu>

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