



EIR newsletter

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event _____

„Yes, we could! How Poland made it”



The European Institute of Romania (EIR) and the Foundation Institute for Eastern Studies (ISW, Warsaw) organized on 23 October 2014 a debate on the occasion of the presentation of the report entitled „Yes, we could! 25 years of democratic change, 15 years in NATO, 10 years in EU. How Poland made it”.

The keynote speakers of the debate, which is part of a project co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were: Mr. **Mario Baldassarri**, President, Centro Studi Economia Reale, former Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Italy, Mrs. **Magdalena Bogdziewicz**, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Counsellor, Head of Political and Economic Section, Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Bucharest, Mr. **Leonard Orban**, President of the EIR Board of Administration, former European Commissioner, Mrs. **Iulia Matei**, Deputy Director General, European Union Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania, Mr. **Liviu Muresan**, President, EURISC Foundation, Mr. **Ovidiu Nahoi**, journalist, Money Channel and Mrs. **Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General, EIR.

In order to highlight the anniversary of events important for Poland, the Institute of Eastern Studies had the initiative to launch the report this year. It consists of ten success stories that are reflecting the history, culture, political and economic system and Poland’s relation with its neighbourhood, stories that are relevant for the democratic and institutional path of Poland... **p.2**

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publications _____

Romanian Journal of European Affairs – Winter Issue 2014

In the December issue of the RJE, the contributors bring to the readers’ attention topics concerning: EU and Russia’s foreign policy relations; the role of the EU as a peace-builder in the Western Balkans; some sustainable development aspects in the Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes (in Macedonia and Albania), the historical evolution of the conditionality criteria in the external relations of the EU with CEEC, the circular European economy and two *book reviews* on the historical formation of Human Rights and on the experience of Visegrád Countries in developing trade policy relations with the European Union ... **p.2**



...This country was referred to as a “miracle”, a “Phoenix bird”, a model of a success story both regarding the European integration as well as the internal development. Questions still remain, though, related to the causes that determined such a success and how the Polish model is to be assumed by other states, especially from Central and Eastern Europe.



The speakers agreed on the fact that, during these 25 years, Poland was characterised by a stable growth and prosperity that are to be further sustained, a stable democracy, a mature democracy and that it proved to be a strong ally as a NATO member and a major actor in the European decision-making, the entire period being appreciated by one of the speakers as the best in the history of Poland. In order to understand the Polish success, references were made to both the causes and the costs that made possible this success story. Among the categories identified in the report - growth and inflation, employment, government finance - the most important dimension of the economic growth in Poland is the accessing and the utilization of European Funds, with special attention given to the fiscal and monetary policy. Poland stepped forward also with practices of good governance, by promoting an efficient political class and sustaining an efficient public administration, on the national, regional and European level, the performance of Poland is measured, among other criteria, by the capacity of the political leaders to have a unitary action, by identifying the public interest and by promoting political elites ready to answer the highest expectations. It was also pointed out that this country is able to maintain credibility in the international arena and to form on a continuous basis new specialists in diverse fields.

The speakers underlined the fact that we need to take into account the current challenges, internal and external, cooperation between states in response to these issues and the EU position regarding both internal and external disputes. The attention was also drawn to the geopolitical context and the way the Member States choose to answer to the external challenges as well as to the centrifugal movements inside Europe and the tensions created by them, the demographic situation and the problem of the migrants.

Given the many common aspirations, values and strategic interests, there were arguments in favour of a strong partnership between Romania and Poland and that Poland, as well as Romania and other states in the region, needs to further concentrate on the accession to the Euro zone, in order to be in the first line in the European decision-making process. Furthermore, it was stated that Romania’s foreign policy should be a policy of national consensus in order to reach the goals of international profile consolidation and deepening the Strategic Partnership for the XXI century with USA. Romania, as a state situated at the border of EU and NATO, should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of this geopolitical function, a key priority of foreign policy being to expand in the vicinity of Romania the democratic zone of security and predictability and therefore to have a closer collaboration with Poland.

In the closure of the debate, during the questions and answers session participants drew attention to the security problems the two states confront, Romania having to consolidate the security and defence policy, and Poland having a need for greater energy security. It was repeated that joining the Euro zone should be carefully analysed, future policies having to focus on the attainment of goals. It was concluded that the Polish model is a successful one due to the firm commitment to the economic growth path, democratization and modernization, providing a good example for other countries such as Romania.

Luiza Strîmbeanu, intern

Romanian Journal of European Affairs – Winter Issue 2014

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Florin Păsătoiu, lecturer in International Relations at the University of Craiova, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, research fellow at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, analyses in

his paper the growing global and regional challenges in terms of security and prosperity, which call for cooperation and “new type of great power relations”. The EU’s failure to transpose Russia’s radical twist in foreign policy into a new design of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) poses many questions. Despite the fact that one of the pillars of the ENP is security for all, the EU has relied exclusively on a stewardship policy built on a normative paradigm, while miscalculating the national security concerns of the Russian Federation.

Gentjan Skara, member of the Department of Law at “Hëna e Plotë” (Bedër) University, contributes to the academic dialogue by arguing whether, how and to what extent, the EU has contributed as a peacebuilder in the Western Balkans, using crisis management operations and missions, as well as the enlargement policy. By restoring stability in the region and overcoming conflicts, the EU’s goal was to make war unthinkable in this region. Referring to the definition of peace-building as “action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflicts”, the author argues that some instruments can be considered relevant as they create favourable conditions for lasting peace and that through enlargement policy they push this region towards political and institutional reform.

Klodjan Seferaj, PhD candidate in public financial management, University of Tirana, Economic Faculty, Albania, in the article entitled *Sustainable Development Aspects in Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes: The Case of Macedonia and Albania*, analyses the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programme Macedonia-Albania 2007-2013 and its sustainable development aspects. The research is trying to assess the impact of the programme since its start in 2007 and the impact of the implemented grants on the sustainable development. Implementation is often problematic and sustainability aspects need to be examined on a more concrete level. The desk review considered well over 40 documents relevant to the program, most of which were shared by the Ministry of European Integration (MoEI) and other actors.

Carlos Puente, Doctor in Economics, former official of the European Commission, presently based in Vienna, presents a historical evolution of the conditionality criteria in the external relations of the EU with the Central and Eastern European Countries. Most cases depend on the financial support to developing countries of the IMF, but also of other institutions like the World Bank, IBD, EIB or the EBRD that are targeting the Central and Eastern European countries. While the general principles of the conditionality criteria were developed in an international forum, there has been a considerable evolution and even stricter conditions were established when Bulgaria and Romania became applicant countries.

Florin Bonciu, University Professor and Vice-president for Research with the Romanian-American University in Bucharest, attempts to conceptualise the current European economy and its evolution over time. He argues that already widely accepted concepts like “sustainable development” or “low-carbon economy” seem to address the effects and not the causes. He analyses a broader approach that places human activity into a long-term historical perspective, namely the circular economy. The conclusions reflect optimism concerning the success in large-scale implementation of the circular economy concept in the European Union and worldwide and thus in taking advantage of opportunities rather than wasting resources by opposing ineluctable changes.

Scott Nicholas Romaniuk, PhD candidate at the University of Trento (Doctoral School of International Studies), Italy, reviewed the book *The Architecture of Concepts: The Historical Formation of Human Rights*, edited by Peter de Bolla, which focuses on how current conceptions of international human rights are built upon a particular conceptual architecture. The author looks at conceptual networks and the extensive relationships found within them so as to direct researchers in conducting future plotting of connectivities within networks. Concepts are treated as a metaphorical “subway or tube maps project into multiple dimensions.” The chapters combine the issue of creating conceptual dispositions with poignant debates about rights that pervaded the First Continental Congress during the 1770s, while repositioning the items of inquiry, by challenging the assumption of the origin(s) of human rights.

Ágota Dávid, PhD candidate at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Doctoral School of Political Theory), leader of INCO-NET projects at the Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development, analyses the paper *Developing Trade and Trade Policy Relations with the European Union. Experience of Visegrád Countries and Implications/Lessons for Eastern Partners*, published by MTA Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Institute of World Economics, Budapest. The trade cooperation between the Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union has faced significant setbacks in recent years. The perspective of full membership, yearly evaluations and recommendations and the support of a dedicated financial instrument were the main sources that fuelled Poland’s and Hungary’s successful integration process. Thus, the lack of a full membership perspective weighs heavily on the cooperation between EU and the EaP countries. The lack of incentives offered by the EU in the trade negotiations with the Republic of Moldova and Georgia may lead to the strengthening of the relations between the EaP countries and Russia.

Full articles will be available in December at <http://rjea.ier.ro>.



Volunteering, between motivation and interest. The necessity of a legal regulation

There are different definitions and meanings regarding volunteering, but in general terms, it represents an essential part of the civic society, more and more present in the contemporary society and a fundamental attribute of every consolidated democracy. The voluntary activities¹ are a double benefit for the person engaged in those activities through the opportunity to develop its own personal and/or professional abilities and for the NGOs through the capacity to expand their own projects and the implementation of new partnerships. Most importantly, this double partnership contributes to the development of the social solidarity, one of the fundamental values of every volunteer activity.

The increasing interest of the citizens and also the projects and initiatives of the NGOs, on a local, regional or national level, promoted volunteering on an international dimension and especially in the European Union (EU).

The dynamics of the voluntary activities generated the need for collaboration on the national level between the Executive and the NGOs in order to have a functioning legislative framework. But, beyond the legal framework, the infrastructure for volunteering in a certain state depends to a great extent on the socio-political situation, the economic factors and the correlation with the labour market and on the existence of a certain volunteering culture.

Volunteering and the “European Society”

When talking about volunteering at the European Union level², terms like *European citizens* or *active European citizenship* must be taken into account. Thus, from 2011 up to date, the special interest, from the institutional level towards the European citizens and their involvement in the voluntary activities, took form through the initiative of the European Parliament to designate year 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering. Therefore, for more than four years, the European institutions adopted and supported different actions, events or projects designed to reflect the idea of European citizens (European Year 2014 and 2013) or the idea of solidarity between generations and active ageing (European Year 2012).

Each member state has its own definitions and traditions regarding volunteering, therefore the involvement of citizens in such activities varies from one state to another or from one region to another. The Eurobarometer on volunteering and intergenerational solidarity³ highlights the following aspects: statistically, almost a quarter of the EU population takes



part in voluntary activities, from the occasional and local activities to the formal and regulated ones, with the highest participation rate in sports clubs and cultural organizations. The majority of respondents identified the sectors in which volunteering plays a crucial role as being the solidarity and humanitarian aid. Regarding the question of defining a legal framework to regulate the voluntary activities, the ratio of the responses is balanced, 47% of the respondents prefer a European Volunteering Charter created by the member states jointly with the EU, and 45% of the respondents prefer a national legal initiative.⁴

In this field, one of the major recommendations of the European Commission to the member states is to support and to expand the voluntary activities among the active population, especially among the young people, but also among seniors.⁵ Therefore, one of the most ambitious European-community based project, with a positive impact for the young people, is the European Voluntary Service (EVS), part of EU's Erasmus+ programme.⁶ This program supports the participation of young people to the public life in order to better consolidate the social solidarity and to promote the active citizenship. Facing one of the most serious challenges for the European continent - the alarming phenomenon of population ageing - the European Union emphasizes the inclusion of seniors in different voluntary activities for a more visible reduction of the effects of social exclusion.⁷

A second important recommendation to the member states consists in adapting or improving the existent legislation regarding volunteering, with a view to developing this sector of activities by balancing the relation between those who choose to dedicate a part of their time to different activities - the volunteers, and the NGOs that are calling on volunteers for the implementation of their objectives and projects established in their statute - the host organizations.

¹ Formal or informal activities, on own initiative and without financial reward.

² The Communication from the European Commission on the EU policies and volunteering (20th of September 2011) http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1311_en.pdf and The Council Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in social policy (3rd of October 2011) <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014552%202011%20INIT>

³ Special Eurobarometer 75.2, TNS Opinion & Social, at the request of the European Parliament, between 13 April and 2 May 2011, on a survey of almost 27000 persons living in the EU member states.

⁴ http://www.europart.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2011/juillet/04_07/rapport_%20eb75_2_%20benevolat_ro.pdf

⁵ Volunteering in the European Union Report (GHK, 17 February 2010).

⁶ Erasmus+ is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sports for 2014-2020, which replaces the previous Youth in Action programme.

⁷ Volunteering by older people in the EU report, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions, 2011.

Legal regulation. Volunteer vs. Employee

The path opened regarding the volunteering regulation by the European institutions or by the national Parliament, pushes each member state to initiate adequate legislative initiatives. Definitely, such an action is not an easy one, specially, because there are some other issues that are to be taken into account: the country-specific approach to volunteering, the necessity of the legal framework, and also the limits of such a legal framework.

Describing the voluntary activities in an inflexible and restrictive framework can distance “the volunteers” from one of the fundamental values of volunteering - the social solidarity - so that their motivation is being shaped by other criteria, such as the socio-professional recognition or the financial benefits. It is mandatory to have a legal regulation in order to get a clear distinction between the volunteer and the employee (who is paid for his work), through a written and regulated agreement establishing the responsibilities of the volunteer and the host organization.

The law for volunteering in Romania

The Chamber of Deputies voted in plenary session, in late May this year, for a new legislative project to regulate the voluntary activities.⁸ By far, the aspect that is most looked forward to of this new law of volunteering is the fact that the volunteering time can be recognized as professional experience if the activities are conducted in the field in which the volunteer has graduated his studies and has obtained a certificate of competence recognised at the European level. This can be considered “a small step to encourage the volunteering in Romania (a European country with a rather recent tradition in this matter) and by this, to give a chance to young people to get employment.”⁹

Regardless of the personal motivation of those who desire to take up a certain cause, of their own initiative and with no material expectations, with or without effects on the labour market, but making an impact in their own community and outside of it, volunteering needs to be regulated, but not over-regulated. There is a need to appreciate and to sustain activism, so that the common values can be consolidated and shared by the entire society.

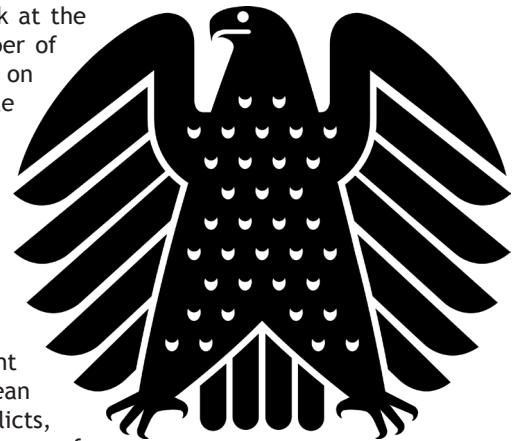
Ana-Maria Popa, intern

Parliamentarism and Democracy at the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag)

For five months between March and July 2014, I had the opportunity to work at the German Federal Parliament (*Bundestag*) together with Frank Heinrich, member of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid and the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development. The collaboration was made possible by the “International Parliamentary Scholarship” programme for young German speakers from 30 countries, mostly European, but also African and Middle Eastern countries.

This programme is the ideal opportunity to learn and understand how German democracy functions, how decisions are actually taken within the Parliament and also about the mutual control and balance of powers. In the two committees where I worked, the debates and the important decisions which were taken addressed situations of human rights violations or cooperation for development and economic support in contexts such as: the conflicts in Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula, death penalty in certain African countries, the Israel-Palestine conflicts, the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, human trafficking with the purpose of forced prostitution in Eastern Europe.

Perhaps the most important aspect is that, regardless of the topic discussed, negotiations are open as the parliamentary parties have - according to their representation - the right to defend their positions and to present counter-arguments and amendments; the whole process is very transparent, time-balanced and solution-oriented. Every committee meeting is attended by at least one Government representative who is, in most cases, a state secretary from the ministry responsible for the topic discussed and who reports to the parliamentary committee and responds to its questions, taking over common suggestions for implementation. Although the opposition, represented by the Greens (*die Grüne*) and the Left Party (*die Linke*), has a small share of the total seats in the *Bundestag* compared to the large coalition formed by the Christian-Democrats (CDU/CSU)



⁸ Law number 78 from 2014 on the regulation of the voluntary activities in Romania, published in the Official Monitor, 1st Part number 469 from 26th of June 2014.

⁹ http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/articles|displayArticle/articleID_26663/Comparatie-Romania-Franta-voluntariatul-experienta-profesionala-vs.-bursa-de-1.100-2.900-euro-lunar.html

and Social-Democrats (SPD), there is a close cooperation between all the members in order to propose common initiatives. Nevertheless, during debates with major differences of opinion, the opposition has no chance to amend the proposals of the coalition or to introduce initiatives, which will be successfully rejected by the coalition. Consequently, there is constant criticism directed at the current role of the opposition, which has no power since, from a total of 631 seats in the *Bundestag*, 504 belong to the CDU/CSU - SPD governing coalition.

A very important aspect of the German parliamentarism is the collaboration with the private business sector and with the civil society. Very often, members of the national or foreign civil society are invited for discussions within the committees to report, for example, on the situation in a conflict zone. On each MP's agenda there are meetings with NGOs, ambassadors or with representatives of the Government, but also with simple citizens, pupils and students. Every MP has - apart from the activity directly connected to the *Bundestag* - a fixed budget for organizing events; he/she can coordinate - with the help of their team - projects pertaining to the committee(s) they represent and has the responsibility to continuously collaborate with educational and training institutions to teach about the German parliamentarism, democratic values and participation in society. All these assignments are only a part from of a German MP's normal work programme, which often starts at 7 a.m. and ends after 10 p.m. It is a position that opens many doors in the social and institutional environments and, in the same time, a responsibility to the electorate with whom there is periodical dialogue through meetings, events, monthly newsletters and, generally, through availability for the problems reported by citizens. In this context, in order to finish by the end of the day all the activities undertaken, it is most important to have a very good time- and team-management, an understanding of the top values and priorities, as well as a sincere and timely approach to any small internal misunderstanding.

The experience at the German Parliament is a model of direct and practical learning that I would recommend to all young German speakers and which leads to accountability beyond expectations as well as to propulsion in the middle of the German political arena. The experience is quite useful in terms of developing one's professional and social competences in a multicultural environment and, even more importantly, an opportunity for re-analysing one's own values and priorities.

For more information about the programme, please access the official webpage: <http://www.bundestag.de/ips>.

Daniela Marinache

A Europe of the Regions - A Potential Earthquake of the European Union?

A new phenomenon is making itself present in the European Union, where an increasing number of regions seeking to secede from the states they are part of are gaining power, the *Europe of the Regions*. The new forms of political organisation are a tangible reality in the EU, now faced with increasing movements for autonomy and independence. The future of the traditional nation-state seems to become uncertain within the struggle of sub-national regions to decide on their own the optimum form of political organisation.

The nation-state is increasingly weaker to the benefit of other governance levels. The transfer of decision-making power is taking place towards the European Union as well as downwards, towards the Member States' territorial units. While in the 1990s the nation-state was challenged by federalism, currently the nation-state is confronted with globalisation and the movements for autonomy manifested by European regions¹.

The federalist view on the EU arises from the allocation of competences to the Union, to the detriment of Member States, for a stronger Europe. Nevertheless, sub-national regions are also gaining in terms of power due to the principles underlying the functioning of the EU, as regional communities have an important role in the European construction. One of these principles is that of subsidiarity, which lays down the sharing



of competences between the EU and the Member States, implying that action should be taken at the level that is closest to the citizens². The EU's intervention is justified when it is more effective than action at national level. The principle of subsidiarity and the effectiveness of decisions taken at the level that is closest to the citizens are arguments from supporters of the autonomy of EU regions such as Catalonia, Basque Country or Scotland. The principle of subsidiarity and, moreover, the

¹ Luedke Adam, "A Europe of the Regions: Rhetoric or Reality?", in *Regional Institutions and Governance in the European Union*, Edited by Jose M. Magone. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003, p.102.

² Burgess Michael, *Federalism and the European Union: the Building of Europe, 1950-2000*, Routledge, 2000, p.15.

high degree of autonomy and even independence claimed by some regions can be seen as instruments for the purposes of democratisation and for reducing the democratic deficit across the EU, by means of criteria establishing how and when the state or EU institutions should take action to ensure full implementation of policies and maximum efficiency in various sectors, such as the economy. The concept and phenomenon called the *Europe of the Regions* would translate precisely through the representation of sub-national governance levels in the EU's decision-making process³.

The decentralisation process we are witnessing can be seen as a means whereby regions protect themselves and develop, since secession movements in the European Union are not anti-European or xenophobic, and the pattern of the regions' struggle for decentralisation appears more like a solution to the economic crisis affecting Europe in the recent years. Scotland, Catalonia and Venice are examples of economically developed regions that are challenging the administrative centre and the current way of economy management.

This September, the European Union's attention turned to the secessionist tendencies in Scotland, materialised through the referendum on independence. It was a historic moment for the European Union, as well as for Great Britain and Scotland. The referendum in Scotland sought the citizens' opinion on gaining independence from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of which it has been part for over 300 years. A positive vote in the referendum would have meant for the European Union the challenge of dealing with the first region to become independent at a time when secessionist movements are rapidly spreading across Europe,

with Scotland being close to becoming a model encouraging their endeavours.

The citizens' vote against this initiative saved the European Union from a potential crisis triggered by the uncertain status of the newly-formed state, as well as from setting the premises for similar actions in other states faced with tendencies towards higher autonomy or decentralisation of competences.

The leader of the campaign for Scottish independence and for organising the referendum would have wanted the ballot papers to include not the two dichotomous options *Yes/No*, but rather a ballot paper with three options: independence, maintaining the *status quo* or further devolution for Scotland. Though Scottish people voted to stay in Great Britain, the over 40% of citizens who voted for independence highlight Scotland's bid for further devolution, which might encourage Wales and Northern Ireland to claim similar treatment.

In conclusion, the problem of Scotland and other regions seeking autonomy or independence from the states they are members of is part of the decentralisation process occurring in the EU for the purposes of optimising and streamlining the governance. The many question marks that accompany this process and threaten the Union's stability are linked to the issue of the regions' representation and status within the European Union in extreme cases such as their transformation into independent states.

Luiza Strîmbeanu, intern

event

Terminology in the service of citizens

The 10th edition of the Scientific Day of Realiter Pan-Latin Terminology Network (www.realiter.net) - on the subject "Terminology in the service of citizens" - took place on 16 October, 2014.

Realiter includes individuals, institutions and organizations from Neo-Latin countries active in the field of terminology and aims at ensuring the harmonious development of the Romance languages.

The event, organized for the first time in Romania, was held in Aula Magna of the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest.

The participants, almost exclusively academics, covered a large geographical area, from Europe to South America.

After the welcome speech delivered by the organizers, Mrs Maria Teresa ZANOLA, the Secretary General of Realiter, presented the main objective of the Scientific Day: to examine the role of Pan-Latin terminology through the interventions of states, governments, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations etc., which must make their actions and results known in the national language of their own citizens. During her speech, she mentioned several roles of terminology: to draw attention to the terminology already available, to help translators, to promote language policy (in particular to provide knowledge to the citizens).



³ Andrew Scott, John Peterson, David Millar, "Subsidiarity: A 'Europe of the Regions'", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, March 1994, p. 48.

During the panel on the ways terminology can be in the service of citizens, Ms Bénédicte Madinier mentioned the second article of the French Constitution, which states the right of citizens to speak French. Therefore, France can be a model in the sense that state institutions must use the official language. She also stressed the role of terminology as an interface between experts and the general public.

Ms Marta Gran I Franch emphasized the importance of spreading and adapting the latest technological terminology to the native languages, giving the example of “Termcat” and recent works in the field of terminology related to tablets and mobile phones.

The event helped to disseminate the results of the scientific activity of Realiter members and of successful experiences in different fields (language policies, high-quality terminology tools, cross-sectoral collaboration between education/research, business environment and administration) from several countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Brazil etc.).

A series of recommendations were issued, such as: national language terminology should adapt more quickly to the needs of citizens, and modern means of communication such as Facebook could also be used; experts should choose fields of terminological research with greater impact on citizens (health, trade, agriculture, food industry, etc.); researchers should publish their works simultaneously in a foreign language and in their native language.

Laura Mihăilescu

Open Justice 2.0 for Romania

On 17 September, 2014, the platform www.onoratainstanta.ro was launched at the European Commission Representation Office.

The platform is one of the results of the **Open Justice 2.0 for Romania** project, aimed at developing a methodology for assessing the predictability of the act of justice on the basis of quantitative and qualitative indicators and an analysis of the relevance of the data obtained in view of the formulation of public policies in this area.

The platform also aims to contribute to increasing the transparency of justice, thereby increasing public confidence in the justice system as a whole.

The project was initiated by Funky Citizens Association with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Rule of Law Program South East Europe), joined by “Ceata” Foundation.

The main objectives concerned the development of a methodology that would assess the predictability of justice, increasing transparency, promotion of standards to ensure a predictable legal act (in partnership with the managing authorities of the justice system).

The platform presents performance indicators for Romania’s instances and it also has a section for public education - “ABC juridic” (Legal 101) and a “Dicționar 'legalez' - român” (Romanian - 'Legalese' Dictionary).

The platform structure has been designed in such a way as to contribute to increasing confidence in the justice system, to present the judicial system performance and to support research in the field.

Designed for both citizens and decision makers in the judiciary and the justice system, the platform www.onoratainstanta.ro is a free program that can be used, distributed and modified without restriction.

The sources of statistical data are reports and the web sites of the Superior Council of Magistracy, Ministry of Justice, and National Institute of Statistics.

At the launch event, proposals were made to develop the citizen education section, to include tutorials, surveys, information on the stages of a civil or criminal trial, on the hierarchy of courts, information about court-appointed lawyers, the average compensation, the length of the trials etc.

Although not yet 100% complete, www.onoratainstanta.ro has potential and we believe it will prove useful to anyone interested in the legal system in Romania.

Laura Mihăilescu



Romania's Territorial Development Strategy

- Support for coordinating actions at territorial level -

On 29 October 2014, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration organised the conference “Romania's territorial development strategy – Support for coordinating actions at territorial level”, at Capital Plaza Hotel Bucharest.

Between 2012 and 2014, an institutional approach has been developed with the aim of elaborating the Territorial Development Strategy of Romania, through which the vision upon the development of national territory for the year 2035 is shaped and development objectives, measures, actions and concrete projects at a general level are established. Territorial Development Strategy of Romania for 2035 assumes the existence of a country with a functioning territory, which is efficiently administered and provides attractive living and inhabitation conditions to its citizens, with an important role in the development of the South-East area of Europe.

Diana Doina Țenea, Director General, General Directorate of Regional Development and Infrastructure, highlighted during the conference, the main stages of the development process of RTDS. Romania is in the process of positive economic growth, which could be maintained by capitalising on the national development potential. The main directions of analysis of Romania's territorial development strategy were based on territorial research and creation of a legislative framework. There are three main scenarios of development: the non interventionist one, polycentric Romania and the one of functional and cohesive regions. Investment and the ensurance of a coherent legislative framework are required in order for the project to constitute an engine for development.

Nicolae Țarălunghă, Director of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, IHS Romania, main consultant coordinator of RTDS, supported the idea that a strategy and an action plan based on an analytical data basis are required. Territorial policies should aim to increase understanding, sustainable development, inclusive growth and territorial cohesion. The idea of a polycentric Romania implies a relationship of interdependence and cooperation between the national system, the system of human settlements and the system of connectivity. From the methodological point of view there are several levels, the first being territorial specificities, which is achieved through potential analysing, the second one regarding territorial issues, the current situation and its evolution trends, and the last level being the transversal elements: territorial competitiveness, territorial disparities and territorial vulnerability. The model of a polycentric Europe has three alternative scenarios: the development of large cities, secondary cities network promotion, or the promotion of small towns and disadvantaged regions. The territorial strategy Romania 2035 is based on key concepts such as cooperation, connectivity and concentration, which rests on four pillars: movement and mobility; functional urban areas; natural and cultural resources; territorial cooperation.

Teofil Ghercă, Examination Assessment Adviser, General Direction of Regional Development and Infrastructure, has referred to the common strategy of territorial development of the cross border region Romania - Bulgaria, covering transport, culture and legislation areas. The general objectives regarding



national territory development for 2035 are aimed at: ensuring the functional integration of national territory in the European area by supporting effective interconnection of energy networks, transport and broadband, developing a network of municipalities fully equipped with technical and municipal infrastructure efficiently interconnected in order to ensure urban and rural areas of good quality, attractive and inclusive, the development of competitive and functional municipalities networks by supporting territorial specialisation, protection of natural and built heritage, use of territorial identity elements, as well as, increasing the institutional capacity for management of territorial development processes.

Radu Necșuliu, Examination Assessment Adviser, General Direction of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Policies and Strategies Department, highlights the importance of monitoring territorial dynamics, which has to be done regularly, and of making the necessary changes following the report. A dynamic strategy is vital to the effectiveness of the programmes.

Mart Grisel, Director of European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN), Netherlands, argues that internal mobility within the European Union should contribute to the development of common policies and to the regulation of policies on migration. In the case of small and medium regions of urban development, both economic challenges and financial instruments that can help solve the problems have to be carefully analysed. An urban development strategy proposes the development of an overall vision of the issues and of a public agenda able to involve the relevant government sectors departments.

At the closing section of the conference, during the debates, the question concerning the selection of disadvantaged mountain areas for protection has been raised and it was mentioned that territorial strategy has to address each territory and its specific needs. This correlation must be performed at the level of priority objectives, as there is a conditionality of project development. It is emphasized that there is a need for deeper dialogue when developing the final forms of strategy. Also, the Territorial Observatory plays a key role in identifying priority areas concerned and in reporting

the achievement of objectives during the project. There is a lack of coordination between the strategy at the national level and how it is implemented locally. In terms of time span, the strategy is under development and public consultation and public policies are to be completed next year. Finally, it was stressed that it is the first time when a territorial strategy for Romania is designed, aiming to develop a country with

an efficiently managed territory, that will provide attractive living and housing conditions for its citizens and that will play an important role in the development of the South-East area of Europe.

Denisa Ticușan, intern

EU

European Parliament Plenary Session 20-23 October 2014, Strasbourg

In the opening of the session, the European Parliament President, Martin Schulz, urged all the actors involved in the Northern Ireland peace process to refrain from “dangerous mutual provocation”, stating that the EP is willing to act as an honest broker to support the process of building stable institutions and a thriving economy, so that all citizens of Northern Ireland can look forward to a safe and prosperous future.

Various statements of the Commission (Better prevention and management of floods at European level), as well as joint statements of the Commission and the Council (Statement on the results of the European employment summit in Milan, 8 October; Preparation of the European Council of 23-24 October 2014), were presented in the plenary session.

On Tuesday, 21 October, President Barroso held a speech¹, reviewing the Barroso II Commission, in which he reminded that the Union has gone through a very difficult period, a geopolitical crisis also marked by Russia’s actions in Ukraine. The speech was followed by evaluative interventions from speakers representing the political groups.

The EP’s Committee on Budgets submitted for debate a series of reports on the Draft amending budget No 2/2014 - the surplus of the budget implementation of budget year 2013; the Draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015, etc.

The Members of the European Parliament voted against the budget cuts made by the Council to the EU’s budget for 2015, emphasizing that the EU Member States must support financially their political commitments, in order to boost economic growth, job creation, as well as research and development, and to enable the EU to achieve its external policy goals.

According to the EP, the autumn European Council will have to address, in particular, issues on growth and employment, as well as the instability in the European Union’s neighbourhood.

On Wednesday, 22 October, the new Commission was elected. The Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented the College of Commissioners and their work programme. After a series of interventions from the representatives of the political groups, the plenary vote was held. With 423 votes in favour, 209 against and 67 abstentions, the new Commission was approved by the EP.

The future European executive, composed of 27 members, will include Corina Crețu, Romanian Commissioner for Regional Policy, which is an important portfolio at EU level, responsible for managing the Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020.

The new Commission, which will be appointed officially by Heads of State or Government of the EU, took office on 1 November for a five-year term.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ro/pressroom/press-release/plenary>

Mariana Bara



Photo source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/european_parliament/

¹ Available in English: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-707_en.htm

Autumn European Council: 23-24 October 2014

The reunion of the heads of state or government in the Autumn European Council was mainly dedicated to the *2030 Climate and Energy Package*, one of the most ambitious policies in the field. In the context of a fragile economic situation in the European Union, a call was made for a faster implementation of the “Strategic agenda for the Union in times of change”, a document that the European leaders had already agreed upon during the Summit in June. Furthermore, the European Council has showed deep concern towards the fast spreading of the Ebola virus, and therefore it was decided for some financial and human assistance measures, in order to support the efforts of the international community. Other issues included on the Council’s agenda were: the Cyprus-Turkey problem and the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, following the recent events in the Cyprus’ territorial sea. Current issues on the external agenda of the Union have been highlighted: the situation in Ukraine and the effectiveness of the Minsk Protocol; the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova in November 2014 and the application of the Association Agreement with the European Union. The euro zone leaders agreed at the Euro Summit that took place at the end of the reunion on the importance of coordination among the economic policies for a more stable Economic and Monetary Union.¹



Photo source: <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/>

“*This is a special European Council*”, with these words president Herman Van Rompuy opened the reunion. Special through the decision of the European leaders on one of the biggest challenges for humanity, meaning the energy and climate policy, and special for symbolically marking the last Council attended by Herman van Rompuy as president of the European Council and José Manuel Barroso as president of the European Commission.²

But the most important decision the European leaders had to make was adopting the new climate and energy policy for 2030 in the EU. This measure prepares the response and, at the same time, the contribution of the European Union to next year’s negotiations in Paris at the UN Climate Change Conference at global level. The new climate and energy package for year 2030 completes the present framework in the field and consists of measures³ that are reflecting the balance between the decision made at the European level and in different member states.

The topic of the economic situation, included in almost all the reunions of the Council over the past five years, highlighted the priority of the economic growth, sustained by each member state by the coordination of the structural reforms and by solid public financing. A second priority of the Council in this matter is the employment problem, for which urgent measures for growth and competitiveness on the labour market need to be taken, by supporting jobs and investments.⁴

Special attention was drawn by the Council to one of the most serious public health issues over the past decade. Although identified in West Africa, the Ebola virus rapidly spread to other regions in the world. At the press conference at the end of the reunion, the British Prime Minister David Cameron insisted on “a certain moral obligation” of Britain to intervene with help for other states in order to keep this crisis under control.⁵ In this matter, the European leaders decided to increase the financial assistance to 1 billion euro and to send medical and support staff in the region.

A European Council with major decisions in the humanitarian field, but also for humanity itself, a reunion that marks the end of a European year with great institutional changes, and a meeting of the European leaders who understood the necessity to consolidate the euro zone, as defence against the global economic shifts.

Ana-Maria Popa, intern

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145445.pdf

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145351.pdf

³ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40%; increasing energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy by 27%; the harmonization of a internal energy market in order to decrease the energy dependence in the Union; a more transparent governance system in order to assure flexibility for the member states and freedom to choose the energy mix at the national level.

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145397.pdf

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/european-council-october-2014-david-camersons-speech>

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