



opinion

Gabriela Drăgan, EIR Director General

Romania takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union



By some mysterious coincidence (to which the history of mankind is not completely unaware of), **1 January 2019** marks not only the date Romania takes over the Presidency of one of the most important European institutions, the Council of the EU, but also the beginning of Romania's **13th year of membership to the Union**. Without being superstitious, and without considering the number 13 as a bad one, it cannot be ignored that 2019 promises to be extremely challenging for the Union in the light of **at least four sensitive dossiers**: managing Brexit, negotiating the future long-term budget (Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027), organising the European Parliament (EP) elections and the Summit of the European Council in Sibiu. With these extremely complicated issues, the management can be challenging not only for a Member State's holding for the first time the Presidency of the Council of the EU, as is the case of Romania, but also for a number of older Members. Austria, for example, from which Romania took over the mandate, had the experience of two previous presidencies (in 1998 and 2006), whereas Germany will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the 13th time in the second half of 2020.

Romania will change the seat held for the last 12 years at the negotiating table of the Council of the EU

The EU Council Presidencies are never free of tensions or challenges, because the more or less tangled threads of the various legislative dossiers initiated by the Commission and put on the negotiating table...

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EIR

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Communication in European affairs

The events organized by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) in 2018 can be grouped into three communication projects, namely: promotion and dissemination of the research findings carried out under the SPOS 2017 project; the public debate campaign preparing the ground for the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) and the National Campaign on Citizen Consultations for the EU Future. At the same time, EIR carried forward all its traditional partnerships...



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... of the Council and the EP are not easy to put in order¹. The general interests of the Union, promoted by the Commission, meet and often collide with the different interests of the Member States reflected in the Council, but also with the interests of the European citizens, represented by the EP, and reaching a compromise, which is necessary for the adoption of a final decision, often means difficult, intense and lengthy negotiations. **The country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU therefore has an obligation not to promote its own**



interests (as it would do as a simple Member), but to ensure a mediation, as balanced as possible, of the different points of view expressed by the Member States.

Therefore, what Romania is about to do is to **change the position it held over the past 12 years at the negotiating table of the Council and to turn from a mostly passive participant into a leading actor** and to ensure an active presidency, acting with maximum objectivity and neutrality in the quest for consensus². In short, the six month presidency will mainly entail the duty to chair different (formal and informal) meetings organised on three levels:

- **Ministerial** (in the 10 sector formations of the Council of the EU), where the competent Romanian Minister/Secretary of State will chair the meetings with corresponding Ministers from the Member States (the Romanian Minister of Agriculture will chair the Agriculture Council, the Romanian Minister of Finance, the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, etc.);
- **Preparatory meetings** organised at the level of the **Member States' ambassadors to Brussels**; in this case, the Romanian Permanent Representative and Deputy Permanent Representative will chair the **COREPER II and I** meetings;
- **Expert** working level meetings, with Romanian experts to be chairing the approximately **200 Council working groups**.

The number of different types of events will be considerable. For an overview, even an indicative one, here is the review of the Austrian presidency in the second half of 2018¹: **2 722 events and meetings, i.e.:** four meetings of Heads of State or Government, 36 Council of ministers meetings in Brussels and Luxembourg, 2 062 sessions of Council preparatory bodies, 161 dialogues with the EP, seven EP plenary sessions, 14 informal meetings of the various Council configurations and 363 other events³.

This first half of 2019 is an unusual one as it overlaps both with the **end of the five year mandate** of Juncker's Commission (which is therefore interested in closing as many as possible of the remaining or pending dossiers) and of the European Parliament (EP), with the EP elections scheduled at the end of May 2019.

Given that the main task of the Council of the EU is a legislative one (exercised together with Parliament, on the basis of proposals submitted by the European Commission), the actual period during which this will be possible is much shorter than usual, of around three and a half months instead of six (from January to mid-April). Although slightly shorter in time, the **legislative mandate of the Romanian Presidency of the Council** will be extremely dense, and topics such as Brexit, the Union's long-term budget (the Multiannual Financial Framework), the summit in Sibiu, or the EP elections will be at the top of the negotiating agenda.

¹ The Council of the EU is involved in the negotiation and adoption of legislative acts, together with the European Parliament, on the basis of proposals submitted by the European Commission, for policy areas where the Union has exclusive and shared competence. For the other areas, such as economic and budgetary affairs, employment, education, culture, youth and sport, where the Union's role is to support the action of the Member States, the Council is responsible for the coordination of those policies. For the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Council acts together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Frederica Mogherini, to ensure that the Union speaks with "one voice" and thus maintains the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the Union's external action.

² Specifically, this means that for those six months Romania will firstly have the obligation to hold the presidency of the nine Council configurations (except for the Foreign Affairs configuration, which lies with the HRUFA), which cover different policy areas ranging from economic and monetary affairs, agriculture, environment, transport, telecommunications, energy, competitiveness, to education, culture, youth, employment or justice and home affairs. The chairmanship of these configurations will obviously belong to the relevant minister (or a secretary of state), depending on the subject under discussion. These will not, however, be the only meetings that Romania will have to hold and chair, as meetings chaired by the national ministers are just the tip of the iceberg. The preparation of each meeting at ministerial level involves the organisation of a significant number of other preparatory meetings, either at the level of a structure called COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives), or at the level of working groups and committees.

³ As a result of the 2 722 events and meetings, 53 political agreements were reached with the EP and 75 agreements were achieved in the Council; 56 conclusions and recommendations were adopted, 509 decisions were taken by the Council and 52 legal acts were signed by the Council and the Parliament.

The Brexit Dossier

The evolution of Brexit is more uncertain than ever. The UK is due to withdraw from the EU on **29 March 2019** (exactly two years after the activation of Article 50 TEU by the UK Prime Minister May), whether or not this will occur in the presence of a withdrawal agreement. Meanwhile, on 10 December 2018, following a reference by the Scottish Supreme Court on 3 October 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) decided, following a fast-track ruling procedure, that Britain is free to revoke unilaterally the notification of its intention to withdraw from the EU⁴.

An agreement between the United Kingdom (UK) and the EU was eventually reached, after months of complicated negotiations. The 585 pages of the withdrawal agreement cover the three major areas on the table (the financial contribution of the UK to the EU – around £39 billion, the situation of British citizens living in the EU and of EU citizens living in the UK, and a possible solution on the Northern Ireland border), whereas the 26-page declaration accompanying the withdrawal agreement hints at the status of the future relationships between the two sides. Although not without difficulty⁵, the agreement was eventually backed by the May Cabinet on 14 November 2018.

The Parliament vote, originally scheduled for 11 December, was rescheduled for January 2019 (21 January 2019 at the latest), in an attempt of PM May to receive by then “new assurances” from the EU on the state of the Northern Ireland border. What will the outcome of the **voting in the British Parliament** be? Uncertain, with a high probability of rejection. PM May warned the members of her own party (Conservative Party - AN) who had decided to vote against the agreement that this would lead to a withdrawal from the EU without any agreement (the ‘no deal option’), which would entail for the UK significantly higher costs than those of a regulated withdrawal.

References to a **new referendum, giving the public the right to have a final decision on the agreement, including the option of remaining in the EU**, are also present, being supported not only by Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs, but also by a (so far small) number of Conservatory MPs. Jeremy Corbyn seeks to maximise his advantage and pushes for general elections, which, should he win them, would allow him to negotiate his own version of Brexit. This would mean, however, extending the negotiation period beyond the two years, which would be possible only if both parties unanimously decided it. Another option would be for the new Labour Cabinet to organise a new referendum on Brexit (the question on the ballot paper not announced yet).

All of these **many questions** complicate the period of the Romanian presidency of the Council of the EU. If the UK’s withdrawal takes place in a regulated manner, a transitional period, due to end on 31 December 2020, will take place in any event. During this period, negotiations on new sensitive issues concerning the future of relations with the EU will continue, which also means that new issues of debate will have to appear on the agenda of the Council of the EU. Assuming that the Brexit negotiation period will be extended by unanimous agreement of both parties (a possibility, though not very highly probable), the Council agenda will include it and will involve further intensive discussions between the 27 governments of the Member States. If the withdrawal takes place without an agreement, the major economic, social and political implications arising from such a situation will even more require further discussions within the various sectoral formations of the Council.

The EU’s long-term budget (MFF 2021-2027)

Brexit will result in a net loss in the EU budget of around EUR 10 billion a year, which makes inevitable the **reform of the EU budget** by reducing expenditure and increasing revenue. During previous negotiations on the Union’s long-term budgets (also known as the **Multiannual Financial Frameworks - MFFs**), **topics traditionally taken up again** concerned the size of the budget, how the funds are distributed among the various EU policies and how the revenue is constituted.

These topics will be present in the current negotiations on the MFF 2021-2027, bearing in mind that, this time, the **solutions appear to be more difficult to identify than ever**. And this is because keeping the current size of the budget as well as the Union’s current development priorities would not allow reducing the gaps for the net contributing States (the difference between the amounts they contribute and the amounts they receive from the EU budget), which means that such a solution cannot be an option for them, just as the reduction in the size of the budget and of the amounts

⁴ This possibility exists as long as the withdrawal agreement has not yet entered into force and as long as the two-year period after the activation of Article 50 has not expired yet.

⁵ The May Cabinet’s agreement went through a difficult process of internal negotiation leading to two resignations from the Cabinet, including the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, Dominic Raab.

allocated to the different priorities, according to the reduction of the EU budget following the UK's withdrawal, is not a realistic solution for some Member States represented in the Council or for the European Parliament. **The timetable for the MFF 2021-2027 negotiations is controversial** as well: while the Commission and the European Parliament prefer an accelerated negotiation process, the European Council is rather reluctant.

Following the informal meeting of European leaders at the European Council of 23 February 2018, Donald Tusk stated that *"finding an agreement in the European Council already this year seems really difficult"*. On the other hand, Jean-Claude Juncker had this to declare once the proposal for the next MFF was published (2 May 2018): *"The ball is now in the court of Parliament and Council. I strongly believe we should aim to have agreement before the European Parliament elections next year"*, a view that is supported by the current EP as well.

Since the progress achieved during the Austrian Presidency of the Council was rather modest, the **Romanian Presidency will have**, in this file's case, **to manage a number of issues such as:**

- **The size of the budget** and the possibility to supplement the Member States' contribution in order to compensate for the gap created by the UK's withdrawal, but also to respond to new European priorities, for instance in the migration or defence areas;
- **How to use the resources** of the EU budget, i.e. how the funds will be distributed to high priorities, starting with the allocations for the two major policies, cohesion and agriculture;
- **How the budget is funded** - by additional own resources and introducing new European taxes;
- The possibility of introducing **new conditionalities** in the use of EU funds, such as respect for the **rule of law** in the different Member States of the Union (which concern certain Central and Eastern Europe states).

Even if, in the current negotiations on the MFF 2021-2027, both the traditional themes of debate and the lines of conflict present in previous MFF negotiations remain in place, the context in which the negotiations take place is totally different, and the stakes are so high that the probability that the negotiations cannot be concluded during the Romanian Presidency is very high. As such, the **professional management of all the debates** that will take place, held in a formal setting, but more importantly in an informal setting, should represent the expectations set by the Romanian Government.

The European Council Summit in Sibiu, 9 May 2019

For the past almost 10 years (since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009), the separation of the presidency of the Council of the EU from that of the European Council⁶ has turned the informal summits of the European Council, held not in Brussels, but in major capitals/cities from the countries holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, into extremely visible events intended to refocus the Union's agenda. The Summit in Sibiu will mark the presence of top European leaders, such as Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, all Heads of State and Government of the EU, official delegations, high-rank guests and, last but not least, journalists.

The direct responsibility for organising the Sibiu Summit, where Romania will be represented by President Klaus Iohannis (the same as at any other European Council summit) rests on the Government, specifically the Foreign Minister, who will also chair the General Affairs Council (GAC). Obviously, even if the General Secretariat of the Council (an old institutional structure, created to effectively support the organisation of the Council meetings) will be actively involved in both the organisation and the effective conduct of the summit, the existence of a well-functioning relationship between the Government and the Presidency remains indispensable.

The expectation from this summit, held just six weeks after the UK's potential withdrawal from the EU and two weeks before the EP elections, is the adoption of a joint declaration on the future of the EU that is sufficiently attractive to encourage European citizens to go to the polls. Given the current divisions within the Union, between the vision currently

⁶ Article 15(3) TEU provides that the European Council shall meet twice every six months or more, when the situation so requires. It is convened by its President and brings together the Heads of State and Government of the Member States, the President of the European Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and, as a general rule, at the beginning of the meeting, the President of the European Parliament as well. Members of the European Council may also have informal meetings, such as the one in Bratislava on 16 September 2016.

promoted by the Tusk-Juncker-Macron team, in order to strengthen supranational integration, and the vision supported by the Visegrad Group, to which Romania appears increasingly closer, and which favours strengthening intergovernmental cooperation, the discussions in Sibiu promise to be not only very important, but also very unpredictable.

The European Parliament elections, 23-26 May 2019

The elections will be held **between 23 and 26 May 2019**, towards the end of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. These are of utmost importance because they will be indicative of the **institutional relay** between the institutions that ensured the functioning of the Union in 2014-2019 and those that will do so between 2019 and 2024⁷. There are real concerns about the **future structure of the EP**, Eurosceptic, extremist, populist or nationalist parties being expected to win a high number of seats. Recent European movements, such as the “yellow waistcoats” in France, raise serious concerns about the outcome of these elections⁸.

Under conditions of overall uncertainty regarding the evolution of the Brexit process, what is certain is that the UK will no longer be represented in the future EP. The EP Resolution of 13 Juneⁱⁱ and the European Council Decision of 28 June 2018ⁱⁱⁱ led to a change in the number of seats in the EP, i.e. their **reduction from 751 to 705**, through a decision to redistribute the **73 UK seats**. Thus, **46 seats** are allocated to a reserve for the benefit of future Member States, and the remaining **27 seats were reallocated** to 14 EU Member States, currently under-represented in the EP⁹.

The way in which the 705 mandates will be distributed raises serious concerns. Even if, since 1979, the two major European political groups, the centre-right **European People’s Party (EPP)** and the centre-left **Social Democrats (SD)**, have won enough votes to secure the majority in the EP, and thus to be able to organise not only the election of the president (and other positions in the EP), but also that of the other major portfolios linked to European institutions (the Commission, the High Representative, the European Council, etc.), this seems to be no longer the case in the future EP. The new majority will involve new alliances, potentially including highly heterogeneous political groups, which include parties labelled as “extremist, populist, nationalist”.

Recent surveys^{iv} show that the EPP could not obtain more than 180 seats and SD no more than 137 seats, the combined 317 votes not being enough to secure them an absolute majority of 353 votes in the EP. This situation, which is unprecedented, will lead to **atypical political negotiations** in search of a necessary compromise. The (rather rhetorical) question is whether or not the Romanian presidency is ready to take on such a role.

Setting realistic expectations

The **realistic management of expectations** remains of paramount importance and may save us from unwanted disappointments. The expectations’ size will need to take into account both “the job description”, *i.e.* the actual responsibilities incumbent on the Presidency of the Council of the EU, as well as **different objective conditionalities**:

- **The Romanian Government will hold not the Presidency of the European Union**, as is often said, but only of one of the seven EU institutions (as identified in the Treaty of Lisbon) and will act within the limits of its responsibilities, corresponding to this institution, which are clearly set out in the Treaties. Moreover, the separation, introduced by the Treaty, between the Presidency of the European Council and that of the Council of the EU has significantly reduced the room for manoeuvre of the State holding the Presidency of the Council;

- **The bulk of the Council’s legislative agenda is taken over from the previous Presidency** (in our case, from Austria) and is dictated by the specific nature of the European legislative process, which involves certain mandatory steps in the finalisation of legislation. This means that the lack of progress on various files (such as the MFF) cannot be fully recovered, nor attributed to the Romanian presidency;

⁷ More specifically, the second half of 2019 marks the end of the mandate of the European Commission and its President, Jean Claude Juncker (the five-year term ceases at the end of October 2019), the mandate of the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk (now serving his second two and a half year-term, due to expire in November 2019), but also of the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi (the eight-year term will end in October 2019).

⁸ France will hold the first elections after the ones in May 2017, when Emmanuel Macron was elected President, after leading the “En Marche” movement, claiming to be neither on the right nor on the left, but somewhere in between.

⁹ As a result of this redistribution, France and Spain get five seats; Italy and the Netherlands, three seats; Ireland, two seats; Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and Romania each get one additional seat. In the case of Romania, the number of seats for the 2019-2024 legislature will be 33.

- Even if the main role played by any Presidency of the Council of the EU is that of an “impartial broker”, not of a Member State intent on imposing and promoting its own interests, we must also bear in mind that the agenda of the Council can often be distorted by the interests promoted by large Member States;

- The apparent divergences between the Romanian Cabinet and the Presidential Administration are not such as to ensure the smooth running of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, on the contrary. The European Council Summit in Sibiu will be the “litmus test” for the efficiency of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, at that point close to the end of its mandate.

Gabriela Drăgan

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Editors’ note:

The text was previously published on <http://cursdeguvernare.ro/> and it is available (Romanian version) [here](#).

The editors would like to thank the team of cursdeguvernare.ro for the permission to re-publish the article in EIR’s Newsletter.

ⁱ <https://www.eu2018.at/latest-news/news/21-21-The-Austrian-Presidency-of-the-Council-of-the-EU-Accomplishments-and-challenges.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2018-0249+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/ALL/?uri=uriserv%3AAOJ.LI.2018.165.01.0001.01.FRA>

^{iv} <https://www.politico.eu/interactive/european-elections-2019-poll-of-polls/>

EIR

Communication in European affairs

The events organized by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) in 2018 can be grouped into three communication projects, namely: promotion and dissemination of the research findings carried out under the SPOS 2017 project; the public debate campaign preparing the ground for the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) and the National Campaign on Citizen Consultations for the EU Future. At the same time, EIR carried forward all its traditional partnerships and organised a series of events meant to bring to the attention of its target audience a whole range of European topics seen as national and EU priorities.

Thus, as part of the promotion and dissemination campaign on the findings of the research work carried out under the Strategy and Policy Studies (SPOS 2017) project, a public launch conference and several debates were organized for each of the four studies.

In terms of coordination of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, EIR organized two debates: *CAP’s Future in the context of the New Multiannual Financial Framework* (30 March, BUES) and *Regional Development. From Cohesion to Competitiveness* (18 May, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași).

As mentioned before, in 2018 EIR was fully involved in the National Campaign on Citizen Consultations for the EU Future. In partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), EIR organized two national conferences and 10 debates in different cities all over the country. The launch conference took place in the Aula of the Central University Library on 9 May, while the consultations carried on during July - September in Arad, Constanța, Panciu, Fălticeni, Craiova, Negrești-Oaș, Târgoviște, Alba-Iulia, Bacău and Bârlad. The closing conference was held at the National Theatre of Bucharest, on 8 October.



On 14 December, EIR organised its Annual Conference (Unity in diversity. Quo Vadis, EU?). The event closed with the 9th edition of the EIR Excellence Awards Ceremony, which focused on youth, youth associations, schools and high schools having implemented projects meant to make known and promote the European spirit and values among their communities or at regional and national level. Last year’s winners: the Association of Law Students - UAIC Iași, the National College “Jean Monnet” Ploiești, the Technical College “Mircea cel Bătrân”, Darius Filip, Alin Gabriel Grănescu, Alin Grigore, the Technological High School “Cezar Nicolau”, the Technological High School of Metrology “Traian Vuia”, the Theoretical High School “Jean Monnet” Bucharest, the Theoretical High School “Ioan Petruș”, Otopeni, Ilfov County, Vlad Măcelaru and the Europeanist Students’ Society, Cluj-Napoca.

Partnerships developed and/or continued during 2018 played a key role in promoting and building the institutional image of EIR. Therefore, in addition to the aforementioned activities and partnerships, EIR organized events in cooperation with the EC Representation in Romania, the Romanian Academy, the European Parliament Liaison Office in Romania, etc.

As far as partnerships are concerned, we continued our cooperation with the Institute for Eastern Studies in Warsaw and organised a series of debates in the framework of two major events, namely the *European Congress of Local Authorities / ECLG* (26 - 27 April, Krakow) and the *Economic Forum* (4-6 September, Krynica). EIR also continued to cooperate with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Romania and the SWP Berlin to organize the sixth edition of *EURT - Romanian-German Roundtable on European affairs* (15-16 November, Berlin). Another international cooperation was the one initiated by the Embassy of Turkey in Romania. In this context, EIR and the Economic Development Foundation - IKV from Istanbul organised the conference *Turkey and EU Relations: Challenges and Prospects* (6 December).

EIR continued to disseminate the results of the projects implemented in 2018. Moreover, the leaflets disseminated during training courses and/or communication events were a successful way of promoting EIR's products and services (training courses, events, publications, internships, etc.). This information can also be found on the official EIR webpage and on its [Facebook page](#), a very useful promotion

tool for EIR's activities and products.

In terms of promotion and visibility, EIR was represented at Director-General and expert level to numerous national and international events. Moreover, on 21 February 2018, the Cursdeguvernare online portal published an article signed by Mrs Gabriela Drăgan under the special series dedicated to the coordination of the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council ([article](#)). On 28 March, the online portal Europunkt published Mrs Gabriela Drăgan's interview on the next EU budget ([interview](#)), and the chapter Regulatory and Institutional Harmonisation of Romania with the European Union (Gabriela Drăgan, co-author) was included in the volume "Romania's Economy after the Great Union", edited and published by the Romanian Academy in December 2018.

EIR's communication events were reflected in the media content, particularly online. For more information about the communication activities and instruments in European affairs, please visit ier.gov.ro.

Florentina Costache
Communication and Marketing Unit

Research in European affairs

The coordination of the project for strategy and policy studies SPOS was one of the main activities carried out by the Studies and Analyses Unit of the EIR in 2018. Four research topics were developed over the past year, namely: 1) *The Multiannual Financial Framework post-2020: risks and opportunities for Romania*; 2) *The revival of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - between economic interests and political priorities*; 3) *The transition towards a circular economy. From waste management to a green economy in Romania*; 4) *The European Pillar of Social Rights: the reduction of social inequalities and disparities in Romania. Developments of European policies and initiatives in the youth field*.

These topics raised the interest of potential researchers, so many of the registered applications were notable for the quality of the research proposals and the expertise of the candidates in the thematic areas of the studies.

The actual research work of the selected teams had the support of particularly active working groups, established with the help of representatives of the central public administration, the beneficiary institutions, the Parliament's specialised committees and so on. The authors of the studies made good use of the suggestions made during the meetings, and the thematic debates presenting a number of the outcomes of the studies started in the last quarter of last year and will continue throughout 2019.

In addition to managing the study project, the members of the Studies and Analyses Unit handled the publication of the academic journal of the EIR, the elaboration of articles and analyses on current European Union issues,

the elaboration of the EIR Newsletter, as well as the participation and representation of the EIR in national and international events of interest for the European studies area.



Throughout 2018, the scientific journal of the EIR, the **Romanian Journal of European Affairs**, brought to the readers' attention topics such as: fake news or disinformation in the digital era, the administrative capacity and absorption of structural funds in Central and Eastern Europe countries, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the impact of Brexit on Central

and Eastern Europe security, economic development and innovation at the local level, the imbalances of the post-crisis world and the transformation of the international liberal order, the European Union in the international investment governance system, as well as three book reviews on the emerging Europe, European integration options, trust and crisis management in the EU, etc.

Publication included in international databases such as *Ebsco*, *ProQuest*, *Scopus*, the **Romanian Journal of European Affairs** was also selected to be part of the

product and service portfolio *Clarivate Analytics* (formerly Thomson Reuters) from June 2017. The journal is therefore indexed and continues to be found in the **Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)**.

[The Journal's Facebook page](#), for better disseminating scientific articles in the online environment, continued to grow in 2018, reaching a total of 800 *Likes*.

The six **EIR Newsletter** editions included news and opinion articles on topics such as: permanent structured cooperation – PeSCo; the European sovereignty; the EU strategy for artificial intelligence; the presentation of the priorities of the Bulgarian and Austrian Presidency, respectively, of the Council of the European Union; the presentation of the main events in 2019 (the series of citizens' consultations on the future of Europe, European Congress of Local Authorities in Krakow, Eurofound annual conference in Dublin, Economic Forum in Krynica, EuroImpact Conference and Workshops, etc.), new book releases and the presentation of main projects of the EIR.

The **micro-study collection** was enriched with a new material, "*The future of Eastern Europeans in the post-Brexit United Kingdom*". The working paper examines the mobility of EU citizens within the UK and how it was presented in both the media and political speech. The author is a former trainee at the Studies and Analysis Unit, Jessica Reed - a graduate of the University of Leeds, Faculty of International Relations, and a Master student at the University *Sciences Po* in Paris.

Also, as part of the project "**Towards a Citizens' Union (2CU)**", co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme (Jean Monnet Networks), to which the EIR is a partner, two

members of the Studies team wrote a chapter of the first collective volume of the project (Direct Democracy in the EU – The Myth of Citizens Union), chapter entitled: "*The untapped potential of direct democracy instruments in Romania*", where they mapped the use of direct democracy instruments in Romania.



The Studies and Analyses Unit took part in the preparation of certain events under the public debate programme in view of Romania's preparations for the 2019 Presidency of the Council of the EU, drawing up *background materials* on subjects such as: the circular economy, the cohesion policy, the concept of "unity in diversity", and the future of Europe.

The members of the Studies and Analyses Unit had also numerous interventions in scientific events, at internal or international level, where they presented the results of their research and the activities of the EIR.

Oana Mocanu
Studies and Analyses Unit

Training in European affairs

In 2018, the EIR's Training Unit (TU), within the framework of the specific activity, organised a number of **71 training sessions**, part of the *Training Program for the preparation of public administration employees involved in the conduct of the Romanian Presidency to the EU Council*, continued from 2017, including the courses that make up the standard EIR offer.



At the sessions organised by the EIR attended a number of 937 persons, out of which 92.8% employees of state institutions, 0.7% persons from embassies, 3.3% employees in the private sector, 0.9% university employees and 2.3% independent persons.

The new training cycle in the framework of the *Training Program of public administration employees involved in the conduct of the Romanian Presidency to the EU Council* made its debut in February 2018. Initially, the target group was formed of those civil servants nominated for the position of president or vice-president of the working groups which had not been able to participate in the courses organised by EIR during the last quarter of 2017.

This cycle included English-language courses and courses with the themes of the European Union and, due to the fact that a significant number of people were named in the first quarter of 2018 and even after, there was the need to repeat the initial modules during the months of May and June.

In May 2018 started the second English module, organised for civil servants nominated for the position of president or vice-president of the working groups, but this time for officials who already passed the first module.

In May started, in the same *Training Program of public administration employees involved in the conduct of the Romanian Presidency to the EU Council*, the specifically designed module addressed to communicators. This module was developed, at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with the ARRISE (Romanian Association of International Relations and European Studies) with which the EIR signed a collaboration protocol. During the months of May-June 2018 were organised 3 course sessions, with a total of 77 participants from all ministries of line and not only.

In June, also part of the Program PresRo2019, a module was organised for the officials responsible for the dossiers. This new module implied, on the one hand, the determination of the target group and identification of courses to meet the needs and, on the other hand, the identification, along with the ARRISE, of potential trainers for the courses planned.

From October to December, the training unit of EIR also organised four subsidised courses, two of which being authorised by ANC. The latter also presupposed the organisation of the graduation exam with assessors nominated by the Commission for the approval of providers of vocational training of adults of Bucharest. A total of 83 persons participated in these four courses.

All the participants to the authorized courses who passed the exam graduated with marks of 9/10 or more. One participant in the course of public Procurement Expert could not pass the exam due to the fact that at the time, as well as at the date of re-examination, he was in delegation.

Other courses, this time for a tax, were organised by the EIR throughout the year, but mainly in the second semester. These courses include “The protection of personal data in the European Union (31 participants) and “Diplomacy and Protocol” (32 persons). The feedback received was very good and a significant number of people continued to inquire into the possibility of the resumption of these topics.

EIR organised, as a result of winning an auction, the training of the employees MADR for courses of English in order to meet the specific tasks to the conduct of successful run of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union. Courses started in October for a number of 69 persons.

In October 2018 was organised the course “Sessions aux de concours de l’Union Europeenne” (EPSO) in collaboration with the INA and ENA.

In the last quarter of the year 2018, the TU team conducted the training needs analysis within the framework of the public institutions in Romania. The analysis questionnaire of approximately 20 questions respondents were asked to think of the training needs in the future, to the areas of interest and preferred training structure. The questionnaire was sent to approximately 180 e-mail distinct addresses from as many institutions. The analysis of the replies continues in the first months of the year 2019.

During the year 2019, EIR intends to continue to organise traditional courses, but also to introduce in its standard offer new titles derived from the training needs analysis conducted last year.

For more information, please visit us periodically on the ier.gov.ro.

Monica Ingeaua
Training Unit

European projects

In 2018, the EIR Projects Unit has contributed, along with other departments, to the implementation of projects which received funding in previous years or were approved in 2018.



The project “*Informing and improving communication on EU Cohesion policy in Romania*” is financed by the Directorate-General for

Regional and Urban Policy and has been approved in March 2018. During 2018, the Projects Unit has worked closely with its partner HotNews.ro/Startupcafe.ro for implementing the activities related to the *online* information and

communication campaign at national level and to the national three-day information and communication event hosted in Bucharest, EuroIMPACT.

On the partner’s website HotNews.ro/startupcafe.ro/European Money, ninety-seven articles were published on themes related to the European Cohesion Policy and other seventeen multimedia articles were designed to promote among the Romanian public successful projects, best practices, lessons learned and opportunities associated with the implementation of the EU Cohesion policy.

A number of 300 conference and workshops participants were among government and experts involved in cohesion policy at European, national, regional and local level, representatives of the business environment, academia and civil society, journalists. The first day of the event was

attended by Ms Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr Victor Negrescu, Minister delegate for European Affairs at the time, Ms Gabriela Crețu, President of the Committee on European Affairs, Romanian Senate, Ms Mihaela Toader, Secretary of State at the Ministry of European Funds, Mr Virgil-Alin Chirilă, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and numerous public and private sector officials and decision makers.



As for the *Eurofound Network of Correspondents: Romania project*, it was extended with another four years, as EIR and Euractiv Network consortium won the tender for implementing the project in Romania. The deliverables

(study cases, quarterly reports, factsheets etc.) were elaborated by researchers hired by the European Institute of Romania. Also, EIR and its partners were involved in the dissemination process, by publishing on their websites and FB pages, information about the Eurofound publications and by organizing public debates. EIR organized two debates in September and November 2018 on two different themes such as: (i) Temporary work and other types of work and (ii) Discrimination at the workplace.

EuranetPlus is an international radio project through which European themes are produced and broadcasted with the financial support of DG for Communication. In this project, EIR is partner of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company and publishes weekly on its website summaries of five articles on European Affairs prepared by Radio Romania International with links to the articles on the website of RRI. At the same time, EIR is sending weekly to RRI a minimum of two articles on European themes to be published by the project partner on its website. In 2018, more than two hundred and eighty articles were published on the partner’s websites.

Through finding new financing opportunities, the projects which will be submitted in 2019 will be closely linked with the expertise of EIR in European affairs.

Nicoleta Voicu
Projects Unit

Translation Coordination

The Translation Coordination Unit (SCT) contributes to the achievement of EIR’s objective to improve access to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and to the Romanian law relevant to the field of European affairs, by making them easier to understand and to apply.

To this end, SCT provides the translation into Romanian, the linguistic and legal revision of the ECHR case-law and of other types of documents, as well as the translation into English and/or French of Romanian legal texts, ensuring the terminological unification/harmonisation and the coordination of the translations (carried out) at national level.

As in the previous years, the main activities carried out by SCT in 2018 were the translation and revision of the ECHR case-law, on the basis of EIR’s founding documents and of the trilateral Protocol concluded between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/MFA), the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM/SCM) and EIR, signed on 6 April 2011. By concluding the aforementioned Protocol, the importance of translating the ECHR case-law - which was first recognised officially with the signature of the bilateral Protocol between EIR and CSM, on 17 July 2008 - has been enhanced and strengthened.

The general public’s access to the ECHR case-law is facilitated by the translation and revision of ECHR cases and their indexation, the terminology research, the drafting of articles in this field and the dissemination of the results on EIR’s website and other channels.



The translations carried out in the field of the ECHR case-law are coordinated and terminologically unified at national level. National coordination is carried out with the extensive support of the Government Agent for the European Court of Human Rights within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who sets out national priorities in the process of selecting the ECHR cases and the information material that must be translated/revised into Romanian. The planning of the documents that need to be translated/revised in the field of the ECHR case-law (a common list adopted by MAE, CSM and EIR) is available on EIR’s website and can be consulted including by the European Court of Human Rights and the authorities in the Republic of Moldova.

The ECHR cases which are translated and reviewed by SCT are sent to MAE and CSM and subsequently uploaded to the HUDOC database (<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>), ECHR's online database which contains documents in 33 languages. Apart from the official languages (English and French), Romanian continues to rank second, after Turkish, in terms of the number of documents translated and available online.

On the EIR's new updated and reorganised website, human rights information is presented in dedicated sections: the ECHR case-law (database of judgments, decisions, legal summaries of ECHR cases), legislation (the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols, the Rules of Court/ the European Court of Human Rights), guides, factsheets and country profiles (all the factsheets drawn up by the Court and Romania country profile).

At the request of the European Court of Human Rights, EIR has granted to the Republic of Moldova the right to republish the translations into Romanian of certain ECHR guides on certain relevant sites. Thus, translation efforts will not be doubled.

In 2018, the indexation (indicating the articles relied on/ invoked and extracting key-words from each case) was made in respect of 33 cases.

Romania's experience in translating, revising and disseminating the ECHR case-law was presented at the Round Table *The implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights in the domestic legal systems: the experience of translating and disseminating*

the judgements of the European Court from a comparative perspective (15 October, Strasbourg).

In 2018, more than 8400 standard pages were translated and linguistically and/or legally revised, and over 350 terminological entries were validated.

All translated and revised cases can be accessed/consulted free of charge at <http://ier.gov.ro/traduceri/drepturile-omului/jurisprudenta/>, and the validated terminology (over 32 700 entries) at <http://ier.gov.ro/traduceri/terminologie/>.

Apart from the translation and revision work, the SCT staff have been involved in the drafting of 7 articles for the EIR Newsletter and 13 articles published on the website of Radio România Internațional. The articles concerned in particular the promotion of the ELRC (*European Language Resource Coordination*, a project launched by the European Commission) and covered certain aspects related to the ECHR case-law, the European Union, as well as terminology issues.

In 2018, the SCT staff participated in the organisation of *The Second ELRC workshop in Romania*, which was held on 1 November 2018, at the premises of the European Commission Representation.

To find out news/for more information in the field, we invite you to follow EIR's website.

Laura Mihăilescu
Translation Coordination Unit

Europe Direct Information Centre

According to the structure of EDIC Bucharest project for 2018-2020, the specific activities for 2018 included: core activities (management of communication with the public, site, social networks, etc.), organization of events, elaboration and printing of publications ("*EU Traineeships Brochure*"), delivering communication support materials, editing the electronic newsletter every two months, all in order to promote European values among the citizens of the Bucharest- Ilfov region, focusing on disadvantaged young people, NEETs and people in the rural areas.

EDIC Bucharest specific objectives for 2018 have mainly been linked to the communication priorities of the European Commission and the European Parliament, namely: communicating a Europe that protects, empowers and defends the citizens' rights, and also the European Parliament elections in 2019. All EDIC Bucharest activities focused on these objectives, taking into account the information provided by President Juncker in his Statement on the State of the European Union and the fact that 2018 was declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The most important aspect of EDIC Bucharest activity is represented by the events we organized: 31 events attended by 1445 participants. In addition to this, we mention the participation of our team members in other 29 additional activities, organized by our partners.

In February 2018, the *Forum Theatre Road Show entitled "It is up to you to change something!"* was launched.

The general objectives of the action were to inform young people about their rights as European citizens and to engage them in debates and activities aimed at highlighting the importance of the right to vote in the 2019 European Parliament elections. *The Forum Theatre Road Show* supposed the organization of 15 performances in Bucharest and Ilfov County, 8 with the volunteer team on the European Parliament elections in 2018, and 7 with the young volunteer team on the European citizens' rights. The young actors have been the students from "Jean Monnet", "Ion Creangă" and "Mihail Sadoveanu" high schools in Bucharest. The partners of this project have been the Youth for Tomorrow Europe Association and the ARTFusion Association.

In August 2018 we organized the "*Youth and Democracy Summer School*", in partnership with EDIC Arges, EDIC Bistrița and EDIC Maramureș, summer school which took place in Băile Herculane. The course consisted in creating digital stories on motivating citizens, especially young people, to participate in the European Parliament elections using digital tools such as Movie Maker, Microsoft Picture Manager, Fast Stone and Audacity. The young people have been involved in discussions and debates on the importance of voting and on civic involvement. Through the films or collages created, the students presented their idea of civic involvement as creatively as possible in order to convince the public to vote.



During the autumn of 2018, we organized a series of *Workshops in partnership with the European Union Information and Assistance Networks*. Among these, we mention the *“Consumer in the Digital Age”* (a workshop organized in partnership with the European Consumers Network in Romania), where participants have been presented 5 case studies on violations of European consumer rights, which have been discussed and solved in teams; *“Be the next Erasmus student!”*, organized in partnership with Eurodesk Romania Network, the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations within the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, as well as with GEYC and Young Initiative Association, an event where the participants discussed in groups on some subtopics of the Erasmus + programme; *“Meet your EU Job”*, organized in partnership with EURES within the National Agency for Employment, and with the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). At this event, the students discussed how to get a job in the EU, how to have a career in the European institutions, etc.; *“How to Become an Entrepreneur”*, an event organized in partnership with Enterprise Europe Network and the Faculty of Business Administration within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, and the Student Entrepreneurship Society. Students discussed in groups and learned from facilitators useful information that could help them initiate or develop their own businesses.

The good collaboration with our colleagues from EDIC Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, materialized in 2018 in the organization of *two cross-border simulation sessions of the European Parliament’s decision-making process “Rock the vote!”*. The first event of this kind, attended by pupils from “St. Sava” National College and “Ion Creangă” National College in Bucharest, took place in November in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, and the second took place in

December, in Bucharest. The event was attended by Mr. Timo Pesonen, Director General of DG Communication, European Commission. Divided in the existing political groups within the European Parliament, but also in specialized committees, the young people debated in the New Multiannual Financial Framework in Stara Zagora and in Bucharest the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement.

As in every year, we celebrated Europe Day, May 9th, with an outdoor, colourful and coaching event. The event was entitled *“CULTURE Europe - Celebrating the diversity and richness of our European Heritage”*. Together with our partners from PROEDUS and Infoeuropa, we promoted the diversity and richness of the European cultural heritage, given that 2018 was declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The programme included a “Wheel of Fortune” Cultural Quiz, painting and 3D puzzle workshops, as well as organizing a music and dance show specific to some EU member states.



We have also carried forward the tradition of organizing *“Europe Direct Clubs”*. Among these we mention: EDIC Bucharest Interns Gala, the events under the title *“The Living Library”* (*“Don’t Judge a Book by its Cover”*, *“Stories of the Passionate Rescuers”* and *“Education: The Need of a Model”*), The *“EU and ME” Awards Ceremony* and the *“Together for Christmas”* event.

In conclusion, 2018 was an extremely active and exciting year. We are looking forward to implementing the planned activities for the current year. So keep an eye on us, because we’re preparing lots of surprises!

Loredana Licuța
EDIC Bucharest Coordinator

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