

editorial

EIR: The first 20 years

In the opening phrases of a presentation that I delivered in the beautiful city of Iași this spring, during a model European Union event, I made a reference to the European Institute of Romania (EIR) as being a successful European project. At that time, some of my EIR colleagues encouraged me to speak about the institute in a more personal, heart-felt manner, rather than purely based on the proverbial activity facts and figures, as the audience, mostly made up of young people, will surely notice (and appreciate) the difference. So that is exactly what I did then and it is what I intend to do in the following lines.

Arguably, it is rather hard to find the right words to describe feelings when writing or speaking in a formal manner. Nevertheless, reality always tends to bring us back to the realm of reason, where we are better equipped to express our thoughts. So a harmonious mix between the two worlds may sometimes result.

In short, the story of the European Institute of Romania is one of success. The results achieved during its first 20 years of functioning, including its implemented projects, its published studies, its training courses and its many organized national and international events stand as testimony. An opinion shared both by the people who worked or engaged with us during this period and the more objective associated “key performance indicators”.

An ambitious project, financed at first through the PHARE program of the European Commission, the institute constantly developed throughout the years and has managed to become an established and esteemed institution in Romania. At the same time, it stood out as a success story for European funded projects in terms of sustainability. Later transformed into a pillar of European Affairs in the country, EIR, with the support of its coordinating entity, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), has provided a platform of ...p. 2



opinion

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The future of the European Union

The last years have been characterised by an ever-growing literature dedicated to the future of the European Union. Alongside conferences and debates having this topic or including thematic sessions, it seems that the future of the EU is a subject that no present of the Union can be discussed without. This connection can easily explain itself given that we cannot fully understand the impact of the current policies if we do not consider all the factors that might influence them in the future. The necessity to anticipate trends that can have an impact on the way the European project evolves is set to become more and more important.

If years ago, the question that used to describe the majority of talks concerning the EU was focused on “more or less European integration”, in the past years the approaches seemed to be more mathematical than narrative, various scenarios being subject to reflections or public consultations. In this sense, the 2017 White Paper on Future of Europe came as a sequel to various declarations belonging to European political leaders or national ones concerning the “Europe of concentric circles” or a “Europe with variable geometry”. ...p. 4

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EIR: The first 20 years

[...] genuine dialogue for various topics of interest featured on the European agenda. It aimed at doing its fair share in bringing the Union closer to the Romanian citizens.

The European Institute of Romania had the honour of being, ever since 2000, part of the negotiation process for Romania's accession to the European Union. Regardless of its real or perceived difficulty, the process in itself proved to be a great opportunity for EIR's team of professionals to learn what European affairs and EU institutions are truly about. Also, it helped us to build a road map and set ambitious benchmarks for ourselves - to see where we stand in order to be able to move forward. From the pre-accession impact studies to the Strategy and Policy Studies starting from 2007, from the initial basic trainings in European Affairs to the ones dedicated to consolidating the relevant knowledge for some of the public servants involved in the first-ever Romanian Presidency of the EU Council in the first semester of 2019, it is fair to say that we came a long way.

And the same can be said for all the work done in the field of translating the *acquis communautaire*, the case-law of ECHR Judgments and Decisions and, in the near future, of various UN reports about human rights, which has helped us build a dedicated and professional team of translators, revisers and terminologists inside the institute. Also, throughout the past two decades, various notable national and international personalities involved in studying and/or practicing European Affairs have shared their views and opinions in our publications or our dedicated events, which, among others, contributed to long-lasting and ever-evolving forms of collaboration and dialogue with peer organizations in countries like Poland, France or Sweden.

So far, there have been many memorable moments in EIR's history. And, as I am confident that the best is yet to come, I will refer in these pages to only two of them. The first was when Professor Hellen Wallace, co-author of the so-called "European studies Bible" - *Polymaking in the EU*, came to Bucharest for the launch of the Romanian version of the book, translated by our colleagues from the Translation Unit. And the second has to be EIR's involvement in all the activities of Romania's Presidency of the EU Council when its contribution was solicited by the MFA. The added value? All the expertise and the constructive exchange of ideas and views hosted and promoted, which help fuel further critical debates about the future of the EU and the role that Romania can play in consolidating the European project.

As an honest broker between the academic milieu and the representatives of the public administration and the Parliament, EIR has sought, through its coordinated studies and research activities, to be a working platform meant to support and empower Romania's positioning in the European decision-making processes. Also, the results of our published works were always available for the Romanian public [on our website](#), ever since the year 2000 and up until now.

The European Institute of Romania's academic journal - [Romanian Journal of European Affairs](#) - has become a renowned publication on the national editorial market. Various experts in political science, international relations or European studies have contributed, throughout the years and the journal's many issues, to building and consolidating a publication widely read and cited both domestically and internationally. The motto of our journal bears the mark of one of the founding fathers of the European Community, Jean Monnet, who once said that "nothing is possible without men, but nothing lasts without institutions."

And, in the end, what is currently EIR's main asset, its main comparative advantage? In a nutshell, EIR's team. And our shared ideal according to which no lasting project was ever solely built on reason and pragmatism, but also on emotion, passion and a sense of belonging in a grouping with a greater meaning.

Today, at a time of celebration and reflection, I wish to express my sincere thanks to all my colleagues who have contributed to the consolidation of the European spirit in Romania, by substantially building a flagship institution in the field of European Affairs: the European Institute of Romania.

Oana-Mihaela Mocanu
Director General a.i.

30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall

Thirty years ago, the whole world witnessed in surprise the fall of the Berlin Wall, arguably the most well-known symbol of a divided post-war Europe, marking the final act of the Cold War and the beginning of the end for the late Soviet Union. The historic moment came against the backdrop of developments that would have seemed highly unlikely just a few years before inside the socialist camp, like the holding of free elections in Poland (June 1989) and the opening of Hungarian borders with Austria (August 1989). Having to deal with an unprecedented wave of protests and social contestation of the Communist regime, the local authorities of the German Democratic Republic were disoriented and lost control over the situation. The emotional event that set off on the night of 9 November 1989 has opened not only the crossing points to West Germany, but also the long road towards democratic transition and peaceful change in the former Soviet satellites, with the notable and regrettable exception of Romania. As such, Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria's ruler since 1954, announced his retirement on 10 November and seven days later the 'Velvet Revolution' spread throughout Czechoslovakia. The wind of change had finally come.

The apparent end of the ideological clash that stood as a cornerstone of the Cold War had fuelled a wave of democratization, which, in fact, started globally during the '70s. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the break-up of the Soviet Union in

1991 have paved the road for the rehabilitation, the building and the consolidation of democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. On a European level, maybe the most significant step had been made through the reunification of one of Europe's most important states (and future European Union 'heavyweight'): in December 1990, after 45 years of artificial separation, Helmut Kohl became the first chancellor of a united Germany. Nevertheless, the crucial part played in the final act of the Cold War by Mikhail Gorbachev, who came to power in 1985, should not be forgotten. For the first time since the fall of the Iron Curtain, "the USSR had a ruler who did not seem sinister, boorish, unresponsive, senile - or dangerous"¹.

In order to pull his country out of the economic malaise in which the arms race with the United States had dragged it, the one who was going to be remembered by history books as the last secretary general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, had promoted a policy of reforms based on three pillars: *uskorenije* (acceleration), *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). These were meant to ensure greater legitimacy for the regime, on one side, and to fix domestic structural flaws and reduce the development gap with the main ideological, economic and geopolitical rival, on the other side. Without providing the expected result, the measures backfired and eventually brought an end to the totalitarian monolith, a natural consequence of the bold, but naïve attempt to reform an unperformable (and unreformable) system. And, in one of history's sweet ironies, Gorbachev won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for his unintentional contribution to ending the Cold War.



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According to British historian and Guardian columnist Timothy Garton Ash, the mistake that Europeans made after 1989 was not that they celebrated the wave of democratic change that swept over Central Europe and, later, the Baltic republics and the former Soviet Union satellites, but rather the taking of the great triumph of freedom and democracy for granted, as an irreversible course towards (an anticipated) end of history². The steady rise of democratic, but illiberal regimes in the past years in Europe has proven the contrary. Free and fair elections remain quintessential for democratic political regimes, but, in the absence of constitutional liberalism, they will not guarantee the emergence of governments that are competent, responsible, honest and eager to rule for the public good³.

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the democratic decline observed in Europe is telling for a larger trend going on around the world, captured by Freedom House: in 2018, the Freedom in the World report recorded the 13th consecutive year of decline in global freedom, concluding that democracy is in retreat⁴. Going beyond values and normative prescriptions, democracies successfully took roots in Europe also because, in general, they were better equipped than dictatorships to raise living standards for their citizens. At the moment of writing, profound transformative phenomena like the Brexit process, the gradual ascent of populist leaders and the illiberal mutation taking place in countries like Hungary, Poland or the Czech Republic risk to put into question the stability of a continent still coping with an inconsistent economic recovery and rising inequalities. However, the sombre prediction about the eventual triumph of illiberal authoritarianism is still far from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. As it was the case 30 years ago with liberal democracy. And it is up to the European Union to put its money where its mouth is, use its normative power and prevent the worst-case scenario from happening.

One of the constant features of the Cold War was the proverbial American support for the prospect of a united Europe and for the North-Atlantic Alliance (NATO). Thirty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the transatlantic relationship never looked more strained, more transactional and less anchored in common values, principles and norms than during the mandate of current republican President Donald Trump. What is more, his French counterpart, the mercurial Emmanuel Macron, has recently said, while pleading in favour of more European strategic autonomy, that "we are currently experiencing the brain death of NATO"⁵. His rather blunt and undiplomatic statements on the topic raised eyebrows in numerous European countries, but were met with praise by Moscow and were a stark highlight of the persistent differences between the two shores of the Atlantic on various international big issues.

Speaking in front of a large crowd gathered in the Baltic port city of Gdansk on 4 June 2019, European Council President Donald Tusk hailed the Polish election 30 years ago that saw the resounding victory of the 'Solidarity' opposition movement and heralded the generally peaceful demise of the entire Soviet bloc. Nevertheless, Tusk reminded the audience that, at the same time, the Tiananmen Square protests were being violently suppressed on 4 June 1989, as the Chinese government had declared martial law. "These two visions are also present today in the world and in Europe (...). This is a dilemma that also applies to our future, not just our past. We must remember this lesson about Poland and China", said the former Polish Prime Minister.

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¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Penguin Books, London, 2005.

² The Guardian, „Democracy is under attack in post-Wall Europe - but the spirit of 1989 is fighting back”, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/30/democracy-europe-1989-berlin-wall-velvet-revolutions-populists>.

³ Fareed Zakaria, „The Rise of Illiberal Democracy”, Foreign Affairs Nov/Dec 1997, available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-11-01/rise-illiberal-democracy>.

⁴ Freedom House, „Freedom in the World 2019”, full report available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019/democracy-in-retreat>.

⁵ The Economist, „Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead”, available at <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>.

The future of the European Union - between complicated math and clear expectations

The last years have been characterised by an ever-growing literature dedicated to the future of the European Union. Alongside conferences and debates having this topic or including thematic sessions, it seems that the future of the EU is a subject that no present of the Union can be discussed without. This connection can easily explain itself given that we cannot fully understand the impact of the current policies if we do not consider all the factors that might influence them in the future. The necessity to anticipate trends that can have an impact on the way the European project evolves is set to become more and more important.

If years ago, the question that used to describe the majority of talks concerning the EU was focused on “more or less European integration”, in the past years the approaches seemed to be more mathematical than narrative, various scenarios being subject to reflections or public consultations. In this sense, the 2017 White Paper on Future of Europe came as a sequel to various declarations belonging to European political leaders or national ones concerning the “Europe of concentric circles” or a “Europe with variable geometry”.



Between the narrative and the mathematical approach, there usually lies the future of the European citizens, the main beneficiaries of the European project. In this regard, the November 2018 Eurobarometer¹ revealed the fact that **61% of the European citizens are feeling optimistic about the future of the EU**. At that time, the most prominent optimists were the Irish people with a majority of 88%, while the Greeks had different views, characterising themselves as rather pessimistic alongside with the French respondents which marked a score equal to 50%. Romania was placed in the second half of the top, registering a score of optimism amounting to 65%.

The optimism observed by the 2018 Autumn Eurobarometer was put to test in the Spring of 2019, when concerns about the European elections arose, with the major fear that the future of the European project could be jeopardized by candidates who proposed more mathematical formulas in favour of the national states and less in support for the Union's development and the strengthening of the European budget. Fortunately, the significant turnover of European citizens (50.66%) managed to counter the potential attempts to destabilize the European institutions, eventually bringing far fewer Eurosceptics to the Parliament than was initially expected.

Nevertheless, some notable changes occurred, the most relevant being that of the shift in the traditional majority held until then by the European People's Party (EPP) together with the European Socialists. After the May 2019 elections the two parties combined gathered 44.74%² of the total number of mandates, which prompted them to seek association with another European political group in order to reach the necessary majority in the decision-making process.

A first consequence deriving from the mathematical change was observed during the election process of the European Commission president. The strategy of 2014, the so-called *Spitzenkandidat*, became obsolete with the proposal of Ursula von der Leyen at the head of the European executive, supported by the national political leaders, notably by Emmanuel Macron. Backed by a new party, which ranked third in the elections (14.38%) and was built around the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the French president was considered the big winner of the political negotiations held at the European Council meetings prior to the announcement of nominations for the top functions associated with the main European institutions.

As a mathematical operation that was to be quite simple, it quickly became an equation with one unknown, since it was not possible to predict what the final result of the vote in the European Parliament would be until the moment it actually took place. Elected with just 9 votes above the minimum necessary, Ursula von der Leyen became the first woman president of the European Commission, but the complicated issues began to appear later. Following the negotiations with the Member States for the commissioners' proposals, several rounds of hearings were required, considering that some of the nominees were rejected in the parliamentary committees, among which the candidates from Romania, France and Hungary. Finally, the vote in the Parliament for the entire college of commissioners was set for the end of November, and the Commission started its activity on 1 December 2019.

The von der Leyen team will need vision, tenacity, cohesion, patience, empathy and the ability to anticipate changes in society in order to cope with the five-year mandate it has won. The scenarios for the future of the Union are in most cases either realistic or pessimistic. Few are the variants in which we can talk about high-spirited scenarios, although some citizens might expect to be consulted on such options. For instance, a recent article in *The Economist*³

¹ Special Eurobarometru 479, October-November 2018, pp. 30-31, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/84833>.

² Data available here: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/elections-press-kit/0/european-elections-results>.

³ Reading the cards, *The Economist*, 14 November 2019, available at: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/14/reading-the-cards>.

projects two scenarios for the development of the EU.

The first is considered to be moderately positive and envisages the development of a multilevel union, with a group of states gathered around the Franco-German core (Europe of concentric circles). Various coalitions of those who want to do more will be able to advance the European agenda together, but enhanced cooperation at this level would not be mandatory for all members. In this regard, a common European asylum system could be adopted, but also regional forms of cooperation might arise such as a digital services union, built by the Scandinavians and the Baltic countries.

The second scenario is rather pessimistic and foresees an intensification of the European Union decline, starting from the existing divisions within the Member States, but also from external threats that are more or less visible. Such a situation would have a negative impact on the euro and would increase economic divergences. It would also lead to technological discrepancies, and citizens' support for the European Union would tend to decrease. At the same time, the development gaps between northern and southern Europe would increase, and challenges such as climate change may not be addressed efficiently. Unfortunately, none of these two scenarios (let alone the last one) can be encouraging considering the challenges that the European Union will face in the coming years.

In a report⁴ of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) on global trends and their influence on the challenges and choices that characterize Europe, several tendencies have been identified that will have a major impact on the development of the Union, such as: **climate change** (global warming will have effects for the economy and for the environment), **the demographic situation** (while Europe is experiencing a decline in population, African states are registering a significant increase in the number of young people), **urbanization** (two thirds of European citizens will live in small and medium-sized cities, and where society is not properly governed this will lead to pollution, increase in crime and violence), **energy consumption** (will increase by 1.7% per year, which will lead to more greenhouse gas emissions), **connectivity** (the number of devices connected to the internet will increase by 5 times, and the number of passengers transported by air will double).

Not to mention the Brexit dossier, which will remain for a long time now on the shelves of policy-makers, or the aspects of migration or the ones focused on creative ways of interpreting democracy for the benefit of politicians with less honourable intentions, the European Union has a slightly predictable future ahead of it. But in such times, when people can become visionary leaders, it can also be **the reference point of the new European establishment to help the Union not only to resist, but also to project a fresh ideal for both its citizens and for the other continents.**

Eliza Vaş
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⁴ Global Trends to 2030, Challenges and choices for Europe, European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, April 2019, available at https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/ESPAS_Report.pdf.

projects

EIR is implementing the project “Consolidating and promoting Romania’s position as a relevant actor in the decision-making process at the European level”

From August 2019 to May 2020, the European Institute of Romania is implementing the project “Consolidating and promoting Romania’s position as a relevant actor in the decision-making process at the European level” code SIPOCA 400/code SMIS2014+ 115759. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (project leader), the Secretariat-General of the Government and École Nationale d’Administration from France.

The project aims to consolidate and promote Romania’s position as a relevant actor in the policy-making process at the European level, by developing a public policy in the field of European Affairs, developing efficient working procedures at the level of ministries, consolidating their capacity in the field of European Affairs, elaborating and implementing a communication strategy and the realisation of thematic analyses on current topics, that are a priority in European Affairs area.



As partner in the project, the European Institute of Romania is coordinating five thematic analyses. Their role is to increase the level of substantiation of Romania’s position within the European Union decision-making processes. The decision-makers will have at their disposal not only recommendations for positions, but an overview of the negotiation processes as well. The present research project will replace, during the period 2019-2020, EIR’s traditional Strategy and

Policy Studies - SPOS research project.

The five thematic analyses will each be implemented by a team consisting of four research-experts, as follows:

1) The role and relevance of impact studies in defining the national positions at the EU level

The research will help increase the capacity of the National System of European Affairs Management to do ex-ante analyses concerning proposals to update European legislation during the negotiation process, as well as the legislation already adopted, which will be transposed into national law.

The analysis will be conducted by a team coordinated by Professor Iordan-Gheorghe Bărbulescu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration.

2) The simplification of the cohesion policy for the post-2020 period: possible solutions for streamlining the implementation

The thematic analysis will evaluate the impact of the current Cohesion Policy (2014-2020) on regional and national economic development and will explore specific and pragmatic ways to simplify and improve the efficiency of this policy in the next framework (2021-2027), starting with the Commission's proposals and adapting them to the Romania's specific country profile, in the European context.

The research will be conducted by a team coordinated by Professor Dumitru Miron, Bucharest University of Economic Studies.

3) The impact of digitalization on the architecture and implementation of the European policies designed to strengthening the internal market

The analysis will evaluate the impact of digitalization on European policies implementation regarding the consolidation of the internal market. The research will include as well ways to implement European initiatives concerning the Digital Single Market, adopted in 2014-2019 (Juncker Commission) in Romania, and will propose measures and recommendations for increasing the efficiency of substantiation and creation mechanisms of national positions concerning the Digital Single Market.

The research will be conducted by a team coordinated by Professor Adrian Curaj, University Politehnica of Bucharest.

4) Artificial intelligence - the impact at the EU level on the productivity of the companies and on the labour market (Case-study: Romania)

The analysis will evaluate the impact of implementing AI solutions in Romania regarding changes on companies' productivity and the labour market. Further, it will identify the main measures taken at the European level regarding AI and their impact on the competitiveness of EU internal market, by underlining the good practices in the field.

The research will be conducted by a team coordinated by Professor Adina-Magda Florea, University Politehnica of Bucharest.

5) Ways of deepening the Eastern Partnership for 2020 and beyond

The thematic analysis will evaluate the impact of the first 10 years of the Eastern Partnership and will propose alternative scenarios and specific policies so Romania could have an important contribution in the negotiations regarding redefining the Eastern Partnership after 2020, in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

The research will be conducted by a team coordinated by Professor Mircea Brie, University of Oradea.

The research project will consist of a thematic workshop for each analysis, in order to identify and debate with representatives from relevant ministries the aspects regarding national positions. Then a public debate for each analysis will be organised, to present the preliminary results. These will be discussed with interested stakeholders, and feedback received will be integrated in the final versions of the thematic analyses.

For additional information regarding the project, please see <http://ier.gov.ro/en/projects/ongoing-projects-projects/>.

Mihai Sebe
European Studies Unit

Romanian Journal of European Affairs - Winter Issue 2019

The December issue of the Romanian Journal of European Affairs brings to the readers' attention broader topics, such as the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on the world order or the European Union's decision-making mechanisms regarding several key issues, as well as more applied approaches, on the relations between Poland and Romania in the global and regional contexts or the Estonian transit sector. The journal proposes as well a scientific review, on the book published in 2018 by Florin Georgescu, titled "Capital in Post-communist Romania".

Monika Szynol (Research assistant at the Institute of Political Science and Journalism, University of Silesia) focuses on the probable impact of Brexit on the EU's development policy, by making a rather subtle distinction, showing that the

exit of Great Britain from the EU will have important consequences on this policy, regardless if it is with a deal or a no-deal scenario. Collectively, the EU Member States are the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA), and the British contribution is significant.

Clara Volintiru (Associate Professor at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies), **Maria-Floriana Popescu** (Lecturer at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies), **Doru Franțescu** (CEO and co-Founder of VoteWatch Europe) and **Melania-Gabriela Ciot** (Associate Professor at Babeș-Bolyai University) analyse in their contribution the divergent options of EU Member States have regarding energy and environment policies. Proving how hard it is to acquire consensus between so many distinct interests, the authors argue that there is a very firm distinction line between countries from Central and Eastern Europe, genuinely interested in energy interconnectivity and rather reticent on environmental issues, and the Western member states. Because of this, European institutions must find some nuanced solutions and approaches in order to solve common problems.

Using a broader perspective, **Florin Bonciu** (University Professor within the Romanian-American University in Bucharest and Senior Researcher with the Institute for World Economy) underlines the strong causal links between the fourth industrial revolution and the world order. Historically, industrial revolutions had the role of either consolidating that order (the first industrial revolution strengthened the position of Great Britain and the third industrial revolution the one of the United States) or challenging it (the second industrial revolution meant the replacement of Great Britain, by the US, as the world leader). The fourth industrial revolution could represent the end of US hegemony and the beginning of a multipolar international arena. The challenges and opportunities are very big, regardless of the position within the global order.

Researching the relations between Romania and Poland in the context of the European Union, **Justyna Łapaj-Kucharska** (Institute of Political Sciences and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia) uses a historical approach, arguing that the two countries have a number of common interests and objectives, and they could promote them in both bilateral and multilateral frameworks. As part of several regional geopolitical arrangements, as well as part of EU and NATO, Poland and Romania are common partners.

André Härtel (Associate Professor for German and European Studies at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) aims to answer the question regarding how the EU Member States managed to acquire consensus regarding the Russian sanctions, in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. Observing how different the positions of these states regarding Russia were before the crisis, Härtel points out that neither rational, nor normative approaches are sufficient in explaining this consensus. Because of this, the author argues, an eclectic explanation is the only one suitable. Of course, such a fragile consensus will be most certainly strongly contested.

In their paper on the collapse of the Estonian transit sector, **Viljar Veebel** (Researcher within the Department of Political and Strategic Studies at the Baltic Defence College and a lecturer at the Estonian School of Diplomacy) and **Raul Markus** (Associated researcher for the Tallinn University of Technology) underline the impact of both European integration and worsening of relations with Russia. The two authors use the scientific literature and the perceptions of business leaders, policy-makers and academics regarding these phenomena, by applying surveys.

Paul Dobrescu (Professor and PhD advisor at the doctoral school in Communication sciences, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration) and **Mălina Ciocea** (Lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration) review the book authored by Florin Georgescu (Professor and Doctoral Supervisor at the Academy of Economics), on the Romanian post-communist capital, by integrating it in the broader academic debates on the historical evolution of capitalism.

Full articles are available at <http://rjea.ier.gov.ro/>.

Our readers are also invited to access RJEa's Facebook page, at <https://www.facebook.com/romanian.journal.of.european.affairs/>.



Ionuț Marcu
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EIR Training Courses

Starting from EIR's assessment of the training needs in the last quarter of 2018, we identified two major topics of interest for the employees of the public administration: a general introduction to European Affairs and the legislative functioning of the European Union. Henceforth, EIR organised and delivered two new training programmes in October and November 2019: *Introduction to European Affairs* and *The EU Normative System*. The two programmes, three days and respectively two days long, enjoyed a real interest on the part of the 43 participants from the public administration and not only.

The two teams of trainers received an honest feedback from the participants, which was positive in a huge proportion. Practically, the programmes were well received and their quality was up to the standards of the participants. There were some punctual observations as to the relevance of some of subject matters included in the agenda, but generally speaking, the feedback we received motivates us to go on according to the line we had established early this year. For the moment, the teams are working on the courses' content, so that in 2020 we intend to deliver the two programmes at least once a semester. *The EU Normative System* comes as a sometimes-necessary introduction for the older programme *Norms and Procedures of Legislative Technique*, which continues to engage participants from the full spectrum of public administration.



Also following the 2019 analysis of training needs, in December, the EIR is going to organise the programme *Corruption Preventing and Fighting*, targeting the public administration personnel active in the domain of anticorruption that have responsibilities herein. Even if EIR has a history of organising such a programme, this time we speak of a new variant, adapted to the latest realities of fighting corruption, thus being considered a pilot programme due to the new structure. This programme is fully supported by EIR, and the pilot group is composed of 20 participants. We look forward to the participants' feedback. Our wish is to be part of our portfolio of training programmes, and raise sufficient interest from the public administration so that we could organise it once every three months.

The year 2020 will bring, together with the programmes already mentioned above, two new subject matters. On the one hand we intend to deepen the domain of European Affairs, passing from introductory courses to the ones exploring specific policies and practices in depth. The investigation of the domains of interest for the advanced programme of European Affairs is realised by the experts of the Training Unit in collaboration with the trainers and the potential participants.

On the other hand, more and more people that participated in previous programmes on *Diplomacy and Protocol* have asked us to bring further information on this domain, so we intend to develop a second advanced programme answering the needs expressed, as complete as possible.

In 2020 and in the future, we will continue to support the public administration in understanding and interpreting the domain of European affairs by programmes adapted to the real needs of the participants and of the institutions where our public comes from.

Monica Ingeaua
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