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Those interested in expressing their own point of view concerning the Euro currency, genetically modified organisms, the European social model or the European strategy for growth and jobs, can access the Miscellaneous section on the website:

http://europa.eu/debateeurope/climate-change/index_ro.htm

EU in October – could this be the end of the crisis?

The informal meetings of the ministers for Internal Affairs (1st October – The Hague), of the Ecofin (1st – 2nd October – Göteborg) and of the ministers for Agriculture (5th October – Brussels) mark the beginning of the October EU agenda.

The Ecofin informal reunion, in Sweden, aims at opening the debate on various crisis exit strategies, principles for the return to long term balanced public finances, financial stability, financing measures on climate change, as well as measures for the reduction of unemployment.

For further details, follow the link: www.se2009.eu

On the 2nd October, however, not only will the conclusions of the Göteborg meetings be revealed, but also the result of the second Irish Referendum concerning the Treaty of Lisbon. Will the Celtic Tiger be the last challenge for the new treaty?

Mădălina Barbu
Communication Unit

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EIR – DEA Conferece: The Post-2010 Lisbon Strategy: National Reform Options and Priorities **29 September**

EIR Course: Implementation of EU environmental policy by the local administration **21 – 25 September**

Access the full EIR agenda [here](#)

LEONARD ORBAN
European Commissioner for Multilingualism

Multilingualism policy is to serve European citizens

At the end of your term in office, can you share a few thoughts regarding the experience of the first Romanian European Commissioner?

By the end of my term as a Commissioner – the first Romanian Commissioner in the EU history – I can say that I am satisfied with the results obtained in turning multilingualism into a very important EU policy.

I must admit that the beginning was not easy at all. There were plenty of voices who claimed that multilingualism is not an important portfolio and, in our country, there are still voices according to which the experience of a totally unimportant and meaningless portfolio at European level- the perception regarding multilingualism- is to be avoided in the context of the next European Commission.

Nevertheless I can clearly say that multilingualism became a defining policy of the European Union, a part of the solutions that the Union has developed for coping with diversity, especially the diversity of language and culture.

Diversity is not only a treasure, an asset; sometimes it can raise important issues and bring serious challenges for the European decision makers. For example, the integration of migrants, of citizens from outside the European Union, particularly from outside Europe, has an important linguistic component that has to be managed intelligently, in order to lead to success. This portfolio has enabled me to bring significant added value to the European Union in this sector.

Precisely, I was able to significantly enrich a policy at European level. Until a few years ago, multilingualism had only an institutional dimension (translation, interpreting and providing official publications) and an educational dimension (promoting foreign language learning). Currently, multilingualism acquired a series of new dimensions, as a result of the adoption, in September 2008, of the strategy **"Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment"**. Therefore, we can speak of a considerable significance of multilingualism to intercultural dialogue, corporate competitiveness, social cohesion, relations with other states. The list can continue with other areas addressed as part of this strategy.

Finally, I have a great satisfaction concerning what I have achieved as a responsible for multilingualism in the European Commission.

As it is well known, the activity of Commissioner requires not only efforts directly related to the portfolio, but also an intense involvement in European policies in general, since at the level of the European Commission we speak about peer decision-making.

The possibility to influence Community decisions can be put to good use if you have the necessary skills and arguments. From this point of view, there were a whole series of cases in which I had a part to play in shaping some decisions of the European Commission. Of course, I can not really get into details. I can only say that there have been decisions directly and indirectly related to Romania, as well as decisions of European importance.

Which are the implications of ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, especially from the perspective of a member of the Commission? What about its non-ratification?

The Lisbon Treaty signed on December 13, 2007, aims to ensure that the enlarged European Union works efficiently in the context of the new challenges that it faces in the world today: the globalization of the



Photo source: <http://ec.europa.eu>

economy, climate change, the need for energy security, demographic changes, migration, cross-border crime, etc.

Drafted in accordance with the aspirations of the European citizens, this document of great importance will allow the adaptation of European institutions and their working methods, as well as the consolidation of democratic legitimacy of the Union and of its fundamental values.

The Treaty of Lisbon will increase transparency of the decisional act and will provide the citizens, the European Parliament and the national parliaments with new opportunities to contribute to the management of united Europe.

The arguments in favour of the treaty are so numerous, that I am convinced that even the countries where the treaty has not yet been ratified are bound to complete this process very soon.

I hope that the Irish citizens also, who previously rejected the treaty, have now understood its benefits. I am optimistic regarding the result of the referendum in Ireland, from October 2. I hope that most of the Irish people will say "YES" to the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and that it will enter into force by early next year.

You recently talked about the development of two communication platforms with the role of enhancing cooperation between decision makers from the field of multilingualism, the civil society and the business sector. Can you offer us some details?

The strategic communication from September 2008 provides various ways of action through which the European Commission will implement its policy in the field of multilingualism.

Thus, based on the finding - certified by scientific studies - that the linguistic and intercultural competences increase the chances to obtain a better job, the European Commission launched, on September 22, a permanent platform for the exchange of best practices between companies, gathering relevant information from the business environment, the social partners, professional organizations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion organizations, from schools and education authorities.

Also, considering that, at EU level, numerous stakeholders from the local, regional and national level, are involved in the multilingualism policy, the Commission will continue its structured dialogue on different directions. One of these is to create a platform with the media, cultural organization and other civil society entities in order to discuss and exchange practices for the purpose of promoting multilingualism for intercultural dialogue.

This platform will be launched on October 23 in Brussels.

In addition to this, I would like to mention that, in September, on the occasion of European Languages Day (September 26), I initiated a campaign to promote foreign language learning in the first years of life, campaign that continues the European programme of encouraging lifelong learning.

These are only a few examples which clearly illustrate that the multilingualism policy is evolving and is permanently in the service of the European citizens.

Interview by **Mădălina Barbu**

EIR Agenda: September – October – November 2009

EIR – DEA Conferece: The Post-2010 Lisbon Strategy: National Reform Options and Priorities	29 September
EIR Conferece: series Romania – France: Together in Europe	7 October
OEZF – IFRI – EIR Conferece: The Black Sea Region: Link between an Enlarged Europe and its New Neighbourhood	15 – 16 October
EIR Course: General Training Programme in European Affairs	19 – 22 October
EIR – CEES seminar: Preparation seminar for employment in European institutions	2 – 4 November
EIR Course: General Training Programme in European Affairs	16 – 19 November
EIR Course: Economic and Monetary Union	26 – 27 November

(European) economic training (at EIR) during times of crisis



Photo source : <http://ec.europa.eu>

Between **26th and 27th November** EIR will organize the course focusing on the **Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)** with the purpose of insuring an advanced training in the field of economic policies of the European Union. The programme is aimed at public servants working in ministries and governmental agencies, whose public decisions are influenced by the common economic and monetary policy. The course will present a short history of the EMU creation, the phases of its creation, the institutional structure of the EMU, the common monetary policy, the Euro zone

and the perception on the introduction of the Euro currency.

At the end of the programme, the participants will have the necessary knowledge in order to: understand the role of the monetary economy in the adjustment of the real economy mechanism, define the common monetary policy, define the ESCB – European System of Central Banks, understand the process of EU budget outline, define the Stability and Growth Pact, understand the connections between the budgetary policy and the monetary policy as well as the costs and the advantages of joining the Euro zone.

The course is lectured by Mrs. **Mihaela Mariana Luțaș**, professor at the Babeș Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca – Faculty of Economics and Business Management, PhD in Economics, as well as an adult education trainer with a vast experience both in the field of Economics and European Affairs. Mrs. Luțaș is also an associate professor at the International University Institute for European Studies (IUIES) in Trieste, Italy, Jean Monnet professor of the European Commission on issues related to the European economic integration and member of EUROTEAM, body of the EC for the implementation of the strategy regarding the adoption of the Euro currency in Romania.

In order to answer questions of practical nature there will also be a session held by Mr. Mihai Copaciu, main economist, representative of the National Bank of Romania.

The course is free and the registration is done by filling in the online form available at http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/programe_in_curs/ Registrations are open until the completion of the working group.

EMU landmarks

The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) represents a superior phase of multinational integration, which supposes: a common monetary policy, a deep coordination of economic policies of the member states,

a common currency, the liberalization of the movement of capital, an institutionalized system to coordinate and manage the monetary policy.

Considered to be, from a certain standpoint, the most ambitious, but also the riskiest project of the European construction, the Economic and Monetary Union is the result of a political decision based on a strong economic component.

The European Monetary System, negotiated in 1978 and adopted in 1979 was aimed mainly at the creation of a monetary stability zone in the framework of an economic space whose member states, at that moment, showed tendencies of decreased differences in their development levels.

The main elements of the system were: the European Currency Unit (ECU) used in financial disbursement, a monetary cooperation fund (created in 1973), the exchange rate mechanism and the European Monetary Institute.

Unlike the monetary policy, through which member states transfer decision making powers from the national to the Community level, they maintain their responsibilities over the economic policy, under the premises of observing the free market principles within a fair competitive framework.

Other important moments of the Economic and Monetary Union were:

- **the Maastricht Treaty** (1992) concerning the creation of the European Union which, in monetary terms, consecrated the creation of a Central Bank at the level of the EU and established the criteria member states would have to fulfil in order to become members of the European monetary space;
- **the creation of the European System of Central Banks**, whose functioning is based on several general principles amongst which the institutional and financial independence, transparency, subsidiarity and responsibility in attaining the objectives proposed in the Maastricht Treaty;
- **the introduction of the Euro currency** starting with January 1st 1999 (in its non-physical form).

The possibility of Romania adopting the Euro currency in 2014 according to the most optimistic previsions, if it fulfils the convergence criteria, depends largely on the economic evolution of the country as well as on the performances of the National Bank in the field of monetary policy aimed at targeting inflation.

The global financial crisis showcased the vulnerability of the Romanian economy to external shocks, as well as the advantages of the Euro zone, many analysts considering the European Central Bank as one of the institutional actors of strategic importance which proved their effectiveness in combating the repercussions of the crisis.

The programme offered by EIR will outline all these aspects and will study them in depth during the two days of the training session.

Click [here](#) for the future

If you read these lines on your computer screen and you have at least one mobile phone, an MP3 player, a portable gaming console or a similar gadget, you are a digital citizen. If you acknowledge that the creation and use of information is for you a particularly important economic and cultural activity, then you admit that you live in an information society.

Currently, less and less people can imagine their life without Information Technology and Communications (ITC), due to how the ITC changed the way we interact. We are closer to each other than ever before (the Internet eliminates distance and makes us all agents of globalization), perceived barriers between state authority and citizens disappear (we can send information on-line rather than to the officials at the counter) and we become digital economic actors (the consumers have preferences which are increasingly shaped by a virtual market). Europe is in the midst of a full-fledged ITC revolution.

i2010 and beyond

i2010 is the European policy framework for information society and media. The positive effect of ITC on the economy, society and quality of life is supported by the three dimensions of the i2010 strategy: creating a single European information space (which promotes an open and competitive internal market for media and information society services), increased investment and innovation in ITC research and inclusion sustainability and improving public services and quality of life through ITC.¹

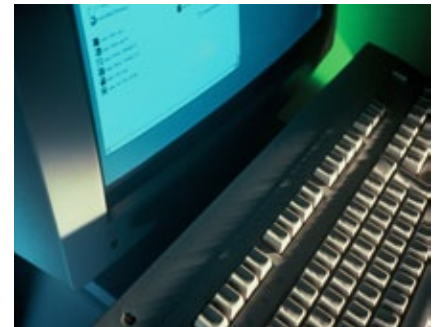
While 2010 is approaching and the debate on a new strategy for the European Information Society for the period 2010-2015 is ongoing, the i2010 has achieved its aim of generating tangible results²: broadband usage tripled between 2004 - 2009, the rate of using mobile phone in the EU rose by 35% while the prices for roaming services went down with up to 70%, a single, EU 27 wide, emergency number was created, an unprecedented budget was allocated for ITC research (€ 9 billion for the 2007-2013 period), a single market for the Union's film industry³ and a digital library of Europe⁴ was put in place and a complex programme for a safer internet was launched.

Broadband for all

It is estimated that ITC industry produces 50% of EU growth making a direct reference to the basic objectives of the Lisbon Strategy with implications on economic growth.

According to the European Commission, the potential of digital economy, based on electronic goods and services produced by electronic business and electronically marketed, is one of the solutions for sustainable recovery from the economic crisis. However, for developing

this potential, it is necessary that all the barriers blocking access to new technologies are removed. At the EU level, efforts are underway in order to achieve the target of "broadband for all", the premise of promoting an inclusive information society. Funds can be accessed both for developing the necessary infrastructure and for expanding e-health, e-government, e-inclusion for citizens, and the policy priorities are focused on identifying ways in which the economic and social benefits associated with using broadband internet will reflect both in urban and rural areas.



Click on [update available](#)

"Digital natives", the young generation, the most active internet users, who become ever-more integrated on a European labour market and are sensitive to the transformation of an economy that rapidly adapts its business models, expect more from ICT.

The evolution of the Internet to Web 2.0, among the applications of which there are blogs and social networks, will lead to improved business processes by developing Enterprise 2.0, social network tools applied within companies.

The development of the *Internet of things*, which involves connecting all items used, appliances, machinery, etc. through fixed and wireless networks, will influence the transport and logistics systems.

Nomadic use of ITC, which features Web services that can be accessed by consumers on the move through various portable devices such as laptops or PDAs, will change the patterns of work organization.

All these development dimensions are accompanied by significant challenges: keeping the internet "open" by taking into account competition, privacy and Internet security, protecting support critical infrastructure, etc.

By consistently pursuing policies that are sensitive to developments in ITC, the European Union is committed to overcoming these challenges and to access the opportunities associated to the digital world, located just a [click](#) away.

Iulia Serafimescu

Analysis and European Studies

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - "i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment", 2005.

² "Creating a Single Competitive, Innovative and Borderless European Telecoms and Media Market for 500 Million Consumers, The achievements of Commission's Information Society and Media Policies: 2004-2009", 2009.

³ EU's MEDIA Programme for the European audiovisual industry has a significant multiplier effect: every € 1 of community assistance allocated within the framework of the programme generates € 6 worth of investment in industry.

⁴ *Europeana*, <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/index.html>.

Regulating the Internet and the digital networks in the European Union



On September 10, the conference **Regulating the Internet and the digital networks in the European Union** held by Mr. **Olivier Japiot**, Director General of the High Council of Audiovisual in France took place in the conference room of the European Institute of

Romania. The meeting within the series of conferences "Romania – France: Together in Europe" enjoyed the presence of His Excellency **Henri Paul**, Ambassador of the Republic of France in Romania. The moderator of the meeting was Mrs. **Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General of the European Institute of Romania.

His Excellency Henri Paul began his allocution by expressing his sincere appreciation for the fruitful partnership between the French Embassy and the European Institute of Romania. Its outstanding success, from his point of view, derives from the large number of commonly organized conferences (this being the seventeenth one) and from the quality of the audience and the following discussions. As far as the theme of the conference is concerned, he noticed the politicized and complicated character of the French debate on regulating the Internet. One good example is the already controversial [Law favoring the diffusion and protection of creation on the Internet](#), which was adopted by the French National Assembly in May this year.

The deeply partisan character of this debate having been underlined, Mr. Olivier Japiot began his presentation by mentioning the issue, common to all countries, related to the regulation of the content of the Internet : a) Should we regulate the Internet ? b) Could we regulate the Internet? and c) How could we do that?

One first answer to these questions was offered by the European Union, when adopting Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market ([the directive regarding the electronic commerce](#)), respectively the "[Telecom](#)" package in 2002.

Mr. Japiot's discourse revolved around three major themes and aimed at evoking the potential past, present and future of the Internet content regulation.

I. Historical review: the technological convergence and the destabilization of the traditional regulating methods

After the 1940's nationalization of the organizations that provided general interest services, it was concluded, in the 1980s, that the national monopolies were inefficient, gradually moving towards openness and coordination at a European level as well as the separation according to the type of network: telecommunications and audiovisual.

The technological convergence led to difficulties in separating the legal systems according to the type of network used, this resulting in the necessity for distinction between the regulation of the networks (with economic features) and the regulation of content (i.e., consumer protection). Moreover, the decentralized structure of

the Internet makes it difficult to establish any European regulations of the content of the Internet.

This decentralized structure is managed by the [ICANN](#) (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), a private organization, by the American Department for Commerce, responsible for the worldwide management of the IP addresses.

II. A new legal framework: the legal convergence does not imply the convergence of the regulators

Based upon the European legislation and in particular the Directive 2000/31/CE Mr. Japiot identifies a different regime of responsibility, according to the actors, introducing three main categories:

- Editor – responsible for the content of the service;
- Provider – responsibility exemption for the agents that carry information coming from the thirds;
- Hosting – limited responsibility for the organizations/persons that stock whenever they do not find themselves at the origin of the transmission of illicit content and when they abstain themselves from selecting the recipient of the information.

The main objectives of the European Union during the process of regulating the content of the Internet are the operators' openness towards the competitors, as well as the adoption of the principles imposed by the operators of previous networks (transparency, access, interconnection, tariffs, neutrality).

One general principle may be considered that the common law applies, although, in some cases, specific rules are applied, such as: the consumer protection law, illegal contents or the protection of personal data.

III. Limitations of the present regulation: Could the Internet be regulated in an efficient manner?

The technological progress has led to the vertical integration of the operators, hence considerable difficulties as to the legal categorisation. The dissolution of the boundaries between the audiovisual and the Internet, and the co-existence of several different legislations bring about the difficulty of preventing access to illegal contents coming from other states.

The advent of the Internet has disturbed the traditional regulation methods, by leading to an increase of the international cooperation as well as of the development of technologies of filtering foreign websites.

Towards the end of his speech, Mr. Henri Paul underlined the fact that the unregulated Internet can be compared to a fighting ring that allows free attacks against the other one, without fear of punishment or sanction. Needless to say, we must put an end to all this.

You can find a summary of the conference, by following this link: http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/arhiva_evenimente/

Mihai Sebe

Analysis and European Studies

„Action for Europe: Day III - MK @ EU”

Macedonian Centre for European Training, Štip, September 17

In September-October, The Macedonian Center for European Training (MCET) is organizing the third stage of the project Action for Europe on the importance of the accession of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to the European Union.

In relation to this specific stage of the project, the debates on European topics which took place in 13 municipalities of the country and in the region of Skopje, make for one of the most important directions of action. Project *Action for Europe* brings together, in its current phase – debates organized in target cities – the ambassadors to FYROM from 14 EU Member States and representatives of think-tanks and institutes of European studies or international relations involved in the elaboration of the publication *EU-27 Watch*, including the European Institute of Romania (EIR).

The EIR has accepted the invitation to participate in one of the events organised in this context, on September 17, in the town of Štip. His Excellency Adrian Ștefan Constantinescu, Romania's Ambassador to FYROM and Miss Iulia Serafimescu, project coordinator within the Analysis and European Studies Unit of EIR, took part in a debate that was meant to share Romania's pre- and post- EU accession experience.



The concept of the discussion session, entitled "With our friends closer to the EU", was to explain the benefits and challenges of the EU accession, by means of dialogue and sharing different experiences of Member States.

Thus, the EIR representative presented elements of the road map of Romania until membership (the process of integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures), the difficulties and challenges encountered during the pre-accession period (various negotiation chapters) and aspects of the process of accession in terms of parallel processes of transition and democratization.

A series of other institutional elements regarding Romania's representation at the institutional level after the accession within European structures were also highlighted, together with a

presentation on the social and economic situation in Romania in the two years from the accession. Moreover, beyond a brief summary of the technical issues and challenges faced by Romania on the way towards the EU, based on the Romanian experience, three strategic dimensions of the cooperation were pointed out, which the FYROM should develop (according to Mr. Constantinescu): internal partnerships - between national political forces, regional partnerships - with candidate countries from the region and international partnerships-the identification of potential support for FYROM's EU bid from the old EU Member States.



Iulia Serafimescu

Currently, FYROM is one of the three EU candidate countries. Although this status was granted in 2005, the negotiations have not started yet, due to the delays in implementing the necessary reforms, as well as to issues related to the accession process, such as the identification of a solution to the name dispute with Greece. The recent European Commission proposal of granting visa free travel to the citizens of three countries in the Western Balkans, including FYROM, reflects the EU's acknowledgement of the positive developments recorded in the country's European course. In this context, initiatives such as that of sharing the experience of Member States in facing the challenges encountered on their path to the European Union, with variations, specificities and concrete solutions could only be welcomed, considering the sustained efforts made in view of the accession by both FYROM and the rest of the states in the Western Balkans.

The Macedonian Centre for European Training supports the accession of the FYROM to the EU by means of professional training, consultancy, advocacy and policy development. Project „Action for Europe” is implemented together with the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM), Youth Educational Forum (YEF) and other support NGO's from the FYROM.

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Iulia Serafimescu

Analysis and European Studies

The post-2010 Lisbon Strategy: national reform options and priorities



On the 29th of September 2009, the European Institute of Romania, together with the Department for European Affairs, and with the support of the Committee on European Affairs of the Romanian Parliament, hosted the first conference from the series of events dedicated to the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy. The event, entitled “**The Post-2010 Lisbon Strategy: National Reform Options and Priorities**” took place at the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, and brought together representatives of the central and local public authorities, members of the diplomatic corps, the academic milieu, and the civil society. The conference aimed to analyze the extent to which the main objectives of the Lisbon Strategy have been implemented up to now, highlighting the difficulties encountered so far as well as the areas in which Romania still has significant structural reforms to carry through.

In the opening address, Mr. **Vasile Pușcaș**, Minister and Head of the Department for European Affairs, underlined the fact that the main purpose of this conference series was that of creating a reflection group, meant to bring real solutions to the problems tackled by the Lisbon Strategy, in the attempt to build a new vision for Romania and for the European Union in the near future. Mr. Pușcaș spoke about the need for our country to propose a new course for the evolution on European level, by means of an integrated approach of the main topics addressed by the Lisbon Agenda.

In his speech, the Ambassador of Sweden in Bucharest, His Excellency Mr. **Mats Åberg**, highlighted the role of his country in the debate on the Lisbon Strategy, because Sweden has not only the opportunity to hold the EU presidency in a significant period of time for its evolution, but also the possibility to offer valuable expertise for the implementation of the necessary reforms. His Excellency Sir **Robin Barnett**, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Bucharest, emphasized the positive role of the Lisbon Strategy in stimulating the reforms at the level of the public sector, considering the fact that the prosperity of the Member States depends on carrying through the economic reforms. Mr **Nicolae Idu**, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, welcomed the initiative of debating upon the Lisbon Strategy in an environment based on a partnership between the Member States and the European Union, saying that the citizens’ involvement in the decision making process is a significant and relevant dimension of the strategy.

In the next panel, entitled “**The Lisbon Strategy: achievements and perspectives**”, representatives of several institutions and governmental agencies involved in the establishment of those public policies that are relevant for the Lisbon Strategy agenda took the floor: **Ion Ghizdeanu**, President of the National Commission of Prognosis, **Lucian Șova**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Economy, **Valentin Mocanu**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, **Valentin Lazea**, member of the Romanian Centre for Economic Policies, **Mihnea Costoiu**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, **Corneliu Rotaru**, Director of the Romanian Agency for Energy Conservation, and **Tudor Șerban**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Economy.

The members of the panel spoke about the economic and financial crisis and its effects on the Member States (using the situation of Romania as an example), the need to support the research-innovation sector as a fundamental component for the increase of the economic productivity, the employment policies and the dimension of professional training, the modification of the educational system and its effects in the context of the need to cope with the present challenges on the labour market, the economic competitiveness and the protection of the environment. The session, moderated by Mrs. **Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General of the European Institute of Romania, aimed at discussing upon the main elements and difficulties that the governmental partners and the civil society in the European Union Member States encounter in their attempt to achieve the most significant objectives of the Lisbon Strategy in the context of the present financial crisis namely that of turning the European Union into a major economic actor, characterized by knowledge-based economic competitiveness.

The final debate panel, entitled “**Ways for identifying the national priorities**” benefited from the interventions of Mr. **Aurel Dochia**, from the Romanian Centre for Economic Policies, Mrs. **Vasilica Ciucă**, Director General of the National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection, and Mr. **Liviu Voinea**, Executive Director, Group of Applied Economics. This session was moderated by Mr. **Florin Pogonaru**, President of the Businessmen’s Association of Romania, who spoke about the main difficulties that the Romanian business environment has to cope with. The speakers dwelled on aspects such as social cohesion, the flexicurity policy, but also the main disfunctionalities that characterise the national economy, on one hand, and the advantages that Romania has and needs to develop in the current context of the crisis, on the other hand, in order to narrow the gap between it and the other Member States, and to take part in achieving the general goals of the Lisbon Strategy.

The event ended with a session of questions and answers, during which the participants raised various questions and commented upon the topics on the conference agenda.

Agnes Niculescu

Analysis and European Studies



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