



## Youth

### The European Commission and the future of the vocational education and training

The key to Europe's success in a globalised world is the quality of the human resources and their ability to foster progress and economic growth. The Europe 2020 strategy stresses the importance of the vocational education and training which are designed to promote a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. In this context, on 9 June 2010, the European Commission presented its new vision on the future of the vocational education and training. The vocational education and training, chosen by an average of 50 % of the students in upper secondary education are called to play a double role. On the one hand, to support the delivery of the vocational abilities which Europe needs at this moment and in the near future, and, on the other hand, to reduce the social impact and to support the recovery from crisis.

The Commission presented several possible ways to give vocational education and training a new impetus:

- ensuring an increased mobility for the participants in the educational process;
- providing several opportunities for the disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the low-skilled, the unemployed, etc;
- flexible systems based on the recognition of the learning outcomes, including diplomas and which support individual learning pathways;
- guaranteeing a high quality of the education and training;
- promoting cross-border mobility and the mobility between different sectors of economy;
- nurturing the creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit in students.

The Commission's plan builds on the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and is linked to the upcoming "Youth on the Move" initiative designed to support young people's mobility. This plan is going to be discussed and adopted by the EU ministers in the second half of this year.

For further information please access :  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/707&format=HTML&aged=0&language=RO&guiLanguage=fr>

Mihai Sebe  
European Studies and Analysis

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Coordinator of the SPOS 2010 study – *The New European Strategy for Economic Growth and Employment (EU 2020)***

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**5 - 6 July**

EMIL DINGA

Deputy General Manager of the Banking Institute of Romania

Coordinator of the SPOS 2010 study – *The New European Strategy for Economic Growth and Employment (EU 2020)*

## Europe 2020 Strategy should be fundamentally considered an intellectual project

### Why is the Europe 2020 strategy necessary?

As we know, the European construction in the economic and social area is supported by the Lisbon Agenda in force, but it has the end of 2010 as a target date. Therefore, a first rationale for the necessity of the new strategy is that of continuity. Secondly, the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda were not fulfilled to the expected level (we are not discussing the reasons, although they are, of course, important in order to avoid similar situations regarding the new strategy), therefore another rationale would be the necessity to catch up with the achievement of the current strategy's objectives. Lastly, the third rationale and the most important is, in my opinion, the need for a master plan to coordinate, from the point of view of the vision and institutionally, all EU economic and social evolution processes. In this context, the Europe 2020 strategy should integrate all the other EU strategies, programs and policies, concerning economic and social activity.

### Europe and the whole world is confronted with the effects of the financial and economic crisis which set off in 2007. Do you think that the Europe 2020 strategy is or should be influenced in establishing the objectives by this context?

Firstly, hopefully the current austerity measures regarding the budget deficits and the sovereign debt and the long awaited measures of monetary and financial re-regulating at global level will attain the envisioned results. Secondly, of course, the effects of this crisis will be probably felt for another 3 – 4 years, at least in terms of the rhythms of economic growth and employment. Therefore, in principle, the strategy should take into account these residual effects but, in my opinion, it should rather have a strongly normative character than a purely extrapolating one. The new strategy has to construct the new economic reality on the horizon of the year 2020 and not to adjust this reality to the current development. We should not neglect the context, but we should not become slaves of the context. A strategy is first of all a vision, a dream that we want to fulfil, not an optimal navigation through the current context, considered exogenous. In my opinion, the Europe 2020 strategy should be fundamentally considered an intellectual project. If needed, the intellectual project can even represent a Procrustean bed in which we should "force" the economic and social reality we aspire to. I would like to mention that, somewhat paradoxically, in this normative acceptance, the future is much more predictable than the past.

### Doesn't the strategy, as a normative project, come into conflict with its practicability, with its odds of being implemented? For example, some analysts consider that the failure to achieve the Lisbon Agenda is to be explained by the over-ambitious nature of its objectives, that is to say, exactly by the overly normative nature of these objectives.

There is indeed a structural contradiction between having a vision (representing the normative aspect) and perceiving reality (representing the context), but it is perfectly manageable through institutional mechanisms called for to "pilot" the process of implementing the strategy. After all, what does to be realistic mean? Probably, to take into consideration the general framework into which we project the vision, all kind of resources which are available or which we presume will be available in the given year horizon

and other similar factors. Or, this way of seeing things condemns us to extrapolate the current state in a purely phenomenological manner. I believe that this is where the true contradiction is to be found, between the having a vision and perceiving reality, and not that which is considered, particularly between having a vision and putting it into practice. Surely we should not be utopian, but this danger may be avoided through a very simple mechanism:



a) the objectives shall be set out in a normative manner, without restrictions generated by the current context; b) based on these objectives, institutional mechanisms for using/generating/restructuring the available resources of all kinds are conceived; c) the objectives should be conceived and, particularly, the timeline of their achievement should be set in such a way so that the achievement of some objectives (or of some stages) become *sui generis* resources for the achievement of the subsequent objectives (or of their subsequent stages). As mentioned above, the contradiction disappears.

### What should be the way in which Romania could take part in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy?

From what I understand, most of the governmental structures involved in achieving the five final objectives of the Strategy have already set their targets (unfortunately, some of them purely based on extrapolation) which will be included in the National Reform Programme, for 2011 and the years to come. I believe we should be very careful, EUwise, to avoid the paradox in which fulfilling the objectives of the Strategy and achieving the economic convergence become contradictory. Therefore, my opinion is that the differentiation of the national quantitative targets is not to be wished and that this differentiation should apply only to two factors: a) different-speed progress references when reaching the final quantitative value, depending on Romania's starting point as compared to that of the other Member States; b) different achievement structures, depending on the lock-ins generated by the economic and social structures existing in Romania. Therefore, there should not be a differentiation in terms of the final target value, but only of the speed references and of the structures within which the target is going to be reached. Otherwise, the contradiction we were previously talking about (analogous to the contradiction between the nominal economic convergence and the real one, the so-called Maastricht paradox) is going to actuate itself, with the risk of the failure of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Interview by **Mihai Sebe**

## 2010 Strategy and Policy Studies (SPOS) Project

Within the frame of the 2010 SPOS Project, four studies are being developed, having as subjects: "Adapting legislation, institutions and national policies to the EU functioning model after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty"; "The new European Strategy for economic growth and employment (Europe 2020): objectives, instruments of monitoring implementation, necessary resources (national, community budget)"; "The Danube Strategy – national priorities" and "New European concepts of industrial policy (clusters of competitiveness, networking, spin-off, etc.) in order to enhance competitiveness and innovation"

These studies have very relevant and topical themes in order to outline some perspectives and national contributions concerning a series of processes that define the social, political and economic evolution of the European Union.

### **Adapting legislation, institutions and national policies to the EU functioning model after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty**

The Lisbon Treaty, entered into force on 1 December 2009, has the role of enhancing the EU capacity of action by increasing the efficiency and the efficacy of the institutions and of the decision-making mechanisms. The modifications introduced in the functioning of the EU ensure the basis for new possibilities of action, both at the level of community policies and at the level of the EU external relationships. The study "Adapting legislation, institutions and national policies to the EU functioning model after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty" aims to contribute to identifying of the opportunities and to consolidate Romania's profile in the European Union.

The reconfiguration of the EU institutional dimension, including adding new positions of President of the European Council and, respectively, of High Representative of External Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, determines the adjustment of the dialogue mode with the European actors and the consolidation of the relationships with them, from the perspective of participation in the European decisional process.

### **The new European Strategy for economic growth and employment (Europe 2020): objectives, instruments of monitoring implementation, necessary resources (national, community budget)**

The study on "The new European Strategy for economic growth and employment (Europe 2020): objectives, instruments of monitoring implementation, necessary resources (national, community budget)" aims to elaborate new perspectives referring to the National Plan of Development and to the National Strategic Frame of Reference. The Europe 2020 strategy proposes a coordinating platform for the economic policies of the member states in the next decade, meant to lead to the transformation of the EU in an smart sustainable and inclusive economy, with high levels of employment, of productivity and of social cohesion. The

general frames of the strategy and its priorities and objectives have been adopted by the leaders of the states and/or by the government at the European Council on 25-26 March 2010. They serve as the basis for elaborating the new *National Reform Program* by all the member states.

### **The Danube Strategy – national priorities**

The research on "The Danube Strategy – national priorities" is analyzed in the context of the European Council's decision to mandate the European Commission to elaborate the EU Strategy for the Danube Region by the end of 2010. The Danube Strategy is an EU internal strategy, to which third party riverside states are also invited to participate in. The Danube Strategy observes the three principles applied in the case of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (no new institutions, no new funds and no modifications of the community legislation). The strategy is going to be based on three domains proposed by the European Commission: connectivity (transport, energy, and telecommunications), the protection of the environment and water management, the socio-economic development (culture, education, tourism, and rural development). The objective of the study is to promote the national priorities in the European and regional area.

### **New European concepts of industrial policy (clusters of competitiveness, networking, spin-off, etc.) in order to enhance competitiveness and innovation**

The Competitiveness Council of March 2010 has adopted the pack of conclusions that refer to "The Industrial Policy: the Necessity of a New Industrial Policy" by which the European Commission was mandated to present, by the end of 2010, a communication on the industrial policy including a new ample agenda for this policy sector, after consulting the interested parties. The Europe 2020 communication of the Commission "A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"<sup>1</sup> launched in March 2010 announces the future communication on industrial policy<sup>2</sup> as an emblematic initiative.

During this year, Romania is to formulate a coordinated governmental position to answer the public consultation on the future communication of the Commission and is to elaborate a first contribution of this sector to Romania's new National Reform Program<sup>3</sup> that should reflect the transposition of the strategic priority of sustainable growth in the Europe 2020 strategy at the national level. The general objective of the study on "New European concepts of industrial policy (clusters of competitiveness, networking, spin-off, etc.) in order to enhance competitiveness and innovation" is represented by the development of Romania's industrial policy and by its promotion in the context of the European policies and experiences in the domain. The study includes proposals of policy traceability starting from the analysis of the challenges of competitive industrial development.

**Agnes Nicolescu**

European Studies and Analysis

<sup>1</sup> COM(2010) 2020 final.

<sup>2</sup> The emblematic initiative "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" enlists in the second thematic priority – the durable growth.

<sup>3</sup> The document is to be transmitted to the Commission this year, in autumn/winter.

## Europe 2020

From 21-28 May 2010, a series of four topical meetings on the national objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy took place at the Infoeuropa Centre, under the coordination of the Department for European Affairs, gathering representatives of the central public administration, of social partners, of universities and of the civil society.

**A. Energy and climate change (20/20/20)**, in partnership with the Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment (MECBE) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) – **21 May**

Ion Stochiță, MEF public manager, stressed the fact that Romania can undertake to fulfil the objective of greenhouse gas reductions by 25 % compared to the 1990 level, Romania having already made that commitment at the European Council in December 2008, as part of the *Energy – Climate Change Package*. Despite this, Romania cannot undertake a potential objective of a 30 % reduction – proposed by the European Commission as an alternative within the Europe 2020 strategy – and need to oppose it.

Cătălina Groza, MECBE managing director, specified that Directive 2009/28/CE provides that Romania should fulfil a target of a 20 % share of energy from renewable sources of the Community's gross final consumption of energy in 2020. Moreover, there is a chance that Romania reach a 24 % share.

As to the last target of 20/20/20, a 20 % growth of energy efficiency, according to Cătălina Groza, Romania is able to make the commitment to reduce energy consumption by 20 %, taking into consideration the effects of the current economic crisis, the impact of the application of environmental legislation, the economic adjustment and the changes in the structure of the energy mix.

**B. Education**, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MERYS) – **26 May**

Liliana Preoteasa, MERYS Director-General, presented the interpretative document on **the target regarding early school abandonment**, drafted by the Sectoral Education Working Group, and the three scenarios proposed to reduce, by 2020, the percentage of the 18 to 24 yo adults who leave the education system prematurely:

- the **pessimistic** scenario – a target of **13,4 %**;
- the **realistic** scenario – a target of **11,3 %**;
- the **optimistic** scenario – a target of **10 %**.

Ion Ciucă, MERYS director, presented an analysis of the tertiary educational system in Romania, highlighting the fact that **the share of the tertiary education of the entire educational system, firstly, depends on the country's economic state**. As far as the national objectives are concerned, it is estimated that **the share of the 30 to 34 yo population, who have successfully graduated from an institution in the tertiary education system, will be:**

- the **pessimistic** scenario – a target of **29,93 %**;
- the **realistic** scenario – a target of **24,60 %**;
- the **optimistic** scenario – a target of **26,74 %**.

A number of measures meant to help fulfil these objectives have been announced, such as:

- make the Student Credit Agency operational;
- increase the attractiveness of the curricula;
- increase the number of student places;

- restructure the bachelor studies system – reducing the number of specializations.

**C. Employment and social inclusion**, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (MLFSP) – **27 May**

Simona Bordeianu, MLFSP director, presented the current situation from the point of view of employment (63,5 % in 2009), as well as the three scenarios foreseen by Romanian authorities for the increase of the employment rate regarding people aged 20-64:

- the **realistic** scenario – a target of **69 – 70 %**;
- the **optimistic** scenario – a target of **71 – 71,5 %**;
- the **pessimistic** scenario – a target of **67 – 68 %**.

Among the measures for increasing the employment rate are the following:

- increase the education level;
- ensure a wider access to life-long professional training;
- ensure access to social benefits and services without an impact on job attractiveness.

With respect to promoting the target of enhancing the degree of social inclusion by achieving the objective of reducing the risk of poverty, Adina Drăgotoiu, MLFSP director, showed that in 2008, the relative poverty rate in Romania was 18,2 % (referring to those who have an equivalised disposable income lower than 60 % of the average disposable income), the most affected categories being the unemployed (37,6 %), own-account workers (40,8 %), single-parent families (30 %), families with more than three children (47 %), young people (20,9 %) and children (25,9 %).

Starting from that, national authorities drafted three scenarios with regard to a decrease in the number of people under the risk of poverty in 2020, as compared to 2008. Hence we have the following estimated reductions:

- the **realistic** scenario – **690 000 people**;
- the **optimistic** scenario – **794 000 people**;
- the **pessimistic** scenario – **586 000 people**.

**D. Investing in research and development**, in partnership with the National Authority for Scientific Research (NASR) – **28 May**

Rolanda Predescu, NASR director, showed that, the objective set at the EU level to allocate 3 % of the GDP to the research and development sector by 2020 is an extremely ambitious one and that Romania, at national level, is able to set a target of about 2 % (public and private investments). Rolanda Predescu also presented the current ratio of the number of researchers to the number of the employed in Romania, that is 1/3 of the EU27 average (0,352 %, to 0,92 % in EU27), as well as the ratio of the number of people involved in research activities to the total number of the employed population in Romania, (0,479 % comparing to 1,55 % în EU 27).

For further information, as well as the detailed objectives, please refer to: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/articol/989/dezbateri-publice-privind-obiectivele-na-ionale-ale-strategiei-europa-2020>

**Mihai Sebe**

European Studies and Analysis



# RJEA, volume 10, no. 2

Treaties, Lisbon, reform, energy policy, internal market, European Neighbourhood Policy, transatlantic relations are the themes tackled with in the first issue of the tenth volume of the *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*.

**Clive Church**, Emeritus Professor of European Studies of the University of Kent, and **David Phinnemore**, Senior Lecturer in European integration at Queen's University in Belfast, write about the status, structure and style of the Treaty of Lisbon, its contents, institutional changes, democratization and its provisions on values and rights. Thus the authors make the treaty understood to the reader, but do not hesitate to present it as a compromise document and not as a master blueprint.

**Irina Maria Găman**, graduate student enrolled at the Free University of Brussels, presents an article about the liberalization of the energy sectors, such as electricity and natural gas. **Ms Găman** states that this process of liberalization for the electricity and gas markets should have been totally accomplished by mid 2007 by the EU member states, goal established by two community legal instruments. The article aims to explain the limits, as well as which the factors for the heterogeneous degree of liberalization of electricity and gas markets at European level are. The focus is on the specific economic and political factors through which the limits of liberalization of the energy markets can be explained.

**Scott Nicholas Romaniuk**, researcher affiliated to the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies of Carleton University in Canada, tackles with the issue of normative power of the European Union in the European Foreign Policy. **Mr Romaniuk** analyses the ability of the Union to exercise a normative power in Eastern Europe. He argues that the disparities in adopting norms between ENP target states exemplifies the incongruence of the success of the EU normative power in terms of foreign relations.

**Adriana Berbec**, graduate student in International Relations and European Studies from University of East Anglia in Norwich, analyses how the latest enlargements have brought new opportunities and challenges to the EU in relation to its neighbours, the role of the Eastern Partnership and the *Union for the Mediterranean* initiatives



in fostering cooperation with contiguous countries and whether these community projects, together with the ENP, may have a contribution to the understanding of what the EU limits are.

Romanian security in an evolving European context is the subject tackled by **Mircea Micu**, PhD student in International Relations at the University of Cambridge. The article presents issues linked to Romania's traditions of security, the uninformed, unaccounted for and unthreatened Romanian populace, and the challenges of its neighbourhood, Russia, Moldova, Ukraine, Turkey, Hungary, Bulgaria and Serbia. Moreover, **Mr Micu** writes about the East-West tension at the heart of the dynamic European culture of security. He concludes his article by stating that it is clear that Romania's concern for its territorial defence is satisfactorily addressed within a NATO framework only.

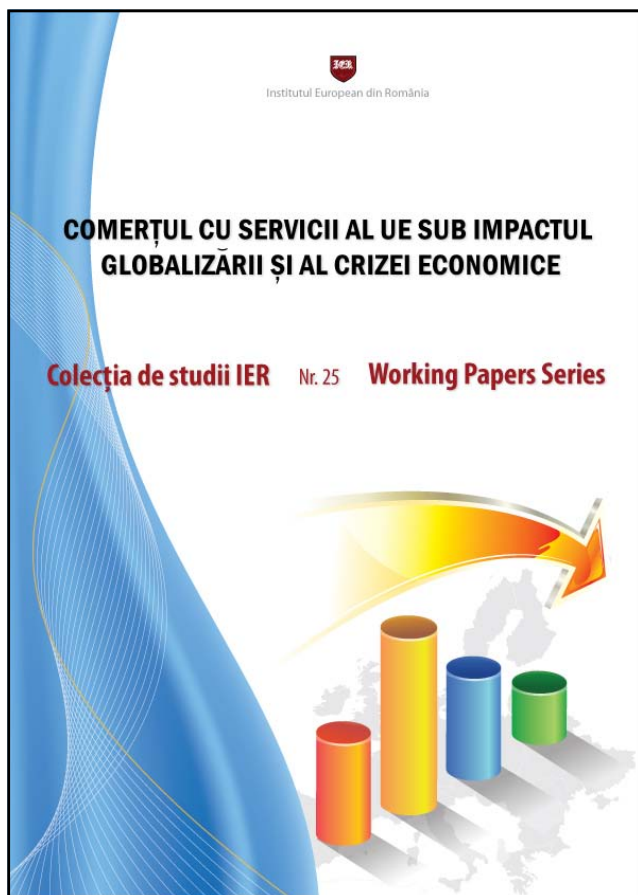
**Victor Negrescu**, PhD candidate at the National School of Political Science and Administration in Bucharest, states that understanding how the *acquis communautaire* in terms of development cooperation was made operational in Romania helps understanding the country's new donor status. Starting from the preliminary considerations on cooperation for development, situated between humanitarian logic and neo-imperialism, the article examines the European policy on development cooperation, evolution, institutional framework, European strategy. The study case on Romania tackles with the legal framework, the national strategy, the cooperation actors.

The present issue of RJEA concludes with a book review by **Ionuț Constantin Trăistaru**, MA student in Contemporary History at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. The book reviewed is on *Weighting Differences: Romanian Identity in the Wider European Context* by Vasile Boari and Sergiu Gherghina.

The full texts of the articles and information on the authors can be found on the webpage of the *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*: [www.ier.ro/rjea](http://www.ier.ro/rjea)

**Mădălina Magnusson**  
RJEA Editor

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#### Working Paper

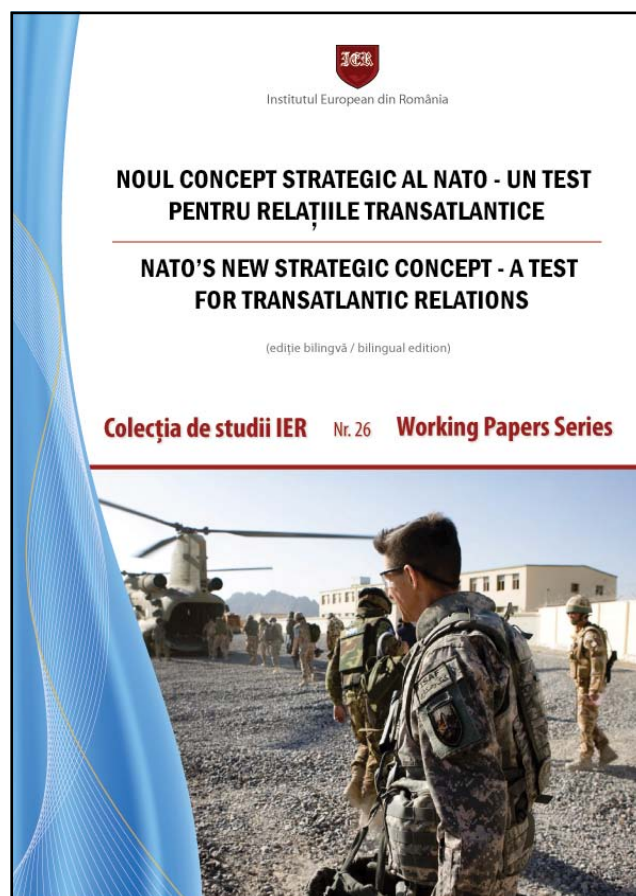
#### ***EU trade in services under the impact of globalisation and the economic crisis***

The paper *EU trade in services under the impact of globalisation and the economic crisis* (available only in Romanian), by Agnes Ghibuțiu and Iulia Monica Oehler-Șincai, tackles with the evolution of the EU trade in services, highlighting the main trends which have put their mark upon the trade in the context of a growing globalisation of world economy. Among the topics presented in the study we would mention: volume, dynamics and geographical orientation of the trade in services, specialization of Member States in the trade in services, dynamics of trade flows intra and extra EU, relevance of the internal market from the perspective of trade flows and the decline of international trade and its causes.

#### Working Paper

#### ***NATO's New Strategic Concept – A Test for Transatlantic Relations***

The micro-study *NATO's New Strategic Concept – A Test for Transatlantic Relations*, by Agnes Nicolescu, tackles with the main factors which have shaped up national perceptions and options with regard to the contents of NATO's new strategic concept, analysing the debates on the Alliance's direction and future missions which have taken place between member states. Among the issues presented in the micro-study we mention the reasons on which the concept of nuclear deterrence is based, the factors which shape up the Allies' relations with Russia and other international key-actors, elements of interpreting article 5 of the Washington Treaty and NATO's role in new interest areas for the allies, such as cyber and energy security.



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