



# EIR newsletter

Year II, no. 24 - December 2010

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in this issue \_\_\_\_\_

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the European Institute of Romania



In partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, the European Institute of Romania organized on 14 December 2010 the international conference entitled *Redefining Europe*.

The anniversary event has marked the 10<sup>th</sup> years of activity of the European Institute of Romania and has had as a guest of honour Mr Jacques Pelkmans, teacher at Jan Tinbergen Chair within the College of Europe, Bruges, Senior Researcher Fellow within CEPS Brussels.

The organisers have brought into the attention of the political decision-makers of the academic and research environment, of the public opinion in general, some of the significant challenges on the current agenda of the European affairs: the post-Lisbon Treaty institutional mechanisms; the financial-economic crisis and its implications upon the EU economic governance; the single internal market at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On the occasion of this event also took place the first edition of the **EIR Excellence Prizes** award, dedicated this year to the journalism in the field of European affairs. The journalists designated for this prize were: Anne-Marie Blăjan (Hotnews), Dan Cărbunaru (Calea Europeană), Ionel Dancă (The Money Channel), Gabriel Giurgiu (TVR), Cristian Hoștiuc (Ziarul Financiar), Luca Niculescu (RFI), Mircea Vasilescu (Dilema Veche) ... **p. 2**

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## Conclusions of the Winter European Council (16 – 17 December 2010)

The end of the Belgian presidency semester of the EU Council was marked by the pursuit at Brussels of the winter European Council's works.

The agenda of the winter Council's meeting comprised the subject of the external relations of the European Union, namely the subject of the economic policy. In this latter case there have been approached issues referring at the outline of a permanent mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the ... **p. 5**



... After the decision of the Selection Advisory Group composed of the Board in Office members and of the EIR Scientific Advisory Council, the seven journalists were the laureates of the EIR Excellence Prize (the EIR Excellence Prize Diploma - the Euro-Journalist of the Year and a mini-laptop).

In the foreword, Mrs Gabriela Drăgan, general director of the European Institute of Romania, presented the objectives of the EIR anniversary conference, also introducing the themes approached within each section, as well as the award of the EIR excellence prizes, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, prizes which have marked the contribution of the best journalists in the field of the European affairs.

Mr Florin Pogonaru, chairman of AOAR and chairman of the EIR Board in Office, expressed the necessity to reposition EIR in the new Romanian and European context. The 10th years of activity have demonstrated that EIR is an influent voice in Romania's integration process into the European Union and also that the Institute will be an active partner not only in the debate of some Community problems, but also in the outlining of some subjects of interest for Romania to be asserted at Brussels.

Mr Leonard Orban, presidential counsellor, former member of the European Commission and honorary president of EIR, underlined the role of the impact studies in the pre-adhesion period for preparing the negotiations, indicating the continuity and efficiency of the EIR products for the political decision-makers. Romania has shortly enough benefited of the statute of EU member, not only from the point of view of the European funds use, but also from the point of view of the convergence, and also from the institutional point of view. Mr Orban underlined that the integration of Romania is not completed, files as the adhesion to the Schenghen area, to the euro area, the continuation of the convergence processes with EU being still opened. In the context in which EU seems to be consolidated after this crisis because there have existed the political will to continue the project and the intelligence to supply optimal solutions to the EU consolidation, EIR, in its turn, must reposition on the market, as a supplier of expertise and optimal solutions for the Romanian decision-makers and other European actors.



His Excellency, Mr Leo d'Aes, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Romania, underlined the main acting directions of the Belgian presidency in the field of the EU economic governance, of the climate changes and of the energy policy,



of the external relations. He noticed the consolidation of the European Commission positions, as guardian of the treaties, in the context of the EU new economic governance, as well as the need to stimulate the structural reforms. Underlining the problem of the Union's limited budgetary resources, Mr Ambassador expressed the need of an active role of the European Parliament, of redefining the work mechanisms at the Union's level, as well as of a higher degree of the EU opening to the rest of the world.

Mr Nicolae Idu, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, reviewed the history of the "EIR project", his role in the drawing up of policies and in the support of the institutional actors in Romania, also underlining the difficulties to mobilize internal and external resources for the drawing up of some studies exceeding the simply academic stage and directing to concrete recommendations of policies. Mr Idu noticed the importance of the research component, underlining the need to redefine EIR in the post adhesion period, as a think-tank in the field of the European affairs. One of the benefits of the adhesion to the EU should be the maximum use of the think-tank instruments in order to identify important strategic objectives at the European level.

Prof. Pelkmans indicated that the single internal market came back in the European Union spotlight, being the only serious option for the returning at a healthy economic growth, based on the market force. It is a definition problem what we understand by the concept of more Single Internal Market, thus being able to have an ad-hoc vision (increase of the existent *acquis* concerning the Single Internal Market), a vision referring to a healthy but narrow Single Internal Market, and finally a strategic vision, in which more Single Internal Market can only prove to be useful to the European Union's socio-economic objectives.

Prof. Pelkmans succeeded to make a balanced presentation, speaking about the reasons in favour of the Single Internal Market enlargement, as well as about the elements that would be against enlargement. Thus, in favour of enlargement there are economic arguments taken from treaties and from the existent case-law, but also factors such as the pressure of globalization and the EU internal dynamics.

For the whole text of the synthesis, please access [http://www.ier.ro/documente/confetinta\\_aniversara\\_ier/Comunicat-sinteza\\_conferinta\\_aniversara\\_14\\_decembrie\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ier.ro/documente/confetinta_aniversara_ier/Comunicat-sinteza_conferinta_aniversara_14_decembrie_2010.pdf).

# Participation of the European Institute of Romania in ARCADIA's first international conference (25-26 November 2010)

On 25 and 26 November 2010, the *Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development* (ARCADIA) organised the first annual international conference, under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on: **Development, trade, foreign and security policies: which is the added value of the new emergent donors?** As an EU Member State and, implicitly, as an emergent international donor, Romania is interested in becoming a dynamic actor on the global stage, in its role as contributor in the area of international development. The conference aimed to provide an area for interaction, dialogue and expertise exchange for all the groups interested in the issue of international development and cooperation, i.e.: policy initiators, academic circles, practitioners, business environment, mass-media, NGOs and professional associations.

As part of this conference, EIR together with ARCADIA organised the workshop on the **Economic and financial crisis and its implications for the Community budget and the development assistance policy** (25 November 2010).

The workshop was moderated by Professor **Dumitru Miron**, PhD, pro-rector of the Academy of Economic Studies and member of the EIR's Scientific Advisory Board. The speakers of the conference were Mr **Napoleon Pop**, director, Centre of Financial and Monetary Research "Victor Slăvescu", Romanian

Academy, Professor **Ene Dinga**, PhD, deputy director, Romanian Banking Institute, Professor **Moisă Altăr**, PhD, Academy of Economic Studies, Mr **Sergiu Celac**, ambassador and Mr **Bogdan Baltazar**, financial consultant.

The Romanian viewpoint on the economic and financial crisis and its implications for the euro and the Community budget, with direct consequences on the budget of the international development and cooperation assistance were presented during the workshop. Important element of the international relations, the development assistance must take into account the economic and political restraints. Romania has had a tradition of the development assistance during the communist period and the lessons of the past may prove to be useful for the future as well.

The development assistance must comply with a series of well established principles in which the pragmatic interests intertwine with the ethical criteria in order to avoid ambiguous situations. At the same time, there has to be a close correlation between the economic capacities of the donor state and the aid provided in order to avoid the unbalanced situations which occurred before 1989.

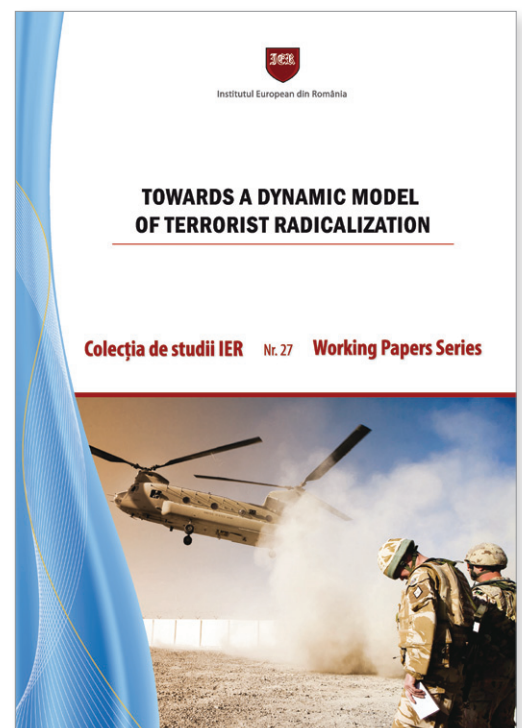
Mihai Sebe

publication

## Working Paper no. 27 Towards a dynamic model of terrorist radicalization has appeared

The European Institute of Romania has published the Working Paper no. 27 *Towards a dynamic model of terrorist radicalization* written by **Clara Volintiru**, in English. The work aims to develop a theoretical evaluation of the radicalization phenomenon. The author aims to develop a dynamical model of terrorist radicalization, which takes account of the interactions between the individual motivations and the determining environmental factors. Sequentially understanding individual and societal radicalization is especially useful in developing counter-measures to the terrorist phenomenon. The Dynamic Model of Terrorism Radicalization is applied to the conflicts of Chechnya and Kosovo showing that, once the causal mechanism leading to radicalization in each case is established, we can see more clearly the specific factors ultimately leading to different outcomes.

The proper understanding of the radicalization dynamics is essential for developing effective policies for securing the EU borders as well as for fighting against terrorism both at home, and abroad. The working paper sets forth the concept of *Vector of Radicalization* (VR), that is the understanding of the involvement in terrorist activities as a process which is reversible up to a point and not as an immutable state. This approach implies a focus of the analysis on process variables such as the changing context which the individual operates in or the correlation between events and the individual reaction (Taylor & Horgan 2006). As presented in this paper, radicalization is "a process of personal development whereby an individual adopts ever more extreme political or politic-religious ideas and goals, becoming convinced that the attainment of these goals justifies extreme methods" (Ongering 2007, Al-Lami



2009). This definition of radicalization as a process implies several consequences. Firstly, it supposes there is a scale of radicalization ranging from legal ways to express one's support for a cause to the illegality of violent actions. Secondly, the motivation behind the radicalization is variable as well. Violent actions as support for nationalist and also religious causes can be identified.

This paper understands the terrorist action/attack as an extreme method and the final stage of the radicalization process. Finally, the above definition of radicalization refers to the ideas and goals driving a person to extremist actions. This type of ideological motivation is thus necessary in order to be able to speak of a radicalization process. If these motivations are absent, we can speak about pathological or criminal terrorism and not about a political action (Schmid 2008). Therefore, the terrorism can be regarded an extreme form of political activism.

Assessing the process which leads an ordinary individual to use violence in order to support his/her political convictions is supported by the definition of the term *process* by Taylor and Horgan (2006): "a sequence of events, involving steps or operations that are usually ordered and/or interdependent". In order to regard the contemporary terrorism as the result of such an evolving "process" and not a mere state of facts, congruent factors need to be included in the analysis.

Trying to leave behind the deterministic analysis of radicalization, Bjorgo (2008) defines different *levels of causation*: structural causes, motivational causes, facilitator causes and trigger causes. He positions the *structural causes* at a macro-level and defines them as "causes which affect people's lives in ways that they may or may not comprehend". In this category, we can include *social factors* (ex: cultural patterns of the society they belong to, demographic imbalances, class structure), *political factors* (ex: geopolitics, regional/international relations) or *economic factors* (eg: changes generated by the modernisation/globalisation process).

Agnes Nicolescu

analysis | opinion

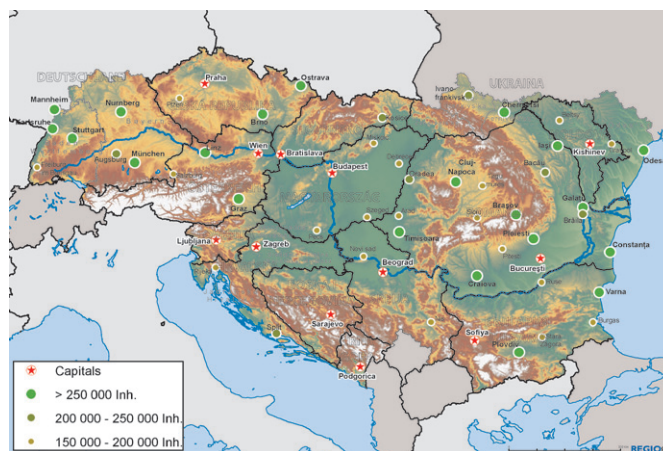
## The European Union's Strategy for the Danube Region

On 8 December 2010, the European Commission has adopted the **European Union's Strategy for the Danube Region**. It is an extended strategy covering several Community policies, having a macro-region as its object. The strategy comprises a communication and an action plan that will be periodically reviewed. The implementation of the strategy will start when obtaining the support of all Member States, in April 2011, during the Hungarian Presidency.

The present strategy encourages the consolidation of the security in the region, the long term cooperation with the purpose of solving local problems, encouraging the development of transport and energy networks and the economic development.

The Danube Region, with over 100 million inhabitants, covering the fifth part of the EU's surface, is vital for Europe. It can facilitate EU's opening towards its neighbours, towards the Black Sea Region, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. With its integrated approach focused on sustainable development, the strategy contributes to the achievement of the EU objectives and it consolidates the application of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Danube Basin holds a series of advantages that can differentiate it at European and global level, thus allowing its rapid development: geographical location (opening towards the East); solid education system; cultural, ethnical and natural diversity; rich sources of renewable energy (hidro, biomass, wind and thermal); good potential of energy efficiency and last but not least, important environment advantages (flora, fauna, the Danube Delta).



Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/danube/images/map\\_region\\_large.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/images/map_region_large.pdf)

Even though the strategy will not offer a supplementary European financing, in the region there is a series of EU programmes ensuring consistent financing in the region. Efficient using of the approximately 100 billion EUR allocated within the framework of the cohesion policy (The European Fund for Regional Development, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund) between 2007 and 2013.

The strategy contains an action plan structured on four pillars: (1) *Interconnection of the Danube Region* - with a view to improving mobility and multi-modality: (a) inland waterways; (b) road, railway and air connections; with a view to encouraging more sustainable energies; with a view to promoting culture, tourism and direct contact between people;

(2) *Protecting the environment in the Danube Region* - restoration and maintenance of the water quality; management of the environment risks; conservation of biodiversity, landscape, air and soil quality;

(3) *Economic growth in the Danube Region* - by developing the knowledge-based society through research, education and information technology; by supporting the competitiveness of enterprises, including by development of groups; by investment in people and in capacities;

(4) *Consolidating the Danube Region* - improving institutional capacity and cooperation; cooperation in order to promote security and to solve the issues of organised crime and serious criminal offences.

The strategy is foreseen for an undetermined duration but it includes a series of precise objectives with defined deadline with the purpose of stimulating the efforts undertaken, among which there are elements such as:

- an increase by 20%, as compared to 2010, of freight transport on the river, by 2020;

- developing, by 2020, efficient multi-modal terminals in the Danube harbours, in order to connect the inland water ways with the road and railway transport systems;
- completing and adopting the Management Plan for the Danube Delta, by 2013;
- reducing by 25% the areas affected by soil erosion of over 10 tons per hectare, by 2020;
- investing 3% of the GDP in research and development by 2020;
- access to broadband internet for all the EU's citizens in the region by 2013;
- a period of maximum 4 weeks for obtaining authorisations to establish an undertaking, by 2015;
- establishing norms for e-Government and reducing excessive bureaucracy, by 2012.

For further information, please visit: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/danube/documents\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/documents_en.htm)

Mihai Sebe

## Conclusions of the Winter European Council (16 – 17 December 2010)



Source: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_council\\_meetings/5276995694/sizes/l/in/photostream/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/european_council_meetings/5276995694/sizes/l/in/photostream/)

The end of the Belgian presidency semester of the EU Council was marked by the pursuit at Brussels of the winter European Council's works.

The agenda of the winter Council's meeting comprised the subject of the external relations of the European Union, namely the subject of the economic policy. In this latter case there have been approached issues referring at the outline of a permanent mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area, the European governance, namely the future multi-annual financial perspective after 2013.

From the perspective of the European Union enlargement we can notice the statute of candidate country granted to the Republic of Montenegro. Another registered premiere refers to the submission of the first report on the progresses registered in the relations with the strategic partners of the European Union, report submitted by the High Representative concerning the European Union's relations with his strategic partners.

The problem of global warming has also been approached, the European Council greeting the successful result of COP 16 at Cancun.

The European Council has agreed upon the text of the draft decision for the amendment of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), deciding to launch immediately the simplified revision procedure provided by Article 48 (6) of TFEU in view of establishing a permanent mechanism to safeguard financial stability of the euro area as a whole (*European Stability Mechanism*). This mechanism will replace the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM), which will remain in force until June 2013. The mechanism will be activated by a mutual agreement of the Member States from the euro area in the event of a risk to the stability of the euro area as a whole. If they want, the Members States whose currency is not euro will be implied in these works and will attend at operations developed pursuant to the mechanism, in an ad-hoc manner.

As for the economic governance, the European Council asked for the intensification of the discussions about the six legislative proposals of the European Commission of 29 September 2010, drawn up based on the recommendations of the guiding group and approved in October this year. The time-limit estimated for the end of the negotiations is June 2011.

Concerning the multi-annual financial perspective after 2013, the European Council recalled its conclusions from October 2010 and specified that it is waiting the European Commission's proposals about the new multi-annual financial framework until June 2011.

In the conditions of the euro area crisis, an important role is played by the solidarity signal offered by the heads of the euro area states and by the European institutions which, in a common statement, have underlined that the euro currency is and will remain a central part of the European integration. To this effect there is wanted the accomplishment of a series of actions providing:

- a) integral application of the existing programmes;
- b) maintenance of the fiscal responsibility;
- c) acceleration of structural reforms intended for the growth improvement;
- d) consolidation of the Stability and Growth Pact and implementation of the new macro-supervision framework of the 2011 summer;

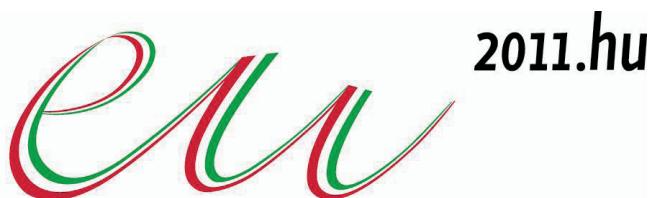
- e) assurance of the availability of the adequate financial support through the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF);
- f) continued consolidation of the financial system concerning the regulatory as well as the supervision frameworks and performance of some new stress tests in the bank sector;
- g) expression of the whole support for the ECB action.

Here are some of the conclusions of the winter European Council formulated by the heads of states and governments: „*The economic growth perspectives are being consolidated and the European economy foundations are solid. The temporary instruments for stability instituted at the beginning of this year proved their usefulness, but the crisis demonstrated that there are no reasons for self-satisfaction. Here is the reason for which we agreed today upon the text of a limited treaty amendment for a future permanent mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area as a whole. This amendment should enter into force on 1 January 2013. We also reaffirmed our commitment to obtain an agreement as for the legislative proposals concerning the economic governance until the end of June 2011, in order to consolidate the economic pillar of the economic and monetary union and to continue the application of the Europe 2020 Strategy*”.

For further details, see: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/118578.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/118578.pdf)

Mihai Sebe

## THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY



The Member States of the European Union hold, by rotation, for a term of six months, the Presidency of the Council, the main decision-making body of the EU. During the first half of 2011 this role will be taken up by Hungary, according to the planning<sup>1</sup>, while Romania's turn will come up in the second half of 2019.

Hungary's current agenda comprises EU's general policy orientations, as well as the solution to the current issues form presently the agenda of the Hungarian presidency, that the European press has already mentioned<sup>2</sup>. Mr Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, gave an exclusive interview for the Council's web-site - **Making the Europe 2020 Strategy a Success** - where he talks about the action lines and his expectations for 2011.

The priority files are organised in four themes<sup>3</sup> focused on the human factor: growth and employment to strengthen the European social model; a stronger Europe; EU closer to the citizen; enlargement and the neighbourhood policy. As regards the EU's enlargement, the Hungarian presidency declares its commitment to finalise during the first semester of 2011 **the accession negotiations with Croatia**. The East neighbourhood policy will be sustained and one of its priority goals is the organisation of the second high level reunion of the **Eastern Partnership** in Hungary in May 2011.

### Under the Europe 2020 Strategy

In fact, the Hungarian presidency follows the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, by which EU intends to improve its citizens' life conditions by creating jobs and by stimulating sustainable competitiveness. In particular, the Hungarian presidency intends to focus on the situation of small and medium size enterprises considered to be the driving force of economic growth and job creation, but also on drawing the attention of the Member States on the consequences the demography and the family policy have on the economy.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/118578.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/118578.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> COUNCIL DECISION of 1 January 2007 determining the order in which the office of President of the Council shall be held, (2007/5/CE, Euratom), JO L 1, 4.1.2007, p. 11 - 12.

<sup>2</sup> **Prioritățile președinției maghiare a UE: economie, extindere, energie (Priorities of the Hungarian presidency of the EU: economy, enlargement, energy)**, published on 30 December 2010, available only in Romanian, [http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/articles|displayArticle|articleID\\_21741/Prioritatile-presedintiei-maghiare-a-UE-economie-extindere-energie.html](http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/articles|displayArticle|articleID_21741/Prioritatile-presedintiei-maghiare-a-UE-economie-extindere-energie.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eu2011.hu/priorities-hungarian-presidency>

At the same time, the theme of the multiannual budget of the EU, that will be the subject of some negotiations considered to be delicate, is being monitored with great interest. The delay in adopting the budget for 2011 is, also, an important challenge which will have to be solved during the semester of the Hungarian presidency.

### Economic governance

But, above all, the main task of the Hungarian presidency is that of finalizing by the end of its term, the debate in the Council on the six legislative proposals of the Commission. They were drawn up on the basis of the proposals of the workgroup coordinated by the Permanent President of the Council, Mr Herman Van Rompuy, and were presented on 29 September 2010. Thus, a permanent mechanism of crisis management will be established for the Euro zone in order to tackle the financial difficulties and to prevent possible “contamination”.

### Re-examining the EU policies

In order to keep up with the global changes and the internal shifts, the Hungarian presidency will have to manage the debates on the agricultural policy (aiming to obtain a compromise unanimously supported by the Member States for the modernisation of the European agricultural model on the basis of the Commission’s reform proposals of 18 November 2010), the cohesion policy, the energy policy and the environment policy.

It is estimated that by obtaining these compromises in order to continue the sectoral policies, the Community interests will be strengthened and the drawing up of new conclusions necessary for the elaboration of the financial framework for 2014 - 2020 will be enabled.

Drawing up an European policy regarding the Roma people  
The Hungarian presidency has set as an objective the adoption at the European Council in June 2011 of a framework strategy regarding the integration of the Roma people, previously elaborated by the Commission to the extent that the strategy will correspond to the intentions of the Member States and of the EU institutions. The document will be examined in designated

groups of the Council and the summary of the results will be submitted to the heads of states and governments. If it will be confirmed, the framework strategy will be the first step of a common European policy regarding the Roma people and the Member States will subsequently draw up reform programmes for their integration.

### The Strategy for the Danube Region (SDR)

The macro-regional development is the objective of an action plan aiming at sustainable development in the lower Danube basin, protection of the territories and natural landscapes, of the cultural values in the region. The Commission submitted in December 2010 a proposal regarding SDR which is to be adopted by the Council during the Hungarian presidency in 2011. Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria were joined in the drawing up of the plan by states of the region that are not members of the EU: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine.

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Even though the shininess of this role of President of the Council seems to some commentators diminished by the establishment of the office of Permanent President, under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the facts show however that the obligations and functions of the presidency by rotation are complex and remain of great importance. This is proved, in the present case, by the tasks and objectives of the Hungarian presidency, which at the same time gives an image of how the challenges of globalisation can be addressed by coordinating policies and resources, through the mechanisms established by the EU. Time will verify the realistic nature of these intentions as well as the viability and complexity of the cross border actions by which the EU institutions try to solve the global issues they are faced with, from energy safety and climate change to employment and the economic crisis.

For further information and for the agenda of the Hungarian presidency, please visit: <http://www.eu2011.hu/>

Mariana Bara

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## Enlargement Strategy and Progress Reports 2010

On 9 November 2010, the European Commission adopted its annual strategy document detailing its policy on EU enlargement. The document is also likely to include a summary of the progress made over the last year by Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. In the case of Albania and Montenegro, the progress reports were replaced by *Opinions*.

As pointed out in the Commission’s document, “Negotiations with Croatia have entered their final stage, demonstrating to all enlargement countries that accession can become a reality, provided the necessary conditions are fulfilled”\*. There has been significant progress in longstanding bilateral differences between Slovenia and Croatia, which helps smoothen the path for Zagreb’s accession to the EU. The document also points out

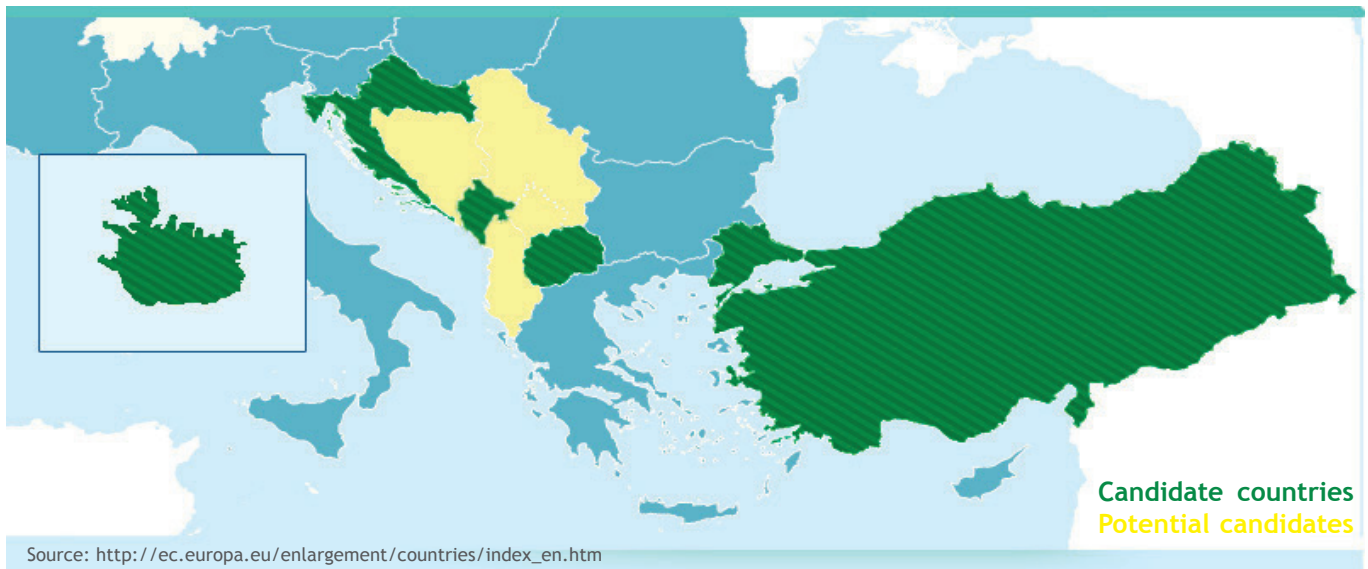
that new chapters have been opened in the negotiations with Turkey and that Ankara has embarked on a thorough revision of its constitution, moving closer to European standards. A positive trend has been noticed as far as regards the evolution of post-conflict reconciliation among peoples and the visa liberalization process for the Western Balkans has progressed.

As reflected in the Communication, Croatia has made consistent progress towards meeting the criteria for membership and the accession negotiations have reached the final stage. Complete cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia remains a prerequisite for Croatia’s progress throughout the accession process.

Numerous challenges persist, and the Commission’s Communication takes note of these significant factors: the

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\* Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010 - 2011, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/strategy\\_paper\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/strategy_paper_2010_en.pdf).



effects of the economic crisis upon all enlargement countries, although to different degrees, also in terms of social welfare in the targeted states; the problem of social inclusion, considering that vulnerable groups such as minorities, disadvantaged communities and people with disabilities have been particularly affected. Other pressing issues which enlargement countries need to consider include the necessity to consolidate the role of law; the freedom of expression and media; regional cooperation and bilateral issues; the use of pre-accession instruments serving the enlargement policy.

The Commission puts forward a series of conclusions and recommendations: the enlargement should continue as it is in the EU's strategic interest to "take the enlargement process forward on the basis of the agreed principles and conditions and the renewed consensus on enlargement approved by the European Council in December 2006". The Commission continues to further consolidate the **monitoring of macro-economic policies** of the targeted countries, while taking into consideration the new developments in EU economic governance. Further on, the Commission will associate enlargement countries with initiatives taken at the EU level in order to pursue the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This

initiative is meant to encourage these states to showcase their preoccupation for these targets in their national political priorities, and even to pursue region-specific targets, where possible.

A particular attention will be paid to the reform of the judiciary and public administration, the fight against organized crime and corruption, considering that most enlargement countries need to make substantial progress to consolidate the rule of law and, in particular, in fighting organized crime and corruption. **Regional cooperation** is a fundamental dimension of the Stabilization and Association process, which translates into the fact that regional cooperation, should not be undermined by divergences over Kosovo. The progress made with regard to **visa liberalization** has been showcased by the fact that visa obligation for citizens from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia has been lifted. Visa requirements for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania should be shortly lifted, provided the two countries meet the necessary standards. As regards the **pre-accession assistance**, beneficiary countries need to consolidate their ability capacity to effectively use EU funds.

Agnes Nicolescu

promo

In the next issue of the EIR Newsletter you will be able to see **the training offer of the European Institute of Romania for the year 2011**, which will include the following courses: *Expert in accessing European structural and cohesion funds; Public procurement expert; General training in European Affairs; The EU legal system; The Economic and Monetary Union; Integrated waste management systems in the context of the European legislation, etc.*

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\* The texts published in this Newsletter express the authors' opinion and do not represent the official position of the European Institute of Romania.

ISSN 2065 - 457X

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