



# EIR newsletter

Year III, no. 29 - May 2011

publication \_\_\_\_\_

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

## RJEA – 2011 SUMMER ISSUE



The summer issue of the **Romanian Journal of European Affairs** offers us the opportunity to analyse the European Union’s strategic presence in the world arena, as well as the relations that the EU currently has with the BRIC countries. The analytical perspective is directed from the world arena to the Black Sea Region and the evolution of the regionalisation process. But the Black Sea is more than that; we are now facing the issue of Turkey’s accession to the EU. What the perspectives are and what we can expect in the future are the main aspects that this article seeks to clarify. We live in a globalised world, in which economic and

social problems are just as important as political issues. Thus, the analysis of the role of the immigrants in Spain can offer us relevant indications in that respect. In this edition you can also read two book reviews dealing with the free movement of persons in the EU area and the issue of transnational identities.

**Scott Nicholas Romaniuk**, an expert in the theory of international relations at the University of Aberdeen, presents in his study *The Entire World’s A Stage: The EU’s Strategic Presence in the Contemporary International Arena* an accurate radiography of the EU’s role in the world arena. The author observes that the EU is going through a process of redefining its own structures and refining the way of using the “soft-hard power” duality ... p. 2

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event \_\_\_\_\_

## Debate – “The Lisbon Treaty: Implications on Romanian Policies and Institutions”

The debate “The Lisbon Treaty: Implications on Romanian Policies and Institutions” took place at the Parliament Palace on **18 May**. The event was organized by the **European Institute of Romania (EIR)** in partnership with the **Commission for European Affairs – Chamber of Deputies** and had as a starting point the conclusions of the homonymous study published in the EIR project **Strategy and Policy Studies – SPOS 2010**.

Guest speakers in the event were: **Valeriu Zgonea** – deputy, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies ... p. 3



The article *The Strategic Character of the Cooperation Relationship between the EU and the BRIC Countries*, signed by **Iulia Monica Oehler-Şincai**, a scientific researcher within the Institute of World Economy of the Romanian Academy, offers an economic perspective on the relations between the EU and the BRIC countries, analysing the operating mechanism of BRIC and the particularities of the relations between its members and the EU.

**Diana Rusu**, a graduate of International Relations at the Central European University of Budapest, analyses in the article *Regionalization in the Black Sea Area: A Comparative Study* the situation of the Black Sea from a comparative perspective, having as a starting point and, at the same time, a reference point the Nordic Region and the Mediterranean Region. The conclusions of the study place the Black Sea Region between the two models mentioned before, having a serious potential to follow the Nordic model, an evolution which depends on the development of future EU policies.

**Andrea Éltető**, a PhD graduate of the Institute of World Economy in Hungary, brings to public attention the issue of immigration, analysing the situation of Spain in a case study, in the article *Immigrants in Spain – Their Role in the Economy and the Effects of the Crisis*. The article describes the characteristics and economic role of immigration, the official policy towards this phenomenon and how it is affected by the economic and financial crisis. Millions of immigrants coming to Spain filled, at first, the vacant positions in fields like construction, industry and agriculture. Subsequently, at the end of 2007, from the moment the effects of the economic crisis began to be felt, a great number of immigrants became unemployed. We are witnessing a decrease in the tolerance of the Spanish towards immigrants and foreigners which seems to have become a current problem.

For **Bedrudin Brljavac**, of the International Burch University, Sarajevo, Turkey represents a great promise, a promise for the future. Faced with a wave of relative reluctance regarding

its accession to the EU, Turkey adopted a multilateral foreign policy, at various levels (economic, political, etc.), turning to countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Balkans. In the article *Turkey Entering the European Union through the Balkan Doors: in the style of a Great Power?*, the author concentrates on the relations between Turkey and the states in the Western Balkans, relations which are disadvantaged from the point of view of Turkey's European aspirations. By its proactive economic policies and by its diplomatic initiatives, Turkey is proving to be an indispensable country for the EU. To the extent that Turkey solves its internal problems and continues its proactive diplomacy, this country is on a path to achieve not only the status of regional power, but also the status of global power.

This issue includes two reviews. The first one, by **Irina Pescăruşu**, a PhD graduate in the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest, regards **Eleanor Spaventa's** book, *Free Movement of Persons in the European Union: Barriers to Movement in Their Constitutional Context* (2008). The book analyses the evolution of the concept of free movement of persons from the perspective of the European Court of Justice case-law. Thus, the timid beginnings in the field are shown and subsequently the newest evolutions are presented in detail. In the second review, **Scott Nicholas Romaniuk** presents **Thomas Risse's** book, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (2010). This book explores Europe in a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional manner, defining it as being an institutional and social concept. The europeanisation of identities and of the political sphere are systematically associated with the key concepts of political discourse: citizenship, nationalism, community and communication, the European Union, enlargement and institution building.

For the full text of the articles, please access: [www.ier.ro/rjea](http://www.ier.ro/rjea)

**Mihai Sebe**

## The European Year of Volunteering (2011) between objectives and reality. Actions of the European Institute of Romania towards supporting the engagement of volunteers

In the European Union, each year is dedicated to an initiative meant to mobilize the European citizens. This year, the European Commission wishes to bring forward the volunteering; thus 2011 is considered the European Year of Volunteering.

The European Year of Volunteering is a moment of joy, but also one of reflection. It is a celebration of the engagement of millions of Europeans who, in their spare time, within various local communities, from their native regions or around the world, in schools, hospitals, sport clubs, mobilize for the purpose of protecting the environment, providing social and humanitarian service for people in need. The efforts of those volunteers and of millions of volunteering organisations help change the life of both volunteers and those whom they help in the most various ways. Nevertheless, things could be better, all the more so as according to official reports 75% of the Europeans do not work as volunteers.



In this European framework and complying with the specific requirements it imposes, the European Institute of Romania is actively involved in the process of favouring and stimulating the volunteering action, through public initiatives meant to bring the youth closer to the European Union's actions and policies in the area.

A first example for this purpose is provided by the events organised on 9 May for the celebration of Europe Day. The European Institute of Romania in partnership with the Department for European Affairs and other public and private institutions celebrated Europe Day at InfoEuropa Centre with an event designed to raise the awareness of the general public towards the European issues and to encourage the Romanian youth to take part in acknowledging what it means "to be European" even more so as, according to the official website of the

European Union, "very few people in Europe know that on 9 May 1950 the first move was made towards the creation of what is now known as the European Union"<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most important projects of this year with a direct impact on volunteering is EIR's participation as a partner in the project POSDRU/90/2.1/S/62955 *Facilitating the transition from school to active life for students in international business and economy*<sup>2</sup>.

According to the general objective of the project, that is the correlation between the qualifications and competences of the students from the international business and economics area (DIBE) and the specific requirements of the labour market which can be acquired only through practical activity, beyond the regional and national borders and having regard to the essential objectives of the European Institute of Romania, set out in the Ordinance for its establishment, which are increasing the level of knowledge and skill of various socio-professional categories in the area of European affairs and the contribution to the development of the European spirit and values, the European Institute of Romania – as partner in this project – organised an internship for 12 students from the Academy of Economic Studies, Faculty of International Business and Economics.

With a total duration of 90 hours, carried out over a three weeks period (9 – 27 May 2011), the internship aimed, on the one hand, to check the applicability of the theoretical knowledge acquired by the interns during the learning programme and, on the other hand, to convey knowledge which will be necessary in the active life.

An important feature of the internship project was the participation in study visits at various public and private, national and international institutions (Representation of the European Commission in Romania, InforEuropa Centre, UN Information Centre Bucharest etc.). Through these visits the students were able to be in direct contact with the real work setting specific to such institutions, with the main issues of the European affairs etc. The visits proved to be mutually beneficial, allowing a direct change of ideas between the current employees and the potential future experts in international affairs.

Mihai Sebe

event

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## Debate – “The Lisbon Treaty: Implications on Romanian Policies and Institutions”

The debate “The Lisbon Treaty: Implications on Romanian Policies and Institutions” took place at the Parliament Palace on 18 May. The event was organized by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) in partnership with the Commission for European Affairs – Chamber of Deputies and had as a starting point the conclusions of the homonymous study published in the EIR project *Strategy and Policy Studies – SPOS 2010*.

Guest speakers in the event were: Valeriu Zgonea – deputy, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies; Vasile Nedelcu – senator, President of the Commission for European Affairs, Chamber of Senate; Leonard Orban, Presidential Counselor for European Affairs, former member of the European Commission,

Titus Corlăţean, senator, President of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Senate; Răzvan Horaşiu Radu, Under-Secretary of State, the Department for European Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu, State Secretary for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, PhD, Dean of the Department for International Relations and European Integration, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, coordinator of the EIR study “The Lisbon Treaty. Impact on Romanian Institutions and Policies” (Strategy and Policy Studies – SPOS 2010). The debate was moderated by Prof. Gabriela Drăgan, PhD, Director General of the European Institute of Romania.

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/arhiva\\_evenimente/](http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/arhiva_evenimente/) (last accessed on 3 June 2011).

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.rei.ase.ro/practica/> (last accessed on 3 June 2011).



The debate gathered representatives of the central administration, the academic and research environment, students, mass media.

The debate brought into discussion opinions and solutions regarding the changes brought by the Lisbon Treaty, with emphasis on institutional and policies-related consequences of the multiple innovation elements, such as the increased role of national parliaments in the decision-making process at EU level or the legal personality of the Union. The implications of the Lisbon Treaty on the national institutions, especially on the Parliament, and the challenges of the Member States in implementing its provisions were also underlined.

Romania was considered ready to adapt to the institutional changes introduced by the Treaty (**Leonard Orban**), but officials

need to pay more attention to the involvement of all institutions in the decision preparatory process. On this occasion, the guests mentioned important aspects of the European affairs activity of the institutions they represent, as well as their attributions (**Vasile Nedelcu** and **Răzvan Horațiu Radu**).

The questions and answers section closing the debate focused on connected subjects, such as: the Parliament and Government's role in the field of European affairs and the quality of professionals involved in this particular field.

For the whole synthesis of the event, please access [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro), **Communication and Marketing / Previous events**.

**Flavia Durach**

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## Debate – “The EU ‘Newcomers’ weight its Costs and Benefits”

The debate “The EU ‘Newcomers’ weight its Costs and Benefits” took place at the Parliament Palace on **5 May 2011**. The event, organized by the **European Development Platform (EDP)**, in partnership with the **Department for European Affairs (DEA)** and the **European Institute of Romania (EIR)** is a follow-up of the high-level round table organized in Brussels on 29 March 2011.

Guest speakers in the Bucharest debate were: **Daniel Dăianu** – President of EDP, as chairman, **Leonard Orban** – Presidential Counsellor for European Affairs, **Titus Corlățean** – President of the Commission for Foreign Affairs, Chamber of Senate, **Korodi Attila** – President of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies, **Bogdan Mănoiu** – Minister, Head of DEA, **Valeriu Tabără** – Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, **Marian Tutilescu** – Head of the Schengen Department, Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, **Dragos Pîslaru** – General Manager of GEA Strategy & Consulting SA, **Sorin Pîslaru** – Editor-in-Chief, Ziarul Financiar, **Cristian Secoșan** – CEO Siemens, **Ion M. Ioniță** – Editor-in-Chief, Foreign Policy, **Dan Gheorghiu** – President of the “Concordia” Employers’ Confederation. Other participants in the event included representatives of the business, political and academic environment, civil society and mass media.



The discussions were divided in two sections: the first one focused on the **Budget of the European Union and the Economic Convergence: the Role of Structural and Cohesion Funds**, and the second one focused on the **Economic Crisis and the European Labour Market: the Role Played by the Schengen deadlock**.

The speeches in the first section pointed out important aspects, such as: the tense negotiations related to the future budget of the European Union and how are Romania's interests in the European funds affected by them (**Leonard Orban**); the importance of adapting European mechanisms to the Romanian internal context (**Korodi Attila**); future trends in the absorption of European funds (**Dragoș Pâslaru**).

During the second half of the debate, **Titus Corlățean** suggested a political approach of Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen Area. **Marian Tutilescu** admitted that the vote is a political one, as certain states require progress elements related to the justice system reform before the accession. In this context, **Ion Ioniță** underlined that the political effects of the economic crisis are starting to show inside the EU and that populist politic approaches are on the rise.

The conclusions expressed brought to the foreground the proposals of changes in the Schengen acquis and the possibility for certain states to reintroduce border control, but the fact that free movement of persons can not be and will not be restricted in any way.

You can find more information about the European Platform for development at <http://www.edp-org.com/>

**Flavia Durach**

## Local public finances balance and decentralisation in the European Union A new conference in the series “Romania-France: together in Europe”



This series of conferences was created in order to shape a French-Romanian perspective on the challenges regarding Romania’s accession to the European Union. The most recent event took place on **23 May** and was held by **Joël Bourdin**, senator, Vice-president of the Finance Committee, Honorary Professor at the University of Caen. The event was attended by His Excellency, **Henri Paul**, the Ambassador of the French Republic to Romania, and was chaired by Ms **Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General of EIR.

At the opening of the conference, **Henri Paul** mentioned the fact that France made an important reform, namely the administrative decentralisation. The budgetary crisis opened the discussion on the efficiency of public finances, subsequently leading to decentralisation and the attempt to reduce the expenditures of public institutions.

At the conference, **Joël Bourdin** wanted to explain the context in which the decentralisation process took place: the French state noticed that public services did not work as the citizens wanted: government deficit exceeded 3% (the limit imposed by the euro zone), reaching 9% in 2009, the debt ratio/GDP exceeded 60% and reached 80% in 2009. Thus, a reform of public finances was necessary in order to reduce the government deficit back to 3%.

The reform will concern state competences and the number of employees in the public sector. An example was provided from the medical and education areas, where the number of positions must be reduced: methods like the employment of one person for two retired persons are practically aimed at the growth of productivity by maintaining the same production, but with fewer employees.

Decentralisation aims at the transfer of tasks and competences to municipalities. The French “départements” (the equivalent of the Romanian districts) have (elected) general advisers who manage competences (attributed by the state), for example in middle schools and high schools (10-15 years old), from administrative and material point of view. The objective is independence of local structures from state budget, autonomy: local councils collect taxes on their own; they ensure their own revenue and assign expenditures. General councils were also granted increased competences in the social field, such as the assessment of care-dependent persons.

Decentralisation is a difficult process involving a series of benefits, as well as disadvantages, and requiring increased involvement from local authorities, as the guest stated in his speech.

For the full report of the event, please access [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro), Communication and Marketing / Previous events.

Mihai Sebe

analysis | opinion

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## EUROPE DAY 2011

The 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which constituted the first step to what is now the European Union, was celebrated on **9 May 2011**. On this occasion, several events have taken place with the participation of key representatives of the EU, especially for the Festival dell’Europa held in Florence (between 9 and 10 May).

During the *Conference on the State of the Union*, which was held as part of the festival, topics such as the progress of the EU and the perspectives for the future have been discussed. Among the remarkable participants were the President of the European Parliament, **Jerzy Buzek** and EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, **Androulla Vassiliou**.

The event, held at Palazzo Vecchio, was opened by **Jerzy Buzek**’s remarks regarding the evolution of the EU, where he underlined the fact that this process is still in development. The euroskeptics, such as **Joseph Weiler**, professor at the New York University, concluded that “Europe is in the worst situation it has ever

been”. This situation is due to a deficit in democracy and a lack of legitimacy caused precisely by the prior success of the Union.

Nevertheless, although many of the speakers were among the skeptics, there was a consensus on the success of the Union so far as regards their ambitions and expectations but also on a lack of political will after the integration “fatigue”.

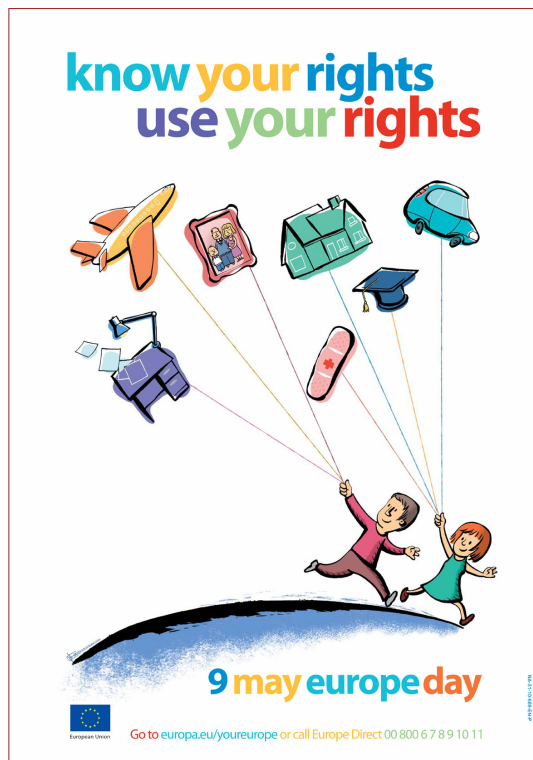
The second major subject of discussion was the Treaty of Lisbon and the extent to which it helped the European Union to overcome its difficulties. Although following an evaluation it was concluded that the Treaty had failed in its objectives, US Ambassador to the EU, **William Kennard**, declared that the Treaty was only a document and the political will to implement it would be the decisive factor. Another issue was the difficulty of involving citizens in the project of integration, yet another unachieved objective of the treaty as Italy’s Foreign Minister, **Franco Frattini** remarked. At the source of this problem is the phenomenon of populism which is on the rise along with

anti-European feelings in reaction to the financial crisis and everyone's difficulties in overcoming it. The generally accepted solution was an improved spirit of integration and especially consistency and perseverance on the part of political actors in all their actions.

Related to the issue of integration is the one of identity, more precisely, as President of Croatia Ivo Josipovic explained, the construction of a common identity without the erosion of the national identity through the use of common norms and values.

The implementation of foreign policy objectives represented the next major subject of discussion. Issues such as Member States' sovereignty, the new Common Foreign and Security Policy, the double role of High Representative Catherine Ashton as both member of the Commission and of the European Council and the role of the External Action Service, are all still regarded as incoherent and confusing but also ambitious and encouraging for the future. The reason given for the situation was the inability of the EU to focus on foreign relations issues in the context of the crisis, despite the largely accepted notion that the EU should become a relevant global actor with decision-making power on the World stage.

The subject of discussion for the second day of the event was the economic dimension of Europe. The crucial aspect was the fact that the Eurozone is not the one affected in this situation



but rather the individual nations that comprise it. Thus, measures implemented so far and prospects for the future were also discussed. Among the conclusions of speakers, such as Zsolt Darvas, research fellow at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels and Yves Mersch, Governor of the Central Bank of Luxembourg, changes have been for the better but also insufficient and, although their creation is obviously a good thing, institutions still need instruments to avoid future crises.

The lack of coordination on economic policies was identified as the main cause for the aforementioned issues, the general consensus being that governments should have a greater degree of control over their economies and leave less up to the market.

The conclusion of the speakers was that for a proper Economic and Monetary Union, a Fiscal and Budgetary Union would be necessary as well, and in order to have that, a Political Union would be necessary, for which there is insufficient political will.

On the occasion of Europe Day, several other events took place such as José Manuel Barroso's speech in Brussels, „Dia de Europa” in Madrid, the youth conference in Milan together with other locally organized events.

Alexandru Boboc

## in focus

# THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT – THE PLENARY SESSION 9-12 May 2011

In the opening, the president of the European Parliament (EP), Jerzy Buzek evoked Europe Day and the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Robert Schuman Declaration. On this occasion, the president of the EP highlighted the importance of the fact that the United Nations granted European Union a new status, by which EU will have a stronger role in the UN.

The diversity of the topics on the EP agenda and opened to debate reflects EU's current concerns: the Radio Spectrum Policy, 2009 budget discharge (the Budgetary Control Committee of the EP approved the European Commission spending), the migration flows and their impact on the Schengen Agreement, the “transparency” for lobby activities, textile names and labelling, novel foods, debt crisis etc.

**THE FOREIGN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY** was debated in the presence of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-president of the EU, Catherine Ashton.

The report on this topic and the plenary debates highlighted that the common foreign and security policy (CFSP)\* passes through a sensitive moment of its evolution, as the EU is required to become a credible actor in the international system. The management of crises, the support of democracy and the economic crisis imperatively demand the development of a common defence, and the Treaty of Lisbon provides new instruments for developing the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The MEPs insisted on the need for an increase in quality, which is both required and possible, as the European edifice runs the risk of drastically resizing the CFSP ambitions and possibilities.

Developing democracy and providing humanitarian support for the Libyan civil population, beyond being an urgent requirement, calls for a more comprehensive reflection, but also for the European Council and the President to exercise the main responsibility in this area.

\* Foreign and security policy, [http://europa.eu/pol/cfsp/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/pol/cfsp/index_en.htm)





The MEPs urged Commissioner Ashton to intensify the efforts to build agreement among Member States in order to strengthen the coherence of CFSP and ESDP as well as other aspects of EU's external action. The debates expressed the dissatisfaction of the MEPs regarding the inadequacy of the European military capabilities which are below the high level of the national defence potential of the Member States.

In her declaration, the High Representative of the EU for CFSP referred to the "storms" which came over EU's neighbour countries – the Arab spring, Syria, Belarus – where there are movements for democracy and rule of law, which are violently repressed by the political regimes, and stated that the aspirations and expectations are high in the current economic context, the most difficult of the last decades. **Catherine Ashton** spoke about the sanctions imposed by the EU on regimes treating the life of their citizens as having no value (for example, the arms embargo against Syria). After numerous MEPs had criticized the lack of attitude and measures against the Syrian regime, the Commissioner's announcement that the EU demanded the Syrian regime to alter direction was highly welcomed. As regards the situation of Belarus, **Catherine Ashton** stated that the civil society will have to be

supported and that there is no other option but strong sanctions in answer to the high number of political arrests.

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE EU** was a topic debated in the presence of the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Sport, Media and Youth, **Androula Vassiliou**. The Committee on Culture and Education of the EP proposed, following a recent visit, to support the bid by the city of Sarajevo to be named European Capital of Culture in 2014.

Reports on learning during the early years of life, youth on the move, creativity and culture, the need that member states do not diminish funds assigned to the education during times of crisis etc. were presented and debated.

For the full text of the reports mentioned, please refer to:

Report on early years learning in the European Union (2010/2159(INI)) – CULT – Rapporteur: Mary Honeyball(A7-0099/2011)

Report on the development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (2010/2299(INI)) – AFET – Rapporteur: Roberto Gualtieri (A7-0166/2011)

Report on the annual report of the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2009, presented to the European Parliament in application of Part II, Section G, paragraph 43 of the Inter-institutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 (2010/2124(INI)) – AFET – Rapporteur: Gabriele Albertini (A7-0168/2011)

Report on "Youth on the move": a framework for improving Europe's education and training systems (2010/2307(INI)) – CULT – Rapporteur: Milan Zver (A7-0169/2011)

**Mariana Bara**

## GREEN WEEK 2011



The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual conference "Green Week" was held in Brussels between **24 and 27 May**. Under the motto "Using less, living better", this year's theme was "Resource Efficiency".

European Environment Commissioner, **Janez Potočnik**, has drawn attention upon the need to consume less to live better and said about the conference themes: "Resource efficiency isn't just about constraints and scarcity – it's a vast array of opportunities for growth and jobs with less waste, a cleaner environment, and better, more sustainable choices for consumers. The scope of this year's Green Week is a clear demonstration of the reach of environment policy – it really is fundamental to the way we choose to live our lives".\*

The sessions of 24 May discussed issues such as scarcity of resources and effective solutions for their use, increasing opportunities on the labor market by creating new abilities in the context of new uses of resources, improving waste

disposal in the food chain, and the phosphorus issue with possible solutions for its efficient use.

The second day of the conference began with an interactive session on the various policy instruments available to the national and European policy makers to promote recycling in Europe. Later on, debates were held on better management of water resources, but also on access to finance for environmental innovation. There were also presented potential solutions for businesses to integrate resource efficiency in their long-term business strategies.

The third day brought into discussion ideas about the use of waste to increase economic profitability, the benefits of green infrastructure for increasing the number of jobs, business opportunities and low costs, and the need for increased investment in sustainable growth. The strategy for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy by the year 2050, adopted by the European Commission, was also debated.

\* <http://www.dae.gov.ro/articol/2028/cea-mai-ampl-conferin-european-anual-privind-mediul-din-europa-analizeaz-gama-posibilit-ilor-de-utilizare-eficient-a-resurselor>

Green Week 2011 ended with a session focused on good practice examples of companies, cities and green regions, and on how these tangible steps can be scaled up for the whole society.

The conference stressed the need to rethink the way in which waste is tackled. It should not be viewed only as a factor of

environmental pollution, but also as a valuable resource for development.

More information about the conference can be found at

<http://www.greenweek2011.eu/>

Adina Grigoriou

## THE G8 2011 SUMMIT

The G8 summit is an official forum which is held annually by the heads of state and government from the European Union, The United States of America, Russia, Great Britain, Japan, Canada, France and Germany.

The Summit was held in France at Deauville between **26 and 28 May**, and it was opened by President **Nicolas Sarkozy**. Leaders from several north-African nations were also invited this year in order to discuss issues of this region.

The European Union is a full member of G8 and was represented by the president of the European Commission, **José Manuel Barroso** and by the President of the European Council, **Herman Van Rompuy**.

The main topics of discussion were the nuclear accident at Fukushima, the Eurozone sovereign debt issue, the future General Director of the International Monetary Fund, the conflicts in Libya and Syria, as well as the rules regarding the Internet.

The topic of the IMF presidency was brought into discussion by the Russian foreign minister, who asked for a greater degree of involvement from the major economic powers in the appointment of the new IMF president. In response, President **Nicolas Sarkozy** argued that the office should be occupied by a European since they have the highest stakes in the IMF's actions. The French President proposed **Christine Lagarde**, the French minister of finance for the office.

The G8 leaders promised billions of dollars in investments for North Africa in order to increase democratic endeavors in the region. During the press conference after the summit, President **Sarkozy** said that this sum could rise up to 75 billion dollars, taking into account the combined effort of the international community, the IMF and other bilateral agreements with the Arab countries. On the other hand, the Greeks were warned about the financial crisis and the lack of will and effort to cooperate with the IMF and to take austerity measures.

The summit members took a far more critical attitude towards the leaders of Syria, Libya and Yemen. President **Sarkozy** warned that NATO operations against **Muammar Gaddafi** will only escalate since mediation is no longer an option. The Russian foreign minister also declared that Moscow is ready to get involved. In the case of Syria, G8 leaders warned the Government regarding the use of violence and said the situation would be taken into account by the United Nations Security Council.

The G8 leaders were supportive of Japan as regards to the events following the nuclear accident at Fukushima, taking their difficult situation into consideration but also discussing the implementation of stricter safety standards for nuclear energy. Prime Minister **Naoto Kan** proposed a reform of the nuclear energy industry and a reorganization of control mechanisms available to governments in order to regain international trust in Japan's nuclear programme.

The G8 summit has been strongly criticized on matters of relevance in the international context along with its capacity to act in this framework. As opposed from G20, G8 does not have inclusion as a priority and opts for an outreach strategy towards third parties. Although G8 members support productive initiatives, their capacity to implement them is questionable.

The G8 summit ended with a declaration regarding the renewal of commitment towards freedom and democracy.

Complete details of the G8 summit can be found here: <http://www.g20-g8.com/g8-g20/g8/english/home.18.html>

Alexandru Boboc



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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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