



EIR newsletter

Year V, no. 49 – January 2013

opinion _____

in this issue _____

The European Year of Citizens 2013



On 10 January 2013, the **European Year of Citizens** was officially launched in Dublin. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the EU citizenship concept into the Treaty on EU. It also marks another anniversary, as 30 years ago, in 1983, the EU designated its first themed year. If in the last years EY had very specific themes (e.g, 2011 was the EY of Volunteering and 2012 the EY for Intergenerational Solidarity), this time around **all EU citizens** are being targeted. Through this initiative, the European Union is making a firm commitment to bring its citizens closer to the European project, by engaging them in a large scale debate on their role in a united Europe, their trans-national rights and opportunities and their political choices.

Those familiar with the EU communication policy already know that a proactive engagement of citizens represents an older objective of the EU Institutions, especially of the European Commission, this year's initiative reminding us of past campaigns such as the much discussed *Communicating Europe*¹ and *Plan D for Democracy, Debate and Dialogue*², which focused on subjects such as the need to develop a European public space and to consolidate a genuine European identity ...

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¹ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/decisionmaking_process/l10117_en.htm

² http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/decisionmaking_process/a30000_en.htm

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in focus _____

Europe Direct Information Centre - Bucharest, hosted by the EIR, opens in January

Funded by the European Commission, the Europe-wide network of Europe Direct Information Centres started its activity in 2008. Through these Information Centres, European citizens have the opportunity to submit questions and requests, as well as opinions or suggestions to European institutions. This way, the visibility and transparency of these institutions are increased...

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... These subjects are now brought again on the EU agenda, in the context of a serious economic crisis, doubled by an identity one (euro-skepticism voices are becoming louder than ever) and a constant decline of interest in the EU as the 2012 autumn Euro-barometer registers a new rise in the number of those who have a negative image of the EU³. With the next European Parliament elections just around the corner, the EU institutions are determined to tackle the citizens' idleness by embarking on a new communication adventure - the European Year of Citizens 2013.

This year, the European institutions are preparing a significant number of **activities to be launched at all levels** - from local and regional to national and transnational. The citizens' access to information will be eased by the Commission, through web pages but also through press releases and dissemination of promotional materials. The *informative* campaign will be backed up by events which are meant to be *deliberative* in nature, aimed to engage the citizens in a dialogue with European, national and local leaders but also with social partners, civil society and business representatives. Thus, events such as debates, seminars, workshops, Q&A sessions are expected to take place in many EU member states.

The focus of the campaign will fall on the **citizens' rights**, the EU institutions aiming to raise awareness on the importance of knowing the EU rights that complement our national ones. A flash Euro-barometer report from 2010 showed that almost 50% of the EU citizens consider that they are not at all informed on their EU citizens' rights (Romania is however among the countries whose citizens feel sufficiently informed on their EU citizens' rights). The EB report further shows that the right to move and reside freely in any EU country is the most familiar to the citizens⁴. It is thus no surprise that the European Year of Citizens events will emphasize the rights that permit any EU citizen to enjoy a complete European experience - having the possibility of living, working, studying and travelling anywhere within the Union's borders.



Beside the events and informative campaigns, the Commission is preparing a report to be launched this year, which will tackle the problem of the still existing obstacles against the full usage of EU citizenship rights. The report is a follow up on the one launched in 2010, which proposed a set of concrete measures to be implemented, in order to ease the citizens' integration in other EU member states.

It remains to be seen if the EU will be able to finally reinvigorate the debate on the future of Europe and to create real deliberative opportunities, so that the citizens will not only have the chance to inform themselves thoroughly, but also to have a tangible impact on the decision-making process. If it manages to capture the citizen's interest, the European Year of the Citizen might be a great step in this direction.

Online information on the European Year of Citizens and the detailed events program are available at: <http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/>

Alexandra Pop

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Funded by the European Commission, the Europe-wide network of Europe Direct Information Centres started its activity in 2008. Through these Information Centres, European citizens have the opportunity to submit questions and requests, as well as opinions or suggestions to European institutions. This way, the visibility and transparency of these institutions are increased.

In June 2012, the Representation of the European Commission in Romania launched a call concerning project proposals for the new generation of Europe Direct Information Centres. Following the evaluation of the project submitted, the European Institute of Romania was selected as the host organization for the Europe Direct Information Centre - Bucharest. Along with **30 other Centres** in Romania, it will make up the **Europe Direct Romania Network for the 2013 - 2017 period**.

³ Standard EB, number 78.

⁴ Flash EB, number 294.



Europe Direct Network represents one of the European Commission's main communication tools and its objective is to transmit general and specialized information on European affairs adapted to local necessities to all citizens of the EU Member States. Europe Direct Centres have an important role in disseminating information by stimulating debates and activities at a local level. Thus, the European Union's capacity of informing, communicating and relating to its citizens is facilitated and enhanced by means of this information network.

Europe Direct Information Centre hosted by the European Institute of Romania will ensure the interface in relation with the citizens of the Bucharest-Ilfov region. The Centre's mission is to provide an area of information and communication in order to allow easy

access to European information related to European Union's institutions, policies, programmes, legislation and priorities as well as the rights and responsibilities of European citizens.

The Information Centre will provide guidance and assistance to various categories of target groups (students/youth, children, adults, researchers, representatives of civil society, public administration, business environment) in fields where the European Union is active, representing a **free public service of information and communication**.

In this respect, Europe Direct Information Centre - Bucharest will provide a dedicated website, newsletters and publications. In order to promote an informed and active European citizenship, during this year, which has been declared the European Year of Citizens, the Centre will organize events (conferences, debates, presentations), and also activities of information, raising awareness and local animation (information courses, workshops, competitions). For further details, please visit the dedicated section of Europe Direct Information Centre - Bucharest on www.ier.ro website.

Diana Filip, Alina Arhire

EIR in 2012

Communication in European Affairs

The European Affairs communication events organized by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) in 2012 managed to bring to the interested public's attention topics and European issues perceived as a priority both at national and at European level, such as the *CAP reform in the context of the new financial perspective, the European Semester, the Fiscal Treaty, social policies - pensions system, structural funds management, the new multiannual financial framework*.

Regarding partnerships, previous experience proved that in the field of communication in European affairs (but not limited to it), they represent an important visibility element for the Institute. Thus, under a partnership contract between the European Institute of Romania and the *Institute for Eastern Studies (Instytut Studiów Wschodnich - ISW)* in Warsaw, the EIR was partner in organizing the debate entitled *Management of Structural Funds in Central and Eastern Europe*. The event took place on September 6, 2012 at the Economic Forum from Krynica and was chaired by the Director General of the EIR. The excellent collaboration we had with the colleagues from the ISW Warsaw extended also to our partnership. Therefore, the EIR representative accepted the organizers' invitation to chair also the session entitled *The crisis - launching platform for entrepreneurs*, event which took place on September 5. This partnership represented an important step in strengthening the institutional relationship with institutions and think-tanks from the European Union.



Other important partner institutions at the level of communication activities were the *Ministry of European Affairs* (the debate *How pro-Europeans Romanians still are?*), the *National Bank of Romania* (the debate *Public finance reform in EU*) and the *Representation of the European Commission in Romania* (partner of the Institute in organizing the launching conference of SPOS 2011 studies and the annual conference).

The annual conference of the EIR brought to the public's attention the new multiannual financial framework. The event was attended by official representatives of the Ministry

of European Affairs, the Representation of The European Commission in Romania, EU Member States Embassies in Bucharest, as well as some renowned experts and economic analysts, who are active in European affairs research.

This event also hosted the third edition of the *EIR Excellence Awards*. The winners of the third edition were *institutes/centres for research and training in European affairs* in appreciation of the academic environment's efforts in the

European affairs field, focusing on *Jean Monnet Excellence Centres*, as well as on other institutes or research and training centres which function within universities.

For more information, please visit: www.ier.ro, *Communication and Marketing/Previous events* section.

Florentina Costache

Studies and Analyses in European Affairs



In 2012, the research and analysis activity of the Studies and Analyses Unit has mainly targeted the consolidation of contributions to the substantiation and implementation of public policies, through the **Strategy and Policy Studies (SPOS)** project. The studies conducted in 2012 tackled the following research topics: *Perspectives of the migration policy in Romania's current demographic context*, *Coordination of European Affairs at the national level*, *Mechanisms of Cooperation between the Government and the Parliament in the field of European Affairs*, *A comparative study between member states*; *Taxing financial transactions and its consequences on economic growth, financial stability and public finances*, *Perspectives and challenges of Romanian exports between 2010 - 2014, in the light of EU's bilateral and regional trade relations*.

At the same time, the articles and scientific papers drawn up by the Studies Unit were better promoted in 2012, both through EIR's website, EPIN (European Policy Institutes Network - CEPS, Brussels) network, EADI (European Association for Development and Training Institutes) as well as through the conferences to which the Unit's staff participated last year.

The Studies Unit has contributed, through opinion articles, scientific papers published in specialised journals and participations to relevant national and international conferences, to both promoting EIR's image as a center of excellence and to debating some of the current topics present on the European and international agenda, such as: implications of the economic and financial crisis on EU's global status, EU's foreign and security policy, EU's interactions with countries in its neighbourhood in the context of the "Arab Awakening", political and cultural models and systems in the EU and its neighbourhood, etc. We would also like to mention the contribution to the development of current institutional partnerships (EPIN network, EADI association) and to the establishment of new contacts, with the University of Craiova, the Institute of East European and Central Asian Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Polish Institute of International Affairs - Warsaw.

Last but not least, the Studies Unit has participated to the effective implementation of European-funded projects such as the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013 'Investing in people'.

Agnes Nicolescu

Training Programs

The year 2012 was a year of changes which were reflected in the activity of the Training Unit by introducing new courses while maintaining the traditional programs of training in European affairs.

The traditional programs, intended for general training - **General Training in European Affairs, Trainer** - and especially for going deeper into some topics specific to the European affairs - **European Union's normative system**; **Integrated**

systems for waste management in the context of European legislation - elicited the same interest as in 2011.

The introduction, based upon requests, of the course on the **Area of freedom, security and justice - visas, asylum, immigration between Schengen and Lisbon**, designed for the personnel of the specialised public institutions, proved to be a good decision.

As a response to the constant interest for the topic of European funds in Romania, EIR organised in 2012 new sessions of the programs for specialization as **Project Manager**, with direct applicability in managing projects financed from European funds and **Expert in European Structural and Cohesion Funds Accessing Expert** with a focus on the development of competences required for the identification, accessing, drawing up, carrying out and implementation of a successful project. The courses are authorised by CNFPA (National Council for Professional Training for Adults)/ANC (National Authority for Qualifications).



Another program of interest and connected to the European topics was **Training in competences for translation and revision of legal texts**. In 2012 two training sessions were organised, delivered mostly by EIR's trainers, based on over 10 years of experience in translating the community acquis and the case-law of the CJEU and the ECHR.

The collaboration with *Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA)*, the *Embassy of France in Romania* and the *French Institute in Bucharest* continued as part of the *Training Plan for European Administrative Officials*, financed by the

International Organisation of Francophony (OIF). Within this partnership, new sessions of the program, already a program of tradition for EIR, intended for the preparation of the Romanian specialists of public institutions for the competitions for employment in the European institutions were carried out, as well as the themed seminary *L'avenir de la politique de cohésion*. All of these programs were carried out in French, attracting a great interest from the target audience.

Two sessions regarding the **New Civil Code** (new course), as well as a session of **General Training in European Affairs**, in English, were organised upon request for the embassies of the Nordic states.

The objective of the Training Unit for 2013 is to successfully continue to organise the

programs designed to ensure a high level specialisation of the public administration workers in the specific themes, but not limited to these.

For further details, please visit the Training Unit's web page: http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/departament_page/3/ and the website of the European Institute of Romania: www.ier.ro.

Gigi Mihăiță, Mihai Sebe

European Projects

The Projects Unit focused in 2012 on the implementation of the project **Training Services for Teachers** developed by EIR in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The aim of the project was to deliver 9 training sessions in European affairs in Bucharest, Iasi and Cluj Napoca for 305 teachers from all over the country. The contract had a value of 59,469 EUR for the period October 2011 - September 2012. The project has been submitted following the tender PN/2011-11/BUC launched by the Representation of the European Commission in Romania.

The training carried out in the 3 cities, over 18 days, was attended by 277 teachers - 65 from rural areas and 212 from urban areas. There were teachers working in special needs schools and teachers from isolated area schools, where they have scarce resources.

Each group benefited from 2 intensive training days, at which they had double role: listener and speaker. The activity of the training was 70% practical, so the teachers worked in small groups, made presentations and sustained the lesson plan drawn up in collaboration with their team.

The aim of the training program was to succeed in attracting the students to the European themes through an interactive and interesting methodology. The teachers involved in the project are part of a national group of trainers which includes primary school, gymnasium and high school teachers that promote the modernisation of the content and of the methods in the lessons on the European Union, on EU policies and institutions, citizens' rights and obligations and European citizenship.

The project **Facilitating the Transition from School to Active Life for the Students in the Economy-International Affairs Field** has reached its second year.

The general objective is represented by linking the skills and competences of the students in the economy-international affairs field (EIA) with the specific requirements needed on the labour market, acquired only through practice, at inter-regional and trans-national level. The transition from school to active life is facilitated for 400 EIA students, who improve their work skills and enhance their chances of insertion on the labour market after the graduation. The project is co-financed from the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013 'Invest in people!' The project will be implemented during a three years period: January 2011 - December 2013, it has a budget of 11,168,004 RON and it aims to provide internship for at least 400 students from the economy-international affairs field of the three partner universities during the whole implementation period. EIR is a partner institution in this project coordinated by the Bucharest

Academy of Economic Studies. The role of EIR is to train the students that choose to do their internship in the institute in order to be informed of the functioning of an organization with this profile.

In 2012, 15 students from the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Ovidius University in Constanța and Ioan Cuza University of Iași were interns in all of EIR's departments which are active in the relevant field.

The EIR personnel involved in the project took part, throughout the year, in the management meetings in Iași, Constanța and Bucharest and in the exchange visits to project partners in Bucharest.

Cornelia Predoiu

Translation Coordination

In 2012, the activities of the Translation Coordination Unit (TCU) focused both on translation and revision, as well as on other types of activities such as terminological research, interpreting, writing and publishing articles and publications, training interns, participating as trainers at the training programmes organised by the European Institute of Romania (EIR).

The translation and/or revision activities centred on various types of documents such as the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), Romanian legislation, internal and/or confidential documents.

In the first part of the year 2012, all the 1011 documents on the historical case-law of the CJEU were (re)uploaded to CCvista (<http://ccvista.taiaex.be/>). Thus, the translation/revision of this type of documents was completed.

In consequence, in the second half of the year, the translation and revision of the ECHR case-law increased to over 80% of all translated/revision documents. The HUDOC database of the ECHR referred the EIR's site for the translations of the ECHR

cases into Romanian (<http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/HUDOC/translations/>).

As regards the terminological research, at the end of 2012, the terminological database contained 30 967 validated entries, available free of charge on the EIR's site.

Part of the TCU's staff also provided interpreting services during certain events organised by the EIR or participated as trainers within the programme "Development of competences for the translation and revision of legal texts".

Another type of activity was to train interns. Thus, three students carried out an internship of 240 hours each within the Translation Unit.

The third volume of *Culegere de jurisprudență CEDO - cauze recente împotriva României* (European Court of Human Rights Reports - recent cases against Romania) was published in 2012. This volume includes a selection of 34 relevant cases pronounced during January 2011- June 2012.

Laura Mihăilescu

event

"European Perspectives" Debate Series – Women's Involvement in Public Life



The Representation of the European Commission in Romania held on 18 December 2012 a debate on the *Women's Involvement in Public Life*. The debate was organised by the Communication and Marketing Unit of the European Institute of Romania within the framework of a technical assistance contract for the organisation of two national conferences and ten monthly round tables for the Representation of the European Commission in Romania (REC).

The debate is part of the "European Perspectives" series of monthly events, launched by the Representation of the European Commission in 2009, with the purpose of stimulating discussions on the European Union's priorities and reflecting, at the same time, Romania's national public agenda.

The event benefited, in the opening session, from the participation of Mr. Niculae Idu, the Head of the Representation

of the European Commission in Romania, and during the interventions session the following speakers took the floor: Ms **Alina-Ștefania Gorghiu**, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies, Ms **Andreea Paul**, Founding Member of the Institute for Competitivity CoNaCo, Lecturer PhD at the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Ms **Georgiana Pogonaru**, Vice President Prodplast, Ms **Maria Șandor**, President's Advisor, Eximbank, Ms **Oana Popescu**, Director of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Center, Ms **Anca Harasim**, Executive Director, AmCham, Ms **Gabriela Crețu**, Member of the European Parliament, Ms **Gabriela Drăgan**, Director General of the European Institute of Romania. The event was moderated by Ms **Monica Loloiu**, Political Assistant at the Representation of the European Commission in Romania.

We present below an overview of the debates (the issues approached by all speakers can be found in the summary of the event, available on the EIR website under the **Communication and Marketing/Communication Projects** section).

Mr **Niculae Idu** opened the debate by mentioning the directive proposal of the European Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Reding, regarding the intelligent quota for women's representation on administration boards, stressing the fact that this is a major theme both on the national and the European level. Commissioner Reding's proposal concerns a specialised segment of women who have important roles in enterprises, that is non-executive managers. The human and managerial qualities of women are largely under-appreciated, a fact which influences the performance of the undertakings. Thus, the adoption of the mentioned initiative by the European Parliament is hoped-for.

Ms **Monica Loloiu**, as moderator, outlined the framework of the discussions referring to the declaration of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, who said that the rights of women and girls are a problem yet unsolved at the level of global politics.

Ms **Andreea Paul** pointed out the fact that in Romania there is a relatively small group of women and men who are concerned with this subject. Among the causes of the current state of affairs, the following factors were mentioned: men's predominantly backward perception of women, but also the fact that some women do not wish promotion in their careers. Therefore, it would be advisable to give up the concept of "promotion" in favour of that of better representation of women in the public life. According to the 2012 Eurobarometer, the representation of women in undertakings is much better in Romania than it is at European level, except for the public undertakings, where we are situated below the European average. It should be noted that it is not the skills, or the lack of skills that has led to the current gender imbalance. In the places where their skills are appreciated, women have been up to the important role they assumed within companies or undertakings. This is less obvious in politics and in the public administration. It is necessary to acknowledge the fact that investment in women's role is an investment in human capital.

Ms **Gabriela Drăgan** went further into detailing the factors mentioned in the 2012 Eurobarometer, providing figures concerning the representation of women on administration boards in business - 15% in the US, 14% in the EU and 10% in Romania. According to Ms **Drăgan**, the low representation of women can have socio-economic, but also cultural reasons. She considers it is necessary to increase the ratio of women in listed companies, by legislative measures and/or in correlation with voluntary solutions, such as imposing codes of conduct which would guarantee that more women are present in these structures.

Ms **Maria Șandor** opened her speech with a brief presentation of the programs carried out so far in Romania with a view to developing women's entrepreneurial capacities. In this sense, she mentioned the specific program developed by UNDP Romania in 1994 - 1997, in which women who subsequently developed successful businesses distinguished themselves. The speaker mentioned several studies showing that undertakings that have a gender diverse administration boards are 30 - 35% more profitable. Among the examples of good practices mentioned, it was mentioned that the head hunting industry in Great Britain created a code of conduct destined to ensure the access of women with adequate education to administration boards.

Ms **Georgiana Pogonaru** pointed out the fundamental importance of the principle of meritocracy, as being the most likely to ensure the balance between social justice and a company's need for efficiency. She emphasized the role of the benefits brought by a diverse representation and drew attention to the fact that the Romanian society is not ready for normality. For this reason, a legal incentive is needed, along with the recommendation of a time limit. Legislation excesses just for attaining the percentage provided for in the law are not desirable.

Ms **Alina - Ștefania Gorghiu** brought to the public's attention a worrying reality, that there are rather few women who dare to step into the political arena. She does not think that the voluntary gender quota, in its current form, is very useful. Referring to the draft legislation on gender quota initiated last year in the Parliament, the speaker mentioned that the initiator of that project did not participate to the talks in plenary session and that this fact reduced the success prospects of the proposal. She also noted, with regret, that public women have a tendency towards a "masculine political discourse", considering that it should not be encouraged, but, on the contrary, opposed. Ms **Gorghiu** appreciates that a legislative project the content of which is shared by many representatives of the political spectrum, regardless of their pertinence to a political family or another, should benefit from some support and consensus from them. It is the ideas contained in a legislative project that are important and not necessarily the person who proposes the legal act. Women involved in politics too have a lot to lose because of this lack of solidarity regarding common principles.

Ms **Gabriela Crețu** resumed the arguments of the previous speakers regarding the importance of women as a valid human capital segment. She launched from the start a provoking question - what is to be done so that women become a relevant group which also includes other representatives than those who share the masculine values promoted by men, regardless of the motives or the context. Mrs **Crețu** noted that she favours an approach focused on cooperation and solidarity. She emphasized that those companies who have a significant number of women in the make-up of their boards are much more balanced and performant.

Ms **Anca Harasim** appreciates that in the post-communist space, including Romania, women continued to be involved in society, assuming an active role both in the professional and in the family life. Romania is still a predominantly "macho society". At the same time, considering her own experience, she considers that she has never felt discriminated against on grounds of gender, although she has worked much harder in order to be promoted. She referred to women who had, for various reasons, to leave the country and search for work abroad, a fact which can be interpreted as a masculine attitude.

Ms Oana Popescu proposed a positive perspective, comparing the situation and the perspectives of women in the urban and those in the rural environment who endure many more hardships from the economical and social point of view. She considers that cultural patterns are important. Referring to the draft legislation on the introduction of the mandatory quota for women's participation to the political life, the speaker mentioned that the coercion factor, unaccompanied by solid education may lead to undesirable or unproductive effects of the initiative. She considered it important to emphasize that the public space is not restricted to the political arena and too little attention is given to women who have something constructive to say in other areas of activity than politics.

The guests' speeches were followed by comments from the public aiming to deepening or clarifying aspects approached in the presentations.

For further information on the event, please visit REC's website: http://ec.europa.eu/romania/news/agenda/17122012_perspective_europene_implicarea_femeilor_in_viata_publica_ro.htm

Studies and Analyses Unit

EU

Launching the Irish Presidency of the EU Council



The Representation of the European Commission in Romania organized, in cooperation with the Embassy of Ireland in Romania, on **22 January 2013** a press conference launching the Irish Presidency of the EU Council. The guests of His Excellency, Mr Oliver Grogan, the Irish Ambassador to Romania, were Mr Titus Corlăţean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr Bogdan Mănoiu, Presidential Adviser on European affairs.

Ambassador Grogan gave a brief overview of the Irish Presidency's priorities, with the slogan „*for stability, jobs and growth*”. The European agenda, the same as the internal agenda of Ireland, is to ensure a stable financial system, to recover and return to growth. Having been a member of the European Union for 40 years and for the seventh time at its Presidency, Ireland's economic priorities aimed towards a banking union and to restore confidence in the banking sector of Europe by an agreement on a Single Supervisory Mechanism for European banks. This will continue Cyprus Presidency's work to reach an agreement on the 2014-2020 budget of the European Union, taking also into account the concerns on Structural Funds and agriculture.

Other items on the Presidency's agenda are the creation of jobs and tackling youth unemployment as 20% of the young people are unemployed. The measure implies providing jobs, the opportunity to continue their education or a vocational school orientation.

Although Ireland is not a member of Schengen itself, the Irish Presidency has expressed its willingness to provide full support to ensure agreement on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to Schengen.

The Ambassador also mentioned the Embassy's plans for a series of cultural events to mark the Irish Presidency in Bucharest, including an expanded St Patrick's Day festival in March.

In his intervention, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Titus Corlăţean, reiterated that joining Schengen remains an objective of particular importance for Romania and for the EU as a whole, adding that Romania has met the conditions for joining Schengen. The Minister said that our country relies on the active support of the Irish Presidency of the EU regarding the accession process for Schengen and the Irish Ambassador in Bucharest stated that Romanian and Bulgarian “aspirations” on the subject are a priority. The Minister said that Romania will strongly support those measures for economic growth and creating jobs, particularly those aimed at young people. The head of diplomacy also emphasized Romania's support for the enlargement process and the Eastern Partnership, where the Republic of Moldova is among the countries who have progressed most in this direction. In conclusion, he welcomed the favourable decision adopted by Ireland last year, on eliminating labour market restrictions for Romanians and thanked the Irish Government for “its principled approach”¹.

In the end Mr Bogdan Mănoiu, Presidential Adviser on European affairs, referred to the context of growing economic policies in the European Union and welcomed Ireland's European commitment reflected in the program of priorities established for this semester.

Livia Mirescu

¹ <http://www.mae.ro/node/17499>

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: 14-17 January 2013 – Strasbourg plenary session

After Tuesday's plenary session debates on the outcomes of the Cypriot Presidency, on Wednesday, the priority debate chaired by the President of the European Parliament, Martin SCHULZ, whose guest was the Irish Prime Minister Enda KENNY, put a spotlight on the priorities of the current Irish Presidency: stability, jobs and growth. They are based on several principles: people-centred recovery, investment in growth favouring job-creation and harnessing Europe's resources; in its relation to the world, Europe will have to engage in win-win relationships¹.

Although the euro zone has a single currency, the fact that it does not have a common bond market makes it difficult to adopt measures for pooling sovereign debt. The MEPs think that Eurobonds can be a mechanism enabling debt-pooling. To this end, a resolution of the European Parliament calls on the Commission and Member States to explore all the options for debt-pooling.

The MEPs insist that the youth benefit from preparatory training after four months' unemployment. Concern for jobs and for the education of young people makes MEPs urge ministers responsible for employment in the Member States to introduce, starting with February, and to support youth guarantee schemes.

The Regional Development Commission put to the vote the report on the *European Union Solidarity Fund*, implementation and application. This main instrument designed to materialise the

solidarity action of the European Union enables an important financial support for the Member States or the regions affected by serious disasters, without placing additional financial burden on the budgets of the European Union or of the Member States. Other instruments for dealing with emergencies, as well as a clearer definition of the concept of disasters are necessary.

In the current session, numerous reports and resolution proposals, such as *Classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances; Multi-annual plan for the cod stocks in the Baltic Sea, Interim agreement establishing a framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement between Eastern and Southern Africa states and the European Community; state aid modernisation*, were put to the vote.

The plenary debates concerned the *Situation in Syria, Modernisation of the Customs Code and introducing the list of non-preferential rules of origin, "One carry-on bag" rule imposed by certain airlines, the Stage of trade relations between the EU and Mercosur* etc.

For more information, please visit <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/ro>

Mariana Bara

¹ See the web site of the Irish presidency, <http://www.eu2013.ie/>

promo

TRAINING COURSES offered by EIR's Training Unit in 2013 (selection)

Course	Date	Tariff
COMPETENCES FOR COMPUTER ASSISTED TRANSLATION	20 - 22 February	500 lei
	16 - 20 September	700 lei
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT EXPERT	25 - 29 March	850 lei
TRAINER	28 January - 1 February	850 lei
	15 - 19 April	
EXPERT IN ACCESSING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS	4 - 8 November	850 lei
PROJECT MANAGER	13 - 17 May	850 lei
	7 - 11 October	
CODE OF ETICS	1 - 5 May	500 lei
EU'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY	11-15 October	400 lei
THE NEW CIVIL CODE	27 - 31 May	400 lei
THE NEW LABOUR CODE	3 - 4 September	400 lei

We can organise upon request courses on various themes. For further information, please write to: formare@ier.ro

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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.

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