

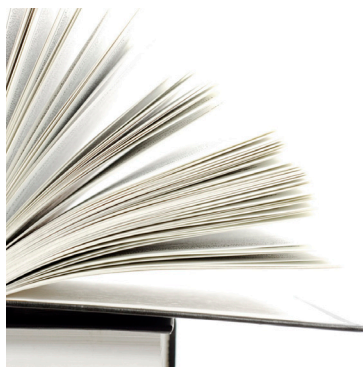


EIR newsletter

Year VII, no. 74 – July 2015

research _____

The Strategy and Policy Studies – a 9-year Tradition EIR Project



In 2015, the European Institute of Romania (EIR) is planning to launch five new Strategy and Policy Studies, continuing a tradition dating from the pre-accession period (2006). Starting with 2007, with the accession of Romania to the European Union, EIR has supported the decision makers (especially the Romanian Government) in formulating the necessary positions required by different European institutions, on specific subjects.

Thereby, each year meant a new series of publications, issued under the aegis of EIR, on current topics such as: the accession of Romania to the European Banking Union, shale gas, the liberalisation of electricity and gas markets, the competitive advantages of Romania on the internal market of EU, the migration policy perspectives in the current demographic context in Romania, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in the context of the budgetary perspective after 2013, the implications of the Lisbon Treaty, the new European Strategy for economic growth and employment (Europe 2020) etc.

This year, the attention has been directed towards 5 themes of European interest and national relevance, as follows: 1. The fight against Euroscepticism, extremism/radicalisation, and the consolidation of trust in European values (especially among citizens, but also... **p.2**

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event _____

REGIO Communicators Forum, 6th Edition

The Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) / AM POR - *Autoritatea de Management pentru Programul Operațional Regional* organised the 6th edition (also the last one in the financial programming for 2017-2013) of the REGIO Communicators Forum (24-26 June). The event was held at the Melodia Conference Centre in Venus (Constanța), under the coordination of AM POR Communication Counsellor, Ionela Caprian... **p.4**



Inițiativă locală. Dezvoltare regională.

...inside national political parties); 2. The cross-border cooperation between Romania and Ukraine, and between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Opportunities and challenges over the 2014-2020 period; 3. Creative industries: the development potential in Romania and at European level; 4. The Juncker Commission Investment Plan and its potential impact on the Romanian economy; 5. The impact of the new measures against terrorism, proposed at European level, on the freedom of movement.

Given the topicality of the themes, and also their potential of generating debates in the Romanian society, EIR has received a great deal of applications from interested candidates. Thus, from the dossiers received and analysed, the winning research proposals belonged to the following coordinators: *Sergiu Gherghina* (for the 1st study), *Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu* (for the 2nd study), *Valentin Cojanu* (for the 3rd study), *Lucian-Liviu Albu* (for the 4th study) and *Simona Raluca Soare* (for the 5th study). In the upcoming months, the researchers will work on the aforementioned studies, in order to have the final versions of the materials available for the beneficiaries and the general public in the first quarter of 2016.

In regard to the first study on *ways to combat Euroscepticism*, the team of authors will focus on the political realities in Europe, on the analyses and the European trends, providing a pragmatic perspective, with emphasis on policy proposals and recommendations in order to efficiently combat these negative developments, especially in Romania. The main details to be presented in the material will be related to: the manifestations of Euroscepticism and the relation between this phenomenon and the radicalisation of the electorate; the utility and the opportunity of consolidating the internal social cohesion of the European Union as a means to raise the international profile of the Union; the perception on the European Union in Romania, in comparison with the perception in other member states; ways of combating Euroscepticism and the radicalisation with xenophobic accents, at an institutional and non-institutional level, in Romania.

The 2nd study aims at presenting the *cross-border cooperation between Romania and Ukraine*, and between *Romania and the Republic of Moldova* (RM), and the authors will identify answers to questions regarding: the role played by the state and non-state actors in the trans-border cooperation; the economic, political and security dimension of the trans-border cooperation; the perspectives of the new Common Operational Programmes Romania-Ukraine and Romania-Republic of Moldova; the way that Romania supports the European perspective of the two neighbouring countries; the common challenges faced by Ukraine and RM on matters regarding the adoption of the community acquis, the regularisation of the business environment and fighting against trans-border organised crime.

The study centred on *creative industries* and their development potential aims at presenting the current status of the creative industries in Romania, highlighting the competitive potential at international scale and offering solutions for supporting this economic field. The researchers will keep track of spheres belonging to the creative and cultural industries that hold a potential for development and that are included in the strategic documents issued by the Government, and also they will try to contribute to establishing supporting instruments by identifying public policies or other measures that could be promoted in favour of developing this sector. Furthermore, the study should identify all available financial resources for supporting the creative and cultural industries, including here the European funds.

The *investment plan of the Juncker Commission* will be analysed by a team of economists, the general objective of this study being the assessment of the potential impact that this Plan could have on the Romanian economy. The study will focus on explaining how this guarantee scheme will be implemented in Romania. Also, the analysis of the public-private partnership is essential because this plan is actually a guarantee scheme provided by the European Union and the Member States will have to back up the entire process, by identifying other public funding sources (which will no longer be included in the budgetary deficit, as they will be considered as investments), and private funding sources (talking here also about the potential role that Eximbank could play as a development bank).

Last but not least, a team of researchers will analyse the impact of the new *measures for fighting terrorism* on the freedom of movement inside the EU. Therefore, the study has as a general objective the analysis of the real consequences, on short and medium term, of the new measures proposed to combat terrorism at the level of the EU, with emphasis on the impact on the freedom of movement, as it is one of the fundamental rights of the European project, and also on the opportunities that the debates on this subject could spring for Romania's objective of joining the Schengen area. In particular, the research will include a short presentation of the evolution of the terrorist phenomenon in Europe and a critical overview of the measures adopted at EU level. The case study is focused on Romania and the way in which our country is part of this security framework, while the study also puts forward proposals for concrete policies.

EIR looks forward to creating bridges between the researchers and the representatives of the potential institutional beneficiaries, in order to ensure that the policy recommendations will respond to the requirements that derive from our position as a Member State with full rights, in the European Union.

The studies can contribute to shaping policies and also to fuelling debates. In fact, right after the studies from the 2015 collection will be launched, public events will be organised where representatives of the political environment, professionals with academic background and active citizens representing the civil society will debate the results of the research.

Eliza Vaş

EIR Participation at the 16th Summer Seminar for Young Public Policy Professionals from South Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region



For the 16th consecutive year, the *Economic Policy Institute* organised its traditional regional forum - the Summer Seminar for Young Public Policy Professionals from South Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. This year's edition took place between 1 and 5 June 2015, under the general theme of *Public Policy Challenges - European and Regional Dimensions* - in the Albena resort on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast with the financial support of the *Hanns Seidel Foundation*, the *Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria*, the *Central European Initiative*, and the *Austrian Embassy in Bulgaria*.

After a competitive selection process, the Seminar brought together 34 young experts from public institutions, research centres and think-tanks from ten countries from SEE and the Black Sea region, namely from Albania, Bulgaria,

Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. In line with the established tradition, the participants had the opportunity to work with prominent and reputable lecturers, among whom high-level officials from the European Commission, distinguished international experts and practitioners, diplomats and academics.

The speakers had the opportunity to share their vision, experience and competences on various public policy issues as well as topics of regional significance and in the field of European politics and economy, such as Countering Corruption in SEE, E-Government Practices in Central and South East Europe, Lessons Learnt from the EU Enlargement Process, the Ambivalent effects of Globalisation, etc.

Driven by the Q&A sessions which were held after every lecture, the participants shared their thoughts on the present situation in Southeast Europe and the wider Black Sea region and the challenges they are facing in their everyday work during the interactive workshops and debates which were included in the agenda. During the *World Café* session, traditionally organised during the first day of the Seminar, the young experts were challenged to discuss public policy related issues such as the good governance in SEE and Black Sea Region, how to increase the efficiency of public institutions and to enhance competitiveness, etc. On the next day, in my double quality, as a representative of EIR, of both participant and moderator, I prepared for my fellow participants an interesting debate on the topic "The EU between real and normative power". This led to some in-depth pertinent discussions between the two designated teams of participants, each arguing in favour of one of the two possible international roles the EU could play on the world stage.

As a corollary of the five days of intense activities, the young professionals had the chance to share their visions for possible future scenarios for the EU and their respective regions. After being divided in five groups, the participants discussed on and later presented to their colleagues political, economic, security, social and regional cooperation scenarios. Each presentation followed a different approach and benefited from constructive comments and remarks from the other working groups.

After the closing ceremony during which every participant was granted a participation certificate by Mr. **Yasen Georgiev**, Executive Director of the *Economic Policy Institute*, and Mr. **Ognyan Zlatev**, Head of the *Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria*, the whole group had the opportunity to visit Cape Kaliakra, as well as the Palace in Balchik and its famous botanical garden. This was yet another opportunity for networking and exchange of personal and working experience between the participants, the lecturers and the organisers.



Bogdan Mureşan

REGIO Communicators Forum, 6th Edition

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The forum was attended by representatives of the Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration - AM POR, the Ministry of European Funds, and the agencies for regional development, as well as partners from the communicators network developed at the regions' level.



During the first two days of the forum, the participants had the opportunity to share ideas and good practices regarding the information and communication activities for promoting ROP, to learn more about the successful projects developed and implemented in each region, and also to learn new things during the two workshops (*How to tell your project's "story"*, held by writer Daniel Sur and *Designing an efficient annual plan for communication actions*, held by sociologist Ana Bulai).

The third forum day started with the presentation "How we became friends with Regio", made by colleagues from the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADRBI - *Agenția de Dezvoltare Regională București-Ilfov*) - Claudia Ionescu, Simona Curpăn and Liviu Râncioagă.



There were presentations on the strategy for promoting ROP in the Bucharest Ilfov region, on the BI-Regio communicators network, as well as successful projects, *i.e.* an investment project - the Voluntari Business Centre (presentation by Iulian Badea, Project Manager at SC Integral Invest SRL) and three

projects implemented by the Bragadiru City Hall, included in the Integrated Urban Development Plan (presentation by Ioan Jarcalete, Project Manager).

Further on, representatives of AM POR (Programme Evaluation Department) presented the status of the impact evaluation of ROP 2017-2013 interventions [eight impact evaluation studies, for 11 major areas of intervention (DMI - *Domenii Majore de Intervenție*), using the counterfactual method]. Five evaluation studies have been finalised (DMI 1.1, DMI 3.2, DMI 3.4, DMI 4.3, DMI 5.2), while three other studies are being finalised, each concerning two DMIs (DMI 3.1 and 3.3; DMI 4.1 and 4.2; DMI 5.1 and 5.3). In the case of the five DMIs for which the studies have been finalised, the conclusions show that Regio 2007-2013 has a positive impact for beneficiaries who applied for funds, coupled with a propagation effect throughout the entire community. The evaluation reports for REGIO 2007-2013 are available at <http://www.inforegio.ro/ro/rapoarte-de-evaluare.html>.

The communication strategy 2014-2020 was included as well in the agenda of the third forum day, and the information provided by Coralia Zadorojnai (Ministry of European Funds) attracted the participants' interest. Thus, we have learnt that there will be a single strategy for horizontal communication, using as main instruments the online communication, mostly through the single portal www.fonduri-ue.ro and the direct contact, through the National Information Centre and the regional centres that will be coordinated by this centre, ensuring as well the single office function for SMEs. The communication strategy ROP 2014-2020 (still in project stage) will follow the priority axes of the previous programming and will be updated according to the conclusions of the *Study on the Evaluation of the Communication Plan ROP 2007-2015 and Perspectives for Communication 2020 for ROP*, conducted by IRES.



Instead of conclusions ...

ROP has been implemented for 9 years; there have been seven years of experience in REGIO-related information, promotion and publicity.

On 23 June, the European Commission adopted the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme in Romania, worth € 8.2 billion (of which € 6.7 billion comes from the European Regional Development Fund). On this occasion, European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said:

"Today we have adopted one of the biggest investment programmes in the EU. It will deliver concrete benefits for citizens in all Romanian regions. The funding is directed at

key areas where it will have a positive impact on the quality of life of the Romanian people: supporting small businesses, promoting urban mobility, improving regional connectivity and providing better access to health and social services for all particularly for the most poor and vulnerable. Investments in energy efficiency will also bring down energy bills for households and tackle climate change. I wish the regions every success in setting up projects to achieve those goals” (Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/cretu/announcements/>

[creating-jobs-and-improving-quality-life-romanian-regions-eu-adopts-investment-package-worth-eu82_en](#))

So, the journey continues!

Good luck to ROP 2014-2020! And, not least, good luck to communicators!

Florentina Costache

Romanian Development Camp – Development Cooperation Days Bucharest, 8-10 July

The event entitled “Romanian Development Camp - Development Cooperation Days” took place in Bucharest, between 8 and 10 July 2015. The 8th edition, organised by FOND (Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations for Development) in partnership with United Nations Development Programme - Regional Centre for Europe a Central Asia, was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As mentioned by Ms. **Natalia Budescu**, President of FOND, this camp is a space of interaction and debate for all those who want information on Romania’s profile as donor state in humanitarian aid and development aid.

The Romanian Development Camp is an annual event intended to bring together relevant actors in the field of cooperation for development throughout the 3 days of activities. Members of the civil society, especially from non-governmental organisations, were present, along with representatives of public institutions active in the field of international development. At present there are 31 countries, at the international level, that have low income and many of them are politically and socially fragile, being thus recipients of development aid.

The list of special guests featured national and international speakers, representing institutions and organisations such as: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania’s Program of Official Assistance for Development, Overseas Development Institute from Great Britain, the Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development (ARCADIA), the Romanian Parliament - Foreign Affairs Committee, European Centre for Development Policy Management, World Vision Brussels, Pro Vobis - National Centre for Volunteering Resources, the Romanian Parliament - European Affairs Committee, Leeds University (Great Britain), Concord Confederation, Global Focus, Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development, Europe Aid, the Ministry of Youth and Sports etc.

This year’s edition was organised in the context of the **European Year for Development**, therefore the speakers list included several experts from the European institutions and organisations active in Brussels. Throughout the 3 days the participants discussed in depth the new development objectives, with focus on sustainability, to be established at the international level.

The event was opened by Ms. **Carmen Burlacu**, State Secretary in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by the special guest **Simon Maxwell**, from the Overseas Development Institute, Great Britain.

Ms. **Carmen Burlacu** presented several policy elements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Cooperation Development Policy (please see <http://mae.ro/node/1381>).

Simon Maxwell from Overseas Development Institute mentioned that in the United Nations Organisation’s draft there are **17 objectives**, **169 targets** to be attained and **300 indicators** for measuring the performance, while there were 8 Millennium Development objectives.

Unlike the old UN agenda, which was in use up to 2015, the new agenda is a universal one and it provides a connection between the environment and development in all areas of action. Actually, Mr. **Laszlo Borbely**, the President of the Foreign Affairs



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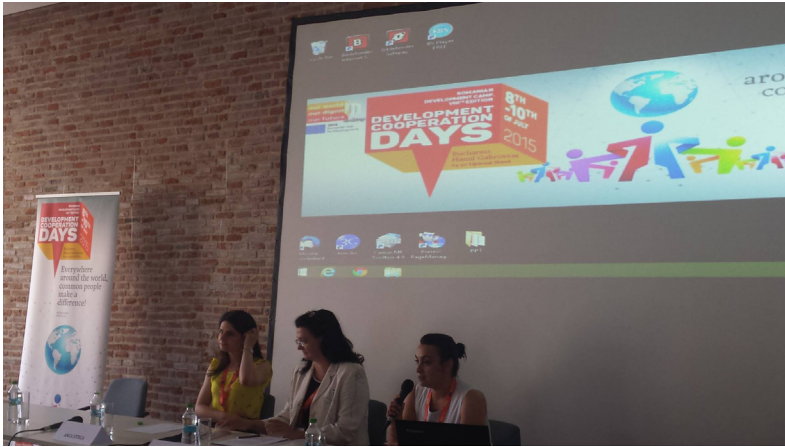


Photo source: <https://www.facebook.com/FONDRomania>

Committee, presented sustainable development as the “development that answers the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to answer to their own needs”.

As concerns the European humanitarian aid, it was mentioned that 31% of the total amount is directed to countries in Europe, Turkey being among the top beneficiaries. Mr. **Geert Laporte** from the European Centre for Development Policy Management brought into discussion the changes of direction in the field of international cooperation for development: the likely end of the North-South paradigm and an integrated/common approach concerning the universal challenges related to international development; the shift towards coherent policies in the field of sustainable development; new financing sources for development combined with efficient

policies; a new “global governance” concerning the aid for development; a legitimate place for Africa in the international system (a better representation at the UN).

Besides the presentations given by the guests, *thematic workshops* were held each day: development promotion through Social Media, youth involvement in development, regional networks of emergent donors, university members’ role, migration and development, development finance - banks’ role for a multilateral development, a regional mechanism for child protection, equal opportunities and development, humanitarian aid offered by Romanian NGOs, migrants’ experiences in Romania.

Referring to Romania’s strong points from the perspective of migration, Ms. **Romina Matei**, from the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, mentioned that: the Romanian legislation is compliant to the community acquis; due to the fact that Romania is not part of the Schengen area, we are not confronted to unexpected problems of migration; the national policy is a prudent one; the European funds absorption rate in migration-related projects is over 90%; Romania has a low number of immigrants and the public opinion is tolerant.

Even though the Romanian Development Camp lasted only 3 days, the participants showed willingness to continue the learning process started in this context, and by the facilities provided by the organisers, it can be noticed that there is in Romania a favourable framework for the aid for development and our country can build a brand in this sense, quantifying the experience it has in democratic transition, law enforcement, child protection and social assistance, among other things.

The European Institute of Romania, whose mission is to provide expertise in European Affairs to the public administration, business field, social partners and civil society, was present at this event with three participants: Mr **Vladimir Guleac**, expert, Public Relations Unit, Mr **Mihai Sebe**, expert, Training and Research in European Affairs Unit, and Ms **Eliza Vaş**, expert, Studies and Analyses Unit.

For more information on this event, you may access the FOND website: <http://www.fondromania.org/pagini/index.php>, and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FONDRomania>.

Eliza Vaş

The International Reflection Seminar From the Eurozone to a “Euro-Union”, Luxemburg, 26 – 27 June 2015

The international reflection seminar *From the Eurozone to a “Euro-Union”*, held between 26-27 June 2015 in Luxemburg, was organized by the *Institute of European Democrats (IED)* and *EuropaNova*, at the initiative of Mr. **Gérard Deprez**, Belgian Minister of State and member of the European Parliament. The seminar brought together various European experts, representing seven different nationalities, who debated the current situation of the European integration process. On the basis of the common diagnosis established, they reflected on the best ways to relaunch the European project. The only Romanian participant was Mr. **Mihai Sebe**, expert at the European Institute of Romania, who presented the national developments in the current European context.



Photo source: <https://www.facebook.com/Europanova>



Photo source: <https://www.facebook.com/Europanova>

The starting point of the debate was the paper presented in October 2013 by the German experts reunited in the *Glienicker Gruppe*, which includes proposals for a better (political) integration of the Eurozone. Based on these proposals, the seminar was intended to verify the legal, technical and political instruments which can be designed and possibly promoted in order to strengthen the Eurozone. The participants in the seminar were also given the opportunity to propose various scenarios taking into account the current European political context.

The main idea was that the European Union must once more take the initiative in order to revitalize and re-legitimize the great common project of European integration. This project is just as necessary as it was 60 years ago, since the current global challenges can be handled only collectively, in a framework that goes beyond the simple governmental cooperation.

In order to restore the credibility of the European integration, it is necessary to look at citizens' actual concerns, such as: skepticism towards the European institutions; the weak economic growth in the European Union; the high level of youth unemployment; the uncontrolled migratory flux; the terrorist attack threats; energy dependency; etc.

All the participants agreed that the regeneration of the European project must start from the core of the European integration, namely the Eurozone. Its member states already share a key instrument of sovereignty - the single European currency.

It is necessary and urgent for the Eurozone states to go further in this economic and budgetary integration, being understood that the other Member States will be able to join the Euro Union, provided all the terms and conditions are accepted.

An open Convention to deepen the Eurozone, without having to amend the current treaties in the first phase, is intended to be initiated by the European Parliament.

This Convention should have as a mandate to identify the best solutions for the following five questions:

- 1) What parliamentary entity (a committee of the European Parliament of the 19 + members of the national parliaments?) would be suitable as an authority of democratic legitimization and control?
- 2) What full-time President (also Vice-President of the Commission?) would be able to offer the necessary impetus and to represent the Eurozone?
- 3) What budget (from which available or newly introduced financial resource)?
- 4) What measures could the Eurozone undertake starting from this budget capacity in order to supply some public goods or to absorb asymmetric shocks?
- 5) How could these new bodies be structured in relation to the European Union as a whole?

For more details, please consult the *Institute of European Democrats (IED)* website <http://www.iedonline.eu/> and *Europanova* website <http://www.europanova.eu/>.

Mihai Sebe, PhD

in focus

European Council: 25 – 26 June 2015

Between 25 and 26 June the European Council held a new session. The main subjects of discussion were migration, security and defence, employment, economic growth and competitiveness and the United Kingdom.

Migration

The main prerequisite of the discussion on migration was that Europe needs an integrated approach, global and common, centred on solidarity and responsibility. One of the efforts mentioned in this regard is the reinforcement of the management of the EU external borders. The key dimensions to be taken into consideration are:

- *relocation/resettlement* - the total amount covered is 60,000 people and it starts with the temporary and exceptional relocation of 40,000 persons over two years

from Italy and Greece to other Member States. The next step will consist in the immediate provision of enhanced financial assistance to the frontline Member States and, in the same time, the efficient implementation of the agreement that all Member States will participate in the resettling of 20,000 displaced persons;

- *return/readmission/reintegration* - high-level dialogues with main countries of origin of irregular migrants should be launched by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as soon as possible. Reinforcing local capacity-building must concentrate on border control, asylum, counter-smuggling and reintegration. Member States will fully implement the Return Directive in order to ensure the swift return of irregular migrants;



Photo source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/europecouncil_meetings/

- *cooperation with countries of origin and transit* - it is crucial to reinforce our overall cooperation with countries of origin and transit, both on stemming the flows of irregular migrants and on tackling the root causes of migration so as to reduce the incentives for illegal migration and to combat the smuggling networks.

Security and defence

The reference idea which generated the discussion concerning the subjects of security and defence was that Europe's security environment has changed dramatically. The actions to be taken revolve around three interconnected areas:

- Further work will be taken forward on the renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy;
- The process of strategic reflection with a view to preparing an EU global strategy on foreign and security

policy is to be pursued;

- Efforts will continue on a more effective, visible and result-oriented CSDP.

Employment, economic growth and competitiveness

In order to fully benefit from the technological revolution, we need to tackle market fragmentation, ensure future-proof regulation, build supporting infrastructure, help the digitisation of industry, create conditions to facilitate growth in all sectors and protect our citizens.

United Kingdom

The UK Prime Minister set out his plans for an “in/out” referendum in the UK. The European Council agreed to revert to the matter in December.

Octavian Gheorghe Roșca, intern

Luxembourg – the new Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Starting with July 1, 2015, Luxembourg has taken over the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The approach of the Luxembourg Presidency will be centred on listening to the citizens, supporting businesses, cooperating with partners and institutions in order to act in the interests of Europe. The program of the Presidency is placed in the context of the implementation of the Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change, adopted by the European Council of 26 and 27 June 2014 and which outlines the key priorities for the European Union over the next five years. The program also takes into account the policy orientations of the President of the Commission, the annual work program of the Commission and the work of the three presidencies of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg.



The priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency¹ for the second semester of 2015 are based on seven pillars:

- **stimulate investment to boost economic growth and employment** - promote sustainable development initiatives based on research and innovation, which seek to enhance competitiveness and increase the rate of employment;
- **deepen the European Union's social dimension** - improve social governance within the Union and, in particular, in the Eurozone; with particular attention to increasing the rate of female employment and to a balanced representation of women and men in political and economic decision-making as factors of competitiveness; in terms of public health, the attention towards patients and innovation of medical technologies will be at the core of discussions;
- **manage migration, combine freedom, justice and security** - promote the process of accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights; the reform of the Court of Justice of the European Union; sustained participation in the adoption by the EU of a coherent global approach regarding the fight against terrorism; implement the renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy for 2015-2020;
- **revitalize the single market by focusing on its digital dimension** - Europe must play a role in the global digital revolution; examine the Single Market Strategy for goods and service; the design and implementation of the internal energy market for electricity; support the European transport policy;
- **place European competitiveness in a global and transparent framework** - Luxembourg Presidency will consider the analysis of the report on the current level of completion of the Economic Monetary Union to carry through its policies on competitiveness; place the fight against fraud and tax evasion in a global context; in terms of multilateral negotiations, the main objectives are to prepare the tenth ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Nairobi; advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership;
- **promote sustainable development** - no effort will be spared to accelerate the transition towards a green economy with low greenhouse emissions; continue the work on the revision of the Europe 2020 strategy by "greening" the European Semester: sustainability must also be the fundamental principle for the future development of European agriculture;
- **strengthen the European Union's presence on the global stage** - the key objectives will be a new foreign policy strategy and development of existing relations with the European Union's closest partners, without jeopardising the fundamental principles of European integration.



Photo source: <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/>

During a press conference, organised after the opening event, Prime-Minister Xavier Bettel mentioned that "Luxembourg has always been a country that has built bridges between others"², referring, in this way, not only to the relations among countries, but also to the relations established within the European societies, more specifically among the social classes.

It is to be mentioned that in Romania, the launch of the Luxembourg Presidency was held on 13 July 2015 and it was hosted by the EC Representation in Romania. The event benefited from the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bogdan Aurescu, and the Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr. Christian Biever and the Head of EC Representation in Bucharest, Mrs. Angela Filote.

Octavian Gheorghe Roşca, intern

¹ <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/la-presidence/a-propos-presidence/programme-et-priorites/index.html>

² <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/actualites/articles-actualite/2015/07/visite-comm-lux/index.html>

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