

event \_\_\_\_\_

## Gender Equality: Guarantee of the Economic Growth and of a Sustainable Society



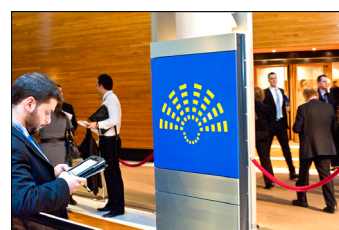
Since January 1, 2013, the European Institute of Romania is the host organization for the **Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre**, a local contact point of the institutions of the European Union for the citizens of the Bucharest-Ilfov region. Coordinated by the European Commission Representation in Romania, the Europe Direct Romania Network, consisting of 31 Information Centres, provides easy access to European information related to the institutions, policies, programmes, legislation and priorities of the European Union and the European citizens' rights and responsibilities. The Europe Direct Information Centres complete and support the activity of the European Commission Representation and of the European Parliament Information Office at local and regional level.

On this occasion, on **March 8, 2013**, at the headquarters of the IER, the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre was **officially launched**, the event being highlighted by the **debate** "Gender equality: guarantee of the economic growth and of a sustainable society". Organized by the European Institute of Romania, in partnership with the European Parliament Information Office in Romania and the European Commission Representation in Romania, the event had a double significance, ... **p.2**

EP \_\_\_\_\_

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Plenary Session 11 - 14 March 2013, Strasbourg Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework Continue

In the opening of the plenary session, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, condemned violence against women and their under-representation on positions of leadership, emphasizing the importance of fighting these phenomena by increasing investment in encouraging professional training and female entrepreneurship. On the debate and voting agenda for this plenary session were also highly-relevant issues such as the long-term budget of the European Union ... **p.7**



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

- 3 *Romanian Academic Society: Annual Analysis and Forecast Report - Romania 2013*
- 3 *Eurosfat ... in Bucharest*
- 4 *Prospects for the Economic and Monetary Union in 2013*
- 5 *Gazprom facing gas markets transformations*
- 6 *Making the Internal EU Energy Market Work*
- 8 *The European Council: 14 -15 March 2013*



... being part of the manifestations scheduled by the European Parliament in all the Member States of the European Union in order to highlight the International Women's Day and to underline the importance the Union attaches to promoting gender equality in society.

The opening session, dedicated to the launch of the Centre, welcomed the presence of Ms. **Gabriela Drăgan**, PhD. Professor, Director General of the European Institute of Romania, Mr. **Niculăe Idu**, Head of European Commission Representation in Romania, Ms. **Mădălina Mihalache**, Head of the European Parliament Information Office in Romania and Ms. **Diana Filip**, Coordinator of the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre. This first part of the event was meant to raise awareness of the importance and the mission of the Europe Direct Information Centres in the local community and to present the objectives of the Europe Direct Bucharest Information Centre, which will be accomplished through the activities set in the 2013 agenda.



The debate following the opening session was honored by the presence of Ms. **Corina Crețu**, Member of the European Parliament and Vice President of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Ms. **Alexandra Bogdan**, Counselor, Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament, Ms. **Lavinia Rașcă**, PhD. Professor, Institute for Business Administration in Bucharest and President of the European Professional Women's Network Romania, Ms. **Liliana Pagu**, President of the Women's Association of Romania, Mr. **Dan Alexandru Darabont**, Deputy Mayor, Bucharest City Hall, Ms. **Gabriela Drăgan**, PhD. Professor, Director General of the European Institute of Romania. The debate was moderated by Ms. **Anne-Marie Blăjan**, European Affairs Editor, DIGI24. The event was attended by representatives of the Romanian Parliament, the civil society, the academic environment and the administrative authorities.

The topic of the debate prompted the speakers to tackle the issue of the gender equality situation in the European Union by presenting key statistics, especially in the context of the economic crisis. Thus, they pointed out specific percentages which show a reduced representation of women in the administrative sector and their inferior position in management bodies. This situation is generated by the financial crisis and

the uninominal electoral system that favors discrimination, but also by the mentality and attitude of resignation.

Ms. **Corina Crețu** underlined the importance of the economic crisis as a factor which catalyses the women's already existing problems, with the mention that the gender equality issue should represent a priority and a constant concern in the European Union as the political will is the most important factor in solving gender discrepancy.

Ms. **Alexandra Bogdan** argued the fact that at parliamentary level, Romania ranks among the last positions in Europe when it comes to addressing the issue of women's inferiority in the administration, while on the labor market our country occupies a leading position. The problem is real and the solution cannot be provided only by adapting the legislation, but also by changing mentality.

Ms. **Lavinia Rașcă** identified three barriers in the gender equality process. The first one is generated by the women's mentality and education, because the society teaches people that men are more suited to leadership roles; the second barrier is the social and family one, because a woman does not have enough time for career once she founded a family; the third impediment is at the organizational and legislative level.

Ms. **Liliana Pagu** said that the discussion does not focus on feminist principles, but on the concept of equal partnership because the policies related to gender equality are vital to achieve economic prosperity. We can talk about competitiveness and growth only when there is gender equality.

Mr. **Dan Alexandru Darabont** endorsed the debate topic, with the certainty that women represent a central and essential component in the smooth running of society, as they are involved, active and genuinely interested in their work.



In closing, Ms. **Gabriela Drăgan** summarized in her intervention, the history of the International Women's Day, the official celebration of which was determined by the initiative of women to have certain rights duly recognized. Although there are certain mental barriers regarding this issue, the desire of chances equality is manifested by both women and men.

The debate gave participants the opportunity to raise a set of questions and comments in order to clarify certain aspects mentioned in presentations.

Diana Filip

# Romanian Academic Society: Annual Analysis and Forecast Report – Romania 2013



Source: <http://sar.org.ro>

On 14 March 2013, the Romanian Academic Society (RAS), in partnership with the European Commission Representation in Romania (ECR), organised a round table on the topic “How to relaunch Romania”. The debate was preceded by the presentation of the main conclusions of the 2013 Analysis and Forecast Report, drawn up by RAS.

The event was attended, among others, by: *Liviu Dragnea*, Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration, *Liviu Voinea*, Minister Delegate for the Budget, Ministry of Public Finance, *Eugen Teodorovici*, Minister for European Funds, *Eugen Nicolăescu*, Minister of Health, *Călin Popescu Tăriceanu*, PNL senator, *Mircea Geoană*, PSD senator, *Gheorghe Ialomițianu*, former Minister of

Public Finance, *Leonard Orban*, former Minister for European Affairs, *Lucian Isar*, Tarom Board of Directors, *Daniel Dăianu*, Professor of Economics, *Cristian Pârvan*, Secretary General of the Association of Romanian Business People, *Lucian Liviu Albu*, Director of the Institute for Economic Forecasting. The debate was open by *Alina Mungiu-Pippidi*, President of RAS and by *Niculae Idu*, Head of EC representation in Romania.

The 2013 Forecast and Analysis Report analyses the capacity of the Romanian state to manage public policy issues in 2012, as well as the resources and risks of relaunching Romania in 2013, in the context of the economic recession both at European level and at global level. The analyses carried out rely on the original research made by RAS experts and associates: Florin Cîțu, Sorin Paveliu, Mădălina Doroftei, Valentina Dimulescu, Raluca Pop, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (General Editor), Răzvan Orășanu, Grațian Mihăilescu, Adriana Iordache.

The document is structured in the following chapters:

- 2013 Forecasts.
- Structural deficit: How we managed to dupe the IMF and what comes next.
- Administrative capacity: good governance is the best strategy for economic growth
- Regionalisation and EU funds: how to avoid doing harm before doing good
- Resources or annuities? The risks and benefits of privatisation in 2013.
- Health policy: putting an end to unfair public-private competition in the Romanian health sector

As can be seen, this year’s issue approaches current matters of great interest, such as the issue of European funds absorption and its impact on regional development, public policies in the health sector (with priority given to hospitals). But, the main topic by far is the analysis of the journey Romania has taken so far together with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The RAS panel experts (analysts and/or practitioners from the public or private sector) answered a series of open questions and expressed their opinion on the need to continue along the guidelines set out by IMF.

The full report can be accessed at:

[http://sar.org.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RAPORT-SAR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://sar.org.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RAPORT-SAR_FINAL.pdf)

Florentina Costache

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## Eurosfat<sup>1</sup> ... in Bucharest

Context: More than six years from accession, Romania cannot fully assume its role as a member state of the European Union. Considering that Romania needs to become more aware of the role it can play in everyday European politics, Europuls has taken the initiative of organising *Eurosfat*. It is a debate platform which will allow a clearer outlining of Romania’s stances in the European Union.

The first edition of *Eurosfat*, an annual meeting of all those interested to debate the current European issues from a Romanian perspective, was held on 15 March 2013 at the Palace of the Parliament.

The event was initiated by Europuls and was organised under the patronage of the Chamber of Deputies, the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Ministry of

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<sup>1</sup> “Eurotalk”, n. tr.



Foreign Affairs. Eurosfat is also supported by the European Commission within the European Year of Citizens 2013 (it is considered the most representative event of the year) and it benefited from the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Romania, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Romania, the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation and the Notre Europe think-tank - Jacques Delors Institute.

The event held at the Palace of the Parliament reunited national and European level politicians, experts in European affairs, representatives of the private and non-governmental environment, journalists and citizens. Among the Eurosfat guests were: Dacian Cioloș, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, H.E. Olivier Grogan, the

Ambassador of Ireland in Romania, ministers and officials of the Government of Romania, members of the Parliament of Romania, leaders of the civil society and of the academic environment.

The works of the event were carried out in two plenary sessions and eight workshops which approached current issues of both the European and the Romanian agenda: the euro zone and Romania's accession to the euro zone, the reform of Romania's health system in the European legal context, the structural funds and the absorption capacity, European citizenship, perspectives of development of the small and medium-size agriculture in Romania and the third energy package, among other things.

An account of the contributions of workshops and plenary sessions will be given in a final report. The summary of the consultations will be made available for the press, it will be transmitted to national and European policy makers and it will be presented in a conference to be held in Brussels, at the European Parliament.

Florentina Costache

analysis

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## Prospects for the Economic and Monetary Union in 2013



The Representation of the European Commission in Romania organized on February 28, 2013 a debate titled “Euroteam Romania: Prospects for the Economic and Monetary Union in 2013”. The current year is expected to be a critical one for the economic development of the EU countries, situation caused by the financial and economic crisis, thus the need to strengthen the economic governance arises. In the context of the current economic crisis, achieving the goals of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), namely the coordination of economic and fiscal policies, a common monetary policy and a common currency seems to be difficult, requiring new perspectives and ways of solving the problems encountered.

In this respect, the prospects of the Economic and Monetary Union can be outlined considering three main areas: current semester progresses, recovery priorities and accountability and democratic legitimacy. Thus, the speakers of this debate presented the current situation of EMU, the actions taken so far, the existing problems, while proposing alternatives for solving those problems.

In the banking sector, for instance, major changes have occurred in terms of the fluctuations of the interest rate that have been problematic for the investments and currency stability, thus generating a flawed system. The governments of the member states were unable to manage the budget deficits and the public debt, the trade deficits and the problems which occurred in the financial sector. Moreover, one of the biggest political problems is the democratic deficit and the deficit of trust in the relationship between citizens and politicians. The Monti Report on the completion of the single market in 2010 revealed the institutional and performance discrepancies in the European Union, thus pointing out the deficiencies of the decision mechanism that delays to solve the problems. The faulty institutional design and the imbalances between the Member States are problems that can not be ignored.

However, it seems that the attractiveness of the European model has not suffered and the trust in European institutions is higher than the trust manifested towards the national institutions. Thus, some of the actions taken so far that have been successful are the European Stability Mechanism, the Budget Pact, the Stability and Growth Pact, the measures taken by the European Central Bank regarding the euro zone stability (this aspect is still deficient, but efforts are being made to achieve this objective) and its interventions by purchasing bonds and the initiatives to strengthen the economic governance. In the context of the current economic situation of the European Union, although policies are starting to yield results, further reforms in deficient areas are needed.

The need for a sustainable economy is immediate, representing the bridge for the proper functioning of the entire European system and for overcoming the economic crisis as soon as possible. Another aspect of great importance is the involvement of the member states in the European Union's efforts to successfully overcome the crisis. Economic growth, competitiveness and also the sustainable development are the joint responsibility of national governments and EU institutions. The aim is a reconfiguration of the governance and a deep restructuring of the economies of the Member States, to address the problems in the political, social and economic areas generated by inefficient operation thereof. Alternatives should be focused on attaining the objective of "a deep and genuine EMU". Given this, the debate lead up to some of the possible solutions to the problems, including: restricting state actions in the economy sector, the need for a common fiscal policy (not just a monetary one), the need for a dual approach of the problem, both politically and technically for a better understanding and preparation for the adoption of the euro and also the monetary and economic convergence.

The projects already underway need to be continued and strengthened and there is also a need for new global agreements and actions to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union aiming for economic recovery and support of the euro.

Andreea Băjan, intern

## Gazprom facing gas markets transformations



### Changes in the European market

The European natural gas market has seen a decline in 2012 compared to 2011 and Gazprom's sales have dropped 8%, a faster decline than the total drop in the market. Meanwhile Statoil, Norway's state-owned energy company and Europe's second largest natural gas supplier, has seen its sales increase by 16%<sup>1</sup>.

The difference is linked with recent changes in the European gas market. If 10 years ago, there were only 2 operational gas hubs, in Great Britain and in Belgium, their number and the transit and trade volumes have increased greatly since then, which lead to a delinking of the spot price for gas from long term gas contract prices which are traditionally linked to oil prices<sup>2</sup>. As a result, large gas buyers and utilities companies

have been pressuring producers to link prices to the gas spot price. Long term contracts linked to gas spot prices have reached 45% of the total volume for 2012 and forecasts show that the percentage will surpass 50% in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Statoil has reacted faster to gas buyers' demands, so that just 45% of the volume sold in 2012 was linked to oil prices, this ratio dropping subsequently to 25% in 2015<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, Gazprom was indexing just 10% of its contracts volume with spot prices.

Asked about Statoil's increase in market share and the market's turn towards indexing with spot prices, Gazprom's deputy CEO, Alexander Medvedev, stated that prices will remain coupled with the price of oil, as the company is seeking revenues and not volume<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, its clients have been demanding renegotiations and Gazprom has reserved \$4.7 billion for European customers refunds in 2013. In 2012, Gazprom had reserved \$4.4 billion for refunds, of which it paid \$2.7 billion<sup>6</sup>.

### Changes in the Russian market

If externally, the main transformation of the market came from the demand side, internally the transformations challenging Gazprom are represented by the supply structure. Gazprom's position in Russia is threatened by the rapid rise of independent energy companies, the main ones being Novatek and Rosneft. The share of independent producers in the Russian gas production has risen from 9.5% in 2000 to 26.9% in

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/gazprom-gas-giant-is-running-into-trouble-a-881024.html>

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Heather, "Continental Europe Gas Hubs: Are they fit for purpose?", Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, NG63, June 2012, available at <http://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/NG-63.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/13/gazprom-statoil-gas-idUSL5N0BB9Q120130213>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-07/statoil-sees-share-of-spot-price-indexed-gas-contracts-growing.html>

<sup>5</sup> [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324162304578304592864530924.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324162304578304592864530924.html?mod=googlenews_wsj)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/08/gazprom-dividend-idUSL5N0B81T320130208>

2012, the aforementioned companies announcing significant increases in their gas production by 2020<sup>7</sup>.

On the export side, Russian president Vladimir Putin has recently announced the intention to gradually liberalise exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which would eliminate Gazprom's monopoly, mentioning that independent producers should turn towards Asian markets, so as not to create Russian competition in Europe<sup>8</sup>.

Facing increasing pressure from customers in Europe and internal competitors and following repeated recommendations from president Putin<sup>9</sup>, Gazprom is turning its export plans towards Asia, especially Japan, China and South Korea. In order to increase the share of exports towards Asia, the company plans to build gas pipelines linking Russia to China and to South Korea. The first deliveries to South Korea are scheduled for 2017, while the turn towards Japan will be based mainly on LNG exports<sup>10</sup>.

Sergiu Căpâlnean, intern

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## Making the Internal EU Energy Market Work



The Representation of the European Commission in Romania organised on 12 March 2013 a debate on *Making the Internal EU Energy Market Work*, under the series of monthly events "European Perspectives".

Several representatives of the European Commission (DG ENER and DG SANCO), of the public authorities with competences in the field of energy, diplomats, representatives of the business environment, academics, researchers and representatives of the mass-media attended the event.

The European Union undertakes to implement next year the single market model for energy in the context of challenges related to high dependence on imports, growing prices and environment protection commitments, a model which implies combining all energy selling and buying offers on a single transaction platform. The objective of this large-scale project is to

ensure a sustainable transition towards a new energetic system, as well as to offer all energy consumers in the European Union a single price reference, so that the electricity costs can be more accessible. Furthermore, there is a need for consumer protection - especially protection of vulnerable consumers - for which national administrations must implement rigorous measures.

The Third Energy Package offers a viable solution for consumers, in the context that the single market for energy contributes to economic growth, job creation and supply security and it ensures the possibility for consumers to change their supplier as well as access to information.

The internal energy market is a pre-requisite for making the energy sector more competitive and for reducing the carbon footprint, if the existing opportunities in the system are taken into account.

The process of liberalisation of the energy market will be a gentle one, considering that the difference between the regulated price of electricity and the average transaction price on the free market is only 10%. However, since the price difference, on the gas market, between internal production and the European average is very high, the companies' acquisition costs will increase by 50% by 2014.

In perspective, next year will be the time of reference for energy market coupling. To this effect, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia have already formed a regional market while Poland and Bulgaria, closely followed by Romania, are negotiating the terms to enter this market.

Livia Mirescu, intern

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<sup>7</sup> Danila Bochkarev, „The rise of the gas independents: a game changer for Russia”, Global Gas Analytics, 4 February 2013, [http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=4039#artikel\\_4039](http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=4039#artikel_4039)

<sup>8</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324162304578302062830532012.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/23/us-russia-putin-energy-idUSBRE89M0RR20121023>

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Medvedev, „Gazprom's Strategy in Asia”, Gazprom Export Global Newsletter, October 2012, Vol. 5, Issue 3, available at [http://www.gazprom-mt.com/WhatWeSay/Lists/PublicationsList/Blue\\_Fuel\\_-\\_3Q\\_2012.pdf](http://www.gazprom-mt.com/WhatWeSay/Lists/PublicationsList/Blue_Fuel_-_3Q_2012.pdf)



## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Plenary Session 11 - 14 March 2013, Strasbourg

### Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework Continue

In the opening of the plenary session, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, condemned violence against women and their under-representation on positions of leadership, emphasizing the importance of fighting these phenomena by increasing investment in encouraging professional training and female entrepreneurship. On the debate and voting agenda for this plenary session there were also highly-relevant issues such as the long-term budget of the European Union, the Common Agricultural Policy after 2014, racism and xenophobia and the individual situations of Syria, Egypt, Mali, Ukraine and North Korea.

Regarding the European Union's long-term budget, MEPs rejected the multiannual financial framework proposal agreed by the Heads of Government on the 8 March. The European Parliament will not accept the long-term budget proposal before it is reviewed and approved by a qualified majority in the Council. Also, the fact that the 2012 payments were not made in full underlies the motivation to reject the budget proposal coming from the Member States.

The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, spoke in front of the European leaders during the European Council on 14 March, in Brussels. He justified the MEPs' refusal to adopt the EU budget in its current form arguing that austerity and budget cuts are not enough to combat the recession. Moreover, the EP President presented in front of the members of the Council, the European Parliament's demands concerning the following negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Following the changes related to the EU population, the number of MEPs will decrease from 766 to 751 after the 2014 EP elections. Thus, 13 states will lose one seat (Romania, Greece, Belgium, Portugal, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania and Latvia) and Germany will have 3 MEPs less. The resolution adopted on 13 March by the European Parliament is a compromise meant to meet the new limits set by the Lisbon Treaty, according to which the maximum number of MEPs must be 750 plus the President and the maximum number of MEPs for each Member State, 96.

Rapporteur Nadja Hirsch, a member of ALDE, Germany, raised the issue of population aging and demographic changes which the European Union is now going through. In this context, the EU system of immigration is the solution by attracting skilled immigrants to compensate for the high level of population aging. To attract these skilled immigrants and also to help them during the integration process, a system based on



Source: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_parliament](http://www.flickr.com/photos/european_parliament)

specific criteria, as well as pre-departure support and local integration was proposed.

MEPs also addressed in this plenary session the EU agricultural policy reform, having voted four legislative proposals. MEPs consider that the EU agricultural policy must be greener, fairer; it should include better environmental protection and also ensure the highest food quality for every European consumer. Two other laws voted on Tuesday are meant to protect the European buyer through rapid compensation in case of disappointment with the purchased products, the laws covering also the virtual area.

The President of Israel, Shimon Peres, has spoken to the MEPs on Tuesday during a solemn session. He maintained that the new Israeli government is an opportunity towards the peace process with the Palestinians, for which the only solution is the „two states for two nations”<sup>1</sup>. The Israeli President has also spoken about the danger posed by the Iranian regime by undermining the security of the Arab countries and he has urged the international community to include Hezbollah onto the list of terrorist organizations. European Union's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, took also part in the debates on the situation of Syria and the North Korea's nuclear threats.

For more details see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/ro>

Ioana Ene, intern

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/headlines/content/20130301FCS06146/4/html/>

## The European Council: 14 –15 March 2013



Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/european-council>

This year's second reunion of the European Council, chaired by the current president of the Council, Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, was held in Brussels, 14 - 15 March. The main topic of the meeting was the *completion of the first phase of the 3rd European Semester* and the economic forecast for the next period as well as the relevant regulations. In the context of talks on the **economic growth**, the Council envisaged an **assessment of the progress** made by the Member States following the application of the 2012 recommendations<sup>1</sup>. An important aspect is the fact that these recommendations were addressed to each state, individually, for the period 2012 - 2013.

The European Semester, the central concept of the debates is in fact a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination within the EU. In economic terms, the European Semester is a period of time in which **the member states align their fiscal, economic and job creation policies** with the objectives and rules agreed at the EU level, namely to the Stability and Growth Pact and the Europe 2020 Strategy. The aim of the Semester is to ensure sound public finances, to foster economic growth and to prevent macroeconomic imbalances within the European Union.

This European Council session also hosted a series of debates on the **Annual Growth Survey 2013**<sup>2</sup> of the European Commission, which supports the European Semester's processes, serving as basis for building a common understanding of the priorities for action at the national and EU level, considering the tendencies as well as the need to return to a path of sustainable growth and job creation<sup>3</sup>. Five essential priorities were identified for this field: pursuing differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidation; restoring normal lending to the economy; promoting growth and competitiveness; tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis; modernising public administration<sup>4</sup>.

Moreover, the Council also tackled the **Economic and Monetary Union** subject, both under its social dimension and as concerns the contractual arrangements. The discussions regarding the banking policies revolved around the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM), which is a priority for the near future. The Commission is to elaborate, during the following months, the plan for a Single Resolution Mechanism for the countries participating in the SSM.

As for **relations with the strategic partners**, according to President Van Rompuy's declaration following the debate session, there were discussions about the relationship with Russia, without neglecting the "dramatic situation in Syria". In this context, "the European Union's full engagement in international efforts to bring an end to the intolerable violence" was reaffirmed. (Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council)<sup>5</sup>.

Oana Iftime, intern

<sup>1</sup> Council reunions, <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings?lang=ro>, accessed on 18 March 2013

<sup>2</sup> Commission Communication Annual Growth Survey 2013, 28 November 2012, [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013\\_ro.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_ro.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Press statement of President Van Rompuy, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/136178.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/136178.pdf) (Accessed: 18 March 2013).

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