



# EIR newsletter

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EU \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Latvia takes the helm of the Council of the European Union



Excency Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mrs. Angela Filote, Head of the European Commission Representation in Romania.

On 1 January 2015, Latvia has taken over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, thus being included on the list of countries that have a say for the first time in this position. On 21 January, an event marking the launch of the Latvian Presidency took place in Bucharest, in the presence of His Excellency Ilgvars Klava, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to Romania, resident in Warsaw, His

In the opening of the event, Ambassador Klava noted the current challenges faced by the Latvian Presidency: the terrorist attack in Paris, threats from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, the high unemployment rate and the security and foreign policy problems in the European Union. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also mentioned that the events in France prove that we are dealing with a dangerous phenomenon, namely extremism. Further on, Minister Aurescu stated that *Romania has always supported a strong European Union*, emphasizing that the problems of economic, social and cultural integration must be tackled. In this case too, Romania supports the Latvian agenda and believes that the priorities stated are very well reflected in the Government’s national objectives ... **p.2**

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## European Year for Development

Since 1983, the European Union has chosen a theme of action each year with the purpose of raising the awareness of the public opinion and attracting the attention of governments of Member States on a particular issue, by organizing conferences, debates, and other type of educative events. The MEPs designated 2015 the “European Year for Development”, in the context of the imminent deadline (at the end of this year) of the “Millennium Development Goals” (MDG) set by the United Nations in 2000 ... **p.2**



... Moreover, the programme of activities<sup>1</sup>, available for the period 1 January 2015 - 30 June 2015, also mentions that Europe “*must be a source of inspiration not only for Europeans, but also for the societies outside the EU*”, and to this end “*Latvia is determined to preside over the work of the Council professionally and honestly*”. Starting from this desideratum, the Latvian agenda will focus on three priorities: Competitive Europe, Digital Europe and Engaged Europe.

Europe’s competitiveness refers mainly to the enhancement of its entrepreneurial capacity, by redirecting investments to new products and services. It is also pointed out that developing a competitive industry and service sectors can subsequently lead to job creation and the promotion of social cohesion. In this case, Latvia has committed to actively support the Investment Plan proposed by the Juncker Commission, so that the European Fund for Strategic Investments can become operational by mid-2015. At the same time, the Latvian Presidency is determined to support the creation of an Energy Union and a solid energy diplomacy with external suppliers. Mrs. Angela Filote expressed her appreciation for the existing political will to create an Energy Union. As regards the actions that will be taken by the Commission in 2015, she noted that the priorities for the current year will be addressed by *simplification, transparency and efficiency*. Now, there are only 23 new legislative initiatives, compared to 2010, when more than 300 new initiatives were proposed, hampering the legislative process.

Further on, the second priority of the Latvian Presidency should be put into practice by developing a true digital Europe. The steps to be taken in this case are related to building trust in the Digital Single Market, digitalisation of the public sector and increasing security in the digital environment, building a coherent data protection framework and reaching a compromise on the Telecommunications Market Package. Another aspect worth mentioning in this context concerns the Transparency Register, which will become a compulsory instrument for everyone who lobbies the EU institutions. Moreover, digital transparency involves the publication of all agendas of EU commissioners, as from December 2014, so that every citizen can have access to this information.

In accordance with the third priority, the European Union’s engagement, especially at external level, should be implemented by speeding up negotiations on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (which are to be completed by the end of 2015), concluding negotiations between the European Union and Canada on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, advancing negotiations on the EU-Japan and, respectively, the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement, implementing Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and reviewing the EU-Central Asia Strategy. Concerning the Transatlantic Partnership, Ambassador Klava stated the following: “*We are great supporters of the Transatlantic Partnership, since we consider it to be an economic element meant to help us cooperate as much as possible in a globalised world; at the same time, it has a geopolitical importance, given its impact on the gravitational centre of the world’s political influence*”. Another role played by Latvia in the Trio presidency programme will be to host the Eastern Partnership Summit, scheduled to be held in Riga on 21-22 May 2015. The summit will provide the opportunity for the Latvian Government to open the way for a new political dialogue with Russia<sup>2</sup> and to contribute to decisions on the future of the Eastern Partnership.

As regards Romania, Ambassador Klava believes that “*there is a ‘realistic’ possibility for Romania to join the Schengen Area during the Latvian Presidency*” of the Council. Minister Aureescu emphasized that, for the past few years, Romania has been acting as a de facto member of this area, ensuring the highest standards of security at its Eastern border, which is also a border of the European Union.

Eliza Vaş

## opinion

### European Year for Development

... In line with its aspirations as a global actor, the EU is engaged in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger worldwide and intends to inform its citizens that every Euro can make a difference towards changing the lives of the less fortunate populations from Third World countries, in areas such as solidarity, justice reform and development policies. The motto of this year will be “*Our world, our*

*dignity, our future*”. The thematic year, divided in 12 thematic months, was launched on 9 January in Riga and will officially end on 8 December in Luxembourg.

The MDG (with 1990 as reference year) make for the quintessence of the Millennium Declaration adopted in September 2000 at the Millennium Summit by 191 countries, including Romania. With that occasion, the leaders of

<sup>1</sup> The programme of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, [https://eu2015.lv/images/PRES\\_prog\\_2015\\_EN-final.pdf](https://eu2015.lv/images/PRES_prog_2015_EN-final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Joint Press Conference of Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ms Federica Mogherini after Meeting between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia and the European Commission, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4htenqAwDQ4#t=107>

world nations promised to fulfill eight key objectives with the main purpose of eradicating extreme poverty from the world by the end of 2015. However, efforts towards reaching those targets are far from finished. The eight main areas of action are the following: *Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; Global partnership for development*<sup>1</sup>. The Millennium Declaration is the only global agenda in the field of development that managed to attract such a high level of engagement from the majority of world states.

Even though it wanted to adhere to this cornerstone custodian of the post-WWII international order as early as 1946, Romania did not join the United Nations until 1955, together with 15 other states. Nevertheless, the local Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Romania was open almost 20 years earlier than in other former member states of the Warsaw Pact. Before the 1989 Revolution, our country used to be an important donor of assistance for other states, especially in Africa and the Middle East. In the transition period that followed, Romania became a receiver of assistance, and after the accession to the EU in 2007, our country regained its position of supporting different areas of development beyond its borders. According to the Governing Program 2013-2016, the “Official Assistance for Development (ODA) will remain a priority dimension of diplomatic action, aiming at strengthening and developing the objectives set through the annual plan in the area. There will be considered priority geographical areas: Republic of Moldova, Eastern Neighbourhood, Mediterranean Basin to support democracy building projects, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”<sup>2</sup>.

On the one hand, **remarkable progress has been made with regard to the overall objective of reducing poverty** (the world has managed to reduce extreme poverty by half in 2010, five years before the deadline), and also in fields such as access to education, promoting gender equality, reducing infant mortality rates, combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring environmental sustainability and forging a partnership for development. On the other hand, **efforts and progress were not equally distributed among states and are limited by the impact of global challenges** such as the financial and economic crisis, price increase for basic food products, global warming or the persistence of conflict and instability zones. Under these conditions, new ways are being sought in order to incorporate the lessons learnt into the Post-2015 Development Agenda that will follow in the footsteps of the MDG program. *The new agenda is to reflect the importance of achieving the initial goals set by this initiative with the final end of building more inclusive societies and stronger institutions powered by shared prosperity.*



It is worth mentioning that *the European Union is the largest contributor in terms of ODA in the world, accounting for more than half of the assistance provided worldwide*. “The European Year for Development is an important chance to engage citizens in the work of the EU institutions in development policy”<sup>3</sup>, said Linda McAvan, Chairwoman of the European Parliament’s Committee on Development and a UK member of the Socialists and Democrats.

“*One of my priorities for this Commission is to strengthen Europe as a global actor*. Europe can only be a global actor if Europeans understand how the role of the European Union and its Member States benefits us all in our interdependent world”<sup>4</sup>, said the new chief of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, in his address delivered on the occasion of the official ceremony that marked the launch of the European Year for Development in Riga. “With the European Union and its Member States as the world’s most important donor, we can take pride in these numbers. **Europe has helped make a difference in the life of millions**”, he highlighted. Looking forward, the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg was on the same page with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, according to whom the Post-2015 Development Agenda “offers a unique opportunity for global leaders and people to end poverty, transform the world to better meet human needs and the necessities of economic transformation, while protecting our environment, ensuring peace and realizing human rights”<sup>5</sup>. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saluting the European Year for Development, assured that the Romanian diplomacy will continue to “promote Romania’s democracy transition expertise in domains such as: good governance, strengthening democracy and rule

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://gov.ro/ro/obiective/programul-de-guvernare-2013-2016>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/news-room/content/20150106STO04601/html/Anul-european-pentru-dezvoltare-evenimente>

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-15-3100\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-3100_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/un-sab/system/files/UN%20SG%20Synthesis%20Report%20on%20post-2015%20Agenda%204.12.2014.pdf>



of law, economic development, education, health and environment protection”<sup>6</sup>.

Unfortunately, a shadow was cast over the launch of the European Year for Development by the worst terrorist incident in the history of France, against the headquarters of the satirical paper “*Charlie Hebdo*” in Paris, which left 12 people dead, prompting a global wave of shock. “This

is an intolerable and barbaric act which concerns us all as human beings and Europeans”<sup>7</sup>, explained president Juncker, who was present in Paris on Sunday 11 January to attend a symbolic march of solidarity with numerous world leaders in honour of the victims.

Bogdan Mureşan

EIR

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## Communication in European Affairs

Once again, in 2014 the European affairs communication events organised by the European Institute of Romania (EIR) brought to the attention of the interested public European topics perceived as priorities both at the national and at the European Union level.

The four studies carried out under the *SPOS 2013* project were launched during the *24 April* conference. The event was honoured by the participation of Mr Leonard Orban, at that time the President of EIR’s Board of Administration, Ms Iulia Matei, Deputy General Director, European Union Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms Gabriela Dragan, Director General of EIR, as well as that of coordinators of the research team taking part in the project. In the period *June-July* was carried out the *promotion campaign of the SPOS 2014 studies* which included four thematic debates (a debate for each study).



On 21 May, EIR organised in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Romania the conference *Poland: Ten Years after EU Accession. Lessons to be learned*, an event which proved to be appreciated by the embassies of EU member states in Bucharest as well as by counsellors and experts in European Affairs. A similar event was organised on 10 June in partnership with the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Romania.

It follows from the above that *partnership relationships* constitute an important element in the process of promotion and creation of the institutional image. Efforts made in order to strengthen the collaboration with the European Parliament Information Bureau in Romania resulted in organising three events in partnership, in 2014 (28 February, 7 March and 9 May). Moreover, the partnership established with the Institute for Eastern Studies (Poland) was developed by EIR’s participation (for the third consecutive year) as institutional partner at the Krynica-Zdroj Economic Forum, where it organised a debate on the *Reform of the Economic and Monetary Union from the perspective of non-euro zone EU member states*. EIR also organised in Bucharest an event entitled “*Yes, we could! 25 years of democratic change, 15 years in NATO, 10 years in EU. How Poland made it.*” (23 October).

The second edition of the Romanian-German Forum took place between 30 September - 2 October in Berlin in the form of a round-table (*EU Round-Table, EURT*).

The annual conference entitled *Political and economical challenges: answers for Europe* took place on 11 December. The event was organised with the support of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions - Eurofound (Dublin), and it also provided an opportunity for granting the *EIR Excellence Awards*, fifth edition. The 2014 edition prizes were granted to radio/TV shows and on-line platforms on European subjects, in recognition of the efforts made by the producers *to promote the European spirit and values*.

As concerns the own income generating projects, particular attention was given to the management and implementation of the partnership framework agreement concluded with the Representation of the EC in Romania on the *Europe Direct Information Centre* (EDIC Bucharest). Among the activities carried out in 2014, there were information seminars and creativity workshops on European subjects organised in four high-schools (two in Bucharest and two in Ilfov County), events organised for specific target-groups, and an event open to the general public “9  *Europa!*” (read as *We like Europe!*) on Europe Day (9 May). Furthermore, following invitations to promote the Centre’s activity, the EDIC Bucharest team took part in other communication and information events organised by the representations of the European institutions in Bucharest or by other partners active in the field of European affairs.

The SPOS 2013 studies launch conference, EIR’s annual conference, as well as the other communication events were covered by the media, especially the on-line publications Euractiv.ro (*live text*), EpochTimes, Caleaeuropeană.ro, Economica.net, Rador Press Agency, among others.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mae.ro/node/30022>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mae.ro/node/30022>

An interview with Ms Gabriela Drăgan, Director General of EIR was aired in the 28 April edition of the “Apel matinal” radio show, Radio România Actualități and an interview (available [here](#)) was given to BizEnergy portal on the issues of Romania’s economic integration and other aspects related to the country’s EU membership, as well as on EIR’s research activity.

With reference to the annual conference and the Fifth Edition of the EIR Excellence Awards, we mention an interview given to the “Euroferma” show (N24 Plus), and an interview to Radio România Internațional aired during the show “Panoramic Punct Ro” of 12 December, as well as the show “De 10 ori România” (*Ten Times Romania*) aired on 15 December by all territorial stations of the Romania Radio Broadcast Company simultaneously.

Ms Gabriela Drăgan has also participated as a special guest in the TV show “Context” (The Money Channel), of 23 December (retrospective of 2014, in dialogue with producer Ovidiu Nahoi).

The EU affairs communication activity was also supported by the two communication instruments: *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* (RJEa) and *EIR Newsletter*. RJEa is intended to stimulate debate on the process of European integration and Romania’s role in the enlarged Europe. RJEa’s area of interest (<http://rjea.ier.ro>) spans from analysing the current themes in the European Union (institution building, economic and financial aspects, internal market, energy, migration, security etc.) to identifying the effects of the European integration process on the new member states (with particular focus on Romania) and to analysing EU’s relations with other global actors. *EIR Newsletter*, a Romanian/English electronic product published once every two months, is meant to increase the visibility of the Institute ([http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/form\\_newsletter](http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/form_newsletter)). Subscribers can read articles on EIR’s events, publications, training courses, as well as opinions of specialists on European themes of national interest.

The *promotion activities* of EIR’s services and products (training courses, events, publications, internships etc.) were carried out by information and promotion materials distributed during training courses or communication events. Information was also published on EIR’s website and on its *Facebook* page, <http://www.facebook.com/institutuleuropeandinromania>, which proved to be a useful instrument in promoting specific activities and products.

For further information on activities and instruments of communication in European affairs, please visit [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro).

Florentina Costache

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## EIR Annual Conference 2014

### *Political and Economic Challenges: Answers for Europe*

The annual Conference of the European Institute of Romania (IER) of 11 December 2014, focused on political and economic challenges of the European Union, the event being organized with the support of the Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions - Eurofound (Dublin). The conference was attended by representatives of the Government of Romania, embassies of EU member states in Bucharest, as well as distinguished experts and analysts from Romania and abroad and researchers specialised in European affairs and foreign policy.

The opening speeches outlined the main challenges that the European Union must respond to. The *Juncker Package* was considered to be a very strong signal addressed to the private sector and a recovery stimulus to encourage the economic growth and the job creation. Concerning Romania, it was underlined that it must respond to challenges such as unemployment, consolidation of the dialogue with civil society, the situation of the Romanians abroad. The deeper integration of Romania has to be a desideratum, so that beyond the ongoing verification mechanisms the quality

of governance and the administrative capacity become subjects of great preoccupation and immediate resolution.

A presentation of Eurofound was made, an organisation which identifies the main social, economic and political problems at European level. One of the main advantages of the Foundation and its working system is the European Correspondents network, that are communicating throughout different reports, articles, representation studies and that are offering contextual information from the different member states.

The first session of the conference focused on the key challenges and priorities of the European Union.

Here are some of the key points expressed during this session:

- the necessity of overcoming the sovereign debt crisis;
- encouraging investments in the EU;
- the need for institutional reconfiguration based on negotiating a new Union treaty;



- the need of taking a *hard power* position in relation with third parties from a military point of view and from the point of view of credibility;
- the influence of the political element upon financial markets with both economical and social implications;
- maintaining under control the vulnerabilities of the European Union (migration problem).

The second session approached the social problem related to the living and working conditions in the EU and the support instruments to improve these issues.

The speakers outlined the following:

- development of mechanisms to stimulate employment;
- establishment of a balance between career and family

- and the reconsideration of the percentage allocated to education and of the legislation related to social dialogue;
- the necessity of coordinated programs to encourage entrepreneurship, both at national and at European level;
- creation of a growth model based on knowledge and technological expertise so that Romania can benefit from a recapitalization of the younger generation (through specialisations in IT, media, design, architecture).

During the final session, EIR's Excellence Awards were granted to the radio and television shows, as well as on-line platforms with a focus on European affairs, for their contribution in promoting the European spirit and values. The winners of the fifth edition were TV shows: Beneficiar România (TVR 1), Context (The Money Channel), Euroferma (Național 24Plus), Europa 360 (TVR Timișoara), Europa mea (TVR 1), Europa TV (TV Neptun, Constanța), Info Europa (Tele'M, Iași), Noi, europenii (Nașul TV), Pașaport diplomatic (DiGi24), Puniți europene (Nord TV, Borșa, Maramureș); Radio shows: Euranet Plus Project (Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company), Tânăr în Europa (RFI România); and online platforms: [www.caleaeuropeana.ro](http://www.caleaeuropeana.ro), [www.euractiv.ro](http://www.euractiv.ro), [www.europuls.ro](http://www.europuls.ro), [www.fonduri-structurale.ro](http://www.fonduri-structurale.ro).

For more information regarding the annual conference please visit the website [www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro).

Denisa Ticușan, intern

## Studies and analyses

Two strategy and policy studies were carried out under the SPOS annual programme, coordinated by the EIR Studies and Analyses Unit. They focused on topics such as *Shale gas - between energy needs and environment standards*, and *The opportunity of Romania's accession to the European Banking Union - sooner or later*. These two studies are to be launched in February-March 2015.

Two further studies were undertaken under EIR's aegis in 2014, following requests received from the Association Romanian Lobby Register (Asociația Registrul Român de Lobby -ARRL) for a study on *Lobbying in Romania vs. Lobbying in the EU* (to be completed in January this year) and the World Bank Office in Romania for developing, in partnership with the Romanian Centre for Economic Policy (CEROPE) an analysis on the implementation of good corporate governance practices in public enterprises.

A significant part of the work aimed at strengthening partnerships with similar institutes and organizations abroad, such as CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies) - Brussels, Notre Europe - Paris, IFRI (French Institute of International Relations).

Furthermore, contributions were made to the Executive Summary of a Policy Brief on "National perspectives of the member states on the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections" under the research and communication project coordinated by *VoteWatch Europe and Notre Europe - Paris (April-May)*.

The Studies and Analyses Unit staff participated at public events with presentations on European issues, among which: a presentation entitled *Shaping force of institutions and European future*, at the event organized by the Information Office of the European Parliament in Romania: *Briefing - EP elections 2014. The role of the European Parliament in the European construction. Case Study: labour market issues. Free Movement of Workers* (Pitești, 7 February); and the paper *Sparks of modelling resilient socioeconomic systems*, indexed ISI Web of Science - Thomson Reuters, which was presented at the World Congress on Resilience: "From individual to society", held 8 - 10 May 2014 in Timișoara, as well as a paper entitled *European Elections 2014 and euroscepticism. Challenges to traditional political families* held at the seminar "Europarlamentări - 2014: Alegeri sui generis?" ("European Election Talks - 2014: Elections sui generis?") - as an opening to the series of debates "European





Election Talks” (“*Europarlamentări*”) organized by the International Relations and European Integration Department (National School of Political Science and Public Administration, 12 March).

The Studies and Analyses Unit has engaged in multilateral dialogue with Romanian and foreign partners in order to identify and submit joint applications. The meetings: Towards Innovation and Sustainable Development in Europe: Opportunities for Cooperation (Roundtable, 27 May 2014, Romanian - American University) and Responsible Research and Innovation (workshop, Romanian - American University, 3 April 2014) were among the main activities.

Therefore, an important activity of the Studies and Analyses Unit was the participation in the identification of new opportunities for projects and preparing the documentation necessary for application for externally funded projects.

An application was submitted under the DG’s call Just Fundamental Rights Citizenship, together with a consortium led by *European Alternatives* (February-March), and was declared winner in July. The project is to be conducted in 2015.

Moreover the application for the project “*Bridging National Perspectives on the European Union*” (coordinated by IFRI) was declared winner, the project aiming at stimulating public debate centred around national experts, regarding the relationship between their country and the EU (the implementation period will be November 2014 - April 2016).

Oana Mocanu

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## Training programmes

2014 was a year of changes, manifested in the activity of the Training Unit (TU) by expanding the range of courses while maintaining the traditional training programmes on European affairs.

Traditional programmes, aimed at general training (*Trainer*, etc.) and especially at a more in-depth approach to issues pertaining to European affairs (*Specialisation in European affairs; The Legal Order of the European Union; The Area of Freedom, Security and Justice - Visas, Asylum and Immigration between Schengen and Lisbon*) designed for the personnel of specialised public institutions, received as much interest as in 2013.

In order to support the interest that still accompanies the issue of European funds in Romania, EIR held in 2014 new sessions of specialisation programmes for such occupations as *Project Manager* (with direct applicability on the management of projects financed with European funds), *Expert on Accessing European Structural and Cohesion Funds* (aimed specifically at developing the skills required for identifying, drafting, accessing and implementing a successful project) and *Public Procurement Expert* (providing detailed information on the Romanian public procurement process); these occupations are authorised by ANC.

It is also worth mentioning the organisation, for the first time, of the training workshop “*How to apply Regio Best Practices*”. The TU held the workshop on 14 November 2014, in collaboration with the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency. During the workshop, the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Plan was raised for discussion, in the context of the programming process for Structural Funds having regard to a series of important topics: the current socio-economic situation, the weaknesses and threats affecting the region, the strengths for the region to rely on, the opportunities to make the most of these strengths, the development strategy and the financial planning of the measures included in the strategy. One issue raised during the workshop was the method in which the Applicant’s Guide would be improved, seeking especially to achieve more comprehensive eligibility criteria.



Another programme of interest in relation to European affairs, was the course *Skills for Computer Assisted Translation*, held for the most part by EIR trainers, based on their experience of more than 10 years in the translation of the *acquis* and the case-law of the CJEU and ECHR. This course was supplemented with a training project called *The ECHR and the media*, which is based on the trainers’ practical expertise acquired at the ECHR.

A very successful pilot programme turned out to be the course *Expert on Preventing and Combating Corruption*. The course was intended for legal experts and specialised personnel from public institutions (ministries, government agencies and local public authorities) and/or private companies who are required, by virtue of their professional activity, to be informed on specialised notions of ethics and combating corruption.

Continuing the series of innovative training programmes, the TU held in 2014 a pilot programme called *Diplomacy and Protocol*. Highly appreciated by the attendants, the programme was especially targeted at public servants (from central and local administration), but also at people seeking to acquire a general training and an up-to-date overview on the rules of protocol.

TU experts attended training and specialisation sessions and workshops, as well as national and international conferences, where they made presentations: on April 25, in Bratislava, the international conference “*European Union and Rising Populism: a Challenge for Democracy*” - the results of the researches were published by IDE in “*The Risks of growing Populism and the European elections. Collection of selected contributions*”; on September 26, in Bucharest, the conference “*The Added Value of Professional Translation and Interpreting Services*”, held by the European Commission Representation in Romania.

Between March and July 2014, a TU expert had a *scholarship for training in European affairs, offered by the Bundestag* in cooperation with German political foundations and prestigious universities in Berlin.

Regarding the *own-revenue generating activities*, other than the courses held by the EIR, TU experts are involved in implementing projects managed by the EIR, such as the *Teacher Training on European Affairs Programme*, financed by the European Commission (EC) through the EC Representation in Romania, which required travelling to Băcău and Timișoara between July and August 2014.

The TU also takes part in implementing the *Citi-rights Europe Project*, which focuses on increasing the awareness and training of young people aged between 16 and 25 with regard to the European citizenship, the rights and responsibilities corresponding to the European identity, and the obstacles to exercising such rights. The project, the responsibilities of each partner and the first meeting of the project were prepared in the final months of 2014, the actual activities being due for implementation in 2015.

In 2015, the Training Unit is planning to successfully continue to hold the programmes in the agenda, aimed at ensuring a high level of specialisation among public servants, as well as to initiate other programmes in line with the current needs in terms of training.

For further details, please visit the Training Unit webpage (<http://ier.ro/activit%C4%83%C8%9Bi/formare-%C3%AEn-afaceri-europene.html>) on the European Institute of Romania website ([www.ier.ro](http://www.ier.ro)).

Gigi Mihăiță

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## European projects

In 2014, the Projects Unit implemented the “*Training services for teachers*” project, financed by the European Commission Representation in Romania.

The project was intended to provide, at national level, **training sessions for 323 teachers** in the field of European affairs. The courses were held in training centres located in *Bucharest, Bacău and Timișoara*, each training centre being assigned the surrounding counties. Therefore, it was ensured the participation of teachers from all 41 counties of Romania, as well as from the six sectors of the Bucharest Municipality. The teachers involved in the project will constitute a *group of national trainers*, whose objective is to promote the updating and modernisation of the contents and methodology of courses on the European Union, its policies and institutions, the rights and obligations of citizens and European citizenship.



The training sessions were held as follows: Bucharest (7-12 April 2014), Bacău (14-19 July 2014) and Timișoara (28 July-2 August).

The trainers involved in these training courses were: Cătălina Bădoiu, Ioana Derscanu, Lăcrămioara Iordăchescu, Alexandru Jădăneanț, Corina Turșie and Ciprian Nițu.

The training sessions have been appreciated by the participants to be very practical and useful; the teachers worked well together and shared their professional experience. They were organised in working groups, drawing up lesson plans on European topics, necessary for the portfolio for the final assessment. All trainees presented the final assessments before the evaluation committees. They will receive certificates for transferable credits.

At the end of the training sessions, the trainees were required to disseminate the information received among the teachers in their educational establishments, parents, the local community, etc.

Another important project currently being developed with the support of the Studies and Analyses Unit is *Eurofound* project, in which EIR is a project leader, having as partners EurActiv Network SRL and Freedom House România. EIR is a national correspondent of the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions* (Eurofound), a tripartite EU agency, whose role is to provide information in the area of social and work-related policies. The general objective of the project is to create a network of correspondents at national and European level that can provide Eurofound with research and information services which will be used by the European Industrial Relations Observatory, the European Working Conditions Observatory, the European Monitoring Centre on Change, the European Restructuring Monitor, also being useful for other social policy matters.

Also during 2014, two other projects concerning the Danube Region and, respectively, combating discrimination and violence against women, were submitted. The results of the application will be published during 2015.

Loredana Licuța



## Translation coordination

In 2014, the Translation Coordination Unit (TCU) worked on the translation and/or revision of approximately 7,500 standard pages. About 90% of the total number of pages are related to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The translation into Romanian of ECHR cases and related documents is carried out under the Trilateral Cooperation Protocol concluded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and the European Institute of Romania.

With the help of SCM, most of the translated cases have been uploaded in HUDOC (<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>), the online database of the ECHR. Consequently, as concerns the number of documents available online, besides the official languages (English and French), the number of translations into Romanian rank second after the number of Turkish translations.

An index is generated for each translated ECHR case, therefore the cases are classified according to the articles relied on and the keywords.

Another activity, related to translation, is the terminology research. The terminology database, also available on the EIR website, has more than 31,500 validated entries.

TCU experts also took part in other activities such as providing interpreting services (especially at events organised by the EIR), writing articles and making presentations in their field of expertise, promoting TCU publications, holding training sessions on “Skills for Computer Assisted Translation”, etc.

In addition, the TCU provided careful training to interns involved in the computer assisted translation and revision of texts, as well as feedback on their activity.

Laura Mihăilescu

## Europe Direct Bucharest: opportunities for the Community in the Bucharest-Ilfov Region in 2014



The Europe Direct Information Centre Bucharest, hosted by the European Institute of Romania, is already in its third year of activity. But what has the year that has just ended meant for EDIC Bucharest? This project, funded by the European Commission through its Representation in Romania, gave us the opportunity to organise activities that were increasingly dynamic and closer to people, to the European citizens in our community - the Bucharest-Ilfov Region. We tried to include in our activities target-groups as diverse as possible, mostly open-minded young people showing initiative and willing to take part in many events.

2014 was dedicated in the first place to the European Parliament elections of 25 May. To this end, we also organised events at universities, to encourage young people to go to the polls, together with the attending MEPs and academic guests, offered them arguments as to why they should exercise this right. As a result, we like to think, the higher turnout among young people is partly attributable to our Centre as well.

Starting with 17 events planned for 2014, the Europe Direct Bucharest team organised and took part in approximately 60 **European communication events**. EDIC Bucharest held information seminars and creative workshops on European themes at secondary schools in Bucharest and Ilfov (where students and teachers received awards), debates for the general public on issues of priority on the European agenda (the Digital Agenda, the Europe 2020 Strategy, education and Erasmus+, the new financial framework), events dedicated to children in placement centres and students with disabilities, meetings of the Europe Direct club and, last but not least, the open air event aimed at the general public to celebrate 9 May - Europe Day alongside many lively and colourful youngsters, and also the winter celebration at the end of the year. On the other hand, EDIC Bucharest was a partner in other activities held by our collaborators, such as: European information; interactive exercises; artistic competitions and programmes in schools, upper secondary schools and kindergartens; open air events; debates, conferences, study- and information visits. Moreover, the EDIC team also attended the general meetings and training programmes held by the European Commission and its Representation in Romania.

In addition to the events marking our presence in our community's region, EDIC Bucharest offered general information on European affairs to approximately 600 citizens who visited or contacted the Centre by phone and email, and published the 6 annual issues of the **electronic newsletter** and the **brochure *The Europe 2020 Strategy and the Implementation Stage in Romania***.

Should our activities attract your interest, you are invited to visit the **Europe Direct Bucharest website** and keep up with the news on **our Facebook page**. You are also invited to join our group **European Information Multipliers**.

Diana Filip

EU

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## EP Session – Strasbourg, 12 – 15 January 2015

During the EP plenary session, the MEPs paid tribute to the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris. After a moment of silence, Martin Schulz, the President of the EP, promised that *these events will not make us downgrade our European values*.

MEPs emphasized that *our values - freedom of expression, freedom of religion - will not change, because sorrow must strengthen our determination to challenge these attacks; because only if we work together we will prevail* (Helga Stevens, ECR, Belgium). *Let us not forget that among the three police officers killed were a black woman, a Muslim and a native Frenchman. This bears witness to the fact that our societies are multicultural and our rule of law gives opportunities to all. Yet, we must also acknowledge a failure. These terrorists were our children who were born here, raised here, and also died here* (Guy Verhofstadt, ALDE, Belgium).

MEPs also debated during the plenary session the **outcome of the Italian Presidency**. The statements of the Council and Commission were followed by the speech of Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, who spoke of Europe's need to invest in success and in the future, in order to overcome the crisis, the economic recession and the austerity. In the context of recent events in Paris, Renzi emphasized that we cannot have security if we do not have freedom.



Photo source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/european\\_parliament/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/european_parliament/)

The Latvian Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma presented the priorities of the Latvian Presidency of the EU Council: Competitive Europe, Digital Europe and Engaged Europe.

Other statements of the European Council and the Commission concerned the **conclusions of the European Council meeting** (18 - 19 December 2014). Moreover, seven resolution proposals from the political groups on the Commission's 2015 work



programme debated in the EP, December 2014 session, were put to the vote. All these resolution proposals were rejected.

Commission Vice-President/High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, made several statements on the situation in Ukraine, Libya, Egypt and Nigeria. The Committee on Petitions presented the Annual Report of the European Ombudsman, in the presence of European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly. Freedom of expression

in Turkey - recent arrests of journalists and media managers and the systematic pressure put on mass-media - made the object of a resolution proposal.

For further details, visit <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>

Mariana Bara

in focus

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## The Romanian Government has adopted the first National Youth Strategy



The Romanian Government has adopted the first National Youth Strategy on the 14 January 2015, which is going to be implemented starting this year until 2020. Considering the fact that the European Union's vision with regard to young people encompasses a double approach (the investment in youth and the promotion of the idea that young people can actively contribute for the society's renewal), the strategy was developed accordingly and **4 major domains of intervention** were highlighted: culture and non-formal education; health, sport and leisure time; participation and volunteering; work and entrepreneurship.

In line with the European strategic approaches from the youth field, Romania is keen on: increasing the labour force participation rate,

promoting a proper legislation that could ensure a coherent transition from the educational system to the labour market, developing fiscal amenities in order to stimulate the creation of new jobs and helping young Roma people getting integrated on the white labour force market.

Starting with the fact that in Romania, we have over **6 million young people, aged between 15 and 34 years old** (accounting for 28.6% from the total population), the data included in the strategy reflects some really worrying facts: the relative poverty rate among the 18-24 age group was 28.1% (in 2011); 51.5% of the young persons under 18 are living below poverty line; 43.3% of young people belonging to the 12-17 age group are severely lacking adequate facilities in their homes; the employment rate of young people between 15 and 24 years old is 20.6% (data from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2014); the unemployment rate among young people aged between 15 and 24 years old is 25.7%; Romania also has the highest poverty rate of young people between 18 and 24 years old, who are engaged in the labour market (30.7% were poor in 2011, even though they were working); in Romania only 1 young person out of 100 decides to open a business; in 2012, the early drop-out rate of young people between 18 and 24 years old was estimated to be at 17.4%; 1 of 4 persons stated they never read literature; the suicide rate in the 15 to 19 age group was 6.3 deaths in 100 000 people, in 2010; 1 young person out of 3 reported never playing sports; less than 1 person out of 5 is engaged in volunteering activities; 53% of the people declare that they would not be interested in getting involved in volunteering activities.

Given the fact that the strategy is looking to actually improve the life of young people, especially of those finding themselves in high rates of social exclusion risks, the general objective of this strategy is the support of active participation of young people in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political life of the country. This purpose will be achieved through specific actions such as: the development of volunteering activities, the extension of school counselling and professional orientation, the implementation of prevention measures in order to reduce the early school drop-out rate, an increase in the number of people involved in practicing different sports, the improvement of the regulation and governing process, transparency and accessibility among youth policies, the adoption of transparent decisions for young people, the application of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, the development of social economy and increasing the labour force participation rate, supporting young people interested in entrepreneurship, promoting access by young people of funds designed to develop agricultural, fishing, forestry activities in the rural area, helping young people have at least one practical experience of entrepreneurship by the age of 26 and the creation of a social housings, reaching a rate of 20% of the current demand, by the end of 2020.

Having in mind that this is the first national youth strategy in Romania, we can hope that if the target groups will be efficiently informed with regard to the objectives and the actions settled, the expected outcomes will not be delayed.

Eliza Vaş



# Romania: new role in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)



Between 1 January and 31 December 2015, Romania will coordinate the activity of the Security Committee of OSCE and the mandate will be exercised by Romania's representative to the International Organisations in Vienna, Ambassador **Cristian Istrate**, and a team of diplomats from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organisations in Vienna.

In practice, the role played by Romania involves the **direct management of tasks** such as: discussing non-military and political security issues, addressing multi-sectoral topics related to non-military security issues, supporting preparations for the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, discussing recommendations submitted to the OSCE Permanent Council and translating them into concrete actions during relevant meetings. Subsequently, according to the rules of procedure, the Security Committee is authorised to prepare for adoption „soft law<sup>1</sup>” decisions or documents for all OSCE member states.

Romania's priorities<sup>2</sup> in this context cover the following aspects: fighting against terrorism, transnational organised crime and the phenomenon of illegal migration in the OSCE space, improving cyber security, combating trafficking in human beings and drugs, border security management in OSCE member states, reforming the security sector and strengthening cooperation between law enforcement bodies. Having regard to Romania's strategic position in the region, its activity within the OSCE is an important commitment and it is precisely why it has strongly supported efforts to resolve the conflicts, focusing particularly on solving the Transnistrian problem. This was reiterated also by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu, when he attended the OSCE Ministerial Council, where he made the following statements: *“Eastern Europe is now at a crossroad. Since our country is the first state that ratified the EU Association Agreements with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, it has unequivocally proved its firm support for the European vocation of those states. We will continue to strongly support this objective<sup>3</sup>”*.

Finally, we emphasise the idea that OSCE comprises 57 participating states in North America, Europe and Asia, thus being the world's largest regional security organisation. We could affirm that Romania can have a significant say in the political dialogue agenda on security issues, especially in the context of the terrorist threats knocking on EU's door.

Eliza Vaş

## opinion

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### OSCE in Eurasia after 2014\*

– guest article –

Central Asian republics appear profoundly concerned about the withdrawal of NATO military forces from Afghanistan, because the permanent condition of instability of this country is perceived as the main source of threats to the internal stability and regional security.

There are actually some potential Afghan-related spillovers which could affect Central Asia security after 2014: the threat of growing cross-border armed incursions of Central Asian extremists or terrorists (returning from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and mainly actives in the Ferghana Valley) and the narcotic trafficking (with its correlated social effects) clearly pose the problem of the weak controls along the inter-republican borders, especially for countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan which share borders with Afghanistan.

However, the main serious threats to Central Asian security and stability are clearly rooted in the internal political, economic and social scenario, linked to domestic issues and unsolved

internal problems rather than deriving from Afghanistan. Indeed, many analysts observed that the roots of events of violence in Central Asia after independence - for instance, the Tajik civil war, the Andijan's events in 2005, the Uzbek-Kyrgyz interethnic clashes in Osh in June 2010, the fighting in Eastern Tajikistan in 2010 and 2012 - could be identified in the domestic scenario.

The slow and weak democratization process, growing authoritarianism based on a strong presidential political model, poverty, corruption, high unemployment rate, the absence of regional cooperation in the economic and energy sector (mainly due to the traditional rivalry and mistrust among Central Asian presidents) and unsolved border questions are some of the most important issues which could trigger a widespread condition of instability.

Water management and the failure to achieve a definitive and complete solution of the shared border questions (border demarcation, minorities rights, political and legal status of

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<sup>1</sup> Quasi-legal instruments which do not have any legally binding force.

<sup>2</sup> Romania has taken over the Chairmanship of the Security Committee of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 6 January 2015, <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/30047>

<sup>3</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs Bogdan Aurescu attended the OSCE Ministerial Council on 4 December 2014, <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/29824>

\*This is an extract of the Indeo's presentation during the 7TH GCSP-OSCE ACADEMY-NUPI CONFERENCE “THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AT 40: REFLECTIONS & PRESCRIPTIONS VIS-À-VIS THE OSCE IN EURASIA”, ISSYK-KUL, KYRGYZSTAN, 2014

the ethnic enclaves) appear as the main sources of instability in the next years.

The gradual and general worsening of the economic and political domestic scenario - growingly authoritarian management of power of Central Asian presidents, the economic and social decline - are also factors able to fuel social unrest and political instability, with high potential in opening spaces for the activities of radical Islamic movements. Furthermore, the spread of an instability condition in the region could engender a flux of refugees among inter-republican borders and a consequent humanitarian emergency that these states appear not able to manage.

Consequently, Central Asian republics and all external actors and international organizations involved in the region share the same strategic goal to preserve security and stability in the next decades, in order to better achieve their economic, energy and geopolitical aims. In this perspective, the OSCE will be one of the international actors which should take charge of preserving security and stability after 2014, following NATO's withdrawal. Compared to other security suppliers, the OSCE is not perceived as a geopolitical actor by the Central Asian republics: the OSCE's engagement to preserve security and stability is aimed to create the conditions which could allow the development in the economic, political and social field, through the commitment of Central Asian governments and populations in a democratization process and reforms as well as in a broader regional cooperation.

In this changing geopolitical scenario post 2014, the OSCE could play a significant role meeting the Central Asian strategic need to balance the Russian and Chinese influence: as a matter of fact, Central Asian mistrust on multilateral security initiatives backed by Russia and China could enhance the OSCE's role and ambitions.

Unlike CSTO and SCO, the OSCE is the only security organization which includes all Central Asian countries: Turkmenistan never joined neither CSTO nor SCO, while Uzbekistan suspended its CSTO membership in 2012, for the second time. Moreover the OSCE could benefit from another strength, represented by the great opportunity to convene United States, Russia, European Union and NATO in a shared and wider security forum, drawing up the possibility to develop a successful dialogue which involves all the actors which share the need to maintain stability in the region, with the exception of China. Even if this perspective appears currently complicated, due to the prolonged crisis between Russia and Ukraine and the worsening relations between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic

Alliance, the achievement of the shared goal to preserve security and stability in Central Asia could push all involved actors to implement this potential framework of broader cooperation, overcoming reciprocal mistrust. Furthermore, the OSCE could also represent the preferential framework within which to develop and employ a 'soft security' approach in the region, privileging actions and policies aimed to reduce the impact of internal causes and distortions which affect the regional stability. As a matter of fact, we can observe that the 'hard security' approach has not produced significant outcomes in order to fight against international terrorism and to preserve Central Asian countries from destabilizing threats.

Nevertheless, the OSCE ambition to play the role of a security provider will depend on its ability to make Central Asian governments aware on the impossibility to reach stability and security without implementing a democratization process and adopting political and social reforms. This is the big geopolitical challenge for the OSCE, mainly because Central Asian governments perceive the issues of democratization as interference in their domestic affairs.

The main factor which hinders the development of a comprehensive cooperation between OSCE and Central Asia is the different approach about the concept of security. In the Western perspective, long term stability, security and prosperity depend on the promotion of reforms and on modernisation in the areas of the rule of law, good governance, democratization and supporting human rights protection. For Central Asian countries, the democratization must be a consequence and not a precondition.

Moreover, the OSCE pressures to adopt and to implement reforms are interpreted as destabilising actions, because reforms have to be in line with the local cultural traditions and must be gradually introduced and not just be imported from the Western world.

In conclusion, the deep engagement of Central Asian countries in a fair democratization process and in the adoption of structural reforms are the main preconditions which could allow the OSCE to impose itself as a regional security provider. This new framework of cooperation could be implemented only when Central Asian countries increase their awareness on the fact that the endogenous unsolved issues and distortions are the most dangerous threats to the regional and internal security condition.

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