

EPIN conference in Nicosia

This October at Nicosia, representatives from over ten EU Affairs institutes within the EPIN network, including EIR, gathered in Cyprus to debate upon the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU – Turkey – Cyprus relations and the energy safety in Europe – all of these being contemporary challenges for the EU.

According to the speakers there are difficulties in implementing the Lisbon Treaty precisely because we face joint management of addressing the issues, the institutional system has become more complex and the institutional balance has changed, the EP having stronger powers nowadays. In addition, we see a gap between the politicians who wrote the Treaty and the ones who implement it.

With regard to the EU – Turkey – Cyprus relations, the debate focused on the Cypriot view on such an important issue in the region. The lecture tackled the Greek – Cypriot perspective upon the accession of Turkey to the EU and the perceptions of different EU Member States both on the accession process of Turkey and the Turkey – Cyprus relations.

Regarding the energy safety issue one could find out about the European Energy Strategy and a Russian perspective regarding the EU's challenges and options in this field.

EPIN is a dynamic network of think tanks and policy institutes focusing on Community policies and European affairs. It is a comprehensive network with 30 members in 25 countries, including almost all the EU Member States and candidate countries. EPIN aims to contribute to the debate on the Future of Europe through up to the minute expert analyses and commentaries and through providing easy access to understanding the different national debates.

For more information about the network, please visit: <http://www.epin.org/new/index.php>.

Mădălina Magnusson
Communication Unit

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2 – 4 November

EIR Course: Infringement procedure according to Article 258 of the TFEU – a practical analysis

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EIR Course: Project Manager

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VALENTIN LAZEA *)

Chief Economist, NBR

*) All comments represent the author's point of view, they do not represent NBR's official stance.

The accession to the euro area is a national project

There are opinions at the European level according to which the wave of austerity in most EU countries is likely to compromise the fragile post crisis economic recovery and to become a threat for the single European currency. From your point of view, are there real reasons of concern regarding the fall of the Euro currency?

As regards the austerity measures in the EU countries, it must be pointed out that they are inevitable and that there is no alternative. The budget deficit has surpassed the threshold of 3% of the GDP in all EU countries (except Luxembourg), while the average public debt has surpassed 60% of the GDP and, considering the current rhythm, it tends to surpass in 2 - 3 years 100% of the GDP. Or, the international financial markets are not willing to indefinitely credit European governments which are incapable of reforms, when they can place their money more safely in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East etc. Europe is definitely no longer the only destination for investments and, unless it will undertake sufficient reforms, it will lose even more ground in the global competition. In this context, USA's rhetoric regarding the exit from the crisis by issuing bonds must be regarded as an effect of the American exceptionalism, which is itself related to the technologic, military, economic and diplomatic supremacy of this country. It gives it advantages which cannot be replicated elsewhere.

As regards the future of the Euro currency, it depends on the degree of fiscal harmonisation that the European governments are ready to accept and on the dimension of the fiscal transfers that their electorates are willing to tolerate. At a deeper level, it is about knowing to what extent a cultural and civilisational convergence can take place between the hard working and sparing North and Central Europe and the relaxed and spender South and Eastern Europe. If the Germans will learn/accept to have fun like the Mediterraneans and the Greeks will learn/accept to work like the Scandinavians the Euro project is likely to succeed. This does not mean that in 30 - 40 years from now there will not be some European states with surplus and others with deficit. In fact, California has the highest debt of all the American states after 160 years of coexistence but it benefits from important federal fiscal transfers.

The new deadline for the adoption of the Euro currency in Romania is 2015. Can you tell us a few words about the preparations for Romania's accession to the euro area?

The accession to the euro area is a national project that the whole Romanian society should support. The project as such implies benefits and costs which must be known and assumed. Unfortunately, the subject of accession to the euro area is nearly absent from the public speech and the population experiences the lack of information. In this context, the National Bank of Romania has established in the beginning of 2010 a Committee for the preparation of the accession to the euro area, which is in charge of the technical preparation

of the process. But this is only the embryo of a future inter-ministerial committee because this process must be assumed politically by all parties and the convergence criteria to be fulfilled are not only the nominal ones (inflation, exchange rate, budgetary deficit etc.) but especially the real ones (the branch structure of the national economy, the volume and structure of exports, the education and labour productivity etc.) where there is still a lot of work to be done. Theoretically, there would be enough time until 2015, but practically there is a lack of interest on the part of the Romanian society towards the reforms which are very necessary, regardless of the context of accession or non-accession of the Euro.

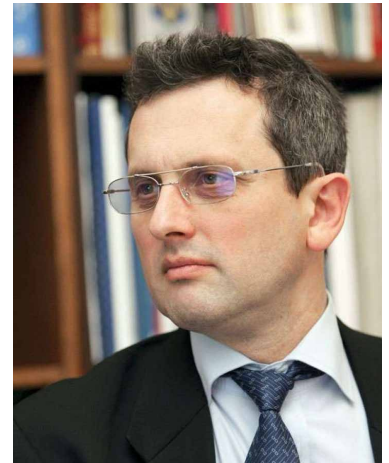


Photo source: www.financiarul.com

Which would be, in your opinion, the solution regarding the increase of the absorption rate of the European funds in Romania, our country being a net contributor to the EU budget more than a beneficiary?

First I need to make a correction: Romania is among the 14 states which are net beneficiaries of the EU budget, not among the 13 net contributor states. This is due to the fact that it is correct to calculate also the pre-accession funds (which are distributed according to the t+3 rule, where t is the year of contracting) and not only the post-accession funds. For the latter, the figures are speaking for themselves: of the total of 8,7 billion EUR (maximum amount allotted by the EU to Romania for the period 2007 - 2010), 76% is covered by approved projects, 64% is covered by concluded contracts, but only 12% represents payments actually made. This huge discrepancy between the concluded contracts and the actual payments is raising doubts, in the sense that it is possible that the vast majority of projects are actually not bankable and eligible for financing.

I think the solution in this case is obvious: merging all departments working with Community funds within the various ministries into a single agency run by a manager who comes from the banking system (and who is paid with a corresponding salary). This would guarantee, on the one hand, the bankability of the projects and the elimination from the market of the dubious consulting firms, and on the other hand, it would allow a prioritization of the projects which at the moment seems to be impossible, given the institutional structure.

Interview by **Agnes Nicolescu**

Employment policy in times of crisis

Labour mobility in the European Union

2010 is, in the European Union, the **European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**. Statistically, almost one out of five European citizens is at risk of poverty, by Union standards. While in 2008, their number amounted to 78 million¹ in 2010, it reached 84 million² following the sudden increase in the unemployment, an effect of the financial crisis and of the economic decline. 2010 sees convulsions and demonstrations as a reaction to the crisis measures and social policies adopted in Greece, France.

Launched in 2000, the "Lisbon Strategy" completes the European Employment Strategy (EES) and encourages information exchange and participation of all Member States in discussions on this topic in order to identify solutions and good practices designed to support job creation in each Member State. The Commission concluded there has been a „Lisbonisation" of the structural funds by which important sums (228 billion euro) have been dedicated to investments supporting growth, innovation, research for the period 2007-2013³.

The European Social Fund projects are created to effectively improve the lives and opportunities of the European citizens. The target groups are the unemployed, unskilled workers, young people, older workers, women, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities. Unfortunately, for the time being, those accessing the section of the European Commission site dedicated to ESF for Romania find they cannot access any of these projects, although their titles are listed. The same technical problem appears, for example, in the section dedicated to France.

In order to find a job, those interested must go through a procedure involving creating a search profile which will allow them to receive e-mail alerts whenever there are jobs matching their profile. By the EURES CV on-line service, accessible in all EU languages, the CV becomes known to all EURES advisers and employers registered in EURES. In some cases, this slows down the active search.



Following a rather winding process, after 1991, the Commission extended the European competences to new areas related to the employment policy: education and training, labour mobility, vocational guidance, partnerships between employers' organisations and labour. The right to mobility was reinforced by Directive 97/81 concerning part-time work and by Directive 99/70 concerning fixed-term work, both of which promote flexibility.

Moreover, in order to support labour mobility, there are currently 20 cross-border partnerships offering recommendations and specialised guidance on the rights and obligations of the workers living in a country and working in another, considering that the cross-border migration is a natural phenomenon in European Union today.

Given the present political developments, there are still questions regarding the access of the young generation to the labour market as the retirement age tends to rise.

EURES report date	Job vacancies	Registered CVs	Registered employers
11 octombrie 2010	932 794	504 971	22 184
13 octombrie 2010	940 300	506 220	22 199

In the employment area, the European Commission coordinates the EURES (European Employment Services) network which includes the public employment services from 31 European countries.

In each Member State, there are mediation services for working in the EU and the European Economic Area, for example the Romanian National Agency for Employment. As an EURES member, the agency's role is on one hand to inform and advise the potential workers about the available jobs, the working and living conditions and on the other hand to help employers in recruiting workers from other EEA countries.

Some answers can be found in the "Youth on the Move" initiative which the European Commission launches to help young people "to gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to make their first job a reality". Developing digital skills proves to be more and more useful in acquiring significant information and finding a job. The success of the employment policy is thus increasingly dependent on achieving the objectives of the knowledge based society.

Mariana Bara, PhD, Associate Professor
Translation Coordination Unit

¹ Decision no 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010), in OJ L 298, 7.11.2008, p. 20: "The Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 highlights the fact that 78 million people in the European Union live at risk of poverty, 19 million of whom are children."

² Europe joins forces to fight poverty and social exclusion, <http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/> (accessed on 21 October 2010).

³ Commission Staff Working Document, **Lisbon Strategy evaluation document**, Brussels, 2.2.2010, pdf, p.5, ec.europa.eu/social/

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=ro> (accessed on 21 October 2010).

The European Institute of Romania at EconomicFest

The second edition of the Economic and Legal Fair EconomicFest took place during **14-17 October** at World Trade Center Bucharest. The organisers intended the event to depict an integrated concept combining an exposition and a series of conferences targeted to those interested in the area of European affairs and in the economic and legal area in general. Part of this event, the European Institute of Romania, in line with its objective of contributing to the development of the European spirit and values, organised a round table and a display of specialised publications.

The EIR round table on *The economic crisis and EU finances: foreseeable evolutions* at EconomicFest

Within the series of debates *Policies of Romania*, the European Institute of Romania, in partnership with Economicfest, organised the round table on ***The economic crisis and EU finances: foreseeable evolutions***. Having as starting point the topic covered in the study on "The future of the European Community's resources and the implications for Romania's contribution to the EU budget" conducted under EIR's coordination as part of the Strategy and Policy Studies project *SPOS 2009*, the participants were invited to express their opinions regarding the most recent developments taking place in the process of reforming the EU budget and finances.

During the four days of the event, the European Institute of Romania organised a display of its publications. Thus, the most recent

publications of the institute were exhibited. On this occasion the public had direct access to the latest issues of the *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*. The studies from the research project *SPOS 2009* as well as the latest of the Working papers entitled "NATO's New Strategic Concept – A Test for Transatlantic Relations" were also highly appreciated. This exhibition was another opportunity for these products of the Romanian research in key areas such as international relations, education (*Improving vocational competencies among graduates and youths: A chance for the future*), social policies (*Flexicurity and social dialogue in Romania – perspectives on the implementation of flexicurity principles in Romanian undertakings*), climate changes (*The impact of the implementation of the Energy-Climate change package on the Romanian economy*) or fiscal and budgetary area (*Public finances: introduction of a medium-term budgetary framework; The future of the European Community's resources and the implications for Romania's contribution to the EU budget*) to become known to the public interested in the evolution of the economic affairs as well as in the social and economic literature.

The legal literature was another point of interest of the display organised by the European Institute of Romania. The Translation Coordination Unit of EIR presented the series of thematic publications from the area of Community law, namely the *Historical Case-law of the Community Courts*. In the context of the recent developments taking place at ECHR regarding the cases against Romania, EIR presented at EconomicFest the first volume of the *European Court of Human Rights Reports - recent cases against Romania*. Another important work which completes the series of previous reference works is the *Guide for the translation into Romanian of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights*.

Mihai Sebe

European Studies and Analysis Unit

Improving vocational competencies among graduates and youths: a chance for the future

On **30 September 2010**, EIR organised, in partnership with the **UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES)**, the round table on ***Improving vocational competencies among graduates and youths: a chance for the future***.

The conference agenda included both the study conducted by Ms Valentina Vasile, PhD, University Professor and Scientific Director at the Institute of National Economy of the Romanian Academy and Ms Gabriela Prelipcean, PhD, University Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, "Ștefan cel Mare" University, Suceava, and the presentations of the authors on the recent developments in the analysed area.

The conference was opened with the speech of Ms Gabriela Drăgan, PhD, University Professor and Director General of the European Institute of Romania and the discussions were moderated by Mr Gheorghe Zaman, correspondent member of the Romanian Academy and member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the EIR.

The event was attended by numerous specialists in the education area and other related areas among which Ms Tania Sandu from the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, Ms Venera Ioniță, representative of UNESCO, Mr Cristian Pârvan, Secretary General of the Businessmen's Association of Romania, Ms Cristina Ionescu, manager of vocational guidance programmes, Mr Ciprian Ciucu, CRPE programme manager, Mr Gabriel Ivan from the British Council, Ms Zoica Vlăduț from the National Centre for the Development of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Mr Iulian Oneașcă, head of the European Studies and Analysis Unit of the EIR.

The discussions focused on issues concerning the status of the young people in today's society, the current challenges generated by globalisation and the economic crisis, as well as the reform of the education system leading to a better transition from school to working life. Developing and encouraging the entrepreneurship culture and offering opportunities for students to participate to internships during the higher education studies were among the solutions put forward for a more efficient integration of the young people on the labour market. Thus, it was agreed that the internships should last at least 3 months and that there is a need of a better defined legislation in the area and of enhancing the cooperation between universities and the business environment.

Roxana Gheorghe
Communication Unit

High level European Conference

Anticipation and management of the responsible restructuring – partnerships for protecting employees

(Bruxelles, 18 – 19 October)

The European Conference has reunited representatives from the public sector of all Member States, employers and trades unions and it was organised on the occasion of the finalisation of the ARENAS project developed by the International Training Center of the International Labour Organisation (ITC-ILO) financed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Organised under the auspices of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council, the conference enjoyed the presence of Ms Joelle Milquet, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Equal Opportunities (Belgium), Mr László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Mr Armindo Silva, director of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Mr Joel Decaillon, Deputy Secretary General of the European Trade Unions Confederation, Ms Maria Andre, Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity (Portugal), Mr Andreas Storm, Secretary of State in the Federal Ministry of labour and Social Services (Germany), Mr Radoslaw Mleczo, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy (Poland).

Several national workshops hosted the presentation of the results of national seminars. At the thematic plenary sessions, presentations of the experts were held on the following themes:

- anticipation of the restructuring in order to keep the employees in a transforming economy;
- professional transition and restructuring: methods, instruments and actors;
- restructuring management: methods, instruments and actors.

The national study on restructuring in Romania has been drawn up by Mr Constantin Ciutacu and Ms Luminița Chivu and it was presented at the European Conference by Mr Ciutacu.

The national studies and seminars provided information on:

- 76 measures and instruments for anticipating restructuring;
- 1111 measures and instruments for the management of restructuring;
- 88 case studies at national, regional and company level.

The conclusions of the conference underlined the importance of monitoring all economic sectors, the importance of anticipation, the need to include the professional training in the national reform programmes, as well as the need to raise the awareness of all the actors involved.

The European Institute of Romania was represented at Brussels by Ms Gabriela Drăgan, General Director of EIR, and Ms Cornelia Predoiu who participated at the national seminar "Anticipation and Management of the restructuring", Bucharest, 11 – 12 May 2010.

For further information on the conference, please visit: <http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/conference-european-ministers-restructuring>

And for information on the ARENAS project and the national seminars, please visit: <http://arenas.itcilo.org/>.

Cornelia Predoiu

Training in European Affairs Unit

The Romanian language in the European institutions

The Representation of the European Commission in Romania hosted on **8 October** the Conference for the establishment of the first network of Romanian experts who will collaborate permanently with the European Commission's translators. The **RO+ Network** or the *Linguistic Network of Excellence for Institutional Romanian* will ensure the linguistic and terminological collaboration between the Romanian Language Department of the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the Commission and Romanian experts.

The conference was opened by the Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, Mr Nicolae Idu, who underlined the importance of the project in order to raise the awareness regarding the EU legislation in Romania. The Presidential Adviser for European Affairs, Mr Leonard Orban reminded that the linguistic procedure of the EU ensures an equal statute to all official languages of the Member States (stipulated in the first Regulation of 1958), with the purpose of meeting the need of the citizens to have access in their maternal language to all the legislative acts of the EU, and also to the working hypothesis and the preparatory documents. As a former European Commissioner for Multilingualism, Mr Orban has specified that the translation should produce an accessible text for the wide audience. The Vice-President of the Romanian Academy, Acad. Marius Sala underlined the preoccupations of the "Torgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics for the editing of the normative works of writing and pronunciation of the Romanian language as well as for terminology, a specialised field.

The role of the network consists in ensuring the language and terminology concordance between the EU legislation and the Romanian legislation. Its members come from the academic environment as well as from the civil society and the public administration of Romania. The network was made-up at the proposal of the Romanian Language Department within the DGT of the European Commission, according to the rules and provisions applicable to the establishment and functioning of the experts groups of the EU institutions. The network is non-political and its members collaborate on a voluntary basis, openly and equally. The network's activities do not generate income for its members.

The Management Committee is made-up of nine members whose president is Mr Viorel Șerbănescu (Head of the Romanian Language Department) and Vice-President is Mr Viorel Florean (Head of Unit). For transparency purposes, the deliberations of the member's meetings and the activity reports of the working groups will be published on the website of the RO+ Network.

The meeting was followed by a press conference and by the first gathering of the Managing Committee.

Mariana Bara

Translation Coordination Unit

Bucharest,
16 – 17 November

The collaboration between EIR and EIPA on the occasion of the seminar on the infringement procedure



The partnership between the European Institute of Romania and the Luxembourg Antenna of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) – the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers continues also during the current year by the organisation of a seminar on the procedure of infringement of the Community law, known among the specialists as the *infringement procedure*.

The infringement procedure – Articles 258 to 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – is one of the mechanisms used by the Commission to compel Member States when it considers that the states in question did not observe the European legal provisions.

The seminar on the **Infringement procedure according to Article 258 of the TFEU – a practical analysis** will take place between **16 – 17 November at the European Institute of Romania** (7-9 Regina Elisabeta Blvd., the conference room).

The **objective** of the seminar is to present a practical analysis of the infringement procedure: details, the procedure itself, the Commission's role, the position of the Member States (methods of avoiding the litigation before the Court of Justice of the European Union, possible defence strategies).

The seminary is aimed at all civil servants who are involved in the transposition of the European legislation and in the preparation of the defence of the Member States in all the stages of the infringement procedure. The seminary welcomes experts and practitioners from the private sector who wish to improve their knowledge about the infringement procedure and to have a perspective on this theme.



The methods used during the seminar will be the presentation, the case study and the workshop. All modules will contain sessions of questions and answers, the interaction being one of the major objectives of this programme. From the point of view of the structure, the two days of training will cover the following **themes**:

- the pre-notification letter;
- the assessment of the case;
- the litigation phase;
- possible defences of the Member States;
- the decision of the Court of Justice of the EU and its effects;
- the sanctions for failure to apply the Court's decision;
- workshop – the infringement procedure.

The training sessions will be held by specialists from EIPA, Luxembourg Antenna (the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers), as well as guests from European institutions (the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Commission). The experience of the EIPA trainers is one of the essential elements for the presentation of the infringement procedure, of the successful defence strategies, as well of certain case studies.

The training team is made up of: **Diego RAMIREZ-CARDENAS**, main trainer from the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers, EIPA Luxembourg; **Nina MIRON**, the Directorate for Environment of the European Commission, Brussels; **Carsten ZATSCHLER**, legal secretary at the office of the Judge Schiemann, Court of Justice of the European Union.

The working language throughout the seminar is **English**.

Registration to the seminar is made on the basis of the online Registration Form which must be filled in by each participant and which needs to be accompanied by a declaration from their line manager. For registration, please visit: a http://www.ier.ro/index.php/site/programe_in_curs. The declaration from the line manager will be sent to the person in charge of the organisation of course on the address: alina.arhire@ier.ro and/or by fax at no. 021-314 26 66. The confirmation of participation to the course will be done observing the order of registration until the completion of the groups. For further details, please contact **Alina Arhire**, the programme's coordinator.



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