

FOREWORD

On the occasion of the five-year anniversary....

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We celebrate the five-year anniversary of the European Institute of Romania with the feeling of having accomplished several projects that contributed to Romania's preparation for its accession to the European Union.

What do five years mean? An important period at least in terms of accomplishments for a country in transition like Romania and for an institution that was involved directly into the clarification of pre-accession issues. Most obviously, in other systems, five years do not mean much. For instance, I remember that the Director of the European Institute of London School of Economics told me in 2000 that, the organization he was heading, at its tenth anniversary, was considered to be „a young institution” (according to British standards).

The setting up of the European Institute of Romania was a necessity and, throughout the past five years, EIR has not only provided inputs to policy-making, trained public servants and translated the Community legislation into Romanian, but it has also initiated and stimulated the civil society debates with regard to Romania's road to the EU and the future of the EU.

EIR was a greenfield investment, because Romania, in comparison to its Central and Eastern European neighbours, had not started, not even in an embryonic phase, a tradition of debates regarding the European construction. That is why one of EIR's important tasks was to encourage the

European studies in the universities by establishing the Romanian European Community Studies Association and by setting up a pool of trainers in the field of European affairs and, most of all, in the field of project cycle management.

At the same time, EIR functioned as a disseminator and information multiplier through its publications among which it is worth mentioning here, besides the Romanian Journal of European Affairs in which I express these thoughts, the collection of Working Papers, the Pre-Accession Impact Studies and the glossaries of terms of the *acquis communautaire* series.

Actually, Jonathan Scheele, the Head of the European Commission Delegation in Bucharest and a close friend of the EIR, said the following: „The European Institute of Romania has become well-known throughout the years in the field of accession preparations. First of all, by translating the *acquis*, an extremely difficult task, given the fact that there are over 80 000 pages, and the fact that in many of the new Member States this task has not been carried out before the accession itself. Second of all, EIR has contributed to the training of public servants in Romania, helping them to undertake the huge responsibility of implementing the Community legislation in Romania. Third of all, through the coordination of the impact studies projects, EIR has drawn the attention of the public opinion, maybe too much, onto the concept of costs of the accession. It

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is extremely important for everybody to be aware not only of the benefits of European integration, but also of the derived constraints. Last, but not least, the EIR has organized debates with Romanian and foreign personalities involved in the European construction. All these actions define the EIR as a reliable partner both of the Delegation and the Government in the framework of the accession impact communication strategy to the population.”

What has to be mentioned is that the EIR has brought to the interested audience keynote speakers in the field of European integration in the framework of the public events that it organized. Among its guests, there were representatives of the political arena, independent expertise, think-tanks and European universities. A lot of them are authors of famous works in the field.

The EIR has represented a pool and a resource that first line institutions in the accession preparations have used, not only by making the best of the EIR products, but also by taking over a number of readily prepared experts.

This year, between the 8th and 10th of June, the EIR organized an anniversary conference, celebrating five years of activity. Several personalities from Romania and abroad took part in this conference and have spoken in appreciative and encouraging terms about the Institute, also presenting standpoints regarding the future of the European construction.

In the pages of this issue, we host some of the valuable interventions at the EIR conference, among which: the Governor of the National Bank of Romania, Mugur Isărescu, the current and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu and Mircea Geoană, respectively, the

former Minister of European Integration, Ene Dinga, but we also felt close to us the EIR's friends who could not be present at the conference, such as: Karen Fogg, the first ambassador of the European Commission in Bucharest, Jacques Pelkmans, the reknown professor of the College of Europe from Bruges, Enrico-Grillo Pasquarelli, the negotiator of the European Commission for Romania, Daniel Dăianu, the well-known professor and economic analyst.

This anniversary moment would not have been possible without the support of Alexandru Herlea, Mugur Isărescu, Karen Fogg, Eugen Dijmărescu, Catherine Day, Enrico Grillo-Pasquarelli, Ioan Ștefan, Christos Makridis, Jonathan Scheele, Iulia Deutsch, Costea Munteanu-Gurgu, Jacques Pelkmans, Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, John Callagan, Raluca Diamandescu, Dana Simion, Anne de Ligne, Brendan Glynn. Therefore we are thankful and grateful to these friends of ours who understood at that moment the necessity and the importance of this project, named the European Institute of Romania.

I am really confident that, after a rather long transition and pre-accession period, Romania will join the EU by 1st of January 2007. But, what sort of member state will be Romania?

Even if it hasn't yet solved all its structural problems, Romania remains, on a medium and long-term perspective, a challenge for investments, due to the facilities of the taxation system and its natural resources.

Some of its exceptional assets are the rather cheap, but highly qualified labor force, the proficiency in foreign languages and adaptability to multicultural environments. Europe should start to see a

different Romania than that sketched by the clichés related to low qualified nationals traveling abroad more or less legally looking for jobs. Considering ageing population in the EU, Eastern Europeans working abroad could be seen as part of the solution for the sustainability of the European social security and pensions system.

Moreover, thousands of Romanian specialists in high-tech, IT or medicine, could stay home in Europe, after accession, instead of crossing the Ocean to join US companies, thus adding impetus to the pursuit of the Lisbon Agenda objectives.

While turning from sideline to gateway of the EU, Romania has the possibility of bringing valuable input in the designing and implementing of the EU neighbourhood policy at the Eastern borders, especially with regard to Ukraine, Moldova and the Middle East.

Last, but not least, Romania brings into Europe a unique natural landscape, being the last habitat of certain species extinct in other European countries. Romania's traditional heritage, based on authentic rural culture, will come to enrich the EU's "unity in diversity".