



Committee on Regional Development

8.11.2017

MISSION REPORT

following the mission to Cluj-Napoca, Romania from 18 to 20 September 2017

Committee on Regional Development

Members of the mission:

Joachim Zeller	(PPE) (Leader of the mission)
Lambert Van Nistelrooij	(PPE)
Fernando Ruas	(PPE)
Constanze Krehl	(S&D)
Matthijs Van Miltenburg	(ALDE)
Monika Vana	(Verts/ALE)

Accompanying Members:

Daniel Buda	(PPE)
Victor Bo tinaru	(S&D)
Vasilica Viorica D ncil	(S&D)
Lauren iu Rebega	(ENF)



Summary

Subject	Delegation visit to Romania
Objectives	<p>Main objective:</p> <p>One of the biggest cities in Romania, Cluj-Napoca, is a regional innovation hub situated in the north-western part of the country. It has several universities and a large student population. One of the aims of the ESI funds in Romania is to help to improve the country's competitiveness by strengthening the links between research, innovation, smart specialisation areas and competitive sectors. Bringing benefit to the IT sector is also one of the priorities.</p> <p>The delegation gave the REGI members an opportunity to find out more about the innovation environment and IT sector in Romania and about how the EU regional development funds have benefitted the city and the region.</p>
Places	<p>18-20 September 2017</p> <p>Romania: Cluj-Napoca, Turda</p>
Participants	The delegation consisted of 10 Members and substitute Members of the Committee on Regional Development.



I. Programme

The programme of the delegation consisted of three main elements: (i) a working dinner with key political actors; (ii) a meeting with local, regional and national authorities and the beneficiaries of EU funds; and (iii) a series of visits of projects supported by EU structural funds.

The full programme is available via this link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/131560/REGI%20Delegation%20to%20Romania%202017%20-%20Final%20programme.pdf>

1. Welcome working dinner hosted by Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca (Monday 18 September)



The delegation's main interlocutors during the working dinner, at which several illustrated presentations were made, were:

- Ms Rovana Plumb, Minister of EU Funds
- Mr Victor Negrescu, Minister of EU Affairs
- Mr Alin Tise, Cluj County Council President
- Mr Ioan Aurel Chereches, Cluj County Prefect
- Mr Emil Boc, Cluj-Napoca City Mayor - host

The first meeting in the programme gave participants an overview of the current state and possible future prospects for economic and social development of the city. The city mayor, Mr Emil Boc, host of the dinner, presented a number of projects which had already been completed with the support of the European Structural Funds. He also presented several projects which the city hopes to implement in the near future. The Mayor insisted on the importance of EU regional policy plays in the development of the city and the region.

In his speech, the Chair of the EP delegation, Mr Joachim Zeller, reassured the host and other guests of the commitment of the Parliament to defend a strong EU structural policy.



2. Meeting with local, regional and national authorities and the beneficiaries of EU funds on simplification, absorption and smart specialisation (Tuesday 19 September)



This was a high-level discussions, with the following interlocutors:

- Ms Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy
- Ms Rovana Plumb, Minister of EU Funds
- Mr Victor Negrescu, Minister of EU Affairs
- Mr Alin Tișe, Cluj County Council President
- Mr Emil Moldovan, Bistrița County Council President
- Mr Ioan Aurel Chereches, Cluj County Prefect
- Mr Tiberiu Marc, Salaj County Council President
- Mr Emil Boc, Cluj-Napoca City Mayor
- Mr Ilie Bolojan, Mayor of Oradea City, Bihor County
- Mr Marcel Boloș, General manager of the North-West Regional Development Agency

The exchange of views concentrated on four main issues:

- delays in project implementation for this programming period and the problem of fund absorption;
- the complexity (and sometimes inaccuracy of) of administrative regulation;
- communication policy and the need to improve it;
- the future of cohesion policy.

Delays in implementation of regional policy were attributed to the complexity of the legislation on the one hand, but also, on the other hand, to additional national rules which are often added to the European requirements. An effort at simplification is necessary both at European and national



level. Several speakers argued the need for decentralisation by the national authorities and greater trust of local authorities. The national state administration should allow regional authorities to submit their projects directly to the European Commission.

There was wide agreement on the need to improve communication between all levels of stakeholders but also to make regional policy better known to the citizens. The best way to secure the future of cohesion policy, independent of the budgetary issue, would be by simplification of procedures and an efficient use of the funds allocated.

3. Project visits (Tuesday 19- Wednesday 20 September 2017)



The delegation programme included visits to the following projects, which had been or were receiving support from EU structural funds:

- IMOGEN Medical Center for advanced imaginary clinical studies
- Three urban mobility and urban environment projects:
 - Rehabilitation of the Old Casino monument (now an exhibition venue) and Simion Barnutiu Central Park of Cluj-Napoca
 - The modernization of the tram line Manastur – Railway Station Square
 - Modernizing the access infrastructure to the industrial area
- Meeting with Cluj IT Cluster Team and ARIES (Romanian Association for Electronic Industry and Software) Transilvania Cluster Team
- A10 Motorway - Sebes - Turda construction site (meeting with Mr Razvan Cuc, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure)
- Turda Salina, salt mine (meeting with Mr Cristian Matei, Turda City Mayor)



- INCDTIM (CETATEA) National Institute for research and development of isotopic and molecular technologies
- Tetarom Industrial Park (meeting with Mr Alin Tise, Cluj County Council President, and Mr Viorel G vrea, Director General Tetarom Cluj)
- Cluj Innovation Park – TEAM Center & Regional Center for Creative Industries
- R&D Joint Project - Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and BOSCH (meeting with Prof. Vasile Topa, Rector of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, and Mr Konrad Kaschek, Plant Manager, Jucu Plant, Robert Bosch)
- Cluj-Napoca airport (also the site of the press conference which concluded the delegation)

Details of each of the projects visited in the course of the delegation are available in the delegation brochure:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/131561/REGI%20Delegation%20to%20ROMANIA%20-%20Dossier%20-%20updated.pdf>

II. Press release

At the end of the delegation, the Parliament's DG COMM issued the following press release:

Members of the EP's Regional Development Committee visited Cluj-Napoca during their mission to Romania on 18-20 September. They all agreed that cohesion policy has had a positive impact on the country but more needs to be done to ensure the full implementation of this policy.

Joachim ZELLER (EPP, DE): "We have had two full days of projects visits and talks with local, regional and national authorities and we can clearly say that Romania needs cohesion policy! We saw a lot of potential, but there are also shortcomings and delays in the implementation of the current programming period. It is imperative that Romania speeds up the implementation on the ground, as it is important also for the future cohesion policy after 2020."

Lambert VAN NISTELROOIJ (EPP, NL): "Romania needs further decentralisation. The Polish example already shows us that this is the future for a successful implementation of cohesion policy. We could clearly see that regions and cities here are ready to take more responsibilities and they are able to ensure better performance on the ground."

Constanze KREHL (S&D, DE): "We are positively surprised that the NW region (North-West region of Romania) has made big steps towards becoming a truly modern region, as the example



of TETAROM illustrates. Now the region is in a position to embrace worthwhile sustainable projects. In so doing it will ensure a Cohesion policy for the benefit of all citizens in the future.”

Matthijs VAN MILTENBURG (ALDE, NL): “The visited research projects in Cluj-Napoca illustrate the European added value of investments in research and innovation. They work on societal challenges as alternative energies. I am amazed by the excellence of the researchers and their dedication. However, Romania should step up the efforts to reduce bureaucracy, cut red tape and better finance the needs of SMEs and R&D. Researchers should do research and not be overcharged with administrative burden.”

Monika VANA (Greens/EFA, AT): “Cohesion policy is the best example for European solidarity. Important elements of the new programming period are the partnership principle and the Europe 2020 goals the structural funds should be in line with. It's therefore of high importance that Romania invests more in sustainable development and mobility, as well as enhance cooperation with local and regional stakeholders, social partners and civil society in order to reach the best results for the citizens.”

Fernando RUAS (EPP, PT): “After this interesting visit to Romania, I am absolutely convinced that I found a country in transformation. The EU presence is quite visible all over the significant investments we visited. Once the current difficulties are overcome, this country will have a sound future. This is what I sincerely wish!”

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