Local perspectives on the Partnership Agreement of Romania

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Timis County, West Region, Romania
*Assembly of European Regions

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Overview

- **West region:** 32.034 sq km, 4 counties
- ~ 2 million inhabitants, economically growing, very good results (usually second in ranking after Bucureşti – Ilfov)
- ~ 6% unemployment rate
- **Timis county**: second GDP in Romania (~ 50% of the West Region GDP)
- ~ 2% unemployment rate

- **Assembly of European Regions:** 230 member regions, 15 interregional organizations
- Different status for the state members negotiations and for the definition of the operational programs

Timis' and West Region's goal

- Absorb EU funds
- Have local and powerful means to develop EU projects, based on its specific necessities
- Be clear in what can be done and how
- Have a good bidirectional synchronization with central entities

Present Situation (1)

- Locally-shared position by relevant experts
- Top-down approach, despite existent county and regional development strategies (in different stages)
- Lack of sufficient transparency to lower levels, caused by more factors
- Better consultation process could have been implemented with the local entities, feedback partially considered
- Priorities (linked to general objectives), strategic focus and financial allocations questioned by local entities

Present Situation (2)

- Centralization of the Management Authorities for regional policies
- National programs defined, even for the regional operational program (with highest absorption rate)
- Some sectors not treated in a unitary and visionary manner, e.g. energy, health, IT&C sectors
- Romanian-Hungarian program: problematic
- Problems with public institutions' capacity (motivation, competence, trust in national mechanisms / procedures, etc)
- Challenging targets, e.g. for research & innovation
- Smallest amount of EU funds per inhabitant allocated to Romania, for MFF

Recommendations

- Operational Programs are defined globally (fact), but to be oriented locally, for each region, in a pragmatic and coherent manner
- More components of the funding programs and more management attributes to be provided to regional entities
- Better balance of money allocation between central and local objectives
- Learn from all past lessons and act accordingly
- Alternate European funds to be allocated to Romania
- General decentralization to be implemented for Romania’s institutions and mechanisms

Assembly of European Regions' related aspects

- Lobbying for and monitoring the implementation of the Partnership principles
- Supporting EU regions in the elaboration and negotiations of their Partnership contracts
- Promoting the political report of Mr. Reichardt on information and access to European funding

- Examples of identified issues in EU regions:
  - not properly managed changes in the implementation structures or in fund management levels
  - limited dialogue with the local and regional actors in the preparation process

Thank you for your attention!