

# THE COMMUNITY OF THE ROMANIANS WHO WORK IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Cristina-Maria PESCARU**  
Ph. D. Cand., University of Craiova

**Abstract:** *The 1990s experienced the real emerging of the first wave of Romanians in the world of the European Brussels. How many Romanians are presently working in Brussels? Is there a request of the specific market on addressing the Romanians? What qualities and skills do we need to have, in order to succeed in our attempts to work in the community capital? There are two labour markets in Brussels, Brussels-Belgium and Brussels-The European Union that, due to geographical superposition, create confusion. There is a Brussels-Belgium, with all the specific features of an occidental capital, and there is also a Brussels-The European Union, with totally different opportunities and approaches. It is hard to imagine the multi-cultural mosaic formed around Schuman Market, but it is very important to decipher it, in order to find personal opportunities for working here. The quality of the Romanian presence in the European Union is mostly given by the quality of the Romanian administration presence, in the relation with the European administration. The administration is the first interface with the European institutions.*

**Key words:** *European institutions; Romanian delegation; community capital*

## Introduction

In Brussels, the capital of the European Union, there has been developed a true community, now existing over 100,000 people, who, through their political and financial power, have totally changed the positioning of “the Brussel region”, classified, nowadays, on the third place, after the City of London and Luxembourg, in the classification of “wealth”, for the 268 regions of the European Union.

The European Brussels is a conglomerate of European institutions and communities created around them, which led to the forming of a separate segment called “the actors of the European Union”. Among the 100,000 people who work in the European Brussels, only 50% do this in the European institutions. Besides the institutions, it is also about the powerful private sector, represented by the European and international companies, industrial federations, European press and non-governmental sector. Brussels is the main pole of the world media, with thousands of accredited journalists.

Approximately 400 multinationals, which we can meet, most of them, in Romania, have also a permanent headquarters at Brussels, an “embassy”

of that corporation near the European institutions. The same way that Romania has an embassy in Belgium, being responsible with all the bilateral relations between Belgium and Romania, a permanent Representation near the European Union, correspondingly, Microsoft has a department that takes care of "the sales market of its products" in Belgium, but also in the European legislative dynamics.

For a permanent or temporary job in the community institutions, there is a very complex procedure, not impossible, but it requires many years, most of the times, until the success. The EPSO competitions (offered through the European Personnel Selection Office), are already noticeable in Romania. There are a lot of training sessions of the European Personnel Selection Office, offered by dozen of entities from Romania. They are paid with few hundred euros, but the chances for success are not exactly very high. There are just few positions distributed for the countries as Romania, and the competition is very strong.

Europe has already dealt with a part of the internal policy for Romania. The analyses say that three quarters of the legislation that is applied in Romania originates from Brussels. This legislation can be noticed in various fields of activity, in our private and professional life, no matter the sector we work in, or the county we live. Policies as the civil justice, environment, consumers' protection, the rights of the companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, do not constitute sensational headlines. Yet, they produce sensational changes in the lives of citizens, society, family, professional associations, companies, majority of people.

### **The importance of the Romanian presence in the European Union's institutions**

The Romanian members of the European Parliament are at Brussels and Strasbourg. They are transmitted the fundamental positions of their legitimate interest groups from Romania, on addressing the adopting legislation. Besides them, we promote them too, at their offices from Brussels and Bucharest. They need specialty input on the various technical matters that the specialty Committees discuss, and which are regulated. Not all the health, finances, environment etc. specialists are politicians, holding honourable European positions, for our advantage. There are representatives of all the Europeans, yet the saying that "charity begins at home" is their "circumscription" – Romania.

The Romanians who are involved in European businesses at Brussels, in the public or private sector, in that of institutions, can confirm this availability of the European Parliament Romanian members. Many of them are young, they are not politicians with important positions in our country and, therefore, they prefer the direct and efficient dialogue, beyond the protocol requests. They regret themselves the fact that they receive insufficient clear taking of positions from the Romanian side, that these come rather late and would like that, besides the written opinions that they receive

from time to time, to discuss more specifically with the representatives from Brussels, or in their offices from the country. They also receive protests from them, yet too late, after the legislation had already been adopted at Brussels, having irreversible consequences for some sectors from Romania.

The governmental representatives noticed the importance of the Romanian members, and so did the European parliamentarians (<http://www.euractiv.ro>), as regarding the common community decision and to assure support in the European Parliament for the promoting of the governmental positions. The Permanent Representation of Romania at Brussels puts itself into coordination with the Romanian European members of the Parliament, on addressing some records – most of the time outside the range of “the great policy”. The success of anchoring a legitimate Romanian interest in the European legislation depends on its representation in the both legislative instances, in the European Council, where the Government has the leading position in the negotiations for Romania, but also in the Parliament, where the stakeholders from Romania, the beneficiaries of the European policies and legislation from our country, should be the preferred source for consulting and lobby (in European, based, legal and correct meaning)

The culture of consultation and constructive dialogue are making their first steps in our country. Yet, it constitutes a rule in the “old” states members of the European Union. The consulting of stakeholders has started to take place regularly, at least in certain fields. The initiative usually belongs to the line ministries, which manage and formulate the national position about a certain sectorial topic, from the political-legislative European actual issues. The internal background is, therefore, the first that must be checked by the Romanian legitimate groups of interest. Beyond this background, or in case the promoting of the specific interest fails to occur internally, the stakeholders can resort to the help of the European parliamentarians from their country.

Nowadays, in the European Commission, there are 800 Romanian officials and, probably, three times more contractual agents. In the entire community institutions, the number of the permanent or temporary Romanian employees must be over 2,000. Basically, Romania reached the number of officials inside the European Commission for all the categories, starting with the generalists, employed for the AD5, until AD14, where there are the directors (Hotnews.ro, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2013).

### **Institutional modifications on addressing the admission of Romania into the European Union**

The European Union Council adopted, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007, a series of decisions that entered into force at the same date, through which there are realised all the institutional modifications that result after Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union.

These decisions aimed for:

- The naming of new members, Romanian and Bulgarian, in the European institutions;
- The actualisation of the official numbers regarding the population of the European Union and the list concerning the holding of European Union Council President positions (Romania is enjoying this privilege between July and December 2019);
- The modification of the necessary numbers for the vote through qualified majority. These decisions were then amended by the European level evolutions.

As regarding the manner of decision with qualified majority, in the European Union Council, it is maintained by the Treaty of Lisbon, along with the Treaty of Nice, until the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2014. This system implies that, for the adopting of a decision by the European Union Council, through qualified majority, there are necessary 255 votes, from the total of 345.

The votes must come from the majority of states members and to represent at least 62% from the European Union's population. Romania has 14 votes in the European Union Council. Thus, in the votes share, Romania holds the seventh place, after Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Poland.

Starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2014, the system of voting, in the Council, has been modified, the majority being defined as representing at least 55% of the states members, including 15 states members and 65% of the Union's population. In case the Council decided differently than the proposal of the Commission or the High Representative of the Union for the external affairs and security policy, the necessary percent for the representation of the states members, becomes of 72%. Nonetheless, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2014 and the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017, the system of voting modified, at the request of a state member, the decisions being adopted according to the in force system, until the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2014.

The admission of Romania into the European Union determined the Permanent Mission of Romania to the European Union to be transformed into the Permanent Representation of Romania to Brussels, which is the main intermediary of the communication between the institutions of the European Union and those of Romania, both on central and local level.

Permanent Representation of Romania, along with the authorised national institutions, elaborates the documents regarding the position of Romania, which are then presented and promoted among the European institutions.

For the fundamental and inclusive representation of the interests from Romania at Brussels, it is necessary the joining of two factors: the intensification, on one side, of the stakeholders' consulting, from the institutional field, and, on the other side, the understanding, the creation of a reflex of them, for following the European legislative actuality, for identifying and communicating, in due time, their positions and to promote them actively at Bucharest and Brussels. The Romanian members of the European Parliament ought to be the priority recipients of opinions, positions and

arguments of the Romanian interest representatives. The suggesting arguments, the transmitting documents that support the expressed opinions, the direct dialogue with them and with the members of their offices, and the maintaining of a professional relation, are beneficial for the two parts: the stakeholders, because the adopted European legislation will be closer to their direct and specific interest, and to the European parliamentarians, because they will have strong arguments for defending a Romanian position, being able to position themselves actively, competently and efficiently as regarding the files they work on, and because they will be offered motivation as regarding the activity carried out at Brussels, for the citizens that they represent.

### **The Romanian representation in the European Parliament and the other institutions of the European Union**

The European Parliament published the data of the Euro barometer, as regarding the perception of Romania about it (according to <http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/>, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2013). The Eurobarometer realised during 2007 – 2011, shows important data concerning the Romanians' level of knowledge in relation to the way in which the European Parliament functions, the degree of information, through the Romanian mass-media, about the European procedures, along with the policies and values that the population from Romania consider priority in its activity. Thus, according to the Euro barometer, a substantial majority of respondents from Romania has solid knowledge on the European Parliament's activity: 45% of them know the fact that the appointing of the deputies in the European Parliament depends on the political affinities, as comparing to the European average of 39%. The Romanian respondents are also better informed, than the rest of the Europeans, as regarding the way in which the deputies are appointed in the European Parliament: two thirds know that the deputies are directly elected in the Parliament by the citizens of the different states members (66%), compared to 55%, in the European Union, in general. Only 10% answered incorrectly (unlike 27%, in the entire European Union).

The data published by the Euro barometer, place the Romanians in the classification of the best informed Europeans, as concerning the procedures of the European Parliament. The results of the Euro barometer represent a new proof for the preoccupation of the Romanians to be informed and to understand precisely, the meaning of the received information.

As regarding the information through mass-media, approximately two thirds of the Romanian respondents remember that they have recently read, seen or heard a piece of news about the European Parliament (65%, compared with the 52%, in the entire European Union), according to the data supplied by the Euro barometer.

On addressing the policies that have to be supported especially in the European Parliament, the results of the Euro barometer show that “the fight against poverty and social exclusion”, “a security and defending policy, to allow the European Union to face the international crisis” and “the improvement of the consumers’ protection and public health”, are the three policies that should be considered a priority, according to the respondents from Romania (<http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/>, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2013). The last two are mentioned more frequently in Romania, than in the European Union, in general.

Related to the values that should be firstly protected: “The Protection of Human Rights” is the first option of both Romanians and Europeans, in general (58% in Romania, 58% in the European Union). The second choice refers to “the solidarity between the states members of the European Union”. This value is mentioned more frequently in Romania, than in the European Union, in general, (43% in Romania, 33% in the European Union). On the third place, almost a third of the Romanians mention “the equality between men and women” (32%, compared with 35% in the European Union). Totally, five of the eight values are mentioned less frequently by the Romanian respondents, than by the European respondents, on average, especially: “the freedom of expression” (26%, on the fifth place, compared to 33%, in the European Union, in general, on the third place).

Finally, the Euro barometer shows that the Romanians want the European Parliament to play a more important role than at present (59%), confronted with the Europeans who share the same idea, but only 49% of them (*Idem*).

In the European Parliament, we are represented by 32 parliamentarians from Romania, 13 of them members of European Popular Party Group, a number of 16 parliamentarians are in the Progressive Alliance of Socialists Group, and 3 parliamentarians are in the Liberal and Democrat Alliance Group (according to [http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament/index\\_ro.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament/index_ro.htm)).

In an interview taken by RomBel, Ștefan Tincă, the ambassador of Romania in the Kingdom of Belgium declared: “Belgium has been, during our history, a source of inspiration for the modernization of Romania and I think, further on, that here there are sectors of activity, principles and social practices that can inspire us for improving the things at home.

Today, we have the best premises for Romania and Belgium to participate together to the European construction. We can resort to the support and the vast experience of Belgium, as concerning our full integration in the European Union, by reaching the convergence with the western states of the Union. In our turn, we can open our perspectives for the involvement of Belgium in this strategic space, which in the Balkan – Black Sea – Caspian Sea Arch” (<http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/>, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2013).

As regarding the activity of the political parties in the European Parliament, the Romanian Euro-parliamentarians do not leave the

impression of being reluctant when taking the floor. As national delegation, we are on the 5<sup>th</sup> place, from the 28<sup>th</sup> states members. The analysis on national parties shows a very interesting fact, that the Euro-deputies from the Social Democrat Party, Conservatory Party and Liberal Democrat Party are almost as talkative, and more talkative than those of the National Liberal Party, the latter preferring a more moderate approach. On the other side, the members of the Liberal Democrat Party agree more than their colleagues from Social Democrat Party, Conservatory Party and Liberal Democrat Party the signings of the draft resolutions of the European Parliament.

On addressing the significant activities, the Euro-parliamentarians of the Social Democrat Party and Conservatory Party hold the first position at the positions drafted reports (slightly in front of the National Liberal Party) and the amended reports (slightly in front of the Liberal Democrat Party). The liberals are situated on the first position for drafting the notifications (slightly in front of the Social Democrat Party and Conservatory Party). The members of the Liberal Democrat Party delegation have lower average positions for these indicators, an aspect that can be explained through the fact that the share of the Romanian deputies in the European People's Party (EPP) group, which is, by far, the highest, it lower than the share of the Romanians in the Social and Democrat Alliance (S&D) and Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) groups, the assigning of the reports and notifications, inside the political groups, being influenced by the size of the national delegation (according to *Europarlamentarii la Raport*, Legislation 2009-2014, Volume III, Bucharest - Brussels, September 2011).

Obviously, for an even more profound evaluation of the Romanian influence in the European Parliament, we should evaluate its importance too, not only the number of the reports drafted or amended by our Euro-deputies, compared with the other national delegations. Nonetheless, according to the data that we are provided at this moment, and the monitoring experience from the last years, the influence of Romania in the European Parliament is growing. In order to use it at its maximum potential of Romania, it is necessary a higher working volume from our Euro-Parliamentarians, such is the degree of consulting between them and their social and institutional partners from the country.

The Euro-deputy Corina Crețu was appointed by the elected president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, the commissioner of the European Commission for Regional Policies. As a Euro-Parliamentarian, Corina Crețu was a member of the next commissions and delegations: *Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*, *Delegation for relations with the United States* and *Delegation for relations with Republic of Moldova*. Moreover, between 2009 and 2014, she held the position of vice-president of the *Committee on Development*.

In the other European institutions, almost 1,200 Romanians were working, at the beginning of 2014, placing Romania on the eighth place in the hierarchy of the countries with the most numerous officials or contractual agents for the European Union, assigned preponderantly at Brussels,

according to a report realized by the European Commission at the start of this year (according to the informations from <http://www.zf.ro/zf-24/peste-1-000-de-romani-lucreaza-pentru-institutiile-europene-pe-salarii-care-pornesc-de-la-2-500-de-euro-net-pe-luna-11733511>, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2014).

The Romanians who work for the European institutions represent only 3.6% of the total number of 33,000 European officials, and their basic pays are similar, for deputies, or even seven times bigger than the average income of the Belgians, reaching 2,500 Euro net a month. Therefore, the salaries of the debutant European officials' start from about 2,650 euro net a month and can reach 18,500 euros, according to the category of employment and the different levels of hierarchy. The biggest salaries are of the officials who hold important positions, which, in case of Romania, represented, at the beginning of October 2014, 642 people.

The most desired jobs, for the Romanians who want to become employed in the European institutions, are those in the departments that require specialists in the European public administration, juridical sciences, translators, interpreters, linguists, the economic or financial field, audit, or those that require archivists and documentarists. The most Romanians that work for the European Union have preponderantly bureaucratic jobs, carried out by the European institutions.

The categories of employees who work in the European institutions are divided into: managers, officials and temporary agents working as administrators (AD), temporary officials and agents working as assistants (AST), contractual agents, special consultants, local agents and agents under the jurisdiction of the country they are from. The AD and AST categories have each 12, and respectively 11 groups of hierarchy of the employed. The agents from the category AD have administrative, consulting, linguistic responsibilities, and carry out the researching activity of the actions at law from the European institutions, while those from the AST category hold the executive, technical and communicational positions.

Niculae Idu, former leader of the European Commission Representation at Bucharest, said that "Romania is in the position to exceed the share of representation, seen from the perspective of the Romanians who are employed in the European institutions, and that the highest impact of them in the European system can be noticed in connection with the commissioner and the members of the Parliament" (*Ziarul Financiar* from 02.12.2013)

<b>ROMANIA IS ON TOP, BUT ON THE EIGHTH PLACE</b>					
<b>Top ten countries with the biggest number of officials in the European Institutions</b>					
Country	No of employed	Country	No of employed	Country	No of employed
Belgium	5,733	Germany	2,236	Greece	1,163
Italy	3,616	Poland	1,468	Portugal	859
France	3,246	Great Britain	1,246	SOURCE: a report of the European Commission, at the beginning of 2003	
Spain	2,292	Romania	1,183		

Source:<http://www.zf.ro/zf-24/peste-1-000-de-romani-lucreaza-pentru-institutiile-europene-pe-salarii-care-pornesc-de-la-2-500-de-euro-net-pe-luna-11733511>

The Euro-parliamentarians have one or two accredited Romanian assistants in the staff from Brussels, plus other few subordinated people, who hold the positions of local agents.

### **The recruiting of Romanians in the institutions of the European Union**

The desire of the Romanians for a job in an office from one of the European institutions, have become more and more present in the last years, especially for those who were already working in the local public administration and who, in 2010, experienced the situation of cut wages, removed wage increases and some jobs that had previously been doubled, were menaced by reorganisation. As a matter of fact, the competition for an announced vacancy from a European institution is of 20-30 people. They compete for a job on a waiting list (reserve) for the candidates who might hold a vacant or a new created position. The validity of the lists is of two years and the applicants are rigorously tested and interviewed, in order to be enlisted on the waiting list. They need to use the EPSO recruiting service for recruiting (European Personnel Selection Office), a site through which there are centralised all the applications and all the available jobs from the European institutions, which has three annually series of recruiting, for all the areas. Generally, this process takes almost a year, and the candidates have to know proficiently the language of a country, member of the European Union (for example, Romanian and French, for the citizens from Romania and France) and English, French or German, at the level that assures them the drafting of papers and a fluent conversation.

The Romanians are disadvantaged in the recruiting process, as confronted by those of other nationalities, who graduate prestigious foreign universities. There are Romanians who graduated a foreign university too, who succeeded in working in European institutions, but there are also Romanians who graduated Romanian universities.

The salary package that the European officials receive monthly includes the basic pay, along with allowances for their families. Moreover, if they have to travel on a business trip, in a country member of the European Union, the European institutions that they work for, must provide them a maximum amount of money between 100 and 180 euros (depending on the destination) and a daily fee between 52 and 104 euros a day. The salaries can be subjected to increase, according to the economic context of the country where they stay, in case the cost of living rises.

On average, the rent of an apartment with one bedroom is of almost 750-800 euros a month, according to the specialised Belgian sites, and a meal with three courses and drinking can reach to almost 20 euros, for the European officials.

Most of the European officials are Belgians (approximately 7,740 people), among which over 4.300 have an official position. Most of the European officials (almost 21,500 people from the approximately 33,000 of employers and contractual agents) live in Brussels.

From the total number of people who work for the European institutions, about 1,500 hold managing positions, and the highest number of them (over 21,000) are officials of the administrative departments (AD) and the assistance departments (AST) (*Ziarul Financiar* from 02.12.2013).

## **Conclusions**

On the resources that the Romanian administration manages to attract, on the expertise of the people who work, on their ability to convince their European partners depends greatly the capacity of Romania to perform its role of great country, in the European Union. The highest risk of exclusion, from the European structure, comes rather from an auto-exclusion, from political incertitude, from lack of interest. There are intellectual and expertise resources in Romania, and at the Romanians outside it, undoubtedly. What is important is that they should be engaged in an integrated system of expertise and national interest, beyond the momentary, partisan interests. It is then when we will know to increase the value of Romania, as country and state member of the European Union, more than the sum of its representations.

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