The Romanian Development Camp

The 10th Edition

“Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals – Are we on the right track?”

4th – 6th of September 2017

Impact Hub, Bucharest
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## Opening Session and Welcoming Remarks

| **H.E. Victor Micula**, Secretary of State for Inter-Institutional Relations, The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| **Anca Stoica**, Romanian ODA Project Manager, United Nations Development Programme, Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS |
| **Dr. Ştefan Cibian**, FOND President/ The Romanian Association for International Cooperation and Development – ARCADIA |

The concept behind the 2017 edition of the Romanian Development Camp was conceived in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the new 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other strategic documents, such as the new European Consensus on Development, adopted this year, in June.

This year’s edition of the Romanian Development Camp, with the title “Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals: Are we on the right track?” marked the anniversary of 10 years since the first edition of the project and also the 8th time in a row when the Romanian NGO Platform is organizing it, with the financial support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the RoAid Programme and in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme – Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS.

The opening session started with a presentation made by Dr. Ştefan Cibian, FOND President, who welcomed warmly all guest speakers and participants and underlined the importance of such events to take place for strengthening the national development cooperation community.

The event was also praised by H.E. Mr. Victor Micula, stating that “the Romanian Development Camp is a front-runner in raising awareness on development cooperation and humanitarian aid”, representing one of the most important “instruments for building capacity of civil society organisations”. The Secretary of State for Inter-Institutional Relations also stressed out the celebration of 10 years since Romania joined the European Union and officially became an international ODA donor. In his speech, H.E. Mr. Micula also brought into discussion the
creation, through **Law 213/2016**, of the **RoAid Agency** that will be in charge with the implementation of development cooperation policies and fully operational by the end of 2017.

**Ms. Anca Stoica**, Romanian ODA Project Manager, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, also emphasized the importance of the Romanian Development Camp project and presented the role of the UNDP as the main partner of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on ODA issues, supporting institutional capacity and project implementation.

“**The 17 SDGs reflect the world in which we would like to live. They are a joint reposibility, no matter what sector we come from. Achieving them needs solidarity and working together – must be complimented by multi-stakeholder partnerships.**”

**Dr. Stefan Cibian, FOND President**

**Trends and Priorities for Development Cooperation within the framework of the SDGs**

**Moderator:** **Olivia Baciu**, Senior Advisor and Technical Lead, Partners Global  
**Keynote Speaker:** **Mandeep Tiwana**, Head of Policy and Research, CIVICUS  
**George Bouma**, Team/ Cluster Leader, Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Programe, Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS  
**Martin Heather**, Policy Officer, International Cooperation and Development, Policy and Coherence, European Commission  
**Johannes Trimmel**, President, European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs – CONCORD

Nearly two years have passed since the adoption of the **2030 Agenda**, which represents the most ambitious call for action up to date, aiming to eradicate poverty in all its forms. Despite its action-driven rhetoric, the reality is different and in the many countries as civic space alongside human rights are being repressed. There are many reasons behind the ongoing alarming world-wide trend of CSO shrinking space that come not only from the state institutions, but also from extremist groups, in the
context of rising terrorism. The overlap between the economic and political elites in most of these societies represents also another negative factor that increases corruption, violent repression, towards dissenters and undermines democracies. To counteract all of these, strong narratives for democratic rights should be promoted. The world’s largest NGO alliance, CIVICUS, is active in this field, promoting CSO rights and providing solidarity in need. By engaging with other international mechanisms (for example, UNHCR, Community for Democracy or Open Government Partnerships), CIVICUS maps and documents CSO abuses and attacks, through its CIVICUS Monitor Platform.

The Agenda 2030 is formed around the idea that sustainable development is not only about People, but also about the Planet, Partnerships, Peace and Prosperity (the 5Ps). Given their broad dimensions, United Nations national agencies come as a supporting pillars in what regards Voluntary National Reviews and reporting processes on SDGs progresses. Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) is one model of response to these national needs, encouraging governments to take ownership in the process of SDGs monitoring. A model of good practice, UN MAPS missions provide a system of prior in-depth analysis, in order to advance SDG through institutional coordination, budgeting and financing, development planning and raising awareness and advocacy. Their widespread character (from missions in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and also in Eastern Europe – in countries such as the Republic of Moldova, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia) also facilitate transversal engagements, thus supporting the universality of the Agenda.

The European Union, as the world’s largest official development assistance (ODA) donor together with its member states, has been promoting the importance of policy coherence in the international development context. To reflect the new 2030 Agenda and also new current global challenges (increasing poverty and inequalities, increasing instability and crises, more diversified developing countries) the EU adopted in June this year a new European Consensus on Development that shapes the next steps for a more sustainable Europe. By mainstreaming the 17 SDGs into the European policy framework and into the current Commission priorities, the new European Consensus represents a long-term, shared vision for the implementation of development policies, both for the EU and its Member States, aiming at a systematic integration the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Nevertheless, the 2030 Agenda is perceived as very ambitious, yet governmental representatives should demonstrate the same ambition in their efforts to implement it – efforts, which up to the present day, from the perspective of the civil society sector, do not live up to the political expectations and promises. The year 2030 is not as far away as it may seem, still there is no sufficient data on the progress which has been recorded.

At the European level, each Member State is responsible for the implementation of policies and priorities aiming at delivering more sustainability. How can we thus trigger together an SDG
transformation in Europe? How can we fit the 2030 Agenda in the current political environment? For this, a stronger commitment and engagement of both non-governmental organizations and citizens is needed.

Parallel Thematic Workshops (I)

**Best Practice: Youth Livelihood Programs – Workshop coordinated by New Horizons Foundation Romania**

**Kelly Organ**, Program Coordinator for International Development and Capacity Building, New Horizons Foundation Romania

**Liana Sargsyan**, Program Manager, World Vision Armenia

The workshop was designed to showcase the importance of youth programs as a good practice of social development. Ms. Kelly Organ and Ms. Liana Sargsyan used as an example the IMPACT and SKYE programs to emphasize the problems young people are facing as well as possible solutions. The keywords for this workshop were “sustainable livelihoods”, “empowerment” and “life skills”.

The workshop identified the importance of treating young people as equals and recognizing their potential in fields of expertise as a way of drastically reducing unemployment rates. Also the facilitators presented the main characteristics and states of a successful youth program from their experiences with IMPACT and SKYE in Romania and Armenia. Firstly, there needs to be a design phase for each program in which the local context is evaluated (especially if other youth organizations are already “on the ground”) along with identifying opportunities to involve the community and private sector.

Secondly, the pre-employment phase covers topics such as “youth development”, “work preparation” and “financial education”.

Thirdly, the livelihood accompaniment phase (which is frequently skipped by many programs because they cannot be designed to take individuals from kids to adults) includes “technical training and internships”, “job placement services” or “business plan support.” Above all, psychological support and the concept of “safe space” for young people are mandatory for any youth program.
As part of its international engagement in terms of humanitarian aid, Romania has contributed with sharing technical expertise and on-site work. The workshop introduced the engagement of Romania’s development cooperation policy, as well experiences directly from the field from ADRA Romania (volunteers assisting on the ground migrants and volunteers) and Caritas Confederation Romania (community based disaster risk reduction and risk assessment), both FOND member organisations.

The main points focused on the role and capabilities of Romania as a donor state in the field of humanitarian assistance.

Romania contributed with expertise on civil protection. Some examples include the 2015 coordination mission of the European Union flood scenario exercises, along with the 2016 activities of providing immediate assistance in crisis situations and emergencies. Providing field analyses, and also grants for assistance and civil protection and the neighbourhood countries is another example of Romania’s support.

The workshop concluded with a short list of key recommendations that would improve Romania’s capacity in providing humanitarian assistance:

- Support more Romanian actors to share their expertise on humanitarian assistance and have access to European funding in this field;
- Enhance cooperation and coordination to act more efficiently;
- Engage more the private sector;
- Raise more awareness on this issue.

Did you know that ... in the period 2014-2017, Romania provided humanitarian assistance in amount of approximately **11.2 million EUR** to 12 states in crisis situations (in the Syria and Iraq conflicts, the Eastern Ukraine conflict, the Matthew Hurricane in Haiti, the Nepal earthquake, the floods in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the epidemic of Ebola virus)?
**Why is it important for us to communicate what we do?**

This was the central question behind the idea of the third parallel workshop, combining both theoretical and interactive perspectives.

Participants were asked to think about their work and identify the reasons for which they need to communicate with target audiences, as well as their strong and weak points in doing so. Afterwards, split into two working groups, they were asked to identify which are the main difficulties in communicating their projects to the public or local authorities.

In the first part of the workshop, several questions were addressed such as: *How do you get over your fears and reach out to our targeted public?* Later on, a short lecture was held on the importance of the way we try to communicate our message and on how to make out words stand out.
Implementing the SDGs: Examples from partner countries

Moderator: Anemari Necșulescu, Civil Society Expert/ Former FOND Vice-President

H.E. Åsa Regnér, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, Sweden

Magda Toma, Director, International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP)

Ragnhild Therese Nordvik, Programme Director, FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, Norway

Mariam Tutberidze, Project Analyst, Institute for Development for Freedom of Information, Georgia

Ion Gumene, Program Director, Expert Grup – Independent Think Tank, Republic of Moldova

The last plenary session from the first day of the event was introduced as a space for debates and discussions that aimed at promoting good practices and experiences at regional and international level.

The first country to present its achievements was Sweden, which is regarded at the international level as the
frount runner in implementing the 17 SDGs. The “Swedish way” of implementing the SDGs has its roots in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the power of self-example. It relies on the core idea of changing oneself as well as the national policies for the better, with the support of a very active civil society.

Sweden succeeded in gaining such notoriety at global level through the emphasis put on the national societal segment. By concentrating on the broader dimension of human rights, the country thus managed to push its national agenda towards the children’s rights sector, committing itself to fighting against any form of violence against children. In this respect, the Swedish Government initiated the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, in which Romania is also actively engaged.

The next presentation on the panel followed the success stories of the International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP). Founded back in 2008, IFP brings together 64 national platforms from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania and 6 regional coalitions, aiming to create and strengthen capacities for collaborative work and to influence global public policies, through a shared vision and common values such as defense of human rights, and the fight against inequalities and injustice.

Yet, in their pursuit of delivering the Agenda 2030 at a country level, CSOs face multiple challenges, some of them including: lack of funding, incoherent governmental programs, lack of inclusion and participation at the government decision making level; lack of capacities (especially monitoring and data); low awareness among CSO actors and public on the SDGs. To overcome these, CSOs must be given access to formal roles, guaranteeing their participation in clear consultation processes on government implementation plans and measures; formal representation mechanisms which oversee implementation efforts; channels for participation in accountability processes, amongst others. The key to all of these is an improved process of capacity development, through which the civil society sector will thus be able to become a relevant player in the ongoing monitoring and successful implementation of the SDGs.

The following presentation, FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development Norway is a great example which succeeds in playing a role in monitoring the SDGs. Formally established in 1995, FOKUS represents today an umbrella for 59 member organizations active in the field of women’s rights and gender equality in an international perspective.
In terms of SDG implementation, Norway, inspired by the efforts of Sweden, has taken concrete steps, especially through the commitment of the Norwegian Prime-Minister H.E. Ms. Erna Solberg, which is one of the UN SDG Advocates.

When it comes to international accountability, Norway has been active in efforts of progress reporting, ever since the 2016 UN High Level Political Forum. At the national level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible with the coordination of the whole process, while other domestically-related ministries have been enabled with implementation of specific, individual goals.

Yet, the Government faces a more challenging context for creating broader ownership. One concrete measure in this direction belongs to the Ministry of Education, which, in 2016, initiated the change of the curriculum with three cross-cutting issues: Democracy and citizenship; Sustainable development; along with Health and Life skills.

Another example of SDGs implementation is in Georgia, illustrated by the project “Support the Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia”, implemented by the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), in cooperation with the Government Administration and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development – USAID and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – SIDA.

The 3 major objectives of the project are: creating and launching an Electronic Monitoring System for SDGs; organizing awareness raising campaigns; and supporting the Government Administration in setting up an SDG coordination mechanism.

Up until now, several activities have been implemented, with the support of national Ministries – including the organization of public lectures in various Georgian regions, of essay and visualization contest on SDGs for youth, and of different workshops for civil servants, preparation of Electronic Monitoring System for SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, as well as visits of an international expert, for the elaboration of monitoring methodology, metadata and scorecard forms.

The last presentation focused on the SDGs implementation process in the Republic of Moldova and the contribution brought by the Expert-Grup national think-tank. Their main work relies on the analysis of 5 phases of the SDGs nationalization process from 2016 to 2017 (providing technical analysis of the relevance of the SDGs in the Republic of Moldova; organizing consultations on the relevant SDGs for the Republic of Moldova; analyzing the independences among all SDGs; making recommendations to integrate the SDGs in the national strategy; and lastly, defining data for the economic-system for SDG monitoring and evaluation).

Following their participatory and transparent analysis process, the resulting data indicated that in the Republic of Moldova the national policy agenda is only partly aligned to the SDGs up to now and that one third of SDGs targets are not at all reflected in the national policy documents. Some of the main causes are: national peculiarities, lack of common vision and approach, different optics of public policies, along with an insufficient level of disaggregation of strategic planning documents according to SDGs. For a successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it is vital to identify which SDGs targets are indeed relevant for the Republic of Moldova, and to try to nationalize them, together with their associated indicators.
The second day of the event focused on promoting sustainable development as well as the conditions for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Romania. The speakers highlighted the need of political willingness for taking the best decisions possible in this endeavour.

The establishment of a Department of Sustainable Development as part of the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government was seen as a positive sign. In addition, the 2008 National Strategy for Sustainable Development needs a revision, for an updated version that would take into account the Agenda 2030. Institutions represent a key part of this process and inter-ministerial cooperation is regarded as essential for developing a coherent strategy and for the upcoming 2018 National Voluntary Review of SDGs progress implementation.

The Romanian Ministry for Environment and Climate Change responsible for promoting and coordinating on sustainable development is open for cooperation with civil society actors. According to a Bertelsmann Stiftung study, Romania is ranked 35/157 on the 2017 SDG index. For better results,
clearer responsibilities must be set at the national level in order to foster synergies together with other national relevant stakeholders (including NGO representatives).

The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) is another key actor when it comes to the 2030 Agenda implementation in Romania. Its main role consists in collecting and reviewing data necessary to measure the SDG indicators. All the information is expected to be presented in a transparent manner, and civil society can exercise its watchdog role in this context. The progress tracking process centered around the Romanian Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) Set which includes 103 indicators, organized on three levels (main, complementary and NSDS progress indicators) and distributed on the three pillars (environmental, social and economic). NIS is currently working on a reporting mechanism, along with a complete metadata for the agreed set of indicators.

Romania should follow the examples set by other countries which are more advanced in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. One of these countries is Finland, one of the European front-runners in promoting sustainable development. At the domestic level, specific ministries are directly involved in the nationalization of the 17 SDGs, according to their field of work. In addition to this, Finland has also established a monitoring system which supports the national Government in compiling its national progress report. Planning ahead of the Agenda 2030, Finland also launched its own development programme – “Finland by 2050”.

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From Action to Results: Romania’s support for development projects in partner countries

The second plenary session aimed at presenting development projects supported by Romanian development assistance in partner countries.

The first presentation was of the Romanian Mobility Fund for Government Experts, which represents a rapid response instrument whose aim is to facilitate the quick transfer of Romanian experts and expertise to respond to the ad-hoc needs of partner countries.

Easy to use and flexible, the Fund fosters the creation of regional and international partnerships, as it encourages network development and best-practice sharing on national priority sectors, such as: rule of law, food safety (sanitary, veterinary expertise), child protection, transition to democracy, governance, administrative reform, electoral reform, conflict resolution, and environment protection.

Strong partnerships are more likely to be initiated within strong networks, federations or coalitions. For this reason, the next presentation focused on the importance of networks — especially in the non-governmental sector.

Networks represent the common interests of the members involved. Yet, there are many challenges networks face in their day-to-day activities. The large variety of external factors, but also the lack of sufficient control in exercising the common voice of their own members may affect internal coherence and coordination. For their good functioning, networks should ensure: transparency, sustainable funding, strong membership, visionary leadership, effective use of limited resources and relevant and strategic partnerships.
**ChildPact** is an example of such successful collective initiative. The Regional Coalition for Child Protection ChildPact represents a network of networks that brings together 600 child-focused NGOs from 10 different countries.

Another successful example is illustrated by the **Anti-Corruption Network** created within the project implemented by UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub in partnership with UNDP Country Offices and FPDL – Partners Foundation for Local Development Romania, and funded by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The project “**Promoting Integrity and Anti-corruption in Eastern Partnership Area: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**” aims at promoting integrity and anti-corruption at the local level in countries such as Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, by disseminating and applying the innovative **Anti-Corruption Methodology “Islands of Integrity”**. This new and practical approach strives to transforms local governments into “islands of integrity” and effectiveness, even if they operate in a sea of mismanagement and bad governance.

The last panel presentation was about **YouthBanks** as means of transforming regional problems into development opportunities in the Black Sea area. The YouthBank programme was set up in Armenia back in 2007 and it slowly started extending itself in other countries throughout the following years. The Black Sea NGO Forum played a role in this process, as it offered since 2010 the necessary open space for meetings and networking.

At the core of the YouthBank framework are the young people and their potential of positively transforming the societies they live in. Following the YB methodology, young people are trained to be grantmakers for youth project, by employing different forms of funding and a positive sense of competition. Value is put on community projects, both big and small, while their central objective remains the transformation of current problems into opportunities.

While all YouthBanks are given flexibility to develop in a variety of ways to suit local needs, their work is underpinned by a number of key principles, also known as the **YouthBank Golden Rules**: youth leadership, openness to young people, emphasis on participation and inclusion, promotion of understanding and of the “say it as it is” approach, employing clear and fair methods, developing skills and experience, reflection and evaluation, and celebration.

The Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND team has supported throughout the years the establishment of networks, partnerships and coalitions through the **Black Sea NGO Forum** project, whose aim is to support the development capacity of NGOs in the Black Sea Region. The two most concrete examples of such successful partnership which emerged within the open space facilitated by the Forum are: the regional coalition working for children’s protection – *ChildPact* and the regional **Anti-Corruption Network**.
Parallel Thematic Workshops (II)

Following SDGs no. 1, 2 and 12 – eradicating poverty, zero hunger and responsible consumption and production – the objectives of the workshop were to understand the importance of responsible consumption and food waste decrease and to identify the possible solutions for solving/improving problems related to the lack of food.

The workshop was thought as an interactive game, where participants were divided in working groups. By combining imagination with practical issues, each one was asked to choose the products that they think a normal family from two different countries (one that is in its developing process and one known for its food waste) would eat in one week and how much money would they spend. This practical exercise of identifying different food consumption patterns revealed that in terms of food and food waste there is a huge discrepancy between rich and poor countries. But why? And more especially, how can we, as individuals, can improve this situation? As the main conclusions of the workshop suggest, there is a constant need for pushing the development cooperation agenda, in our global efforts to take responsibility for our own actions.

Youth is the key to global sustainability! – Workshop coordinated by UN Youth Delegate Romania & AIESEC Romania

Denisa Bratu, UN Youth Delegate Romania
Gabriel Uifălean, UN Youth Delegate Romania
Alexandra Șuțu, Public Relations Vice – President, AIESEC Romania

In the search for solutions to current global crises, this workshop emphasized the role of each one of us – big or small – can assume. The Romanian UN Youth Delegates represent the perfect example -by

Our daily food – Workshop coordinated by the Association “Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21”

Nina Cugler, President, “Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21”
Cătălina Luiza Neagu, National Coordinator O.R.A, APSD Agenda 21

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According to the wide national consultations which were organised last year by the Romanian UN Youth team, the main issues raised by the Romanian youth consisted of civil engagement and employability, concerns which were included also in the 2016 speech of the two Romanian Youth Delegates at the 55th Commission for Social Development.

In the second part of the session, both speakers and participants engaged in a discussion about the major contrasts between the different experiences of children and young people from various parts of the world, starting from a short video which was made to raise awareness of children in vulnerable areas. As it was later underlined, all of these alarming problems are often let aside, while “first world problems” from developed countries are given more importance.

AIESEC Romania, through various programs, such as “Youth Speak Forum” or “Global Volunteer” (closely linked with the activities of the UN and the 17 SDGs), try to approach major issues in international development and get youth more and more involved.

**Did you know that ... Romania** has functioning embassies in 8 Sub-Saharan African countries: Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe?
the participants to make suggestions on how these relations might be further improved.

As pointed out during the presentations, the 1950s marked the early years of political and economic relations between the CEE and SAA, which fruitfully continued until the 1980s. However, the fall of communism in 1989 represented the starting point of a period of dis-engagement from both parties. Relations slowly resumed only in the mid 2000s, with the involvement of EU Member States in the African continent through development aid schemes.

Priorities of both regions

✓ Trade represents the main driving force of these relations;
✓ Slow, but existing interest in investment among CEE and an openness for a broader partnership in terms of political consultations, investment and aid;
✓ Working on improving general agreements for all the countries in the EU and bilateral relations;
✓ The need for the CEE countries for empathy with the transition experience towards a consolidated democracy;
✓ More funding programs for scholarships, e-government; increasing the diplomatic missions and visits in the SSA Region;

Challenges in the CEE-SSA relations

- The outdated perspective about one another;
- The fact that we are stuck in a dark past (the CEE countries decreased engagement in the SSA Region), now resuming only at trade relations and a poor economic assistance;
- Not having a robust trade policy and the lack of institutions to support it;
- The SSA countries’ not very positive perspective on the EU and therefore the difficult process to make them understand that you are a part of the EU and you want to re-engage.
Parallel Thematic Workshops (III)

Global Citizenship, the key for achieving SDGs - Critical Perspective – Workshop coordinated by A.R.T. Fusion Association

Andreea – Loredana Tudorache, Trainer/Program Consultant A.R.T. Fusion Association

The central theme of the workshop was centered around the premise that global agendas have small to no progress over the years. Working in small groups and putting subsequent questions, participants had to find the reasons why this may happen.

The main reasons identified by the participants are:

- the lack of a common vision at the international level
- the lack of education and empathy;
- not taking individual responsibility in achieving the SDGs;
- the Agenda is not adapted to the realities of each country.

Based on these findings, a general debate was initiated, centred on the issue of responsibility: who and how should take responsibility and at a local/international level in order for the global agendas to be effective?

The conclusion of both the exercise and the workshop was that only through global citizenship and by becoming a global citizen can the global agendas really be accomplished, but to reach this goal there is a complex and difficult process that we all need to undergo.
The last workshop from the second day of the event focused on the potential of Romania in its neighbourhood and its contribution in providing regional stability and expertise.

According to the discussions, the stability of the Romanian foreign policy is perceived in the region as one of its main strengths and the approaching Romanian European Union Council Presidency in the first semester of 2019 represents a major opportunity for international visibility and engagement, yet it poses also many challenges.

In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, data protection was identified as a field of expertise in which Romania could support countries such as Georgia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, along with expertise in structural reforming or raising commercial competitiveness. The national experience in the anti-corruption field is also considered valuable by and for other states and often represents an advantage at the European level. In this context, the Romanian Expertise Database (RED) developed by Global Focus Center represents a resourceful tool in exploring the Romanian experience and know-how in democratic reform.

In what regards the challenges the 2019 Romanian presidency may face, energy security, along with Brexit and the 2019 European Parliament elections have been brought into attention. As a conclusion, Romania should offer stability and establish carefully its internal agenda with strategic priorities, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders both at national and global level.
Development priorities on the National Agenda: The new Romanian Policy on Development Cooperation and Romania’s 2019 EU Council Presidency

The plenary session from the last day of the Romanian Development Camp focused on Romania’s upcoming Presidency of the EU Council in the first semester of 2019 and the future of the national policy on development cooperation and humanitarian aid in this context.

At the governmental level, 2019 is considered a crucial moment in which Romania should strive to be as visible as possible, to show its capabilities and overall, to influence the potential of the European Union on the international arena.

In order to do so, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims at engaging all Romanian citizens in an open and transparent fora of communication and consultation, promising a widely inclusive process. Special roles will be attributed to the civil society and private sector, which will work together with the Ministry to define the priorities and events that will have the official patronage of the Presidency.

Apart from these two categories, youth will also have a say in the future of their country and will be involved as much as possible in the preparations, as volunteering and internship programmes will be specially set up.

Moderator: Anca Ciucă, FOND Board Member/ Foundation for Democratic Changes
Victor Negrescu, Minister Delegate for European Affairs, The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ștefan Tinca, Political Director, The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rilli Lappalainen, Secretary General, The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU – Kehys
Sigrid Solnik, Executive Director, The Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation - AKÜ
In what regards the development cooperation sector, during its Presidency Romania will have to effectively tackle the negotiation for the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) or the future EU Mutual Fund. Both national and international stakeholders will thus have to work together and reach for a consensus while they push on the global agenda their own priorities.

However, all of these will require in the near future an update on the national development cooperation policy. The new RoAid Agency will thus become the central governmental entity which will be responsible with setting out the new national thematic and geographical priorities for Romania. In parallel with the Agency, an Advisory Committee in the field of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid will also be functioning under the form of an inter-ministerial coordination between 9 central institutions.

As for the 2018, the priorities of Romania in regards to development cooperation are expected to follow closely those of the United Nations Organisation, with a special emphasis put on the ties with the African (especially Sub-Saharan African) and Carribean territories, in domains such as: climate change, capacity development, or agriculture.

The experience of other countries who have previously coordinated the EU Council Presidency may prove to be valuable for Romania. A successful example is that of Finland, an EU Member State which is exercising its Presidency for the third time. As emphasized, there are many opportunities at European level of which Romania should take advantage to raise its profile and advance both national and European priorities.

Romania has a lot to learn also from Estonia, exercising its EU Council presidential mandate during July – December 2017. The discussions mostly focused on the challenges the Estonian government and the Estonian civil society sector faced in preparing for the Presidency (difficulty in raising awareness and in developing a policy making mechanism for local authorities by involving both the NGOs and the private sector, the lack of interest of the Estonian citizens, or even the challenges in the Troika), as well as the opportunities which have been brought along: networking with high-level EU representatives and officials from other countries, stronger advocacy and higher visibility.

Yet, NGO leaders presented at the event were warmly advised to try to match as much as possible their intended activities for the Presidency with the priorities set by the national government, but at the same time to try and stand out with several clear-cut initiatives, that would differentiate them.
It was both interesting and inspiring to meet colleagues and share experiences across borders. Agenda 2030 is a global agenda, a joint agenda, and even though each country has its own unique advantages and challenges, there is a lot to take from the experiences in each country that other countries can learn from.

Mandeep Tiwana - CIVICUS

The 10th Romanian Development Camp was an inspiring gathering of civil society members, academics and government representatives on the future of development cooperation in the region and beyond. I was personally impressed by the depth of insights shared at the camp and the energy of the delegates to create a more just and inclusive world for all.

Ragnhild Therese Nordvik, FOKUS
Forum for Women and Development, Norway

It was wonderful to feel the excitement related to all the possibilities an upcoming presidency could bring along. Having seen the will and determination of people present, I'm sure Romanian civil society will make the most out of the first half of 2019. I believe it is important to be ambitious as well as have a realistic approach towards the presidency - this period will not miraculously fix everything, however, it is definitely the time to push for what you believe in! Good luck!

Sigrid Solnik,
Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation - AKÜ
The coming Romanian and Finnish EU presidencies will happen in very interesting time when EP elections will influence on the whole decision making process of EU. That’s why well-planned and joint presidency strategies can still make progress and encourage EU to take SDGs seriously in its own work (including financing) and showcase leadership to other parts of the world.

Rilli Lappalainen,
the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU – Kehys

This was my first time to the Romanian Development Camp, that happened to celebrate its 10th edition and dedicated its work to the most important and the only agenda that is implemented globally: the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As the SDGs are the topic of discussion at all levels around the globe, the Romanian Development Camp chose to take different path and share knowledge and experience not only on what SDGs are or what has been done in different countries to implement 2030 agenda, but to also discuss the challenges and measure the paths that has been taken so far. It was also important that specific thematic workshops has been dedicated to discuss the ways to engage with African Region and mobilize more resources for it. The discussions like this promote the successful implementation of 2030 Agenda by showcasing successful examples and finding solutions to the challenges. The Romanian Development Camp succeeded in this.

Mariam Tutberidze,
Institute for Development for Freedom of Information,
Georgia

It was interesting to participate in the 10th edition of the Romanian Development Camp panel discussions particularly about the SDGs implementation in different European countries and see how they are progressing, what are the challenges and what to expect in future. Given that youth are one of the important target groups, whose issues are in the global agenda as one of the priorities, I’m also happy to have had the honor of presenting World Vision Armenia’s experience in empowering and engaging youth through IMPACT and SKYE club models in the light of specific SDGs. The 10th edition of Romanian Development Camp was also a good platform for networking and partnership opportunities through formal and informal meetings.

Liana Sargsya, World Vision Armenia
Priorities and recommendations for the Romanian EU Council Presidency 2019

Romania will hold for the first time the EU Council Presidency and will coordinate three Working Groups at the European level. Taking over the Presidency represents a very important moment especially because it will bring visibility among other EU member states and it’s also a good opportunity to emphasize Romania’s capacity and expertise in different areas.

At the same time, we need to take into account the geopolitical and economic context in the next years as the period also includes the Brexit, European / national elections, negotiation of the Post Cotonou agreement and renegotiation of structural and investment funds. The topic was debated during this edition of the Romanian Development Camp. The session was facilitated by Anca Ciucă, FOND Board Member/ Foundation for Democratic Changes.

The three groups which will be coordinated by Romania in 2019, focusing on the development cooperation policy are the following:

- **CODEV**: It includes diplomats, the main objective is to contribute to the poverty eradication. The group also deals with topics like migration, development, gender equality, environment, trade. It meets twice/week. One meeting will take place in the country which holds the Presidency.

- **COHAFA**: The WG monitors humanitarian needs resulting from man-made and natural disasters outside the EU. It also ensures the coherence of the EU’s response to the crises. The group meets monthly.

- **ACP**: The group deals with European cooperation with African, Caraïbe and Pacific states (ACP). The Cotonou Agreement is the most comprehensive agreement between ACP and EU.
Conclusions and recommendations for the Romania’s priorities during the EC Council Presidency, based on the participants input (Day III, 6th of September)

The participants were divided in three working groups (CODEV, COHAFA and ACP), according to their interest and expertise. The following topics were debated in each WG – the strenghts that Romania could use during the Presidency, challenges and opportunities. Another important objective of this session was to raise awareness among the general public about this moment, as it was stressed by the Romanian and foreign experts during the previous morning session.

Conclusions - CODEV (Working Party on Development Cooperation):

- The Romanian priorities for the Presidency should fulfill 3 conditions – to be genuine and representative for the EC and for itself, should be based on the existing expertise at the CSOs and governmental level, should be in line with the priorities which will be set up by Croatia and Finland (Troika);
- Among the geographic priorities the participants mentioned – Black Sea region, Western Balkans, Middle East, Africa, Caribe, Pacific;
- The thematic priorities which should be taken into consideration include – youth empowerment, social entrepreneurship, disaster risk reduction, anti-corruption and monitoring the elections, data protection – in this case, Romania could provide expertise to countries like Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, agriculture - enhancing the competitiveness, water – as a link to other priorities, such as Sustainable Development Goald and maritime regional cooperation;
- The involvement of private sector mush be a priority.

Conclusions - COHAFA (Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid):

- When setting the Romanian added values, we have to take into consideration the expertise that already exists at national level – civil protection, disaster risk reduction by involving local communities (community based disaster risk disaster), involvement of volunteers in assisting migrants and refugees;
- At the European level, the following topics should be addressed – building resilience for reduction risk disaster, avoiding „politicisation“ of humanitarian aid and development cooperation;
- From the financial point of view, the focus should be the prevention and building capacity of local communities and also the flexibility of access to European funds for EU 13 countries who could bring an innovative expertise in this field;
- There is a need to increase the public access to information on this topic.


- During the Romanian Presidency the Cotonou Agreement will be revised – Romania should debate on its position. This is also a very good opportunity to raise the visibility and to get involve in the negotiation process for the new agreement;
- We need to include the migration topic in the discussions and to find other funding sources for this field, other than development;
- It has been suggested to strengthen capacities for actions in Africa - a mapping of human and technical expertise;
- We need to have a clear message about the region – poverty exists and it must be eradicated/“doing better means doing together”;
- Developing a media campaign (including the private sector) before the Council meeting;
- Initiating public consultations with the private sector in order to raise awareness on the opportunities in the ACP area;
- Initiating micro-funding, including SMEs;
- Including in the Romanian legislation of provisions that motivates the private sector, especially for those that have a social impact – e.g. subsidies or grants,
- Consultations with Chambers of Commerce – e.g. Bucharest Chamber of Commerce
- Opening new embassies in Africa and developing the relations with the existing ones – for example, scholarships could be awarded for those who are working in these regions and have thematic expertise,
- Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) must be a priority in this context.

Useful links
