



Education and Culture DG

## 'Europe for Citizens' Programme



With the support of



Support for projects initiated by civil society organisations

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This event reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## "Europe for Citizens" PROGRAMME - EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG Education and Culture

EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

### Action 2 – Active Civil Society in Europe

Measure 3: Support for projects initiated by civil society organisations

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION:

**ASOCIATIA MUNICIPIILOR DIN ROMANIA - AMR  
ROMANIAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION - RMA**

### TITLE OF THE EVENT:

**Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens / Europa în dialog cu cetățenii săi  
(Active Citizenship Project 2007)**

### LOCATION: FRENCH INSTITUTE – BUCHAREST

INSTITUTUL FRANCEZ DIN BUCUREȘTI, Bulevardul Dacia 77, București

Bucharest, Romania, 11 April 2008

<http://cetatenieeuropiana.amr.ro>

## Background information

### Project objectives

The project was financed through the **Program „Active citizenship” 2007** and aimed at the public participation promotion for the future construction of Europe, especially the public debates and workshops promotion to analyze – starting from real study cases – and contribute to methods and tools improving used by the European Institutions in order to better interact with its citizens for strengthening their awareness and participation.

### Partners

The project entitled „Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens” was initiated by the **Association of Local Democracy Agencies, ALDA**, elaborated and implemented in partnership together with the following organizations from 9 European countries:

Index (*Cyprus*)  
Más Democracia (*Spain*)  
Kommunernes Landsforening (*Denmark*)  
YEN (*France*)  
Balkan Assist Association for Partnership and Citizens' Activity Support (*Bulgaria*)  
Open Society Institute Budapest (*Hungary*)  
Aid Program Advisory Center (*Poland*)  
Insieme (*Italy*)  
Romanian Municipalities Association (*Romania*)

### Main partner from Romania

In Romania, the organizer was the Romanian Municipalities Association – RMA ([www.amr.ro](http://www.amr.ro)), which was founded in 1990 presently counting 106 Romanian municipalities. The purpose of AMR consists in promoting and protecting the mutual interests of member municipalities in order to solve and manage the public needs to the benefit of their local communities. Starting with 2007, AMR has a representative office in Bruxelles.

The Romanian Municipalities Association, RMA, represented Romania, as the ninth project participating country. RMA developed in the last years various projects in direct connection with its main statutory objectives, among which:

- Promoting forms of collaboration and mutual support among the members of the Association;
- Encouraging participation of the civil society structures in solving the problems of the local public administration;
- Unique representation of the local communities' common interests within the relations with the central public administration, non-governmental organizations and third parties.

The European project developed in partnership offered a good opportunity to RMA to connect with civil society and some citizens to make their voice and needs being heard and to stress the importance of EU Institutions and values. RMA paid special attention to the **„Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens”** project objectives and implementation for improving the communication among the various actors at different levels to finally know more and participate to the consultation and decision making process concerning local communities issues.

### Local partners from Romania

The implementation was made possible with the support of some important local partners: French Embassy, French Institute from Bucharest and National Agency for Youth Initiatives Support, ANSIT.

### Duration of the event

According to the agenda, the round table took place from 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., with active debates which continued after the official closing, due to the interest shown by the participants; the event was followed by the projection of the movie ROMING, opened to participants and some pupils and students invited to take part (free entrance).

## Venue of the event

On April 11, 2008 there took place at the **French Institute from Bucharest** the round table organized within the Program „**Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens**“, developed by the European Commission – General Directorate for Education and Culture.

## Event description

The event in Romania was developed according to the general action plan of the project financed through the European Commission – Active Citizenship Project 2007, in close relation to the other European partners aiming to reach the general project purpose.

The round table within the project “Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens” - Bucharest, Romania focused on the "two way process", granting both information and listening to people's opinions about Europe.

The first part of the round table was dedicated to various presentations upon: the project, European citizenship concept, public information services and solutions for young European generation from Romania.

In the second part of the seminar the following topics were discussed:

- *Young people active participation in the European construction building process and the local public administration;*
- *Young people and education;*
- *Networks and informational society (improve the communication and interaction between Europe and its citizens – identifying and promoting new and innovative communication tools)*

The choice of the workshops was made in such a way as to promote action, debate and reflection related to Active European Citizenship concept, focusing mainly on the way Europe and the local communities communicate with the civil society representatives and young people.

The topics chosen and discussed during the workshops are relevant to the objectives of the “Europe for Citizens” Program such as fostering action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture.

As the ambitious goal of the project is to bring Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past, the promoters and the partners took advantage of the event to remember the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

The event was the perfect opportunity for various actors to increase their awareness regarding the EU issues. Meanwhile, some public policies were known to the audience and some ways of communication were proposed for the citizens to better communicate regarding the EU institutions and challenges. Fostered debates and reflection related to EU matters were carried out during the seminar through the participation from local level - several municipalities from Romania, from the central administration - ministries in education and labor, from the youth national agencies, the general secretariat of the government, the representatives from European financing programs, the representative from the French Embassy, mass media persons, youth organizations and other NGO's.

At the seminar works 55 participants shared experiences, opinions and best practices related to the interaction and communication with the European Union at the local level, as citizens and as participants to civil society, if possible, as a member of an NGO. Also, by the participation of the europarliamentarian Adina Valean, the participants were informed about issues related to EU institutions and practice. She also brought into attention the working migration problem, the right to freely travel and work, the right to study, to elect and to be elected in the European Parliament, in the residence state while complying with the same regulations valid for the natives from respective states, access rights to EU institutions documents, the right to address themselves to EU Institutions in one of the official languages of the EU, nondiscrimination right based on nationality, gender, religion, disability, equal access right to community public position occupying.

The europarliamentarian presented as a premiere a documentary movie related to labor migration, which raised debates among the participants.

### **Activities within the General Action Plan**

#### Preparatory activities

There were sent invitations for the participating target groups representatives. The interest shown in the event was very high, a lot of the participants presented and shared their experiences, difficulties encountered, successful initiatives and examples of projects carried on within their organizations.

There were collected the material to be disseminated such as: brochures, folders, newsletters, other publications from the partners, participants, organizer.

Many leaflets and brochures on various EU important topics were provided by the European Commission Representation in Romania and distributed to all the participants during the seminar works.

It was realized a poster to present the present project and to advertise the movie, which was played on this occasion. The artistic movie entitled ROMING, a story about values much appreciated within EU borders such as: human solidarity, tolerance and searching for identity was played in the „Elvira Popescu” Cinema Hall for the participants at the seminar and the young people invited from Bucharest schools.

There were prepared and handed over folders containing the information material/presentation of the speakers/documentation on EU topics/poster for all the participants.

As a follow up of this round table, a website section was created on RMA website - **cetatenieeuropeana.amr.ro**. The participants and other interested persons can find here information related to the round table developing, specific materials and other interesting information. They can also send their opinions and continue to make contributions related to the European citizenship topics.

Mrs. Adina Valean – Europarliamentarian, presented as a premiere the documentary movie „*The way back home*” having as subject the migration in Europe and the European citizens rights on the labor market in EU, the right to free circulation, staying, settling, studying in other members states of the EU.

The movie proved to be of great interest for the participants, especially for the youngsters.

### **Impact of the project (local - municipalities, NGO, youth organizations, national, international)**

The participants were pleased to discover other initiatives and experiences of the institutions that participated in the event in relation with European citizenship; the practitioners and the academicians succeeded to better connect theoretical concepts with good practice examples, reaching a common point of view from different perspectives. The audience was informed about EU issues, financing opportunities, and ways to deal with aspects related to the debated topics. They also had the opportunity to have an active dialogue with an europarlamentarian, to find the principles and problems encountered in free circulation of the people as European citizens and other related issues. Their ideas were heard by the Romanian representative to the European Parliament and the chances for these ideas to become viable projects increased.

### **Conclusions**

Europe came closer to its citizens by the presentations related to the history of the European Union, the moderator being himself teacher of Political Sciences in one of the most appreciated Romanian Universities. He also presented and intermediated a debate related to the results achieved through European policies and actions.

The present event by encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organizations was of great use in reaching the target of the project.

Other conclusions were related to:

- young people involvement in the communication process established among EU institutions
- need to increase the transparency between institutions and citizens
- need to improve the organizational capacity and to develop civil society representatives lobby activities.

Through the developing of the round table the awareness process related to European integration issues was strengthened and the present people felt much closer to European matters.

The seminar created the opportunity for a improving the existing communication between different important actors at various levels.

Other ideas reached during the workshops developed within the project "Europe in dialogue with its citizens" were:

- resuming the radio and TV broadcasts regarding EU integration, considering the fact that a lot of the Romanian citizens need to better know their rights and obligations as EU citizens
- including mass-media in the information and public policies adapting process
- involving youngsters in finding solutions for an efficient administration

## Project assessment

- a. Public participation - Through the participation of 55 persons from diverse, responsible and active representatives of the public administration and institutions, NGO's and youth organizations, the ambitious targets of the projects were achieved. The active participation in the round table and workshops led to interesting conclusions in relation to the project topics
- b. Use of resources – the partnership developed in good conditions at the local and the international level. Good expertise has been brought to the present project by the representatives of all the partners, each in his specific field of activity; the financial resources dedicated for this activity were efficiently used to support and develop the successful going on of the event (as per the financial report)
- c. Difficulties faced:
  - insufficient time left for discussions compared to multiple issues coming from various activity fields comprised into the event agenda
  - the novelty offered by the first time organization of such a complex event involving so many and important actors
  - insufficient standard materials for the project to be distributed to the participants in due time for all the co-organizing partner countries
- d. Suggestions for future actions:
  - need to create as soon as possible a web-link with information and materials from the events of the co-organizers from other countries available to all interested people and organizations
  - project continuation in the next years on various EU issues in connection with the ways to improve communication with the citizens
  - stronger involvement of the young people in European projects as well as in day to day communication and public participations on subject of high importance for their communities
  - for the final conference, it is important to have more than two participants from each country (from different organizations, with different backgrounds and different experience).

-----

### LOCAL PARTNERS:

