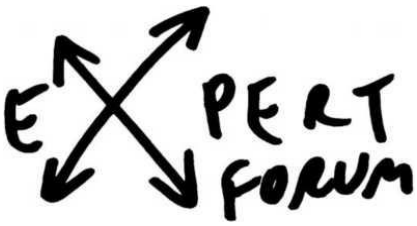


2017
ANNUAL REPORT

WHO WE ARE

Expert Forum (EFOR) is a Bucharest based think tank, set up by well-known experts in public policy and public governance reform. The main sectors covered by the organization are: administration reform and public sector integrity; decentralization, regional development, public finance; justice and anticorruption reform; social policy and pensions; energy and transport; healthcare; electoral processes and active citizenship.

Expert Forum members have been involved in the most important evaluations of institutional reforms in the public administration and have analysed the policy process in recent years in Romania and neighbouring countries (particularly in the Western Balkans and Moldova), in collaboration with the European Commission, Council of Europe, World Bank and United Nations Development Programme.

Since its beginnings EFOR has set as an important goal for itself to forge partnerships with the business community in order to fight together for a cleaner and more responsible government, transparency in public budgets and a more open and predictable policy process. We do this by monitoring various public sectors and organizing public debates together with various business associations. The organization works with private businesses or business associations for policy analysis in taxation and public budgets, public healthcare, pensions, energy policy and taxation etc.

The think tank has obtained support from international donors as a project leader to promote transparency and good governance in Romania and the region (Croatia, Serbia, Moldova, and from 2013 also Bulgaria) to monitor the proper, transparent use of public budgets. The organization has also obtained US Embassy support for justice reform in Romania and UK Embassy support for energy sector reform. The UK Embassy in Zagreb has contracted EFOR for a technical assistance to implement anti-corruption policy in Croatia based on lessons learned in Romania and Bulgaria and EC monitoring practices.

Expert Forum is also part of the Open Government Partnership initiative and assists governments for enhanced transparency on information and public decisions. EFOR experts are frequently asked by the Government to participate in working groups for strategies and legal drafts. At EU level, the president of EFOR Sorin Ioniță is a former member of the European Economic and Social Committee, whereas Laura Stefan, anti-corruption expert, is member of the 17 experts commission that monitors EU member states on anti-corruption policies and transparency.

OUR TEAM

SORIN IONIȚĂ

Expert in Public Administration Reform and Development; consultant with the European Commission, Council of Europe, World Bank, UNDP on Eastern Europe and the Balkans; former civil society representative in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC, on Transport-Energy and Environment); associate lecturer at Maastricht School of Management (MSM) and Babeş-Bolyai University (Cluj). Frequent guest in current affairs news programs on TV and radio; blogger. Graduate of the Bucharest Polytechnic School (IPB); Bucharest University (UB); Central European University (CEU); PhD in Political Science, Fulbright fellow at Georgetown University, Washington DC.

LAURA ȘTEFAN

Anti-corruption expert, former director for anti-corruption policies in the Romanian Ministry of Justice, international expert on rule of law with the European Commission and the Council of Europe. While in the Ministry, she was one of the promoters of anti-corruption legislation in Romania and judiciary reform in general. Contributed to programs for civic awareness and the reform of the Public prosecutors' office. In 2015 the US Department of State awarded her the prize Brave Woman of the Year, followed by a scholarship from the Eisenhower Foundation. Frequent guest in current affairs news programs on TV and radio. She is a graduate of the Bucharest School of Law and has a Masters in Law at Cambridge University.

SEPTIMIUS PÂRVU

Expert in good governance and electoral processes. A decade of experience in the civil society coordinating capacity building projects for public institutions and NGOs, in areas like anti-corruption and citizen participation. Currently the leader of School for Democracy, a multi-annual program to improve skills of civic activists in Romania and Moldova; analyst of political clientelism and political financing. He managed seven rounds of independent elections monitoring and participated in similar programs in Moldova, Montenegro and Estonia. Graduate of Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest.

CEZARA GRAMA

Program coordinator on anti-corruption and rule of law, judiciary reform; worked in projects on electoral integrity and public administration reform. Currently she is running an initiative of best practice exchange between Romania and the EU associated countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) on anti-corruption and judiciary reform. Graduate of the Bucharest School of Law and LLM in Public International Law.

ANA OTILIA NUȚU

Policy analyst on energy and infrastructure, SOEs, regulators. Consultant for the World Bank on public administration reform, and in the private sector for investors concerning policies and regulations in energy and transport. Analyst of EU policies and programs on energy and transport. Over a decade of experience with public debates on energy reform, monitoring the quality of regulations and the sectoral governance. Member of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (Energy and environment). Frequent guest in current affairs news programs on TV and radio, as analyst on energy and infrastructure. Graduate of the Bucharest School of Economics (ASE) and the Central European University (CEU).

NICOLETA POPESCU

Nicoleta graduated from the Faculty of Commerce, Marketing Department, Bucharest University of Economic Studies. She has more than 10 years experience in an external commerce company and three years with public procurement and logistics. Since 2014 she is a financial manager at EFOR.

ALEXANDRA LOGOFĂTU

Alexandra Logofătu gratuated from the Chemistry Faculty, University of Bucharest. She has an experience of more than six years in food toxicological chemistry. Since October 20114 Alexandra is working with Expert Forum as project assistant.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP| Consolidating rule of law through active citizenship, second edition

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Although the accession to the European Union has been a powerful ally for the internal fight against corruption and weak rule of law, it is now clear that the external pressure for change is not enough and there is a need for more active citizens, implicated in the public decision. The democratic derailments are not specific to Romania, but are widely spread in the region, in countries that have been forced to skip steps in a natural process of transition from communism to democracy and to access the European Union, that has been seen as a mechanism that will prevent the return to communism. In the accessing process, the verification of the Copenhagen criteria in practice was not a thorough process, but rather a goodwill demonstration.

Not by chance, after the political and constitutional crisis in Hungary and Romania, within the European Union was formed an opinion trend that asks for the introduction of mechanisms that will permit the sanctioning of the transgressors. It has been acknowledged that the suspension of the voting right of a state member is a difficult sanction to apply and that the EU needs other milestones that would permit a swift action. Any mechanism that would be implemented without the signaling of the national issues would be futile. And in order to signal deviations there is need for the consolidation of the active citizenship, monitoring public institutions and services, constructing a social and professional consciousness that will condemn abuse and the violations of the norms.

Therefore, we aim to offer a better understanding to the youth – to those who work in the judiciary or in adjacent branches – on the foundations of rule of law, to explain that this is the basis for future development of a democratic country and to show what happens when derailments occur. EFOR in partnership with Rule of Law Program South East Europe, Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung organized a number of seven (7) conference in the Republic of Moldova and Romania opened to law students and professionals on topics such as democratic principles, rule of law separation of powers and mechanisms needed to create and consolidate the institutional balance. The scope of the conferences is to underline the role of rule of law in a democratic state and for the fight against populism, extremism and instability.

TIMELINE

#1 – 2 May 2017, Chisinau,– Facultatea de Drept, Sala de conferințe 119, Blocul 2 de studii, M. Kogălniceanu, 65
#2 – 3 mai, Balti, ora 16 – Sala Polivalenta a Corpului Administrativ, Puskin 38, Balti
#3 – 11 octombrie, USPEE „C. Stere", Sala Senatului „Vincenzo Bianchi", etajul 6 (bd. Ștefan cel Mare 200)
#4 – 19 octombrie, FSPAC, Traian Moșoiu 71, Sala III/4, Cluj Napoca.
#5 – 24 noiembrie, ASE, Bucuresti
#6 – 27 noiembrie, USM, Facultatea de Jurnalism și Științe ale Comunicării

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP| School for Democracy, August 2017

Civic Innovation Fund / Foundation for the Development Of Civil Society, Canadian Embassy & Fund for Democracy

School for Democracy is a program managed by Expert Forum that aims to encourage critical thinking and active citizenship in local communities through supporting teachers in their efforts of knowing and understanding how to use non-formal instruments and democratic key notions.

Our goal is to contribute at the improvement of the quality of the educational process so that the pupils' interest in getting involved in the local decisional process will grow.

The target group consists of high-school and gymnasium teachers from Romania and Moldova, teaching subjects such as history and civic education and other optional subjects - education for community development, social and financial education

In **August 2017**, the 4th edition of the **School for Democracy** took place in Sinaia and included 25 history and civics teachers from Romania. The seminar included topics such as: non-formal education and how to apply it during history and civics classes – films, games, technology and debates; Key concepts of rule of law, public policy, anticorruption, civic participation and community organizing and how to make use of them in the effort to fight fake news, extremism, populism and corruption; leadership; project writing.

"***School for Democracy*** *is that training seminar where participants, in this case experienced teachers, are anxious to come to the next session to learn as much as they can from trainers and colleagues. It is that type of training seminar where the competition is very high and serious and where notebooks are being filled rapidly with new ideas and inspiration and where telephone numbers are exchanged as the first step towards a lifetime of friendship and cooperation*". (https://fondulpentrudemocratie.ro/de-la-scoala-despre-scoala/)

Shortly after, **September through December 2017**, EFOR joined the teachers and their communities in Zimnicea, Bucov, Bucharest or Roman to implement small civic projects with more than 200 students using instruments that they had learned during the School for Democracy.
Details: http://expertforum.ro/scoalapentrudemocratie/info/2017-romania/

The story of the School for Democracy
[VIDEO]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8_FxW7DNhc

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP|REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA| School for Democracy, March 2017

Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

The School for Democracy is an Expert Forum program that aims to create an innovative learning environment for teachers who want to discover alternative and effective tools for active education and involvement of young people. In 2017 we had the opportunity to organize our first international School with teachers from Republic of Moldova. In March 2017 we held a one week seminar for 18 teachers.

In May and April, EFOR team traveled to Moldova to support the implementation of 10 civic projects in the schools and communities, all over the country starting with Chisinau, Bălți and ending in Comrat (Găgăuzia). The projects were also very diverse, such as electoral simulations, world cafes regarding the priorities of the youth, photovoice etc.

More information about the initiatives implemented at the local level can be found here: www.expertforum.ro/scoalapentrudemocratie/activitati-md-2017/

Stories from the School for Democracy: www.fondulpentrudemocratie.ro/scoala-pentru-profesori-unde-gandirea-critica-ricoseaza-in-comunitate/

RULE OF LAW| Ethical dilemmas in the judiciary

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Romania

The judiciary operates with the notion of **judicial truth** which, as opposed to absolute truth, is confined to only those facts that can be legally proven before the court. These are complicated concepts that need to be explained to the general public so that they grasp the complexity of how the judicial system operates.

The project "**Ethical dilemmas in the judiciary system**" has as main objective to facilitate a better understanding of the act of justice and, indirectly, to discuss the ethical dilemmas encountered by the judges portrayed in the films and then initiate further discussions on ethics related to all fields of activity (public office, politics etc.) by reaching out to young minds, in the process of formation.

In order to do so, the series of short films **'Kijken in de ziel'** (litt. „Gazing into the soul"), created by the journalist Coen Verbraak focusing on the judges will serve as a useful tool in reaching out to young minds, in the process of formation.

The burden of ruling cases is very great and judges have their own worries and dilemmas. How do judges reach their verdict, what is the internal process that they go through? How sure are they of their decisions or do they have doubts sometimes? Are there laws that they deem unfair? Do they have prejudices? The films portray exactly these problems, at the border of what the law provides and ethical standards, showing how, in some cases, the law is unfair and the judge will have to enact it nonetheless.

Expert Forum organized screenings of the films in universities in Bucharest, Cluj and Timișoara for law students, as well as trainee police officers and trainee judges and prosecutors. The screenings were followed by debates conducted by experts and practitioners.

TIMELINE

November 2016 – Faculty of Law, University of Bucharest
December 2016 – Police Academy, Bucharest
February 2017- National Institute for Magistracy, judges
March 2017 – National Institute for Magistracy, prosecutors
March 2017 – Faculty of Law, West University in Timisoara
April 2017 – Faculty of Law, Iasi University

RULE OF LAW| PREVENT - Training sessions for contracting authorities

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Expert Forum together with the National Integrity Agency in Romania (ANI) held during autumn 2017 two (2) training sessions in Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest for public servants responsible for providing information for the new online PREVENT system.

Starting with 2017, ANI has a new tool at its disposal to prevent conflicts of interest in public procurement, with the PREVENT system of ex ante checks.

PREVENT is an online system which through cross checking and very complex analyses can pinpoint potential incompatibilities, for an on-going public procurement tender. The system will function on the basis of information provided by stakeholders involved in the tender directly in the electronic public procurement system (SEAP).

The legislation for PREVENT provides that the obligation to fill in these forms of integrity rests with a specifically designated public servant in the contracting authority.

The training session were help in October 2017 at the Faculty of Political and Administrative Science at Babeș-Bolyiai University in Cluj Napoca and at the National Integrity Agency headquarters in Bucharest in early January 2018.

Over 100 public servants in charge of procurement attended the seminar, working with local authorities as well as central authorities (ministries, national agencies etc.)

Trainers:
Ionuț Pândaru, Integrity inspector, ANI
Alexandru Popa, Integrity inspector, ANI
Bogdan Pușcaș, President of the National Agency for Public Procurement (ANAP)
Laura Ștefan, Expert Forum anticorruption expert

Partners:

CLIENTELISM| Money and politics – linking public resources to the illicit financing of political parties

European Antifraud Office (OLAF)

Expert Forum organized the international conference on Money and politics – linking public resources to the illicit financing of political parties on the **7th and 8th of September 2017** in Bucharest.

During the debate, we explored the **link between political party funding and public procurement**, respectively the risk of public resource abuse. The topic is widely debated in Europe, especially since there are trending concerns about good governance, transparency and the ways in which the funding of political parties can be reformed.

Expert Forum released a report (www.expertforum.ro/banii-si-politica) concerning the politicization of European and national public funding for infrastructure, covering both Romania and Croatia.

The event was attended by more than 60 party financing experts, prosecutors, investigative journalists and public procurement experts from countries such as Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Latvia, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Belgium, France, Italy or Spain and representing international institutions such as GRECO, OSCE / ODIHR or IDEA International.

Agenda and information about **speakers** can be found here:
www.expertforum.ro/en/conference-money-and-politics/

CLIENTELISM| Civil Response to Clientelism in Media - MEDIA CIRCLE
European Commission

The project Civil Response to Clientelism in Media – MEDIA CIRCLE is a transnational initiative, implemented in Croatia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro. Its purpose is to establish independent sustainable multi-layered cross country Mechanisms for Active Media Policy Monitoring, Advocacy and Emergency response in SE Europe.

Within the project, EFOR and its partners researched the current situation in all the partner countries and developed a monitoring mechanism with the purpose of creating a common web portal populated with the results of the country monitoring.

TIMELINE
The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, in co-operation with the Social Development Partnership (Croatia), organized on the March 6th in the European Parliament the public hearing *Index of Clientelism in Media: Measuring media reality in 6 Eastern European countries* - **www.expertforum.ro/indexul-clientelismului-2.** The second measurement of the Index was released.

The debates related to the third measurement took place in Bucharest in December 2017 and will be followed by a debate in Brussels in March 2018. We organized the public debate *Who do state owned companies serve: citizens or political parties?* On December the 15th.

The debate included speakers such as **Alexandru Giboi** – General director Agerpres, **Cristina Lupu** – Program director, Center for Independent Journalism, **Iulian Comănescu** – Media analyst, **Cătălin Gomboș, Alexandru Rusu** – Journalists, Radio România and **Sorin Ioniță** – President, Expert Forum

In order to correctly frame the discussion, we discussed about the governance of state-owned companies, starting with the modification of the legislation, to the capture of public goods, through clientelistic appointments and their use in the interest of politicians and for electoral campaigns.

State owned companies are useful tools for parties in gaining political influence and clientele, and sometimes even for siphoning resources useful in electoral campaigns or for the use of the political party. Public press is no exception. Legislative changes in recent years show how parties in power have always tried to subjugate the press and enforce clientelistic rules, such as appointing or dismissing the governing bodies of public audiovisual institutions. It seems that Agerpres is set to be the next institution remodeled and taken to the area of this instability.

In 2016, an electoral year, a populist initiative lifted the public tax that funded radio and television to a significant extent, transferring the burden on the budget, thus increasing the risk of clientelism and political subordination. At the same time, pressures on leadership and journalists remain a worrying reality; the protection of whistleblowers against abuse remains an ideal.

MEDIA CIRCLE project is co-financed by the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Croatia Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

CLIENTELISM| State Owned Enterprises – Preventing Corruption And State Capture (SCOPE)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

In a consortium of 6 organization, the project provides a detailed analysis and strategic on the phenomenon of clientelism in state-owned companies (SOEs) in four EU Member States (three new Member States, Romania, Bulgaria and Czech Republic and an old member state, Italy), characterized by significant state interference in the economy. The project designs common indicators, in a cross-country comparative approach, proposes new data visualization tools and policy recommendations at national and European level.

The project is an innovative one which created for the the first time an "objective" evaluation framework through concrete indicators to measure corruption and poor governance in **state-owned companies** in four countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Czech Republic), to measure the evolution of corruption over time and in comparison between countries, in order to scale up at EU level. Companies will be analyzed are centrally-owned (in Romania, for example, companies such CNADNR, CFR, Hidroelectrica, Romanian Post Kerslake, CEC, RAAPPS etc.) and local utilities (and regional operators of water utilities, RADET, urban transport etc.)

Romania is currently one of the countries with the largest number of state-owned companies in Europe. The government is a majority shareholder in approximately 250 companies, and the local authorities own over 1,100 companies. The exaggerated size of the public sector, the very large number of companies and their scattered distribution all across Romania make monitoring difficult and contribute to avoiding public scrutiny, creating opportunities for corruption and clientelism.

The report reflects the results of the research in the Romania case study measuring the extent of corruption and clientelism in state-owned companies. Based on mixed data collection methodology. The project "State-Owned Companies – Preventing Corruption and State Capture" (SOESC), financed by the European Commission was the first opportunity to collect comparative data about state capture in state-owned companies in four members states of the European Union (EU): Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy and Romania.

In the case of Romania, the research underlines that here has been a significant improvement of the corporate governance legal framework for state-owned companies, even though it was not fully applied and the latest attempts of the Parliament to except a large number of SOEs from the criteria of corporate governance diminish its applicability and makes it useless.

The report on Romania: www.statecapture.eu

ENERGY| Energy Watchdog Coalition
Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

A comparative assessment of energy regulators in Romania, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova EFOR and partners from Georgia (World Experience for Georgia), Ukraine (Dixi Group) and Moldova (Center ASPE) prepared a common set of evaluation indicators on governance and quality of regulations for a comparative assessment of energy regulators, based on best practices established at EU level for energy regulators. Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia published national reports and launched them in workshops with key national stakeholders.

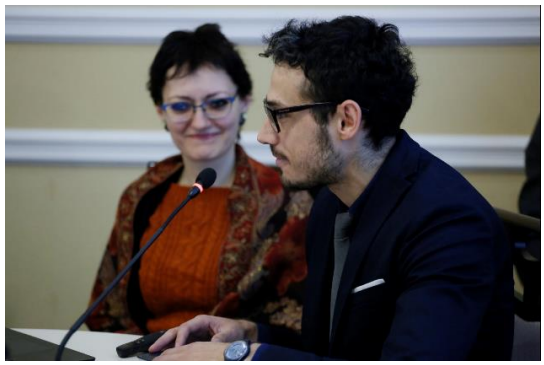
The comparative report on the three countries and Romania, peer reviewed by an EU expert, is being used as an advocacy tool in Brussels for closer monitoring of energy sector reforms in the three AA countries.

GOOD GOVERNANCE & ENERGY | The bridge over the Prut, version 2.0: electricity interconnection between Romania and Moldova
Embassy of the Netherlands in Romani

In January 2017 we launched in Chisinau, together with our Moldovan colleagues from **Expert Grup**, the report "***The bridge over the Prut, version 2.0: electricity interconnection between Romania and Moldova***". Participants included representatives of the EU Delegation in Chisinau, companies, embassies, international donors, experts, media.

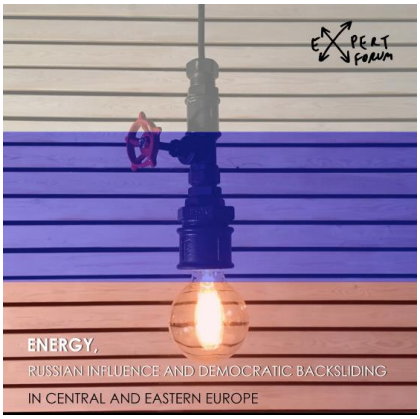
Full conference: (Romanian): https://www.privesc.eu/arhiva/73030
[VIDEO] Very briefly, what are the energy links in Moldova:

- Romanian https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Erzbwd61c
- Russian https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvUUJssT7aY



GOOD GOVERNANCE & ENERGY| Energy, Russian Influence, and Democratic Backsliding in Central and Eastern Europe

National Endowment for Democracy (NED)



The democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe are facing significant challenges. Across the region, Russia is expanding its economic and political influence and using it to undermine democratic standards and values. Using its strong position as a dominant energy supplier to the EU and former Soviet republics, Russia is employing economic incentives and punishment to undermine democratic transitions, counter European integration, and erode commitments to EU policies.

Working with prominent think tanks from **Ukraine**, **Belarus**, **Moldova**, and **Hungary**, throughout 2016 and the beginning of 2017, Expert Forum conducted a thorough research to better understand and spotlight Russia's negative influence on the energy sector. This research resulted in a public policy report for the countries in the region with recommendations for both Brussels and Washington DC stakeholders.

Expert Forum and its partners present and discuss this project's findings and offer policy recommendations to mitigate Russia's impact in two roundtables with regional and international stakeholders in **Brussels** (April 2017) and **Washington DC** (May 2017).

The full report can be found from here: http://expertforum.ro/en/files/2017/05/Final-countries-report-coperta.pdf

A video of with the main findings of the report:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PxVxhEOp48

OTHER INTITIATIVES| Expert Forum @ One World Romania 2017
13-17 of March 2017

Expert Forum adopted two documentary films as part of the One World Romania human rights film festival.

I DIDN'T CROSS THE BORDER, THE BORDER CROSSED ME
SYNOSPIS
The villagers of Churvaleti knew since the end of the Georgian war in 2008 that they were living on a border. Life was simple, but not far from normal. Until a while ago, when Russian patrols started drawing the borderline and putting up barbed wire fences. In Churvaleti, the barbed wire fence goes right through the village. Families and communities got divided. Every other hour border patrols pass by and put anyone in captivity who come close to the fence. In spite of this menace, the villagers find ways to stay in touch with their relatives and friends across the line. Life goes on, but will it ever be the same again?

CATCHING HAIDER
SYNOPSIS
Dead in a car crash in 2008, Joerg Haider, former leader of Austria's Freedom Party, was the first to bring a far right populist party to power in Europe. Catching Haider is a subjective voyage in Haider's political, geographical, familial, and emotional world, seeking to glimpse the real person behind Haider's contradictory personas, his goals, and his strategies, and finally identifying the illusionary and deceptive methods of populist politics which have since spread all over Europe.

OUR VICTORIES

Debate on the reform of justice

Given the massive criticism of changes to the laws of justice, together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Funky Citizens, we organized, on November 20-21, the conference *Consensus: Laws of Justice*. The aim was to identify the views of several relevant institutions and experts on the most discussed amendments. The conclusions can be read here: www.expertforum.ro/concluzii-legile-justitiei/

Elections

In October, our colleague, Otilia Nuţu, was elected vice-chair of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum's governing board. The EAP CSF aims to strengthen civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine - and cooperation with partner organizations from EU partner countries.

We were awarded for the Every Vote Counts campaign

On November 22, Geeks for Democracy (with whom EFOR collaborated during the election) won the first place in the category dedicated to civil society within the Romanian PR Award 2017. The campaign gathered in December 2016 over 1300 observers who covered more of 2000 polling stations in the parliamentary elections. The campaign won 2 awards in 2017.

EFOR in the world

At the invitation of the German Embassy in Bucharest, the EFOR paid a week-long visit to Berlin and Baden Wurttemberg, where the Romanian delegation met with federal and land authorities. The topics discussed were the organization of the state apparatus, in particular the body of civil servants, an outstanding theme in Romania; the state of preparation and the themes of the Romanian Presidency of the EU; and the vision of cooperation in the Danube Strategy. The central point of the visit was the meeting with Federal Minister for European Affairs, Michael Roth.

Scholarship within the Professional Fellows Program

Our colleague, Cezara Grama, was the recipient of a scholarship at the Professional Fellows Program, the US Department of State fellowship program.

Cezara spent a month with the Chicago Mikva Challenge organization where she learned about civic education, grass-roots initiatives and good governance and contacted many leading US governmental and non-governmental actors.

Present at the Frankfurt Book Fair

EFOR attended an event-conference dedicated to Romania at the largest book fair in Europe, called "Quo vadis Romania?" We joined Philipp Ther, professor at the University of Vienna and Karl Peter Schwarz from Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, both well-known and friends of Romania. The interest is big enough because the Germans take European issues seriously and even want to understand what is happening to us.

Participation in the annual meeting of the Moldovan diaspora in the USA

Because we are more and more present with civic projects and media appearances in the Republic of Moldova, we were invited to speak at the annual convention of the Moldovan diaspora in the USA, held this year in Miami. The central theme was, of course, the political year 2018, when Moldova (and its diaspora) will have their decisive parliamentary choices.

Panellists at the EBRD Annual Meeting, Nicosia, Cyprus

EFOR was invited to be part of the Civil Society and Green Cities discussion panel at the EBRD annual meeting. Here I came with a critical look at the current Green Cities approach, an expression that threatens to become a fashionable cliché, empty of content. The Civil Society Panel discussed discrepancies in addressing green urban policies, including in the context of conference hosts (EBRD) programs.

Exchanging expertise and good practice on anticorruption

We participated to the conference *"Prevention of Corruption in Parliamentarians, Judges and Prosecutors: main trends and lessons learned from the GRECO Fourth Evaluation Round"*, held in Prague in November 2017 to share the experience of participating in the fourth round of evaluation GRECO. We also held a presentation on wealth and interest control at the "Interests and Asset Disclosures by Public Officials: What Works and What Does not? Latest Insights from Anti-Corruption Monitoring Bodies ", which took place in Vienna in November and was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Also in November, we were part of a panel at the Regional Economic Outlook conference, organized by the International Monetary Fund at the National Bank, where we talked about the anti-corruption experience in Romania.

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