

THE POLITICAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS OF ROMANIA'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract in original language:

The changes interfered in Europe since 1989 have placed Romania in a new geopolitical context, Romania being forced to redefine its options, accepting from the start the idea of the opening towards Europe. The political context where Romania's intercessions regarding the integration in community structures are framed, suffers both great changes that interfered in the Romanian society after 1989 (changes referring to building a democratic society and installing a new market economy) and challenges at the European Union's level: the need for structural internal reforms, emphasized by its unavoidable extension over the European countries with the same democratic values. At the same time, Romania's opening towards Europe was considered to be the solution of crossing the major drawbacks that issued from placing the country at the intersection of two axes: an interaction axis of two great powers – Russia and Germany – and a junction axis of the great areas of instability and insecurity – the former Yugoslav space and the former Soviet space. Therefore, since the 1990s, Romania's integration in the European Union has become a primary objective of its external policy, Romania's first priority in international relationships' dynamics. Considering these, the current study wants to present the evolution of Romania's integration in the European Union, a process that imposed several legislative, institutional, economical and social changes, having major implications in all fields, but this process was perceived by many people as being Romania's only viable alternative at that time. The study also presents the way that Romania, member of EU since January the 1st, 2007, undertakes this status' responsibilities, contributes to the accomplishment of the European agenda's projects regarding both the intern policy and the external one.

Key words in original language:

Intergation; reforms; democracy; EU; Romania; internal policies; foreign policy.

1. ROMANIA'S INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION – ROMANIAN EXTERNAL POLICY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE AFTER THE COLD WAR

The changes interfered in Europe since 1989 have placed Romania in a new geopolitical context, Romania being forced to redefine its options, accepting from the start the idea of the opening towards Europe. The political context where Romania's intercessions regarding the integration in community structures are framed suffers both great changes that interfered in the Romanian society after 1989 (changes referring to building a democratic society and installing a new market economy) and challenges at the European Union's level: the need of structural internal reforms, emphasized by its unavoidable extension over the European countries with the same democratic values. At the same time, Romania's opening towards Europe was considered to be the solution of crossing the major drawbacks that issued from placing the country at the intersection of two axes: an interaction axis of two great powers – Russia and Germany – and a junction axis of the great areas of instability and insecurity – the former Yugoslav space and the former Soviet space. We also added the fact that ideological

barriers' disappearance allowed the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that means Romania, too, to have access to a new political culture and to another vision of the future, stimulating their will to become a part of the western democratic institutions. In these conditions, Romania's option – as a country of Eastern Europe whose institutions, culture, traditions, political and economical life were, except the communist period, an inherent part of the western world – for the integration in the European Union was absolutely natural and it was based on a quasi-general consensus both at the political class' level and the public opinion's level. Thus, since the 1990s, Romania's integration in the European Union becomes its external policy's primary objective, the first priority in international relationships dynamics.

But we have to say that the relationships between Romania and the European Union did not start in the 1990s, considering that Romania was the first and the only country in Eastern Europe that, since the 1970s, has carried official relationships with the European Community¹, and in 1980 it proceeded to recognize de facto this economical group by signing the Agreement regarding the creation of Romania's Mixed Commission – European Economical Community.

But all of these were only the preamble of the European Union accession, the main marks showing clearly Romania's evolution towards integration: on October 22nd, 1990, we signed Romania's Agreement of Commerce, Commercial and Economical Cooperation – the European Community (enforced since May 1st, 1991), on February 1st, 1993, we signed the Agreement of association to the European Union (enforced 2 years later), on June 22nd, 1995, Romania applied for s to the European Union and on February 15th, 2000, the accession negotiations to this organization started², being technically accomplished in frame of the Accession Conference at a ministerial level on December 14th, 2004³.

The Accession Treaty of Romania and Bulgaria⁴ at the European Union was signed on April 25th, 2005, at Luxemburg, being ratified by all the states members of the European Union⁵,

¹ In 1974 Romania signs an Agreement with the European Community that included it in the Preferences Generalized System.

² At the same time, the negotiations with Malta, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria have started.

³ The accession negotiations (that, unlike other negotiation types in the international relationships, developed mainly in the written procedure), had place in the frame of 31 negotiation chapter that resulted from the division (from methodological reasons) of the community acquis. The negotiations' development procedure established in 1998 forced the national authorities to make and transmit to the European Union's Council a position document corresponding to each negotiation chapter. The European Union answered Romania's position documents by common positions. After the accomplishment of the accession negotiations, their results were incorporated in the accession treaty's project. (<http://www.eic.ro/Dosar%20UE%20RO.pdf>).

⁴ Bulgaria's integration in the European Union had place at the same date with Romania.

⁵ The chronology of Accession Treaty's ratification: Slovakia (June 21st, 2005), Hungary (September 26th, 2005), Slovenia (September 29th, 2005), Republic of Cyprus (October 27th, 2005), Hellenic Republic (November 2nd, 2005), Estonia (November 16th, 2005), Czech Republic (December 6th, 2005), Spain (December 14th, 2005), Italy (December 22nd, 2005), Malta (January 24th, 2006), Latvia (January 26th, 2006), Great Britain (February 16th, 2006), Portugal (March 8th, 2006), Lithuania (March 30th, 2006), Poland (March 30th, 2006), Sweden (May 9th, 2006), Austria (May 11th, 2006), Netherlands (June 13th, 2006), Finland (June

and on January 1st, 2007, it became a state member of the European Union. Therefore, by contracting the Agreement of Association to the European Union, Romania committed itself irreversibly on European integration's way, having from that moment a clear perspective and a certitude regarding its European future, the association being the accession's ante-room and allowing the familiarization with institutions, regulations and negotiation way used in the European Union. The association also meant for Romania the beginning of the legislative and institutional harmonization and adjustment at the economical and social-community space's demands⁶.

The association agreement led to the institution of an intense dialogue with the European Union in order to accomplish the free circulation of the goods, services and manpower between the two parties. As a consequence of this association, Romania could do a step forward, elaborating in 1995 – “The National Strategy to prepare the accession to the European Union” – that was adopted on June 21st, 1995 and that had the signatures of all Romanian parliamentary political forces, occasion when they affirmed that Romania's accession to the European Union represents a fundamental strategic objective for the Romanian society. This option was based on the convergence of all political and social forces and referred to the country's solid anchoring in European values system, Romanian society's development basing on democracy's and market economy's principles in measure to provide solid stability and citizens' and nation's prosperity.⁷

In spite of that, in spite of a consensus at a political level regarding Romania's European future, the major difficulties that Romanian society faced after the events of December 1989 determined by the transition to a new political, economical and social system had several consequences such as economical failures, delays during the negotiations with the European Union, missing some objectives contained in the program elaborated in 1995, aspects that forced the political class to structure more coherently the process of preparing the economy and the society for the accession at the community structure. Therefore, we elaborated “The National Strategy for Romania's economical development on a medium term”, adopted on May 24th, 2001, its objective being: providing the economical growth, increasing the institutions' credibility and the economical policies, providing the macroeconomic stability, the inflation's drastic relief, continuing the economical reform, modernizing the country's productive device, accelerating the privatization process, creating a favourable, stable and predictable business environment, developing the market competition and decreasing the taxation, defining clearly the property rights, reforming the state and its institutions, combating the corruption and the bureaucracy.

19th, 2006), Ireland (June 21, 2006), Luxemburg (June 29th, 2006), France (October 3rd, 2006), Belgium (October 13th, 2006), Denmark (November 21st, 2006) and Germany (November 24th, 2006)(www.mae.ro).

⁶ Copenhagen European Council (1993) established criteria that every country that candidates to the accession has to accomplish in order to become an EU member: stable institutions that guarantee democracy, rule of law, human's rights, minorities' respect and protection; viable market economy, able to face competitive forces and Intern Market's pressures; the ability to undertake member obligations, namely to adopt the EU institutional and legislative frame, also named community aquis. Madrid European Council (1995) introduced an additional criterion: the one of a national administration's existence, able to manage EU's member quality. (http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_25.pdf)

⁷ I. Iliescu, Integration and globalization. The Romanian vision, National Press Publishing house, Bucharest, 2003, p.51.

The new government, resulted from the elections of the autumn of 2000, sought to accelerate and to intensify the preparing for the accession to the European Union by an institutional modification that was referring to the nucleus of the activity coordination system for the European integration, by establishing the Ministry of European Integration and National Delegacy for negotiating Romania's accession to the European Union and also accession structures at all ministry's level. The effects of these measures appeared soon and the status of state candidate at the accession gained after the European Council from Luxemburg marked a new stage of the relationships with the European Union and involved undertaking greater responsibilities while accomplishing the Copenhagen criteria, when accepting the community norms and practices. Gaining the status of state member on January 1st, 2007 represented the concretization of the efforts of our society in more than 15 years and allowed Romania to join a union of European states that share the same values, having in common the respect for human dignity, democracy, rule of law, and respecting the human's rights and fundamental liberties.

2. ROMANIA'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST QUESTION

The accession to the European Union, a process with major implications on a long-term for the entire Romanian people, also has some questions referring to the compatibility between this political option of Romania and the national interest⁸.

Without trying an exact delimitation of the national interest concept limits, we have to mention that different criteria are implied in its definition, such as: the economical criterion, the ideological criterion, increasing the state's power, the military security's advantage, the cultural affinity or questions related to the race or ethnical questions⁹.

But, no matter the elements used to define the national interest, this concept is a useful instrument for understanding the actors' behaviour at the international level.

⁸ The national interest concept is extremely wide and, in the same time, very limited and ambiguous. Across the history, the leaders or the leading groups invoked the national interest in order to justify their own actions and policies. From Hannibal who invoked Cartagena's interest of eliminating Rome from the Mediterranean business in order to war it in the Peninsula, until Napoleon who appreciated that France's interest means Russia's elimination from Europe, the history is full of such examples where we invoke the national interest in order to justify different political actions. (M. Ionescu, State International System's modern evolution – class notes, International Relationships and European Integration Department, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, 20011, Theme 1, p. 4-5).

⁹ Any policy meant to increase the state's economical potential is seen as corresponding to the national interest. Also, the ideological criterion is often used by the states in order to justify their policies. Such a case was until recently the Marxist-Leninist ideology as a "base" of defining the national interests in the states where these systems were leading. In the respect of the state's power, we appreciate that any policy that determines the enlargement of the power vectors: economical, ideological, military, cultural vectors etc, is in the national interest. The military security corresponds to the current world's reality and the supporters of this defining criterion of the national interests appreciate that gaining the military advantage comparing to the other actors is the best way to protect itself. The cultural affinity is found in the things based on the Bosnian conflict and the ethnical one in the relationships between Romania and Moldavian Republic (Idem).

Across the time, national interest also varied for Romania, a country placed at the junction of the great powers' interests and its change depending on the regional and international realities provided its survival as an independent state¹⁰.

In frame of the international situation after the cold war¹¹, when in the entire world there were situations reversals and hard to anticipate transformations, Romania had to redefine its options and it chose the European integration, considering it as corresponding to the national interest, as representing an objective need for the Romanian state, as he only way towards the evolution.

Romania's option, from that date, by reporting not only to the international realities, but also to the intern ones, was considered as being the only viable alternative to a situation that would only have meant: economical isolation because the European Union owns about 60% of Romanian external commerce, stint of the access possibilities to the Romanian products on the community market, increasing the Romanian products' vulnerability in front of the measures of commercial defence practiced by the European Union against the third countries, increasing the economical disparity between Romania and the countries in the area – members of the European Union or that will access this organisation, due mainly to the impossibility of benefitting from the development community funds, isolating and carrying away from the European decision processes, from the mechanisms of the Common Security and External Policy¹², this fact involving increasing difficulties and expenditures as a consequence of the late integration in the Common Agricultural Policy's mechanisms¹³ etc.

In these conditions, Romania's integration in the European Union was seen as a benefitting process whose main benefits would be: a stable political and economical climate able to stimulate a long development, an increasing stability of the economical environment, the competitiveness' growth on the intern market, that will lead to the motivation and stimulation of the inland economical agents, namely increasing the productivity and the efficiency by developing new products and services, developing the commerce, increased access to the capital market and European investments, the access to new equipments and informational systems, to managerial know-how and to the organizational techniques from the developed

¹⁰ L. M. Trocan, International Public Right Studies, „Academica Brâncuși” Press, Tg-Jiu, 2008, p. 137.

¹¹ The cold war was triggered by USA by the anticommunist policy and especially by the anti-Soviet one, promoted by the president H. Truman and continued by all the other American administrations until the president R. Reagan, inclusively. During the cold war, we registered a real arming race, Europe's division and then world's division in two parties, the internationalization of some local conflicts, the world seemed to be suspended between an abortive peace and an undeclared war, although avoiding a third world war across a time that could be featured by the following expression: "...neither war, nor peace; peace and war at the same time..." (M. McCauley, Russia, America and the Cold War, Polirom Press, Bucharest, 1999, p. 22).

¹² By the Maastricht Treaty, Title V, we established the fundamental rules for the institution and orientation of the European Union's common external policy, adding the common security policy. This policy's objectives are defined as being pointed towards keeping the Union's common values, independence and integrity, according to the principles of the United Nations Organization's Charter, strengthening the Union's security under all the patterns, maintaining the international peace and security, promoting the international cooperation, developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and also respecting the fundamental human rights and liberties. (O. Manolache, Community Institutional Right Treaty, C.H. Beck Press, Bucharest, 2006, p. 605).

¹³ National Sovereignty and European integration, Polirom Press, Iași, 2002, p. 224.

countries, the presence of Romanian economical agents on a great and very important unique market, strengthening the national security by the integration in the mechanisms of the Common Security and External Policy, including our country in projects referring to the extension and development of the trans-European infrastructure networks (transports, communications, energy); the opportunity to participate to the decision processes regarding the future configuration of Europe, increasing the prestige and consolidating Romania's status in frame of the relationships with other state actors both at the political and economical level, gaining the rights from the provision of "European citizenship" for the Romanian citizens, professional improvement perspectives and access to the European work market for the Romanian citizens etc.

Therefore, considering both the international and the intern context, we can appreciate that Romania's integration in the European Union corresponds to the national interest, even if, as the social and economical costs of the integration process and of the membership become more and more visible, it would be normal that the support and the structure of the integration motivations suffer important changes.

3. EUROPEAN UNION'S INFLUENCES ON THE JURIDICAL

Romania's integration in the European Union, as all states members' integration, needed in the first place the juridical integration, considering that every type of economical and political integration needs minimal rules that systematize the development of the process.

The changes in this field had to start from the fact that the jurists and the politicians understand that the juridical sovereignty's nature on the continent suffered some modifications and that the absolutist notion, such as "west phallic sovereignty", is very surpassed¹⁴, the European integration's features being the fact that it groups states that gave up designedly to the singular development principle in favour of a community development, transferring a part of their national sovereignty at a supranational level in order to manage better their common interests. Therefore, when we accept the fact that integration supposes more than a simple cooperation between the states members' juridical orders, the national juridical system has to suffer important changes that allow the penetration of the European influences needed in order to adapt the Romanian society at the demands imposed by the European membership¹⁵.

For that, we imposed the need of the Romanian legislation's harmonization with the community *acquis*¹⁶, that, beside the fact that it was a juridical obligation resulted from the

¹⁴ "While the respect for the sovereignty and the state's fundamental integrity remains in the centre, it is obvious that the multi-secular doctrine of the absolute and exclusive sovereignty does not correspond any more, in fact, it was never absolute, as it was conceived as a theory. A major intellectual demand of the present is to think again the sovereignty's problems, not to enfeeble its essence that is crucial for the international security and cooperation and to recognize that it can have new patterns and accomplish more functions". (B. Boutros Ghali – Empowering the United Nations", in *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1992/1993, p.98-99).

¹⁵ I. Anghel, *International Treaty and Intern Right*, Lumina Lex Press, Bucharest, 1999, p. 58.

¹⁶ The community *acquis* represents all the juridical norms that regulate the institutions' activity and the community policies and consists in: the content, the principles and the political objectives contained in the Communities' Originate Treaties and in the next ones (European Unique Document, Maastricht Treaty and Amsterdam Treaty); the legislation adopted by EU institutions in order to put in practice the treaties' foresights

European Association Agreement Romania –the European Union, represented at the same time one of the conditions that determined the progress in the accession negotiation process, the commitments undertaken by Romania in the position documents referring mostly to the modification or adoption of new normative documents for the negotiated field. Therefore, Romania had to change a series of normative documents, starting with the Constitution¹⁷, in order to insert in the intern rights the basic principles from community right's theory: the priority and the obligatory feature of European Union's foresights of the constitutive treaties and of the other community regulations, the European norms direct effect, the equality between European Union's citizens¹⁸ etc.

The admission of the four fundamental liberties certified by the European treaties had to be established in the normative documents in order to allow the free circulation of the goods, the persons, the capitals and the services.

Between the amendments series suffered both by the Constitution and the other laws of the country, we mention: - guaranteeing every Romanian citizen's the right of electing and being elected in the European Parliament; guaranteeing the right of choosing and being chose in the authorities of the local public administration in Romania for every citizen of the Union; guaranteeing every European citizen's right of purchasing buildings anywhere in Romania; guaranteeing the private property; delimitating the Police and creating the Community Police Group, the possibility of recognizing the circulation and of replacing the national currency with the European Union's one¹⁹ etc.

In the context of the accession to the European Union process, Romania has transposed thousands of normative documents²⁰, whose content was not negotiable²¹, and this aspect

(regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations), the declarations and the resolutions adopted in EU frame. (<http://www.intercultural.ro/europa/curs.html>).

¹⁷ All the states that accessed to the European Union acted to the previous modification of the Constitution in order to provide the absolute legality of the accession procedure. Although, there is no obligation regarding the Constitution's revision, neither in the association agreement, nor in other documents. But such a revision is needed because EU affirms that Romania's intern legislation harmonization with the European norms is a condition for the integration. Romania, by the Romania's Constitution Revision Law no. 429/2003, acted to the modification of the constitutional foresights, introducing more articles in this purport, even a new title – Title VI – named the Euro-Atlantic Integration(the aspects referring to the integration in the European Union being contained in article 148).

¹⁸ Exposing the reasons of the Romanian Constitution Revision Law no. 429/2003. *** National Sovereignty and European Integration, p. 73.

¹⁹ Art. 137, paragraph 2 in Romanian Constitution in 2003

²⁰ At the same time of the effective process of legislative harmonization, there were also developed the translation approaches in Romanian of the community acquis. The translation activity was developed under the coordination of Ministry of European Integration, Romania. In 2001, Romania finished the translation of more than 5500 pages of EU Official Journal and in 2002 it accomplished the translation of about 10000 pages (Supplement 8 of the Daily « The day», May 9th, 2003, page 13).

²¹ The European Extension Commissar, underlined that the syntagm negotiations with EU is inaccurate, since the content of the documents is not negotiable, the only negotiable element being the term for transposing certain documents with a sensitive feature reported to the national context (The Truth, November 23th, 2002, p. 10).

corroborated with the negotiations' unilateral feature supplied important arguments to the European Union's critics who showed that there were implemented several times legislative and institutional measures that did not consider the particularities and the specific of Romania's problems and that did not prove their anticipated efficiency. But, when obtaining the EU membership, Romania has become an actor judicially equal to all the other states members, inclusively regarding the position in the European legislative process, having the opportunity to support the reflection in the normative documents elaborated at the Union's level, in a corresponding way, and the Romanian realities and interests.

4. ECONOMICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ROMANIA'S INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION PROCESS

After contracting the European Agreement, the European Union has become the main commercial and investment partner, but also the most important sales market for Romania's export. At present, about 70% of Romanian exports are destined to the European Union and over 65% of the imports are coming from the European Union²². Romania's accession to the European Union has determined the involving of the Romanian economy in the most important economical integrated system in the world, the accession process producing a series of positive political and social pressures in order to create a functional market economy, a question that Romania accomplished, but for whose consolidation we still need efforts. The economical integration process stimulated structural transformations that considered the elimination of the discrepancies between Romania and the European Union, transformations that have rallied the entire national economy that had to pass through transformation and adaptation successive processes in the respect of the rules and the European general economical frame. At the same time, the economical reforms directed towards the liberalization, the privatization, the industrial units' reform, the infrastructure's reform and the financial institutions' reform imposed sometimes dramatic mutations, considering that the integration process developed at the same time or immediately after the transition process of the market economy²³. With a view to removing the existent discrepancies, Romania benefitted of a financial assistance²⁴ from the European Union by PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD funds for small and medium industry units, for regional development, for education and research's development etc., but, several times, the allotted funds were used in a too small measure, due to the inadequate governmental policies, the unknowing of the accession way to

²² <http://ue.mae.ro>

²³ The social consequences of the transition involved the consumption's decrease and the poverty's increase for an important part of the people due to the dismissals, the lasting unemployment, the insufficiently developed system of social insurances etc. (A. Neculau, *We and Europe*, Polirom Press, Iași, 2002, p.77)

²⁴ The financial assistance provided to Romania by the European Union between 1992-1999 was about 1,2 billion Euro. In order to touch the objectives in the pre-accession strategy and in order to greet the needs of the countries that candidate, the Berlin European Council decided to double the financial assistance starting in 2000 and to create other specific instruments: structural pre-accession instruments. Between 2000-2003, Romania received about 660 million Euro per year, by the three pre-accession instruments: PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD. After the European Commission suggestion to increase significantly the help for the countries that candidate, starting with 2004, in order to support them in crossing the last stages needed for accomplishing the accession criteria, Romania received additional funds, the EU financial assistance between 2004-2006 touching about 1,8 billion Euro. (<http://ue.mae.ro>).

these funds, the absence of the centres specialized in offering consultancy services regarding a financing demand's conceiving²⁵.

Also, the gradual liberalization of the exports and imports between the two markets discovered very quickly Romania's inability to compete with the Union in all the sectors. Romanian economical policy's incoherence in the 1990s emphasized even more the discrepancies: Romania did not identified any industry as a possible comparative advantage on the Unique Market and did not invest strategically in any sector that it should have developed in order to integrate in the European Union.

The economical measures in the last years made Romania to register certain results regarding the macroeconomic stability and the inflation's decrease. The fiscal and monetary cautious policies have supported the progress in the macroeconomic stabilization and have established the basis for a reasonable economical increase. Also, we applied certain improvement measures of the Romanian business environment. All these aspects encouraged Romania to gain the EU membership on January 1st, 2007.

Without contesting the benefits involved by Romania's accession to the European Union, we have to say that the participation to the Unique Market involves a series of responsibilities that impose the continuation of the markets' liberalization and that stimulate a series of additional efforts in the regulations' quality increase, strengthening the policies in the concurrence and state help fields. Other responsibilities regard the macroeconomic stability's preservation (prices stability and financial stability), the public finances' preservation, the continuation of the reform of the social and health insurances, increasing the public services and administration efficiency's quality.

All these things will involve very high costs and, in world economical crisis context, they can represent a particular strong pressure factor on the entire Romanian society considering that, two years after the accession, with all the efforts that have been accomplished, we still register major difference from the economical point of view between Romania and the states that accessed to the European Union before 2007. Furthermore, the accession to the European Union made Romania a net contributor to the Union's budget, our share being 1,1 billion Euro in 2007 and the money received effectively from EU in 2007 was about 400 million Euro, money that was needed especially for the preparing of some projects and only the consultancy companies benefitted of it, not the ordinary citizen. To these, we add the fact that the effective implementation of certain fundamental liberties of the European Union, such as the freedom of circulation of the work power or the freedom of circulation of the products, involves certain conditionings and protecting measures regarding Romania.

At the same time, in spite of the forecasts, a report of the United Nations' Conference for Commerce and Development (UNCCD) showed that, after the accession, the direct foreign investments from Romania decreased in 2007 by 21%, at 9 billion dollars, from 11,4 billion dollars in 2006²⁶. But we hope that, by introducing the Euro currency (from the accession, Romania being considered a state with derogation from the adoption of the unique currency –

²⁵A. Neculau, op. cit., p 76.

²⁶The Truth Journal since January 11th, 2008.

Euro – according to the article 122 of the Institution Treaty of the European Economical Community, the derogation applying to all the new states members, until the convergence criteria's accomplishment²⁷), we will stimulate the direct foreign investments, we will reduce the currency risk and there will be a growth of the external commerce etc. The fact that Romania will be a state member of the European Union with a Gross Internal Product per inhabitant more under the European average, but in direct concurrence with the other state members, in sense of the economical and institutional performances, emphasize the need of efficient use of the personal resources and the community funds, of a more active stimulation of the foreign and native investments. All these things prove that Romania needs to maintain a period of time as long as possible of the quick, moderate and lasting economical growth, of strong and efficient institutions and of a predictable fiscal system²⁸, aspects hard to accomplish in the contemporary international economical realities context.

5. ROMANIA'S POSITION – AS A MEMBER STATE – IN ACHIEVING EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES

The successful completion of Romania's accession to the European Union meant the beginning of our country's integration process in the European Union, as 1st of January 2007 was the beginning of a new age for Romania, an European age with all the benefits deriving from European Union membership, as well as all the obligations and responsibilities for developing the projects included in the European agenda both in the field of internal politics and external politics of the Union²⁹. As a member state of the European Union, Romania takes part in all the communitarian institutions meetings, at political level and technical level as well, considering that as series of decisions have been adopted by the European Union Council for performing all the institutional alterations necessary after Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the European Union, mainly focused on the assignment of new

²⁷ The nominal convergence criteria, known as the Maastricht criteria, are: the average inflation rate from the last 12 months (calculated by the consumption prices index) must not cross by more than 1,5 percentage points the inflation rate of the first three states with the most reduced levels of the inflation rate; more than that, the inflation rates in the state that candidates has to prove that they are lasting; The state's consolidated budgetary deficit must not cross the level established in the Treaty of 3% of GIP; if this values is crossed, the budgetary deficit must be significantly and continuously reduced towards a value close to the reference one or the reference value's crossing has to be temporary and has to represent an exception. The gross public debts should not be more than 60% of the GDP or, in case of higher values, it has to significantly be reduced in order to be close to the reference value in a satisfactory rhythm; the average output of long term public securities computed for the last 12 months does not have to be more than 2 percentage points higher than the output of the public securities of the first three states with the lowest levels of inflation. Another prerequisite for adopting Euro refers to the national currency participation for at least to years in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) II. Romania will pass to the unique currency in 2014, intending to access the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) II, before entering the Euro area, in 2012. (<http://www.euractiv.ro>). At present, 16 member states of the European Union have adopted Euro: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Holland, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia and Slovakia.

²⁸ http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/12/strategie_post_aderare.pdf

²⁹ <http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/afis-buletin.php?nrbul=12>

Romanian and Bulgarian members in the European Institutions³⁰, as well as altering the figures necessary for the majority vote³¹.

In accordance with the post-accession strategy project 2007-2013, as a member state of the European Union, Romania contributes within European forums to drawing-up and developing the policies of the European Union, by promoting national positions at communitarian level and by supporting the agreement based on the mutual interest of member states. It also collaborates to communitarian institutions and member states for debating major themes within the Union³².

Therefore, as far as the European budgetary policy is concerned, in its contribution to public meetings developed between September 2007 and June 2008 on Budgetary Reform for a changing Europe, Romania expressed its opinion according to which the communitarian budget has to be equitable for all member states, supporting the need to provide a modern and flexible budgetary structure that would allow the Union to achieve its political commitments taken at the Level of the Union and answer future internal and external challenges (including the ones generated by the development differences in an extended Union)³³. With a significant agricultural potential, Romania has expressed its interest for providing a satisfactory financing for The Common Agricultural Politics appreciating the Common Agricultural Politics has to be based on a consistent budget in the future, considering also the current context characterized by global financial and economic difficulties and on mechanisms adapted to the specific needs of the new member states, in order to provide food safety, to comply with the requirements of the European market and decrease the impact of a possible liberalization of world agricultural trade on communitarian agriculture³⁴.

Also, European Union migration related policies are of special interest to Romania considering that together with Bulgaria, it provides the Eastern border of the Union, its actions going towards a balanced and global approach regarding the migration-development matter. Within the background of developing cooperation instruments with the East and South-East states by the European Union, within the global approach of migration of the regions from the East and South-East of Europe, Romania has become involved in approving and promoting these, taking part in the Mobility Partnership implementation with the

³⁰ 1 European inspector assigned with the multi-linguism portfolio, 35 European parliamentarians, 1 judge at the Court of Justice of European Communities, 1 judge at the First Court, 1 member at the Court of Accounts, 15 members in the Economic and Social Commission, of which 5 representatives of the syndicates, 5 representatives of patron confederations and 5 representatives of the civil society, 15 members in the Commission of Regions. (www.mae.ro).

³¹ At present, for adopting a decision of EU Council through certified majority, 255 votes are necessary from the total of 345. Votes have to come from the majority of member states and represent at least 62% of EU population (meaning at least 305,5 million of the 492,8 million of EU inhabitants). According to the Treaty in Nice, Romania has 14 votes within EU Council. Therefore, from the votes weight point of view, Romania is the 7th after Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Poland. (V.Stan, Prague 2002: memories on the future, *Sfera Politicii Magazine*, nr. 95-96/2001, p.5).

³² www.mae.ro

³³ http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/12/strategie_post_aderare.pdf

³⁴ www.mae.ro

Republic of Moldavia. The project began with the execution on the 5th of June 2008 of a Joint Statement by the representatives of the European Council and Commission, of the participating states and of the Republic of Moldavia and was embraced by the European Council in June 2008. As an answer to the mandate granted by the European Council in June 2007 for enforcing priority measures for the Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, Romania has supported and promoted as a leader state the project for launching a Cooperation Platform in the field of migration and development in the Black Sea region, as a pilot instrument for EU external politics in the field of migration for the Eastern and South-Eastern European regions. The instrument launch was approved by the Council of Justice and Internal Affairs and by the Council of General Affairs and International Relations from June and December 2008. Romania support the Global Approach of the European Union regarding Migration, considering that through the cooperation with neighbor states of the Union and by supporting their economic development, migration pressure at Europe's borders may be significantly reduced. As a member state managing the second terrestrial external border in size of the European Union, Romania considers that European Union policy regarding migration has to be balanced from the geographical point of view, being necessary to allocate resources and develop the intervention ability for other regions with a high level of migration – East of Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, etc³⁵. As far as the matter of the Constitutional Treaty is concerned, Romania is its steady supporter, having already ratified it through the Accession Treaty, considering it necessary to continue the reflection and ratification process of the constitutional Treaty by member states³⁶. Romania's status towards the extension of the European Union at this time is reserved, considering that we notice a tendency of delaying UE27 extension. According to the post-accession Strategy 2007-2013, Romania does not want to block UE candidate states accession, but supports their strict compliance with all the conditions, which is necessary for an institutional consolidation of the Union³⁷.

Regarding The Common External and Safety Policy (PESC) Romania's efforts have been considering the convergence of its own external policy to the Common External and Safety Policy (PESC) of the European Union. The positions expressed by Romania's representatives have reflected our country's desire to play a role in accordance with its potential, as well as to support European Union as a global and responsible actor of the international system³⁸. Romania has proven to be an active participant to the political dialogue within EU and has played a constructive role within PESC. Also, Romania has been a constant presence within the operations performed by the European Union, both at military and civil level, taking part in the meetings of all work structures of the Council having the theme of PESC/PESA³⁹ and

³⁵ www.mae.ro

³⁶ http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/12/strategie_post_aderare.pdf

³⁷ http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/12/strategie_post_aderare.pdf

³⁸ <http://www.mapn.ro/diepa/politicadeaparare/pesa.htm>

³⁹ The Safety and Defense European Policy (PESA) wants to allow the Union to develop its military and civil abilities to manage crises and prevent conflicts at international level. Formally, PESA missions are defined through the three tasks from Petersburg adopted in 1992 by the Western Europe Union and introduced in the Treaty of the European Union. They are: humanitarian missions and nationals, peace maintenance missions, fighting missions for managing crises and/or peace reestablishment operations. In 2002, a declaration of the European Council expressly stated that the fight against terrorism is included in PESA tasks. Since then, European Defense Policy has not been just an external projection, and has acquired an internal dimension –

actively involving in the structure and operation process of the European Safety and Defense Policy (PESA), since its launch (in June 1999, at Köln)⁴⁰. Romania has been and still is present in various missions developed by PESA, on several continents (Europe, Asia, Africa): EUPM (civil mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina), EUFOR Althea (military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina), EUPOL RD Congo (civil mission in RD Congo), EUJUST LEX (integrated mission in the field of law state for Iraq), EULEX Kosovo (mission in the field of law supremacy in Kosovo), EUBAM Rafah (civil mission at the border of Gaza and Egypt), EUPOL Afghanistan (civil mission in Afghanistan), EUFOR Ciad/RCA ('bridging operation'), EUMM Georgia. Member of significant bodies important for PESA, like the Satellite Centre of the European Union from Torreón (Spain), European Union Security Studies Institute from Paris (France), or the European Defense Agency headquartered in Brussels, with a key role in developing defense skills for crises management within PESA⁴¹, Romania is interested in taking part in European cooperation initiatives in the field of weapons and research and technological projects in the field of defense developed by these bodies. At the same time, as a member state of the European Union, Romania contributes to drawing-up Positions, Statements and activities of the Union and enforces them in compliance with international penalties and restrictive measures established by the European Union.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Romania's accession to the European Union is no longer a desire, but a certitude. The road covered so far for belonging to a space of political stability, internal and external security, economic development, social protection and solidarity has not been easy and has involved political, juridical, economical and social transformations, but the belief in the benefits that the integration in this structure may offer was what has motivated the Romanian and society and supported the necessary activities. Unfortunately, what has not been presented to the public and has created a slight unrealistic image was that the benefits resulting from the membership are only potential. This is why, Romania needs to define its own interests within the European Union, to actively and efficiently support them in agreement with all the other member states and then implement, monitor and capitalize the results. Accession to European Union means making the necessary efforts for recovering economic unbalances compared to the old member states of the European Union and hence Romania shall have to clearly and rapidly identify the fields that can individualize the Romanian economy and create an advantage in the European economic competition (ecologic agriculture – natural food products; IT industry; Wine industry; Tourism – agro-tourism, cultural tourism, Danube Delta; Textile and clothing industry; Traditional craftsmanship products; furniture industry; Naturalist pharmaceutical industry) and take stimulating measures⁴². Also, in order to provide the premises for a solid and influential position within member states and build a reputation

protecting citizens living in Europe. (P. Duțu, M. Șt. Dinu, Safety and Defense European Policy – National security interests development framework, National defense University Press „Carol I”, Bucharest, 2007, p. 17).

⁴⁰ http://www.mapn.ro/diepa/eveniment/20060713/Brosura_PESA.pdf

⁴¹ PESA provides the long-term framework for a coherent European policy in the field of defense abilities, research and weapons, with a convergent approach of national policies. (http://www.mapn.ro/diepa/eveniment/20060713/Brosura_PESA.pdf)

⁴² http://x.gov.ro/presa/integrare/12/strategie_post_aderare.pdf

with capitalization potential, Romania has to correctly exercise the Union practices and comply with the communitarian acquis⁴³, the success of European integration depending on the way in which Romania will know to comply with the commitments taken towards the European Union, to the work and honesty that the political class and Romanian administration, respectively shall prove⁴⁴. Despite the fact that for the near future the influence of the system will probably overcome Romania's ability to establish certain economical, political and social standards or patterns, it is much better to represent a centre that decided than remain formally sovereign without a real influence. What shall be it's up to the next generations to decide, but let's hope that European Union integration shall be benefic and shall bring profits to Romania.

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⁴⁴ Excerpt from the speech of the former Romanian prime-minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, at the Parliament meeting dedicated to Romania's accession to EU. (<http://www.atheneum.ca/modules/news/article.php?storyid=304>).

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