

THE IMPACT OF ROMANIA'S ADHESION TO EUROPEAN UNION OVER THE LOCAL BUSINESS WITHIN ICT FIELD

PhD Student **Laurian Gabriel TĂNĂSESCU**
Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania
laur@euromg.ro

Abstract:

Romania's adhesion to European Union has been a long process, carried out for almost fifteen years, and which enjoyed in great measure the support of Romania's people. As happened to the other Member States, which adhered to European Union after 1990, a decrease in popularity of the European Union took place after the adhesion moment.

The adhesion to European Union have had a negative impact for sure over some activity fields (the mining field that suffered significant restructuring and reorganization, for instance) and an indubitable positive impact over some other field (for instance, the trade or support services providing met within high international companies).

The field of Information and Communications Technologies (abbreviated as ICT) emphasizes that field having an extremely high dynamics on worldwide level, where the changes and readjustments have been very fast. For this reason, an analysis on this field referring to "what if we hadn't adhered to EU" can be extremely difficult to be carried out, since it is impossible to build a hypothetical scenario (that regarding the non-adhesion), and the analysis parameters might be highly sophisticated. The paper work in the field proposes an analysis over the already existing situation and the impact reflected after the adhesion to European Union.

The analysis has been carried out on two levels (both the normative and the available financing, respectively), especially from the SMEs point of view, with activity on the ITC field.

Key words: information and communication technology, impact evaluation, integration in European Union, European Fund for Regional Development, Structural and Cohesion Funds

JEL classification: M15, M21, M48, O11, O21, O22, O31, O38, R11

INTRODUCTION

The impact of Romania's adhesion to European Union can be analyzed from many points of view. The most emphasizing are:

- ✓ Changing the settlement frame. Romania had to harmonize the legislation to the European regulations.
- ✓ Changing the national institutions politics. New institutions were defined (such as the People's Lawyer or the Competition Council etc.) as national politics specific to the European approach (the regional development politics or the agricultural politics)
- ✓ The availability of new financing sources, highly significant regarding from the strategic and financial size point of view, but which need new mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and control, in order to be accessed.
- ✓ Social changes, especially by the free circulation of people, by the exchanges and cooperation carried out between the Member States, thus resulting in a series of significant changes within the public mental attitude and the approaches and expectations of the Romanian society.

If one analyzes only these issues of changes determined by the adhesion to the European Union, a significantly complex and multidisciplinary effort will be generated, fact that might get beyond the aim of the paper.

One should limit towards two levels of the changes, determined by the adhesion of Romanian society to European Union:

- ✓ Changes of the regulation frame
- ✓ Available financing for the small and middle companies

Regarding from the activity point of view specific to the analyzed field, the Information and Communications Technologies (abbreviated as ICT) represents one of the most dynamic fields of activity, seen on global level, but also one of the fields seen as having a special potential for supporting Romania's development on middle and long term.

MAIN GUIDING MARKS OF ROMANIA'S ADHESION TO EUROPEAN UNION

Concerning the legal point of view, Romania's adhesion to European Union has started simultaneously with signing on 1st of February 1993 the Agreement of Romania's Accession to European Union. This document was confirmed by the Parliament of Romania and entered into force two years later, on 1st of February 1995.

Simultaneously with the enforcement of Agreement of Accession, Romania was eligible to solicit the adhesion to European Union. The adhesion requirement was submitted in 1995.

The European Council established at Helsinki in 1999 the beginning of negotiations specific to Romania and other five countries' adhesion to the European Union. The official opening of negotiations for Romania's adhesion took place in February 2000, within the reunion of the European Union Council for General Business, reunion dedicated to release the Inter-Governmental Conference.

A phase of negotiations between Romania and the Member States of European Union has followed. The negotiations were carried out on chapters of negotiations, and each chapter represented a field standardized on European level.

Romania received the political confirmation of concluding the negotiations of adhesion to European Union on 7th of December, 2004. As result, on 13th of April 2005, the European Parliament agreed with the proposals of Romania and Bulgaria of adhesion to European Union. Within an official ceremony that took place at Neumunster Abbey of Luxemburg, the Treaty of adhesion to European Union was signed on 25th of April 2005.

At the end this highly complex process, having many involvements, Romania became one of the 27 Member States of the European Union, starting with 1st of January 2007. As result of the negotiations carried out during the pre-adhesion phases, certain settlements of Romania with the European Union or other Member States were adjourned for a limited period of time. The maximum adjournment period of time was of seven years, but Romania earned the right to negotiate extensions of maximum three years, in highly limited and very well justified situations. Taking into account the public information available at the moment of writing the current work paper, such situation has not been found. The transition phases were agreed for the blind spot fields, phases with some exceptions from applying the community's regulations; for such fields, disequilibrium occurred at the moment of adhesion, but estimated to end after some time. The most well-known fields were those dedicated to the free circulation of people (Romania's citizens had limited rights of travelling to some member states of the European Union), or in treating equally the citizens of all Member States. These points of view were taken in accordance to the rights and obligations, especially the right of other Member States citizens of owning ground in Romania.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ICT FIELD AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES PERTINENT FOR THIS FIELD

One of the powerful effects of Romania's adhesion to European Union consists in the impact over the Romanian economy.

In accordance to the community's regulations, the country's development should follow some priorities and should have an action plan. Such details took shape by means of the National Development Plan 2007-2013, document issued and assumed by Romania's Government and by adopting the Government Decision. "The National Plan of Development (abbreviated as NPD) signifies the fundamental plan, by which Romania will try to recover as fast as possible the disparities of social-economic development, towards the European Union. The NPD signifies a

concept specific to the European politics of economic and social cohesion (Cohesion Policy) and means the document of multiannual strategic planning and financial appointment, issued within a large partnership, which will be able to guide and stimulate the social-economic development of Romania, I accordance to the Cohesion Policy of the European Union.” Govern of Romania, 2006.

In pursuance of National Plan of Development 2007-2013, the main objective established by Romania to be reached by the end of 2013 consisted in reaching a level of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on almost 40% of the GDP of EU-25 (the Member States that adhered to European Union prior to 1st of January 2007). The moment of issuing the NPD 2007-2013, the GDP of Romania was of about 3.2 lower than the level reached by the EU-25.

The significance of Information and Communications Technologies field (abbreviated as ICT) within Romania’s development has been proven by an especial chapter included within the National Plan of Development 2007-2013 (pages 67-73), specific for this field.

The relevance of ICT in developing the Romanian society was recognized by other institutions or initiatives. This field signifies a potential engine of development on the emergent societies, engine recognized on the world-wide level. All over the time, and especially after 2000, more national and international initiatives have been shaped in the field.

Many international initiatives of using the ICT field have been started, in order to support the society’s development. Amongst the most relevant, one might mention the Knowledge Economy initiative of the World Bank. By the help of development and use of the Knowledge Economy, influencing in a consistent way the development of the under-developed societies or in progress of development was a point of view. Using these concepts will generate the following advantages:

- ✓ The initial investments are much lower in comparison to the investments necessary within a project of development, which might involve a defined road infrastructure;
- ✓ Some phases of development might be left out. Fulfilling all the technological phases is not necessary in order to reach a certain level, and can be directly invested within the last technologies;
- ✓ By using the ICT, the communication between societies can be facilitated, fact that determines a series of social, behavioral and development points changes;
- ✓ Regarding many activities, the physical distances between someone that needs a service and the service provider are not relevant and have no major impact (including the financial point of view);
- ✓ By using the new technologies, the efficiency of educational processes (the e-learning) and governmental processes will be increased. The transparency of the governmental actions and the ability of a society to identify and react towards the anti-social actions, including the corruption actions will be higher.

Among the significant national initiatives, one might mention the actions of India, started in 1995. India decided to support the IT field, even in the detriment of other fields. Many governmental facilities were provided to the investments in this field; the taxes were reduced, the support services were provided to the companies interested in the field and many programs of promoting the IT field in India were carried out. The education in the field was supported by all possible ways. The result emphasized that many companies carrying out activities in the IT field has moved at least a part of their activities in India. Multinational companies, as HP or IBM, have moved their headquarters in India. An entire industry of call centers was developed. Companies as British Airlines ensured the support for their customers, by using the headquarters in India. Services providing, support or software development headquarters have been started, not necessarily basing upon very high specialty knowledge. All well-known participants within the international market of the software industry have moved a part of their activities in India, but not on entirely.

Such development was in contradiction to the society. A situation occurred when a glass building of tens meters high was situated much closed (few hundreds of meters) to a poor neighborhood, full of unlettered people, with very low incomes and living in an extreme poorness. These discrepancies generated many social issues, conflicts that affected the governmental politics

and the quality of services offered by the employees of headquarters in India. The explanation was that such way of development was unsustainable, and it was very difficult (or better saying, almost impossible) to develop only one field in a society or economy, without having the rest of the society to an adjacent level of progress.

INITIATIVES OF ROMANIA IN SUPPORTING THE ICT FIELD

Romania has had over the time many initiatives underlying upon the ICT field. Some of them stopped to an official level or to plans that were only issued and published, but never implemented. There were although some initiatives that have proven results and generated the ICT field to be one of the Romanian economy's engines, thus being situated to a level of progress over the European average mean.

One of the first initiatives that generally supported the ICT field in Romania consisted in tax deduction offered in accordance to the wages tax, for the employees in this field, deduction adopted in 2003. Similar to this situation, some economic activities within the ICT field were added at that time on the list of activities, for which the physical persons that provide such services might choose the revenue tax calculated in accordance to the revenue normative. In this way, the income tax for these persons (that operate as Authorized physical persons) is limited to a level equivalent to the yearly wage of 25.000-30.000 Ron (Ministry of Public Finances, 2014).

Concerning the level of governmental programmes, essential initiatives were taken in the ICT field of Romania. One of the most important initiative was the Project of Knowledge based Economy. Such project benefited from a pilot phase, where 20 local communities were involved, followed by the national phase, when 255 local communities were involved (Ministry of Information Society, 2007). The project benefited from financing assured by a loan taken from the World Bank, and the pilot phase was launched in 2004.

Many initiatives were carried out by the Government of Romania in the last years, in order to develop projects owning major components of ICT. The most known are those related to the Ministry of National Education (AEL system, implemented in the schools of Romania), to the National Health Insurance House (projects regarding the electronic health card, the electronic prescription), the National House of Public Pensions or the National Trade Register Office.

As regards the trade companies, some initiatives were carried out from the national public funds. The most significant represent those included in the public assistance schemes established by the Government Decision no. 979/2012 or the Government Decision no. 323/2014. By the help of such schemes, grants were given (non-reimbursement financing) for the companies that proved an essential investment that involve the ICT field, as well.

A high impact over the ICT field was given by the initiatives financed by the private funds. The most important (regarded from the financial point of view) consists in the programme of libraries information system, programme financed by the help of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

INITIATIVES TAKEN ON EUROPEAN LEVEL FOR SUPPORTING THE ICT FIELD

The European Union mentioned beginning to 2000 that ITC field signifies an essential position within the strategies of economic development, in order to transform EU as the most important world economy.

The first shape of carrying out such strategy was taken on the official and planning levels and the ICT field was mentioned in various strategies and action plans. The next phase was of including in some financing programmes the special lines for the ICT field. This happened with the Framework Programme V and afterwards, with the Framework Programme VI.

Then next phase consisted in initiating special programmes dedicated to the initiatives of the ICT field, and of defining this field as a horizontal priority, meaning this should be taken into

account by all programmes and projects of European funds co-financing. The eContent and eContent+ initiatives were launched during this phase.

Being a Member State of European Union, starting with 1st of January 2007, Romania should analyze the impact of European initiatives over the ICT field regarding from the impact of the European legislation point of view, as well.

The European initiative within ICT field of high visibility on Romania's level is probably that relating to the roaming taxes, which can be applied by the mobile phones companies. There is a plan with very well established terms, in order to reduce these taxes. Until now, the impact over the roaming taxes on phone lines has been quite visible (at the beginning of 2000, the tax was over 1.2 Euro/minute; nowadays the tax is five times lower than the previous, meaning 0.24 Euro/minute). The European officials declared that their plan is to fully discharge such taxes.

Other initiative taken on European level, with high impact over the ICT field in Romania, is that related to the minimal period of time, which is compulsory as warranty for the ICT devices that are traded by the citizens. By such measure, all the providers and traders of ICT equipment of long term using are obliged to offer at least two years of warranty, an extremely benefic issue for the population.

Regarding the European regulations, of impact over the activities included in the ICT field in Romania, here are many regulations not dedicated exclusively to the ICT field, but that have a direct or indirect influence or a lower or higher influence. One can therefore mention the following:

✓ Settlements concerning the free competition and forbidding the monopolist type agreements between the main players on the market. Such regulations especially influence the fields where few players that carry out activities exist, for instance, the field of communications, where the first four players cover over 90% of the market. For instance, if the players agreed over establishing a minim limit on certain offers, the final consumer would be obliged to pay such tax, since he or she haven't had any alternative solutions.

✓ Settlements relative to free competition, by forbidding certain punctual agreements of restriction of other competitors. In this way, a producer or a provider of a product cannot set a unique provider or will be not allowed to reject to other providers the access to that product or service.

✓ Free circulation of merchandise and services. Thus, a producer or a provider cannot forbid a product or a service, available in a Member State within European Union, to be available in other Member State. So, the market of European Union aims on becoming more and more a unique market, including this point of view, benefic aspect for the final user.

✓ The settlements regarding the public acquisitions. Legislation in the field of public acquisitions, which was applied until 2006, allowed the expenditure on public funds (and) in ways lacked of transparency. Therefore, only certain companies or certain providers have had access sometimes to contracts. By applying the legislation of public acquisitions, the procedures have been transparent, and any not-legal inclusion or restrictions that might limit in any way the competition were forbidden (or executed, if met).

✓ The free circulation of goods and services. By these rules, the Romanian companies are allowed to provide goods or services in any Member State. Within European Union, it is forbidden to introduce some regulations of differentiating between companies, depending upon the Member State, the headquarters or origin of services providers or goods manufacturers.

ICT FIELD WITHIN THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS AVAILABLE TO ROMANIA

Romania was assigned to almost 20 milliards of Euros during 2007-2013, from the European non-reimbursement funds, other than those for the agriculture or rural development. These funds can be spent until the end of 2015. The allotted amounts were shared by means of Operational Programmes, and each programme had many Priority Axes or Major Fields of Intervention and Operations. Dividing the amounts between these programmes, as well as their

areas of action represent a result of priorities established by Romania, by the help of National Programme of Development 2007-2013. From all the actions foreseen within NPD 2007 – 2013, almost half of them were about to be covered from European non-reimbursement funds (the total budget of actions during NPD 2007-2013 was estimated to almost 40 milliards of Euros, and the total budget allowed to the Operational Programs was of almost 20 milliards of Euros).

Concerning the amounts spent from European funds, the public data are available (the rate of absorption signifies a highly known indicator), and the percentage of fulfilling the NPD 2007-2013 was not evaluated or the results of such evaluations were not available to the large public.

During 2014-2020, the allotment of non-reimbursement European funds has maintained a relatively similar structure, and the total available budget was higher. A comparison between the two periods of time is highlighted in the following tab

Table 1. Position of structural and cohesion funds allotted during 2007 - 2013, of their expenditure level and allotted funds on 2014 - 2020

Budget on 2007 - 2013				Budget on 2014 - 2020	
Operational programme	Allotted budget (milliard s of Euros)	Absorption percentage 31.05.2014 (%)	Amount reimburse d by the European Committe e (milliards of Euros)	Operational programme	Allotted budget (milliard s of Euros)
Sectorial Operational Programme on Increasing the Economic Competitiveness (POS CCE)	2,554	36,40%	0,930	Operational Programme on Competitiveness	1,6
Sectorial Operational Programme on Transport (POS Transport)	4,426	31,23%	1,426	Operational Programme on High Infrastructure	9,1
Sectorial Operational Programme on Environment (POS Mediu)	4,413	28,33%	1,279		
Regional Operational Programme (POR)	3,966	46,70%	1,740	Regional Operational Programme	6,5
Sectorial Operational Programme on Developing Human Resources (POS DRU)	3,476	28,75%	0,999	Operational Programme on Human Resources	3,6
Operational Programme on Developing the Management Ability (PO DCA)	0,208	55,79%	0,116	Operational Programme on Management Ability	0,382
Technical Support Operational Programme (PO AT)	0,170	33,89%	0,058	Operational Programme on Technical Support	0,3
Total	19,213	34,29%	6,588		21,482

Regarding the interval 2007 – 2013 on the European level, the inclusion of informational technologies as horizontal objective was decided, this aspect being mentioned within the rules that establish all the available European funds. As consequence, all projects financed from European funds had to mention within the financing requirement the way they contributed towards the horizontal objective. Such trans-programmes approach has had certainly an impact over the inclusion of some IT components into projects, and this extremely difficult impact has been so difficult to be evaluated. It is hard to make a differentiation between the current situation and the situation that had existed, if such requirement wouldn't have been asked as compulsory.

Besides the general component, valid to all projects, some amounts were allotted strictly to those projects of ICT investments. Within the Sectorial Operational Programme on Increasing the Economic Competitiveness 2007-2013, from five priority axes, one was dedicated to this field, meaning Prior Axis III, "Information and Communications Technology on private and public

fields". As the title emphasizes, this axis has financed projects carried out by public institutions (projects of e-government, e-management, e-administration, e-health, e-education) and by private companies, as well (projects on e-commerce, business intelligence and e-learning).

Unfortunately, the amount allotted to such tax was of only 383 million of Euros, from the structural funds, and of 86 million of Euros, meaning the national public contribution (the Ministry for Information Society, 2007), and of almost 2% from the structural funds and of cohesion allotted to Romania during 2007-2013.

In this way, concerning the official level, all political and decisional factors concluded that ICT field has been a priority, able to support a sustainable and long lasting growth of the Romanian economy, where the allotment of funds for supporting this field was extremely low.

Although during the programmes interval of time, meaning 2014-2020, the allotments on priority axes were not ended, it is estimated that the weights to maintain or even slow down. If one analyses the amounts allotted to each Operational Programme (Table 5-1, Position of structural and cohesion funds allotted during 2007-2013, the phase of their expenditure and the funds allotted for 2014-2020), one might notice that although the total of amounts allotted to Romania from structural and cohesion funds was increased by 11.81%, the allotted amounts to the Operational Programme on Competitiveness was reduced by 37.35%, reaching to represent from 13.29% from the allotted amounts during 2007-2013 to only 7.45% during 2014-2020. This thing has happened since POS CEE is placed on the 3rd position within the hierarchy of the eight Operational Programmes, depending upon their absorption level.

Unfortunately, there are no published reports of analysis regarding the impact of spending such funds. Such an analysis might be difficult to be accomplished, since one may notice the objective of the prior axis, "Full capitalization of ICT potential by the private and public fields" (Ministry on Information Society, 2007). Such an objective might be impossible to be evaluated.

Although the objectives of Operational Programme and Prior Axis are quite ambiguous, regarding from the analysis of available public documents point of view (the Guides of solicitor related to calls of projects developed up to that moment), it results that the individual projects have had indicators of evaluation extremely obvious and precise, well defined in time (being divided in: indicators that should be carried out until the end of project implementation time, and indicators that should be carried out until the end of monitoring the post-implementation time, meaning 3 or 5 years, from the end of the implementation time). There are also certain compulsory means that can be applied to beneficiaries of non-reimbursement funds, and there is also a possibility of reducing the non-reimbursement financing, proportionally to the level of not-accomplishing an indicator, for instance. As consequence, at the end of the implementation and monitoring of projects, one should have a very specific evaluation over the degree of reaching the indicators proposed by the beneficiaries from financing.

ICT IN OTHER EUROPEAN FUNDS AVAILABLE TO THE ORGANIZATIONS OF ROMANIA

At the beginning of 2000, the European Committee decided that one of the priorities should consist in developing the Multilanguage digital content. Starting from the theory according to which, in order to use a technology, tools and content should exist. There were also analysis that proved that there is no cooperation between the Member States for future collaboration and complementary actions, as regards the digital content, so that launching a financing line dedicated to the field was decided. Therefore, during 2001-2004, the eContent programme was carried out.

Basing upon the experience accumulated within the eContent programme, the European Committee decided to continue the programme, in a reviewed form, under the name of eContent Plus. The new programme was carried out during 2005-2008.

For the following time, the European Committee decided to maintain a single tool of financing the innovative projects, and here the ICT projects were framed. This unique tool, known

under the name of Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (abbreviated as CIP) has covered all the areas of action specific to the innovation and competitiveness.

For this time, the main tool of financing the innovative projects consists in the Horizon Programme 2020 (programme built starting from the Framework Programme 7, as continuing the priority mentioned).

All these financing tools that were available at the level of entire European Union, as well as for some states in progress of adhesion (as the Romania's situation, before 2007), have been allowed to projects with trans-national impact, at the level of many Member States. Therefore, the projects financed by these tools have been always carried out by more partners, these using in common their resources and abilities. In most situations, it is about more than 10 partners, from more than 10 countries. The partners should not only benefit of project, but they should also contribute in an active way to its progress.

Romania had access since the pre-adhesion time (before 2007) to such programmes, and the organizations of Romania were able to be involved. In most cases, during the pre-adhesion time, the Romanian organizations could only be partners, but they were not allowed to lead the consortium.

Taking in view the conditions described above, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the impact on such projects over the organizations of Romania. Unfortunately, there is no public information available, for neither the weight on budgets afferent to the partners in Romania nor the weight of responsibilities in the total of result or fulfillment indicators assumed by the project, so that one might be able to estimate the allotted resources (the funds) and the achieved results (indicators). Unfortunately, taking an empirical analysis, and without claiming that information achieved should be generally valid, one notices that such type of financing is less known and quite hard to be accessed by the Romanian organizations. These preferred to access structural and cohesion funds, managed by the ministries of Romania, which have had responsible representatives on central or regional levels in our country.

A significant impediment in accessing the funds available at the level of European Committee consisted in the need of partnership work and multi-institutional type, where many times, different categories of organizations of different management were involved. This type of partnership work was not specific to the Romanian society. As proof that partnership work signifies an impediment for projects, an example can be given: the proposals to projects implemented by operational programmes financing (for instance, the Operational Programme – Human Resources Development - POS DRU – 2007 – 2013), which have had such compulsory condition, and in such conditions, the projects are implemented in a more difficult way as comparing to other project proposals.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGES OVER THE LOCAL COMPANIES THE IMPACT OF NEW SETTLEMENTS

The new settlements have helped the local companies, especially regarding the confidence of the new customers in applying to products or services provided by them. Thus, even if a customer does not know a certain company, never worked with it before, hasn't been recommended by someone else, will have the courage to apply to services offered by that company, or to buy some products offered by that company, since the customer knows that he or she is protected by the legislation in force. For instance, if a customer knows that he or she should benefit of a warranty of minimum two years in case of long term products, the customer will know that he or she will be able to return, with no penalty taxes, any good purchased in accordance to terms established, without being necessary to prove his or her discontentment. All these legislative assurances will determine the customers to be more open to the new goods or products, offered by the local companies, as well.

Another significant impact of the legislative changes determined by the adhesion to European Union is that referring to the public attainments. As previously proven, the European regulations as regards the public attainments impose a very high level of transparency, and reduce

the possibility of the contracting authorities to include criteria or elements of not-justified restraints of the competition. Therefore, the local companies have had access to information dedicated to organized attainments procedures (the online access www.e-licitatie.ro for the attainments organized by entities living in Romania and www.ted.europa.eu for the attainments organized by other Member States), and have minimal terms established between the moment of publishing an announcement and the moment of submitting the offers. In the situation when a company is not able to participate to a procedure by itself (the requirements are too high or the procedure covers fields that exceed the experience of that company), the company is allowed to have an associate, and to form a consortium with other local companies or from the European Union, and to carry out together a competitive offer. In this way, the local companies are able to access a larger market, including the international market (at the level of European Union).

Another major impact over the local companies is given by the settlements concerning the competition. Amongst the main elements of impact, the following are emphasized:

- ✓ Interdiction according to which a Member State gives public assistance that distorts the competition. In this way, a company has the certainty that no competitor will receive benefits from the state, benefits that might help the competitor, making against the other participants that act on that market;

- ✓ No manufacturer or provider can restrict the access to the goods or merchandise provided. Channels of exclusivist distribution practically impossible to be built.

Another primary impact of the new regulation frame is given by the confidence that high international players have over this frame, trust gained due to knowledge (the essential elements are the same at the level of entire European Union), as well as the predictability of its changing, of the availability of some tools of trust arbitration, in the situation when such changes will affect in an inadequate way their business.

The higher confidence in Romania given by the wellknown international players have as result, in the first way, an increase of their interest (occurred by the growth of financial flows carried out by branches in Romania), but also by means of making available to local companies all programmes of partnership opened to other companies from the European Union. Most of such multinational companies offer significant facilities for partners, facilities highlighted by the following:

- ✓ free access or minimal costs to products and services offered by the multinationals, or for the partner companies;
- ✓ access to programmes of trainings, specific to technical on sales specialists;
- ✓ access to the technical support services and back office type services, as regards the partner companies or their customers;
- ✓ access to information specific to programmes of developing new products or services;
- ✓ Access to the multinational network's partners, thus making easier the cooperation processes.

As immediate result of improving the business environment of Romania, most of multinational companies have started to open headquarters in Romania. If initially, these headquarters were opened exclusively in Bucharest, for the time being, the weight of work positions new created in our country has been significantly growing. The most significant exemplification in this sense is given by the list of projects approved, in accordance to receive public assistance, within the diagram announced by means of Governmental Decision HG 979/2012.

By analyzing the above mentioned list, one might notice that most of high competitors within international ICT market have decided to expand their headquarters in Romania, or to initiate new centers. Such headquarters of services have also had an effect over the local economy, by means of more guiding lines, meaning:

- ✓ Working in accordance to standards and procedures highly severe actually represents an example (by its positive and negative parts) for the local companies. These can learn

from multinational and are able to define the points of differentiation towards the high companies.

✓ By means of their activity, the headquarters use services and goods offered by the local companies, such as: starting from the immovable services and of buildings management, up to using the communications services, technical assistance for the complementary activities etc.

✓ The activity of such companies has had effects over the labor force, by carrying out programmes of training and improvement. A part of the labor force will be able to perform in local companies or to initiate local business etc.

THE IMPACT OF AVAILABLE FINANCING

Concerning the effect of non-reimbursement financing, that are available to local companies as result of Romania's adhesion to European Union, a detailed evaluation of projects carried out hasn't been performed until now at the public level. Such an evaluation should analyze the size of financing achieved by the Romanian companies, the degree by which projects financed from European non-reimbursement funds reached their proposed objectives or the impact over the attained financing etc.

The already existing public information refers strictly to the number of projects submitted (the requirement of financing). An accurate analysis specific to this indicator would be relevant, since one might assume that percentages regarding the impact and financial size will be maintained. A synthesis of such information is illustrated in the following chart.

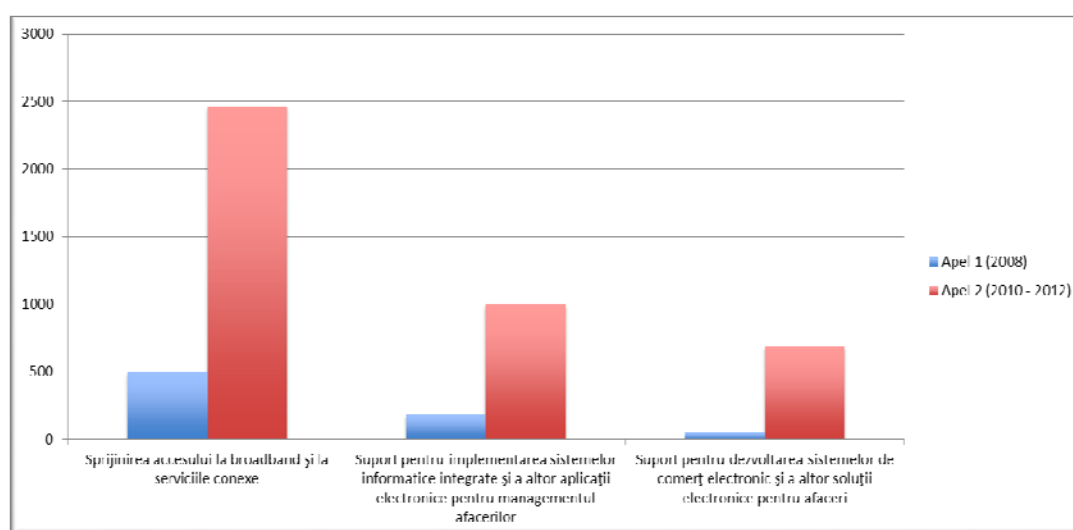


Figure 1. Number of financing applications submitted by private entities within the applications carried out over POS CCE Priority Axis III

Source: OIPSI website <http://fonduri.mcsi.ro>

The above emphasized chart shows that in application of projects no.2, the number of financing applications has been increasing, by over 14 times more, specific to operation 3.3.2 – Support on developing the electronic trade systems and other electronic solutions to business; by over 5 times more, specific to operation 3.3.1 – Support on implementing the integrated information systems and other electronic systems over the business management; and over 4 times more, specific to 3.1.1 – Support on accessing the broadband and connected services in the field.

Such significant growths have indicated an increase in visibility for the European non-reimbursement funds that are available, as well as regarding their approachability. Unfortunately, the main points of reducing the impact and efficiency of these funds have been represented by the legislative changes that seem to be continuous in this field, by an excessive bureaucracy and those

long periods of evaluation, specific to projects and to the Applications of reimbursement relative to these.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Romania's adhesion to European Union has proven an amalgam of positive and negative involvements. For the time being, there is no public data allowing an analysis in an indubitable way over many components of the adhesion (especially one cannot evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the non-reimbursement funds attained by the companies of Romania).

Another essential issue in evaluating the impact of adhesion is represented by the identification and evaluation of the scenario: *What if we hadn't adhered*. It is quite difficult to achieve a qualitative evaluation of this scenario, since it would generate a series of uncertainties and of parameters that should be defined. For instance, what type of economic model would Romania have adopted in such position? What would have been the relationship to high economic and political powers of the world? And so forth.

Taking into account all these uncertainties and doubtfulness, and underlying on those described in previous chapters, one might conclude that in generally, the impact of Romania's adhesion to European Union is positive, as regards the local companies and the society level, impact that has brought more benefits rather than disadvantages. The highest benefits are related to the credibility of local economic environment, by a framework more steady and predictable on settlements, by taking into consideration some points of view. All these factors have inclusively generated a growth in concern for the well-known multinational companies, over developing their business, as well as establishing their headquarters and enlargement of the partnership basis in Romania.

Concerning the future, the decisional factors should take the necessary requirements, so that the allotted amounts over companies, which aim to implement ICT projects on their own or on their customers, should increase. In order to determine a real impact, the rate of absorption of non-reimbursement European funds should also be increased.

An essential part whereof Romania should pay attention is represented by a powerful and steady engine of developing the ICT component, specific to the Romanian economy. In this way, the funds over research and innovation can be established, in the view of supporting the transnational partnerships relative to the initiation and implementation of innovative projects.

REFERENCES

1. Guvernul României. (2006, decembrie 01). Planul Național de Dezvoltare 2007 - 2013. Retrieved iulie 01, 2014, from Ministerul Fondurilor Europene: http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/posdru/images/downdocs/pnd_ro.pdf
2. Ministerul Finantelor Publice. (2014, 01 02). Norme Anuale de Venit: Anul 2014. Retrieved 07 01, 2014, from Ministerul Finantelor Publice - Agenția Națională de Administrație Fiscală: http://www.anaf.ro/anaf/internet/Ilfov_old/asist_contrib_ilfov/norme_venit_2014_if!/ut/p/a1/IZDbC oJAEEC_pR9wxkvrpqhIsmm4G1fQsE2QV0xyd_Peup-mbeBc-DMAIcMeFecalGMteyK5rJzsvNUj3ga1XzmbhAtZrjEDFBHZs5AfgvQ0HBmAjF-OrFV2yT_-oSZaFHHDRhNVErU33x8MxZ-81Pg98iLCx6A58Qr8KHBBY4aWc7_TFfA3SCL-vBSbnWITgXwodpXQzUoB3kcIZumSRFSiqZSBgl9G8cZ1ts2yhdnx6Wvmw!!/dl5/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/
3. Ministerul pentru Societatea Informațională. (2007, 01 01). Organismul Intermediar pentru Promovarea Societății Informaționale. Retrieved 07 01, 2014, from Ministerul pentru Societatea Informațională: <http://fonduri.mcsi.ro/?q=system/files/Axa3.pdf>

4. Ministerul pentru Societatea Informațională. (2007, 01 01). Proiectul Economia Bazată pe Cunoaștere. Retrieved 07 01, 2014, from Ministerul pentru Societatea Informațională: [http://www.ecomunitate.ro/Proiectul_Economia_Bazata_pe_Cunoastere\(51\).html](http://www.ecomunitate.ro/Proiectul_Economia_Bazata_pe_Cunoastere(51).html)