

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania – Active Player for the Romanian Business Community Integration in the European Union

Speech delivered by **Mrs. Mihaela GOJ**,
Secretary General of CCIR
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**Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honoured to participate, next to you, in a conference with such a present interest theme for the Romanian business environment—“*Economic Aspects of the European Union Integration*”.

The year 2006 has represented the last stage of Romania’s accession to the European Union, but the complex and difficult process of our country’s integration into the European structure is just beginning. It will require the continuation and intensification of reforms in the key sectors, in order for economic operators to be prepared to join the competition, observing the rules operating on the single European market.

The Business Community represents a key factor in fulfilling the economic criterion and registering a certain progress towards our country’s accession into the European Union. According to the European Parliament’s opinions, Chambers of Commerce and Industry are true mediators between the European Union and national enterprises.

From this point of view, I would like to mention some of the **objectives and achievements of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania at an international level**, namely:

- valorising the Chamber System’s network potential at an international level;
- Training commercial companies for the close accession to the European Union;
- drawing foreign investments;
- Promoting regional cooperation;
- Developing the public-private partnership at a regional and international level.

Owing to our experience and international relations, we are able to offer competent and professional support to both Romanian companies and foreign investors interested in the opportunities offered by the Romanian market. Therefore, **we act as a true partner for the Government in its policy for supporting private entrepreneurs and stimulating free initiative.**

Concretely, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania supports Romanian companies in penetrating foreign markets, by **facilitating partnerships between them and foreign companies, organising economic missions, as well as providing information on the business opportunities from other countries.**

However, an objective assessment of the Romanian market emphasises a series of obstacles we need to overcome. I am mainly referring to small and medium-sized enterprises insufficiently prepared to face the harsh competition from the single market.

Being loyal to our mission of supporting economic agents' interests, **we bestow special attention upon the small and medium-sized enterprise sector:** costs and benefits, the importance of increasing competitiveness, means of observing European standards, accessing structural funds etc. Therefore, a large share of the services offered by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania—training courses, seminars and public debates—is going to approach subjects related to the European problem: the *acquis communautaire*, the European business trends, the European Union economic practices.

An essential role in developing external exchanges is played by **the sources of information** on the business opportunities and the export offer. In this respect, I would like to mention the electronic catalogues offered by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania together with the Romanian Investment Partnership Center—Part-invest.

The EuroInfo Center within the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania organises Romanian companies' participation in **European business partnerships** held within prestigious exhibitions. These types of business meetings are defined by the fact that participating companies benefit from pre-established personalised meeting agendas and wide promotion among participants, which maximise the participation's benefits.

Another problem consists in the inability of a large number of commercial companies to elaborate eligible projects for accessing European funds. This has generated the need to organise **training courses for the elaboration and management of eligible structural fund accessing projects**. Our goal for the near future is to organise “training trainers” courses and seminars with the purpose of clarifying subjects related to structural fund types and accessibility, as well as the role that chambers of commerce would play in the process of accessing such funds.

A special chapter is represented by **foreign financing programs** carried out by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania in partnership with various foreign or international organisations from Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Eurochambers, International Chambers of Commerce, the EuroInfo Centre network, programs directly or indirectly addressing Romanian commercial companies, at the level of bilateral, regional or international trade relations. By **regional co-operation**, I am referring to the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Central – European Initiative, the South-east European Cooperation, the Danube Cooperation Process, Euro Atlantic partnerships.

I would like to particularly point out the fact that the good relations held by our institution with the International Chamber of Commerce from Paris, Eurochambres and the chambers of commerce from the European Union member countries have represented a precious capital in reaching our goals.

At the same time, I would like to mention that we have followed the European example and opened a **representation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania in Brussels**, which will hopefully become a strong voice defending the Romanian business community’s interests.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are convinced that, by providing Romanian commercial companies, particularly our members, with these services, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania contributes to the creation of a stable and coherent business environment, able to generate economic development and prosperity.