

# The management of evaluating the European programs and policies implemented in Romania<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Starting with the reform and modernization of the public administration in Romania in the mid 1990s, an important element of this process being the development of the management process, respectively of planning and managing public policies, the Romanian government started also a process of developing the capacity for evaluating public programs and policies, both the ones with European or foreign financing and the ones with domestic financing. Up-to-date analyses and studies have showed, however, that at the level of the national public sector there is a major discrepancy between the progress made in the evaluation of European programs or the ones with foreign financing and the programs financed from public funds, namely that there is a consolidated evaluation practice as regards the first types of programs, which is virtually inexistent as regards programs financed from the public budget. This paper intends to identify the progress made at the level of the Romanian public administration as regards the management of evaluating programs with European financing, to see the characteristics of building the evaluation capacity within the national system of these programs and the motivation stimulating such approaches. The first part of this paper shall contain a presentation of the background of the current evaluation system, including both the legislative framework and the institutional framework with duties of management and evaluation of European programs; further, I shall analyze the evolution of this system in order to be able to draw conclusions regarding the evaluation capacity of Romania.

**Keywords:** management, evaluation, structural funds, European Union, the capacity for evaluation

## Introduction

The practices of evaluating the programs with European financing implemented in Romania appeared in the pre-accession period and were performed for programs such as PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD, based on well-established evaluation mechanisms. The requirements of the European Union and the conditioning of our country to perform such evaluations in order to have access to European funds are the arguments and impetuses for the development of this practice and of the legislative and institutional framework for performing the evaluation activity in Romania. Transposing in the national legislation the requirements and the European legislation in the field of public policies is a process called Europeanization, which has witnessed a rapid pace of development, especially after Romania became a European member state.

The Europeanization of public policies is a relatively recent concept, which emerged as a consequence of the influence and impact of the European Union on the politics and public policies in the member states.

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<sup>1</sup>This paper is treated at length in the PhD thesis of the undersigned, under the title: "Evaluating programs and public policies in the public sector in Romania. Building the evaluation capacity in the period after joining the European Union"

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<sup>3</sup>This is the conclusion of several research studies in the field and of some reports reviewing the current evaluation system that I shall present on detail in this chapter.

For construction purposes, Europeanization means: '1. building processes, 2. dissemination and 3. institutionalization of formal and informal rules, of procedures, paradigms of public policies, of acting styles and modes, of shared convictions and norms which are for the first time defined and consolidated at a European level, then incorporated in the logic of speeches, identities, political structures and public policies on a national level.'<sup>4</sup>

## Analysis of the background of the current management and evaluation system

### Standard regulations

The evaluation of the programs supported by European funds is mandatory, being a prerequisite for obtaining financing, and is set forth in European regulations.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most important European documents providing for financial management and stipulating as mandatory the function of evaluating structural instruments is the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) no. 1605/2002 of 25th June 2002 on the Financial

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<sup>4</sup>Radaelli, Claudio M. (2009): 'Europeanization', in Boussaguet, Laurie, Jacquot, Sophie, Ravinet, Pauline (coord.): Dictionary of public policies, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, p.108b

<sup>5</sup>See the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 1605/2002 of 25th June 2002 on the Financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, the (EC) REGULATION NO. 1653/2004 OF THE COMMISSION of 21st September 2004 on establishing the standard financial regulation for executive agencies based on the (EC) Regulation no. 58/2003 of the Council on establishing the status of executive agencies which are to be assigned certain tasks regarding the management of community programs.

regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities. The financial regulation specifies and sets rules for all the programs and activities involving significant expenses, required to be evaluated before and after implementation.

According to the regulation, the evaluation is necessary and mandatory in order to ensure the observance of the good management principle. The evaluation is imposed according to the provisions at the beginning of the Regulation, art. 11 setting forth that: 'institutions should proceed to ex ante and ex post evaluations, according to the guidelines set by the Commission'. According to art. 11, 'the good financial management principle should be defined depending on the principles of economy, efficiency and efficaciousness, and the observance of these principles should be ensured by following some performance indicators established for every activity and measurable so that to be able to evaluate the results obtained.'

The evaluation of structural instruments is a mandatory stage. The European Commission imposed the evaluation through the Council Regulation (EC) no. 1083/2006, whereby it requests one to perform ex-ante evaluations, intermediate (ongoing) evaluations and ex-post evaluations as regards Operational Programs.

The evaluation is the heading of chapter I under the title 'Efficiency' and includes general regulations, sets forth the responsibilities of member states and the responsibilities of the European Commission. The regulations set forth the scope, nature and types of evaluation. The evaluations have as their main goal: 'the improvement of quality, efficiency and coherence of the intervention from Funds' (art. 47(1)) and may be strategic

in character, 'in order to track the evolution of a program or of a group of programs in relation to community and national priorities' or operational in character 'in order to support monitoring an operational program' (art. 47(2)). Both types of evaluations represent ex-ante, ongoing and ex-post planning.

Member states have the required means for making evaluations and may develop an evaluation plan. At the same time, member states make an ex-ante evaluation of every operational program (art. 48). The European Commission may perform strategic evaluations and performs an ex-post evaluation of every objective (art. 49). The evaluation system of the European Commission is decentralized, but its coordination is performed at a central level by the General Secretariat. Each General Directorate (GD) evaluates the activities it coordinates and is responsible for the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations made as regards new policy initiatives. The General Secretariat ensures the general evaluation framework and supports the evaluations made by General Directorates.

The European dispositions were transposed into the Romanian legislation. The requirements of the Council Regulation (EC) no. 1083/2006 may be found in the Governmental Resolution no. 457/2008 on the institutional framework for the coordination and management of structural instruments, where the coordinating institutions and their evaluation duties are designated.

GR no. 457/2008 designates as a coordinating institution the Authority for coordination of structural instruments, called ACIS, which, among other powers and duties, 'coordinates the process of evaluating structural instruments'.

The European dispositions and the obligation to observe them are included also in other national laws and documents, among which the National Reference Strategic Framework (CSNR) and in the standard documents of implementation of every operational program.

CSNR 2007-2013 sets forth that every member state has the obligation to evaluate the expenses from structural funds in order to ensure the efficient use, according to the community acquis and required policies. Based on the EC Regulation, CSNR specifies the types of independent evaluations that every member state should make, namely:<sup>6</sup>

1. Ex-ante evaluations, which should identify differences and the development potential. These shall be used for setting the objectives to be reached, the results considered and for ensuring the coherence of programs.

2. Evaluations of the monitoring – aiming at carrying out the projects according to the objectives set. If some differences appear, these shall be reported and then removed.

3. Thematic evaluations – as regards every such evaluation, one shall set the objectives, results expected, questions and evaluation methodologies.

Performing the evaluations according to European requirements and standards, as well as to the guidelines developed by the European Commission is the task of the Evaluation Units within every Management Authority. Using the evaluations and capitalizing on the information provided by them is the responsibility of the Management Authorities. I shall present in detail the mode

of operation and the duties of these authorities in the following sub-chapter, called ‘institutions with responsibilities of management and evaluation of European programs and projects’.

### **Institutions with responsibilities of management and evaluation of European programs and projects**

For the period 2007-2013, in Romania were built the bases of a consolidated national system of coordination and evaluation of European programs. In 2007, one set up the system of evaluation of structural instruments (SIES), whose central management is ensured by the Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS). From an institutional point of view, SIES includes several institutions, actors and procedures in the field of program evaluation.

*The Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS)* is the central institution with responsibilities of evaluating the use of non-reimbursable European funds. ‘The institution coordinates the preparation and operation of the legislative, institutional and procedural framework for the management of structural instruments and, on the other hand, it plans, coordinates, monitors and evaluates the use of non-reimbursable financial assistance’, according to the information published on the website of the Ministry of Public Finances. The institution with a coordination role was set up in March 2004 based on the Governmental Resolution no. 403/2004 on the amendment of the Governmental resolution no. 1574/2003 on the restructuring and operation of the Ministry of Public Finances and of the National Agency for fFscal Administration

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<sup>6</sup>The Romanian Government, 2006, the National Reference Strategic framework 2007-2013. Draft, PDF format.

as a structure within the Ministry of Public Finances called the Management Authority for the Community Support Framework (AMCSC). In March 2007, AMCSC became the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS), based on the Governmental Resolution no. 386/2007 on the organization and operation of the Ministry of Economy and Finances. Through the Emergency Ordinance no. 26 of 17th March 2011 on establishing some organizational measures at the level of the working structure of the Government and of some ministries, as well on establishing some financial-budgetary measures, ACIS was restructured as a department which is now a legal entity subordinated to the prime-minister, being taken over by the Ministry of Public Finances within SGG, being managed by a department head in the position of a secretary of state.

*The Central Evaluation Unit (UCE)* is one of the main institutions coordinating the evaluation in Romania. The main duties of UCE were developed in connection with the evaluation of programs financed from European funds. UCE as the main institution coordinating the evaluation has a double role:

1. on the one hand, it has duties regarding planning, design and implementation of evaluations;
2. on the other hand, UCE has the role to ensure that the results of evaluation are used and capitalized on.

The Central Evaluation Unit is organized at the level of the Authority for the Coordination of the Structural Instruments and fulfills two main functions:

► evaluating the National Reference Strategic Framework and the Operational

Program of Technical Assistance;

► coordinating the evaluation of structural instruments in Romania, including the development of evaluation capacity<sup>7</sup>.

UCE was set up in order to perform ex-ante evaluation of the PHARE program before 2007. From 2005 to 2007 UCE had developed the documents required for performing the ex-ante evaluation of structural instruments, and in January 2007 this reported on the mode in which it prepared itself for evaluating structural instruments. In 2007, Romania set up a system evaluating structural instruments called the System of Evaluating Structural Instruments (SIES). Until 2007, the evaluations were performed by the DGE within the European Commission and persons and not structures were designated for evaluations. In March 2007, UCE concluded an evaluation contract for PHARE.

- In April 2011, through the Governmental Emergency Ordinance no. 26/2011, the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments was transferred from the Ministry of Finances under the subordination of the Prime-minister, in the composition of the working structure of the Government, respectively within SGG. An argument for making this decision was the discontent of the Government as regards acquiring quite a small number of European funds available to Romania.

- Management authorities (AM) are bodies coordinating the implementation of operational programs, as well as the implementation of the recommendations of

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<sup>7</sup>The website of the Working Group for Evaluation, <http://www.evaluate-structurale.ro/index.php/ro/unitatea-central-evaluaire/functiuni>

evaluations. Every Management Authority has an Evaluation Unit and a Committee Coordinating the Evaluations. The duties of the Management Authority are regulated through the GR no. 457/2008, the most important being:<sup>8</sup>

- ensuring the fulfillment of the duties arising from the functions set forth under art. 60 in the (EC) Regulation no. 1.083/2006 of the Council;

- develops the evaluation and selection criteria for the projects of the operational program managed and submits for the approval of the monitoring committee the selection criteria;

- provides ACIS the information requested for ex-ante checking, annual monitoring and ex-post checking the observance of the additionality principle according to the provisions of art. 15 in the (EC) Regulation no. 1.083/2006 of the Council Evaluation Unit.

- Develops and implements the Multi-annual evaluation plan and makes sure this is used as a strategic and management instrument during the implementation of the operational program;

- Informs the monitoring committee about the results of evaluations and about the ways proposed for their implementation.

The Evaluation Units are evaluation structures within the Management Authorities. The evaluators within the evaluation units in every AM form the public network of evaluators managing the evaluation of structural instruments.

*The Committee for Coordinating the Evaluation (CCE)* is the main coordinator of

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<sup>8</sup>Government Resolution no. 457 of 21st April 2008 on the institutional framework of coordination and management of structural instruments.

evaluation activities as well as of the results of evaluating operational programs. The exception is POS DRU, where CCE has only a consultative role, given that it grants support for making the evaluations but it does not have the role of approving them. The most recent review of the evaluation system shows that, although the role of this institution in coordinating evaluation activities is very important, in point of fact, this institution does not operate at maximum capacity<sup>9</sup>. Experts consider as normal the fact that the CCE performance is not at the standards set forth in the regulations in force, given that: 'up to the present, CCE had a limited number of opportunities to exercise its function' because a small number of evaluations were performed<sup>10</sup>. In their opinion, the performance deficiencies are 'just inherent elements requiring further adjusting', while performing evaluations. Experts recommend conducting a basic training course for all the CCE members so that their contribution to evaluations becomes significant.

Intermediary Bodies (OI)/joint technical secretariats are those structures supporting Management Authorities, being governed by

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<sup>9</sup>Following interviews with persons in the AM management, with members of evaluation units and contractors conducted within the project: 'Developing the capacity for evaluation of evaluation units within the Management Authorities and ACIS', experts identified different opinions regarding the operation of CCE. Some actors considered that the role of the institution is rather a formal one, that actually the institution does not really support the evaluation process, this being done by the evaluation units.

<sup>10</sup>The Romanian Government, (2011): Draft Report on reviewing the current evaluation system (provided) in PDF format, p.21

the Governmental Resolution no. 457/2008 and by the Governmental Emergency Ordinance no. 26/2011, laws defining the institutional framework of the management and coordination of Structural instruments.

The OI duties in implementing the appropriate operational program are delegated by the AM within which they operate, the responsibility for fulfilling these duties staying with AM.

<b>The public network of evaluators of structural instruments</b>			
<i>Management Authority</i>	<i>Structural Operational Program</i>	<i>Evaluation Unit</i>	<i>Number of persons employed<sup>11</sup></i>
	CSNR	UCE	6
	POAT	UCE	
UCE	Community Support Framework, the Ministry of Public Finances		5
The Ministry of Administration and the Interior	POS-DCA	UCE	2, of whom one works in UCE and the other one works temporarily in Brussels
The Ministry of European Integration	POR	Evaluation Unit	4
The Ministry of the Environment and Water Management	POS ENVIRONMENT	Planning and Evaluation	2
The Ministry of Economy and Commerce	POS CCE Competitiveness	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	5
The Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism	POS Transport	Evaluation and communication	1
The Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and the Family	POS DRU	The Planning and Evaluation Unit	3 employees per evaluation

The fulfillment of the objectives of every Operational program and its observance of the European and national legislation are supervised by a Monitoring Committee, a body with important duties in the evaluation field. The duties of the Monitoring Committee are set forth in the General Regulations no. 1083/2006, art. 65, among which being also to periodically evaluate the progress made for fulfilling the specific objectives of the operational program based on the documents presented by the Management Authority".

The Monitoring Committee is the institution that approves the multi-annual plans and the evaluation annual plans but also the recommendations arising from evaluation and has the responsibility to implement these recommendations. If the situation requires so, the Monitoring Committee may request the performance of ad-hoc evaluations.

<sup>11</sup>As resulting from the Romanian Government, (2011): Draft Report on reviewing the current evaluation system (provided), PDF format



The Evaluation Working Group (GLE) was set up in 2006 and is formed of the members of the evaluation units, being managed by the general manager of ACIS. GLE operates under a mandate<sup>12</sup>, to end after the implementation of the programs 2007-2013, to be renewed afterward according to the new requirements and progresses made. GLE meets monthly. UCE ensures the GLE secretariat. The purpose of GLE meetings is to improve evaluation processes, to make recommendations to this effect, to review the evaluation procedures and systems of operational programs. The GLE contribution to the evaluation of structural instruments is a significant one, among the most important results being<sup>13</sup> :

- the development of some standards for the function of evaluation of structural instruments
- the development of a model of evaluation of structural instruments
- establishing some general evaluation procedures
- establishing a framework of development of multi-annual and annual evaluation plans
- developing some guidelines regarding intermediate evaluation in 2009
- delivering evaluation training and other training.

<sup>12</sup>The Romanian Government, 'The mandate of the Evaluation Working Group – draft version', 2006, available on the website of the Evaluation Working Group, [http://www.evaluare-structurale.ro/images/stories/Documente/mandat\\_glewn.pdf](http://www.evaluare-structurale.ro/images/stories/Documente/mandat_glewn.pdf), English version.

<sup>13</sup>The website of the evaluation workshop, <http://www.evaluare-structurale.ro/index.php/ro/grupul-de-lucru-evaluare/prezentare/30-rezultatele-grupului-de-lucru-pentru-evaluare>

## The Evaluation of programs and policies financed by the European Union

### Period 1997 – 2007

We have chosen the period 1997-2007 for the following reasons:

1. The reform of public administration in Romania started in the mid 1990's, 1997 being a reference year because it is the time when the European Union became a significant financier of reform projects through the PHARE program;

2. 2007 is the year when Romania joined the European Union, a process that led to substantial modifications with a view to accelerate the process of reforming public administration in Romania, one of the arguments being the preparation of our country for accessing and implementing programs with European financing.

Romania received European funds for the pre-accession period and the period of joining the European Union, through pre-accession instruments such as PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD. The evaluations performed on these programs may be considered a beginning in building the capacity for evaluating the system, even if, as the analyses of data will show hereinafter, 2007 represented a turning point, most of the practices developed during this period not being used any longer after accession. The evaluations of these programs did not end all in 2007, the completion term of many of the projects developed within them going beyond 2007.

In order to evaluate them, the European Commission and the PHARE Coordination Department made an annual list of programs. The Delegation of the European Commission and the competent Ministry made the evaluation. The first evaluations were made at the request of the European Commission,



initially the only beneficiary of such evaluations – the European Commission – not only requesting the evaluations of programs but also making such evaluations itself.

Until 2007, the evaluations were made by the European Commission, through a Delegation of the European Commission and by the evaluation authority in Romania. Later, the national authority had undergone a series of restructuring changes. Starting from 2005, the evaluation of programs was no longer performed by the European Commission but by representatives in Romania, the Commission receiving only the reports.

**The period 2007 – up to the present**

2007 represented a turning point as regards the evaluation of structural instruments. Two essential aspects resulted from the analysis of data and the discussions with experts in the field;

1. by restructuring or liquidating some institutions dealing with the coordination of programs and their evaluation, one lost a significant part of the experience gained within

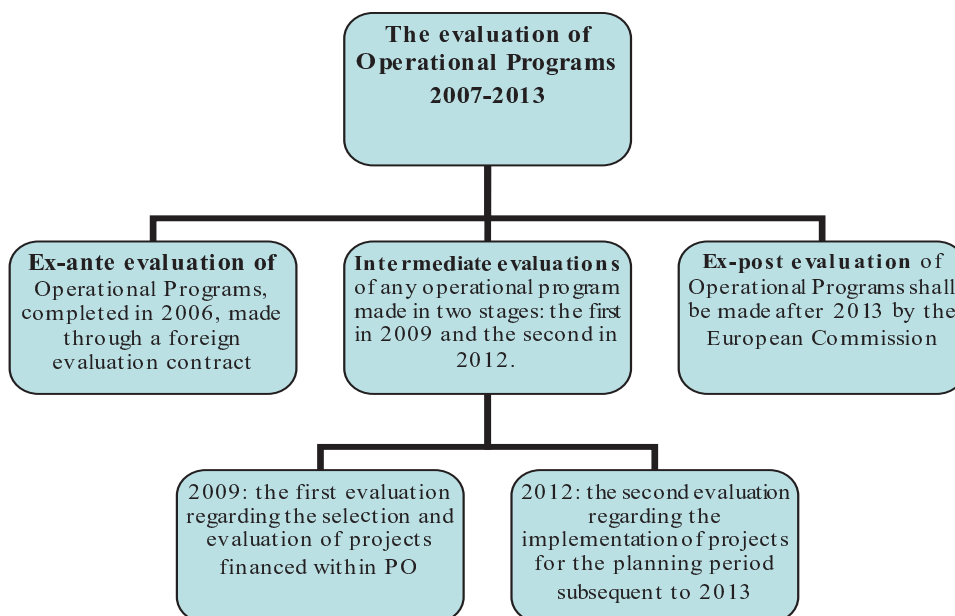
them and implicitly the expertise in the field

2. secondly, in 2007 exactly the system of evaluating structural elements changed. A significant modification was that initially the evaluation was performed by another entity than the evaluated one, but from 2007 the evaluated is also the one paying for the evaluation. Through this process, one changed the way of performing evaluations, the principle of impartiality and objectivity being clearly affected. Another essential modification is that after 2007 evaluations have been made by an institutional system.

The accession of Romania to the European Union means that our country is a beneficiary of Structural Instruments, respectively Structural Funds 2007-2013 and of the Cohesion Fund. The preparation for this financial opportunity consisted of making ex-ante evaluations of Operational Programs, completed in 2006 following a foreign evaluation contract.

The plan of the evaluations of programs with European financing implemented in Romania may be illustrated as follows<sup>14</sup>.

Figure 3: the Evaluation of Operational Programs 2007-2013



During the planning period 2007-2013 Romania is being granted by the European Union through structural instruments Euro 19.67 billion plus a national co-financing estimated as being Euro 5.6 billion. Of this amount, Euro 19.2 billion is allocated for the objective "Convergence" within the National Reference Strategic Framework, by means of seven Operational Programs.

Most of the activities carried out by UCE are performed via the implementation of some projects financed from European funds that I shall present in the following paragraphs.

The first project was performed through the project PHARE 2003 RO 2003/005-551.03.03.04 'Technical Assistance for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation' and took place in the period 2004-2006. The main purpose of this project was to prepare the Central Evaluation Unit for taking over the evaluation of the PHARE programs and for creating a system of evaluation of structural instruments. The Project implemented a series of measures for reaching the objectives proposed, namely the implementation of the Action Plan for taking over intermediate evaluations by the UCE of the PHARE program, of the Action Plan for raising awareness regarding the importance and necessity of evaluation and for developing evaluation locally, through its decentralization. For this purpose, several activities were carried out, among which meetings for the development of the capacity for evaluating the market. A series of six seminars took place attended by 298 persons that were presented and explained the importance of evaluation. Other 34 students attended a session of evaluation training for training consultants, authorized by the National University of Ireland, with

duration of 3 months. Within this program was also developed the National Evaluation Strategy<sup>15</sup>, proposing a joint integrated approach to all public interventions, both the ones financed from European funds and the ones financed from the state budget.

A second project significantly contributing to the institutional development of evaluation in Romania, coordinated by the Central Evaluation Unit, is the Project for 'the Development of a Professional Evaluation Community in Romania', taking place during the period 2007-2009, financed through PHARE RO/2005/017-553.05.03.02. The results of this project are significant steps in the development of the capacity for evaluating structural instruments in Romania. By means of this program, one developed important documents for the evaluation practice and for evaluators as well.

Another extremely important contribution was brought by the project in the development of the evaluation field academically. Within the project 'The Development of a Professional Evaluation Community' one developed 'the Grid of competences for the master degree in evaluation', a draft establishing the curricula for the master program 'The evaluation of European Public policies and programs', conducted by the Department of International Relations and European Integration within the National School for Political and Administrative Studies of Bucharest. The third project carried out and coordinated by the Evaluation Unit in the period 2007-2009 is 'the

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<sup>15</sup> I shall present the National Evaluation Strategy 2007-13 in chapter III, the sub-chapter emphasizing the contributions this brought in the field of evaluating programs and policies financed from the national budget

evaluation facility' through which it encouraged and attracted the public institutions in Romania to make their own evaluations of public interventions which are not financed by the European Union, provided them technical assistance and financed their evaluations. Ten evaluation projects were developed by mixed teams, including foreign and Romanian evaluators. The exchange of experience was useful and necessary, especially for a better training of Romanian evaluators. 'The evaluation facility' was the instrument through which the evaluation funds were granted within the PHARE program /2005/017-553.05.03 'the implementation of the national evaluation strategy'. By using this instrument, the Central Evaluation Unit tried again to make the public institutions to become aware of the importance and usefulness of evaluation<sup>16</sup>.

The latest project carried out by the Central Evaluation Unit is the project: 'the development of the capacity for evaluation of the evaluation units within Management Authorities and ACIS', co-financed from the Operational Program Technical assistance 2007-2013. The objective of this project is to ensure a common level of experience and knowledge in the evaluation field within institutions and other stakeholders.

### **The current evaluation system of the European Union**

#### **The process of evaluating structural instruments**

The report of analyzing the current evaluation system, the final draft from August 2011 considers that the evolution of the system is good, positive and: 'at present, SIES has all the elements required from an

organizational, financial human resources point of view, and a first set of evaluations has been already made'<sup>17</sup>.

According to the report, the evaluation process includes five stages:

1. planning the evaluation
2. Evaluation design
3. implementation of evaluation
4. Using recommendations
5. Learning

I shall detail further each of the stages in the evaluation process listed above, with its particularities and specific activities carried out at each of these moments.

Planning the evaluation is a stage regulated by the European norms, through the EC regulation 1083/2006 and transposed and set forth also in the national legislation through the Governmental Resolution no. 457/2008, specifying the institutions responsible in this stage. The multi-annual evaluation plans are developed by the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments and by Management Authorities.

Planning the evaluation of the European programs implemented in Romania considers the horizon 2007-2013, the objectives addressed being time, budget, resources, the identification of the purpose of evaluations. The planning results from the Multi-annual Evaluation Plans (PME) and the Annual Evaluation Plans (PAE) developed for each of the seven Operational Programs, inclusively for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border

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<sup>16</sup> The list of projects evaluated within this program is available on the website of the Ministry of Public Finances, at the address <http://www.mfinante.ro/facilitate.html?pagina=evaluare>

<sup>17</sup>The Romanian Government (2011): Report on analysis of the current evaluation system, p.9

Cooperation and the IPA Program of Romania-Serbia Cross-Border Cooperation as well as at the level of the National Reference Strategic Framework. The evaluation is planned by the Central Evaluation Unit, in collaboration with the Evaluation Coordination Committees, and are approved by the Monitoring Committee, respectively by the National Coordination Committee.

The drafts of the Annual Evaluation Plans should be completed by February every year, are approved by the end of spring and the monitoring report regarding their implementation should be developed by the fall of the same year. The experts analyzing the current evaluation system of the European Union noticed that the evaluation is planned at a general level, where evaluation titles and themes are indicated and recommend to persons in charge with evaluation to consider detailing the Multi-annual Evaluation Plan, by presenting in detail the themes proposed and their terms and budgets.

The evaluation design is the second stage identified by experts in the evaluation process of programs with European financing. The purpose of this stage is to develop the Reference Terms meeting the needs of the operational program evaluated. The experts in the field defined the evaluation design as being the stage that 'starts with a brief presentation of what is to be evaluated according to the Annual Evaluation Plans, the development of the Reference Terms detailing the purpose of evaluation, its scope, criteria and evaluation questions, the methodology that is to be used, the budget and human resources required, the results expected.'<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The Romanian Government (2011): draft Report on analysis of the current evaluation system (provided), PDF format

It also pertains to the evaluation design according to the Evaluation Report the 'application for obtaining financing through the Priority Axis of Technical Assistance, the development of awarding documentation, publishing the awarding documentation and the Reference Terms and the end of the period of requests for clarification until the selection of the bidder and signing the contract'.

The implementation of evaluation is the process for which the evaluation units within every operational program and within the Central Evaluation Unit are in charge. The results of evaluations and the recommendations developed on their behalf are later sent to the Monitoring Committees and as regards cross-border cooperation programs, the Joint Monitoring Committees and the Evaluation Workshop.

Using the evaluation results is actually the stage of capitalization on and implementation of the recommendations made based on the evaluations performed. Experts identified differences between the ways in which Management Authorities implement the recommendations of evaluations and this because not all the Management Authorities have a complete plan in this respect. In this stage one develops the action plans for implementing the recommendations, which are monitored and implemented by the evaluation units. The difficulties noticed by experts in this stage refer to the way in which one perceives the quality of the recommendations "which results in their partial acceptance' and the fact that the implementation of certain recommendations presupposes the involvement of several institutions. Experts underline that recommendations are just 'recommendations', that is they are not firm managerial decisions to be implemented and

specify that maybe the greatest difficulty faced in this stage is that this requires the most 'brainstorming and systematic thinking abilities'. Another conclusion drawn from the Report on analysis is that 'decision-making factors within the Management Authority should be aware of the evaluation and its usefulness in order to be able to 'assimilate' the recommendations of evaluations for owning them and understanding the benefits of their impact – if they are implemented'.

The last stage in the evaluation process is the learning stage, whereby experts mean 'the process during which the results of all the evaluations are collected for being used in the following planning stage'.

### **Conclusions regarding the capacity for evaluation of structural instruments**

The experience as regards the evaluation of programs and policies financed from foreign sources, especially the ones from European funds indicates that the process of building the capacity for the evaluations of a public system is a difficult and lengthy process.

If in the pre-accession period one made the first steps in the field, the first evaluation approaches in Romania being witnessed, the development of the evaluation process in the post-accession period has known a spectacular dynamics. The adjustment of the national legislation to European requirements and even the introduction in the national legislation of some European provisions has continued, the Romanian government making some permanent legislative amendments in order to improve the institutional and procedural framework for accessing European funds.

The capacity for evaluating the national public system continues to develop. Following the analysis of the legislative and institutional framework of evaluation, I consider that there are several elements defining the process of building the evaluation capacity. In this chapter I shall present the components of this process breaking it down into the evaluation capacity in the pre-accession period and the evaluation capacity in the post-accession period<sup>19</sup>.

From my point of view, the evaluation capacity before 2007 consisted of:

- minimal requirements of the European Commission regarding the evaluation which transformed subsequently into
  - working procedures (consolidated by gaining experience, testing and following numerous discussions and debates)
  - human resources, namely consultants performing the evaluation and creating thus the expertise required
  - the institutions coordinating evaluation
  - ensuring the European funds required for development

In the post-accession period, the evaluation capacity consisted of:

- procedures, regulations, manuals, guides
- legislation
- institutions – performing evaluations
- human resources
- European funds – financial resources required for improving the evaluation

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<sup>19</sup>In this chapter I shall simply review the elements defining the capacity for evaluating European programs and policies, the concept being further developed in the last chapter of the paper being based also on the analysis of evaluating public policies financed from the national budget.

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11. Council regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999
12. European Commission, (2007): Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: evaluation during the programming period. Working document no.5
13. European Union, (2008): Developing Evaluation Capacity
14. The (ec) regulation no. 1653/2004 Of the commission from 21st September 2004 on establishing the standard financial regulation for executive agencies pursuant to the (EC) Regulation no. 58/2003 of the Council on establishing the status of executive agencies to be assigned certain tasks regarding the management of community programs.
15. Regulation (ec) no 1081/2006 of the european parliament and of the council of 5th July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999
16. European Commission, EVALSED - is an online information resource providing a guide regarding the evaluation of socio-economic development, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index_en.htm)
17. <http://www.evaluate-structurale.ro/> is the website of the Evaluation Workshop
18. <http://www.fonduri-ue.ro> is the Page of Structural and Cohesion Funds in Romania

19. <http://www.mfinante.ro/dezvoltare.html?pagina=evaluare> is the page on the website of the Ministry of Public Finances including relevant information about non-reimbursable financial support and the evaluation of structural instruments
20. [www.sgg.ro](http://www.sgg.ro) is the site of the General Secretariat of the Government and includes public information about the role, duties and activity of the Directorate for Public Policies, as well as other official documents regarding the evaluation of public policies.

