Activity of Romanian Non-Governmental Organisational Entities in the Context of EU Integration
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Abstract
The reintegration into the European family after more than half a century has required a long phase of preparing the accession and was marked by a number of uncertainties. Since receiving the invitation to begin the negotiations in 1999, at the Helsinki Summit, when the internal expectations were low, upon the accession to the EU on January 1st, 2007, the constant pressure of the EU institutions on Romania has always been debated. What could have traditionally been interpreted as a surrender of national sovereignty in the range of some important decisions was translated by a pressure to reforms by the European Union. After the integration, the European Union remained the political institution directly affecting Romanians' lives and simultaneously enjoys the highest level of trust.

The Romanian public opinion is among the most optimistic ones concerning the future of the Union, over 70% are optimistic in relation to future developments. However, this optimism is based on a trust that is not doubled also by an appropriate level of knowledge about the EU. According to this Eurobarometer, only about a quarter of Romanians consider they are well informed on the “European political matters”, a percentage by 6% below the average at the level of the entire European Union. Only 15% of those interviewed consider that Romanian people are well informed, which reveals that there is a perception of a relative lack of interest in this aspect. On the other hand, according to a study about the European citizenship, Romanians show among the highest level (94%) of familiarity with the term of citizen of the EU.

INTRODUCTION
If the European integration has brought an additional dimension in the debate on the evolution of democracy in the member countries, the EU perceived in Romania as one of the main factors that contributed in democratising the public institutions. However, provided that the quality of the operation of democratic institutions in the new member-states is yet debatable, a question arises as to what extent the transfer of some duties to the Union's institutions, which the Romanian citizens had no influence upon before the integration, can contribute in developing a quality democracy. On the other hand, by promoting certain programmes to support the consultation between the civil society and the European institutions, the European Commission became a very important actor in promoting an active dialogue with the civil society. This connection shall help in consolidating the role of the civil society's organisations as partner of the government. The Romanian civil society has played and still plays an essential role in the process of changing the mentalities, both by initiating some debates and by the expertise provided, always being at the forefront of addressing the problems and options which Romania has. The debates triggered in the public scope by the civil society many times led to a reconfiguration of the public agenda. In this respect, the familiarisation with the European values is a process started in the various discussion topics addressed by the organisations of the civil society.

The civil society, particularly through the non-governmental organisational entities most present in the public space, has played a fundamental role in transposing the conditionality of the EU integration into legislative reforms, especially in the field of decisional transparency and anticorruption fight. (Bebbington, 1993)

Due to the very low level of population's trust in the political class and state’s institutions, the civil society, particularly through the opinion leaders, had an important role in convincing the population regarding the benefits of the integration to the EU. Even when a number of unpopular actions such as

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constantly increasing the gas and gasoline prices has been identified by the accession to the EU, the leaders of the civil society and mass-media had an important role in explaining the medium-term benefits of the alignment with the EU standards.

The capacity to do the watch-dog function was undoubtedly improved by the legislative regulations adopted pursuant the conditions required by the accession to the European Union. According to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Interest, 544/2001, the sector of non-governmental organisational entities has acquired an important capability of monitoring the implementation of the new regulations, due to the right to make requests and submit complaints on the violation of the law. According to the Law 52/2003 on the decisional transparency, the non-governmental organisational entities have attributions in supporting the counselling process on legislation problems. (Buklin & Asociates, 2002)

Due to the constant problems Romania encounters in the process of implementing the reforms needed for the integration to the EU, at the repeated recommendations of the European Commission, the Ministry of European Integration initiated a number of dialogues with the non-governmental organisational entities specialised on various aspects of the negotiation chapters. This consultation also occurred in the field of drafting the strategic plans for the non-governmental organisational entities. The legal reform was one of the most sensitive points throughout the period of negotiating the EU access, but also after the accession, currently the justice field still being under the supervision of the European Commission. The non-governmental organisational entities with legal expertise had the role to carefully monitor the works carried out in various parliamentary commissions, as well as the legislative proposals submitted by the government, so that they would promptly notify the various deviations from the commitments made in negotiations. Monitoring some institutions the activity of which is relatively opaque in Romania (judges, prosecutors, police, prisons) provided specialised information to the European institutions, limiting the inherent tendencies to hide certain flaws or the implementation of some reforms only on paper. This mechanism, coupled with a good communication between the non-governmental organisational entities and the representatives of the European Commission in Bucharest provided a good capacity to monitor the reforms.

THE INTEGRATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONAL ENTITIES’ ACTIVITY FROM ROMANIA INTO THE EU

Along with the accession to the EU, funding by means of structural funds can be seen as one of the main sources for funding some major projects, with a profound impact. Even if the access to the European funds was an important point on the agenda of the discussion on the effects of the accession to the EU, Romanian authorities did not make any efforts to involve the non-governmental organisational entities in the process of preparing the strategy for accessing and managing these funds, so that it would compensate the lack of competence in this field of the Romanian administration. In this case also, in the presence of this state of fact, a number of seven important non-governmental organisational entities formed a coalition to monitor the training process for managing the European funds. (Dima & Vlăduțescu, 2012)

The component of Increasing the role of the Civil Society in the process of Romania’s accession was an important source to finance some large-scale programmes. If between 1196 – 1999, it was aimed at strengthening the non-governmental organisational entities by institutional development, improvement of the activity environment and development of some resources Centres for these, in subsequent programmes, the focus was more on the ability to act on the external environment. Through the Civil Society Programme of 2000-2005, the focus on the development of the civil society capacity to cooperate with the local administrations, promoting the improvement of the legal framework specific to the sector of the non-governmental organisational entities and increasing the credibility of this sector. To conduct the last phase of the PHARE programme, in 2008, 1,700,000 Euros (funding for 2006) were allocated, the programme focusing on proposals aiming at the development of the capacity of the sector of non-governmental organisational entities to institutionalise the mechanisms of consultation between state’s institutions and social partners. The following elements are stated: the improvement of the sustainability of the sector by encouraging the non-governmental organisational entities to create networks/platforms;
creating new Resource Centres for the non-governmental organisational entities or reinforcing the existing centres; ensuring the visibility of the initiatives of non-governmental organisational entities among the general public; involvement of the non-governmental organisational entities in civic education activities.

The National Development Plan of Romania for 2007 – 2013 has been created to guide the strategic planning and multi-annual financial programming to access and implement the projects from structural funds, in compliance with the European Union’s Cohesion Policy. Although the document created by the Government is presented as a creation in a wide partnership, the government- civil society communication was relatively poor as usual, most of the grievances expressed by the non-governmental organisational entities not being taken into consideration.

If the community stipulations on the management of the Structural and Cohesion Funds 2007 – 2013 emphasise the need to cooperate with social partners and the civil society in identifying the problems and optimum ways to deal with them, in the absence of an actual consultation, these stipulations remain just a desiderate. In practice, these organisations have been involved just formally in the planning process, there not being an explicit role in the final form of the plan, expressed for the organisations of the civil society. Furthermore, the presence of some sporadic references to the civil society throughout the document and not mentioning any role for the civil society in the programme for implementing the plan are sufficient reasons to highlight the inability of the government to develop a partnership. Moreover, ignoring the recommendations of the European Commission, the plan does not propose any action to reinforce the non-governmental sector or the partnership between the government and the civil society.

The only area where a direct relationship is stated is that of service provision. However, it is highlighted here that in the hypothetical context of openness to the civil society, it is aimed at to assign financial support to non-governmental organisations in order to improve the quality of the social services which they give. In practice, the organisations of the civil society are stated as service providers and not as partners in reaching a certain purpose. (Dima, 2013)

One of the most problematic effects of the lack of interest regarding the inclusion of the civil society into the financial support actions is the risk itself that a significant number of active organisations would be in the position of being unable to continue much of their activities. That the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 and the Operational Programmes do not provide direct funding in the fields of democracy, constitutional state, citizens’ local and national participation to the good governance, justice and social inclusion makes their access to the structural funds be seriously threatened. Another effect of the lack of civil society’s involvement in planning, implementing and monitoring the development projects can lead to a drastic limitation of the transparency of using the EU funds, an aspect which created an ideal environment for fraud, in a country with a high level of corruption.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITY OF ROMANIAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONAL ENTITIES

Taking into account the problems which the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities are facing, the structure of the activities they perform and the actual way in which they operate, an assessment of these organisations can be done, according to the model of the SWOT analysis, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS

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The capacity to act locally
Organisational maturation
Research on the evolution of the NGO sector

Fundraising
Lack of some legal rules on the advocacy and lobby activity
Trust level in the civil society
Concentration in urban region
Ambiguous legislation
Dependence on international donors
Low level of civic participation

Opportunities
Increase of the capacity to support actor's interests
Improvement of the sector image
Access to European funds
Increase of the capacity to collaborate with local authorities
Using the public consultations and rules of transparency
Influence of policies at EU level
Raising the number of professionals in the field of fundraising

Threats
Competition lack of transparency
Lack of stable financing sources
Romanian state's incapacity to absorb European funds
Loss of skilled personnel, particularly in the field of project drafting
Doubts regarding the conflict of interests
Lack of collaboration and initiative at European level

Strengths
One of the main strengths of the Romanian civil society is given by the formal development of the sector. The constant evolution of the number of organisations in all areas, even if a significant number are not active or are sporadically active, indicates the existence of some important resources that can be mobilised by this sector. Tax legislation on sponsorship and 2% law with all its shortcomings can be considered one of the points favouring the development of the organisations of the Romanian civil society. Particularly, the regulations regarding the sponsorship and 2% Law can create the basis of a sustainable funding for a significant number of organisations. However, because the access to these sources is indirectly conditioned by the already achieved notoriety, the entrance of some new organisations on this market shall be increasingly difficult. The capacity to influence the legislative process, even if it is more limited than in other countries, can be considered a strength of the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities. That the electoral reform of 2008 is based on a project supported by the Pro-Democracy Association for more than ten years is a testimony of the fact that in the presence of some constant efforts and ability to attract the interest of the mass-media and general public, the civil society can achieve important successes in advancing its own agenda. The capacity of media confrontation with the political power is a distinct feature of the Romanian civil society. In the absence of some institutionalised mechanisms for exercising some pressures on the authorities, this capacity is crucial for advancing certain objectives. In recent years, the ability of ad-hoc mobilisation to promote a common project has become increasingly larger. The Coalition for a Clean Parliament (CCP) is undoubtedly one of the most successful initiatives of the Romanian civil society in recent years. The representatives of over 20 non-governmental organisational entities in the field of human rights organised in order to verify the individuals registered on the lists of candidates of political parties and local and general electoral alliances in 2004, in terms of the activity performed in the past. Beyond the huge mediatization of the initiative, the fact that 98 of the candidates named by the CCP were withdrawn from the lists by their parties, or lost the elections, as well as the fact that all trials initiated against it by a number of candidates and dignitaries were recovered, represented an important moment in the evolution of the non-governmental organisational entities in this field. The increase of professionalism of people working in this area is obvious in recent years. Despite the competition with other areas to attract human resources, a competition held against an acute labour force crisis in Romania, the non-governmental organisational entities in Romania can be considered the most efficient environment to rapidly train some people and
bring them to a high degree of professionalism. In recent years, the training programmes, financed many times by means of PHARE funds, led to a significant increase in the number of people with expertise in several sub-areas of the activity typical to the non-governmental organisational entities, such as: writing funding projects, development of reports, participation in the audit activity, fund-raising, addressing the business field, public relations. The success of some professionals trained in this area and who subsequently operated in governmental structures or in the business field is a clear indicator of the increased level of this professionalism. (Drucker, 2001) The existence of some highly qualified experts, with a good reputation and connections in the international environment enables the performance of some high specialisation activities. This aspect can be an important resource when the expertise of various organisations is reunited for a number of mutual goals. In addition, in the presence of some financing lines covering a wide range of specialisations, this specialisation can reduce the strong competition for a limited number of funding on the same sub-field. The diversity of civil organisations is undoubtedly an advantage because it provides a large margin of adaptability in supporting the agenda of the civil society. This diversity can also help in increasing the ability to take and process social needs and present them in an elaborated form, as proposals of public policies - but of course, in the presence of a minimum degree of collaboration between these organisations. Regarding the action at local level, the organisations in the social field are the most active and efficient ones. Particularly the organisations in the field of protection of children’s rights (Salvati Copiii - Save the Children) conducted a number of successful programmes, particularly when they organised into initiative groups with a unitary voice, had the ability to participate in elaborating and changing the legislation in the field. This influence also benefited by the international pressure in this sector, Romania often being criticised for the weak quality of the legislation and practice in this field. Protecting the rights of the people with disabilities was another field where the public policies in recent years were influenced by the different cases reported by the non-governmental organisational entities, cases that sometimes triggered true media scandals. The maturity of the Romanian civil society is a strength that was revealed in several researches on this topic. Even if an exact definition of this concept cannot be provided, it may be considered that by the gradual evolution, a selection process was caused, so that currently the non-governmental organisational entities that succeeded to survive a number of a few years are professional in terms of the ability to act, fund-raising, project management, etc. A number of cooperation links have also been created between the non-governmental organisational entities with a long tradition, links which increased the level of trust in these organisations. The existence of some researches on the evolution of the sector of non-governmental organisational entities is an immense reservoir of know-how for understanding the structural problems that must be faced in the coming years. Identifying the constant features, the problems persisting despite the efforts to solve them, and also of the good-practice models can lead to avoiding the repetition of some strategies with minimum chances of success. Organisations such as FDSC, USAID, OSI or PDA have invested significant resources in achieving these materials, their drafting generally involves consulting experts from several organisations. (FDSC and CIVICUS, 2011) This resource can also be used by the governmental organisations and European institutions in drafting some sustainable strategies to develop the organisations of the Romanian civil society. (Dima & Man, 2013)

Weaknesses

The ambiguous legislation was and remained one of the main sources of problems for the operation of the Romanian civil society’s organisations. The frequent legislative changes in related fields, as well as a number of ambiguous stipulations on awarding grants and subsidies, particularly in the context of a country with a high level of corruption leaves room for arbitrariness in the interpretation of the law. In the activity of relating with the state, there are many cases where precious sources of time are used to obtain some qualifications regarding the interpretation of the law by the various governmental bodies. Due to the lack of an institutionalisation of the mechanisms of legislative clarification, states officers sometimes avoid to provide clear answers, transferring the responsibility to other institutions. As it has already been mentioned, obtaining the statute of public utility by a political decision is a strong source of suspicion to the criteria whereon this statute is assigned. That many of the important Romanian organisations, which would have been classified in the legislative stipulations, preferred not to use this statute, combined with the efforts of some associates run by people close to the political environment to
obtain this statute is still an indicator of the typical problems caused by the legal environment. The increased dependence to the international assistance, in the context of the EU integration, combined with a limited capacity to mobilise the local resources is a threat to the activity of many organisations specialised almost exclusively in attracting such funds. The imminent withdrawal of most of the international donors will limit the sustainability of many organisations and limit the access to beneficiaries of the services which these organisations provide. Another structural deficiency of the Romanian civil society is given by the low level of the civic participation and of the associative life in Romania. The focus of non-governmental organisational entities of Bucharest and Transylvania, areas that traditionally benefited from a higher civic participation, emphasises the acute dependence between the civic participation and the development of formal organisation of the civil society. With some exceptions, the campaigns to involve the communities in various actions generally remained unanswered. The lack of a civic participation is doubled by a lack of institutionalised cooperation between the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities. Except for the union movements, the inexistence of some large umbrella movements make collaboration on institutionalised basis be difficult to obtain. The lack of communication and collaboration is an essential barrier in limiting the coherence of the activities undertaken by the different non-governmental organisational entities, in many cases similar projects being carried out by various organisations, without the slightest mutual feedback. Overall, the ability of the non-governmental organisational entities to express through a common voice on certain problems, as well as systematically tracking the activity of the state’s authorities are the only viable ways to increase the influence on the formulation and implementation of public policies. However, there are examples of partnerships and networks at local and regional level, particularly in Transylvania, collaborations that led to successfully dealing with some local problems. The absence of some strong umbrella organisations in many of the fields of the civil society’s activity, except for the union ones and the professional organisations is a serious limitation of the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities’ power to act. (Edwards & David, 1992) This absence of development is probably to be maintained as long as the cultural factors, like the low level of trust, will persist and as long as the competition for resources will remain at the same level, most of the non-governmental organisational entities in an area being in competition for a limited number of funding sources. In recent years, a number of federations like the ProChild Federation have developed, yet the number of members in such organisations remains relatively low. The Government’s lack of interest to collaborate on institutionalised bases with the civil society’s organisations is one of the most important weaknesses and barriers in its capacity to influence the Romanian public policies. Due to the frequent confrontations on certain issues, even in the context of a positive attitude at declarative level, the relationship between the government and the civil society is marked by a deep mistrust on both sides. In the absence of some institutionalised mechanisms to collaborate, mechanisms that could compensate for the lack of trust, the current situation makes that many beginnings of collaboration escalate rapidly in confrontations, carried by means of the press releases, news articles and talk-shows. The attempts to discredit the civil society’s representatives by the political representatives are not a novelty. The incapacity of a civilised dialogue makes the personal attacks be a common practice in Romania, even at the level of the highest position in the state. The decrease of the salary competitiveness in relation to the economic and political fields is an increasingly stronger phenomenon. The competition for human resources with the political area and the commercial one is determined by a relative stagnation of salaries in the field of the civil society (the PHARE programmes stipulated only small increases in recent years for the various levels of expertise) combined with a strong salary increase in most other areas. In the context where we are currently witnessing a withdrawal of international donors and a transition to accessing other types of grants, it is very likely that the number of experts who will migrate to other areas will increase. Last but not least, in recent years, the development of the consultancy companies in writing and implementing various projects from European funds created opportunities, so that a tripling of the salary may be reached, by moving from a non-governmental organisational entity to a consulting company. The fund-raising capacity remains one of the weakest points for most Romanian non-governmental organisational entities. Practically, except for the organisations in the social area, organisations that many times benefited from an active support of the mass-media, the success in this activity is very limited. The inexistence of some local donors with great financial power is another feature limiting this ability. The
lack of developing a philanthropic behaviour or even the disinterest to use the 2% instrument represents serious cultural barriers in improving this situation. It should be highlighted that the different attempts made by international donors to transfer techniques and strategies used in other countries to the personnel of Romanian non-governmental organisational entities have been generally doomed to failure. Generally, obtaining some small donations, most of the time conditioned by obtaining an image benefit (organising a public event where the sponsor’s name would be visibly present) cannot be a sustainable financial basis. The absence of some legal regulations of the advocacy and lobby activity leads to confusion, many of the organisations specialised in such activities being legally founded as associations or foundations. This state of fact is a factor of the entire civil society’s vilification as it mixes the activities of supporting some economic interests with those of other nature. The level of trust in the civil society remained at a relatively low level in recent years. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, the non-governmental organisations enjoyed a percentage of 27% (37.5% of those who showed an option) of much trust and very much trust of the total of respondents, over the political parties, parliament, government and justice, but much below the television, radio, written media and city halls, enjoying the trust of over 50% of the respondents. Another alarming concern is that the non-governmental organisational entities have the highest percentage of non-answers to the question on trust, 28%, which reveals a lack of non-governmental organisational entities’ visibility at the level of Romanian society. The concentration in urban areas is a factor that improved in recent years, but remains deeply unbalanced. Because the organisations of the civil society play a very important role in democratising the political life at local level, particularly in poor rural areas, finding some ways to develop some non-governmental organisational entities in rural areas should be a priority for donors. Even if in recent years there has been a number of projects funded by European funds by means of which it was aimed at developing the civic participation in rural areas (for example, the project Democracy at the countryside – carried out by PDA), the development of some sustainable long-term projects depends on the existence of some structures at local level.

Opportunities
Increasing the capacity to support the sector interests is a factor that may lead to a number of advantages, primarily to the improvement and clarification of the legislation, but also to an increase of the available grants, particularly from structural funds. Beyond ad-hoc organised coalitions, which in many cases are only limited to jointly signing press releases, an institutionalisation of the collaboration through various umbrella non-governmental organisational entities and permanent consulting platforms is needed. These forms of collaboration should be able to permanently collect information on the needs of various sub-fields, about how the different possibly divergent interests can be brought into concordance, about the ways to efficiently transpose these interests into legislative amendments and about identifying and using some communication channels, persuasion and pressure on decision-makers. Improving the sector image is an important opportunity of the coming years. This goal can be done primarily through a better communication with the general public, campaigns like those needed to attract funds through the 2% Law, being a good time to explain and popularise the actions taken by the organisations of the civil society. What can be achieved is a more clear delimitation between the authentic civil society and the organisations that only have this name. Accessing the European funds is currently the main opportunity in the field of carrying out large-scale projects. Because of the still relatively low level of economic development, the 2% mechanism cannot be a source to achieve some large-scale projects, so that structural funds remain the main large-scale financial source before the withdrawal of most international donors. Because of the complex criteria that must be fulfilled to access these funds, increasing the capacity to collaborate by projects between the organisations of the Romanian civil society, as well as with similar organisations in European Union member-countries is an extraordinary opportunity to increase the transfer of know-how in preparing the applications, accessing and implementing the projects. Increasing the capacity to collaborate with local authorities based on the already existing evolutions is a very important opportunity for both parties. Both because a significant part of the structural funds can be accessed only in partnership with local authorities and because the use of the (physical, communicational, relational) infrastructure of these authorities can significantly increase the impact potential of projects, the non-governmental organisational entities must improve their capacity to co-opt the local authorities in various projects. By collaborating with various non-governmental organisational entities, local authorities can
have access to an expertise that is inexistent locally and which could be obtained only by paying some large amounts of money to the consulting companies. Because of the policy of community institutions of consulting the civil society, influencing the policies directly through this communication is an opportunity for them both to advance their points on the agenda and to improve the visibility at national and European level. Naturally, due to the limited experience in this field, the participation in partnerships at European level is an almost sine qua non condition. The more efficient use of the legislative tools like public consultation and transparency laws is an opportunity to increase the role of the non-governmental organisational entities in influencing the legislative environment and public policies. The development of Corporate Social Responsibility is an important opportunity to collaborate with the business field in achieving some common goals. Beyond the access to additional funds, which may become increasingly more consistent in coming years, by the expertise they have, non-governmental organisational entities can help in guiding better the use of these funds by the business field. This development must be coupled with an increase in the number of professionals in the field of fund-raising, a chapter in which, at present, most non-governmental organisational entities are not doing very well. (Kohler-Koch and Finke, 2007)

According to several researches, contracting social services is a field where significant improvements can be made. Although on the social service market the specialised non-governmental organisational entities are the most important private actors, yet due to the bureaucratic inefficiency and over-regulation, the service for contracting social services is slow. Due to the absence of a local or national strategy on social needs, the financial allocation for social assistance is not coherent, and local authorities can establish social services only after rectifying the budget. Last but not least, the territorial distribution of the non-governmental organisational entities accredited as private social service providers is uneven, there being counties where the number of non-governmental organisational entities is very low. A future improvement of the legislation, the increase of the convergence of contracting mechanisms, as well as the clarification of the relation between them and the legislation in the field have the potential to lead to more rapid development of the non-governmental organisational entities in this sector. (Fisher, 1998)

Threats

The competition for limited resources and the lack of transparency combined with a climate of the lack of trust are a serious threat for the organisations of the civil society. Conditioning the access to the different funding resources on the rapid access to information was a characteristic mentioned in the various researches conducted in recent years. It should be emphasised that one of the fundamental sources of this state of fact is also the funding structure, respectively the important of accessing a limited number of international donors, who in many cases used informal channels to collect the information on the organisational abilities of various non-governmental organisational entities. In the context of maintaining this climate, the level of cooperation and collaboration cannot increase in the near future, given the fact that they depend on the development of a climate of mutual trust. Last but not least, the lack of transparency of the activity of certain organisations may lead to a decrease of the general public’s level of trust, but it can also be a good weapon against various organisations. In the context of increasing funds from the state budgets or local budgets, increasing the political dependence is a possible threat for the independence of the sector of non-governmental organisational entities. Supporting some political forces and involvement in partisipanships can be a strong threat for the credibility of the Romanian civil society’s organisations. The incapacity of the Romanian state to absorb European funds (efficiently) is indirectly a threat for the sector of the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities, because it deprives it of the possibility to access some crucial funds, directly or in partnership. Given the fact that in one year after the accession, the progresses were rather verbal, and the lack of actual involvement of non-governmental organisational entities in this process, there not being a possibility to positively influence this process, this incapacity may become a serious problem in the context where 2008 was the last year when PHARE funds could be accessed. By not co-opting in the development of the National Development Plan, combined with a continuation of this lack of consultation are a threat because it will deprive the sector of non-governmental organisational entities of the possibility to introduce their own priorities and will limit their growth of know-how in developing the programmes based on EU funds. Losing the qualified personnel, particularly in the field of project writing, in the context where the demand for experts by the consulting companies will increase, can be a threat in the case where an increase in possibility to train and
attract human resources will not be achieved. The need to co-fund all projects in the case of European funds will practically remove a large number of organisations from accessing these funds. If for the PHARE funds the minimum limit of co-funding was of 10%, this will increase in the future to 20%-25%. The lack of collaboration and initiative at European level is a medium-term threat, limiting the possibilities of the Romanian civil society’s organisations to be heard when important decisions will be made, which could affect their interests directly or indirectly. The uncertainties regarding the conflict of interests are an important source of corruption because it can allow the use of knowledge of those that are in various administrative positions to access funds through some non-governmental organisational entities. The cases where the spouse or other relatives of some decision-makers regarding the allocation of funds that lead to a non-governmental organisational entity are frequent, the lack of some clarifications in this field drastically limits the access to various funding sources on fair grounds. (Vladutescu, 2006) The EU integration has changed the position of Romania, from a country undergoing democratisation that permanently needs external pressures to make various improvements, into an EU member-country with related obligations. To the civil society’s organisations of Romania, the accession was an important period of transition. It is difficult to outline the solutions to the problems this sector faces, but a number of elements can be mentioned, which are absolutely necessary. A better orientation of the non-governmental organisational entities to meet citizens’ needs also in other fields than the social services, particularly at local level, is a strong excellent opportunity for these organisation to create a strong base at local level. For most organisations, this is the only way by which they can ensure a stable income base that would enable them to avoid any compromises. The increase of the communication ability and constant collaboration is an emergency, because in the absence of a coagulation of the way to express the non-governmental organisational entities, many of the opportunities given by the EU accession will be lost. The efforts to fund this type of evolutions, made by means of the PHARE programme, should be continued for a few years, in order to record visible and sustainable progresses; currently, there not yet being organisations with resources necessary to fulfil this task. Stabilising the funding sources is another important factor to stabilise the non-governmental organisational evolution. Using the existing facilities requires the non-governmental organisational entities to acquire some new abilities that could not be developed immediately, but requires investments of resources and time. The debate at European level about a possible common EU policy to the organisations of the civil society is a field wherein the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities should make efforts to be heard. If the stake currently does not seem so obvious, the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities’ participation to programmes and partnerships within the various Forums at European level of the umbrella organisations and federations is also one of the most efficient ways that can ensure the accession of this sector into the EU. The participation in defining the role which the civil society will play in an enlarged EU is an important issue, as Romania’s ability to bring its contribution to formulating an European identity in course of formation will also depend thereon. (Fowler, 1997)

CONCLUSIONS
Achieving a balance between the components of the SWOT analysis leads to the increase in the non-governmental organisational entity’s importance in the civil society, particularly also in society, in general.

The topic of supporting, founding and developing networks between the organisations of the Romanian civil society and those of the EU and supporting the lobby activity at the level of the European Union level is increasingly more present in recent years, particularly after the approximation of Romania’s accession to the EU. By the PHARE programme, this goal was also constantly mentioned as a priority and funds have been provided in this regard. Averagely, over 20 projects have been funded annually, which, at EU level, were focused on creating some networks by the participation of the non-governmental organisational entities to multinational events in the environmental field, in the social-economic development area and social area. According to a research of FDSC, in 2010, only 23% of the non-governmental organisational entities questioned were part of formal coalitions, while 26% were part of informal coalitions, most of them being strong organisations in Bucharest or other major cities. (FDSC and CIVICUS, 2011)
Currently, the participation of the Romanian non-governmental organisational entities in European networks is still relatively low, the information on these participations being rather disparate. However, after only one year since the accession, an increasingly larger number of organisations or federations of non-governmental organisational entities mention the recent affiliation to relevant networks of the EU. It remains to see whether the formal affiliations will also lead to an efficient integration in the cooperation activities at the level of the Union.

The only area where the international affiliation worked for a long period of time is the union, the large federations of Romania, being affiliated for more than a decade to organisations like *The European Trade Union Confederation, the Union of Industrial and Employers Confederation of Europe*.

REFERENCES