



"Ovidiu Șincai" European School

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THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF THE SCHOOLS OF POLITICAL STUDIES *Good Governance and Political Pluralism* Bucharest, 27-28 April 2006

Following the initiative of **Romania's Permanent Representative of Romania to the Council of Europe** and of the "**Ovidiu Șincai**" Institute, in the period **27-28 April 2006**, the **European Conference of the Schools of Political Studies** took place, at the Intercontinental Hotel from Bucharest. The event was included on the agenda of the Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

For the promotion of democratic values and principles among the young generation, at the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe taking place in Warsaw on 16-17 May 2005, **development of the network of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe** was included as a priority in the Action Plan. For this purpose, the Council of Europe, the Romanian Government and the "**Ovidiu Șincai**" Institute have organized the **European Conference of the Schools of Political Studies** with the title ***Good Governance and Political Pluralism***, which benefited from the presence of personalities and experts from the Council of Europe and Romania. The special guests of this event were **Mrs. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Mr. Jean Louis Laurens**, Director General for Political Affairs of the Council of Europe, **Mr. Theodor Baconchi**, State Secretary within the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other Romanian and foreign officials. The host and moderator of the conference was the Director Coordinator of the "**Ovidiu Șincai**" Institute, **Mr. Adrian Severin**.

The conference has reunited, for the first time, both directors and three representatives of each School of Political Studies of the Council of Europe from Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo Province, Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Ukraine. At the same time, due to its dimensions, the conference has been

considered a preview of the Summer University for Democracy that will be organised in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe for all Schools of Political Studies, in the period 10-14 July 2006 and which will reunite 500 de participants.

During the conference, three main issues were debated: 1. **Consolidation of Democracy – Efficiency and Transparency of Public Institutions**; 2. **The Relation between National Identity, Sovereignty and Human Rights**; 3. **The Effects of Asymmetric Threats on the Consolidation of Democracy in the Council of Europe’s Member-States.**

The exchanges of opinions, information and the description of the particular experiences in the countries of origin, have represented a real benefit for the elaboration of guidelines for the future. An important part of the conference referred to the necessity to intensify public administration reforms in order to allow consolidation of democracy and the efficient fight against the threats confronting societies: terrorism, organized crime and corruption.

The organization of this conference has proved that the Schools of Political Studies already represent a network through which the East European countries can be helped to get over the period of transition and become consolidated democracies, and this network must be capitalized and extended.

In 1992, when the first School of Political Studies was founded in Moscow, few believed in the effectiveness of the project. But, after the method was successfully adopted in other ten countries, it was proved that this kind of “school without walls” is one of the most efficient methods of promoting the democratic values and of training a new generation of politicians. In Romania, the “Ovidiu Șincai” European School was established in 2004, part of its alumni being in important positions in the Romanian society, within the Government, central and local administration, mass media and business. Two aspects are especially important to mention about this project: a) the support of the Romanian Government, of all parliamentary political parties, of representatives of the most important national minorities and of the civil society, as the general opinion is that such a programme is useful for the entire political class and for the society on the whole; b) it is a relevant and worthy fact that the “Ovidiu Șincai” Institute has been and continues to be the main contact point of the Council of Europe for managing and developing this project, and the constant support of the

political and civil society for this action shows the respect and recognition the Institute enjoys even in a different political context than in the initial phase of the project.

The organization of this conference was also fostered by the idea that this part of Europe needs political support for developing democracy, civil society, for committing and professionalizing politicians. And the Schools of Political Studies represent an area that can help to consolidate democratic values for all states that are still having some difficulties concerning good governance. That is why the Council of Europe has recently made the foundations of a common programme with the European Commission, having as purpose the financial support for these Schools of Political Studies, so that they would be able to continue their activity without any problems, as long as the East European countries need help.

The European Conference of the Schools of Political Studies was appreciated by the representatives of the Council of Europe as an exceptional event, both in terms of the quality of debates as well as in terms of the level of organization. Therefore, in the resolution adopted on this occasion, that was included in the conclusions of the Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the representatives of the Council of Europe wanted to emphasize: *The Council of Europe, the Directors and the participants of the Schools of Political Studies would like to thank the Romanian Government for their invitation to participate in this conference and express their gratitude to the “Ovidiu Șincai” European School for the hospitality and excellent organization of the event.*