

## PRESS RELEASE

### European Funds, vital resource for the Region West development

*At the Timisoara County Council, citizens are informed about the benefits of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union financial programming, through the "Together for Cohesion: Let's rEUnite!" campaign. The Council will allocate in the next financial programming period a budget of 30.6 billion euros to finance the projects.*

We all know that the European Union funds secure a favorable framework for the development of Timiș county, in priority areas for the county as: health, road infrastructure, tourism, environmental protection and emergency management. The support of the raised funds is simply real "oxygen" for our communities.

Our country is a net beneficiary of EU structural funds, and the cohesion policy funds are the main sources of investment for us. Cohesion policy, also known as regional policy, is one of the most important and complex policy of the European Union, aiming to reduce the economic, social and territorial disparities between the regions of the Member States.

It is important to focus on the significant added value brought at national level, during the current financial year, in which the EU has allocated over 350 billion euros, about one third of the total European Union budget, for the cohesion policy.

**But where are these funds directed?** The development of infrastructure in transport and energy, development of environmental protection measures and resource efficiency management, increasing the competitiveness of SMEs are the main beneficiary areas, but also social inclusion, reduction of carbon emissions or sustainable employment. Other areas where considerable funds have been invested concern adaptation to climate change, educational and professional training, technical assistance, research and innovation, efficiency of public administration, but also information and communications technology.

**Our region benefited directly from the cohesion prioritization in EU investment policies,** because the allocation from the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 has created thousands of new jobs, facilitated the rehabilitation of several regional roads, the provision of high-performance equipment for various hospitals and schools and considerable investments in services and infrastructure. We can rightly say that cohesion policy, together with foreign investments, are the factors that propelled Timis into the top counties with the lowest unemployment rate in Romania. Since our accession to the European Union in 2007 until present, we reduced it from 7.7% in 2006 to below 1% currently rate.

**Hence the importance of informing citizens in the Region West, for to be aware of the benefits of the EU cohesion policy and its accessed funds.** According to a recent Eurobarometer of June 2017, **only 35% of citizens are aware of EU cohesion policy-funded projects in their regions**, and that only 28% know about the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and less than one in twenty respondents (4%) heard about the Cohesion Fund.

For the purpose of informing the citizens and local authorities, Timis County Council hosted the conference "**The benefits of cohesion policy for the citizens of the European Union**", part of the [\*\*"Together for cohesion: Let's rEUnite!"\*\*](#) # together4cohesion project. Its aim was to inform about the positive impact of cohesion programs in the regions, by involving stakeholders in concrete discussions with regard attracting EU funds efficiently. Thus the invited representatives of public institutions and non-governmental organizations have acknowledged relevant details of the next programming framework. On this occasion, were mentioned only a few major successful projects, funded through cohesion policy in Timis County, through Timis County Council:

**Expansion and modernization of the Emergency Receiving Unit of the Timișoara County Hospital**, 4.4 million lei, financed through the Regional Operational Program 2014 - 2020. The Emergency Receiving Unit of the Timisoara County Hospital receives approximately 200 patients in 24 hours. For the past three years, the number of patients increased by 400-500 presentations per year. The Hospital covers the most complicated cases of critical patients, from Timiș but also other regions. The investment focused on three important aspects - **increase of 25% in the number of workstations**, creating a much functional circuit in terms of patient triage and ensuring greater comfort for both patients and their caregivers.

**Construction of a new Obstetrics-Gynecology clinic**, an investment of over 50 million lei, financed through the European project on the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary program. The new clinic will be providing high quality medical care and among others, in-vitro fertilization, obstetrics-pathology, gynecology, laparoscopic and hysteroscopic surgery, physiological obstetrics and day hospitalization. Intensive care units, premature babies, eutrophic newborns and facilities for companions are also provided. The maternity ward will also have an ATI section, operating room, birth rooms and guard rooms. Given the scale of the investment, it can be said that a regional maternity ward will be built, providing top services for the entire western part of the country.

**The unloading from the A1 Motorway**, by extending the county road Dumbrăvița - A1, to four lanes. Worth 50 million lei this is another project of the Timis County Council, financed from European funds through the Regional Operational Program, for the great benefit of all citizens in our region, as well as all those in transit on this route. The final deadline for the works is 2022.

**The modernization of the DJ 693 county road for interconnection on the A1 motorway and the construction of a bridge over Mureș in Pecica, Arad County**, is another example of a project financed by European funds which ensures the road interconnection of the road sectors from the border of Timiș - Arad county, with the TEN-T network, and an indirect connection with the A1 motorway.

Nevertheless the Timis County Council, through **ADI West**, ensures the co-financing the Romania-Hungary cross-border project, of approximately 850,000 euros, with the aim to purchase three

complex intervention vehicles, so to increase the number of mobile units equipped for emergency interventions and to reduce of the average response time, both in rural and urban areas.

*"In this context, it is our duty to make full use of all the opportunities that we are and to involve ourselves thoroughly to increase the level of absorption of these funds at the level of UATs in the county and in the future,"* said CJ Timiș, Călin president Ionel DOBRA. At the same time, the president of CJ Timiș launched an appeal to the mayors, vice-mayors and representatives of the mayors from the area of Timiș county to strategically prepare for the next financial programming period, presenting in the communities that represent the benefits of accessing funds and which gains generate membership in the European Union.

#### About „[Together for cohesion: Let's rEUnite](#)”

Co-financed by DG Regio (Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy), the #togetherforcohesion project began in April 2019, with a communication campaign designed by a consortium formed by the European Assembly of Regions (ARE), as leading partner, mc Group - media partner and the local governments of six regions in five different countries: Trento (IT), Csongrad (HU), Timiș (RO), Alba (RO), Catalonia (ES) and Varazdin (HR). An ambitious team that aims to raise awareness among citizens, business owners and entrepreneurs in all areas, about the benefits of projects and actions within the cohesion policy between regions.

#### About AER:

Founded in 1985, AER is the largest independent network of regions throughout Europe, bringing together over 150 regions from 30 countries - from Norway to Turkey and from Russia to Portugal. Political assembly reuniting elected regional representatives, AER is a dedicated platform for the best practices the exchange, advocacy and EU interregional projects.

Covering a wide range of topics and with its flexible structure AER aims to support its members and partners, to implement actions and policies in various fields, informing them, first and foremost, about the options and methods available to them.

AER provides its members with access to specialized policy analyzes, advice on strategic aspects of policy and regional and intermediary connections with European institutions.

AER monitors calls for projects and disseminates information on financing opportunities and partner search, assists members in finding partners for announced projects, writes and develops projects, participates in projects as a partner. With extensive experience in managing and financing European projects, AER assists its members in projects or programs at EU or regional level.

Last but not least, AER uses an expanded network to support regional causes, ensuring that regions and their voice are heard at the right time, at the right place, and by the right people.

In Romania, 30\* counties are AER members, and an external office, hosted by the Alba County Council. The office works to promote the connection between the regions of Romania, the south-east of

Europe and the regions of the whole Europe in the events and activities of AER in Romania and Southeast Europe.

Timis County is a member of AER, represented by Mihai RITIVOIU, county councilor, as President of the Commission 2 - Social Policy and Public Health.

\*AER's members in Romania: AB, AR, AG, BH, BN, BV, CL, CS, CJ, CV, DB, DJ, GL, GJ, HR, IS, IF, MM, MH, MS, NT, OT, PH, SJ, SM, SB, TM, TL, VS, VR.

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