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Politics

German investors' involvement in privatisation is of major interest to Romania

Bucharest, Nov 10 /Agerpres/ - On an official visit to Berlin, President Traian Basescu said that a major involvement of German investors in the privatisations going on in Romania is of major interest to Romania.

"Romania has decided to put up for privatisation three big heat plants - Turceni, Rovinari and Craiova - and we also want to turn private the CFR Marfa freight rail carrier and many others. It certainly is of major interest to us that the German investors get involved in a major way, given the German experience in and technology for the use of coal in the energy industry, and also the German quality and technology in the railway field. It remains to be seen whether we manage to be persuasive," President Basescu told a joint news conference with Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel.

He added that Germany is Romania's largest foreign trade partner, with trade between the two countries having reached 14 billion Euros in 2010.

"Germany is the third largest foreign investor in Romania. There are over 14,000 German companies having invested 4.4 billion Euros in Romania as of end-2010, having essentially contributed, along with the Netherlands and France, to the Romanian economy being modified and modernised," President Basescu said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel in her turn stressed that the economic relations between Germany and Romania are on an upward track.

"The German enterprises are major investors in Romania and they provide jobs as well. We can do better than that. We have also talked about the multiple efforts of Romania to ensure the state of law for the reform in justice. All the systems in justice received new codes and that means this is an extraordinary performance and it will have positive effects," Chancellor Merkel said.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Romania is working a lot for its tax and budget consolidation, adding that this is going to have a positive effect on the long run, and voicing her gratitude to President Traian Basescu for his political performance in this respect.

"Romania voiced its intention to join the euro area in 2015 and I have the utmost respect for it. I know what it means for the people in Romania, because this country is making great efforts towards a tax and budget consolidation. I believe it will have some positive effects on the long
run. This is not an easy road that is why I am grateful for your political performance in this respect," Chancellor Merkel told a press conference held jointly with the Romanian Head of State who is paying an official visit to Berlin.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel believes that Romania’s gradual accession to the Schengen area is a possibility, even if not all EU member states want to approve this plan.

“Concerning the Schengen area, Germany and France proposed a gradual plan, which is also accepted by Romania. Not all member states want to approve this plan, but we believe that this gradual approach regarding Schengen is a possibility and we can have a common area,” Chancellor Angela Merkel told a joint press conference with Romania’s President Traian Basescu.

She also mentioned that, in the discussions with the Romanian head of state, she approached the international situation from the economic crisis point of view, pointing out the importance of the 27 EU member states collaborating in this respect, regardless if they are members of the euro area or not.

In her statement, the German Chancellor mentioned that the German minority of Romania was a connecting point between the two countries and that the very good bilateral relations had to be consolidated.

President Traian Basescu on a state visit to Republic of Serbia

President Traian Basescu in the period November 1-2 paid state visit to the Republic of Serbia, at the invitation of his counterpart Boris Tadic, shows a press release remitted to Agerpres by the Presidential Administration Press Office.

On his visit, the Romanian Chief of State had official talks with Serbia’s President Boris Tadic, as well as meetings with Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic and with Serbian Parliament President Slavica Dukic Dejanovic.

The visit agenda also included a meeting with representatives of the Romanian community of Serbia and a trip to the Timoc Valley, where Romania’s President met the local authorities of Negotin, the members of the Romanian ethnic community in the Timoc Valley, as well as representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchy of Malainita, the release also shows. (ActMedia, November 2011)
The Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers from the Danube Region
MFA – Bucharest/ Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi has opened today, 7 November 2011, alongside Austrian Vice-Chancellor and federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Spindelegger, the proceedings of the Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers from the Danube Region, held in Bucharest under the high patronage of the President of Romania.

“We need to use all our instruments to revitalize the European economy and improve our citizens’ quality of life. The EU Strategy for the Danube region is an important instrument, an opportunity for the macro-region,” said Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi while speaking, in his address, of the obligations incumbent on partners involved in the implementation of the Danubian project.

In his turn, Austria’s Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Spindelegger thanked the Romanian Foreign Minister “for his direct involvement in supporting the EU Strategy for the Danube Region,” insisting on the fact that “Bucharest has become a real capital of the Danube.”

Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolai Mladenov mentioned Bulgaria’s backing for the Romanian proposal to hold an annual meeting of foreign ministers from the Danube region, so as to secure constant, solid political support for the Strategy.

The European Commission, through the DG Regio director general’s adviser Kadri Uustal, assured the attendees of its support and involvement in the process of managing the Strategy. The representatives of the 16 delegations attending the event approached several aspects related to the significance of the EU Strategy for the Danube region in the current European context, the management and funding of the projects, as well as the communication strategy for the EUSDR.

The participants in the meeting agreed on the EUSDR being a crucial instrument to be used to improve the competitiveness of companies in the macro-region, in the context of the current financial crisis. European programmes and financial instruments play a major role in the region’s economic development.

In the margin of the Meeting, Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi met with his Austrian counterpart, Michael Spindelegger, Romania and Austria being co-initiators of the project. The two ministers reviewed the excellent stage of the bilateral relations and exchanged views on current European issues such as economic governance in the Euro zone, EU enlargement and recent developments in the Eastern Partnership, with emphasis on the EU – Republic of Moldova relationship.

As far as the EUSDR is concerned, the two officials agreed that emphasis should further be given to specific, realistic projects and that today’s meeting identified several lines of action rendering it possible to put to good use the Danubian region’s economic and social potential.
Moreover, Minister Teodor Baconschi met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, Iurie Leancă. The two ministers analyzed the stage of bilateral cooperation projects and appraised the progress made so far.

On the occasion the Romanian minister reiterated Romania’s support for a clear European perspective for the Republic of Moldova and conveyed a message encouraging an intensified pace of the reforms undertaken by the pro-European government.

The heads of the two diplomacies agreed to continue the dialogue at the 5th Meeting of the Group for the European Action of the Republic of Moldova, to be hosted by Romania, alongside France, in the sidelines of the FAC on 14 November 2011.

Background

The informal meeting in Bucharest is a natural follow-up to the high-level meetings of the representatives of the Danubian states, begun with the Meeting of Ulm (2009); moreover, it marks one year since the Bucharest Summit of 8 November 2010, which established the major lines of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

The session rallying the heads of the diplomacies in the Danubian region will be followed tomorrow 8 November by an Economic Forum attended by representatives of civil society, the business environment and the academia in the Danubian region, who will continue the debates on sustainable development in the Danube area.


ForMin Baconschi welcomed by Ukraine's President, PM and Chairman of Supreme Rada

Bucharest, Nov 10 /Agerpres/ - On an official visit to Ukraine, Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi reiterated Romania’s support for the recognition of Ukraine’s European prospects in an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which has reached a final stage of negotiations.

In his conversations in Kiev with Ukraine’s President Viktor Yanukovich, Baconschi voiced Romania’s full readiness to support Ukraine concretely and practically in fulfilling the conditions for getting nearer to EU memberships.

In the same conversation, he reviewed the developments in the bilateral relations between Romania and Ukraine, including the need to modernise the joint cooperation formats between the two countries.

As regards the cooperation between Romania and Ukraine in solving neighbourhood problems, Minister Baconschi voiced Romania’s openness for dialogue and cooperation, including for securing the protection of the rights of people belonging to the Romanian minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Romania, at the highest standards and in line with the best European practices.
Romanian Chief Diplomat was also welcomed by Ukraine’s Prime Minister Mykola Azarov. At the meeting, Minister Baconschi mentioned the huge yet untapped potential of regional and cross-border cooperation, especially under projects related to the European space sponsored by the EU. The meeting ended with the conclusion that the two countries need to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the EU’s Strategy for the Danube Region and cross-border cooperation programmes, particularly those in a format that involves Romania, Moldova and Ukraine.

The two officials voiced appreciation for the bilateral trade between Romania and Ukraine and underscored that fact that Romania and Ukraine can cooperate with positive, mutually beneficial results, including in the field of energy security.

In his conversation with the Chairman of Ukraine’s Supreme Rada, Minister Baconschi discussed the recent developments in the bilateral relationship and ways to further it, as well as European affairs, with emphasis on parliamentary cooperation between Romania and Ukraine. Minister Baconschi underscored that parliamentary dialogue is vital to boosting trust and recovering political dialogue.

State Secretary Doru Costea has met with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Marie Yovanovitch

MFA – Bucharest/ State Secretary for Global Affairs Doru Costea has met on 1st November 2011 with the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Marie Yovanovitch.

They focused on the joint efforts to be made in order to implement the Joint Declaration on the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the USA, adopted on 13 September 2011, during the Washington visit of Romania’s President Traian Băsescu.

The two high officials agreed to continue the close consultations in order to identify the main cooperation projects for each of the areas listed in the Declaration. According to both sides, the document marks the shift of the bilateral relationship to a new, qualitatively higher stage and establishes the main directions for further consolidating and developing it.

State Secretary Doru Costea underscored the importance of granting increased attention to the economic dimension of the Strategic Partnership, which so far has not been sufficiently turned to advantage. The Romanian official insisted on the special opportunities the Romanian market offered to US investors, and voiced the wish of the MFA to deepen the cooperation with the representative organizations in Romania of the US business community.

Also discussed was Romania’s role in backing the democratic construction processes in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as in North Africa and the Middle East, Marie Yovanovitch showing that Romania’s efforts so far have been well appreciated by the Washington Administration.
The visit to Leeds of the Ambassador of Romania

Embassy of Romania - London / Between 30-31 October 2011, the Ambassador of Romania to London, Dr Ion Jinga, paid a visit to Leeds, at the invitation of the Romanian Honorary Consul in Leeds, Mrs Annemarie Vişoianu-Kanatas. This is the Ambassador’s fourth visit to Leeds, since the beginning of his mandate in London.

During the first day of the visit, the Ambassador took part at the inaugural service of the new place of worship of the Romanian Parish “Saint Makarios the Great”. The church was purchased through the financial effort of some representative members of the Romanian community living in Leeds, and it become the first Romanian Orthodox church owned by a local Romanian community living in the United Kingdom (the religious service of the other Romanian parishes takes place in rented churches). The new church is using the building of the former Anglican Abbey „Saint Michael and All Angels”. The very earliest Christian community in the region was attested in 1180, the church has been rebuilt several times. The church was consecrated in 1886, is constructed in Roman basilica style with Gothic elements and is included in the United Kingdom list of heritage buildings.

The religious service was officiated by Father Constantin Popescu, together with other four Romanian priests serving in the United Kingdom. In his opening remarks, the Ambassador of Romania congratulated the Romanian community for the acquisition of the new place of worship: “I know it took a considerable effort from your part to make this happen. The purchase of this building was also possible because you were welcomed with openness and generosity by the people of Leeds. The fact that you have your own church means you are growing roots here; you are well integrated in the local society. I am convinced that you will know how to show our British friends that you are proud to be Romanians living on these lands”. After the religious service, the Head of the Consular Department offered consular assistance to the Romanians in need.

Beginning the second day, the Ambassador of Romania visited the Five Lanes Primary School where, in mid-November, will be organised a contest of general knowledge about Romania, the awards being offered by the Embassy of Romania. Five Lanes Primary School is twinned with Anatol Ghermanschi Primary School of Brasov, Romania. This event was followed by a meeting with the Leader of Leeds Council, Keith Wakefield, and a working lunch the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Reverend Councillor Alan Taylor, who was accompanied by the Head of Leeds
Initiative and International Partnerships

Martin Dean, the Director of Marketing Leeds company Jean Dent, the Pro-Vice-chancellor of Leeds University Prof. David Hogg, the Head of International Relations Department of of Leeds University Prof. Mark Smellik, and Penny Camateras, in charge of Leeds and the Brașov (Romania) Partnership.

At the School of Politics and International Studies of Leeds University, the Ambassador of Romania delivered the speech “Romania and United Kingdom: Strategic partners in the European Union”, and met with Romanian students and professors of Leeds University .

Discussions with the local authorities were based on the 2004 Leeds and the Brașov (Romania) Partnership on best practices exchanges through joint programmes, which included so far reciprocal visits and participations at related conferences.

The meeting with the Leader of Leeds Council, Keith Wakefield, revealed the interest of both sides for developing the cooperation in fields such as trade and investments, public administration, education and cultural projects.

The Ambassador Ion Jinga saluted the positive experience of such collaboration between local entities from Romania and the city of Leeds , showing that there is interest to extend the existing area and capitalising the British expertise in European funds absorption, one proposal being launched already by Arges County .

During the talks with the Lord Mayor of Leeds, the interest for enhancing the Romanian-British cooperation was highlighted. The Lord Mayor, who has an ecclesiastic rank as well, underlined the importance for the Romanian community of having a church which constitutes a lever for the integration into the local community and a cohesion factor.

About 30 Romanian students and professors of Leeds University greeted the Ambassador of Romania. Among their fields of interest are electronics, aeronautical and aerospace engineering, communications, constructions, applied mathematics, audio-visual technology, events managements, psychology, accounting and finance, foreign languages, especially Arabic and Japanese.

The Romanian students are well integrated into the academic community, being between the most competitive of the university. Their future plans at Leeds University are including the establishment of a Romanian Society and organising Romanian cultural events.
The opening of a new Romanian Orthodox Parish

Embassy of Romania - London/On November 13, 2011, HE Dr Ion Jinga, the Ambassador of Romania in London, accompanied by Mrs Daniela Jinga, took part at the inaugural religious service of the Romanian Orthodox Parish in Luton, at the invitation of Father Ioan Nazaruc.

The religious service was officiated by Reverend Father Silviu Pufulete, who came from London as representative of His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Southern and Western Europe, and by Father Ioan Nazaruc, the priest of the new Romanian Parish.

Addressing the audience at the end of the religious service, the Reverend Father underlined the support given by the Embassy of Romania in London to the Romanian communities living in the UK: “I have been living in Great Britain for many years and I can say that, out of all the ambassadors I have met here, Ambassador Ion Jinga is the most active in supporting the Romanian community and has attended all the important events organised by Romanians all around Britain”.

At his turn, the Ambassador of Romania congratulated the Romanian community in Luton for the inauguration of a new Orthodox Parish in the UK, encouraged them to be proud of being Romanians, to promote their national values and, through their behaviour, to earn the respect of the local community. He also reiterated the support of the Embassy of Romania and the authorities in Bucharest for the Romanians living in the UK, mentioning that the topic was also on the agenda of high level discussions between the President of Romania, Mr. Traian Băsescu and the British Prime-Minister, Mr. David Cameron, during the visit of the Romanian Head of State to London in June 2011, as Guest of Her Majesty’s

The city of Luton is 60 km from London, the Romanian community living there is new, adding up to several thousands, most of them having arrived after Romania’s EU accession.
Economics

Romania meets Maastricht parameters in order to maintain 2015 target for joining Euro Zone

Bucharest, Oct 31 /Agerpres/ - Romania satisfies the convergence criteria on the public deficit, the public debt and the inflation rate in order to maintain the 2015 target for joining the Euro Zone, Prime Minister Emil Boc said on Monday, Oct. 31 at the Victoria Palace at the beginning of the meeting with German Bundestag's European Affairs Commission Chairman Gunther Krichbaum.

"As you know, Romania is part of an Agreement with the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and regarding 2011, I can convey to you that Romania will meet all its commitments. We are about to reach the deficit of 4.4 percent and an economic growth of 1.5 percent in line with the Agreement. I just attended a meeting with Governor of Romania's National Bank (Mugur Isarescu - editor's note) and I can assert Romania maintains the 2015 target for joining the Euro Zone. In this regard, Romania is heading into the right direction as for the public deficit, the level of the public debt but also the inflation rate are in line with the necessary criteria in order to adhere in 2015," Prime Minister Emil Boc said.

The Romanian Prime Minister stressed that these parameters must be met within the established limits in the coming years too, by 2015 and he pointed out that Romania's public debt rate, of 31 percent of the GDP is much lower than that of many Euro Zone states and than the threshold of 60 percent established by the Maastricht criteria, while inflation plunges every month.

"Now we want to consolidate this process, to take no step backwards for not ruining all that we have obtained so far," said Prime Minister Emil Boc, also adding it is more important that the Romanians, who bore the brunt of the austerity measures taken mainly in 2010, to be able to benefit from the advantages of these reforms in the upcoming years, with the Euro Zone adhesion in 2015 being also in their advantage.

In his turn, the German official said that Germany is aware of the tough impact generated by the economic-financial reforms from Romania upon the population, but also of the fact there was no alternative.

"There is no alternative for the future of your country because there is a competition not only between the European Union member states, but also a global competition at the level of the entire EU. Therefore, a decision is taken today for the next ten or five years. These decisions..."
are very tough for the population, for the Romanian citizens, but there is no alternative. We consider and I think the International Monetary Fund does too, that when you complete all these reforms that are needed, the future of your country will be bright and more flourishing," Krichbaum affirmed.

He also said that after the last week's summits of the European Council, the financial markets have calmed down a little. "The news coming from the financial markets is encouraging. We have echoes also from the US and China and we hope that we shall succeed in fully calming the markets. First and foremost we have to create in this context a feeling of trust, including among European banks," the German parliamentarian said, while paying a visit to Bucharest.

Our target for 2013 is a zero deficit
The budget deficit target for 2013 is zero percent, after setting a maximum deficit of 3 percent of the GDP by the ESA methodology of the European Union (2.5 percent on cash) for 2012, showed Prime Minister Emil Boc after the meeting with the leaders of the National Fund for Loan Guarantee for SBEs.

'Our target is to have a zero deficit in 2013. The deficits allowed to be larger must be mirrored by spells of economic slump because when we return on growth, we could decrease the deficit so as to cover what we spent in the year of recession. This is a responsible policy,' Prime Minister Boc explained.

The Head of Government said the deficit target of 3 percent of the GDP for the year to come means 2.5 percent on cash, which is also met in the targets set with President Traian Basescu, with the IMF, the European Commission and the World Bank.

The prime minister added that the revenues to the GDP will be around 33.7 percent in 2012, while the pension budget will be 47.9 billion lei.

'The revenues to the GDP will rise from 33.4 percent in 2011 to 33.7 percent in 2012. The pensions will have 47.9 billion lei allocated in 2012 from 47.6 billion lei in 2011. We have resources to cover the pensions and the salaries and there is also the possibility the deficit should increase for granting all the state's bonds,' said PM Emil Boc.

The investments will have 37.8 billion lei allocated in 2012 and the state guarantees will amount to 3.3 billion Euros.

The budget project for 2012 intends to increase investment expenses from the budget and from European funds from 35.4 billion lei in 2011 to 37.8 billion lei in 2012. The amount of 3.3 billion Euros will be allocated for state guarantees. The Guarantee Fund and the Counter-guarantee Fund, the Fund of Load Guarantee for Agriculture and Eximbank will also provide guarantees," Premier Boc also showed.

The Prime Minister also said the Government aids will still be granted in 2012. 'As regards the Government aids, we are going to keep granting the minimum aids, the aids for investments in economy, by the Mihail Kogalniceanu programme, the START UP programmes or those for
young people starting up businesses,' added the prime minister. (ActMedia, November 14, 2011)

Mobility of Romanian and Bulgarian workers has an overall positive impact on EU economy

A report of the European commission released on Friday highlights the overall positive impact of the mobility of Romanian and Bulgarian workers on the economies of the destination countries.

The vast majority of recent movers from Bulgaria and Romania participate in the labour market to the same extent as the average population, or even at a higher rate. They have played overall a positive role for the economies of receiving countries, contributing to the skill mix, and working in sectors and occupations where job shortages needed to be filled, the report says.

A recent model-based study estimates that mobility from the EU-2 during 2004-2009 may have boosted the aggregate Gross Domestic Product of the EU by about 0.2 percent in the short term and 0.3 percent in the long term (based on the increased labour force and allowing for adjustment of production capacity). For the receiving EU-15 countries, the long-term impact is even stronger (0.4 percent). However, there seems to be no significant long-term impact on GDP per capita for receiving countries. Other existing studies tend to confirm the overall positive impact on overall GDP and moderate effects on GDP per capita.

The report highlights that there is no evidence of disproportionate use of social security benefits by the mobile EU citizens inside the EU and that the impact of recent flows on the national public finances is negligible or even positive.

At a recent conference in Vienna, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Laszlo Andor underscored the positive impact of worker mobility, saying that the movement between countries offers real opportunities and economic benefits to both the destination countries and the entire EU. He said geographical mobility depends to a great extent on economic trends and the existence of jobs, voicing hope that all the restrictions on mobile workers will be lifted.

The two main destination countries for Romanian and Bulgarian mobile workers have been Italy and Spain. Member states’ population statistics and Labour Force Survey data show that at the end of 2010 around 2.9 million Bulgarian and Romanian citizens of all ages reside in the EU-25 countries compared with 2006.

In relative terms, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals resident in an EU-25 Member State represent a limited share of the total population of the EU-25: 0.6 percent at the end of 2010, compared to 0.3 percent four years before. Romanian nationals represent more than 80 percent of all EU-2 nationals resident in another Member State and are found mainly in Italy (41 percent) and Spain (38 percent), followed by Germany (5 percent) while Bulgarian nationals live mainly in Spain (38 percent), Germany (15 percent), Greece (12 percent), Italy (10 percent) and UK (7 percent). The employment rate of Bulgarian and Romanian working age (15-64) citizens who moved recently was, in 2010, slightly below (63 percent) the average in the EU-25 countries (65 percent).

However, recent Romanian and Bulgarian movers have been the group hardest hit by the economic recession and the share of those unemployed (16 percent) was much higher than for nationals (6 percent). This is mainly due to the adverse labour market situation in Spain, one of the two main destination countries, to their on-average low educational attainment and their predominance in sectors strongly impacted by the crisis, in particular the construction sector.

It is clear that recent EU-2 movers played a very minor role in the labour market crisis of individual
countries. For instance, in 2010 they represented only 1 percent of all unemployed persons (aged 15-64) in EU-15 countries, compared to 4.1 percent for recently arrived third-country nationals.

The report will be the basis for a further review by Council of the transitional arrangements still governing their citizens' labour market access.

Transitional arrangements on the free movement of workers have been agreed in the 2005 Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania that allow member states to temporarily restrict the right of workers from Bulgaria and Romania under EU law on free movement to work in another member state. Their aim is to gradually introduce free movement for workers step-by-step over a seven-year period. There are three phases (2+3+2 years) during which different, increasingly strict conditions apply as to the conditions under which member states can restrict labour market access.

This is the second phase of transitional arrangements that ends on December 31, 2011, Agerpres correspondent informs.

Workers from Bulgaria and Romania currently enjoy full rights to free movement under EU law in 13 (of 25) Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, and Sweden) and also do not need a work permit to work in the Czech Republic. In addition, Bulgarian workers also enjoy full rights to free movement in Spain, unlike Romanian workers, after Spain invoked the safeguard clause in relation to Romanian workers and re-introduced restrictions on their labour market access. No restrictions on labour market access apply between Romania and Bulgaria.

The restrictions may be kept in place after December 31, 2011 only if the country seeking to do so has notified the European Commission by this date that there is a serious labour market disturbance, or threat thereof. In the case of Spain, the commission authorised to re-introduce restrictions under the safeguard clause following Spain's request that is valid until 31 December 2012.

The transitional measures will be irrevocably over on December 31, 2013. (ActMedia, November 14, 2011)

**Romanian industry turnover up 17.6 pct in 9 months**

The Romanian industry turnover went up 17.6 percent in the nine months from Jan.-Sept. 2010 and it rose 13.6 percent in this Sept. from Aug.; the turnover was up 15.2 percent on last Sept., the National Institute for Statistics announced.

The three-quarter growth was the result of the increases in the processing industry (18.1 pct) and extraction industry (7.8 pct).

Rises in turnover were recorded in all big industrial sectors: energy industry (26.9 pct), the intermediate goods industry (24.3 pct), capital goods industry (16.7 pct), consumer goods industry (7.7 pct) and the consumer durables industry (5.6 pct).

The industrial turnover in Sept. rose an overall 13.6 percent compared to Aug. amid the growths posted by the processing industry (13.9 pct) and extraction industry (5.3 pct).

All industrial sectors registered expansion in this Sept. compared to Aug. as follows: the capital goods industry (40.5 pct), the consumer durables industry (14.7 pct), the intermediate goods industry (6.8 pct), the energy industry (4.4 pct) and consumer goods industry (3.3 pct).

The Romanian industrial output grew year-on-year in Sept. 15.2 percent overall, amid the increases posted by the extraction industry (10.9 pct) and the processing industry (15.4 pct).

Rises in turnover by big industrial groups were recorded in all sectors: the energy industry (25.5 pct), the intermediate goods industry (16.9 pct), the capital goods industry (15.7 pct), consumer
goods industry (10.1 pct) and the consumer durables industry (3.5 pct), the Institute announced. (ActMedia, November 8, 2011)

**IMF continues discussions about privatization**
The IMF delegation which participated in talks with the Romanian Minister of Transport Anca Boagiu was satisfied about the reduced losses at CFR Marfa and CFR, two companies with big arrears. Talks will continue until the end of the week about the privatization of companies subordinated to the ministry, Transport Ministry sources said. According to them, Jeffrey Franks, the head of the IMF delegation said he was satisfied by the level of European fund absorptions in the field. Talks will continue about the privatization calendar for companies TAROM, CFR Marfa and Electrificare CFR subordinated to the Ministry of Transport, the privatization of packages of shares from those companies taking place until the end of January 2012. (ActMedia, November 2, 2011)

**Romania launches sale of its largest copper mine**
Romania launched the sale of its biggest copper mine Cupru Min SA Abrud via a tender, the government's industry privatisation office (OPSPI) said on its website. OPSPI, which set a Jan. 17 deadline to submit bids, said it aimed to sell 100 percent in the mine which sits on about 60 percent of the European Union member's copper reserves, some 900,000 tonnes. It said the auction would be held on Jan. 18. Deputy economy minister Claudiu Stafie had said last month he hoped the privatisation would be wrapped up by the end of this year and that the ministry has received 10 letters of intent from investors willing to participate. Finance ministry data showed the company recorded a profit of 18.8 million lei ($6.2 million) last year. It has overall debts of around 72 million lei. A government strategy paper showed earlier this year that Bucharest aimed originally to sell a stake in Cupru Min on the Bucharest stock exchange. Romania's flat corporate profit tax at 16 percent, its skilled labour force and the presence of western explorers already active, are likely to encourage mining investment. In addition, the government has recently unveiled plans to ease expropriation proceedings to make way for drilling sites. ($1 = 3.047 Romanian Lei) (ActMedia, November 2, 2011)

**Constanta Port, Georgian Peer Sea shipping hubs Poti and Batumi to build cooperation partnerships**
The Black Sea port of Constanta will develop cooperation partnerships with Georgia's ports Poti and Batumi under a deal agreed upon last week by the Romanian Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Anca Boagiu, and her Georgian counterpart. According to the Romanian Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MTI), Anca Boagiu and Georgian Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Vera Kobalia, met in Krakow for bilateral talks, agreeing to strengthen cooperation between the two Black Sea states by developing projects aimed at
maximizing both countries' potential in the region.

In this context, Minister Boagiu highlighted Romania's interest in developing a collaborative partnership between the port of Constanta and Georgia's sea shipping hubs Batumi and Poti. The relevant Memorandums of Understanding will be signed by the end of this year.

'Together with the Georgian Minister we agreed to strengthen our countries' cooperation on transport infrastructure by signing collaborative partnerships between the port of Constanta and Georgia's main sea ports Poti and Batumi. In the last year the port of Constanta has developed similar partnerships with the ports of Rotterdam, Dubai and Istanbul, a sign that the Romanian side is perfectly aware that we need to take advantage of our status as gateway to the European Union for shipments from Central and Southeastern Asia. Co-work with the Georgian side will further reinforce the role of the Constanta port in the Black Sea region,' said Minister Anca Boagiu.

Another subject of the talks between the two ministers was the request of the Georgian side for assistance from the Romanian Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure with the training of the personnel of the Georgian transport administration. The Romanian Minister said that MTI and the institutions under its authority are ready to provide assistance to the Georgian party by training and refresher courses on land, rail, naval and civil aviation transport. Minister Anca Boagiu participated in Krakow in the ministerial conference on the Eastern Partnership in the field of transport. (ActMedia, November 1, 2011)

The UK Ambassador: Melrose Resources to invest almost 130 million dollars in oil exploitations in the Black Sea.

The British Ambassador to Bucharest Martin Harris stated on his blog that Melrose Resources and its partners (Petromar Resources) intend to invest approximately 130 million dollars in the oil exploitation in the Black Sea. On 12 October the government approved two concession agreements with Melrose Resources&Petromar Resources for the Muridava and Cobalcescu areas, with a view to exploiting, developing and oil exploiting. Each concessioned area has a surface of almost 1,000 square km, the areas being placed in the maritime sector of the Black Sea. The oil agreements have duration between 20 and 30 years, depending on the complexity of the things. After the finalization of the compulsory programme, depending on the results, the signatories of the agreements can decide to give up the agreement or to go on with the works. "This is good news as regards British investment in Romania. (...) Melrose is one of the biggest British investors in Bulgaria and I am pleased they start new operations in Romania as well. They will bring British capital, technology and know-how for this key sector in the Romanian economy. We hope they will help Romania and Europe to develop several safe sources and diversified for energy supply", Ambassador Martin Harris said. (ActMedia, November 3, 2011)

Ambassador Gitenstein: Microsoft planning to equip all Romanian libraries with new computers

Attending the inauguration of the 'American Corner' Information and Resource Centre in Targu Mures, U.S. Ambassador to Romania, Mark Gitenstein, said that Microsoft has a program in place to equip all libraries in the country with new computers.

"Just like the U.S. libraries, Romanian libraries too are not simple book collections, they are places where people - young or old - meet, exchange ideas, work on computers they would otherwise not have access to at home. A major U.S. company, Microsoft, is running a large scale program in Romania, aimed at bringing new computers to all libraries in the country, so
that all Romanians be able to have access to the Internet and online resources,” said the American Ambassador.

Mark Gitenstein said that the ‘American Corner’ in Targu Mures will offer visitors not only Internet and books, but also movies or any other American cultural products, and that it will also serve as a venue for seminars.

“This is the ninth ‘American Corner’ we open in Romania, and these facilities are a kind of platform whereby we want to share our culture with you. I won’t be able to visit all nine ‘American Corners’ during my term in Romania, but I really insisted to come here to attend the opening of this particular one. I could say that my wife Libby is very dedicated to this program and she plans to visit each ‘American Corner’ in Romania, so a member of our family will be doing this anyway,” said the American Ambassador.

The ‘American Corner’ in Targu Mures was set up under a partnership between the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest and the Mures County Library.

According to the U.S. Embassy, the ‘American Corners’ program in Romania aims to promote understanding and cooperation between the United States and Romania, by providing accurate and diversified information that will help develop communication and cultural exchanges between the two countries. (ActMedia, November 2, 2011)

**Farming land in Romania is worth 25 billion euro**

The surface of 15 million hectares held by Romania is the largest useful agricultural surface in Europe. The over 13 million ha of farming land in Romania are worth over 25 billion euro now when the average price of a hectare of land is 2,000 euro. The quotation of farming land in the local market is the lowest of all EU countries.

The cheapest farming land with prices between 1500 and 2000 euro/ha is found in counties like Dolj, Olt or Vaslui while in other areas like the vicinity of Bucharest it can reach 3,000 euro/ha according to the Financial Newspaper.

Prices vary according to location and the area or quality of land sold. Land is more expensive if areas are in the vicinity of a bigger town or is connected to roads, railway or sea. In Teleorman county a hectare of land can be bought with 1,500 euro in the case of a lot up to 10 ha. If the lot is over 100 ha, the price can reach 4,000-5,000 euro/ha. The area controlled by firms with foreign capital covers 10% of 8.3 million ha of tillable landing the local market.

The most expensive farming land in the country is in the vicinity of the Capital, prices reaching even 3,500 euro/ha but most owners sell at prices of 3,000 euro/ha. Land in Olt or Vaslui has prices half of those in Giurgiu, Brasov or Timis, no more than 2,000 euro/ha. In Vaslui County the situation is the same, prices being about 1,500 euros/ha. Vaslui and Olt counties are among the poorest in Romania. (ActMedia, November 15, 2011)

**Baywa plans investments in Romania**

German agricultural products maker Baywa plans to invest in Romania thanks to the high local agricultural potential. Company’s engineering department manager Mayer Siegfried said during his meeting with Agriculture Minister Valeriu Tabara, at Nadab, Alba County (western Romania).

The Baywa official said that Romania has a high farming potential, and it must be a priority domain.

Minister Tabara also met with the Italian Maschio Gaspardo Group’s manager Egidio Maschio and the Group’s delegate manager Mirco Maschio. Afterwards Romania’s Agriculture Minister was visiting the Maschio Gaspardo factory in Chisineu Cris, where farming machines
and tools are manufactured for the farmers of Romania and other countries. Minister Tabara was invited to visit the factory on the special occasion of the inauguration of a new photovoltaic installation, one of the most modern in Europe. The Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) official also met with Chisineu Cris town's mayor Gheoghe Burdan and they were talking about the agricultural investments made in the area. (ActMedia, November 8, 2011)

**Dacia cars sales on French market went up by 51.7 percent in October**

A number of 8,567 new Dacia cars were registered in France in October 2011, 51.7 percent more than the 5,646 units in October 2010, announced the Committee of French Car Manufacturers.

A higher increase in percentage was reported by the sales of Dacia minivans, with a number of 508 units sold on the French market in October 2011, 80.8 percent higher compared to the 281 units in October 2010.

The data on the first ten months indicate that the sales at new Dacia cars on the French market dropped 18.4 percent on an annual rate by 71,086 units and the sales of vans reported a 3.4 percent decrease to 4,222 units. Overall, the French market reported a 2.8 percent increase in October, with 210,236 units registered.

In 2010, a number of 104,642 units were registered in France, 70.9 percent higher than the 61,217 units in 2009.

Dacia Company in Mioveni was taken over by Renault in 1999. Renault has launched seven Dacia models by now, Logan, Logan MCV, Dacia VAN, Logan Pick-Up, Sandero, Sandero Stepway and Duster. (ActMedia, November 8, 2011)

**ING reaches 1 bln Euros threshold in assets managed for Romanian clients**

ING reached the threshold of 1 billion Euros in managed assets for its life insurance and pension clients from Romania, the bank reports in a release.

On the life insurance segment, the value of the financial assets under management amounted to 2.1 billion lei (1 euro = 4.35 lei) at end-Sept. 2011, up 7 percent compared with the same period of 2010. The volume of the gross premiums subscribed by ING Life Insurance in the first 9 months of 2011 stand at 407.5 million lei, slightly up against the volume registered in Sept. 2010 (namely 404.4 million lei), given the decline in the number of contracts with unique premium.

The value of the benefits paid by ING on Jan.- Feb. 2011 for insured events and contracts reaching their maturity dates ran to 47 million lei, up over 21 percent compared with the same period of 2010.

The value of the net assets related to the optional pension funds under ING management totalled 183.7 million lei at the end of the third quarter of 2011, up 38 percent against Q3, 2010 (and compared with a growth pace of 34.7 percent at the level of the entire market). Thus, at end-Sept. 2011, ING Life Insurance owned a cumulated quota of 45.8 percent, depending on the assets, on the 3rd Pillar market.

In Sept. 2011, the rate of the annual profitability amounted to 5.99 percent for ING Active and 7.48 percent for ING Optimum.

In the first 9 months of 2011, ING Life Insurance posted a gross profit worth 25.5 million lei, against 46 million lei registered in the same period of 2010.

As for the mandatory pension segment, ING manages the savings for the future of over 1.6
Embassy of Romania in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

At the end of the first 9 months of 2011, the ING Private Pension Fund owned net assets worth 2.2 billion lei, up 47 percent compared with the amount recorded at the end of the same period in 2010. Thus, the market share of ING Pensions stood at about 39 percent at end-June 2011. (ActMedia, November 7, 2011)

**Romania has 60% of mineral water reserves in Europe**

Romania has about 60% of mineral water reserves in Europe, but exploits only 20% of them according to data supplied by Rio Bucovina, one of the most important mineral water producers. At present, water bottled in Romania reaches about 11.3 million hl., which means 0.16 l/day/person. The Romanians continue to drink about 50 l of mineral water/year, half of the annual European average. According to Rio Bucovina representatives, the potential consumption can exceed 35 million hl/year. However, the estimate consumption increase is moderate, about 5% per year.

The Romanians prefer Romanian brands and over 60% of consumers are women. Bucharest is the biggest plain water consumer, over 60% of people drinking plain water daily. According to the latest data, plain water consumption holds a share of 56%, while fizzy water represents 44%. As for bottling 2 l. plastic bottles are preferred, followed by 5 l. recipients.

Data were obtained by Rio Bucovina this year following an analysis of consumption customs in towns with over 50,000 inhabitants. Rio Bucovina, present in the market since 2006 had a business figure of 85 million lei in 2010 and estimates a business figure of 110 million lei in 2011. The main brands are Bucovina, La Vitta, Rio, Malibu, Bon Ton, and Golden Horse. Rio Bucovina is the single distributor in Romania for Zara (pasta) and Becker’s Bester (natural fruit juice). (ActMedia, November 1, 2011)

**Maritimo Shopping Centre, new investment worth 100 mln Euros in Constanta**

Maritimo Shopping Centre, an investment worth about 100 million Euros was officially inaugurated in Constanta (southeastern Romania), offering over 1,200 fresh jobs. The investment was made by the Austrian company Immofinanz and according to its representative Eduard Zehetner, the commercial centre, covering a total area of over 50,000 square meters has 130 stores, known as international fashion brands, restaurants, spare time entertainment places and also a car park with 2,200 parking spaces.
'We have worked very hard to open Maritimo Shopping Centre, in our opinion being one of Romania's most modern commercial centres. I am positive it will become Constanta people's favourite spot,' Eduard Zehetner said.

According to him, the all-in investment of nearly 100 million Euros also includes the money invested by Auchan Hypermarket, located in the shopping center. Eduard Zehetner said an eight-hall cinema multiplex will be opened in the spring of 2012.

Attending the inauguration, Constanta Mayor Radu Mazare said this is the biggest investment from the county, also raising the city's standard.

'The investment has generated jobs during the period in which the building has been constructed and it will also generate during its running. I know this investment raises Constanta's standard as a city and it will be a popular attraction both for the city's residents and for those living in the neighbourhood, and during summer for tourists. (...) I am very proud this investment was made in these difficult times,' Mazare said.

The portfolio of Immofinanz Group includes 50 properties, mainly commercial centres and office buildings, with the value of the investments standing at roughly 900 million Euros. (ActMedia, November 2, 2011)

Pound trades at 5.09 lei

The exchange rate of the national leu currency resulting from the quotations announced on November 15 by the banks authorized to operate on the currency market is as follows:

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<th>CURRENCY</th>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
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<td>GBP</td>
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<tr>
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- **Culture & Tourism**

**Wild Carpathia Preview screening at the Embassy of Romania in London**

Embassy of Romania – London/ On October 26, 2011, the Embassy of Romania in the United Kingdom and Romanian Cultural Institute in London hosted the preview screening of “Wild Carpathia”, a Travel Channel documentary filmed in Romania. Together with the 200 guests were present the associate producer, Paul Lister, founder of European Nature Trust, Geoff Ellis, Vice-president of Travel Channel, and the presenter, Charlie Ottley.

The event took place under the patronage of the Ambassador of Romania in London, Dr Ion Jinga, and it was organised by European Nature Trust.
and Travel Channel, with the support of the Romanian National Tourist Office in London.

In his opening remarks, the Ambassador of Romania saluted the producers' initiative to film “one of the most beautiful places in the world: The Carpathian Mountains, the cradle where the Romanian people was born 1900 years ago, the place that brings together in perfect harmony three main Romanian historical provinces: Transylvania, Walachia and Moldova”.

“The film is remarkable because it avoids classical stereotypes and it shows places of an extraordinary natural beauty and cultural richness, where real people live real lives. I invite you to watch this documentary because it shows not only ravishing landscapes and well preserved medieval architecture, but also captures a way of life, ancient traditions demonstrating the hospitality, generosity and spiritual wealth of the Romanian people”.

“We are deeply honoured that HRH The Prince of Wales has agreed to give an interview and revealed his passion for this fairylands, where he is doing a fantastic job in preserving the traditional architecture and skills of the local people”.

After the screening, the guests were invited to have a taste of the Romanian cuisine, its exquisite wines and flavoured dishes, by the organisers.

Wild Carpathia is going to be translated in 20 languages and broadcasted in 121 countries. In the United Kingdom can be watched on travel Channel, Sky 251 and 252, the next dates: Sunday, 30 October at 8pm, Wednesday, 2 November at 8pm, Thursday, 3 November at 1.30pm, Saturday, 5 November at 2pm, Sunday, 6 November at 6pm and Saturday, 12 November at 8am.

Romania participated at the World Travel Market
Embassy of Romania in London/On November 7, 2011, the Ambassador of Romania in London, Dr Ion Jinga, attended the opening of the Romanian stall at the World Travel Market, held at ExCel London.

The Romanian stall was 255 square meters large and it was organized by the Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism, hosting 31 co-exhibitors: tour operators and tourism agencies, hotels, regional tourism associations and event organizers. The official delegation
led by Mrs Carmen Moraru, director general in the Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism, was accompanied by a group of Romanian journalists.

On this occasion, the documentary “Wild Carpathia”, made by Travel Channel and the European Nature Trust, was screened. Attending the event were the associate producer and founder of the organisation, Paul Lister, and the presenter, Charlie Ottley.

In an interview for the Romanian journalists, the Ambassador of Romania said: “The documentary captures, in a heartfelt and accurate manner, the essence of being Romanian. It presents one of the most beautiful places in the world, the cradle where the Romanian people were born more than 1900 years ago, the meeting point of three main Romanian historical provinces: Transylvania, Walachia and Moldova. The Carpathians were compared by the British press with the Yellowstone National Park (USA), which entitles us to believe that we are on the right track in building a true and deep Romania profile, beyond the classical stereotypes. The producers would like to continue the series of documentaries in our country, presenting the Danube Delta, Bucovina and Maramureș, and I encouraged them to do so”.

At the Romanian stall was also launched the “Guide to Spa Resorts – Romania”, made by the Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism.

Now in its 32nd year, the World Travel Market, the largest fair in the world for tourism professionals, is open to the public between 7-10 November 2011, hosting exhibitors from 152 countries.
Cultural events to be organised by or with the support of the ROMANIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE in London:

The Contest by Dan Pîta @ Romanian Cinematheque

24/11/2011 @ 1 Belgrave Square, SW1X 8PH

We invite you to the screening of Dan Pîta’s iconic film *The Contest*, which tells the story of an outdoor competition that gradually turns into a perilous expedition through the labyrinths of conscience.

**Introduced by film journalist Edward Lawrenson**

Leading Romanian director Dan Pîta turns an orientation contest in a forest into an ordeal of psychological suspense and, ultimately, an ironic allegory. What starts out as a simple expedition becomes complicated when the group hear a mysterious cry for help and decide to ignore it rather than veer off course. In the surreal atmosphere of a contest, Dan Pîta exposes the myth of collaborative teamwork in the everyday conduct of sociopolitical institutions.

“We are faced with humanity sick with indifference... Superbly photographed by newcomer Vlad Paunescu, and with a fine group of actors, Contest is undoubtedly one of the most profound Romanian films ever made.” International Film Guide

**Lucian Ban and his fabulous octet invited to perform at London Jazz Festival**

20/11/2011 @ Southbank Centre / Purcell Room

Acclaimed pianist Lucian Ban, accompanied by an exceptional group of musicians, will perform *Enescu Re-Imagined* at London Jazz Festival.

Conceived by Lucian Ban and John Hebert, the *Enescu Re-Imagined* project was inspired by the work of the great Romanian composer George Enescu. The project premiered in 2009 at the “George Enescu” International Festival in Bucharest. Since then, it has been presented in numerous
concerts and venues, being considered one of the best shows in 2010.

With two nominations for the “Best European Jazz Musician”, Ban will re-imagine Enescu’s work bringing into the spotlight an A-list band that includes: Tony Malaby (tenor saxophone), Ralph Alessi (trumpet), Albrecht Maurer (violin), Mat Maneri (viola), Badal Roy (tabla, voice, percussion), Drew Gress (bass) and Mark Ferber (drums). Do not miss an uplifting mix of sounds from New York’s downtown jazz scene with a twist of rhythms from Romania’s folklore and from the Indian subcontinent!

“Trust us; this kind of night only happens once every three centuries”. Stacey Anderson, Village Voice NY

After studying composition at Bucharest Music Academy, in 1995 Lucian Ban established a group named Jazz Unit, and released two albums through Green Records label in Romania. In 1999, he moved to New York where he studied at the New School University for two years. His American debut Somethin’ Holy recorded in a duet with saxophone player Alex Harding brought him 4 stars from Allmusic. This success was followed by the critically praised quintet album “Premonition” (2003), “Tuba Project” (featuring Bob Stewart, 2006) and “Playground” (featuring Jorge Sylvester, 2006).

Lia Perjovschi’s first exhibition in Ireland

04 - 20/11/2011 @ James Hardiman Library, National University of Ireland, University Road, Galway

Lia Perjovschi, one of Romania’s leading contemporary artists, opens her first exhibition in Ireland with the support of the Romanian Cultural Institute London, as part of the TULCA Art Festival in Galway.

For nearly twenty years, Lia has embarked on a project-as-an-institution, employing the recent history of art as material for building up relations and dialogue. The CAA (Contemporary Art Archive) is a “context in motion”, a “museum in files”, based on meticulous documentation of the international art scene. Her works are neither installations nor performances; they look like offices for individual research, reading rooms or places for debates; the focus is the body of art.

The installation of Lia’s work will be sited in the James Hardiman Library, one of the central areas of the National University of Ireland Galway.
The TULCA Season of contemporary visual art is one of the most important annual art events in Galway and in the West of Ireland. This year’s programme, curated by Megs Morley, addresses the role of art at a time of local, national and international recession, political collapse and social upheaval, under the familiar yet ambiguous name “After the fall”.

The programme features local and international artists in multiple art and non-art spaces throughout Galway city, unexpected live-art performances, and a programme of discussions, talks, workshops and debates with artists, critics and curators.

Poetic Voices in Conversation: Vasile Garnet and Mario Petrucci

17/11/2011 @ Institutul Cultural Român Londra, 1 Belgrave Square

Vasile Garnet will conclude the 2011 series Contemporary Romanian Poets organised in partnership with Poet in the City, which over the course of 2011 has presented six of Romania’s most accomplished poets: Denisa Comănescu, Claudiu Komartin, Bogdan Ghiu, Miruna Vlada, Andrei Bodiu and Vasile Gârneț. Mario Petrucci will join the Romanian poet as special guest.

Vasile Gârneț (b. 1958) is considered a remarkable cultural personality and one of the important poets of contemporary Romanian literature. Vasile’s poetic works, which include A Character in the Forgotten Garden and Borges Field, have been awarded numerous literary prizes in both Romania and his native Moldova. A subtle and refined poet, he uses a striking montage of poetic imagery to reveal a deeper aestheticism beneath.

Mario Petrucci, a metaphysical poet of international standing, an ecologist and PhD physicist, will join Vasile Gârneț as special guest. He has received major literary prizes across the board (National Poetry Competition (3rd); four times winner of the London Writers competition; Bridport Prize (winner); New London Writers Award). His poem on Chernobyl, Heavy Water (2004), captured the prestigious Arvon Prize for poetry; his other volumes include Flowers of Sulphur (2007), i tulips (2010) and the waltz in my blood (2011).

The event will be hosted by Amanda Hopkinson, a Senior Fellow at the University of East Anglia and Visiting Professor of Literary Translation at Manchester University and at City University, London, who will provide an English introduction and will place the poets in context for the English-speaking members of the audience.

Poetry in Romanian will also be read and performed in English translation by actress Cristina Catalina.
Nottara Theatre Tour in London

09 - 19/11/2011 @ The Pit, Barbican Centre

Nottara Theatre from Bucharest showcases, at Barbican Centre, Vlad Massaci’s stage version of Festen by Thomas Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov. The production is a sample of world class directing and performance and marks the come back of the Romanian theatre on the London stage after more than 13 years of absence.

Based on the first, multi-award-winning Danish film that emerged from the Dogme 95 movement, this movingly realised stage version blends nuanced performances from its Bucharest ensemble, urging us to reflect on the lasting consequences of turning away from the truth.

Festen is the story of the Klingenberg/Hansen family gathered to celebrate a patriarch’s 60th birthday. But festivities around the banquet table are interrupted as a startling secret, left to fester over years, is exposed. In Massaci’s personal view, the story of the troubled Klingenberg/Hansen family is the story of the very society we live in: “one that rejects dealing with recent history. If shrinks for nations existed, we should be making appointments” (Vlad Massaci).

Festen @ The Pit is a rare opportunity to encounter several generations of Romanian actors. The exceptional cast includes Alexandru Repan, Emil Hossu, Catrinel Dumitrescu, Ion Grosu and the young Ada Navrot and Dan Bordeianu.

About the theatre and the director

Nottara Theatre is one of the oldest repertoire theatres in Bucharest, with a distinctive artistic voice in the Romanian cultural landscape. Acknowledged over the years by audiences and critics alike for the company’s outstanding creative ensemble, Nottara has mounted in time over 320 exciting Romanian and international productions. Having showcased work at numerous festivals across the world, from Ukraine to Uruguay, Festen at The Barbican marks the theatre’s UK debut.

Director Vlad Massaci is a long-term collaborator of the Nottara Theatre, where he has previously mounted The Cripple of Inishmaan by Martin McDonagh (2005), Platonov by Chekov (2008) and Festen (2009). Self-defined as an advocate of simplicity in theatre, Massaci places the ensemble at the heart of the production, and the world of the production within each actor. His artistic vision is confirmed by the critically acclaimed performances.

Performed in Romanian with English surtitles.
British Press Reviews:

Festen (The Celebration)
by Thomas Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov
Barbican Pit
Review by Philip Fisher (2011)

Rufus Norris and David Eldridge together created what many will see as a definitive stage version of Festen.

It is still refreshing to see what other companies can do when it comes to adapting the unforgettable Dogme 95 debut film written by Thomas Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov.

This version directed for Nottara Theatre, Bucharest by Vlad Massaci combines three separate cultures, as the Danish movie is first translated into Romanian and then presented in the Barbican Pit with English surtitles.

The real strengths of this production lie in an absolutely claustrophobic staging with the actors hemmed in on three sides by audience members and on the fourth by a glass wall adorned by a variety of symbolic animal skulls.

This is the home of the Klingenfeldt-Hansen family, although all of the children have fled the roost. They return to celebrate the 60th birthday of patriarch Helge, played with remarkable intensity by Alexandru Repan.

The great man has clearly lived his life as a harsh disciplinarian so the return of his children has something of the character of a typical British Christmas when the best laid plans of mice and men often fall horribly apart within minutes of reunion.

From the opening, bitter disagreement seems inevitable although initially girlish Linda played by Cristina Păun seems happy enough. It is only slowly that we realise that she is a ghost returning like Hamlet Senior to avenge herself on the culprits behind her recent suicide.

Wild, young Michael, Dan Bordeianu, is apparently banned after previous excesses, while his much quieter brother Christian, played by Ion Grosu, appears on the brink of nervous breakdown, though we soon learn why.

The evening’s mystery is developed further thanks to the efforts of Ada Navrot’s Helene, who searches for clues that might lead to a final communication from their missing sister.

After suitable approbation for the birthday boy, Christian rather spoils the effect by denouncing him as a paedophile who for years abused his own children and particularly Christian himself and Linda.
What transpires can be difficult to behold as the family goes into meltdown first in desperate denial and then abject despair as they realise that the rock upon whom all hope has been built is false.

What makes this production worth bringing all the way from Romania is the acting of all of the leading performers but particularly Alexandru Repan who effortlessly moves from celebratory mode to belligerent defence and finally collapse.

He gets particularly strong support from Ion Grosu who portrays Christian as a man on a mission to achieve catharsis quarter of a century too late.

_Festen_ still seems just as powerful on stage today as it did when it launched the low-budget Danish Dogme concept of moviemaking that turned Lars von Trier into a global name.

Now, 13 years on, Vlad Massaci and his excellent collaborators catches the same feeling of fear, intimacy and urgency in an engrossing 100 minutes.

http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/festenbarbican-rev.htm

**Festen, The Pit, London**

November 10, 2011 6:31 pm  
By Ian Shuttleworth

We often praise the way that its physical immediacy makes live performance a deeper, richer experience than film. But that same immediacy can, disappointingly often, mean that nuances and discretions available to the more distanced eye of the film camera are lost or discarded in a stage version. This is the case with the Nottara Theatre of Bucharest’s adaptation of Thomas Vinterberg’s Dogme film _Festen_.

It is partly a consequence of the logistics of stage adaptation. Limiting the action at this family reunion to the single location of the dining room and making events more or less continuous give fewer opportunities for sidelights on the various family members that might contextualise Christian’s announcement, by way of a 60th-birthday toast, that his father had repeatedly raped him and his now-dead twin sister during their childhood. However, director Vlad Massaci has also chosen to clarify, ie simplify, the moral and factual picture.

Much of the uneasiness generated by the film in its middle phase stems from our uncertainty as to whether Christian’s accusation is true or a figment from his history of mental disturbance, then from similar doubt as to how the family will respond. Here, regular appearances by Linda’s ghost lend credence to his claim from the beginning.

So does the performance of Alexandru Repan as their father Helge: in his white tuxedo, cummerbund and matching patent leather shoes, he is not just a paterfamilias but a Godfather, exuberant but also menacing. It is easier to believe such a man would be an abuser than to side with him against Ion Grosu’s far from saintly but still palpably martyred Christian. Massaci’s programme notes hint at a significance in Christian’s naming, as they paint the piece as a
portrait of a society waiting for someone such as him to speak out truthfully, after which they are compelled to take the right position.

Massacci retains a nod towards the work’s filmic origins by having a video camera shoot the “celebratory” dinner and the succession of family speeches; in a deep thrust staging on three sides, this also helps members of the audience who may not be able to see directly the expression of a given speechmaker or listener. It is an adroitly crafted ensemble piece, but this is one of those occasions when cross-media comparisons are invidious.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/e51598ca-0b90-11e1-9a61-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1qLaDS5Sw

Festen, Barbican Pit - review

Thomas Vinterberg's 1998 film Festen is a modern classic, and in 2004 this picture of tainted inheritance was deftly adapted for the stage by David Eldridge. Here, in a different version by Bucharest's Nottara Theatre, making their debut in this country, it remains a disturbing vision of domestic tragedy.

Presented in Romanian with English surtitles, the story revolves around Danish family, the Klingenfeld-Hansens, coming together to honour the 60th birthday of stern patriarch Helge. It is meant to be a celebration but is marred by the outbursts of Helge's son Christian, who claims he and his dead sister Linda were abused as children by Helge.

An essential feature of Vinterberg's film is our initial uncertainty about whether Christian's account of events is accurate. Here it is corroborated by the almost conspiratorial presence of
Linda’s ghost. Other nuances of the film are absent, simply because the tight playing space means elements of the action are now and then invisible to sections of the audience. At times we feel too close and wish for a more distant vantage point. Matters aren’t helped by the fact that the surtitles are poorly synchronised.

Director Vlad Massaci has understandably chosen to omit parts of the original script that it would be difficult to show onstage. Yet the result is that the social world of the story seems less rich, and some subtleties of characterisation are lost.

The main strength of the production is the quality of the performances: Alexandru Repan’s menacing Helge, Ion Grosu’s bug-eyed Christian, and Dan Bordeianu as Christian’s disorderly brother Michael.

The ensemble work is skillfully marshalled, with a couple of moments of thrilling physicality, and the narrative builds powerfully. Massaci is clearly a gifted craftsman. But his version of Festen suffers by comparison with the artistic achievement that inspired it.

Until November 19 (020 7638 8891, barbican.org.uk)

http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/theatre/review-24008700-festen-barbican-pit--review.do

Festen (The Celebration)
Published Friday 11 November 2011 at 10:40 by Mark Shenton

The title, of course, is heavily ironic. Festen may be Danish for celebration, but though it revolves around a family who come together to celebrate the patriarch’s 60th birthday, it’s an event in which shattering long-buried secrets around a daughter’s suicide are finally brought out into the open, and implode the family forever. Originally written as a 1998 film by Thomas Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov, it was subsequently adapted for the stage by the same authors - a Polish language version of that script previously came to Sadler’s Wells as part of LIFT in 2002.

But it is best known in Britain for a subsequent stage version, written by David Eldridge under commission to producer Marla Rubin and first produced at the Almeida in 2004, from where it subsequently transferred to the West End’s Lyric Theatre. I called that production one of the most powerful, poignant and overwhelming evenings I’ve ever spent in the theatre, a judgement I still stand by.

So seeing it again at the Barbican in a Romanian production that returns to Vinterberg and Rukov’s stage script has a lot to live up to, and only partially succeeds. Some of the shapes and contours I remember so vividly from Rufus Norris’s production have been ironed out - this
version also lacks the layers that Eldridge imposed on it, as he took the action out of the dining room and into the bedrooms of the private hotel that the father runs.

Instead, it strips the action back to the single setting of a wood-panelled dining room. One key character, Hergé’s depressed brother Poul, has been erased and Linda - the sister who committed suicide - is now a dominant, silent presence, observing the action throughout. That’s not to say it isn’t still forceful - the story acquires a dreadful, accumulating sense of terror, dread and pain, especially as poignantly seen through the eyes of Ion Grosu’s superb Christian, the brother who survived his father’s abuse but is still its victim. Alexandru Repan also makes the father Helge all too horribly plausible. But director Vlad Massaci’s production feels a little relentless and almost entirely humourless - part of the wrenching pain in the Norris/Eldridge version came from the humanity of its humour. There are also serious sightline problems by seating the audience on three sides, with the long dining table in the centre, which even the resourceful use of a TV camera filming the dinner and projecting it onto two large flatscreens doesn’t fully solve.

http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/34187/festen-the-celebration-

Festen, Barbican Pit Theatre

Romanian stage version of the famous Dogme 95 film story hurts but doesn’t really fly
by Aleks Sierz
Friday, 11 November 2011

Children at risk: Alexandru Repan in ‘Festen’

Ciprian Duica

Family occasions can be fraught affairs, as playwrights from Harold Pinter to Alan Ayckbourn have convincingly proved, but the mother of all family meltdown dramas must be Thomas Vinterberg’s Danish Festen, a Dogme 95 film made in 1998. Soon after, this was turned into a stage play by Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov, which had an outstanding success in David Eldridge’s version here in 2004. Now a Romanian theatre company, Nottara, from Bucharest, bring their version to London.

At the start of the evening, we are welcomed chez Klingenfeld-Hansen (the Danish names remain unchanged). The family has come together to celebrate the father Helge’s 60th birthday - festen means a celebration. Guests include their oldest son, Christian, and their daughter Helene. Plus
Michael, the wilder younger son, who gatecrashes the event: he’s in disgrace for not coming to the funeral of Linda, another daughter who has killed herself. As the eating and drinking begins, everything seems normal. And it is, until the time comes for the birthday speeches. When Christian gets up, he offers two choices of speech: the unwelcome truth and a convenient lie.

When the family choose the truth, Christian accuses Helge of child sexual abuse. Then all hell breaks loose. His mother Else begs him to apologise; Michael, his wife Mette and their child are in shock; the toast master doesn’t know what to do, and the servants suddenly become involved. Soon after, Helene’s lover - a rastaman - makes a surprise appearance and tests the family’s tolerance. A little later, Helene produces one of those staples of traditional European drama, the hidden letter, and a second circle of hell is revealed.

This large family (pictured right) is - like so many stage families - a microcosm of society. With its four generations, numerous servants, and complex sexual cross-currents, this is like a human pyramid, topped by the winners of this world - criminals who are able to get away with it - and built on the bent backs of the losers. In a wonderfully subversive moment, it is the servants that make sure that none of their betters can leave.

But if Vinterberg and Rukov perform an autopsy on all that is rotten in the state of Denmark, this is also a story about personal courage. Christian comes across as an unwilling hero, yet he still manages to persist in his confrontation with his father, which is both psychologically painful and has shades of mythical and Oedipal significance.

Vlad Massaci’s production, which is Nottara’s UK debut, is performed in Romanian with English surtitles. It is a fine example of ensemble acting, where each actor gets their moment to shine. Alexandru Repan’s Helge is a mountain of a man, a powerful and sinister stage presence, while Ion Grosu’s Christian makes the journey from depression to confrontation seemingly at enormous personal cost. When these men break, the earth seems to tremble. There’s good work also from Dan Bordeianu as the young and passionate Michael and Ada Navrot as the nervous and worried Helene.
As the skeletons come tumbling out of several cupboards, there are one or two funny moments, each laced with an acerbic twist of excruciating emotion. But if the naturalism of the acting makes the show instantly accessible, the main disappointment is that the piece is not presented with more visual imagination. Apart from the ghostly presence of Linda, some spectral animal trophies and a distracting video, the show remains earthbound. It hurts, as it should, but it never really soars.

- **Festen is at the Barbican Pit Theatre until 19 November**

**Theatre Review: Festen (The Celebration) @ The Barbican**

By zefrog - November 11, 2011 at 13:00 pm -

Confrontation during a celebration - photo: Florin Biolan

A Danish play, featuring incest and paedophilia, and performed in Romanian with English surtitles may not seem, on first consideration, the most appealing proposition a theatre can dream up to fill a house.

This is, however, what is currently on offer at the Barbican – a stage adaption of *Festen (The Celebration)* by Nottara Theatre of Bucharest and based on the script and 1998 film by Thomas Vinterberg.

It is a truth universally acknowledged in many a piece of fiction that families are complicated and as we are reminded very early in this production, the Klingenfeldt-Hansen family is no exception.

The table is set for the 60th birthday dinner of the patriarch, Helge (Alexandru Repan) and as the family reunion progresses we realise how complicated the relationships between the main members of this particular clan actually are.

Linda, one of the four children, died only a few months ago and her ghost (Cristina Păun) literally haunts the family home. Soon comes the time for the speeches and Christian (Ion
Grosu), the eldest, drops a bomb that completely fails to explode, due to the wilful refusal of all present to acknowledge the gravity of what has just been said.

From there the celebration stumbles on willy nilly, oscillating between understated farce and outright drama, to the point where we start to wonder if Christian is simply mad. Eventually, secrets and lies are revealed culminating in Helge’s downfall; leading Helmut Van Sachs (the family friend officiating as unflappable MC – Emil Hossu) to remark euphemistically: “it is quite difficult to be the toastmaster today”.

The production, an initiative by the Romanian Cultural Institute, is installed in the Pit, a studio theatre in the basement of the Barbican Centre. This is an inspired choice of a venue for that particular play, adding an ideal sense of intimacy and claustrophobia to the experience.

Vinterberg’s award-winning script raises issues that are probably even more present in the social psyche now than they were at the time of writing but it only uses them as narrative devices to explore the tribalism and hypocrisy of the family.

It is served in this by a first-rate cast who offer some very intense performances. The actors remain clearly shaken by what they have just been through when, at the end, they should be basking in their highly deserved applause.

As mentioned, the performance is in Romanian with English surtitles. This wouldn’t be a problem if the surtitles were synchronised with the performance. Unfortunately, on the night we attended, they were almost invariably displayed late and sometimes too fast. There was also a feeling that not everything that was said had been translated.

This rather marred the experience but remains the only truly negative point of an otherwise excellent night.

Festen (The Celebration) is at The Barbican until 19 November. Tickets: £18. Londonist received a press ticket to see last night’s performance.


Festen
Venue: The Pit, Barbican Centre
Where: West End
Date Reviewed: 11 November 2011
WOS Rating: ★★★★

At the centre of this Romanian production of Festen, which is based on Thomas Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov’s playtext of their seminal 1998 Dogme film - the same used by David Eldridge for his thrilling 2004 version - are two powerhouse performances from Alexandru Repan and Ion Grosu.
They play father and son Helge and Christian, who have gathered with the rest of their family to celebrate Helge’s 60th birthday in the family pile. But the skeletons soon come popping out like jack-in-the-boxes when Christian accuses the proud patriarch of abusing him and his recently deceased sister Linda as children. The revelation is dealt with in different ways by the gathered guests. Some gasp, some sing, and the poor MC simply carries on regardless.

The dining table takes centre stage in Vlad Massaci’s production, which jettisons the bedroom and external scenes depicted in the film and retained in Eldridge’s version. As a result the action is more focussed but the private exchanges lack intimacy; quite literally in the case of younger brother Michael (Dan Bordeianu) when he attempts a quickie with his wife on an armchair.

But let’s return to those central performances. Grosu lends an innocence and rabbit-in-headlights vulnerability to Christian that is deeply affecting. He visibly trembles when he first greets Helge, and perfectly captures the essence of a man living constantly in fear. When he exclaims “Where are you?” to the ghost of his dead sister (an intermittent presence on stage), it is as much a psychological as pragmatic question.

The white-suited Repan is a genuinely frightening presence as Helge. He struts around like a mafia boss, his white shoes glistening in the lights. He reacts with anger when his wife raises her eyebrows at him for inviting his grandson to sit on his knee, and by the end has descended even further into appallingly misguided self-pity.

A few of the key lines - notably Christian’s initial revelation - fail to hit home as effectively as they should due to the inevitable surtitle delay. And not casting a black actor in the role of Gbatokai is a mistake, meaning Michael’s racist slurs look odd to say the least.

But despite these drawbacks there is much to admire in Nottara Theatre’s economic staging of a family melodrama that continues to send shivers down the spine.

- by Theo Bosanquet

http://www.whatsonstage.com/reviews/theatre/london/E8831321012772/Festen.html

Theatre review: Festen at the Barbican Centre
by Amy Humphreys Friday, November 18, 2011 1:10 PM
Family feuds erupts in this Romanian production challenging the importance of telling the truth
But family feuds erupt when the son admits to being sexually abused as a child. Picture: Florin Biolan

Romanian Theatre returns to the London stage after a decade’s absence with Festen, produced by Nottara Theatre in association with the Romanian Cultural Institute.

Originally the first film to emerge from the Danish Dogme 95 movement (led by Thomas Vinterberg and Lars Von Trier), this new stage version has been adapted by Vinterberg and Mogens Rukov.

The Klingenfeldt-Hansen family has gathered to celebrate the 60th birthday of patriarch Helge. But the celebratory atmosphere quickly turns sour when the son Christian announces he was sexually abused by his father as a child.

The play challenges our response to atrocities and whether, as individuals or societies, we choose to overlook historic horrors in favour of an easy ride in the present day.

The programme notes tell us the production is anchored around the principle creed of the Dogme 95 manifesto: the ensemble at the heart of the production, and the world of the play within each actor. This is immediately obvious, with some of the strongest ensemble acting I have seen in a long time.

The performance space is small, and the cast substantial, yet all 19 players share the space equally and with no regard for who the ‘lead’ roles are supposed to be.

The programme also contains no biographies of the cast; past credits are clearly deemed irrelevant to this production.

The result is a tightly-knit production of nuanced, perfectly-pitched performances.

Having to follow surtitles mean certain moments of the action are missed, but it is worth it to witness a great display in true ensemble acting from one of Romania’s oldest repertory companies.

- Festen is showing at the Barbican Centre, in Silk Street, EC2, until Saturday, November 19.

http://www.bdpost.co.uk/what-s-on/theatre/theatre_review_festen_at_the_barbican_centre_1_1130603

More info about The Romanian Cultural Institute in London’s events, please find at: www.icr-london.co.uk
Balanescu Quartet at Kiss The Sky Bar, London

Tuesday 22 Nov 2011

20:00, Kiss the Sky Bar, 7 – 9 Pond Street London NW3 2PH, Tel. 0207 794 7377, info@kisstheskybar.com
Tickets: £10 on the door

The Balanescu Quartet are playing an intimate London show on 22 November at the Kiss the Sky Bar (capacity 50 people). The programme is a mix of gypsy and traditional Romanian songs given unique treatment by the Balanescu Quartet with the inimitable Sanda Weigl.

An Introduction to Balanescu Quartet, a new compilation of their works is out now, available on Amazon.co.uk

Shantel & Bucovina Club Orkestar

Thursday 24 Nov 2011

19:00, KOKO, 1A Camden High Street, London NW1 7JE. Box office: 0870 432 5527
Tickets: £16, available online

Shantel and his Bucovina Club Orkestar are back for their third mega party at KOKO, celebrating 10 years of the now legendary Bucovina Club that discovered the hottest sounds from the Balkans and took them to the clubs and festivals of the world, from Ibiza to Istanbul.
Shantel is the undisputed King of the vodka-fuelled Gypsy Beat and a turbo-charged Eurosoun. Whether he DJs or plays live with a band, Shantel has the knack for turning any venue into a vortex of pure euphoria, where the Balkan bounce takes over and everyone turns into an expert bellydancer on the spot. Love and good vibes are in the air. This exclusive UK show promises to be a party to remember – tickets are in high demand.

Details on [www.koko.uk.com](http://www.koko.uk.com)

To learn more about Romanian cultural events taking place in London, please visit the page of the [Romanian Cultural Centre/ Ratiu Foundation](http://www.romanianculturalcentre.org.uk/cultural-diary/):