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PRESS RELEASE

European Union promotes Quality Statistics

A new EU funded twinning project, of a total value of 1, 2 MEURO, focusing on the improvement of the quality of statistics was launched officially on 22nd October 2002. The project aims to achieve full compliance of the Romanian statistical system with the EU system upon accession.

Accurate statistics is pre-requisite for policy-making, policy enforcement but also monitoring of effective policies at all levels in various sectors: from social-economic to demographic, from environmental to private business investments. Therefore the project purposes are to set up the framework for the provision of accurate, reliable and timely set statistical data. Beside, the project will also focus on three specific statistical issues:

- the elaboration of the necessary methodology for delivering environment statistics (waste, emissions, water use and discharges to water) and the integration of the Romanian environmental statistical system into the EU one;
- the improvement of the government finance statistics and the elaboration of an unique database for the financial indicators adjusted on the basis of the Acquis Communautaire requirements;
- the strengthening of the INS capacity to elaborate statistical studies in the economic and social fields.

The successful implementation of the project requires close cooperation among the National Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Development and Prognosis, the Ministry of Waters and Environment, the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank of Romania. The experts of the Department of Treasury of the Italian Ministry of Economics and Finance, the Italian National Statistics Institute (ISTAT), the Department for Sustainable Development in the Ministry of Environment and the European Center for the International Statistical Cooperation "Luigi Bodio" (CESD-Roma) will share their expertise and experience with the Romanian colleagues to achieve the ambitious results of this project.

The presence to the event of Mr. Yves Franchet, General Director of EUROSTAT (the European Union Statistical Office), Aurel Camara, President of the National Institute of Statistics, Augusto Zodda, Deputy General Director of the Department of Treasury of the Italian Ministry of Economics and Finance, Salvatore Favazza, Director of CESD-Roma and André Lys, Head of Pre-Accession Assistance within the Delegation of European Commission in Romania witnesses the importance attached to this project by the European Commission and the partners institutions from Romania and Member States.

The Eurostat Director General, Yves Franchet, emphasized how important the total quality management (TQM) approach, is for a country seeking EU accession.

"The overall objective of this project is to refine the overall country statistical system as to enable it to meet the needs of the Romanian economy and EU requirements with accurate, reliable and timely data in the context of accession negotiation and membership obligations. It is important to consolidate the Romanian statistical system towards reaching compliance with EU statistical norms and standards, by creating the premises for an appropriate communication and transparency, leading to strengthen the confidence in Romanian statistics", declared Mr. Augusto Zodda.

In his turn, Aurel Camara, stated that: *"The objectives of the project will be pursued through an articulated work programme that comprises about one hundred different activities, among which the Italian short-term experts missions to Bucharest and inland Romania, Romanian officials study visits to Italy, training for the Romanian partners, know-how transfer, common work, studies and seminars".*

"One of the priorities for the European Union statistical work is to support the EU enlargement by incorporating those areas of statistical indicators of primary importance for the accession negotiations and for the integration of Candidate Countries statistical system into the European one" stated Andre Lys.

An Italian Pre-Accession Advisor, from the mandated body CESD-Roma will be seconded to the Romanian partner over the duration of the project and a wide range of expertise will be provided on a medium and short term basis by the Member States' partners.

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PHARE was the first European Union programme of technical and financial co-operation with Central and East European countries, initially launched in 1989. The programme is a pre-accession instrument aimed at supporting candidate states' preparation with a view to EU accession. Romania could receive about 250 million EURO annually through the PHARE programme, being the second candidate state, after Poland, as to the amount of allocated funds.