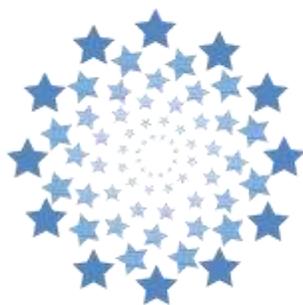


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ACTIVITY REPORT 2018

EUROPULS – CENTRE OF
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2018 SUMMARY

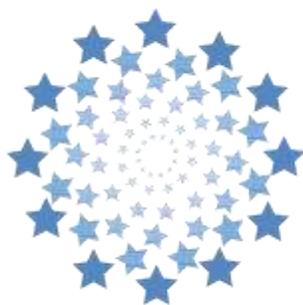
If Eurosfat 2017 has been an assessment moment, in 2018 we came up with concrete proposals for the following years or even decades on how Romania can be part of the European core. Europuls thus brought to the forefront a debate about Romania's contribution in relaunching the European project and the steps to be taken until and after the Sibiu Summit in May 2019. Through the plenary debate of the Forum, Europuls managed to gather, **for the first time since 1995 (Snagov Declaration)** signed by all fourteen major political parties declaring their full support for EU membership), **representatives of all major political parties in Romania at the same table, to discuss about the Future of Europe and Romania's place in setting its direction.**

The RO2019 Platform has continued its monitoring activity, being directly involved in consultations with the Minister-Delegate for European Affairs regarding the priorities of the Romanian Presidency to the Council of the EU. Moreover, our experts provided trainings to civil society on the EU decision-making process and on all the elements of a rotating Presidency. Europuls organized a roundtable with Romanian MEPs in order to discuss about Romania's priorities during the 6-month mandate. The Minister-Delegate was shortly after replaced and Europuls sent a letter to reiterate our commitment for a successful rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Europuls extended its activity in the Republic of Moldova through a Fake News project, aiming to combat fake news and anti-Western propaganda by targeting information vectors in the Republic of Moldova (journalists, bloggers) and empowering them through trainings and contacts with regional experts and leading organizations in debunking fake news from Eastern Europe.

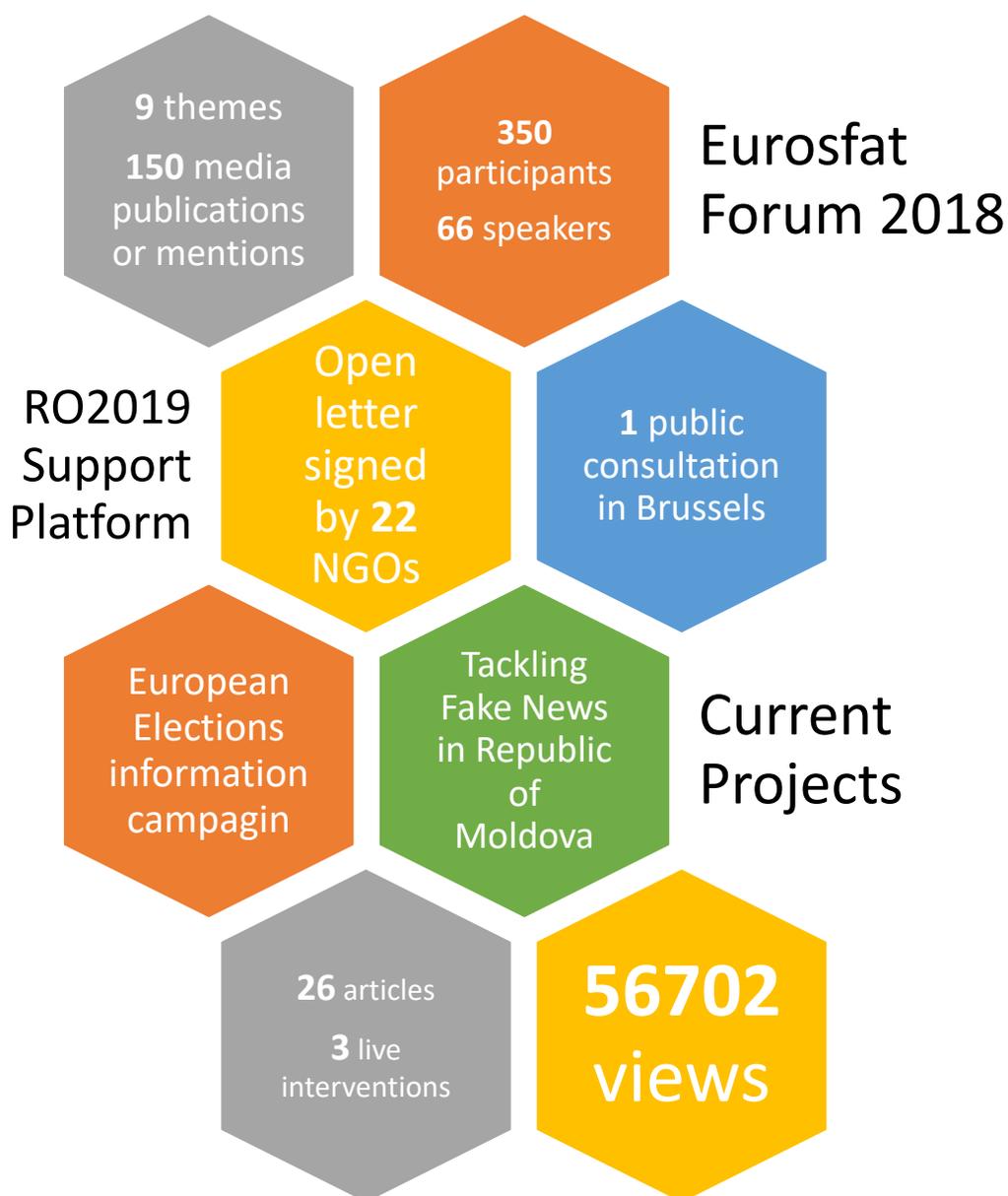
We organized a brainstorming session in Bucharest entitled "How does Romania manage the transition towards a sustainable and digitized energy system?". We also contributed to the European Policy Centre report on the European Citizens' Consultations in the EU member states with a case-study on Romania

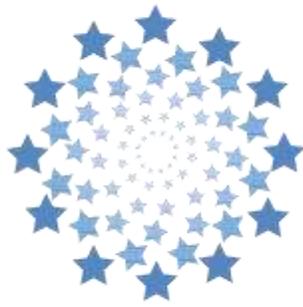
Our experts continued with their written contributions on current topics of the EU agenda and one of our experts began a series of series of articles on elections in the EU member states. We also started a fact-checking series related to national politicians' declarations about the EU.



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1. EUROSFAT 2018

The 6th edition of the EUROSFAT Forum envisaged a broad discussion oriented towards the future: of Romania, of the European Union and of Romania within the EU. The 2018 edition welcomed a record of more than 350 participants at the plenary session, regrouped 66 speakers and took up a different format compared to previous years. On June 6 a **Citizens' Dialogue with Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport** took place. On this occasion, we learnt about the European Commission's vision of the future of the European Union and the potential of education in tackling the current challenges on the European continent, the chances of creating a European Education Union, and the Commission's educational plans by 2025. The Citizens' Dialogue was organized in partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania.



The EUROSFAT forum took place on June 8, and it began with a plenary session entitled "Romania's Vision on the Future of Europe" which gathered, **for the first time since the Snagov Declaration in 1995, representatives of all major political parties in Romania at the same table, to discuss about the Future of Europe and Romania's place in setting its direction.** The main Romanian political leaders participated in a debate with the representatives of civil society, having thus the possibility to publicly state their opinion on Romania's place in the future European project. During this session, the 7 representatives presented their parties' positions on future of Europe, with the purpose to identify the future priorities of Romania as member state of a stronger Europe and the future domains in which Romania could play a strategic role at the European level. The plenary session was organized in partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania.

This year we had the privilege to welcome, among other speakers, **H.E Todor Churov** (Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Romania), **H.E. Isabel Rauscher** (Ambassador Republic of Austria in Romania), **Princess Lia of Romania**, , **Lord Martin Callanan**, (Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Government of the United Kingdom),



Urmas Paet (Member of the European Parliament), **Victor Negrescu**, (Minister Delegate for European Affairs, Government of Romania), **Julian Popov** (Goodwill Ambassador for energy and climate policy, Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council, Fellow, European Climate Foundation), **Mihail Dumitru** (Deputy Director-General, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission), Anca Păduraru, Spokesperson European Commission, European Commission) and the list continues with other well-known names from the national and European political environment, as well as from current civil society.

Moreover, the forum was further structured in 9 thematic workshops around the following topics: the future of European agriculture and its young farmers, democracy and rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe, digital solutions for the energy system, the challenges of the healthcare system, towards a European Social Union, Brexit and its consequences, cybersecurity and combating fake news and propaganda. The forum ended with a cultural event which highlighted the Black Sea diaries, a collection of inspiring stories from people living in the Black Sea region.

Patronaje

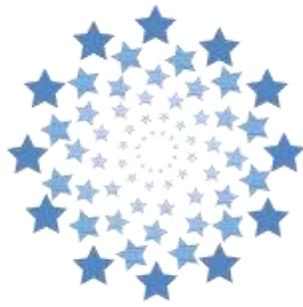


Sponsori



Parteneri





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2. RO2019 PLATFORM

Building on the 2017 activity and making use of our Handbook of the [Romanian Presidency to the Council of the EU](#), Europuls continued to actively monitor the preparations for the upcoming rotating Presidency and to inform Romanian citizens about the importance of this moment through trainings to civil society, business representatives, students, journalists and all interested citizens about the significance of the rotating Presidency and the overall decision-making process at EU level. One of our experts provided 3 trainings on the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2 in Bucharest and one in Cluj.



Europuls prepared a roundtable debate on November 7, 2018 with Romanian Members of the European Parliament on their vision about the Romanian Presidency in 2019, in collaboration with the Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU. The debate took place under the Chatham House rules and consisted in a debate regarding the priorities and challenges of the upcoming Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Romanian Members of the European Parliament also

mentioned their concrete contribution to the rotating Presidency during the 6 month-period.

The rotating Presidency will focus on 4 priorities: EU strategy for the Danube region, the European budget, the digital and social entrepreneurship and the EU Neighbourhood Policy (especially on the Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans and Northern Africa). The participants and the speakers also discussed about essential topics during the rotating Presidency: addressing the initiatives of a multi-speed Europe, terrorism and illegal migration, youth unemployment, Brexit, future of the Eurozone and Schengen, negotiations with Western Balkans and Moldova, future of SMEs, research and innovation progress, artificial intelligence and digitalization, cybersecurity, Erasmus+, improving Eastern Europe connectivity, MFF and future of Europe in the context of the Sibiu Summit.



Europuls also had an immediate reaction following the sudden resignation of Mr. Negrescu from his position as Minister-Delegate for European Affairs, condemning the change of the main contact point for foreign actors interested or involved in the preparations for the Presidency and also the unstable image that this situation offered to the EU actors. After the appointment of Mr. Ciamba in this position, Europuls sent an open letter signed by other 21 civil society actors in which we asked him to immediately resume the preparations for the Presidency and to continue the active engagement of the civil society in the efforts needed to ensure a successful rotating Presidency.

3. FAKE NEWS PROJECT

“Everything you wanted to know about Fake News, but were afraid to ask”

Project Summary:

The projects aimed to combat fake news and anti-Western propaganda by targeting information vectors in the Republic of Moldova (journalists, bloggers) and empowering them through trainings and contacts with regional experts and leading organizations in debunking fake news from Eastern Europe.

Analysis of the situation:

Politically driven and carefully fabricated fake news are becoming one of the basic daily-consumed products in Eastern Europe. Particularly in vulnerable countries like the Republic of Moldova, which sees its news channels, media, politicians and general society split between Western and Russian preferred sources, the prevalence of anti-Western, pro-Kremlin propaganda is a permanent reality.

At the core of tackling this problem are the journalists and bloggers who disseminate, comment on and use the information that becomes available. Europuls considers them valuable and important information vectors, as their role in either furthering the propaganda or stopping it altogether is



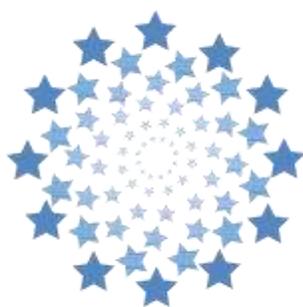
paramount. In the battles of this new information war, they have to be the frontline and if the Western Democratic Model is to be safeguarded and even developed, they need to be empowered with the expertise and tools to identify, block, debunk and prevent fake news in the future.

Goal/Objectives:

Through this project, our main aim was to create links between the anti-propaganda experts and organizations in Europe (StopFake.org in Ukraine, EU East StratCom in Brussels, Finnish Government Department for Strategic Communication, NGOs and think-tanks with expertise in the field etc.) with the image vectors from Moldova. The expected result was to empower the participants from Moldova (identified together with the local partner, the Association of Independent Press (API)) through three main objectives:

- **Objective 1.** Organize a media training for at least 30 Moldovan journalists on fake news and combating propaganda in Chisinau, focused specifically on Russian language propaganda, empowering Moldovan journalists to identify and combat it locally.
- **Objective 2.** Organize a trip to Brussels for at least 10 Moldovan journalists and getting them in contact with the lead experts in the EU environment, providing them with the necessary tools to protect and promote the EU and Western democratic model at home.
- **Objective 3.** Develop a “Fake News Alert” app, linked to a section on a popular online platform in Moldova, which will send out regular updates to identify and debunk fake news and propaganda. The app is currently being implemented and will officially be launched in January.





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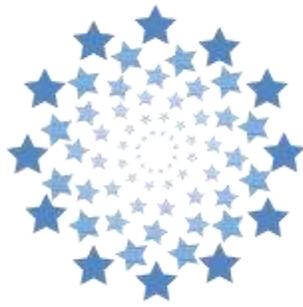
4. ARTICLES

The Europuls volunteer team will continue to write opinions, articles and policy papers on current EU topics, challenges and announcements. Moreover, we started a series of articles that analysed the election mechanisms and results in some EU member states such as Germany, Russia, Czech Republic and we envisaged the possible scenarios and implications of the results from an EU perspective.

The articles and papers written by the Europuls experts are publicized on the official website, nevertheless they are also taken over by 2 of the most important neutral publications in Romania, namely www.contributors.ro and www.hotnews.ro.

Below you can find the list of articles, policy briefs and papers written by the Europuls experts in 2018. The number of views are reported from www.contributors.ro :

- 11.01.2018 - [Analysis of the Czech presidential elections \(I\)](#) Tana Foarfă - 1811 views
- 23.01.2018 - [EU wants renewable energy and energetical efficiency](#) – Iulia Ghiță – 1779 views
- 24.01.2018 - [Analysis of the Czech presidential elections \(II\)](#) - Tana Foarfă - 946 views
- 26.01.2018 - [Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the challenges of the energy policy](#) – Gabriel Trăistaru
- 31.01.2018 - [EU Public Health](#) – Claudia Gherman
- 04.02.2018 - [State of Health in the EU](#) – Iulia Ghiță
- 26.02.2018 - [Romania - almost absent from the EU leadership](#) - Tana Foarfă & Bogdan Deleanu - 2538 views
- 1.03.2018 - [Analysis of the Italian elections](#) - Tana Foarfă & Bogdan Deleanu & Larisa Rusu - 1676 views
- 07.03.2018 - [Desinformation and modern fairytales](#) - Bogdan Deleanu - 7159 views
- 14.03.2018 - [The moving sands of the Brexit clepsydra](#) - Eva Chitul - 1966 views
- 16.03.2018 - [In the backstage of the Russian presidential elections](#) - Tana Foarfă - 1547 views
- 05.04.2018 - [The wind of change doesn't blow in Hungary](#) - Mihaela Popa & Tana Foarfă - 2907 views
- 20.04.2018 - [Upholding democracy in the EU becomes a priority for the European Parliament](#) - Mihaela Popa & Tana Foarfă - 1114 views

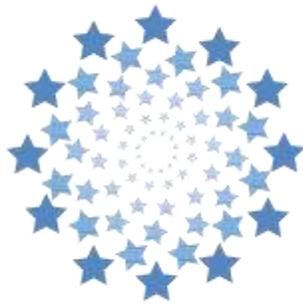


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- 07.05.2018 – [European Commission’s Budget Proposal 2021-2027](#) – analysis by Dumitru Oprițoiu, intern
- 04.06.2018 - [Value-Based Healthcare: state of play in the European Union and its implementation in the Member States](#) – Iulia Ghiță
- 11.06.2018 – [Europuls’ position in the Future of Europe debate](#)
- 11.07.2018 - Open letter to the Romanian politicians [Romania in the EU - between promises and actions](#) - Tana Foarfă - 866 views
- 13.09.2018 - [State of the Union Analysis](#) - Tana Foarfă & Mihaela Popa, 1747 views
- 01.10.2018 – [How did Viorica Dăncilă try to convince that Romania will manage the Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) – Tana Foarfă, 15014 views
- 02.10.2018 – [Romania in the EU: Truths and Disinformation](#) – the Europuls team, 2963 views
- 03.10.2018 – [The Interconnectivity in the Energy field in the 3 Seas Region](#) – Dumitru Oprițoiu, Project Manager
- 08.11.2018 – [The Procedure for the Adoption of the European Parliament Resolution on Rule of Law in Romania](#) – Cezara Panait
- 10.11.2018 – [Romania Sabotages itself before Taking over the Rotating Presidency](#) – the Europuls team, 12345 views
- 15.11.2018 – [Open Letter addressed to the Minister-Delegate for European Affairs](#) – the Europuls team
- 03.12.2018 – [Report: Roundtable with Romanian MEPs in the context of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) – Eva Chitul
- 03.12.2018 – [The Efforts of the EU to Maintain Rule of Law](#) – Cezara Panait
- 03.12.2018 – [How did Romania Implement the Citizens’ Consultations on the Future of Europe](#) – Dumitru Oprițoiu, Project Manager, 324 views

Live interventions:

- 02.02.2018 – [Tana Foarfă – Access to European funds restricted by respect of rule of law?](#)
- 07.06.2018 – [Bogdan Deleanu – Eurosfat Forum](#)
- 02.11.2018 – [Tana Foarfă – Is Romania ready for the rotating Presidency?](#)



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5. BRAINSTORMING SESSION “HOW DOES ROMANIA MANAGE THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND DIGITIZED ENERGY SYSTEM?”

On December 11, 2018, the Europuls experts in Bucharest brainstormed together with experts in the energy fields about the Romanian energy system, about the accomplishments, failures and ways to reach the 5 objectives set for 2030: reducing the energy poverty and protecting the vulnerable consumer, energy security, clean energy, economic competitiveness, modernization of the energy governance system.

The speakers brought up many interesting ideas in the debate, among which we could quote the following:

„Romania must become more ambitious and next year we hope that it will inspire whit respect in the negotiations. Romania’s potential in the energy sector is way bigger that the target aimed in the Romanian strategy for the energy field for 2018-2030.” (Andrei Covatariu, Enel Romania)



„Digitalization brings both benefits and risks, and if one compares them, then Romania must definitely orient itself towards digitalization.” (Răzvan Nicolescu, Deloitte România)

„Targets regarding climate and energy for 2030 were not set yet at European level. These will be established following the negotiations between the European Commission with each member state.” (Andreea Nica, Deloitte România)

„Romania is prepared to reach the targets set for 2020, but less these of 2030. It is necessary to invest more in consumer education regarding the energy efficiency and digitalization.” (Mădălin Apostol, ARPEE)

„If we look at the targets for 2020, Romania looks well except from the energy efficiency. We should be more preoccupied by energy poverty and vulnerable consumer. Romania stays the last



in the European top of innovation performance, but this does not mean that we are strangers from achievements.” (Eugenia Gusilov, Romania Energy Center)

„With regards to the Romanian strategy for the energy field for 2018-2030, we can aim for higher targets and greater investments in renewable energy and digital sectors.” (Zoltan Nagy-Bege, ANRE)

„Considering that the IT&C industry represents 6% of Romanians GDP, we have a huge potential for the digitalization of the energy sector.” (Mihai Păun, Centrul Român al Energiei)

6. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS – INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

Europuls dedicated the second half of 2018 not only to the preparations for the rotating Presidency, but also to the upcoming European elections. For 2019, our goal is to encourage citizens to turn up for the European elections and we hope to make them realize the importance of the European elections through a broad information campaign in Romania that will consist in: articles and quick reactions on our website and Facebook page, a report on the role of MEPs and the importance of the European elections, a fact-checking section on our website dedicated on monitoring the declarations of Romanian decision-makers on EU topics.

ROMÂNIA ÎN UE: ADEVĂRURI ȘI DEZINFORMĂRI



PROCEDURA DE ADOPTARE A REZOLUȚIEI PARLAMENTULUI EUROPEAN PRIVIND STATUL DE DREPT ÎN ROMÂNIA



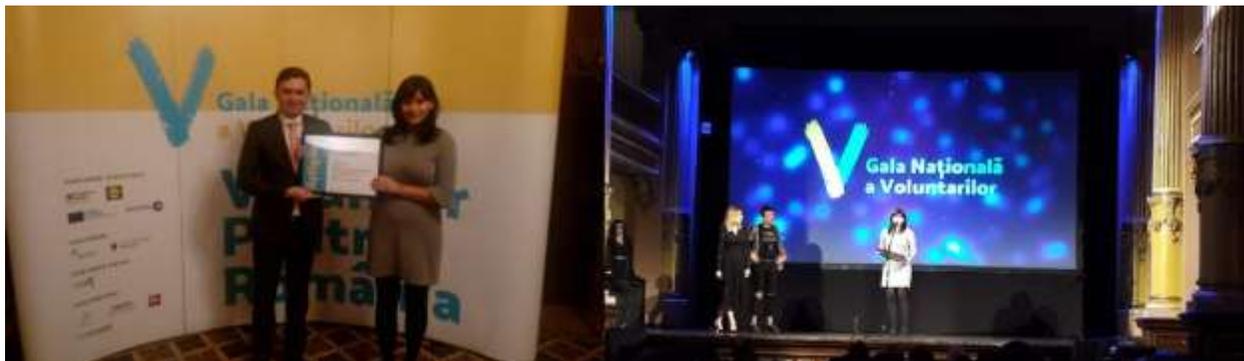


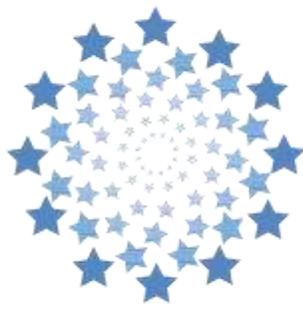
7. REWARDS

All the efforts of our team have been rewarded at the end of this year with 2 important awards.



On December 12, Europuls reached the list of finalists at the Good Lobby Awards in Brussels. We competed, together with other 2 NGOs for the “Pro Bono Professional Award” category. We were impressed by the complexity of the projects, by the enthusiasm of the volunteers and by the variety of good actions that take place in each EU member state. We were glad to celebrate the volunteer spirit together with all the teams and to receive the Runner-Up award in the Pro Bono Professional category.





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On December 21, our team attended the National Volunteer Gala in which Europuls was one of the finalists competing for the “Volunteer Project of the Year in the field of civic engagement and human rights”. The projects were extremely diverse and we were honored to be the proud winner of the prize!



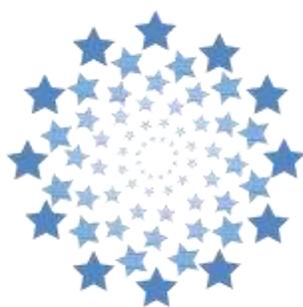
EUROPULS wishes you a

*Merry
Christmas*

PIC•COLLAGE

These achievements inspire us to persevere in our work and to aim even higher for 2019. They reward the efforts of a team of 20 volunteers in Brussels and Bucharest that dedicate their free time for the projects they propose, they believe in and that hopefully will reach the desired impact.

None of these efforts would have been possible without all our sponsors, partners and almost 8000 people that follow our page. We hope that in 2019 we will manage to gather the support of even more of you, through our projects!



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ABOUT Europuls – Centre of European Expertise

EUROPULS – Centre for European Expertise is a non-profit organization founded by a group of Romanian professionals in EU affairs. Its main goal is to promote the process of European integration in Romania and contribute to the creation of a real European public sphere. Europuls aims to promote debates on European topics through articles and studies but also by organizing debates, workshops and conferences which are attended by European commissioners, MEPs, political leaders, civil society representatives, researchers, business representatives, experts and journalists. Europuls is the founder and main organiser of EUROSFAT, the main annual European affairs forum in Romania. Europuls, founded on March 15, 2010 is registered in Romania and Belgium and is fully independent from any political body.

www.europuls.ro

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