



Hope never dies

Fairytale for some, reality for others

Fairytale for some, reality for others, this is what the E.U means for the citizens of Romania. While some think with fear of 2007, the year when Romania is supposed to join the EU and others thoroughly support this step, there are some that don't even know what the initials EU stand for so issues like the advantages and disadvantages of the integration are alien subjects for them.

Maybe this fact seems surprising to some, taking into account that this issue has been ardently debated the last few months and it has become the most popular subject in schools, universities, institutions, etc. But still there are people that don't have a clue what the EU is and unfortunately their number is getting larger and larger day by day. They are mostly simple people that come from villages or they are live in small or medium cities. What is worrying is the fact that the rural population is a total of 50% of the countries number of inhabitants. So, almost half of the total number of people living in Romania don't know anything about the European Union!

Surprisingly, the last opinion poles show that the majority of Romanians agree with the idea that Romania joins the Union in 2007 and consider this very positive for the country's well being. But do they really know the advantages and disadvantages of this step that we are about to take? Do they know that many of them will become unemployed? That their little shops and businesses shall be closed?

If you go and ask the government or the local officials about the informative programs that they have carried out or that they should have carried out, they will show you a leaflet or brochure that has little or no pictures but contains a lot of text. A text that is usually written in a very formal language with words that ordinary people are not aware of.

Naturally, essential things should be explained simply, not in a very philosophical way. For example, the advantages and disadvantages should be presented "mirror-wise". So, the advantages, like the future change of the market economy in a new one that is strong or the modernization of the infrastructure that would lead to better roads, a cleaner and healthier environment and more modern and efficient transport system; the increase of living standards, a better health and educational system and the wages, in the future will be slightly increased; Romania will benefit from the four fundamental economical liberties of the Union: free movement of the labor force, of the goods, of services and of the capital in the EU territories.

By contrary the disadvantages like the sudden rise of prices that will take place in the near future because we shall be obliged to align our economy to the one of other countries from the EU. So the unemployment rate will surely rise because most small and medium industries will be closed because they won't have such a high standard like the one the EU is asking for.



But the real problem is what will an ordinary person from the village understand from this kind of a brochure? The truth is that they will not understand a thing! Then why do we wonder that almost 50 % of the country's population has no idea what EU means?!

Worst, because people see that the authorities have no interest in helping them to understand the phenomenon they become careless and uninterested with what happens around them. Without realizing that this indifference is going to cost them a lot because they will be the first to suffer. EU is going to come with new laws, high standards in all fields, and does who won't rise up to the standards will be eliminated.

What will then happen with them? How will they earn their living?

The answer to this question will come, unfortunately, in a very rough way in 2007, if the authorities and the government don't decide to get more involved in the process of informing the population. Still, they represent almost 50 % of the countries population!

So, the only thing that is left for us to do is to sit and wait for some campaigns that are meant to inform the citizens about the European Union in a way more accessible to them, not through brochures but through specialized people that will and meet them personally and will help them understand what will happen in the next few years.

Unfortunately, like all hopes in this country, they are useless and take a long time because chances for them to be resolved are usual, very few. But, as a familiar quote says " hope dies last...."!!

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Home is better

Rural business

A very simple question: How many businesses will survive after we enter the UE? ...In Romanesti village, Timis county no aborigine investment is prepared to be integrated, that's because they don't rise up to the standards. What will happen? No one knows.

Curiosity killed the cat so being here in Românești I decided to interview the owners of the three local stores. I wanted to know how this kind of business can be started and how it can be made to prosper.

I took a cassette recorder and went to get some answers to my questions. My target was to get an interview with the owners of these three shops, two of them being administrated by the same person. First information we gathered referred to the appartenance of these businesses. Two of them were a family inheritance and the other one was opened for the need of an income after its owners were fired from their jobs.



The first local store was opened in 1991. It was only a pub than and it didn't seem to have a wide range of clients. That's why the owner opened a well-catered grocery in the same building. This was a bless for the villagers who now had a wider range of products and the commerce finally started to evolve here. From than till nowadays the other 2 stores evolved too. One of them now has even a terrace outside, while the other is special because it is built up in order to preserve the communist style.

Now as anytime a burning problem is getting the authorization to function which, as told implies a lot of documents and traveling from one institution to another. Of course this is only the beginning of the story. After the respective business is free to function another problem rises from the dark, a problem that is there almost all the time: catering. However nowadays even in the villages things are starting to move. The simple apparition of commercial en gross agents, which go with the products directly to the store, has simplified a lot the work of local owners. Products are usually brought from the near towns like Timisoara, Lugoj and Deva, where they have to go at least twice a week.

The worst nightmares of these stores are considered to be the visits from Office of the Consumers Protection (OPC), The Direction of Health and Guard of Environment. "We have never had good results and probably never will after this check-ups", stated one of the owners. Being very sincere they said that they haven't received complaints from their clients, which had to do with the quality of the product. The additional commercial taxes are somewhere between 10 and 15 % per cent and the best sold products are the basic food products.

When asked what it is important so the shop would be well seen by clients, we were told that the products should be kept in a well salubized space. It is also necessary for the products to be always fresh and the prices should be accessible for the villagers. In conclusion no high prices.

An issue that concerns everybody is the year 2007, the year of the integration into the European Union. People confess they are scared of that moment because none of the local stores rises up to their standards and are taking the risk to be closed. This is thought to be a drawn alarm signal, because this would cause problems not only to the owners but also to people here. They won't have any store unless some new investors appear.

A proof of pessimism was shown in the moment when I was told that nobody thinks investors will come to this place. Despite this issues owners mention they will continue with their business if they will have the money they need in order to modernize the place.

The villagers' opinion about this is also of great importance. Most of them are fully satisfied with the local shops and say they prefer buying things from here. Local people say that it would be better if they had a better-catered store with accessible prices. Until then they are grateful for what they have. Maybe once we enter the UE these shops will disappear. Anyway people fear that moment and say that if this will happen it is better to stay where we are. This way at least they can get what they need from places at their near touch.

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Pseudo realities

Harmony between the generations

One would think that in the villages, where life is poor, lacking its material pleasures, the relations between the parents and children are in a pretty bad state considering the fact that the young have much more things to complain about.

On the way from Timisoara to Romanesti one can have the pleasure (should I be allowed to say so) of watching a color fading as well as full of contrasts picture, very representative for our country, concerning the luxury or poverty, moods and other things that will come out of the depiction.

Leaving the "Big City", or "The country's belly"(as it is also called) and advancing to Lugoj, Faget, the first thing to be observed was the infrastructure: fewer streets (where you can drive), fewer cars, fewer-and different from the architectural point of view-houses; the next thing observed was that people seem to be more bored here (and as follows-more boring), and the luxury more and more lessened. As an end to all these, when I got to Romanesti, I learned that the youngsters are rather a beautiful dream (but gone with the wind) of the grown-ups, as well as of the older people, which presently (and probably many years from now on, if not forever) monopolize the little placement-because it is a little placement with a number of inhabitants approximated to 1000 or less. The only street where one can drive is the main road that leads to Tomesti; the houses are poor, rather neglected and that element which personalizes them is absent. Besides the missing teens, another surprising thing is the villager's lack of joy. These people seem to do everything (that they still do) automatically, as if they were robots, waiting the joys of the After Life.

I'm saying it is surprising because it is to be expected something different from some inhabitants an inch away from the Pades Mountains. This type of inhabitants should be lively, in the way our long passed away authors described them; from another point of view this lack of joy is totally excusable when we're talking about old people. I'm going to put this site depicting job aside, and pass to other things, because if I didn't I would have to find some other title for the essay. I will try to stick to the subject.

One day ago I took a little walk trough the village looking to find some life forms with whom I could share at least the language that I speak. This having done I started to look for parents and to pray God that I should also find some children.

I met an old lady and I started to ask her different questions in matters of life and kids-this just to find out at about the end of the "interview" that she didn't have any children and to listen to the story of her life and how, as she said, "beceaga" she was(not that I didn't wish to learn from her life experience, but I was thinking: "Maybe some other time!").From this I concluded that people here are missing communication or maybe help from those which are disposed to offer it-judging after the way they express their problems in front of the strangers. Still, I was grateful that among other facts she managed to mention that she likes: the way us teens dress, and practically everything concerning our person.

I continued my journey and-alas! -a silver lining appeared between the clouds the moment I saw a boy. Unfortunately, that last drop of hope dried when the one in cause cut my question: "Have you got a minute?"; by throwing at me a: "No, I don't have time for such things!".



I went on with my fragile walk, accompanied by the feeling that I failed to interact with the one and only young element from around here when, suddenly, I ran into a young boy, after which followed two girls(it was highly probable that those were the only of my age in the village)and then a lady at her "second youth".

Summing up their pearls of wisdom I reached the final conclusion that in this village parents and children are mutually satisfied with things that occur in each other lives; making an overview-everything is pink.

I was more than disappointed when I listened to those recorded interviews again, I expected these people so restrained by existential conditions to have more things to complain about, more to object, so on and so forth. This is the reason why I came up with this "(Pseudo)Harmony" title. It's either these people offer a totally different version of what really happens to them(which is the most to be sure about because no family, nowhere, can benefit from a so-called "pink life"),either there was an inhibition owed to the presence of the recorder (extremely harmless, I assure you),or maybe it was just the laziness of discussing of these things.

It would be even worse if one person's voice would be covered by the society's voice and everybody would do and say the same things. Seems terrifying, right?

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Beyond survival

Long lost tradition

Being only a child, my parents tried hard to raise me in the spirit of the traditions from Banat. I remember my father getting upset on me, because I refused to accompany them at weddings where the style to party was with: singers called "lăutari", dancing "in horă" and many other things.

Although our parents try to raise us by the old and modern way, this combination isn't working anymore. Most people think that the city doesn't have anything to offer from the point of view of tradition, but who would have thought that even villages that show off tradition don't even remember it exists?

Being in Românești village for six days now, I noticed that people here live in the past, but they don't want to speak about it.

When I first arrived here I thought they would want to talk about what differentiates them from other villages and towns.

However, I got answers like "I don't have time now" and "I don't remember".

Românești is a village with a past full of customs, as I later found out from the priest here, customs that have been abandoned and forgotten.

I kept in my mind a beautiful story about traditions of Românești village, about how they used to celebrate Christmas, Easter and other holidays of great importance.

One of the most important traditions used to take place in winter, around Christmas. It was about single girls that used to dance and receive "dube".

This custom is called "Dubele", and the boys who wanted to become "dubăi" had to follow an initializing ritual. Usually boys that weren't married and weren't in military service at the moment became "dubăi", "dubași" or "călușari".



The Easter holidays were treated in a special way in this part of the country.

The Tuesday before Easter, villagers carried "Sfintele Paști"(bread and wine) to the church, where the priest does the religious service and blesses the bread and wine with holly water. In the past wheat used to be collected from the whole village and was taken to the mill, money was raised from everybody to buy wine and candels, and Easter holiday was organized by one family.

Nowadays this custom is forgotten. Everybody manages on his own. Overwhelmed by needs, people don't help each other anymore, their life has become a struggle for survival!

The funeral is one of the few customs that is still kept nowadays. Although the villagers have lost their customs, they still act according to some superstitions.

On the 8th of July, a holiday called "Sf. Mucenic Pocopie"(or Precup) takes place .On this day nobody works and people tend to stay all day long inside, because it is said that if you work on that day you will be hit by thunder. During the morning of this day, villagers go to the cemetery to take care of the thumbs.

Another superstition is related to what they call "Postul Mare", kept in the honor of "Haidu Sântoader".

There is also a holiday called "Ornapia" which comes from Hungarian. I have to mention that Hungarians used to live here in the past. "Ornapia" in Hungarian means "Day of God", and on this day people pray and rest.

The loss of traditions should make us think. How do we stand before other countries as peoples?

Through an economy weaker than in other European countries? Through people that don't respect anything?

This is how we are judged abroad, although we have much more to offer.

But for this we need eyes wide open, not just for the day after, but also for the day before...

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