



FRANCESCA UNGARO VISITS THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANSILVANIA

In the framework of the European University Industry Network (EUI-Net) Project and in view to prepare the following project of the Thematic Network, some pilot actions took place. Among them, the practical placements of two entrepreneurs in the University of Transilvania in Brasov, Romania.

One of the entrepreneurs who participated at this pilot action was Francesca Ungaro from Italy. Francesca visited the University of Transilvania from the 24th to the 26th January 2007.

Francesca is very glad to have participated in this pilot action and thinks that having a professor as a reference person was very important because it enabled her to learn about the country, culture and history of Romania.

Concerning the agenda of her placement, the first day Francesca visited the University of Transilvania and met with a local entre-



Preparatory meeting in Vienna, December, 2006

preneur, who was interested in her business sector: stair-lifts.

The same day, she met a University student. Francesca invited him to spend some months in Centaurus, her enterprise in Italy. In this way, the student could learn how the stair-lift market works and perhaps later on start the same business in Romania. After these meetings, she visited the city of Brasov accompanied by Doru Talaba. During her second

day, Francesca met the manager of a big Canadian company in Romania and entrepreneur. According to her, their exchange was very rich and interesting. He will visit Francesca's company in the following months, to see if it is worth setting up a company.

Francesca wants to thank Doru Talaba, coordinator of the EUI-Net project for his professionalism in organising the programme and for his kind hospitality.

Compulsory reporting on CSR activities was rejected by the European Parliament. However, the situation is not clear when it comes to CSR criteria for public procurement.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SMES

The Member of the European Parliament, Richard Howitt presented a report that demanded enterprises to state their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Following the strong opposition to this report from important SME stakeholders, MEPs accepted CSR as a purely voluntary activity.

SME do not want to be faced with inquiries regarding their CSR activities. They believe this would be discriminatory, above all when SMEs participate in public tenders. On this area, the report as voted in the EP's plenary does not provide clear solutions on the CSR

criteria for public procurement.

Maria Panayotopoulou-Cassioutou (EPP-ED, Greece) stated that « the success of CSR comes from its voluntary, un-binding nature and therefore any moves to make CSR compulsory, including the publishing of assessment reports, would be counterproductive and incompatible with the EU's efforts to reduce red tape.

According to a UEAPME 's press release published on March 13, UEAPME welcomes the inclusion in the report of the official EC definition of CSR and the deletion of com-

pulsory reporting clauses on CSR activities. The EP urges the Commission, Council, businesses and other stakeholders to re-define CSR aims and methods. The EP defines CSR as "*the voluntary integration of environmental and social considerations into business operations, over and above legal requirements and contractual obligations*".

The EP also wants small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be involved in corporate social responsibility with the help of the European Commission.