

Report on the First National Plan of Action of Romania for the Alliance of Civilizations

Institution building

Romania joined the Groups of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations in March 2007 and appointed a national coordinator (focal point) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Romania counted among the first ten members of the Group of Friends that adopted a National Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations (25 March 2009).

The main feature of Romania's contribution is to promote the objectives to the Alliance of Civilizations at national level. Such objectives are to be integrated into policies and activities aiming at stimulating inter-cultural dialogue, cultivating the interest of the academic circles and the civil society in general. The background of this contribution is the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, as well as the traditions of tolerance and mutual respect among various ethnic and religious groups in the Romanian society.

Following the adhesion to the Group of Friends, the national coordination was provided by means of an inter-institutional working-group consisting of representatives of ministries and governmental departments, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations illustrating the religious and cultural diversity of the Romanian society.

Romania participated in all political meetings, i.e. Annual Forums and Regional Conferences, at the level of minister or secretary of state.

At a latter stage, the focal point mobilized the support and involvement of international organizations represented in Romania. A project dedicated to the Alliance of Civilizations was entrusted to UNDP. In 2010, the initial institutional network was joined by the UNESCO Department - Chair for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES), and the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO. A partner (Scheherazade Foundation) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the civil society was also designated. The inter-institutional working group was transformed into an open-ended Steering Committee, which at present includes youth organizations as well.

The platform of political support for the Alliance of Civilizations has been extended through the direct involvement of the Parliamentary Commission for the relations with UNESCO, followed by the patronage of events dedicated to the Alliance of Civilizations by the chairperson, and vice-chairperson, respectively, of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The minister of foreign affairs, at the proposal of the focal point, appointed good will ambassadors for the Alliance Civilizations: Professor George Grigore, prominent Arabist and expert in Qur'an

studies, Professor Razvan Teodorescu, medievalist and member of the Romanian Academy, as well as a well-known actress Maia Morgenstern.

Some activities have been undertaken in partnership with the Embassies of Spain, Turkey and Tunisia.

Main events

The most significant events organized under the auspices of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2009-2010 (a selection):

- Flagship events organized by the Department of Interethnic Relations (Summer school: “Youth and Development of Intercultural Cities”; in cooperation with UNDP; “Plurilinguism in Education and its Role in Forging a Culture of Communication and Dialogue”, in cooperation with the Embassy of Turkey, the National inter-disciplinary seminar “History and Multicultural Education”, the publication of a pilot school handbook for trainers “History of National Minorities in Romania);
- Thematic conferences delivered in Romania and abroad by professor George Grigore, good-will Ambassador for the Alliance of Civilizations (“Accepting “the other” in Ibn Arabi’s vision” – Islamabad, “Dialogue Among Religions in Romania” – Riyadh, “ Leaders at the core of communities – Erbil, Iraq; “Dialogue Islam – Christianity: Success or Failure?” – Bucharest);
- Conferences organized by civil society organizations (“East-West dialogue” – University of Cluj, “Enabling Youth in a Multi-cultural Community – PATRIR Cluj, “Sustainable Development at Black Sea” – the League of Romanian Students Abroad”, “1000th anniversary of the birth of the Uyghur Linguist Mahmud Kasgarli” – Tuna Foundation);
- The conference “International Year of the Youth – Dialog and Mutual Understanding” (UNDP in cooperation with Bucharest General Mayor Office;
- The bilateral Seminar Spain – Romania on the topic “Alliance of Civilizations Through Education” (with the participation of the local authorities of Aragon province in Spain);
- A Music festival for children dedicated to the religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity of education establishments in Bucharest and Romania;
- The signing of a “Charter of the Alliance of Civilization in Romania” by 50 public figures and active militants in this domain, representing the governmental and non-governmental milieus.
- Interviews and presentations on the Alliance of Civilization in mass-media (Printed media, TV, Internet);
- The creation of a web-site of the Alliance of Civilizations in Romania.

The Second Framework National Plan of Action of Romania for the Alliance of Civilizations (2011 – 2013)

Underlying principles

The Second Framework Plan of Action of Romania for the Alliance of Civilizations is based on the principles of transparency, openness towards civil society, cooperation and communication.

The overall goals of the Alliance of Civilizations, as well as those reflected in the first Plan of Action for Romania, remain valid for the second Framework National Plan.

The working agenda is based on the same structure as the previous plan and reflects initiatives from all the members of the Steering Committee as well as other interested partners in the civil society, to whom the draft Plan was publicly available for comments, amendments and contributions.

The proposed actions do not represent an exhaustive list, but a minimum number of lines of interests to which any other initiative can be added, provided that it corresponds to the goals, principles and priority areas for the Alliance of Civilization in a time horizon of three years (2011-2013).

Activities planned

Section A: Enhancing visibility of the Alliance of Civilization at national level

- Organization of an annual National Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations, under the auspices of the Parliament of Romania.
- Dissemination in Romania of Plans of actions of international organizations of which Romania is a member, such as the European Union, Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and UNESCO.
- Information of the public on the Alliance of Civilizations and the actions undertaken under its auspices in Romania, by means available to the governmental institutions, as well as to the organizations of the civil society involved.
- Conducting a systematic campaign aiming at informing and involving mass-media with respect to the goals and actions of the Alliance of Civilizations.
- Participation in the Annual Forums and in the ad-hoc Conferences of the Alliance of Civilization at an adequate political level.
- Interactive use of the Alliance of Civilizations' web-site.
- Establishment of a Merit Diploma on the name of "Dimitrie Cantemir" to be awarded each year to persons or organizations which brought special

contributions to the achievement of the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Section B: National Institutional initiatives

- Mobilizing, under the auspices of the Alliance of Civilizations, contributions from new organizations, mainly from the higher education institutions and mass-media.
- Organizing public events with the participation of honorary ambassadors for the Alliance of Civilizations
- Identifying and attracting collaboration of new personalities in the field of social sciences and humanities willing to play the good will ambassador's role for the Alliance of Civilizations.
- Designating liaison persons in the main university centres of Romania for the organization of events and activities dedicated to the Alliance of Civilizations.
- Identifying, among daily and weekly publications, journalists interested to specialize in topics relevant for the Alliance of Civilizations.

Section C: Integrating the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations in policies and activities aiming at promoting intercultural dialogue

- International Conference CEPES – UNESCO and Alliance of Civilizations entitled “Eurasian Inter-university Dialogues on Cooperation for Higher Education Development”, Bucharest, 27-28 May 2011;
- International Conference “Contribution of the Alliance of Civilizations to the improvement of the security environment”;
- Campaign for the introduction in the curricula of the pre-university institutions of optional disciplines on cultural diversity;
- Documentation trips in cultural and religious establishments which reflect the religious and faith diversity in Romania;
- Introduction of topics pertaining to the Alliance of Civilization in radio and television shows and news;
- Establishment of an Internet-based interactive platforms for debates related to the main topics of the inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue;
- Partnership with Romanian printing houses for the publications of relevant books under the logo of the Alliance of Civilizations;
- Broadening the circle of collaborators among diplomatic missions accredited in Bucharest for the organization of bilateral and multilateral events in Romania;
- Organization of cultural and artistic events, which reflect the cultural diversity and the common values of religious communities living in Romania.