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MUNICIPALITY OF ROMANIA AND AVEZZANO
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COOPERATION RELATIONS BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. THE CASE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL UNITS CÂMPULUNG MOLDOVENESC MUNICIPALITY OF ROMANIA AND AVEZZANO MUNICIPALITY OF ITALY

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Abstract

In order to develop collaborative relations based on mutual respect, support and trust, to solve problems of common interest, the communities understand to get twinned. From this point of view, in the present article we propose to analyze the collaboration model established between two administrative-territorial units, one in Romania and the other in Italy, namely Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality and Avezzano Municipality to highlight the benefits of a such an association for both parties. The study carried out in the pages of this paper shows that, by signing and assuming the Cooperation Agreement, the local public administration authorities in the two localities established friendship ties and made experience exchanges, convinced that the twinning is an incentive for the development of social, cultural, economic, sport and tourism relations between twinned communities.

Keywords:

twinning, cooperation agreement, local collectivities, local public administrative authorities, administrative-territorial units

JEL classification: H77, H79

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I. INTRODUCTION

Twinning, as explained by the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, means binding, respectively, developing a fraternal friendship relation, and the word *collaboration* means the action to work together [4]. Starting from this explanation, the twinning can be defined as the friendship agreement that attracts cooperation between two local communities from different states, agreement made with the support of local authorities [10]. As a result of a such twinning, the two localities support the understanding of the similarities and differences between the locals, carrying out projects in various fields: culture, education, social services, public services, public works, economy, commerce, sports, tourism etc.

The twinning movement offers an invaluable area of experiences and initiatives to develop the European citizenship on the scene. A twinning is the encounter of two communities that associate to act in a European perspective, to confront their problems and to develop between them more and more closer ties of friendship. Born after World War II, this idea has increasingly made its way. In this context of post-war reconciliation, twinning tended to build a pacifist Europe [2].

In practice, it has been found that twinning relations can be found in various formulations: partnership agreements, twinning agreements, cooperation agreements, etc.

In the frame of the programs promoted by the European Union, there is also the "Active Citizenship" program, which aims to support cities in achievement of the twinning relations.

In Romania, the legislative framework is represented by the Government Ordinance no. 120/1998³ through which our country ratified the European Framework-Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation of Territorial Communities or Authorities, adopted in Madrid on 21 May 1980.

Also, the Local Public Administration Law no. 215/2001 provides for local councils the possibility to approve the twinning of the locality with foreign territorial units or to decide the association with other localities from other countries in order to promote some common interests [6]⁴.

To illustrate a model of cooperation, in this paper we propose to analyze the twinning relation developed by an administrative-territorial unit

³ Published in the Official Gazette no. 329 of 31 August 1998

⁴ According to art. 36 point 7 par. b, c of the Local Public Administration Law no. 215/2001, republished in the Official Gazette no. 123 of 20 February 2007

in Romania with another administrative-territorial unit in Italy. After 1990, the Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality of Romania undertook twinning projects with localities in the European Union, in the attention of this approach being the cooperation with the Avezzano Municipality from Italy.

Founded in the 12th century, in 1411 Câmpulung Moldovenesc became an exchange center by establishing a princely customs for the merchants who came from Transylvania. This settlement, which had the appearance of the old Moldavian fairs, has an economic, administrative and infrastructure development during the Austrian domination [8: pp. 7-10]. Geographically, Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality is located in the northwestern part of Suceava County, with a length of 12 km, from where its name comes, namely "long field = câmp lung" (see Figure no. 1):

Figure no. 1. Location of Câmpulung Moldovenes Municipality

Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A2mpulung_Moldovenesc
[accessed on November 6, 2017]

Avezzano Municipality is located in the center of Italy, between Rome and Pescara, in the center of the Abruzzo region and the Aquila province (see Figure no. 2). The first relations of collaboration between the inhabitants of this community and the Romanians have been registered since the end of the First World War, when 5,000 prisoners, most Romanians, being imprisoned in the camp on the edge of Avezzano, participated in the reconstruction of this locality after the devastating earthquake in January 1915.

Figure no. 2. Location of Avezzano Municipality

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avezzano> [accessed on November 6, 2017]

II. STEPS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN CÂMPULUNG MOLDOVENESC MUNICIPALITY AND AVEZZANO MUNICIPALITY

In the desire to develop relations of cooperation and friendship based on mutual trust, equality, respect and support in solving of some problems of common interest, the Câmpulung Moldovenesc community has always searched dialogue partners, including internationally. In this approach, it was identified the possibility of achieving a twinning between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality and Avezzano Municipality.

During the implementation of the project "Setting up and strategic planning of the Local Action Group Bucovina de Munte" (GAL Bucovina de Munte), the representatives of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc City Hall established relations of cooperation with GAL Marsica Italy and the Valle Roveto Mountain Community, and then, through their representatives, also with the Avezzano Municipality, Abruzzo Region, Italy.

As a result of the meetings, the idea of a twinning between the two localities was advanced, taking into account the similarities between them, starting from the predominantly mountainous natural environment, the relatively close concerns of the inhabitants, the common Latin origins and continuing with the existence of an important community of Romanians

(2,500) in the Italian town, including a Romanian church attended by a consistent number of parishioners.

Through the mutual exchange of letters of intent and as a result of the visit of the chief of the Mayor's Cabinet from Avezzano, in September 2010, the Italian partner submitted a project in the frame of the CITIZENSHIP EACEA Program, Action 1 - Active Citizen for Europe, Measure 1.1 - Town twinning citizens' meetings, under the name of Essere Cittadino nel' Europa del 21 Secolo, the City Hall of Câmpulung Moldovenesc being a partner together with Avezzano Municipality [9].

The project was evaluated and received funding, so that in March 2011, a delegation from Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality participated, at the invitation of the Italian partner, to the signing of the Cooperation Agreement.

In order to achieve this Cooperation Agreement, the Câmpulung Moldovenesc City Hall, through the address no. 2,233 from 8 February 2011, communicated to the Ministry of Administration and Interior the intention of twinning and cooperation of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality with the Avezzano Municipality.

In the same note, the Câmpulung Moldovenesc City Hall asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the approval for Cooperation Agreement project. Thus, through the Directorate of International Law and Treaties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [1], a favorable approval was given to the achievement of this project of Agreement, requesting some amendments to the project text in order to comply with the specific terminology of the cooperation documents made at the level of the local public administration authorities, as follows:

"1. We propose that the title of the document called «Twinning Pact between ... » be replaced by «Cooperation Agreement between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and Avezzano Municipality in Italy»;

2. We propose replacing the term «Pact» with the term «Agreement» throughout the document;

3. We propose that the alternate rule be respected, so that in the copy of the Romanian part, in Romanian and Italian languages, the Romanian part be mentioned first, in the title, the content and the end of the Agreement;

4. We propose to amend Article 10 of the Agreement as follows: «This Cooperation Agreement is realised for an indefinite period and will enter into force on the date of signature. The achievement of the

cooperation objectives will be evaluated at a three years period in order to ensure efficient cooperation between the two localities»;

5. We propose to modify the last paragraph of the Agreement as follows:

«Signed at (place of signature), on (date), in two original copies, each in both Romanian and Italian languages, both texts being equally authentic.»".

These recommendations were reiterated in the Cooperation Agreement between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and Avezzano Municipality in Italy.

From 14 March 2011 until 18 March 2011, a delegation from Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality participated in the cooperation action aimed at signing the twinning official document between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality and Avezzano Municipality in Italy. This action is part of the activities of the "Active Citizenship in a United Europe" project whose activities have been fully funded by the European Union through the "Europe for Citizens" program, the "Twinning between cities" measure [7].

The composition of the Romanian delegation, consisting of 16 persons, was formed according to the indicators established in the project, namely: representatives of the local and county administration, representatives of the business environment, the county media, the chamber of commerce, representatives of the financial and banking sectors, tourism, culture and religion, respecting the age and gender structure, in accordance with the horizontal principle of equal opportunities promoted by European projects.

The program of the visit, during the four days, also included various activities of knowledge of the partner territory and its representatives (see Table no. 1):

Table no. 1. Visiting program

<i>Current No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Activities carried out</i>
1.	15 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting up a stand for the promotion of traditional products; - official reception of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc delegation; - participation in the seminar "<i>The European Union in its general, political and historical aspects</i>"; - visiting the main Avezzano objectives.
2.	16 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowing the Avezzano economic environment ; - participation in the Italian folklore show.

3.	17 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in the official parade occasioned by the National Day of Italy; - participation in the seminar "<i>A parallel between the two territories: Avezzano and Câmpulung Moldovenesc. Possible cooperation projects in fields of common interest</i>"; - participation in the Orthodox religious service.
4.	18 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signing the "<i>Cooperation Agreement between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and Avezzano Municipality in Italy</i>"; - the speech of the two mayors; - press conference.

Source: Cooperation Agreement between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and Avezzano Municipality in Italy

III. COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN CÂMPULUNG MOLDOVENESC MUNICIPALITY IN ROMANIA AND AVEZZANO MUNICIPALITY IN ITALY

The preamble of the "Cooperation Agreement between the Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and the Avezzano Municipality in Italy" describes the steps taken to achieve the cooperation as well as its opportunities.

In 2010, the Avezzano City presented to the competent European authorities the project "Active Citizenship in a Unified Europe", in the frame of the "Europe for Citizens" program, the "Twinning between cities" measure, "Citizens meetings on cities twinning" sub-measure.

The project provides for the achievement of some activities between Avezzano Municipality (project initiator) and Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality, in collaboration with the Valle Roveto Mountain Community and GAL Marsica.

This was declared eligible and approved for funding according to the results published following the selection procedure, on the website of the European Authority, the project being registered under the number 513,170 and included on the list of eligible projects under the number 104 position.

The localities involved - Câmpulung Moldovenesc and Avezzano expressed their willingness to sign a twinning agreement in order to sensitize citizens' opinion for building a United Europe in the spirit of peace, friendship and collaboration among all peoples.

An important role in the realization of this cooperation agreement is represented also by the relations established in 2004 between the Abruzzo

Region (Italy) and the Suceava County, through the initiatives promoted by the Valle Roveto Mountain Community and the GAL Marsica throughout the whole territory of Suceava County.

Both sides are convinced that a close collaboration between localities must translate into mutual spiritual and material benefits.

This twinning project can help build a United Europe - Europe for Citizens.

In the "Cooperation Agreement between the Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and the Avezzano Municipality in Italy"⁵ there are described the purpose and the way to achieve this cooperation. Thus, the ten points of this Agreement take into account the following aspects:

"1. The localities Câmpulung Moldovenesc (Romania) and Avezzano (Italy) sign the present twinning agreement in order to favor the progress, development, welfare of both peoples, united in a tacit desire for friendship.

2. Local government authorities in the two localities have agreed to establish cooperative relations between themselves according to the competencies they have and in accordance with the laws in force in their respective countries. Both localities, under the title of twin cities, intend to relate freely and spontaneously to determine spiritual, material development, consolidating the relations based on the common desire of peace, friendship and prosperity.

3. The twin cities will promote all kinds of social relations, appropriate to development, in particular:

- social relations
- cultural relations
- economic relations
- sport relations
- tourist relations.

4. Both localities will have diverse cultural activities. In this sense, they will organize:

- conferences on topics of mutual interest
- exchanges of publications of various genres
- meetings among young people and families
- exhibitions of works of art
- promotion of traditions

⁵ The important points of the Cooperation Agreement are taken over entirely from its contents in order not to leave room for interpretation.

- educational, training and historical-cultural research projects to deepen mutual knowledge.

5. In the economic field, the following initiatives will be carried out:

- meetings among the professional, social associations and among investors in both areas;

- participation in exhibitions, fairs

- promotion of local typical products

- facilitation of the access to information specific to industrial, artisanal and commercial activities of mutual interest.

6. Both localities will facilitate the discovery of the social realities of each territory through the realization of some events and activities meant to promote the exchanges of experience among the citizens.

7. With the goal of promoting tourism initiatives, both cities will act to:

- elaboration of some travel programs, of some stays

- communication of the programs related to specific traditional events, cities days, festivals.

8. The activities described in this Agreement can be further extended by identifying some fields of common interest.

9. Monitoring of the correct implementation in the territory of the actions envisaged in the present Agreement will be carried out by a Partnership Committee composed of a representative of Câmpulung Moldovenesc locality and a representative of Avezzano locality.

10. This Cooperation Agreement is established for an indefinite period and will enter into force on the date of signature. The achievement of the cooperation objectives will be evaluated at a three years period in order to ensure efficient cooperation between the two localities."⁶

From the analysis of the Cooperation Agreement it can be noticed that the recommendations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Directorate of International Law and Treaties, mentioned in the approval no. H 2-1/897, registered under the no. 3,676 from 3 March 2011, have been complied with and are found in this agreement.

This first action of the "Active Citizenship in a United Europe" project was completed according to the envisaged schedule of activities, thus resulting the necessary institutional framework for the further development of the projects already discussed during the visit, as neither of the two

⁶ The Cooperation Agreement was drafted in two original copies, each copy being translated into the language of the participating countries, namely the Italian and Romanian languages.

signatories do not want that the agreement to remain just a simple document, but to bring benefits to both parties.

The second phase of the EU-funded cooperation project consisted in receiving, in the second half of May, a delegation from Avezzano composed of representatives of the local government, project management technicians and potential investors that expressed their interest for our area.

By Decision no. 24 from 31 March 2011, the Local Council of Câmpulung Moldovenesc approved the Cooperation Agreement between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in Romania and Avezzano Municipality in Italy, signed at Avezzano on 18 March 2011.

Regarding the second stage of the cooperation project, we mention that an Abruzzo delegation visited the Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality in June 2011. As a result of this visit, an Italian investor from Avezzano opened in Câmpulung Moldovenesc a supermarket "Il Canguro", which led to the creation of ten jobs for the Romanian inhabitants. Through this supermarket both the products of the Romanian producers and the Abruzzo producers were promoted, thus fulfilling a requirement of point 5 of the Cooperation Agreement. Also, another Italian investor from the Abruzzo area opened a cake shop with various ice cream specialties, called "Italian Gelateria". A Câmpulung Moldovenesc producer of sausages tried to open a Romanian store in Avezzano, but so far his intentions have not materialized yet.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the facts described in this paper, we can conclude that the analysis of the twinning relation developed between Câmpulung Moldovenesc Municipality from Romania and Avezzano Municipality from Italy highlighted intentions and ties meant to facilitate and promote the collaboration between these two communities. In-depth study of this model of cooperation between the analysed administrative-territorial units was possible by presenting some general considerations regarding the twinning relations of the localities, by exposing the necessary steps for the realization of this twinning and by broadly discussing the "Cooperation Agreement". By signing and assuming this Agreement, the local government authorities in both localities established cooperation relations and made experience exchanges, convinced that the twinning is a stimulus and a benefit for both parties in all sectors - social, cultural, economic, sport, tourism.

Finally, it can be noted that the twinning between localities belonging to different countries is a fundamental element for their better knowledge and it also contributes to the consolidating friendship and peace.

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