

Mauro Maria Angelini, President of Confindustria Romania:

Bilateral relations between Romania and Italy have ended up surpassing the standard rapports between two European Union member states

President Angelini, Confindustria Romania needs no presentation, hence, this time, faced with the numerous activities that your employers' association has carried out and is now planning to carry out, tell us what the "heart" of Confindustria Romania represents now, at maturity?

We are industrialists, entrepreneurs, experts, managers, consultants and self-employed persons - really interested in our companies - who, more or less consciously, through our work and the supplementary activity we carry out for Confindustria, also contribute to the building of the European dream. My generation was 20 years old when the Berlin Wall fell, we had high expectations; unfortunately, many of them were disappointed, but I have the conviction that the European cause is still important for us, we are doing it for our children.

The spirit of internationalisation and commercial relations with the East are not a novelty, the old free towns and maritime republics had shops, entrepôts, stable activities, clients, suppliers and agents in these countries. Under this aspect, we have re-established an old tradition, recreated in terms of history and vicinity after 1989. In the countries we are active in, there is a demand for entrepreneurship and competencies. We have spontaneously created Confindustria representations in various countries, starting with Romania. We are living proof that we, Italians, know to unite, are capable of respecting associative

regulations and of giving things a concrete form, not just of talking about them.

The increasingly obvious success of the associative model that Confindustria Romania represents has become a guide for all Confindustria international representations. A target that seemed unattainable until a few years ago. How was it possible?

The first article of the Italian Constitution defines Italy as a democratic republic founded on the principle of labour. For more clarity, the emblem of the republic features, behind the star of Aeneas, a cogwheel that symbolises precisely labour. It's not by chance that the same cogwheel is also present in our associative logo.

Once we arrived in Romania, we brought with us the respect for our values, any trade is honest and "sacred", there are no humble trades; we brought with us the perseverance of our parents and grandparents who rebuilt Italy in the post-war period, and the courage of the sailors, which was indispensable in the face of the afflictions and challenges of a very difficult period; we also brought with us know-how and the desire to do good, in other words we brought with us the desire to give what we have best.

In 2003, we created this association - which went on to become a representative and recognised employers' association - with the same engagement that motivates us today too. The purpose was to bring Confindustria's century-old experience to a



country in which only the citizen and the "state-party" had existed for over 50 years, and which lacked the so-called intermediary bodies and civil society.

This aspect was not overlooked by the leaders of Confindustria Italy and we were asked to "export" our associative model in support of new international representations. We accepted the invitation unhesita-

tingly and, from the very first months of intense collaboration between the countries in which Confindustria is present, our activity was so highly appreciated that it allowed us to undertake the role of Presidency, Foreign Relations and Treasury of the Confindustria East Europe Federative Project until 2020.

On celebrating June 2nd, the Day of the Republic, do you have a brief message for Romanian institutions?

To Romanian institutions we want to convey the message that Italian entrepreneurs are and will continue to be present and Confindustria Romania, as employers' association, is collaborating with the institutions and wants to be an instrument of support and a social dialogue partner alongside the other employers' associations, and also to present its point of view on technical topics.

Bilateral relations between Romania and Italy have ended up surpassing the standard rapports between two European Union member states. Our countries are linked by a present and a future in what concerns labour and entrepreneurship. Currently looming are the new mixed Italian-Romanian generations that had the possibility to travel, get to know each other, study, work and live together. They were born in a context in which the "Iron Curtain" no longer existed and we have the duty to remind them that things were not always like this, in order to prevent the raising of new walls, starting with inner walls.

June 2nd, Day of the Republic!

As part of Sistema Italia in Romania, Confindustria Romania enthusiastically greets the Day of the Italian Republic. June 2nd reminds us of the institutional referendum held by universal suffrage in June 1946, in which Italians were called to the polls to decide on the country's form of government after the fall of Fascism, to choose between the monarchy and the republic. The

victory of the popular referendum, in which Italians chose the republic and opted for the elimination of any privileges gained via social status, is thus celebrated. This must remind us today that, in essence, Italians chose the principle of meritocracy in a context of equality of chances, in order to give those who want to affirm themselves the chance to reap the fruits of their labour.

We emphasise this aspect because this was a choice full of significance for today's entrepreneurs; June 2nd reminds us that a change in values took place in 1946, a cancellation of privileges conferred by social status at that time, in order to create the chance to harness merits.

Happy Birthday on the Day of the Italian Republic!

There are many opportunities for Italian companies in Romania, ICE-Agenzia meets them with customised services

The Bucharest Office of ICE (the Italian Trade Agency) is present in Romania ever since 1969 and is accredited as the Italian Embassy's Section for the Promotion of Trade. The Bucharest Office has prerogatives for the Republic of Moldova too.

As a public institution, its task is to promote, facilitate and develop our companies' trade, by putting a series of services at their disposal. The Office collects information on trade opportunities by continuously monitoring the market, trade flows and investments. The services offered by ICE-Agenzia range from competitor analysis to verifying the degree of receptivity to the product, and up to the global assessment of the business environment, the legislative and technical framework in which the Italian companies may work. These services can be divided into four typologies: market analyses, identifying partners, promoting companies and operative assistance in loco. Through international fairs, businessmen's missions, congresses, B2B seminars and other initiatives that are part of the public Promotional Programme, ICE-Agenzia supports internationalisation and the consolidation of the companies' position on various markets.

The message we want to convey on the

Italian Festival 2017 is that in Romania there is still a lot of room for the products of our country, room in which Italian entrepreneurs can become protagonists. I'm not talking solely about our traditional export products - agricultural products, furniture and clothing - but also about large projects in the constructions and infrastructure field, about services and all the opportunities offered by the new European grants earmarked for the 2014-2020 period, which forecast a very ample horizon of activities. Romania is registering significant economic growth, has qualified labour force at still accessible costs and a fiscal system that rewards initiative. ICE's Bucharest Office is receiving each year hundreds of requests of assistance from Italian companies, but also from Romanian companies that want to institute profitable business relations. It's not simple to tap into new markets, particularly for small and medium enterprises, and we offer our clients customised services precisely to support their gradual integration in the new international context. Italian entrepreneurs were the first to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the revolutionary movement 28 years ago, when the country opened to market economy, and they continued to believe in



Romania over the years. Since then, our presence has consolidated and diversified, currently covering the entire territory. Today, our companies enthusiastically get involved in the new economic scenario in which the links between our countries are ever stronger, from the standpoint of both the Italian presence - so important in Romania - and of the presence of such a large Romanian community in the penin-

sula. For a long time, Romania has been one of Italy's main economic partners. Italy continues to be, for over 10 years now, the main investor in Romania by number of registered companies. From the standpoint of trade, our country is second, behind Germany, both in the rankings of sources of imports and in the rankings of export markets for Romania, with a share equal to 10 percent of Romania's total trade.