

**Newsletter of
The Netherlands-Romanian
Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture**

January 2012

Dear Members,

Our first newsletter in 2012 comes to you from cold and snowy Bucharest. Winter has finally come. This has not withheld the protestors on Piata Universitate to continue their objections against the current government. The impact of their heated comments and actions however, does not seem to be that strong so far. Until now only the Minister of Foreign Affairs victimized himself in the context of this "hot winter".

From a business perspective one could make a counter-statement that the Romanian government actually has done relatively well in the given circumstances. If compared to some of the adjacent countries in our region such as Greece and Hungary, Romania is faring well and is, in the words of the IMF's Jeffrey Franks like "a ship that survived a storm and had its damage repaired and sees another storm on the horizon". Growth is back and the trend seems to be positive also for this year.



This is a good position for the new year for your business and for The NRCC as business association. We look forward working with our members to make this a successful year. Many activities are planned around networking, advocacy and knowledge sharing. We are an active association with active members.

On the 14th of March we plan to have our annual Members General Assembly. Please feel encouraged to present yourself as a candidate for Board membership of The NRCC. During this meeting we will also launch the NRCC directory for which we still need your inputs.

Peter de Ruyter
Chairman

Content of this newsletter:

- Events since our previous newsletter:
 - o 12 December: lunch with Ambassador at Casa Doina
 - o 14 December: **Dutch Networking Drink**, 19.00-22.00 hrs at Van Gogh, organised together with Nederland.ro
 - o 15 December: Master Class at Maastricht School of Management, NRCC partner, free attendance for NRCC members
 - o 15 December: meeting new Romanian Ambassador to The Netherlands: Mrs. Ireny Comaroschi – new meeting in February expected
 - o 11 January: **New Year's Drink** - Dutch Networking Drink, 19.00-22.00 hrs at Van Gogh, organised together with Nederland.ro
 - o 18 January: lunch with Dutch Ambassador at Residence
 - o 24 January: EU Bilateral Chambers Presidents' Dinner
 - o 26 January: Renewable Energy Seminar - Italian Chamber of Commerce

- Upcoming events:
 - o 31 January: Let's Talk HR event, organised by our member Fine Law exclusively for NRCC members
 - o 7 February: First Romanian Compliance Conference, organised by our member Bliss Romania, together with NRCC
 - o 8 February: Retrospective on Labour Legislation, organised by our member Fine Law
 - o 8 February: **Dutch Networking Drink**, 19.00-22.00 hrs at Van Gogh, organised together with Nederland.ro
 - o 15 February: NRCC Knowledge centre – Finance for Romanian companies
 - o 22 February: **Growing Together: first Training Session** for all NRCC members, organised by NRCC, in partnership with our member MSM. MSM Professor Paul Garrison (USA) trains about Branding and Customer Value.
 - o 28 February: joint Breakfast Briefing with the **British-Romanian Chamber of Commerce** and Transparency International at Crowne Plaza
 - o 2 March: **Growing Together: Training Session** for all NRCC members, organised by NRCC, in partnership with our member MSM. MSM Professor Mr. Sandy Vaci (Hungary/Canada, worked in >50 countries) runs a session on Customer Service.
 - o 14 March: **General Assembly** of the members of the Netherlands-Romanian Chamber of Commerce at Grand Cafe Van Gogh.

- Interview with Dutch Ambassador to Romania: H.E. Mr. Matthijs van Bonzel
- Incoming business requests
- New members:
 - o Agrivital
 - o Eurodite
 - o IHS Romania
- News from our members
 - o Ionescu-Sava
 - o IDROMANIA
 - o LeasePlan
 - o Beros & Van Schaik
- An interview with the Board: **Mihaela Bitu**

Events since our previous newsletter

Dossier Schengen

The Board of the NRCC met the Dutch Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Matthijs van Bonzel, for a lunch meeting to discuss how Dutch business in Romania is affected by the negative vote of the Dutch government. Different suggestions for changing the position have been debated and the Ambassador committed to take with him a summary to the International Ambassadors Meeting in The Hague.

In the same light, the Dutch national television, the NOS, will visit Romania soon, to identify the impact of the delay of the Romanian accession to the Schengen zone on business in general and on Dutch business specifically. If you are interested to be interviewed or involved otherwise in the visit by the NOS, please contact us at: info@netherlands.ro.

Dutch Networking Drink, December 14th



Dutch and Romanian business people came together again for the last time in 2011 to chat, know each other better or just to enjoy a cold Heineken, good food and the cozy atmosphere on the first floor at Van Gogh café.

Special guest of the evening was HE Matthijs Van Bonzel, the new Dutch Ambassador to Romania. His very friendly outgoing personality was highly appreciated by the Dutch Romanian community present at Van Gogh. And so was his first speech that underlined the qualities of Romanians, the positive developments of their country and its huge potential. The Ambassador expressed also his willingness to be close to the Dutch investors and encouraged them to share their problems and successes with him.



All present acknowledged that they enjoyed a wonderful evening and talked about returning next. We extend our big thanks to Eureka, Heineken and TPA Horwath, our members that made this special event possible.



The next event will take place on Wednesday 8 February 2012, between 19.00 and 22.00 hrs at Van Gogh Café

Meeting the Romanian Ambassador to The Netherlands, December 15th

A small delegation of the NRCC was invited for a talk with the newly appointed Romanian Ambassador to The Netherlands, H.E. Mrs. Ireny Comaroschi. The Ambassador asked the NRCC and the Dutch community in Romania for support in dismantling the existing obstacles between the two countries, as well as suggestions to make the Dutch trust Romania and its citizens more. She appreciates the Netherlands' contribution to Romania's developments, as it was the first country to implement Twinning Programs.



H.E. Mrs. Ireny Comaroschi is open to a continuous dialogue and cooperation with the Chamber. Therefore the Board of the NRCC invites her to the next Board Meeting, as well as to the Dutch Networking Drink that follows on February 8, before she leaves to her new position in The Netherlands.

New Year's reception at the Dutch Residence – 11th January

The newly appointed Dutch Ambassador to Romania, HE Matthijs Van Bonzel and his wife Cristina, invited the NRCC members at their residence to wish them in person a happy and prosperous 2012.

It was a very special evening for all the guests who enjoyed the stylish place and the genuine hospitality of the hostesses. During his speech, the Ambassador conveyed a precious message to the Dutch Romanian community: our home is your home too; we are willing to share this place with you to host business, social and cultural events; please let us know your achievements, ideas and visions. A generous invitation which we hope you will honour. We are happy to receive your suggestions.

EU Bilateral Chambers Presidents' Dinner – 24th January



On the initiative of the NRCC, together with its sister organisation BRCC (British Romanian Chamber of Commerce), all the EU bilateral Chambers were invited to a meeting, to discuss possible ways of collaboration with the purpose of offering more possibilities to the members and to create synergies. The participants agreed on several important issues, like sharing

the event calendars and thus avoid overlapping of events; to identify possibilities for organising some joint events; to eliminate unnecessary duplication of topics of events; to co-brand some events with the Chamber that has most expertise in the respective field; and to collaborate in lobbying activities at the Romanian government, authorities and other similar Romanian organisations.

Renewable Energy Seminar - January 26th

The Netherlands-Romanian Chamber of Commerce, together with the British and French Chambers of Commerce, co-branded the event organized by the Italian Chamber of Commerce, on renewable energy in Romania. Due to the large amount of participants, location had to be changed. All people present considered the seminar a huge success, also due to the wide variety of participation. Outcomes at: <http://bit.ly/y53yeE>



Upcoming events

- 7 February: **First Romanian Compliance Conference**. Our member Bliss Romania together with NRCC and other partners organise this conference with the aim to support organizations to identify meaningful ways to use resources devoted to compliance, anti money laundering and financial crime prevention, as well as to address risks and opportunities in these areas having in view the real cost of non-compliance.
- 8 February: **Retrospective on Labour Legislation**, organised by our member Fine Law. The purpose of this event is to exchange knowledge and experiences in implementation of the new labour legislation passed on last year and to offer practical solutions to the cumbersome aspects of the labour legislation.
- 8 February: **Dutch Networking Drink**, 19.00-22.00 hrs at Van Gogh
This drink is open for all our members and their employees. The dress-code is business. This event takes place together with members from Nederland.ro. Specific invitation follows. This event is sponsored by Heineken and Beros & Van Schaik Wine Traders.



- 15 February: NRCC Knowledge Centre – Financing for Romanian companies. How can companies make smart financial decisions in these difficult times? What are conditions for lending money? What are its tax implications? This event is organised with support of Access Financial Services and on of our members from the banking sector.

Interview with the new Dutch Ambassador to Romania: H.E. Mr. Matthijs van Bonzel

“Come with your ideas and let’s make them happen”

Since early December, H.E. Mr. J.H.M. (Matthijs) van Bonzel is the new ambassador of The Netherlands to Romania. We are curious about his plans and intentions, his full scope as well as his focus. An interview.

What was your first reaction when you heard your next post would be Romania?

The Hague checked with me whether I was interested for this post. My first reaction was that it sounded very nice. I was sorry to leave Costa Rica, where I had a great time.

It was clear it would be a difficult post; the political situation to start with is not easy. Still, I see a lot of economical opportunities. Also it is an interesting time in which Romania has to find its place and comfort in the EU. Many subjects still have to be settled, like employees abroad, border control, the EURO, the Republic of Moldova, etc.



What have you noticed in your first 6 weeks?

I’m very enthusiastic about the country and its possibilities. I have seen a bit from Bucharest now. I also have visited Cluj, where I met DBC (Dutch Business Association, partners of the NRCC), the prefect and the mayor. I’m very impressed by the mentality in Cluj. They are able to attract top Romanian talent through Dutch companies. The (local) government is really pre-occupied with the question: “How can we do things better?”

Can you be more specific about your plans?

No, I want that myself as well as all other people at the Embassy are open for the opportunities that are occurring. I don’t want people to ignore opportunities and chances, “because it is not in my year-plan”.

Will we have also here a Fenedex award (the Dutch award for “the best Embassy for entrepreneurs”), like you won in Costa Rica?

We cannot guarantee such prize, though I definitely will work to have that same attitude at our Embassy: be focused on and helpful for the outer world. And from this point of view, the attitude is already very strong and positive at the Embassy in Romania. Also the Economical Department is doing a fantastic job.

You arrive in a difficult moment. The Netherlands is against Romania’s accession into the Schengen zone. What can you say about this situation?

We are going to find a solution. We have to focus on the long term, not only on the political situation now. When there is an openness to work together, we will get out of this. We face a situation in which Romania still has a way to go to get up to EU standards in many aspects. We want to help. Therefore we imagine that the situation is solved already, all obstacles removed, and we work hard to make that image reality. I'm optimistic that it will only get better and nicer.

In each gap that is identified, we have to look for the business. In The Netherlands, waste and garbage have always been dirty and we didn't want to see them. Until someone realised that there is business in it, it's a product. This identification of gaps as possible businesses, in order to make Romania stronger in its local economy, is something we are very much willing to explore together.

[How is the collaboration between The Netherlands and Romania?](#)

Within the EU it is sometimes more difficult to work together with other EU states than when you work for example in Japan. Outside Europe, all EU countries automatically work together. Within the EU it is more common to work together in subject-groups, in commissions, in industry-communities. Therefore I believe that all EU Ambassadors should work together, all EU Economic Attachés should work together, and so further.

In The Netherlands there are a lot of local contacts with Romanian villages. This has remained from the early days after the Revolution, when Dutch villages collected clothes and toys for Romania. These ties can be built out. I think about



collaboration between Dutch and Romanian schools, football clubs, student organisations, wine tasting (why not?), churches, etc. It is essential that Dutch citizens visit Romania. That way a real understanding, acceptance and appreciation will be built.

I feel myself to be the Ambassador in all these fields, not only political or economical. I want to be open towards the whole country. I want to do things and projects for people and companies also from the country side. And I mean the same for our own house. It's an open place for visitors.

I want to promote Romania in The Netherlands and in the EU. That's why I support the initiatives Romanians and Romanian companies come with. So please come with your ideas and we look together how we can make it happen. There are so many contacts at our Embassy, but also elsewhere between The Netherlands and Romania, that a solution must exist. I want The Netherlands to be the multiplier for Romania.

Mr. Matthijs van Bonzel is born in 1956 in Utrecht, The Netherlands. He is married to Cristina van Bonzel-Gomez. They have 2 sons, 19 and 22 years old, 1

dog (called Lucky) and 1 cat (called Zuri (which means in Japanese: pickpocket)). Follow Matthijs van Bonzel on Twitter on: @MatthijsvBonzel

Incoming business requests

- Incoming request:
"Hello, we are a big company which is recycling cars. We are looking for export addresses who want to buy used engines from cars. Can you help us with it?"
If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact us at info@netherlands.ro, so we can put you in contact with the requesting party.
- Are you looking for a certain service or collaboration among our members? Please do share them in our newsletter.
- Please send in your completed form for the **NRCC Members' Directory!** Only companies that paid their membership fee and from which we received the form, will be included in the Members' Directory!

New members (since 31 November)

- Agrivital www.agrivital.nl
- Eurodite www.eurodite.eu
- IHS Romania www.ihs-romania.ro

News from our members

○ **Law Firm Ionescu and Sava Enters the Insolvency Market**

After 6 years on the legal market, law firm Ionescu and Sava emerges as a solid, integrated business consultancy firm, now incorporating the Ionescu and Sava Insolvency House. Future plans also include a stand-alone tax consultancy office that would take over the already existing tax department.

For the past four months, Ionescu and Sava has undergone a re-branding process to assimilate these developments at a corporate level, the result of which can be seen in a fresh new look of the firm. The new corporate identity has been transposed to the Ionescu and Sava Insolvency House and will stand as basis for the future tax consultancy office.



"The transition from a boutique to a general practice law firm has been smooth for Ionescu and Sava, as it was solely based on client needs and

portfolio development. During the past two years, our efforts have been aimed at structuring our consultancy around businesses and high profile clients." says managing partner Radu Ionescu.

Ionescu and Sava has been set up in 2005 by a team of experienced attorneys, trained with some of the most prestigious law firms in the country. Six years later, Ionescu and Sava has earned its own prestige on the market and now assists clients in the pharmaceuticals industry, automotive, banks and financial services, real estate development or industrial production. The firm's practice areas include litigation, insolvency, tax, competition, private client and M&A.

- o **IDROMANIA**, The Real Estate Business unit of Management Services BLISS and long term member of the NRCC, has launched their new real estate website. www.idromania.ro. Find now in Romanian, English and Dutch an actual overview of residential and office properties in Bucharest for rent or for sale.

As we are a proud NRCC member **we offer all members and their staff professional and reliable Real Estate brokerage services for free when willing to rent or purchase a property.** Contact us now for professional real estate support: at isfahan@idromania.ro / 0040(0)729005625 or violetta@idromania.ro / 0040(0)729005626

- o **LeasePlan**: It is no news that during winter, the number of car accidents and incidents caused by the specific weather conditions is increasing.

Even so, **LeasePlan** is taking care of it's clients and meets their requests with professionalism and putting on the first place their comfort and safety.

As an example, during the week 23-27 January 2012, following a request from a client that was isolated in Poiana Brasov, our team together with local partners, was able to put at their disposal 50 snow chains and 50 shovels, even if the traffic in the area was completely blocked and the access to the area restricted.

Also, for another client that had a company car (assigned for top management purposes), snowed-in at the exit from the A2 highway, and which was almost completely covered by snow, LeasePlan was able to provide a replacement car with driver, until the situation returned to normal.



Also, LeasePlan was involved in assistance services related to the specifics of the winter season, services that involved among others: towing to authorized service vehicles that were not functioning, helping snowed-in vehicles or on-site assistance for malfunctioning vehicles.

- o **Beros & Van Schaik** is a wine trading company created by two entrepreneurs, Jerry van Schaik - known from Grand Café Van Gogh and Rembrandt Hotel - and Christian Beros, a Chilean wine loving architect. Starting on February 1 Beros & Van Schaik will introduce a new wine shop & bar-concept in the rapid developing Romanian wine market. We offer a unique assortment of imported wines from France, Spain, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Australia a.o., completed with quality wines from Romania that can't be found in the supermarket, like Corcova, Terra Romana, Prince Stirbey, Avincis and La Certa . We like you to enjoy good wine for competitive prices and we want to make your live easy, so we deliver the wine when and where you like. In our bar on strada Sepcari in the old city centre we serve a range of wines by the glass, accompanied by small snacks, like cured meat, cheese, olives and daily specials. The BvS shop & bar is open from Tuesday – Saturday from 14.00 – 22.00 hours.
- o Publish here all **your important company news** to all our members! Send us your news, your major achievements and changes in your companies. We want this newsletter to be your communication platform!
Deadline for the next newsletter: Monday 23 January 2012

An Interview with the Board: Mihaela Bitu

NRCC: Can you tell something about yourself?

I have worked with ING for the past 16 years with various roles and responsibilities, primarily in Romania but also in London and in The Netherlands. At the moment I am Head of Corporate Division in ING Romania and Deputy General Manager, as well as Member of the Board. Also, I am member of the NRCC Board since February 2011. I applied for this position because ING is an important Dutch organisation in Romania and we want to have an active role in the community. On a personal level I have a good understanding of both cultures and I feel this contributes to my position within the NRCC too.



What do you appreciate in your role of NRCC member?

What I like in NRCC and in the Board especially is the genuine interest in bringing people together. There is also a true interest in developing the business and in adding value for the members. NRCC plays an important role for members, the Chamber is a facilitator of events, communication, business opportunities, lobbying and much more.

The Netherlands still keeps Romania outside the Schengen zone. Does this position affect ING as a Dutch company?

No, we do not see any significant signs. In business, business comes first. The value of the services we offer as a bank is what matters most, and this goes beyond the emotions regarding political decisions. However, I do observe an increasing tension in society.

What are ING plans for the coming 3-5 years?

Romania is an important market in Central and Eastern Europe and the ING Group has confidence in this market. First we want to consolidate our position in the Romanian market. The macro-economic situation is very uncertain at the moment all around Europe. There is a conservative approach everywhere. We believe there is place for growth for us, though it must be sustainable and focused on specific markets and services. We will not go for an aggressive expansion.

We are a top 10 player in Romania by assets. The corporate division is ranked 5 or 6 among all banks in Romania; the retail division, which started much later, still has a lot of potential to grow. We are a very important market player in internet-banking and we are market leader in custody services for financial institutions.



We all know that Romania does not have a very positive image abroad. How did you feel that in The Netherlands?

Indeed, Romania can do much better. The general image is negative about Romanians. However, if I look at the Romanian community in The Netherlands, it is full of highly educated professionals who contribute to the economy. The public opinion abroad must change. This can only happen by

intense collaboration and promotion. Romania is not only a "beautiful country" and Romania does not produce only unproductive workers and unwanted emigrants. Romania is a country with many well-educated and experienced professionals and above all, it is a very interesting market, even nowadays.

How can NRCC do more?

In the NRCC Board we challenge ourselves. We had a strategy meeting in November last year, in which we asked ourselves: what are the needs of our members? The survey we conducted revealed that the activities we organise are appreciated. Now we have to continue, we have to organise more events and focus on better quality; we shall do lobbying where needed in the interest of our members. We also learnt that we need more active communication. This has improved a lot by the launch of the Newsletters. Still, communication should be more bi-directional.



Do you have a message to new members?

The NRCC is a place where you can meet other companies. You can share experience, business opportunities, generate business, work on projects for common interest and join forces for lobbying. The NRCC has succeeded and keeps on working hard to stand out by offering much value for its members.

Other news, plans and inputs

- o Please send in your completed form for the **NRCC Members' Directory!** We want all our members to be in this book! Only companies that paid their membership fee and from which we received the form, will be included in the Members' Directory!

If you did not receive the Members' Directory Form, please contact us immediately. Also for **advertising possibilities** in the Members' Directory, please contact us at info@netherlands.ro.

Would you like to place your ad in our next Newsletter? Please [contact](#) us!