



MINISTERUL DEZVOLTĂRII REGIONALE
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Ladies and gentlemen,

Honoured guests,

It is with joy that I have the great honor of welcoming you to Romania! Thank you for your presence at this event which is part of the calendar of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and which is organized by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration.

The Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union took off on the belief that the unity and cohesion of the European Union are the foremost principles to be considered at the present time.

In this sense, we are thinking of cohesion as a common European value, as well as an expression of solidarity among states, regions and citizens of the European Union.

The European project calls for a boost of creativity, and a strengthened perspective, to overcome the current challenges it faces.

It is not by chance that we find ourselves today less than 10 kilometers away from the external border of the European Union, in the oldest university center in Romania, a city for which culture, history and science are key features.

Besides being a perfect location for a large scientific event like the ESPON Seminar, we decided to organize this meeting in Iași and thus reiterate an extremely important message: If we want the Union to go forward, then we must all go ahead together. Nobody can be left behind. Every citizen counts whether he lives in Iași, Brussels or any other place in the European Union.

We share a common goal and it is only by working closely together that we can reinforce our confidence in the fundamental values that unite us.

The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration highly values the results of the ESPON Cooperation Programme – *the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion* – and I am convinced that participants will find the occasion useful and contribute to the discussions today and tomorrow.

Let me take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our partners in this event: Iași County Council, the Prefecture of Iași County, ESPON European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation and ESPON Managing Authority for their valuable support.

Thank you for your attention and wish you all a successful activity!