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EVENT: SCIENTIFIC COLLOQUY

RURAL BANAT: REALITIES, PERSPECTIVES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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In 28 of October 2016, within the West University's central headquarters, room 607A, took place a vivid and fruitful scientific event. The colloquy entitled 'Rural Banat: opportunities and challenges' (Figure 1) brought together students, teachers and curators (Photo 2) interested in the evolution of Banat's rural areas, the development opportunities they have within the European Union's regional policy framework and the challenges they faced due to neoliberal economic trends and the social instability and precarious, they entail, together with the inconclusive political response to the problem offered by the central authorities from Bucharest. The colloquy is part of the larger national campaign entitled People of the Time, which aims to bring together a community of shared values by rewarding the most influential scientists, writers, entrepreneurs, artists, doctors, journalists, civil society members and cultural personalities who reside abroad.



Figure 1. The advertisement of Rural Banat Colloquium

These important representatives of Romanian culture are proposed either by the campaign's manager or by the public, on the official website of the campaign: <http://www.oameniitimpului.ro/>. After the end of the nominalization period, the national jury selects five finalists for each domain. Starting from mid November to the beginning of December, the public vote their preferred candidate for each domain (40%), and so does the national jury of the campaign (60%). In the end, at the award ceremony which will take place in the 10th of December within the assembly room of the `Vasile Alecsandri` national theater from Jassy, the selected candidates will receive their well deserved awards. The People of the Time national campaign try to identify some of the most pressing regional issues existent in Romania and address them properly. Within the Banat region, the specific topic chosen for debate was, as already mentioned, the rural problem.



Photo 1. Professor Remus Crețan lecturing the issues on rural Romanian Banat

Addressing it were PHD. Professor Remus Crețan, West University of Timișoara, Department of Geography, and curator Ion Traia from (Photo 1) the Banat Village Museum. Professor Remus Crețan discussed about the incoherent strategies and the lack of perspectives facing Banat's villages due to insufficient funding from the government, the high numbers of people from the rural area who choose to work abroad in order to provide for their families and the new wave of foreign entrepreneurs who, benefiting from subsidies from their own states and also using the European legislative framework

to their advantage, aim frequently to obtain quick gains at the ecological and economical expense of local communities.



Photo 2. Participants at the Rural Banat Colquy

This situation can be change only through the conjugated efforts of local, national and European authorities, as well as through the initiative of the local communities themselves, which have the opportunity to obtain European funding for projects that they have to conceive and implement within a certain period. Curator Ion Traia offered the audience delightful insights into the modern history of the Banat province, presenting specific cases of mostly anonymous people who contributed a lot to the international visibility of this region during the 18th, 19th and the 20th century. Overall, the whole event was a success, both speakers being congratulated by the audience and asked numerous and relevant questions.