



# PANORAMA

*Focusing on European Regional and Urban Policy*

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## North-West Romania: going in the right direction



COMMISSIONER  
CRETU: PAST  
ACHIEVEMENTS,  
FUTURE PLANS



Regional and  
Urban Policy



# Good news for Portugal ... and future EU investment

*The Alcobaça Monastery is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in central Portugal*

**In November 2018, the Integrity Pact Stakeholder Event ‘Together towards Clean Contracting: New developments and the road ahead’ presented some important project results, shared lessons learned and looked forward to the challenges ahead.**

In Portugal, the last officially signed Integrity Pact (IP) will promote transparency and efficiency in an EU-funded project focusing on the restoration and preservation of the Alcobaça Monastery. This is one of the country’s historical and architectural medieval treasures and is among the most influential Cistercian centres in the Iberian Peninsula and Europe as a whole.

The Portuguese Government’s General Directorate of Cultural Heritage will be supported by Transparency International Portugal in ensuring that the project, which is worth around EUR 1 million, will deliver on its objectives and that citizens will continue to be informed about and involved in monitoring the work.

With parts of the structure dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Alcobaça Monastery retains many of its medieval features. As a result of its unique history, the monument has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With large numbers of tourists visiting Alcobaça, the work will help to protect the building’s intricate designs, including the famous

tombs of King Pedro I and Inês de Castro commissioned by King Pedro I after the dramatic love story that would later inspire many poets and artists.

## **Showcasing transparency and value added**

This is the last of the 17 projects in 11 Member States to use IPs for EU-funded projects as part of a joint pilot initiative between Transparency International and the European Commission’s DG Regional and Urban Policy. Their goal is to boost transparency and value for money for EU investment under Cohesion Policy. As the implementation of these projects has progressed, some significant results have been observed and important lessons learned for the future.

On 28 November 2018, the Integrity Pact Stakeholder Event brought together around 120 stakeholders from all 17 IPs: civil society partners, contracting authorities, managing authorities, contractors, as well as other important interested parties (anti-corruption authorities, public procurement offices), representatives of the European Commission (in particular DG Regio), and the Transparency International EU Liaison Office and Secretariat.

The aim of the event was to showcase best practice and promote ambition among the existing IPs. Three years into the project, participants shared lessons learned, achievements and

remaining challenges emerging from this collaboration. Furthermore, they looked to the future and expanded the focus to consider IPs within the broader, 'clean contracting' picture. The stakeholders also discussed how different initiatives can build on and complement each other to strive for more efficient, effective and corruption-free public procurement.

## Funding the future

During the day, plenary and group sessions covered different topics: lessons and impressions from stakeholders, results of a mid-term learning review recently conducted within the framework of the project, DG Regio's perspective on the IPs in the context of the latest trends in public procurement, the issue of low competition and single-bidding in public procurement, ongoing efforts to break down barriers between different stakeholders involved in public procurement, and how to foster greater transparency and openness and build a coalition for action with better open data.

Patricia Moreira, Managing Director of the Transparency International Secretariat, has no doubts: IPs are important to build trust among different stakeholders (civil society, national authorities, private sector, citizens). They have helped to develop a stronger appreciation of the role that IPs and civil society engagement can play in building cleaner contracting, alongside other work such as open data initiatives.

*“Efficiency, transparency and performance will remain key elements of the next generation of EU programmes and funds and, in particular, of Cohesion Policy.”*

According to Marc Lemaître, Director-General of DG REGIO, this pilot project shows how public institutions can benefit from the cooperation with civil society in order to become more transparent, efficient and result-oriented, while better protecting the EU's financial interests. This is also a clear message for the future. Efficiency, transparency and performance will remain key elements of the next generation of EU programmes and funds and, in particular, of Cohesion Policy. ■

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### FIND OUT MORE

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/integrity-pacts/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/integrity-pacts/)

<https://bit.ly/2UzmSaE>

<https://bit.ly/2G10fsY>

