

## Opening remarks: U.S. – Romania Economic Forum

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- Good morning & welcome everyone!
- In my capacity of President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Romania, it is a great honor to open the U.S. – Romania Economic Forum: from Security to Prosperity.
- AmCham Romania joins therefore the high-level initiatives of this year to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US – Romania Strategic Partnership, focused this time on the economic agenda, where our expertise lies.
- The U.S. – Romania Strategic Partnership, that preceded Romania's NATO membership, was an expression of both countries' commitment towards a solid cooperation, and we are grateful for the continued partnership over the past 25 years.
- Throughout 2022 the Romanian Presidency, the Government, the Parliament, the U.S. Congress, and other officials have expressed the renewed commitment on both sides for the Strategic Partnership's objectives.
- As a business community that makes Romania's prosperity a leading priority, AmCham supports the implementation of a bilateral economic agenda by facilitating an open, multistakeholder dialogue, by making the case for Romania in the board rooms of the companies we represent, by promoting policy recommendations for making Romania attractive for US investors and for nurturing Romanian businesses so that they become global players and success stories in the U.S. and not only.
- In this context, leveraging on the great cooperation in the defense and security area, today we have invited important stakeholders to a forward-looking dialogue on strengthening the trade & investments cooperation between our countries.
- We need to look no further than Ukraine to understand and **acknowledge the value of Romania's NATO and EU membership**. It is what safeguarded all of us living and working in Romania to go on with our lives, and more than that, to join the Ukraine war relief efforts, as a country, as corporate citizens, as individuals.
- Like many times in history, Ukraine's situation shows that armies can win a battle but to win the war you need a solid and strong economy.
- Therefore, while the geopolitical context called for an intensified security cooperation, and we are grateful for the ongoing support our country receives from its NATO allies, we all agree that it provides a solid foundation for further developing the investment and the economic relations between our two countries, and there is no better time to discuss about and commit to the shared objectives of increasing trade and investments both ways.
- All of us at AmCham are extremely honored to host today's high-level dialogue on the future of U.S. – Romania economic relations, and I would like to thank our distinguished keynote speakers, the U.S. and RO officials, the representatives of central and local authorities, the U.S Embassy team, the AmCham Romania members, the business leaders, and the media, that are present here today.

- Our event has two main parts, followed by a networking lunch.
- In the first part of the event, we are especially privileged to have Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Don Graves, and Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, Jose Fernandez joining us. They are the highest ranked US officials to join an AmCham event in our organization's almost 30-years of activity in Romania.
- The mutual commitment to the bilateral economic agenda is expressed on Romania's behalf through the participation of the Acting President of the Senate of Romania, Alina Gorghiu, and the Deputy Prime-Minister, Sorin Grindeanu.
- As the future of the US - RO economic ties we are discussing today is anchored in the security cooperation so far, we are grateful to also have NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană share his insights on the evolution of the regional landscape from a security and defense perspective.
- After a 15 minutes break to allow our keynote speakers leave the stage, the second part of the event will be dedicated to "the policy – industry" dialogue, where we have invited members of the Romanian Government and representatives of leading U.S. investors in Romania to engage in a dialogue on what it takes for our country to attract more investments from the U.S.
- To contextualize the discussion, I will start by present some key results of what we believe to be a first attempt to measure the volume and impact of the US - RO economic relations, which my colleagues in AmCham has worked with a team of researchers at the Babes Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.
- The figures will illustrate the evolution of our commercial relations, the championing industries, and more than that, will reveal the great potential for further growth of our bilateral economic cooperation.
- To conclude, we are aware that this is an ambitious agenda, therefore, today's conference is only the opening of the forum which will be followed by a series of roundtables dedicated to those industries that hold the greatest potential for future economic growth.
- Speaking of the agenda, I am honored to share the floor and the microphone today with Charge D'Affaires David Muniz, also the Honorary President of AmCham. This event would have not been possible without the support and relentless effort of the U.S. Embassy team.
- These being said, I would like to invite David for sharing the welcome remarks on behalf of the U.S. Embassy