



MONICA MACOVEI, 1997 ROMANIA

Member of European Parliament

Monica Macovei believes her program was tailored for her future career as it gave her “the desire, the courage and the strength to rebuild institutions and to support victims of civil and violent unrest in post-conflict zones.” Visits to law firms exposed Macovei to the importance of pro bono work, a concept prohibited in Romania except when a lawyer defends a relative. She admired the underlying notion that a law firm should contribute to the well-being of society in addition to the individual. Macovei was incredibly impressed that one can challenge a law, practice or system for this reason. She decided that she must be a proactive player and look for appropriate cases to challenge when a law or practice does not suit the common good.



When Macovei returned to Romania, she resigned from her position at the General Prosecutor’s Office in the human rights department and joined the Romanian Association for Human Rights, where she later became president. Macovei also continued as a legal expert for the Council of Europe and other international organizations. Over the next few years in these roles, she successfully represented over 20 applicants before the European Court of Human Rights whose civil rights had been violated by Romanian authorities. She also trained over 1,000 personnel in law enforcement positions on the rule of law and the European Court of Human Rights.

From 2005 to 2007, Macovei served as Romania’s Minister of Justice, where she implemented reforms in the judicial system and took measures against corruption within the judiciary and political class. Macovei restructured the judiciary model within the European Commission, fighting against high-level corruption and money laundering, and implemented the protection of intellectual property rights. Macovei attributes her ability to make these changes correctly and effectively to her Eisenhower Fellowship. She received international recognition and awards for her anti-corruption initiatives and justice reforms that allowed Romania to enter the European Union in 2007.

In 2009, Macovei was elected as a member of the European Parliament in the European People's Party Group. As a member, Macovei drafts legislation in the judicial and human rights areas. Currently, she is drafting the “Directive on Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime”, and is working to emulate the “follow the money” principle applied in the U.S. Macovei values the vital role networking can play, a lesson she learned while on fellowship, as it has helped her immensely in her role in the EP. This is evident in her work in reforming systems, getting public and political support, and making legislation based on a negotiation process. In 2012, Macovei was ranked as the top member of EP in the category “reports adopted by the European Parliament” out of 754 parliamentarians and with a total of 35 reports approved.

Of her fellowship, Macovei states, “The fellowship changed my life through the people I met, the experiences I had and the world that opened my mind through learning what a real democracy is and how it functions. It helped me tremendously in my future career, in particular in the reforms to change the judicial system and to fight against corruption, as a minister of justice in a pre-accession to the EU period; it helps me even now in the European Parliament”.

Leaders bettering the world around them.