



Dear Aspen Friends

Thank you for joining us at the Aspen Leadership Awards and Gala Dinner. The event has reached its 12th edition this year and it concludes another rich year for our Institute. Among all our events this is maybe the most personal to each and every member of the growing Aspen Institute Romania community. This is when we all come together animated by the fundamental commitment to a values-based contribution to the Good Society.

The Aspen Leadership Awards are an **opportunity to bring recognition to individuals or organizations** that left their mark on the Romanian and global society in the year that is coming to an end, who were innovators and examples of ethical and professional conduct, in fields such as **public service, technology, research and innovation, arts or cultural heritage**.

During these turbulent times and given the multitude of profound crises from the past years, that have produced important and long-lasting mutations in the functioning of our politics, economies, and societies, the Aspen Institute Romania **managed to remain close to its mission of promoting values-based leadership**. The work we have done together over the past years is important for the development of the Romanian society and offers us reasons to be proud of our common efforts.

Our Leadership, Policy and Public Programs are unparalleled in our part of Europe, supporting the Institute's mission to foster values-based leadership, encouraging individuals to reflect and act in accordance with the ideals and ideas that define a good society.

The **network of Fellows and Alumni of our Leadership Programs** comprises **over 1100** extraordinary individuals from **over 40 different nations**, all age groups and walks of life. It is, without a doubt, the best long-term contribution of the Aspen Institute Romania to the society and to the continuation of the values-based ideals in the hearts and minds of the next generations.

The Aspen Leadership Awards and Gala Dinner celebrated our common work this year and paved the way for the future. It was a great occasion for the Aspen family to meet and share the values that have brought us together from the beginning of our journey: the Aspen Idea.

The **Aspen Leadership Awards**, the **Aspen Social Action Prize**, the graduation of our 2022 **Aspen Young Leaders Program** cohort and the section dedicated to the **Aspen Public Service Leadership Program** represented the highlights of our Gala.

We thank all the Members of the Institute, the Aspen Fellows and Alumni and our Partners and Sponsors for their constant support, dedication, and willingness to contribute to the Good Society.

Please receive our warmest regards.

Sergiu Manea
Acting President
Aspen Institute Romania



The Award

by David Sandu

An array of Aspen leaves, from the Cantacuzino Institute courtyard, turn into patinated silver leaves for the Aspen Awards Gala. The Aspen Awards speak of excellence and superlatives with a deep sense of modesty and normality, as they are a symbol created to offer recognition and appreciation.

The Award design is David Sandu's artistic interpretation of the fundamental values of the Aspen Institute, offering a collage of mixed artistic techniques, both traditional and modern alike that converge towards the same image, object and symbol.

The balance of nature is symbolized by a delicate composition of molded beeswax, pure silver alloyed with copper and exotic wood from the North American Continent.





Aspen Leadership Awardees

"Mihnea Constantinescu" Values-Based Leadership Award

Ms. Roberta Metsola

President of the European Parliament



Roberta Metsola was elected President of the European Parliament in January 2022.

She was first elected to the European Parliament in 2013, becoming one of Malta's first female Members of the European Parliament. Metsola was re-elected in 2014 and then again in 2019.

In 2020 she was elected as the First Vice-President of the European Parliament, becoming the first Maltese national to hold the post. She was responsible for the European Parliament's relations with national parliaments and for the Parliament's participation in the interreligious and non-confessional dialogue (Article 17 TFEU).

Within the European Parliament, President Metsola was the EPP Group's Coordinator in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, between January 2017 and 2020. President Metsola was the Parliament's rapporteur on the European Border and Coastguard Regulation in 2019.

She also co-authored the Parliament's own-initiative report on the need to protect journalists in the European Union from Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation.

Professionally she is a lawyer who has specialised in European law and politics.

Prior to her election as a MEP, President Metsola served within the Permanent Representation of

Malta to the European Union and later as the legal advisor to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In her student years, she campaigned actively for Malta's EU membership, and was active in various organisations, acting as the Secretary-General for the European Democrat Student organisation between 2002-2003.

She completed an Erasmus exchange in France and graduated from the University of Malta and the College of Europe in Bruges.

Born in 1979, Roberta Metsola is married to Ukko Metsola and is the mother of four boys.

The "Mihnea Constantinescu" Values-Based Leadership Award is presented to a public leader or national organization that has excelled in one's field of activity, by constantly supporting and promoting national and universal values.





Innovation and Technology Leadership Award

Mr. Mihai Cepoi
Founder of JOBFUL



Jobful's founder Mihai Cepoi, was selected for the Forbes 30 under 30 list in 2019 and designated the startup Founder of the year 2019 in Romania by the Central European Startup Awards. For Mihai, building and leading the company represents a continuous learning process and a perfect mix of all his previous experiences. He graduated from the most prestigious computer science university in Romania and worked as project manager and product manager after graduation. Passionate about education and entrepreneurship, he joined Leaders School, Aspire Academy, Alternative University and other educational programs. Prior to the full-time dedication to Jobful, Mihai worked in the enterprise sales teams of Microsoft and SAP both locally and internationally, being awarded as MEE's Most Valuable Player in HR Sales. Jobful was selected as one of the "10 super promising Romanian startups to watch in 2022" Jobful is a human-centric platform for talent acquisition launched in May 2018 striving to disrupt the HR Tech market, using a gamification framework to address candidates needs, machine learning algorithms to drive operational excellence for the recruitment team and process redesign to fill the gaps in today's market. The solution is an end-to-end platform that helps companies to attract, engage, skill and hire professionals.

During the last 4 years, the team was part of various startup Acceleration Programs (SAP.io Berlin Acceleration Program, NUMA New York Acceleration Program and InnovX Scale-up Acceleration Program). In 2022, they were selected by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development for the Star Venture program, offering expert consultancy for key development projects.

The talent shortage is and will continue being a big challenge for all the countries. Jobful directly impacts the workforce, creating the tools to help professionals up-skill and find the right career path for them as well as companies to make bias-free decisions based on candidates knowledge and skills. This increases talent mobility and will reduce talent shortages. When the Ukraine-Russia war started, they deployed their technology to support the displaced people from Ukraine to regain their financial stability - <https://jobs4ukr.com> - recognised by EU's State of the Union.

Their implementation (jobs4ukr.com) became the largest platform supporting hiring for Ukrainians regionally, attracting more than 7.000 Ukrainians and 2.000 employers from 49 countries. Migration is key for the future of the workforce across the globe and work is the fastest way to integrate. Based on this experience, they are expanding their solution for other categories of vulnerable populations. The Innovation and Technology Leadership Award is presented to a leader or an organization which brought significant contribution in the field of technology, innovation and research, or in the entrepreneurial environment. Innovation stands as a cornerstone to social and economic progress.

The 2022 Innovation and Technology Leadership Award was presented by BCR.





Arts and Society Leadership Award

Ms. Adina Pintilie

Filmmaker, visual artist and curator



(Copyright Berlin International Film Festival)

Adina Pintilie is a filmmaker, visual artist and curator. From 2022, she is also a professor for cinema at the HFBK University of Fine Arts Hamburg. On the fluid border between reality, fiction and visual art, Pintilie's works emerge from decade-spanning, innovative artistic research processes, centered around intimacy, contemporary body politics and participative practices of in-depth community impact. Spanning cinema, installation, performance and virtual reality, and nurtured by trans-disciplinary inquiries, her works stand out through cutting-edge aesthetics, a bold, uncompromising exploration of the human psyche and an ongoing questioning of film language conventions.

Her feature film *Touch Me Not* won the Golden Bear at the 2018 Berlinale and was nominated for the European Film Academy Awards, receiving critical acclaim in publications such as *The New York Times*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Die Welt*, *Die Zeit*, *Sight & Sound*, *Télérama*, *Les Inrockuptibles*, *Indiewire* and many others. It has been theatrically released internationally in over 40 countries, and screened at festivals and cultural institutions such as MoMA Museum of Modern Art New York, Toronto Film Festival, British Film Institute, ICA Institute of Contemporary Art London, BOZAR Bruxelles, Viennale etc.

Pintilie's visual art project *You Are Another Me – A Cathedral of the Body* has been selected to represent Romania at the 2022 Venice Art Biennial. Her film *Don't Get Me Wrong* premiered in Locarno 2007 competition and won the Golden Dove for Best Documentary at Dok Leipzig 2007. She is a member of the European Film Academy. Pintilie held masterclasses and lectures at institutions such as KHM Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Stockholm University of Arts, York University Toronto, National University of Drama and Film Bucharest. She also served as a jury member among others at Berlinale, Locarno, IDFA Amsterdam, Karlovy Vary, Goteborg etc. The Arts and Society Leadership Award is presented to an individual or organization that has significantly contributed to the enrichment of Romanian culture, promoted Romania abroad and supported the overall development of the country's cultural patrimony.

The 2022 Arts and Society Leadership Award was presented by UniCredit Bank.





Service with Dignity Leadership Award

Gl. Lt. Corneliu Postu

Director of the Romanian Defense Staff



He has been a member of the Romanian Defense Staff command team since November 2017, when he was appointed director of Romanian Defense Staff, which is Romanian Armed Forces' control and command structure. More than four decades have passed since he chose the military path and in the last 10 years he has held leadership positions in the field of planning current operations, as well as in various structures of expertise at the strategic management level of the national defense institution.

The most recent military promotion took place on Romania's National Day, this year. Thus, on the first day of obtaining the rank of lieutenant-general, he had the honor and responsibility of being the commander of the National Military Parade and presented the honor to the Romanian people by marching under the Arc of Triumph. After graduating „Ștefan cel Mare Military High school, in 1983, he chose the field of air missile defense and attended „Leontin Sălăjan" Military School for active artillery and radiolocation officers in Brașov, branch of Missiles and anti-aircraft artillery. In the first 15 years of his career, he fulfilled command positions, at tactical level, within the Air Force. He built experience at operative level, both in Romania and abroad. He assumed duties within the main

structures of Romanian Air Forces, but also within the Allied Air Command in Izmir, Turkey.

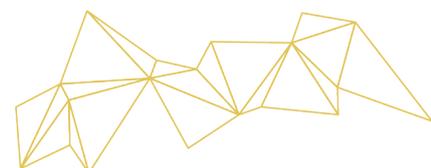
His professional evolution included a wide range of forms of training. Throughout his career he attended different postgraduate courses at „Carol I" National Defense University, West University of Timișoara and „Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, and also training programs in Turkey and Italy.

He is known and recognized for his vast professional experience. During his career so far, as a sign of appreciation for his activity and remarkable results, he has been awarded with various honorary awards, among which we mention: the National Order „Faithful Service" in the rank of „Knight" for soldiers, The National Order „Military Virtue" in the rank of „Knight", for soldiers.

The motto that guided him throughout his professional career is: „Honor. Flag. Homeland". In the last period, he has focused both on the administration of Romanian Defense Staff, and on promoting the respect that the soldiers have towards the values of the army: Romania's yesterday and today's heroes. He was actively involved in the commemoration campaigns for war veterans and the actions for supporting the wounded soldiers, veterans from theatres of operations. They are the heroes who sacrificed themselves for the defense of the country and the promotion of Romania's national interests. He considers himself an accomplished man also in terms of family. His wife and three children offer him invaluable moral support, which has been essential in his career.

He remains devoted to the national defense institution, to which he has dedicated his entire life. The Service with Dignity Leadership Award is presented to a Romanian public servant that has proven constant effort to exemplary fulfil work duties and go beyond those, as a role model for the community. By their impeccable professional and ethical standards those nominated for this award are seen as guardians of the Good Society, leaders among their peers and as a source of pride and inspiration.

The 2022 Service with Dignity Leadership Award was presented by Ms. Cătălina Iuga and Mr. Vasile Iuga.





Cultural Heritage and Society Leadership Award

Via Transilvanica



In short, Via Transilvanica is a long distance trail that crosses Romania from Putna in Bucovina, to Drobeta Turnu Severin at the Danube river, measuring 1.400 km. It crosses ten counties: Suceava, Bistrița-Năsăud, Mureș, Harghita, Brașov, Sibiu, Alba, Hunedoara, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți, which we have grouped into seven cultural regions as it follows: Bucovina, Highlands, Terra Siculorum, Terra Saxonum, Terra Dacica, Terra Banatica and Terra Romana. But of course, because Via Transilvanica is a product of Tășuleasa Social, it has a strong social component to it. It was created in 2018, when Romania was celebrating 100 since the great unification as “the road that unites”, because it traverses the complex ethnic, cultural, historical and geographical diversity of Transylvania and ultimately, of the entire country.

This road showcases the natural and rural heritage of the country, offering people the opportunity in taking part in a slow and active form of tourism, while giving out the much needed chance to develop economically to a couple of hundreds of communities in Romania, especially rural ones.

Via Transilvanica was officially launched in 8th of October 2022 and it is now a long distance trail, very well marked with andesite stones which were turned into individual pieces of art, it is documented in a Traveler's Guide and most importantly, it has already been walk by a few thousands of people from Romania and abroad. And it's just the beginning of the journey!

The Cultural Heritage and Society Leadership Award is presented to an individual or an organization that has devoted time and effort in the work of the preservation of the national and global cultural heritage. The nominees for this award have brought significant contribution in bridging and developing local communities, by highlighting their cultural, historical, and natural wealth.

The 2022 Cultural Heritage and Society Leadership Award was presented by Raiffeisen Bank.





Aspen Social Action Prize

România fără dosar - Romania fileless
Initiated by Two Fellows of the Aspen Public Service Leadership Program: Anamaria Nicola, Dean of the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, University of Bucharest and George Tuță, Quaestor of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania.



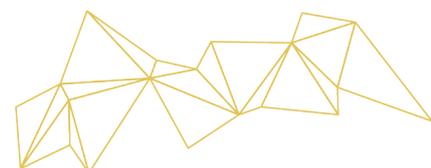
The student hackathon România fără dosar, organized by the University of Bucharest and the Chamber of Deputies, aims to accelerate the process of debureaucratization and simplification of administrative processes. It brings together the academic environment, political actors and members of civil society.

In 2022, the competition organized two editions, in March and November. In the most recent one, there were 27 teams that enrolled, with 10 teams reaching the final. Students representing 10 faculties from 7 universities across the country worked alongside 10 mentors-deputies to create communication campaigns that help encourage electronic payments in all social categories of the population or to encourage public institutions to integrate with the ghiseul.ro platform.

The competition brought in the jury personalities from the public sphere, professors from the academic environment, top journalists and communicators. In the mentors section, half of the mentors were Aspen Fellows of the Public Service Leadership Program.

For the November edition, the organizers collaborated with the Authority for the Digitalization of Romania (owner of ghiseul.ro platform) and the Ministry of Digitalization. Aspen Institute Romania would like to bring recognition to the activities and initiatives that the Aspen Fellows and Alumni put forward in creating social and civic change, through the Aspen Social Action Prize. The Aspen Community of Fellows, Alumni and Members determines through vote the winning project. The Aspen Social Action Prize 2022 and the 1000 EUR grant is awarded to a project initiated by Aspen Fellows or Alumni, with a significant development and social impact throughout the year 2022.

The 2022 Aspen Social Action Prize was presented by Alliance Healthcare Romania.





Aspen Fellows Network Grant

First clinic in Romania for young addicts

The Aspen Fellows Network Grant is offered to a project initiated by participants of the current generation of Aspen Young Leaders Program.

By the end of the program, participants are encouraged to initiate or endorse an original community service project that they will further develop, individually or in groups. Participants should aim to develop a project which can deliver a real benefit to society, and which is sustainable. The project proposals initiated by the young leaders are analysed by the representatives of the Aspen Community of Fellows and Alumni, who vote and decide the winner of the AFN Grant (1000 EUR).

*The **First clinic in Romania for young addicts** project is initiated by the following participants to the Young Leaders Program 2022: Alexandru Lazarov, Teodor Blidaru.*

The project aims to build the first facility in the country for young addicts. The project will be implemented by the 5th District City hall with other institutional partners.



We thank the Partners of the Aspen Leadership Awards and Gala Dinner 2022 for their devotion to the Aspen Idea



AWARDS SPONSORS



MS. CĂTĂLINA IUGA

MR. VASILE IUGA



ASPEN SOCIAL ACTION PRIZE SPONSOR



GOLD LEAF SPONSOR



SILVER LEAF SPONSOR



BRONZE LEAF SPONSOR



WITH THE SUPPORT OF



MEDIA PARTNER



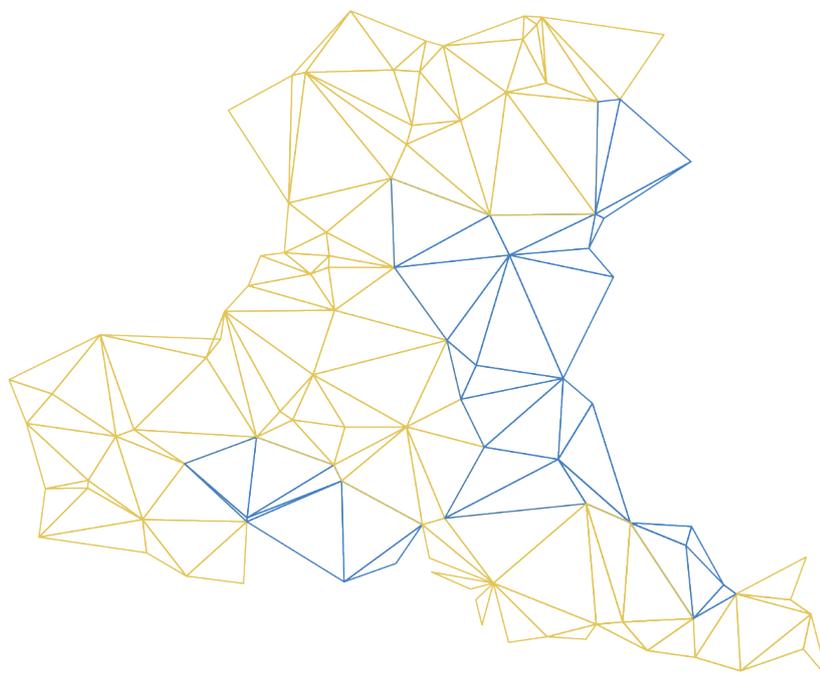


ASPEN LEADERSHIP TRUST

*The Aspen Leadership Awards and Gala Dinner constitute a source of financial support for the **Aspen Leadership Trust**, an initiative of the Aspen Institute Romania aiming to support the Leadership Initiatives of our Institute and to offer scholarships to join our Leadership Programs to high school students, university students, young professionals, public sector representatives and NGO representatives, in Romania and the region.*

*We invite you to become a **Leadership Trustee** or to make a **donation** as an **individual contributor** to the Aspen Leadership Trust.*

*For more details regarding the **Aspen Leadership Trust**, the current Leadership Trustees and Individual Contributors and various possibilities to contribute, please click [here](#) or contact us via e-mail at ioana.antonescu@aspeninstitute.ro or oana.dumitru@aspeninstitute.ro.*



ASPEN
INSTITUTE
ROMANIA



**IDEAS
LEADERSHIP
ACTION**

Aspen Institute Romania is a non-profit, non-governmental association dedicated to promoting enlightened leadership in Romania and its region and to encouraging open-minded and informed debate among leaders about the challenges facing our societies today.

www.aspeninstitute.ro

Aspen Institute Romania is part of an international network of Aspen Institutes, comprised by the Aspen Institute US, Aspen Italia, Aspen France, Aspen Germany, Aspen Spain, Aspen Central Europe, Aspen Kyiv, Aspen Japan, Aspen India (Ananta Aspen Centre), Aspen Mexico, Aspen New Zealand and Aspen UK.