



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels, 19 AVR. 2021
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Dear Mr Ciolacu,

Thank you for your letter, sent to Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans and myself.

Your letter touches upon issues related to democracy and rule of law, which are at the very heart of the European Union. As you know, strengthening the respect for the rule of law and the common values of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union is a priority for the Commission. The Commission carefully monitors developments relating to the rule of law in all Member States, including Romania.

In this respect, on 30 September 2020, the Commission adopted its first Rule of law report, as part of the new European rule of law mechanism. The report focuses on significant developments in areas with a direct bearing on the rule of law, i.e. justice systems, anti-corruption frameworks, media pluralism and freedom, and other institutional issues linked to checks and balances. The Ombudsperson plays an important role in the checks and balances in Member States. While Parliaments have the competence to appoint or dismiss the Ombudsperson, ensuring space for discussions and seeking consensus remains always a good practice.

Your letter also touches on the adoption procedure of the state budget, which should respect both the national and European fiscal frameworks. The activation of the general escape clause does not suspend the procedures of the Stability and Growth Pact. This applies in particular to Romania, which currently is in an excessive deficit procedure.

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*Mr Marcel Ciolacu
President
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In this context, fiscal policy should continue to support the recovery in 2021, while safeguarding fiscal sustainability in the medium term. All Member States should gradually shift from a protective emergency response to measures that support the recovery. Medium-term fiscal policies should aim at restoring prudent fiscal positions and ensuring debt sustainability, while enhancing investment. Replenishing fiscal buffers over time will be important to be prepared for future crises.

As regards the national resilience and recovery plans (NRRPs), their preparation is ongoing in all Member States, including Romania, and the technical dialogue between the Commission services and the Ministry of European Investments and Projects is currently taking place. At the same time, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) Regulation requires Member States to explain how local and regional authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, youth organisations, and other relevant stakeholders have been consulted and how their inputs were reflected in the plan.

The role of national parliaments in the NRRP very much depends on the national governance framework in place. Prior to implementation however, a successful recovery effort in Romania and all other EU Member States depends on the ratification of the Own Resources Decision by all Member States. This is a prerequisite for the Commission to be able to finance the European recovery effort. Any delay in this process will translate into a delay in overcoming the pandemic and its economic and social fallout across Europe. Thus, we are looking forward to the ratification of the Own Resources Decision by the Romanian Parliament.

Please rest assured that the Commission will continue to closely follow developments in Romania, be it on fiscal matters, on European Funds and the NRRP, or under the rule of law mechanism and the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. In this respect, the Commission remains strongly committed to upholding EU law and values in the interest of the citizens of Romania and the rest of the European Union.

Yours sincerely,



Ursula von der Leyen