



Parlamentul României

Senat

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## OPINION

**regarding the Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions**

### **2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy**

The Senate of Romania has examined the *2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy* according to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon (Protocol no.1).

The Romanian Senate was of the opinion that:

a. This Communication analyzes the progresses made by the candidate and potential candidate countries towards the implementation of the "Medium-Term Strategy for EU Enlargement Strategy" objectives of 2015, on which the European Commission has formulated a series of conclusions and recommendations;

b. From the perspective of individualized reporting, the evaluation of the communication is a mixed one, with progress and regression being observed. Given the complexity of the necessary reforms, it is a long-term process. Shortcomings persist, particularly in key areas such as the rule of law and the economy;

c. Despite the slow progress registered, the enlargement policy has produced some concrete results in implementing the necessary fundamental human rights reforms, the functioning of democratic institutions, the regional cooperation and the good neighbourhood relations;

2. In this context, the senators reaffirmed the importance to maintain and strengthen the political commitment of the European Union and the Member States in order to consistently promote the enlargement policy with the candidate countries and the aspiring countries, especially in the current context when the Union is facing multiple internal and external challenges. This policy has proved to be a successful project of the Union in the process of building a global relevant actor profile, as well as in expanding the area of democracy, stability, prosperity and peace in the neighborhood of the European Union.

3. The Senate supports:

a. The continuation of the accession process of the candidate and potential candidate states which show willingness and ability to meet the necessary accession criteria based on the own merits principle. In this context, the Senate particularly emphasize the need to reaffirm the EU's clear commitment to the European path of the Republic of Moldova in order to respond in a structured and calibrated manner to the tangible progress made by Chisinau in the implementation of AA / DCFTA, by granting a clear European perspective to this country based on the Article 49 of the EU Treaty and, further, a candidate status.

b. The on – going particular attention to the compliance of the candidate and aspiring states with the political accession criteria, including the commitments made to

protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, within the limits of the EU acquis;

c. The aim of the Maltese Presidency of the EU Council to open new negotiating chapters with Montenegro and Serbia, on the basis of the fulfillment of the negotiating process conditionality;

d. The goal of opening Albania's EU accession negotiations, based on all reform priorities, as well as the objective of obtaining a positive European Commission endorsement by Bosnia and Herzegovina for EU candidate status on the basis of quantitative finalization And on time of the Commission's questionnaire and implementation of the reform agenda;

4. Finally, the Senate appreciated that:

a. Our country is committed to strengthening regional cooperation in formats that can effectively support the European integration process as part of the support to advance the process of promoting stability in the Southeast European region;

b. Based on its own experience, Romania offers candidate assistance to the candidate states, in order to concretely support the internal reform process and their European route map.

**p.PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iulian - Claudiu MANDA', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Iulian - Claudiu MANDA**