



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN
interim President of the Senat
Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 1-3, sector 5
RO – 050711 BUCHAREST*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on progress in Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (COM(2019) 499).

The Commission welcomes this opinion and underlines that it attaches great importance to the continued dialogue with the Senat in the context of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, and on the rule of law in general.

The Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) was established at the accession of Romania to the European Union as a transitional measure to facilitate Romania's continued efforts to reform its judiciary and step up the fight against corruption. It represented a joint commitment of the Romanian State and of the EU. In line with the decision setting up the mechanism and as underlined by the Council, the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism ends when all the benchmarks applying to Romania are satisfactorily met.¹ The Commission's conclusions and the methodology of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism have consistently received the support of the Council.

In the report of October 2019, the Commission welcomed the renewed commitment of Romania to dialogue and cooperation under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism and expressed its confidence that Romania could give a new momentum to fulfilling the objectives of the Mechanism. It therefore looks forward to Romania rapidly fulfilling the recommendations as set out by the Commission in January 2017 and November 2018, so that the path towards conclusion of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, as set out in the January 2017 report, can be resumed. The Commission plans to re-evaluate the progress by the end of 2020.

¹ Council Conclusions on the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, 12 December 2017 - https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/20171212-st15587_en.pdf.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Senat to the continuation of the dialogue with the Commission and the Member States to promote European values and strengthen the rule of law in all Member States, including the initiatives to assess the rule of law based on objective mechanism and criteria applicable to all Member States.

Strengthening the rule of law is a shared responsibility for all EU institutions and all Member States and it is a key priority of the Commission's mandate. In this respect the Commission has started the set-up of a new European rule of law mechanism applicable to all Member States and with objective annual reporting by the Commission. The monitoring approach will be the same in every Member State and it will be done in close dialogue with national authorities. The new way forward brings transparency, allows early detection and offers targeted support to resolve any issues at an early stage. Our objective is to find a solution that protects the rule of law, with cooperation and mutual support, but without ruling out an effective, proportionate and dissuasive response as a last resort. The Commission looks forward to the involvement of national Parliaments in this process as they play a crucial role in the respect of the rule of law at national level.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Věra Jourová
Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*