



## Parlamentul României Senat

*Bucharest, 24 March 2021*

Courtesy translation

### OPINION of the SENATE of ROMANIA

#### **on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy COM(2020) 660 final**

The Romanian Senate examined the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy - COM(2020) 660 final - according to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon Protocol (no. 1).

Taking into account the report of Committee for European Affairs, **the Plenum of the Senate**, during its session of March 10, 2021

#### 1) Notes:

- a) that the Enlargement Package 2020 is of interest in terms of integrating the proposals of the revised methodology on the enlargement process into the European Commission's reporting process, which was approved by the Council in March 2020, with discussions still pending at Council level for transposition of the methodology of the draft negotiating framework with Albania and the Republic of Northern Macedonia;
- b) the increased attention, given by the European Commission in the Enlargement Package, to the political commitment of the partner states towards the strategic objective of EU accession, which must be unambiguously communicated to the citizens;
- c) the approach of the European Commission to stronger emphasis on reforms and progress of candidates and potential candidates in areas related to the rule of law.

#### 2) Supports:

- a) the reaffirmation of the EU's commitment to advancing Enlargement policy, through the Annual Enlargement Package published by the European Commission on October 6, 2020;
- b) the claim that Romania, as a traditional promoter of Enlargement policy, shares the European Commission's approach to the positive role of this policy, through the strategic investment given by the consolidation of peace, security, prosperity and stability of the EU;
- c) the positive developments in the field of Enlargement policy, in the context of the difficult crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

- d) the active involvement of the EU and the Member States for a strengthened partnership with the Western Balkans region, in order to manage the current health crisis and its economic consequences.
- 3) Appreciates the European Commission presentation with increased clarity and transparency of both the progress made by the reform partners, and also the steps to be taken so that the process is predictable, expectations are clearly expressed and partners receive support and motivation necessary to advance the process.
- 4) Brings up the following observations:
- a) enlargement is one of the EU's successful policies. Given its strategic value, the process must continue on the basis of the candidates' own merits, but at a pace that will keep them credible, in line with European commitments to their partners in the Western Balkans;
  - b) strengthening the rule of law and meeting political criteria are key elements in the EU accession process of the Western Balkan states. In this sense, Romania considers it absolutely necessary to respect the rights of national minorities and in particular, the respect of the rights of the Romanian minority by the authorities of the states where there are Romanian communities.

**President of the Senate**

**Anca Dana DRAGU**

