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Bucharest, June 23rd, 2021

Mrs Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Mr Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Subject: The violation of the rule of law by the parties in Government in Romania

Dear President,
Dear Executive Vice-President,

I would start by thanking you again for the continuous support offered to Romania. **As the opposition leader in my country it's good to know that Romanians can count on friends like you that put people's safety and rights above everything.** This is why, taking into consideration recent events in Romania, I feel obliged to inform you that the democracy and the respect for the rule of law are seriously put in danger, by the current parties in Government in our country, and call for the help of the European Commission in dealing with the abuses committed by the governing parties.

More exactly, in the last couple of weeks:

- **The Constitutional Court decided to repeal the decisions imposed by the parties in Government to change the heads of the Romanian Public Television (SRTv) and the Romanian Radio Network (SRR).** The Romanian Constitutional Court validated the complaint made by the Romanian Social Democracy Party and **considered the changes illegal and an abuse to the independence of the national media networks.** What the government is trying to do in Romania corresponds to similar steps made by other illiberal governments and are going to harm the Romanian democracy.
- **The parties in government violated the parliamentary procedures during the simple motion against the Minister of Investments and European Projects by illegally counting the votes.** More exactly, the procedure stipulates clearly that only the votes casted physically in the plenary are valid during a motion procedure but the parties in government decided to illegally count the votes casted afterwards online. If people lose their faith in the Parliament, they might lose their trust in the rule of law. Therefore, we decided to challenge this decision at the Constitutional Court.
- **The government parties decided to dismiss the Romanian Ombudsman without respecting the legal procedures currently in place.** This illegal change of the Romanian Ombudsman contravenes to European recommendations and the practices of the Council of Europe Venice

Commission that underline the need for this institution to be independent from Parliament and political parties. We will defend the independence of the Romanian Ombudsman by again appealing to the Constitutional Court, but the support of the European Commission is needed also in this regard.

To allow an independent corroboration by European Commission experts, further information and legal background for the presented democratic breaches have been annexed. **We remain, in this regard, at your disposal to identify adequate solutions to avoid Romania slipping towards a non-democratic path.** It might be hard to believe what the current parties in government in Romania are doing, but it is unfortunately the case. The leaders of those parties are practising a double speech at international level, that can be easily dismantled: on the one side they say something in Brussels, on the other side they are acting against European values in Romania.

Despite our efforts to identify common ground for Romania to develop and strengthen its democracy, the rule of law and citizens participation, the current parties in governments are obsessed with power and are ready to do everything to get it. Little by little they are trying to wipe out any form of opposition, starting with the media and continuing with the remaining independent institutions. Their upcoming goals are to change the Constitutional Court and the electoral practices in order to influence the outcome of future elections, knowing that they lost the last local and legislative elections.

We think it is time for the European Commission to publicly address the issues reflected above and call upon the parties in government in Romania to stop with their ongoing non-democratic practices. **The Commission should continue to be the guarantor of European values, democracy and rule of law in Romania and we count on your impartiality and your support in addressing these issues.** In the end, I would like to express my desire and availability to meet with you, in order to discuss the steps that could and should be made by Romania at European level in order to strengthen our Union and our country and ensure the best conditions for our citizens.

With friendship,

Marcel Ciolacu

Member of the Parliament
President of PSD Romania
Leader of the opposition in Romania