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Commissioner Nicolas Schmit
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Ref.: JWG/cb

Brussels, 11 February 2021

Dear Commission Vice President Dombrovskis, dear Commissioners Gentiloni and Schmit,

We have been informed that the Romanian government is presenting and explaining its 2021 budget to the Commission. We ask for your intervention and making clear to the Romanian government that this is not the way forward. It needs to enter into dialogue and negotiations with the unions.

Romanian workers and their unions perceive this budget as an austerity budget. It foresees that salaries are frozen in health and public services despite promises to the contrary last year. It also cuts other supplements to incomes like food allowances (estimate as 64 euros netto per month). The government proposes freezing of bonuses at levels of 2018, cutting in so called holiday vouchers (granted once a year in a net value of 267.5 euros). Dialogue and negotiations appear absent. Also in other sectors like in urban transport measures are taken to violate agreements and put services under stress.

Unions are protesting today in front of the government. Due to the Covid restrictions numbers are restrained. This should not give the impression that the anger is less. Unions act responsible. But we do want responsible governments as well.

The European Commission can give a message to the Romanian government that this is not the time for austerity. The President of the European Central bank has recently underlined this as well. The Commission will be aware that insisting with governments on austerity is not the recipe to build back better and to get us out of this crisis. Let alone what it will do to the legitimacy our European project and the EU.

Please make this clear to the government. No recovery with austerity.

Yours sincerely



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary



NICOLAS SCHMIT
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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Brussels, 04. 03. 2021

Dear Mr Goudriaan,

Thank you for your letter of 15 January 2021, in which you inform the European Commission of your communication to the Romanian Government, with regard to the legal developments of the remuneration of personnel including healthcare workers, paid by public funds.

In 2020 the Council adopted a recommendation for Romania to strengthen the resilience of its health system, including in the areas of health workers and medical products, and improve access to health services¹.

Romania made use of the EU funding opportunities to address the crisis. Thanks to the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives (CRII and CRII+), additional resources have been mobilised, in order to provide support for doctors, medical personnel and social workers. The Temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) instrument provides EUR 4.1 billion to Romania. Some of the measures include bonuses for additional work for the health personnel of the specialty structures of the National Public Health Institute and the country public health directorates, and bonuses in respect to particularly dangerous conditions granted in recognition of the merits of medical personnel.

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¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0523&from=EN>

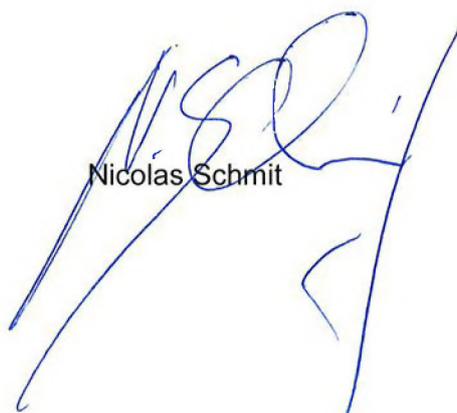
Mr Jan Willem Goudriaan
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Moreover, the Recovery and Resilience Facility will support reforms and investments that also address the country-specific recommendations and the challenges that were identified in the 2020 Country Report for Romania assessed that the country is experiencing macroeconomic imbalances, linked to cost-competitiveness and a widening current account deficit in a context of an expansionary fiscal policy and an unpredictable business environment. The Romanian government is working to bring the fiscal situation on a sustainable path and these actions should not undermine the support to the health system and the economy.

The EU promotes social dialogue with full respect to the autonomy of social partners, bearing in mind that the responsibility of ensuring successful collective bargaining at national level lies with the Member States. In the framework of the European Semester, the Commission has paid particular attention to the functioning of social dialogue as well as the broader issues of wage developments and social inclusion in Member States. Over the last years, this has shown a need for adequate consultations and improvement of social dialogue in Romania, as also reflected in the country-specific recommendations. In 2020, the Council adopted a recommendation on improving the quality and predictability of decision-making in the country, including by appropriate stakeholder consultations. The Employment Committee (EMCO), the main advisory committee for the Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council, have also underlined the need to strengthen the role of social partners in policy-making in Romania.

The Commission services remain committed to providing support and advice to all Member States, including on strengthening the resilience of the healthcare system, within the remits of the Commission's competencies. We will continue monitoring the developments of the situation and maintain an open dialogue.

Yours sincerely,



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Ref.: JWG/ns/rp

Brussels, 11 March 2021

Dear Commissioner Schmit

Many thanks for your letter of 4 March in response to the concerns we have raised about the situation in Romania and in particular the government's refusal to engage in social dialogue with public sector unions. We note with interest the information you provide on economic support for the Romanian government and the calls for "adequate consultations and improvement in social dialogue". Unfortunately, I have to report that as yet we have had no response to our letter to the Romanian government of 15 January and more worrying is that, according to our affiliates there, the situation has deteriorated. The government now appears to be challenging the unions in terms of their basic rights to act as independent organisations, to receive their dues by check-off and to engage in legitimate protest.

In the light of the European Commission's support for the country in the context of the recovery and the current discussions underway over the EUR 4 billion that has been allocated for Romania's recovery and resilience plan, I would urge you to raise these matters with the Romanian government and remind it that respect for social dialogue is a core principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. We are approaching the Social Summit in Porto and such flagrant violations will cast a shadow over it.

I look forward to your response and support on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary