



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

Brussels, 17 September 2012

Statement following the meeting between President Barroso and Prime Minister Ponta

President Barroso met today with Prime Minister Ponta to discuss the latest developments in Romania.

President Barroso expressed the same concerns to Prime Minister Ponta as he had last week to President Băsescu on the need for Romania to remove all doubts on its commitment to the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the respect for constitutional rulings.

President Barroso made clear that all political forces in Romania, in government and in opposition, should act with responsibility and restraint and to set their focus very firmly on the urgent need to restore institutional and political stability. This will be especially important in the run-up to the parliamentary elections this autumn. President Barroso emphasised the importance that Romania promotes all European values, the values of justice and freedom and all the features of a truly pluralistic society.

President Barroso stressed the importance of continuing with the efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. It will be especially important that key nominations for the posts of General Prosecutor and Chief Prosecutor of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate are conducted in a fair and transparent way. The Government, both before and after the election should avoid appointing Ministers with clear integrity rulings against them. The Commission will adopt a further report before the end of this year, to assess whether all its concerns have been addressed and the necessary democratic checks and balances have been restored.

President Barroso gave an overview of recent economic developments across the European Union and urged the Romanian Government to maintain the efforts to keep the two economic adjustment programmes on track. The progress of structural reforms, particularly the restructuring of state-owned companies and reform of healthcare are crucial for the long-term sustainability of public finances.

President Barroso and Prime Minister Ponta also discussed the absorption of EU funds in Romania. While a major effort has been made over the last year, the absorption capacity remains extremely low and Romania risks to lose significant amounts of funding that could have a major beneficial impact on Romanian citizens and businesses. President Barroso urged the government to take the immediate measures necessary to improve the administrative capacity and public procurement rules.