

No. 27/30.01.2023

To: *European Commission
Recovery and Resilience Task Force*

For the attention of: *Mrs. Céline Gauer - Head of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force*

Dear Mrs. Gauer,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Foundation for the Defence of Citizens against State Abuse (FACIAS), a non-governmental, non-profit, and apolitical organization, strategic partner of the Council of Europe and the European Commission through the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA).

At the beginning of 2022, FACIAS initiated the "Transparency and Accountability - Monitoring the National Recovery and Resilience Plan" in order to monitor the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Romania's most important project for financing economic recovery actions, and for implementing investments and structural reforms essential for our country's medium and long-term development.

Currently, FACIAS has observed a deadlock in the implementation of the public pension reform foreseen in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), more specifically, the Romanian state representatives responsible for the implementation of the Plan have not yet succeeded in proposing a legislative project that meets all the conditions set out in the Milestone 215 for the establishment of the legislative framework for the reduction of expenditure on special pensions with the deadline Q4 of 2022 and the Milestone for the entry into force of the new law on the pension system, which replaces the provisions of Law No. 127/2019 with the deadline Q1 2023 of Romania's NRRP.

In view of the above, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the repercussions if Romania does not reform the public pension system as foreseen in the Romanian Plan?
2. If Romania does not carry out the reforms of the public pension system as planned, will it be possible to continue the implementation of the reforms and future investments identified under Component 8 Tax Reform and Pension Reform?
3. Can the unfulfillment of Milestone 215 on the entry into force of the legislative framework for the reduction of expenditure on special pensions and Milestone 214 on the entry into force of the new law on the pension system, which replaces the provisions of Law No 127/2019, result in a negative opinion for the approval of the fourth claim in its entirety or only in part?

4. Has Romania formally requested the amendment of Milestone 215 on the entry into force of the legislative framework for the reduction of expenditure on special pensions and Milestone 214 on the entry into force of the new law on the pension system, which replaces the provisions of Law No 127/2019? If so, what is the Commission's view of this request?

In the framework of the "Transparency and Accountability - Monitoring the NRRP" Project, FACIAS has been monitoring with particular attention the implementation of investments and reforms foreseen in the NRRP, the achievement of milestones and targets within the deadlines assumed by the Romanian authorities.

FACIAS has taken steps to ensure that the rights of Romanian citizens are respected, emphasizing the right to transparency in the implementation of the NRRP, and has constantly informed citizens about the status of the Plan.

On November 2, 2022, FACIAS organized a debate entitled "NRRP Monitoring: the possibility of renegotiating the Plan on the unfulfilled milestones", which discussed the state of implementation of the NRRP one year after its inception and the possibility of optimizing the Plan in the current context. This debate was the only event organized in Romania on this topic that brought together representatives of the Romanian Government, experts, academics, and civil society representatives.

Our main concern and approach are to defend citizens against abuses of the state and we act as a member of CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) and FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) and the international network FRIENDS OF EUROPE. We support transparency in public administration and want to increase citizens' involvement in the process of public policy formulation. We aim to develop programs that promote human rights, citizens' freedoms, transparency in decision-making, and citizen involvement. We believe in democratic change in the state, based on good governance, citizen participation, and participatory decision-making.

We look forward to receiving your response at office@facias.ro.