



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council  
Herman Van Rompuy  
following the meeting with President of Romania  
Traian Băsescu**

Thank you M. President for your hospitality and for the good discussion we had today.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the government and the Romanian citizens. Exactly 7 years ago, on 25th April 2005, the Accession treaty to the European Union was signed in Luxemburg. This was an important moment for Romania, but also for the European Union. Your country joined only five years ago, but already we cannot imagine our Union without Romania. I welcome the important role President Băsescu is playing in the European Council.

The first point we discussed this morning is the economy. President Băsescu presented to me the measures that Romania has taken over the last years to turn the tide of the crisis. Difficult decisions to restore market confidence, to consolidate the budget and to engage in structural reforms. These decisions have produced results. After a sharp recession, growth bounced back and is expected to continue this year and next. The IMF is expecting growth of 1.5% in 2012 and 3.5% to 4% in 2013-2016. I want to encourage the new government and its Prime Minister fully in its further efforts. They are indispensable for the future of Romania and the Romanian people.

Making good use of the EU funds is key. More progress is needed to be able to claim and process the funds which are destined for the country in the EU Budget. The European Parliament has just agreed to a new instrument which will help Romania further. The European Investment Bank will be involved.

**P R E S S**

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Of course, Europe can only do so much: addressing weaknesses will require further work, especially as regards government effectiveness and governance reform of state-owned enterprises.

We also discussed the broader economic outlook and the situation in the Eurozone. We are going through a mild recession, and of course the challenges in some countries are very significant. At the same time, we should not forget that some large parts of the Union are doing relatively well which will be helpful for the European outlook more generally.

Europe will pursue its strategy to restore growth and jobs. Tackling youth unemployment is a key priority, therefore the Union is mobilizing its instruments. We also encourage that national and European budgets give priority to drivers for growth, such as investments in energy and transport infrastructure, innovation and education.

Also further economic cooperation in Europe is needed. Last month, we signed a treaty for more fiscal discipline. It is crucial for the Union as a whole. Romania's participation is highly appreciated: as a sign of trust and a vote of confidence for the future. Smooth ratification by all signatories is crucial now.

Secondly, we discussed Romania's entrance into Schengen. All European leaders have underlined more than once in our meetings that all legal conditions for accession have been met. At our last meeting in March, the leaders made progress: we urged the Council to take its decision on accession by Romania in September. I welcome the fact that your country is taking confidence enhancing initiatives in the mean time, for instance in the field of border control and police cooperation. This will ensure Romania becomes a safe entry point to the Schengen area.

We also discussed the challenges in the field of energy. With rising costs of energy, energy security is more important than ever. We welcome Romania's involvement and commitment to the development of the Southern Corridor. It is crucial for Europe and Romania.

Lastly, we discussed the future European budget. I have taken note of Romania's priorities which President Băsescu presented to me. Agriculture and cohesion policy remain important for a competitive and inclusive Union. The budget should be an instrument for growth throughout the Union. At the upcoming European Council meeting in June, we will continue the discussions.

I thank President Băsescu again for his courage the last years and for his positive cooperation in the European Council.

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