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**Press release**

TI Romania appreciates as welcomed the Monitoring Report of the European Commission, made public today, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008, and draws attention that postponing the safeguard clause activation and the financial sanctions' absence does not exonerate Romania from fulfilling its obligations assumed with the EU adhesion, especially because The Cooperation and Verification Mechanism will still be maintained for another year.

TI Romania appreciates that the Report's tone and the pressure maintained over Romania in order to obtain substantial progresses in the fight against corruption are fully justified and should be taken seriously by the authorities from Bucharest, especially when there is the danger of the same sanctions next year as those applied to Bulgaria this year.

In the reporting period, the actions carried on in order to apply the Plan of measures for the conditionality' fulfilling had a mainly formal character, and , even though the normative acts and the necessary decisions were adopted, there are deficiencies in concretely applying them, the final result being yet to come. At the same time, in the reporting timeframe, it was registered a tendency of using the fight against corruption in the conflicts between the political parties, which severely jeopardizes the credibility and the public sustentation of these reforms.

Transparency International Romania considers that, in order to successfully fulfill the engagement Romania took by the EU adhesion, the anticorruption reforms must be based on a technical expertise and their implementation must be supported by a strong political will.

TI Romania considers that, in order to obtain concrete results in the fight against corruption, it is necessary, along with the measures meant to obtain the priority requirements, to make efforts dedicated to increase the public integrity also in the following sectors: justice, business sector, education, health, infrastructure projects, political parties' financing, as well as the structural funds' usage.

Transparency International Romania appreciates that the normative framework is sufficient for preventing, combating and sanctioning corruption, but it must be concretely, constantly and coherently applied. The simple publication in the Official Monitor alone is not sufficient as long as no public entity does not take them for serious. Applying the law must be an assumed and respected obligation for all the public authorities and the public sector employees: officials, functionaries, magistrates, and contractual agents.

Our organization draws attention over the fact that the disciplinary jurisdictions are completely inefficient, and they are not creating the necessary pressure for applying and respecting the law. Thus, even if the population is discontented by the misbehavior of the public functionaries, the disciplinary sanctions completely lack. Although Romania is the EU member state with the most convictions at ECHR, the magistrates do not respond for their judicial errors. Though the investigations of the high level corruption felonies are presented as public successes, the result fail to appear.

In conclusion, Transparency International Romania points out that avoiding the activation of the EU sanctions against Romania could only be made possible by un-politicizing the fight against corruption, by strengthening the coercive means of applying the specific laws, by making more efficient the corruption administrative prevention and combat before it turns active, and by making more efficient the sanctioning effects once the corruption felony was committed, including by sanctions meant to discourage such facts.