

**„ROMANIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE“  
- SPEECH OF HE MR. ADRIAN NĂSTASE, PRIME MINISTER OF  
ROMANIA EUROPEAN POLICY CENTER (BRUSSELS, JUNE 6, 2002)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking Director John Palmer for the invitation to address such a distinguished audience. I take the opportunity to speak at the European Policy Center in order to present some features about the accession of Romania to the EU and how I see the future European Union and Romania's role in it.

This reminds me what one of the most important Romanian political figures and outstanding diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, once said: „The future of Europe is anchored in Romania as strong as Romania is anchored in the European values and into the European spirit“. I am convinced that our national identity – which is equally part of the European identity – is an expression of the Romanians historic pattern: inter-ethnic tolerance, human solidarity and good neighborhood, values actively promoted by Titulescu.

Now that we have the certainty of joining the EU and that there is fair idea when this will happen, one could put another question: “What is the place of Romania in an enlarged European Union?” This is one of the expressions of the “enlargement-deepening” paradigm. The two issues are strongly interlinked, one generating or conditioning the other. But beyond the debate at political level, there are the pragmatic aspects that the enlargement implies in terms of losses and gains. Which one counts more?

Having said that, I will start with some considerations on Romania's accession preparations.

Romania is strongly committed to its European integration on the short term. Even though less than three years are separating us from the decision to start negotiations in Helsinki, we have reached impressive achievements in fulfilling all accession criteria. At the same time, the way we approach the conclusion of negotiations remains a challenge for us. We are close to the moment when all remaining chapters of the acquis will be opened, meaning that starting with the Danish Presidency, our major objective will be the closure of these chapters.

Nonetheless, we should not fall hostages to statistics: I do not think that the accession preparation of a country should be commensurated by the number of chapters of the acquis opened or closed. Our philosophy was to advance in the negotiations, while concrete measures to adopt and implement the acquis were adopted. We believe that a clearer road-map and a target date for its accession will boost our preparations for accession.

What we are following now is a self-assumed calendar, aiming at opening the negotiations for all the chapters of the acquis by the end of this year and closing them at the latest in the first months of 2004.

All these developments will allow us to sign the Accession Treaty before the elections for the European Parliament. This should normally give enough grounds for Romania to participate in these elections, as well as in the IGC for the future of Europe and in the

debates on the financial perspectives of an enlarged EU on an equal footing with the other candidate countries.

The slogan "from Copenhagen to Copenhagen" was chosen by the future Danish Presidency as a token for the conclusion of the current enlargement process. Taking into consideration there are 12 countries currently negotiating their accession, I hope the Danish Presidency will set up a clear-cut accession calendar for Romania and a more concrete perspective for the accession of my country to the EU.

Now some words about our preoccupations and expectations from the future EU.

### **Financing the future Union**

In less than ten years, the Europe we know today will change and the enlarged European Union with 27, 28 or 30 new Member States is shaping up as a real challenge for the cohesion of Europe. Between the current candidate countries and the EU Member States there is a considerable gap in terms of economic performances. The Report on social and economic cohesion presented by the European Commission in end January predicts a significant decrease of the EU GDP after the accession of the 12 negotiating countries.

For both citizens from EU Member States and candidate countries, the process of integration sounds a bit worrisome. For some of them, there is a fear of competition on the labour market, for the high costs of the funds provided for sustaining the integration of the new Member States. For the others, the economic and social impact of enlargement is calculated in terms of challenges for their future: to face unemployment, to adapt to new standards and conditions of productions, to share national decisions with the institutions in Brussels or other EU partners.

One of the most urgent issues that we must solve is how we will finance the common policies.

Even though the debate is still at its beginning, I cannot observe that the discussions are too much linked to practical calculations and take less into consideration the basic principles of the EU: solidarity and equality between all Member States.

If the reform of the financial mechanisms of some of the major common policies, such as the Common Agriculture Policy and the structural policies will be needed, I think the current and the future Member States could try to find the solutions together. I believe a debate on the reform of this policy should be opened, under certain conditions:

- the reform should be correlated with the outcome of the Millennium Round within WTO;
- this process should not become a new obstacle for completing the enlargement process;
- the reform should be the result of a common debate and decision of the current and future Member States (EU 27).

### **Preparations for the Economic and Monetary Union**

Our economy is moving now in the right direction and the latest figures allow us to be more optimistic today than in the past. The Pre-Accession Economic Programme, adopted by the Government in October last year and its 2002 updating are the instruments for planning and implementing the policies needed in order to transform our economy into a functional market economy and to enable it to cope with the pressure of the EU market. In

2001, Romania registered a 5.3% economic growth and I hope our economy will be able to keep this momentum in the years to come.

We are all well aware that there is a fundamental link between the fulfilment of the Copenhagen economic criteria and the requirements of the Economic Union, and that this link has a strong impact on our economic policies. From a certain point of view, the economic criteria are the easier part of the job compared to the membership demands that all of us will face.

We also have to take into account, even from now, possible major advances of the EU towards meeting the objectives of the Lisbon Process.

At the very same time, our economic policies, as future members, will have to deal with the dual – some might say even divergent – objectives of real convergence and preparing the accession to the Monetary Union. We had the possibility to discuss these issues three months ago in Barcelona. That meeting provided an excellent opportunity to realise that candidate countries are moving from the stage of transposing and implementing the *acquis* to the stage of shaping up the *acquis*.

The meeting in Barcelona had the role of raising the profile of the social dimension of the EMU. It warned that both the current and the future EU Member States have to continue to improve the social situation in our countries, as many of the problems of the past prove sometimes more difficult to solve than initially thought and as the structural reforms have to be conceived and implemented so to produce visible and immediate results.

The implementation of the *acquis* – especially in infrastructure-related sectors - brings in additional substantial financial demands, which cannot be met only via the funding from the EU, be it pre-accession or membership assistance.

## **Social Europe**

Taking into consideration all these aspects let me turn to the principle of solidarity at the European level. Maintaining the economic and social cohesion within the EU is one of the strongest challenges of the enlargement. I know and we all know the costs of the enlargement will be considerable. However, this must not be a reason to impose a clear landmark in financial terms between the current and the future Member States. This must not be a reason to postpone to an undefined term the new accession for the countries that will not be able to join the Union in 2004.

No matter how challenging seems to be to solve the problems involved by the new enlargement, I personally believe that this process is a great opportunity for everybody, Member States as well as candidate countries. Enlargement may be the key factor to reaching sustainable growth in Europe, as proclaimed in Lisbon, Stockholm and Barcelona. It will build the biggest single market in the advanced world with a population of nearly 500 millions and creating 300,000 new jobs in the current Member States and up to 2 million in candidate countries.

We are in a moment when we realized the magnitude of the European project. We have to sit back, to meditate and to foresee our way ahead. There is an opinion shared by many in Europe that the EU is showing signs of a certain fatigue. Too many projects have lost their touch and need a strong impetus.

One of the tasks ahead is the establishment of a genuine economic union. We witnessed few months ago in Barcelona the attempt to reinforce the Lisbon process and the economic integration of Europe.

Our opinion on this matter is clear: we fully support this project with all its components. We in Romania feel a certain attraction for this economic model because we appraise a thing by its difficulty. Achieving EMU is challenging and for us, joining EMU will be even more difficult. But EMU will be good for our economy, for our industry and our services.

That is why we advocate a stronger role of the European Commission in the economic field, not only because it is in the best position to give guidance to the potentially largest economy in the world, but also because it can strike the most appropriate balance between the needs of the most developed economies in Europe and the ones that emerge in the Eastern parts of the Continent.

From an economic point of view, enlargement will bring with itself the prospects of a larger market, more jobs in the current EU, a new dynamic for EU companies and enterprises. Candidate countries will experience a period of sustained growth, thus improving the growth rate of the EU. Enlargement will also challenge the cohesion of the Union. This is why our ultimate objective is a Social and Cohesive Europe. This is why we attach a great importance to the social dimension of enlargement.

In this connection I would like to make two remarks:

First, the need to increase the human resources dimension of the structural instruments, including the perspectives of creating a fund for technological development so that our employment policies will be enriched with a technology transfer dimension.

Second, the way we will redefine our immigration policies. We are in favor of a more integrated approach towards immigration. However, any attempt to reform this field must be made in co-relation with the structural and cohesion policies.

## **Justice and Home Affairs**

I would like to commend the Italian initiative in proposing a feasibility study on the setting up of a common police for the external borders of the EU. The European Commission also drafted recently an interesting report on this topic.

For the Union, the management of the external borders of the Union is a crucial part of the area of freedom, security and justice. At the same time, for Romania, the task of ensuring an efficient border control and surveillance of its Eastern border, as part of the future EU border, is a top priority, but also an important challenge.

In my view, the setting up of a common border police should be the first step in establishing a common immigration policy. In this respect, the responsibility for strengthening EU's external borders is a common task for all EU Member States, present or future ones. In creating this new policy, we should begin exploring several avenues, among which the legal one, the institutional one and the financial one, without skipping the training activities for those police officers.

The main features of this force should be similar to the Rapid Reaction Force: a collection of national units deployed mainly from the regions that will be inland regions after enlargement towards the new Eastern borders and the Mediterranean. This formula is also desirable from a budgetary point of view, since it will avoid any increase of the pressure on the common budget.

## **Europe as a global actor**

Speaking about immigration policies and effective border control does not mean that my picture about Europe is one of a "Fortress Europe". On the contrary, the European Union has one of the most open societies, one that stems from the cultural heritage and richness of its nations, which makes it more open towards other different cultures from the world.

Nowadays the people of Europe need more Union, within diversity, while the world needs more Europe. We are at the moment of truth because the alternative to the integration is the division and the lack of power for all the Member States. The perspective of the enlargement and the stake of the globalization represent for all of us a challenge and an opportunity to find out a new breathe for our Europe.

The common foreign and security policy (CFSP) has developed tremendously in the past decade. The strong point of CFSP is its openness towards multilateralism, since the positions and actions taken in this framework are the results of negotiations among "the Fifteen". At the same time, Europe benefits of a unique window of opportunity to come back in the front line in world affairs, but this time in a totally different fashion than one century ago.

Nevertheless there are some risks that cast a shadow over these bright perspectives. First, this window of opportunity will not last for long. I think the EU has only a few years left to prove it is a winner on the global stage. Second, the EU needs to define soon its position towards the centers of power. What is the future of the Trans-Atlantic relationship, what would be the best policy towards Russia, how do we approach China? How do we keep the balance between these players, especially Russia and the US? Third, how will Europe play its part in the various crises in the world?

In the vicinity of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Romania is contributing to the efforts of the EU in projecting stability and prosperity in the adjacent regions, especially in Caucasus and the Middle East. Romania is able and ready to contribute to the development of the Union as a global actor on the world stage.

Being at the future Eastern border of the EU, Romania will have an important task in monitoring one of the most sensitive external borders of the Union, which will be confronted with a substantive migratory pressure. Romania has an important role to play in reaching the objective of setting up a common liberty, security and justice area within an enlarged European Union and it is committed to bring its full contribution in this respect notably in: stopping the influx of the illegal immigrants, combating organised crime, blocking the activities of the networks for trafficking drugs, human beings and arms.

By developing its infrastructure and the sectors of the European networks on its territory Romania is becoming a bridge between Europe and neighbouring regions. My firm belief is that Romania, a large European nation and strategically placed in the West shores of the Black Sea can play a role in this respect, irradiating to our Eastern neighbors the most

profound European values: reconnecting the Western Balkans to the European spirit, enhancing the European vocation of its Northern and Eastern neighbors, forming a bridge between Europe and the Caucasus.

The recent concept of 'global security' is a very interesting one and very promising. I think the Union is in a good position to be among the sponsors of this approach. In my view, this encompasses all sides of security and provides a wide range of solutions. The international community has acknowledged a long time ago that international security is indivisible and un-separable. Now, after 11 September 2001, we realize more than ever that internal security cannot be separated from external security and that we need to identify sustainable solutions to the various crises in the world.

We will support this concept in all international fora and will use our international position to promote it, including in the UN Security Council, if we will be entrusted with this capacity in 2004 and 2005.

Global security also means better responses to the negative effects of globalization. As far as the EU is concerned, let us recall the concept of controlled globalization so dear to Commissioner Pascal Lamy. To some extent, controlled globalization reflects one side of global security. The external actions of the Union need to become sustainable, which means the integration of its trade, development and security policies and providing a sustainable dimension to each one of them.

This would require a more rational division between the responsibilities of the European Commission and the EU Council, but also a stronger role and profile of the High Representative for CFSP, which has to be perceived not only as an EU foreign minister, but also as a counterpart for leaders from third countries.

### **Institutional developments**

This brings me to the final part of my intervention, the institutional shape of the EU and the activities of the European Convention. As you know, the European Council in Nice decided that, in order to be able to perform with 27 Members, the European Union must reform its institutions, policies and decision-making mechanisms.

The overwhelming advantage represented by the "conventional method" over the classical diplomatic negotiations is to bring about a serious reflection allowing to all its members to go beyond subjective opinions and to think at the missions of Europe in a sense of "public welfare". In order not to fail this chance, we have to avoid imposing our views or proposing immediate solutions, while allowing to all of us to take time for reflection, dialogue and listening. The Convention aims at reaching the project representing the Political Union, thus confirming the initial objective stated more than fifty years by the "Founding Fathers" Jean Monnet and Robert Schumann.

The ideas developed in the recent Communication of the Commission, could, in our view, significantly help the work of the Convention in this respect. The three dimensions (social-economic, internal security, external policy), taken into account in this Communication, constitute action priorities that also suit the positions expressed by different participants in the debate on the future of Europe.

Romania envisages an EU constituted as a federation of Nation-States. We also support the consolidation of the Community method, this meaning a reinforcement of the European institutions directly responsible with the implementation of Community policies, mainly the European Commission.

The major problem of the Union is not its competence, but its leadership. The main players, the Presidents of the Commission and of the European Parliament, the Heads of State or Governments of the Union have limited powers at this level. Some suggest the creation of a President of the EU. Others think this function should replace the President of the European Commission. Such an idea has to be carefully analyzed, taking into consideration all the possible implications as regards the functioning of the Council, of the European Commission and of the Union as a whole. We have to define missions, competences and tasks for this new function. Last but not the least we have to think the concrete way to elect "the President of Europe": by the European Council, by the European Parliament, by special "electors" (using the American model) or by universal vote. All these questions need argued answers which have to take into consideration the voice of the European citizens.

A restructured intergovernmental pillar is also a necessity, this meaning a reconsideration of the role of national institutions in the European affairs, respectively the rationalization of the executive and legislative functions of the Council and the reconsideration or upgrading of the role of the national parliaments. On the other side, the European Council should return to its role of "supreme instance" within the Community decision-making process and cease acting as "mediator" among different horizontal Councils.

We consider that is necessary to strengthen the parliamentary component of the European institutional system in order to remedy the democratic deficit and ensure greater democracy in the Union. In this respect, a reinforced role within the Community legislative process for the national parliaments should be granted. Such an approach could be confirmed by creating a "Committee of National Parliaments", after the models of COSAC, Economic and Social Committee or the Committee of the Regions. A possible consultative role for this new body should derive from the future constitutional model of the Union.

These are only few ideas about how we see in Romania our place in the EU. I would end my intervention by saying that fifty years ago a generation of visionary politicians opened the way, after the Second World War, to reconciliation and progress on our continent, by creating the European Communities. Today, another generation, beneficiary of this heritage, is asked to answer again a huge challenge: that of giving new shape to Europe. European integration is not an end in itself but rather a means to deliver the most positive values of European culture: fundamental rights for everyone, pluralistic democracies, shared prosperity and economic competition.

Thank you.

[Quelle: <http://www.gov.ro/engleza/index.html>]