



Open Letter to Heads of State and Government of the European Union

May 2007

Dear President, dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express the concerns of Europe's socialists and social democrats about worrying developments for democracy in Romania and in Poland, which pose a serious risk to the principles of democracy and rule of law on which the European Union is founded.

Since February of this year, the Romanian Parliament has been investigating allegations that President Basescu has infringed several constitutional provisions since the beginning of his mandate, including the separation of institutional powers. The Romanian Parliament voted in favour of suspension of the President on 19th April (322 votes in favour; 108 against; 10 abstentions), in view of the gravity of the allegations with which he is charged, a decision which was then validated by the Constitutional Court on 20th April. Since then, Mr Basescu has made public accusations that members of Parliament are representatives of "the oligarchs" and has supported street protests against the Parliament. In the run-up to a referendum that should decide on Mr Basescu's impeachment, it appears that Mr Basescu is attempting to undermine the legitimacy of the Romanian Parliament and, therefore, Romania's representative democracy. Whatever the outcome of the forthcoming referendum, it is incumbent on all European leaders to reiterate the fundamental principle of democracy within the European Union.

Recent developments in Poland are similarly worrying. A recent law on lustration raises very serious questions concerning the respect of freedom of speech, media freedom, the protection of human dignity and human rights. Bronislaw Geremek's refusal to sign a lustration declaration is a courageous act in the face of what can only be described as an illegitimate law; he is now threatened with being stripped of his mandate as member of the European Parliament, despite having signed a previous lustration declaration prior to his election in 2004. The Polish government's actions should, in the view of Europe's socialists and social democrats, be considered an attack on fundamental freedoms and a populist





attempt to polarize Polish society. This is compounded by other troubling signs of government discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation.

It is important to recall that the European Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, as set out in Article 6 of the Treaties. The EU should not tolerate the non-respect of these principles in any of its Member States, bearing in mind the sanction established by Article 7 of the Nice Treaty. For this reason, I call on you, as heads of state and government of the European Union, to express your concerns about these worrying developments and urge the heads of state and government of Poland and Romania to ensure strict observance and implementation of the EU's founding principles.

Yours sincerely,

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen
President
Party of European Socialists

