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Answer given by First Vice-President Timmermans  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(14.3.2019)

The Commission is following with great concern the developments concerning the rule of law in Romania, including discussions on a possible emergency ordinance on extraordinary appeals for criminal cases following the recent Constitutional Court ruling on the panel of five judges (7 November 2018).

The Commission at all levels and at all occasions has stressed that Romania needs to very urgently put the reform process back on track. This means going forwards, not backwards and abstaining from any steps which reverse the progress accomplished over the past years.

To achieve that the best starting point remains the approach set out by the Commission in the November 2018 Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) report, to call to a halt the changes and start afresh on the basis of proper consultation and the input of external expertise.

The Commission reaffirms its commitment to applying all the tools at its disposal to promote and enforce the respect of the common European values under Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union, including the rule of law, in all Member States.