

The President

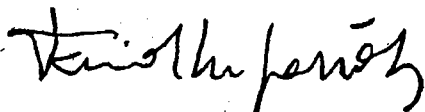
Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
BE - 1049 Brussels

D 318606 20.12.2019

Dear President von der Leyen,

Following the meeting of the Conference of Presidents of 19 December 2019, I am pleased to send you the observations of the European Parliament regarding the Cooperation and Verification mechanism on Bulgaria and Romania, in the form of a letter addressed to me by Mr Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Chair of LIBE Committee.

Yours sincerely,



David Maria SASSOLI

Annex: Letter from Mr López Aguilar, chair of the LIBE Committee, on the Commission reports on progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Cooperation and Verification mechanism (COM(2019)498 and COM(2019)499)

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
The Chair

D 202408 18.12.2019

IPOL-COM-LIBE D (2019)48208

Mr David Maria SASSOLI
President of the European Parliament
PHS 09B011
Brussels

Subject: Commission reports on progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Cooperation and Verification mechanism (COM(2019) 498 and COM(2019) 499)

Dear President,

I am addressing to you as regards the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism on Bulgaria and Romania. As you know, on 22 October the Commission presented the latest reports on the Cooperation and Verification mechanism on Bulgaria and Romania

In its report on Bulgaria the Commission noted the steady progress since January 2017 and the work done on the implementation of the recommendations which allowed making further progress as regards independence of judiciary and the fight against corruption. Based on its findings the Commission concluded that the progress made by Bulgaria under the CVM is sufficient to fulfil the commitments made by that Member State at the time of its accession to the EU and that the cooperation and verification mechanism for Bulgaria can be lifted. The Commission states that the monitoring of the continued implementation of the reforms put in place by Bulgaria in the area of CVM, especially as regards corruption, will need to be ensured by the post-monitoring council and that will feed into the future dialogue with the Commission in the framework of the comprehensive rule of law mechanism.

The European Parliament was invited to provide its observations to the Commission before the decision for ending the CVM for Bulgaria is formally adopted.

The European Parliament stresses the importance of the implementation and the enforcement of the commitments and reforms in practice. The Parliament expects that the Commission will closely monitor the situation regarding the rule of law and fundamental rights in both Bulgaria and Romania, as well as in other EU Member States, in particular, in the field of independence of the judiciary, fight against corruption and media freedom.

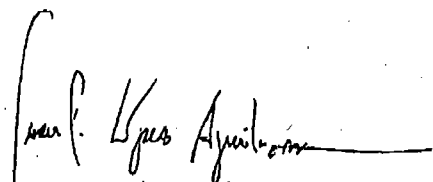
The LIBE Committee discussed the CVM reports on Bulgaria and Romania on 7 November 2019. The majority of the political groups took note of the progress made by Bulgaria to meet the commitments under the CVM. They supported the conclusion of the Commission to end the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria.

As regards the need for a CVM, during the debate several Members pointed out to the necessity of establishing a comprehensive and consistent mechanism on Rule of Law addressing all EU Member States as asked for by the European Parliament in its resolution of 25 October 2016¹ and building in particular on the lessons learned from CVM.

The LIBE Members underlined in general that the CVM should be disconnected from the accession of the respective countries to the Schengen area as they have already fulfilled the required criteria.

Based on the outcome of the discussion that took place in the LIBE Committee and the decision of coordinators I am glad to inform you that the LIBE Committee supports lifting the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juan F. López Aguilar', written over a horizontal line.

Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR

¹ Resolution of 25 October 2016 with recommendations to the Commission on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.