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It would be normal for the European People's Party (EPP) to convey a message in support of Romania's EU accession on January 1, 2007, Romanian Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu said during a meeting at the Victoria governmental Palace with a group of Euro-parliamentarians from the EPP, led by head of the Romania-EU joint committee Guido Podesta.

According to a governmental release issued on Friday, Tariceanu said that through the measures assumed and taken in the past year and a half, Romania has demonstrated it can meet the commitments of a EU member state, which justifies the support of the EPP and the other parliamentary groups for Romania's entering the EU on January 1, 2007.

Even though there still is (much) to do, deadlines will be observed, Tariceanu assured those present at the meeting. He said that very great progress has been made in the fields where Romania had reported delays two years ago, namely in agriculture, justice and home affairs, the fight against corruption, competition.

For example, in fighting corruption, changes occurred after firm governmental moves have been taken, the Prime Minister believes. The reform of justice has made the judicial system independent, the National Anti-Corruption Department started to work and the message of zero tolerance for corruption was regarded as a warning at the level of the public administration.

The head of government referred to the assessments made at the end of last year by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, showing that the level of corruption went down. All this is expected to be reflected in the Monitoring Report the European Commission is due to issue on May 16, the Romanian Premier said.

Podesta appreciated the progress made by Romania. He referred among others to what European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn said about the reforms in Romania, considered to have a good pace, the Government said in the release.

The parliamentarians of the European People's Party and the European Democrats (EPP-ED) who have been in Bucharest these days will present their group a favourable report about the progress made by Romania, voicing their support for Romania's EU accession, spokesman for the delegation Millan Mon also said on Friday.

'We have wanted to come to Romania in this period crucial for the integration, in order to better grasp how things are and to exchange views with authorities and with members of the political parties, including our friends in the Democratic Party (PD),' Mon said.

According to the Spanish Euro-parliamentarian, on Thursday and Friday the delegation met with main

**MEMBERS OF EPP-ED FAVOURABLY  
IMPRESSED BY PROGRESS MADE BY  
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authorities involved in key sectors for the integration, as well as with members of the political parties that have joined the EPP, and discussed with them border control and the fight against corruption. 'We have been favourably impressed by the progress made by Romania, the report to our group in Brussels will be positive and we are backing the process of fulfilling our common purpose, Romania's accession to the European Union. Of course, we have to wait for the monitoring report (the European Commission is due to issue) on May 16, but considering the stance taken by (European Commissioner for Enlargement) Olli Rehn regarding the progress in Romania, we can be sure that Romania can join the EU on January 1, 2007, if it continues implementing the reform,' Mon said.