

April-9-17 – Dacian Ciolo? Should Defend Romania's Interests, Not the Lords of Brussels

Description

President of the Romanian Senate Calin Popescu-Tariceanu called for Dacian Ciolo? to "defend Romania's interests, not those of the bigwigs in Brussels." He says the former premier is in the service of a faction that feels Romania "should be content with the status of a colony within the EU."

"I've been quite surprised by the criticism coming lately from the technocrat Dacian Ciolo?, former premier, and I think it's worth a response. Not a personal response, because I don't want to ascribe to Mr. Ciolo? a greater importance than he merits. Dacian Ciolo? speaks for a faction in Romanian politics that says Romania should content itself with the role of a colonial state within the European Union. We have politicians going around Europe with the same mindset of 250 years ago when the Phanariot rulers approached the Sublime Porte [seat of the Ottoman government] with the attitude, 'better to bow your head than wind up dead.' There are politicians out there who present it like a great victory for Romanians that the notion of a 'multi-speed Europe' has been replaced with a Europe 'at different paces and intensity.' It's like the saying, 'Still the same Mary, but in a different hat,' Tariceanu wrote Saturday evening on Facebook.

He maintains that EU decisions are taken after "hard negotiations" in which each state has a responsibility to work "vigorously" to protect its own interests.

"Probably, some of these people think it's better to be a slave with a generous master than to stand on one's own feet. Others have gotten used to their luxurious lives as high-status functionaries with the same salary as the CEO of a private company, without even having to worry about getting in trouble with your employer. Whatever their motive, one thing is clear as daylight: all these politicians know that MCV is a political mechanism, and that decisions that have to do with Romania, like all the other second-tier Member States, are not automatically taken in accordance with European principles but have to be negotiated on the basis of economic or political interests. Even Dacian Ciolo? says as much in a statement he sent in reference to discussions he's had with other European leaders about postponing the country's admission to the Schengen area. To use an expression that President Iohannis is fond of: that's the elephant in the room, that everybody knows about. In the EU, decisions are made following tough negotiations in which each state has to act vigorously to protect its interests. "If you don't do that, you're going to lose."

The Senate President gives Poland as a model negotiator and pleads in favor of a one-speed European Union.

"This is a fact that states like Poland understand, but people like Prime Minister Dacian Ciolo? do not apply it. They still believe in the logic whereby, if in the final negotiations they offer a several-billion-euro contract to a Dutch company to build ships, without putting it out to bid, they will gain the goodwill of the Netherlands. Posing as convinced Europeans, they say all this to *me*, who was Prime Minister at the time we joined the European Union. I believe in the European Union, but a single-speed European

Union, not one with 'colonies' and 'great powers,' not a Europe with 'first-tier citizens' and 'second-tier citizens.' I believe such a European Union can be achieved, in which Romania will be a strong state, possibly even the seventh largest economic power in Europe, as befits the size of its territory and population. This is one of my objectives in traveling Monday to Brussels, where I am going to meet with Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, and with Vera Jourova, European Commissioner for Justice," said Tariceanu.

According to him, Romania must uphold its "interests" in Brussels.

"This EU, which I think every Romanian wants, can be achieved only if we uphold our interests in Brussels and do not accept the status of a servant. Politicians like Dacian Ciolo? want to sell an illusion to those few Romanians who still believe him. The illusion that if we behave ourselves and don't bother anyone, we will get what we deserve. The illusion that if we keep still while our rights and freedoms are infringed, we will be counted among "the good guys." The illusion that if we applaud every decision made by today's leaders in Brussels, we will be given a front-row seat. But if there is a lesson to be learned from Romanian history, it's this: when we were other people's servants, we were weaker and lived poorly. When we dared to look up from the ground, we were stronger. I hope that Dacian Ciolo? and the other politicians like him will find this courage. Whether they do or not, I, together with ALDE and our partners in government, will continue to work to gain a stronger position for Romania in the EU," said Tariceanu.

Agerpres / (Author: Livia Popescu, editor: Nona Jalb?, online editor Anda Badea. Translated by Alice Decker.)