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Mr. Matthias Ruete
Enlargement Directorate General
Directorate B
Co-ordination of Negotiations and Pre-accession;
Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey
European Commission

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Dear Matthias:

→ Dirk Lange
we need to speak
about a report
re: by Malin 16/5

Thank you for taking time today to lead the Commission's participation in the digital videoconference on the Romanian adoption law with Mike Mozur and Department experts and with Embassy Bucharest DCM Tom Delare and his team. I understand from Mike that the discussion was thorough and that both sides have a clearer appreciation of the respective positions.

I was pleased to hear that there was clearly recognized common ground on the adoption issue, that the EU and U.S. experts both acknowledged that international adoptions have a place as an option, if only as a last resort, as governments address the welfare of abandoned or orphaned children. Similarly, it is good that we are committed to working closely together to promote reform in Romania, including efforts to reduce corruption and strengthen public administration. We all seek a transparent child welfare system in Romania that is free of corruption. We do not believe, however, that an outright ban on inter-country adoptions will in itself eliminate corruption in this sector. Rather, progress on both accounts will contribute to improved conditions for those children who find themselves in foster care or government institutions.

As you know, the Romanian Chamber of Deputies is considering a new child welfare law, one that in its present form all but eliminates inter-country adoption as an option. The Romanian government has indicated it

believes the European Commission supports the draft law as written and does not favor amendment to allow inter-country adoption as a last resort in accordance with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. As did Deputy Secretary Armitage in his May 4 letter to Commissioner Verheugen, I would like to urge you to convey to the Romanian government that legislation consistent with the U.N. Convention – and which allows inter-country adoption as a last resort – is not contrary to the Acquis Communautaire. Of course, we agree that Romania must make its own decision on the shape of its child welfare legislation.

We look forward to working closely with our partners in the European Union to promote reform and progress in Romania. We are hopeful that we will be able to cooperate together to improve child welfare conditions in Romania. In so doing, we hope to ensure that those children whose needs are not presently being met by Romanian institutions will have the possibility of a permanent home with loving parents, either in Romania or abroad, an option that is precluded by the current Romanian draft law. We need to look out for the interests of children who need help now. At the same time, as today's discussion recognized, we can work in tandem to improve the overall child welfare system so that there will be lower rates of abandonment and institutionalization in the future.

Thank you again for today's DVC and for working with us on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Charles P. Ries
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of European and Eurasian
Affairs