

SPEECH
by Victor Ponta, Chief Prime Minister's Control Department of Romania,
to the training seminar for OLAF communicators
Bucharest, 22 October 2003

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely honoured to have been asked to open the deliberations of the international seminar organised by the European Union's Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and by the Government's Control Body, which is OLAF's counterpart in Romania, particularly as this opening session is attended by a number of prominent individuals who, by their presence, underscore once again the importance of the issues to be addressed as well as the importance that the European Union and the Romanian authorities at the highest level attach to our shared future. I would, therefore, like to thank once again the President of Romania, Ion Iliescu, who has honoured us today with his presence at this seminar, Ms Michaele Schreyer, the European Commissioner, and Ms Diemut Theato, the Chairperson of the European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee.

The presence of our esteemed guests, as I have already said, underscores the importance of this event and, at the same time, conveys to all those present just how seriously and responsibly we intend to proceed.

Before giving the floor to our guests, I trust that the visits that were organised have been beneficial and useful and have made up for the not very clement weather.

On behalf of the Government's Control Body, I would like to add that this seminar as well as the presence of our guests of honour reflect all our expectations.

Romania has been accepted into the European family. Through all its institutions and all the people that work there, it must demonstrate its absolute conviction that our place is in Europe, that we deserve to be seated at this table, alongside all the member countries and all the candidate countries, which I congratulate on the efforts to date and to whom I wish further success. We have one future ahead of us, a future within a united Europe.

Thank you very much.