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## **EU Parliament: Europe seen from the East. Iohannis (Romania's President), support to Ukraine. But we need reforms and to bridge the gap with citizens**

(Strasbourg) In his speech in Strasbourg, Romania's President Iohannis points to a number of issues, both internal and international, in which the EU could play a decisive role. First, "support for Ukraine and its people. We feel a certain fatigue in this, but it is our duty and interest to support Ukraine". The war unleashed by Putin has, among other things, once again raised the need for a common defence, "in complementarity with NATO", and for "the development of the EU defence industry". Iohannis dedicates a large part of his speech to the "EU enlargement", which would make the EU "even more attractive and stronger", with the process of accession of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the Balkans in the future. Iohannis also stresses the EU's global vocation, which requires close ties with Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and South America, and a strong "transatlantic bond". But to do all this, "Europe needs reforms, which can take place immediately within the framework of the Treaties", without necessarily rewriting the Treaties themselves (a hypothesis that the president does not rule out). And finally: "Today we are stronger than five years ago. Europe has shown remarkable unity in the direst circumstances" it had to face. "The EU must always remain an open construction site", and equip itself to provide new responses in the environmental, economic, labour, and safety fields. He points out that "the veto power in the Council must be absolutely overcome, because a single government cannot block Europe". He then recalls the 10 points of the declaration signed in Sibiu, his city, on 9 May 2019, ahead of the previous European elections, where EU leaders looked at the future of the Union. These principles, according to Iohannis, are still valid today. But we must "bridge the huge gap between politics and citizens. We are bad communicators about what we do. The gap with citizens must absolutely be bridged".

Alberto Baviera