

PM Citu: No revision funds to ministers in the absence of reforms

Prime Minister Florin Citu said on Tuesday that the ministers failing to make reforms at loss-making state-owned companies will not receive extra funds at the next budget revision to cover expenses throughout the year, given the deficit target set earlier this year.

"Reform of state-owned companies: I have included in the national budget money for certain loss-making companies, assuming that they will undergo reform and reduce expenses; it is June soon. (...) Nothing like that has been done. I am telling my colleagues in the government that they will not receive that money at the revision to have expenses covered throughout the year, unless they carry out reforms. It is almost June; they must come up with the reforms, because the funds do not exist, there is nowhere we can get it, and the deficit is the one I unveiled at the beginning of the year," Citu told Radio Guerrilla private broadcaster on Tuesday.

At the same time, the prime minister said once again that he asked the ministers to reform institutions, to start with a simple streamlining.

"I reorganised the Ministry of Finance last year (...), I managed to reduce the number of directors general at the Ministry of Finance, which also means savings for the budget and the ministry was able to go very well, collecting (...) So, you can reform, reduce the number of directors general, merge directorates and so on, so this can be done, the simplest reform, that's why I am encouraging them, then I will ask the ministers to carry out the streamlining of ministries. So far I have not received a reorganisation of the ministries to do what I did, namely reduce the number of director general positions, for example, none have come in. Now I am encouraging them, then I will ask them, otherwise they cannot reduce expenses," Citu said.

He pointed out that the government should not be afraid of reforms, considering that "Romania has postponed reforms for 30 years."

"We don't make them because the European Commission or the IMF or anyone else tells us to. The results are beneficial to Romania, that's why we make them, not because we are somehow crazy. When you make these reforms, linking performance to income in the public sector (...) should already exist, so I should not come up now to say that. Cutting down on public money waste at state-owned companies, again, I shouldn't come up to say that, it should have been normal to do so until now, it should have not taken 30 years for me to say now that is a new thing," said Citu.

Regarding the evaluation of the ministers' activity, the prime minister reiterated that it takes place continuously and when he makes a decision he will announce it.

"I have told you that I assess continuously and only the decisions are announced publicly. First I announce a decision to the coalition colleagues and then, as it happened last time, I announced publicly," said Citu when asked when the assessment of the ministers will take place.

He added that by 2024 there will be a decrease in staff spending, due to the dynamics in Romania's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"Staff spending will decrease as a percentage of GDP by 2024. I said in the fiscal strategy it decreases by one percentage point every year, because the GDP dynamics will outpace staff spending. It's a simple, statistical thing. What I want from the public apparatus, what we all want, in fact, is for it to be efficient," added Citu.