

Tanczos Barna: Replacing fastener folders, objective number one; no viable alternative to coalition

The main objectives of interim Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Transformation Tanczos Barna are to replace physical folders and cut through red tape.

"Replacing the physical folders and getting rid of the red tape that characterises the administration system in Romania is my number one goal and it certainly was for my predecessor as well. We will not be able to solve this problem in a few weeks in the interim, but the priority for this ministry must be digital transformation and interconnection of public bodies so as to cut through the red tape whereby the citizen is sent from one counter to another for various approvals, stamps, signatures and papers. Complex investment and complex IT solutions will surely do the trick," Tanczos told AGERPRES on Friday.

The minister specified that Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) provided considerable funding for this area.

"My goal is to continue the project started by the ministry during the preparation and negotiation of PNRR, to ensure continuity, because a team has left that worked hard on this project and it is absolutely necessary and even mandatory that all PNRR knowledge, all experience, everything that was added in 2021 and in the inter-ministerial discussions to be taught and carried on," added Tanczos.

At the same time, he pointed out, there are still a number of important objectives in the area of research.

"Here too, any interruption of negotiations both nationally and internationally could generate problems. We have the Magurele project, an extremely important project, because we must succeed in Romania being practically welcomed back to this European consortium of resources and for ELI - the programme at Magurele - to be continued. There are already discussions here with the Hungarian side and the Czech side, discussions that give us hope that we can make up for the lost time and get back on a normal path. Romania's acceptance to this consortium it is a priority and it is an essential thing," said Tanczos.

He pointed out that as far as the Magurele project in concerned, "unpleasant things can happen."

"We have already talked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have contacted the Hungarian side and the Czech side, we have assured them of our full support for this project and we will soon probably meet them. It is very important for Romania to show seriousness and commitment to this subject," added the minister.

Regarding the Consultative college in the field of research, which during the summer had some discussions launched by the former minister, Tanczos said that he will go further, because there are signals that many people would have wanted to participate in the discussions but they did not receive information and data to be present.

"We have already had some telephone conversations with the chairman of the Romanian Academy and next week we will probably meet on this topic," the minister added.

Regarding the national budget revision for research funding, Tanczos said that the way of allocating funds for the core programme should be re-discussed inside the ministry, given that there are many research projects that have not basic funding, some of which are even on financial deadlock threshold.

"And the procedures, methods, formulas for allocating public funds to support research must be re-discussed,

because we cannot allow the important research institutes due to the Romanian state to end up in a situation in which they are not sustainable," the minister argued.

Tanczos said rebuilding the ruling coalition is the only solution for maintaining political stability and, from that point of view, there should be openness from both the Save Romania Union - Freedom, Unity and Solidarity (USR PLUS) alliance and the National Liberal Party PNL.

"Unfortunately, in the last few days, too many categorical statements were made and too many trenches have been dug. I believe that my colleagues at USR PLUS must be more conciliatory and there must be openness on the part of the PNL to rebuild the coalition, to continue in the same formula. At the moment, the situation in Parliament also shows that there is no viable alternative to the PNL - USR PLUS-UDMR coalition," the minister said.