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**FONDUL PROPRIETATEA ISSUES STRONG WARNINGS ON THE SUITABILITY OF RECENTLY
APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS OF SALROM**

Bucharest, 16 September 2021 – Franklin Templeton International Services S.A. R.L., as administrator of alternative investment fund and sole administrator (“Fund Administrator”) of Fondul Proprietatea S.A. (“The Fund”), expresses its extreme disappointment at the sudden change related to the appointment of Salrom’s board members and questions their suitability and experience for these roles. The mandate of the new board will start on 1 October 2021.

In fact, the candidates appointed now by the majority shareholder in Salrom's board of directors are none other than those who held these positions in 2020, a year in which Salrom's profit fell almost seven times and in which operating revenues fell by 36%. It is a legitimate question whether these are the right people to contribute to the listing of the company or to make the best decisions regarding the exploitation of the graphite deposits, a vital resource for the global energy transition.

The stability and soundness of state-owned companies, as well as future development of these companies are of paramount importance for the Romanian economy and their success is a direct result of the quality of people appointed in the key oversight and managerial positions. Fondul Proprietatea considers that this decision risks harming the company and jeopardizes important projects, such as the listing of Salrom on the stock exchange and the evaluation of the options regarding the exploitation of the graphite deposits in Gorj.

Johan Meyer, CEO of Franklin Templeton Bucharest and Portfolio Manager of Fondul Proprietatea said: *“Fondul Proprietatea has been sounding the alarm for many years and has always stated that for the economic development of Romanian state-owned companies, transparency, continuity, and professionalism are needed. We do not see these conditions are met by the new composition of the Salrom board. In our view the members who were changed from the board had the necessary qualities to develop a sustainable investment program for Salrom, met the corporate governance criteria that the Romanian state has assumed, and could ensure the necessary stability to achieve the objectives of listing the company on the stock exchange and of development of Salrom. It is imperative that state owned companies stop being treated like political footballs, that board and management teams are selected according to corporate governance principles taking into consideration professionalism and expertise and that they are evaluated based on results delivered for the company and its stakeholders.”*

Fondul Proprietatea continues to support Salrom’s current board of directors and management based on their demonstrated business acumen through the introduction efficiency measures at the company level and the initiation of investment projects that would support long term growth for the company. The investment projects, if commercially viable, should be carried out by the company as it means more investments that stand to benefit all stakeholders: employees, local communities, and shareholders.

- ENDS -

Contacts:

<p>Elena Birjovanu Senior Corporate Communications Manager Franklin Templeton Bucharest Branch Premium Point 76-80 Buzesti, 011017, Bucharest Tel: +40 725 301 189 Email: elena.birjovanu@franklintempleton.com</p>	<p>Cristina Butunoi Head of Corporate Division Golin Metropolis Bravo, 89-97 Grigore Alexandrescu 010627 Bucharest, Romania Tel: +40 751 024 088 Email: cbutunoi@golin.com</p>
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Notes to Editors

1. About Fondul Proprietatea

Launched in December 2005, Fondul Proprietatea was established to compensate Romanians whose properties were confiscated by the former communist government. Following an international tender announced in December 2008, Franklin Templeton Investments was officially appointed as investment manager and sole administrator of the Fund on 29 September 2010.

The Fund is an alternative investment fund and its investment objective is the maximization of returns and per-share capital appreciation via investments mainly in Romanian equities and equity-linked securities. The Fund listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange on 25 January 2011 and on the Specialist Fund Market of the London Stock Exchange by means of global depositary receipts ("GDRs") on 29 April 2015.

The headquarters of Fondul Proprietatea SA are at 76-80 Buzesti Street, 7th Floor, Bucharest District 1, 011017, Romania. For more information on Fondul Proprietatea, please visit <http://www.fondulproprietatea.ro>.

2. About Franklin Templeton Investments

Franklin Resources, Inc. [NYSE:BEN] is a global investment management organization with subsidiaries operating as Franklin Templeton and serving clients in over 165 countries. Franklin Templeton's mission is to help clients achieve better outcomes through investment management expertise, wealth management and technology solutions. Through its specialist investment managers, the company brings extensive capabilities in equity, fixed income, multi-asset solutions and alternatives. With offices in more than 30 countries and approximately 1,300 investment professionals, the California-based company has over 70 years of investment experience and approximately 1.572 trillion in assets under management as of 31 August 2021. For more information, please visit www.franklintempleton.ro.

Franklin Templeton established an office in Bucharest in May 2010, with a team of 32 employees, including 6 locally based investment professionals who are further supported by the over 40 portfolio managers and analysts of the wider Templeton Emerging Markets team.

Starting with 1 April 2016, in view of complying with the EU Directive 2011/61 on alternative investment fund managers, the Fund is managed by Franklin Templeton Investment Services S.À R.L. ("FTIS/ Fund Manager"), a société à responsabilité limitée qualifying as an alternative investment fund manager under Article 5 of the Luxembourg Law of 12 July 2013 on alternative investment fund managers, authorized by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier under no. A00000154/21 November 2013, whose registered office is located at 8A rue Albert Borschette, L-1246 Luxembourg, registered with the Luxembourg Register of Commerce and Companies under number B 36.979.

This release herein is issued by FTIS Bucharest Branch, registered therein under the number 40198471.

The office of FTIS Bucharest Branch is located at Premium Point, 8th floor, 78-80 Buzesti, District 1, Bucharest, Romania. Tel: +40.200.96.00, Fax: +40.200.96.31/32.

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