



GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

Country Profile

Romania

Capital:	Bucharest
Geographical Size:	238 390.7 km ²
Population:	19 942 642 (2014)
Population as % of total EU population:	3.9% (2014)
GDP:	€ 142.245 billion (2013)
Defense Expenditure:	€ 1.847 million (2013)
Official EU language(s):	Romanian
Political System:	Semi-presidential republic
EU member country since:	1 January 2007
Seats in European Parliament:	32
Currency:	Romanian Leu (RON)
Schengen area member?	No
Presidency of the Council:	First time to be in 2019

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a. Political System

The political system of Romania takes place in a framework of a semi-presidential republic, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government and the President of the Republic is the head of state. The government exercises the executive power. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of Parliament: the 412-seat Chamber of Deputies and the 176-seat Senate, which are elected for four years. Borrowing from its tragic past, the bicameral system in Romania is explained by the necessity to temper any possible authoritarian or extremist tendencies of a Chamber¹. According to the Constitution, the Parliament of Romania grants the vote of confidence into the whole Cabinet and its political programme. Parliament also elects the magistrates composing the Superior Council of the Magistrature, and the two branches of Parliament are entitled to appoint three judges of the Constitutional Court each². The judiciary is independent from the executive and the legislature, with a system of lower courts that includes the High Court of Cassation and Justice.

The President (currently Klaus Iohannis, centre-right) is directly elected for up to two five-year terms and is charged with safeguarding the Constitution, foreign affairs and the proper functioning of public authorities. The President acts as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Chairperson of the Supreme Council of National Defence. After consulting the parliamentary groups, he or she designates a candidate for the office of Prime Minister (currently Dacian Cioloş). The Government enters the execution of its office once the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, meeting in a joint sitting, grants confidence by a vote of majority³.

As in other traditional semi-presidential political systems, the President and the Prime Minister's constitutional powers are comparable. The Constitution however specifies their powers in broad terms, which leads to disagreement related to exercising these powers. Even if this could compromise government efficiency, such institutional design is aimed at preventing tyranny, which is evidently important in countries that had been located on the east side of the iron curtain before 1989. Moreover, According to A. Burakowski (University of Warsaw), the potential inconsistency of the Romanian executive power had no substantial impact on the stability and efficiency of the Romanian governance system. In his view, this situation resulted from the well-developed adaptive capabilities of the post-communist Romanian elites that came into power after President Nicolae Ceausescu (1974-1989)⁴.

Romania's multi-party system features vigorous competition between various blocs; no single force has been able to dominate both the executive and legislative branches in recent years. Following the 2012 parliamentary elections, the Social Liberal Union (USL) took 273 of 412 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 122 of 176 seats in the Senate. The opposition Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) and its Right Romania Alliance placed a distant second with 56 lower house seats and 24 upper house seats, followed by the People's Party Dan Diaconescu with 47 and 21, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) with

¹ Chamber of Deputies of Romania, "Structure of Parliament", *How Parliament works*. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015. <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=109>

² Chamber of Deputies of Romania, "Appointment and revocation of some State Authorities", *How Parliament works*. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015. <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=introp2-e2>

³ Chamber of Deputies of Romania, "Appointment and revocation of some State Authorities", *How Parliament works*. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015. <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=introp2-e2>

⁴ Świątłowski, B., "Adam Burakowski: Political System of Modern Romania", review of *Political System of Modern Romania*, by Adam Burakowski, *Visegrad Plus*, March 4, 2015. Web. Accessed October 22, 2015. <http://visegradplus.org/visopedia-archive/adam-burakowski-political-system-modern-romania/>

18 and 9, and various national minority representatives with a total of 18 seats in the lower house. The constitution grants one lower house seat to each national minority whose representative party or organization fails to win any seats under the normal rules, and 18 such seats were allotted in 2012. In the November 2014 presidential election, Klaus Iohannis (leader of the PNL and joint candidate of that party and the centre-right Democratic Liberal Party) won the elections with 54.4% against Victor Ponta. According to *Freedom House*, elections in Romania have been considered generally free and fair since 1991⁵.

Rankings put Romania alongside Bulgaria as the most corrupt country in the EU. However, Romanian National Anti-corruption Directorate (DNA) has made strides, convicting over a thousand officials in 2014. On June 5th the DNA announced its biggest case yet, charging the then Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, with forgery and conflict of interest⁶. Victor Ponta stepped down on November 4, 2015 because of public anger over a nightclub fire accident that killed 56 people and prompted a popular campaign slogan “Corruption kills”. On November 17, a new government of technocrats won a confidence vote in parliament by an overwhelming margin for a one-year term and was backed by the Liberals and former ruling Social Democrats. It includes European Commission staff, diplomats and civil society leaders⁷.

b. Foreign Policy

Similarly to other semi-presidential systems, the President of Romania enjoys wide room for manoeuvre in steering national foreign policy. After the fall of Communism, the country adopted a strong **pro-Atlantic** and **pro-European** approach in foreign and security policies. Romania’s ambition is strengthening its position in the EU and NATO, as well as the strategic partnership with the United States⁸. Romanian diplomacy has also constantly acted to promote regional and sub-regional cooperation in **Central and South-eastern Europe**, besides its active participation in the EU, NATO and OSCE. These regional approaches were and still are considered in interdependence and complementarity with the global evolutions managed by the UN⁹.

Romanian special relationship with the United States (and, consequently, with the UK) was initially favoured by the conviction that Atlanticist powers were the real security guarantors of Europe’s Eastern flank. However, as a result of the US and UK pivot away from Europe and Germany’s growing leading role in Europe¹⁰, President Iohannis (of German origin and background) emphasised the importance of the **strategic partnership with the USA** and

⁵ “Romania”, *Freedom House | Freedom in the World Report*, Accessed October 22, 2015. Web. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/romania>

⁶ n.a. “Immune System”, *The Economist*, July 13, 2015. Web. Accessed October 22, 2015. <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21654081-law-change-may-help-victor-ponta-prime-minister-dodge-prosecution-immune-system>

⁷ Marinas R. S., Ilie L., “Romanian government meant to tackle corruption wins parliament’s backing”, *Reuters*, November 17, 2015. Web. Accessed November 22, 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/17/us-romania-government-vote-idUSKCN0T61KF20151117#LCrcXISyhpz9TQbK.97>.

⁸ Daborowski T., “President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?”, *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

⁹ n.a. “Cooperation between UN, regional organizations a priority of Romania's foreign policy”, *Romanian National News Agency AGERPRES*, May 6, 2015, Web. Accessed. October 25, 2015. <http://www.agerpres.ro/english/2015/05/06/cooperation-between-un-regional-organizations-a-priority-of-romania-s-foreign-policy-10-54-29>

¹⁰ Goşu A., Manea O., “Letter from Bucharest”, *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

Romanian-German relations in the first months of his presidency. During his visit to Berlin, Iohannis said that he viewed Germany as one of the key actors not only in the EU but also globally, and emphasised the role of German Chancellor Merkel in resolving the conflict in Ukraine. He has demonstrated strong support for Germany in its efforts to implement the Minsk Accords¹¹. The United States and Romania recently deepened relations by increasing cooperation on shared goals, including economic and political development, defence reform, and non-traditional threats such as transnational crime and non-proliferation. In 2011, the United States and Romania issued the *Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century between the United States of America and Romania*. The two countries identified key areas for enhanced cooperation, focusing on our political-military relationship, law-enforcement cooperation, trade and investment opportunities, and energy security¹².

The European courses of **Moldova and Ukraine** remain one of the major foreign policy preoccupations of Romania. The reason is not only well-known historical ties, but also Romania's proximity to conflict zones and states of interest for Russia. President Iohannis explained that stable and safe vicinity is fundamental for Romania, saying that in the current regional security context the Eastern Partnership is a relevant instrument in the relations with the neighbouring partners¹³. In regards to relations with Moldova, which is historically a high priority in Romanian foreign policy, Iohannis is continuing the previous policy of supporting this country's pro-European policy (Moldova has ratified a political and trade agreement with the EU in June 2014)¹⁴. Moldova's territory, with the exception of the separatist region of Transnistria, was a part of the Kingdom of Romania between the two world wars and was handed over to the Soviet Union in 1940 without violence. This history has generated a sense of guilt among the political elite in Bucharest—a feeling that survived to this day¹⁵. The Romanian political elite is worried about Russian intentions on Moldova, in a possible repeat of what has happened in Ukraine. Russia has maintained troops in the territory of the Russian-speaking Transnistria since 1992, a part of Moldova that broke away during a short war in 1991-92. The separatist war in eastern Ukraine was partly sparked by Kyiv choosing a pro-EU stance - and policies similar to those being adopted by Moldova - over a future closer to Moscow¹⁶. Regarding Ukraine, Romania stands for its territorial integrity; President Iohannis upheld support for sanctions imposed on Russia. However, he recognised possible supplies of weapons to Ukraine at the present stage as inadvisable¹⁷.

¹¹ Daborowski T., "President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

¹² "US Relations with Romania", *US Department of State*, October 2, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35722.htm>

¹³ n.a. "Klaus Iohannis: European courses of Moldova and Ukraine are a foreign policy preoccupation", *Timpul*, January 30, 2015. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015. <http://www.timpul.md/en/articol/Klaus-Iohannis-European-courses-of-Moldova-and-Ukraine-are-a-foreign-policy-preoccupation-69200.html>

¹⁴ Daborowski T., "President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

¹⁵ Goşu A., Manea O., "Letter from Bucharest", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

¹⁶ n.a. "Germany and Romania weigh up Moscow's plans for Moldova", *Deutsche Welle*, February 26, 2015. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015. <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-and-romania-weigh-up-moscows-plans-for-moldova/a-18283804>

¹⁷ Daborowski T., "President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015.

European Union (EU)

Despite having been a candidate since June 1995, Romania joined the EU in April 2005. Subsequently, the European Commission stated that even if Romania lacked sufficient efforts in order to strengthen the rule of law within its border¹⁸, the country complied with the political provisions to enter the EU. Consequently, Romania's accession to the EU entered into force on 1st January 2007, despite some “accompanying measures” to be applied¹⁹.

European integration issues have been given top priority in Romania. President Iohannis confirmed that he wants Romania to join the **Eurozone**²⁰. Romania wants the EU cooperation and a verification mechanism covering the monitoring of its progress in combating corruption to be lifted²¹. Also, Romania wanted to join the 26-nation visa-free **Schengen Area** (formal membership requirements were already met in 2011), but its accession was blocked for political reasons. Some EU nations were worried about mass poverty migration and organized crime heading west. As a result, former Prime Minister Ponta recently said that Romania had asked for its integration into the Schengen zone to be removed from the agenda, as it “was clear that the decision would not be a favourable one”²². Several nations including Germany, Holland, and Finland have opposed Bulgaria and Romania joining, saying that both countries have serious corruption issues and thus do not meet the key conditions for admission. Romania has insisted that it meets all the technical criteria needed to control its more than 2,000km-long border, including with two non-EU countries (Ukraine and Moldova). In recent months, however, the Ponta government has said that joining the Schengen area is no longer a national priority²³.

c. Peace & Security Policy

The 2015 *Romanian National Defence Strategy* (NDS) asserts the following objectives: the consolidation of the strategic partnership with the United States of America, the strengthened profile of Romania in NATO and the EU, deeper cooperation with neighbouring states and states at NATO's Eastern flank, and boosting regional cooperation²⁴. President Iohannis stated that the main guarantor of Romania's security is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)²⁵. Yet, the document explicitly seeks to define a **broader concept of national**

<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

¹⁸ Romania struggled to establish proper judicial system and administrative capacity, to protect minorities and to conduct a real fight against corruption.

¹⁹ “Roumanie”, *Toute l'Europe*, last modified November 17, 2014. Web. Accessed October 22, 2015.

<http://www.touteurope.eu/les-pays-de-l-union-europeenne/roumanie.html>

²⁰ Daborowski T., “President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?”, *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015.

<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

²¹ Goşu A., Manea O., “Letter from Bucharest”, *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

²² Chiriac M., “Romania Withdraws Bid to Join Schengen Area”, *BalkanInsight*, October 7, 2015. Web. Accessed October 25, 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/romania-bulgaria-face-new-delay-on-joining-schengen-space-10-06-2015>

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Presidency of Romania, “A Strong Romania within Europe and the World”, *National Defense Strategy 2015-2019*, adopted by the Romanian Parliament June 23, 2015: p. 9-10. Web. Accessed October 25, 2015.

<http://www.presidency.ro/static/National%20%20Defense%20Strategy%202015%20-%202019.pdf>

²⁵ n.a. “President Iohannis unveils Romanian National Defence Strategy to Parliament”, *Romanian National News Agency AGERPRES*, June 22, 2015. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015.

defence: education, health, good governance, environment, and economic prosperity appear for the first time as priorities for Romania’s national security. Besides energy security, terrorism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, new identified threats to Romania’s security derive from the changed security environment (e.g. frozen conflicts, Russian destabilizing actions, cyber threats, and informational hostilities). The document makes quite clear that Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and Russian actions in the Black Sea region deeply affect the regional security environment. Consequently to the changed security environment, the NDS declares a **specific commitment to meet NATO expectations**. This includes military modernization and allocation of 2 percent of Romania’s GDP to defence spending, starting in 2017 for a minimum of ten years. Romania also aims at enhancing its capabilities to face hybrid and asymmetrical threats. Such commitments are meant to sustain the aspiration that Romania can become an important security provider in the region, in order to play a proactive role (especially *vis-à-vis* Russia)²⁶.

Romania is the closest NATO and EU member state to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed in March 2014. At a time when Russia has effectively become the “spoiler-in-chief” of the European security order, regional forces are pushing **Poland and Romania** more than ever before in the direction of a coalition. Bucharest and Warsaw have a common foundation to build on. Both countries see Washington as the ultimate guarantor of their security and act as bridgeheads for the U.S. forward presence on Europe’s Eastern flank. That presence includes the U.S. missile defence system hosted in Romania and Poland, which is perceived as a strategic reassurance. Furthermore, in October 2009, Bucharest and Warsaw signed a strategic partnership. The agreement was late in launching, but its defence and security components became more significant with Moscow’s annexation of Crimea²⁷.

European Union (EU)

In the field of security, NATO is certainly the top priority for Romania. Yet, in recent years, Romania has envisioned **strengthening cooperation between NATO and EU**, which is why Romania does not mind a stronger Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Romania participates in many Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, in particular in the Balkans and in the Caucasus: 44 nationals in EUFOR Althea (Bosnia-Herzegovina), 36 personnel deployed in EULEX Kosovo, 36 nationals in MSUE Georgia, and 7 people in EUAM Ukraine. Romania also takes part in most CSDP missions in Africa, though with symbolic contributions: 5 people in EUCAP NESTOR (Horn of Africa), 3 people in EUCAP SAHEL NIGER (Nigeria), 2 personnel in EUTM Mali, and 2 people in EUCAP SAHEL Mali. Romania supported the launch of EUFOR CAR and will participate in EUMAM CAR (Central African Republic)²⁸.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Romania joined NATO on March 19, 2004 and has established itself as a steadfast ally of both the United States and NATO. For Romania, NATO membership represents the main

<http://www.agerpres.ro/english/2015/06/22/president-iohannis-unveils-romanian-national-defence-strategy-to-parliament-19-49-16>

²⁶ Rebegea C., “A Strong Romania in Europe and in the World”, *Center for European Policy Analysis*, June 26, 2015. Web. Accessed October 25, 2015. <http://www.cepa.org/content/strong-romania-europe-and-world>

²⁷ Goșu A., Manea O., “Letter from Bucharest”, *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

²⁸ “L’Union Européenne et la Roumanie”, *France Diplomatie – Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International*, last modified September 4, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015.

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/roumanie/l-union-europeenne-et-la-roumanie/>

guarantee of security and external stability. Thus, it seems quite obvious that under the guidance of Iohannis, all parliamentary forces agreed that defence expenses would reach 2% of GDP by 2017 and remain at this level until 2027²⁹. For the period 2014-2015 Romania has contributed 1.06% of the NATO's direct funding system³⁰.

The country continues to improve its capabilities for NATO and multinational operations, and has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to provide forces and assets in support of shared national security interests, including significant contributions of troops, equipment, and other assistance in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Kosovo. NATO appreciates Romania's support for partners (including Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia) and its contributions to stability in the Black Sea region. Moreover, the US and Romania signed a **ballistic missile defence agreement** in 2011, allowing the deployment of U.S. personnel, equipment, and anti-missile interceptors to Romania. In October 2014, the U.S. Navy formally established **Naval Support Facility Deveselu**, the first new Navy base since 1987. In September 2015, Romania built up a NATO Force Integration Unit. The country will also host the Alliance's Multinational Division-Southeast headquarters in Bucharest and is committing significant resources to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force. In exchange, U.S. assistance supports Romania in completing its military modernisation, improving its interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces, and increasing its expeditionary deployment capabilities in support of NATO's collective defence and coalition operations with the United States³¹.

United Nations (UN)

Romania was admitted to the UN on December 14, 1955 (alongside 15 other states). Romania was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1962, 1976-1977, 1990-1991, and 2004-2005³². Several offices of UN agencies, programmes, and funds are currently hosted by the UN House in Bucharest, including for the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the World Health Organization (WHO). As of September 2015, Romania had 3 troops, 37 military experts and 64 police personnel involved in UN Peacekeeping operations (MINUSMA, MINUSCA, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNAMA, UNFICYP, UNMIK, UNMIL, UNMISS, and UNOCI)³³. In June 2015, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced the appointment of Simona-Mirela Miculescu of Romania as his Representative and Director of the United Nations Office in Belgrade (Serbia). Ms. Miculescu will support the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)³⁴.

²⁹ Daborowski T., "President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

³⁰ NATO Common-Funded Budgets & Programmes", *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf

³¹ "US Relations with Romania", *US Department of State*, October 2, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35722.htm>

³² "Romania at the UN", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania*. Web. Accessed October 25, 2015. <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2059>

³³ "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, September 30, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15_3.pdf

³⁴ "Secretary-General Appoints Simona-Mirela Miculescu of Romania as Representative, Director of United Nations Office in Belgrade", *United Nations*, June 8, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sga1572.doc.htm>

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Romania joined the then *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe* in 1973. In 2014, it contributed to 0.3% (€ 433,640) of the OSCE's unified budget³⁵ and had 3 nationals involved in its staff³⁶. Romania had taken over the one-year Chair of the OSCE Security Committee for the year 2015. While exercising this function, Romania attached special attention to combating terrorism, transnational organized crime and illegal migration in OSCE space, increased cyber security, combating trafficking in human beings and drugs, border security management in OSCE states in the context of transnational threats, reform of the security sector, and deepening cooperation between law enforcement bodies³⁷.

Council of Europe (CoE)

Romania became a member of the Council of Europe in 1993. In 2015, it has contributed to 0.85% (€ 3 540 465) of the organisation's unified budget. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights dealt with **87 judgements concerning Romania**, which 74 were violations and 2 were non-violations³⁸. The Council of Europe anti-torture committee (CPT) issued in September 2015 a report on Romania stating its concern about numerous credible allegations of ill treatment by persons held in prisons, although it also points out significant progress in reducing such practice in police stations. There are reports of beatings to inmates by special intervention forces. The report also noted overcrowding at all prisons. Conditions in police stations were also described as mediocre due to overcrowding, disrepair, and insufficient access to natural light and fresh air. In their response, Romanian authorities refer to the zero tolerance policy towards police ill treatment and provide detailed information on the training activities of police officers in the human rights field³⁹.

Strategic Culture

As a country on the Eastern edge of NATO and the EU, Romania spends most of its diplomatic resources on national security. Bucharest's **strategic partnership with the United States** remains the cornerstone of Romanian national security—even more so since the Ukraine crisis is perceived as a major threat to Romania's security⁴⁰. Even before Iohannis' Presidency, Romania granted consent to the deployment of elements of the US missile-defence system, provided access to one of its airbases for the redeployment of US troops from Afghanistan, has taken part in the missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, and has co-operated closely with the US intelligence services. As a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine, Romanian-US military exercises have intensified and the presence of US warships in the Black Sea has become stronger⁴¹. Today more than ever, Romania has developed the

³⁵ The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015: 105. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³⁷ "Romania takes over Chair of OSCE Security Committee", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania*, January 6, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/30047>

³⁸ "Romania – Member State", *Council of Europe*. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/romania>

³⁹ "Council of Europe anti-torture committee calls on Romania to combat ill-treatment in prisons", Press release, *Council of Europe*, September 24, 2015. Web. Accessed October 28, 2015. <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2361823&Site=DC>

⁴⁰ Goșu A., Manea O., "Letter from Bucharest", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

⁴¹ Daborowski T., "President Iohannis' first steps in foreign policy – how much change, how much continuation?", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, March 11, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-11/president-iohannis-first-steps-foreign-policy-how-much-change-how>

mentality of a frontline state, together with Poland and the Baltic countries⁴². To conclude, given the fact that Romania heavily relies on the United States and NATO for its national security, most Romanian resources are allocated into the Atlantic collective security system. In turn, strategic culture and decisions on whether to deploy military tools or not are strongly influenced by the **Atlantic point of view**.

d. Economic Policy

European Union (EU)

Romania began the transition from Communism to Capitalism in 1989 with a largely obsolete industrial base and a pattern of output unsuited to the country's needs. Macroeconomic gains have only recently started to spur creation of a middle class and to address Romania's widespread poverty. However, high levels of corruption continue to permeate the business environment. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, Romania signed on to a \$26 billion emergency assistance package from the IMF, the EU, and other international lenders, but GDP contracted until 2011. In March 2011, Romania and the IMF/EU/World Bank signed a 24-month precautionary stand-by agreement worth \$6.6 billion, in order to promote fiscal discipline, encourage progress on structural reforms, and strengthen financial sector stability. In September 2013, Romanian authorities and the IMF/EU agreed to a precautionary two-year stand-by agreement worth \$5.4 billion to continue with reforms. Economic growth rebounded in 2013, driven by strong industrial exports and an excellent agricultural harvest, substantially reducing the government's deficit. The economy ended 2014 with 2.8% growth, down from the 3.5% posted in 2013. Exports remained the engine of economic growth led by trade with the EU, which accounts for roughly 70% of Romania's trade. Romania's industrial economy is mainly based on manufacturing, energy, and extraction. Agriculture accounts for 10.65% of the cultivable surface of the EU countries and provide an occupation for 25% of the Romanian working population. In 2014, the Government of Romania succeeded in meeting its annual target for public finances, the external deficit remained low, and inflation was at lowest levels since 1989. This allowed a gradual loosening of the monetary policy. However, progress on structural reforms has been uneven and the economy is still vulnerable to external shocks. An ageing population, weak domestic demand, tax evasion, and insufficient health-care represent the top vulnerabilities⁴³.

The 2015 European Commission's analysis claims that Romania is experiencing macroeconomic imbalances, which require policy action and monitoring. In the three consecutive EU-IMF programs, external and internal imbalances have been significantly reduced. However, risks from Romania's relatively large negative net international investment position and a weak medium-term export capacity merit attention. External and internal vulnerabilities persist in the banking sector. Romania is currently in the preventive arm of the *Stability and Growth Pact*. In its *Convergence Program*, Romania has requested a temporary deviation of 0.5% of GDP from the required adjustment path towards the medium-term objective because of planned structural reforms. However, the Council is of the opinion that there is a risk that Romania will not comply with the provisions of the *Stability and Growth Pact*⁴⁴. While some improvements were seen in 2014, employment and activity rates

⁴² Goșu A., Manea O., "Letter from Bucharest", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, July 10, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60668>

⁴³ "Romania", *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last modified October 22, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html>

⁴⁴ European Commission, "Recommendation for a Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Convergence Programme of Romania", *Official*

continue to be especially low among women, young people, older workers, and Roma people. Reducing poverty and social exclusion remains a major challenge for Romania. Although decreasing, the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion remained high at 40 % in 2013, far above the EU average. Romania's administrative capacity is low, fragmented, and characterized by an unclear delegation of responsibilities. A result of this administrative capacity is it acts as a drag on the competitiveness of the economy. State-owned companies suffer from sub-standard productivity, contribute to the illiquidity in the economy, place a burden on the general government budget, and account for 50 % of the tax arrears of all companies combined⁴⁵.

Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade

In 1992, the United States and Romania signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which came into force in 1994. Romania attracts U.S. investors interested in accessing the European market with relatively low costs. A major draw to investment is a well-educated, tech-savvy population. In Romania, major U.S. firms operate in the energy, manufacturing, information technology and telecommunications, services, and consumer products sectors. Top Romanian exports to the United States include machinery, vehicle parts, steel and metallic items, and fertilizers⁴⁶.

Romania is almost completely self-sufficient in gas consumption and imports only around 10 percent of its gas from Russia. The country has also recently installed an interconnector with Hungary. This development might not help much if Russian gas supply were to be halted, considering Hungary's dependency on Russian gas. Although the country's exposure to Russian gas is quite small, some operational issues with the gas system in Romania mean that loss of Russian gas supply could in fact endanger supply in the country: a drop in pipeline pressure could make it impossible to deliver indigenous supplies to the market⁴⁷. Other Government's objective is to obtain Romania's energy independence. This can be obtained through efficient exploitation of natural resources of Romania, such as Black Sea hydrocarbon reserves, but also from energy alternative sources, while observing the highest standards of environment protection⁴⁸. The Eastring Project will connect the existing gas infrastructure between Slovakia and Romania/Bulgaria. Once built, Eastring will offer direct and most cost-effective transportation route in between the Balkans and the rest of Europe. It will enhance the security of supply as well as it will bring the opportunity of diversification of natural gas sources. Eastring will transport natural gas from different areas and alternative sources – in its first stage it will provide the Balkans and/or even Turkey with gas from the European gas market. In its final stage, when its bi-directional mode should be in place, Eastring will transit prospective Romanian Black Sea natural gas, Caspian and Middle East natural gas to Europe⁴⁹. Eastring helps to fulfill the concept of North-South and Southern Gas Corridors supported by EC to achieve further market integration. Eastring replaces the Nabucco Project in its original mission and moreover establishes a bidirectional connection

Journal of the European Union, COM(2015) 272 final (May 13, 2015): 3-4. Web. Accessed October 28, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_romania_en.pdf.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4-6.

⁴⁶ "US Relations with Romania", *US Department of State*, October 2, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35722.htm>

⁴⁷ Chyong C-K., Tcherneva V., "Europe's vulnerability to Russian gas", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 17, 2015. Web. Accessed October 25, 2015.

http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_vulnerability_on_russian_gas

⁴⁸ "Energy Independence", *Romanian Government*, September 25, 2015. Web. Accessed October 23, 2015.

<http://gov.ro/en/objectives/important-topics/energy-independence>

⁴⁹ "At a glance", *Eastring*. Web. Accessed October 28, 2015. <http://www.eastring.eu/page.php?page=about>

between German and Turkish markets (as well as all markets connected to those) and hence represents a major step towards the real Single European Market. Eastring, unlike recently abandoned South Stream Project project does not provide only an additional route but also provides diversification of sources as it shall allow new potential suppliers namely from the Caspian region to access European markets⁵⁰.

e. Other Diplomatic Priorities

Priorities at the European Level

Romanian institutions are now seeking to reaffirm their key role in the re-shaping of Danube Strategy. Romania's priorities include transportation, energy, environmental protection and water management, research, tourism and rural development. Navigation is to be improved on the Romanian-Bulgarian section of the Danube, and infrastructure will be modernised at Constanța and in the smaller ports of Brăila, Galați, Oltenița and Calafat⁵¹.

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⁵⁰ “Eastring vision and mission”, *Eastring*. Web. Accessed October 28, 2015.

<http://www.eastring.eu/page.php?page=vision-mission>

⁵¹ Mocanu O., Vaș E., “Romania's Renewed European Priorities”, *Europe's World*, March 9, 2015. Web. Accessed October 24, 2015. <http://europesworld.org/2015/03/09/romanas-renewed-european-priorities/#.Viu5ltLhAdA>

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