

EU-28 WATCH



No. 10
July 2014

ISSN 1610-6458

www.EU-28Watch.org

EU-28 Watch

Contributing partners are

Austrian Institute of International Affairs, Vienna
Economic Policy Institute, Sofia
Center for European Studies / Middle East Technical University, Ankara
Centre international de formation européenne, Nice
Centre d'étude de la vie politique, Université libre de Bruxelles
Centre d'études et de recherches européennes Robert Schuman, Luxembourg
International Relations Research Centre, Ljubljana
Cyprus Institute for Mediterranean, European and International Studies, Nicosia
Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen
Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, Madrid
Romanian Centre for European Policies (CRPE), Bucharest
Federal Trust for Education and Research, London
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki
Foundation for European Studies - European Institute, Łódź
Greek Centre of European Studies and Research, Athens

Institute of International Affairs and Centre for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik
Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb
Institute of World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest
Portuguese Institute of International Affairs, Lisbon
Institute of International and European Affairs, Dublin
Institute of International Relations, Prague
European Integration Studies Center (EISC), Vilnius
Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta
Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', The Hague
Macedonian Centre for European Training (MCET), Skopje
Center for Civic Education, Podgorica
Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava
Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, Stockholm
Estonian Foreign Policy Institute (EVI), Tallinn

On the project

Euroscepticism and the European Parliament elections in 2014, the EU's Neighbourhood in light of the Ukraine crisis and power relations in the EU: The EU-28 Watch project is mapping out discourses on these issues in European policies all over Europe. Research institutes from all 28 member states as well as Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey give overviews on the discourses in their respective countries.

This survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire that has been elaborated in March 2014. Most of the 33 reports were delivered in June 2014. This issue and all previous issues are available on the EU-28 Watch website: www.EU-28Watch.org.

The EU-28 Watch No. 10 receives significant funding from the **Otto Wolff-Foundation, Cologne**, in the framework of the *"Dialog Europa der Otto Wolff-Stiftung"*, and financial support from the **European Commission**. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Dialog Europa Otto Wolff - Stiftung



Disclaimer

Institutes/authors are responsible for the content of their country reports. The publisher and editorial team cannot be held responsible for any errors, consequences arising from the use of information contained in the EU-28 Watch or its predecessors, or the content of external links on www.EU-28watch.org or in the EU-28 Watch. The content of the EU-28 Watch is protected under German copyright law. The articles of the EU-28 Watch can be printed, copied, and stored for personal, scientific, and educational use for free. Articles of the EU-28 Watch may not be used for commercial purposes. Any other reprint in other contexts is not allowed without prior permission from the publisher. For permission or any other question concerning the use of the EU-28 Watch please contact: info@EU-28watch.org.

Editorial Team

Publisher: Prof. Dr. Mathias Jopp
Executive Editor: Dr. Katrin Böttger
Managing Editors: Nicole Koenig, Marco Siddi
Editorial: Joris von Moltke
Layout: Juliane Eichblatt

Contact: info@EU-28watch.org
www.EU-28watch.org

iep Institut für
Europäische Politik
Bundesallee 23
D-10717 Berlin
Tel.: +49/30/88.91.34-0
Fax: +49/30/88.91.34-99
E-mail: info@iep-berlin.de
Internet: www.iep-berlin.de

Romania

Bianca Toma

Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE)

1. Euroscepticism and European Parliament elections

Domestic polarisation and Europe's marginalisation

Relevant debates on European issues were extremely rare mainly due to highly polarized politically controlled media outlets in Romania. The European elections campaign was basically an exercise and a continuation of the more than one-year-long dispute between the leftist Prime Minister- President of a party with senior members under investigation for corruption - and the Romanian President (centre-right) who has made the independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption the main themes of his last term.

The absence of euroscepticism

There have been no relevant political forces of the extreme right or left competing in the European elections in Romania. Moreover, there has been no Eurosceptic backlash in Romania.

Victory for centre-left and the fragmented right

The PSD-UNPR-PC alliance of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the National Union for Romania's Progress (UNPR) and the Conservative Party (PC) won 16 out of 32 seats (37.3 percent of votes) in the European Parliament.

The overall turnout of Romanian voters at the European Parliament elections was 32.16 percent while at the previous elections in 2009 it had been 27.21 percent.

With the mass media financially dependent on politics and after massive popular discontent about austerity measures promoted by previous centre-right governments, the Social Democrats enjoyed widespread public support, two years after coming to power. Their score must be interpreted against the backdrop of a heavily fragmented centre-right, which participated in the European Parliament elections with no less than five small factions.

2. The EU's Neighbourhood

Ukrainian sovereignty and insecurity in the Black Sea Region

Romania, as a NATO and EU member state, has unequivocally supported the sanctions imposed by the European Union and US with respect to Russia's actions undermining or threatening Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs fully supports the NATO Secretary General's request regarding an end to the Russian Federation's supply of combat equipment to separatists.

Moreover, the situation in Ukraine and the regional 'offensiveness' of the Russian Federation have forced the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) to engage in sensitive tasks such as gathering information on these developments as well as "preventing any internal effects in terms of national security for Romania, especially in the sensitive area of intelligence", said George Maior, according to the Press.

Experts and diplomats agree that the "federalization of Ukraine would mean that Romania would, once more, have a common border with Russia, through the military region of Odessa" (Toma). Therefore, regardless of the future orientation of those in power in Kiev, Romania needs to keep all communication channels for a functioning relationship with Moscow open.

Towards an ambitious post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership

Romania is the main advocate of the pro-European orientation of Moldova's efforts. It contributes financial assistance and shares its expertise in order to reach a successful conclusion of negotiations on the signing of an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Moldova. With the beginning of the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, Romania supported advancing and speeding up the process of signing a DCFTA with Moldova in the framework of the European Council.

As regards the Eastern Partnership, Romania appreciates that a broader consensus is necessary among the EU-28 for re-launching and reforming the Eastern dimension of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy. However, Romania must be proactive and substantially contribute to an ambitious post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership together with Poland.

Stronger European and bilateral ties with Turkey

The Romanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs re-confirmed last year its support for Turkey's EU bid, encouraging the efforts to speed up negotiations on accession chapters and for a successful completion of the EU-Turkey negotiation process. In March 2013, Bucharest and Ankara signed the action plan for the Romania-Turkey Strategic Partnership, both sides analysing the possibility of cooperation under regional formats following the recent developments in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, Middle East and Western Balkans. During the last year, high level officials of Turkey and Romania shared the interest in running new lines between Constanta and Istanbul in the area of maritime transportation, and in intensifying the cooperation in relation to the Nabucco pipeline project.

Links:

- Christian Ghinea, Bianca Toma, [Kiev's new turn: time to reset the Romania – Ukraine relationship](#), 21 March 2014.
- George Maior, [George Maior: Situația din Ucraina și ofensivitatea regională a Rusiei au impus SRI sarcini sensibile](#), 11 June 2014.

3. Power relations in the EU

Germany – a respected guardian of fundamental values

Germany is an EU Member State to which Romania relates with great respect, both in terms of the role it plays in the EU-28 as well as its position as main contributor to the EU budget (Romania is one of the biggest beneficiaries of EU regional policy and cohesion funds). Germany was one of the most vocal European partners pointing out, both bilaterally and within the EU, Bucharest's serious and severe shortfalls regarding the respect of fundamental values during the recent political crisis in 2012 and 2014.

The Romanian civil society expects Germany, along with the European Commission, to keep up their critical and proactive approaches. Germany is also expected to play a key role in negotiating future EU Treaty changes. Unofficially, Germany and the US are perceived as guardians of democracy and respect for the independence of Romania's judiciary.

The difficult path from austerity to growth

Two (centre-right) Romanian governments have fallen, following drastic spending cuts affecting the salaries of public workers while austerity measures were angering citizens and undermining faith in government officials. The spending constraints have been attempts to satisfy conditions imposed after a bailout by the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (2009). The course of the ruling coalition, promoting growth rather than austerity, receives broad support according to polls, which influence policy in this electoral year (European Parliament and presidential elections). Following the austerity measures in 2010-2012, Romania's economy grew at its fastest pace in two years in the third quarter of 2013, denoting a 1.6 percent increase quarter on quarter. In comparison, the EU-28 average growth in the same period was at 0.2 percent, while growth in the euro zone fell to 0.1 percent.

UK exit and Romania's freedom of movement

British eurosceptics put Romania on the British political agenda by questioning the free movement of Romanian workers. In the UK's electoral contestation, opposing the rights of UK-based Eastern European workers was the eurosceptics' favourite slogan. Romania timidly tried to fight back, but in no case did it reflect the virulence of the British eurosceptics' statements.

Romania officially embraces the EU's views, according to which the UK should remain in the EU. However, public opinion in Romania is not necessarily in favour of the UK remaining in the EU due to its virulent rhetoric against Romanian workers.

Links:

- Hubert Gude, Peter Muller, [Interview: German Interior Minister: 'We'll Veto Schengen for Romania and Bulgaria](#), 4 March 2013.
- Andra Timu, [Romania's Economy Grows at Fastest Pace in Two Years on Harvest](#), 14 November 2013.