

# **Romania in 1989-2019**

## **A Difficult Road to Democracy**



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## INTRODUCTION

There are not many publications about Romania that would enable Readers to understand its complicated and complex background on the Polish market. It is also difficult to find a book that would answer whether the events of December 1989 were a revolution, a revolt, or a coup? What influenced the events in Romania? What was the level of development of Romanian civilization society at the end of the 1980s? How the events of December 1989 changed the future of the state? Has Romania finished democratization? The authors of the hereby publication considered the above-mentioned and other issues related to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The book titled *Romania in 1989–2019. A Difficult Road to Democracy* is a comprehensive case study of the events that significantly influenced the history of the state and affected Romanian people's history. Studies on the Polish book market are, in the first place, historical items, thoroughly and substantively prepared, and are the basis for considerations in terms of political science. Polish researchers have made a lot of effort trying to find an explanation of Romanian phenomena, e.g., the crises. Nevertheless, the objective and deep reflection over the processes and events require broad research conducted not only by historians and political scientists. It is essential to enclose sociological, cultural, legal, and even religious studies. The work of most Romanian researchers may be burdened ideologically and politically. The past and the present have had a significant effect on their publications. It is not only about ideological monism but also about observations and interpretations of the civilizational processes and the accompanying basic ideological values. The example might be Romania's political system and form of government, a copy of Soviet Union solutions. Why then was it possible to introduce the model in Romania without more significant modifications? In the states of Central Europe, the communists were forced to consider the nation's political tradition, and despite the efforts, they were not able to introduce communist theocracy. First and foremost, there are numerous research problems related to the so-called Romanian revolution and its political and social consequences, including the range of democratic reforms implementation. Without precise political science and sociological research, it is impossible to thoroughly analyse the roles of the main actors of December events, namely post-communist and oppositional political elites, the nation, churches, as well as the military and secret service; it is impossible to entirely understand the phenomena and social processes that took place after the "revolution." The monograph does not include the solutions to all

the issues related to the “Romanian revolution.” It is just a suggestion of a direction of research on Romanian social rebellion and its consequences. The authors also aimed to enable Readers to understand the distinctive events in Romania at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, it was necessary to refer to the historical analysis and comparative and analytical methods.

Over the years, all kinds of influence, from Turkish to Western ones, crossed in Romania. It was confusing for the Romanian society which was not able to deal with so much experience and numerous cultural differences. The nation gradually began to withdraw and create an “area of parochialism.” It was prone to adopt radical ideas and destructive policy in the form of fascism or communism. “Romania is different”<sup>1</sup> and “Bucharest”<sup>2</sup> is a city in which elements of communist history collide with Paris chic; a city in which “a Romanian pursues happy end.”<sup>3</sup> The Romanian society is a mixture of Europeanism, Russian orientalism, and autochthonism. Over the years, Romanians wanted to be “different.” Different meaning better, richer, smarter, like their neighbours, who lived happily and wealthy in the East of the Bug. Romania is a country of a complicated genesis. In terms of the political system, the form of government, economy, and society, it was developing differently from other European countries. Due to the rule of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu, and beliefs established by the communists and the democrats, the Romanian society has developed a complex, and has become “withdrawn.” The syndrome of Romanian “disparity” permanently fit into the condition of Romanian society. It also fit into the activity of political elite, having a destructive influence on the crisis of identity, failed reforms, and the long-lasting impasse.

After 1989 Romania has undergone several changes introduced under the leadership of the old elites.<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that the changes were related to the use of violence and accompanied by massive mobilization. Despite this, the way of implementing changes in the state and their results did not go out of control of the forces associated with the old regime. A mentally and financially weak society, being stuck in the place, without awareness of political transformations taking place in the West and in Central Europe, was prone to manipulations and loyal to Leninism’s assumptions. Being unaware of the consequences, it accepted the changes, believing that they would bring “the better tomorrow” and ensure welfare for the next generations. The educated people, who saw the utopia in the promises of the authorities, were

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<sup>1</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia jest inna?*, Kraków 2016.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rejmer, *Bukareszt. Kurz i krew*, Wołowiec 2013.

<sup>3</sup> B. Luft, *Rumun goni za happy endem*, Wołowiec 2015.

<sup>4</sup> E. Bujwid-Kurek, D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *Transformacja ustroju politycznego wybranych państw Europy Środkowej*, Kraków 2015, pp. 31–33.



quickly and efficiently “held back” on efforts to disseminate their ideas. They were skilfully silenced and corrupt. The communist dictatorship in Romania lasted half a century. It was overthrown in just a month, but its effects persist to this day in almost every area of the social life. Romanian society has always been a prisoner of its history, which was accompanied by Turkish and Russian orientalism, autocracy, fascism, and Bolshevik communism, with strong ideological elements of nationalism. The 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in Romania passed under the slogan of “revolution.” However, it was a “revolution” other than the great uprisings in France, China, or Russia. It was a mixture of a revolt and a *coup d'état*, as its conditions and immediate causes can be compared to the Bolshevik revolution. In Romania, the communists-reformers and the democratic opposition saw no sense in carrying out the revolution in its pure form. Following the example of Karl R. Popper, or John S. Mill, the opposition took a chance on the revolt in combination with the *coup d'état*. It took on an economic and social dimension with few elements of the extension of political freedom. Its main goal was to remove Ceaușescu and replace him with a new “Genius of the Carpathians,” who would be more open to the West and become a link between the Euro-Atlantic and post-Soviet world. Such a political attitude was also characteristic of some post-Yugoslavian countries, e.g., Serbia. Post-communist government elites naively believed that thanks to this attitude, they would accumulate political capital and strengthen the country’s economy, necessary to stay in power. Such hopes were vain.

The society was only seemingly involved in “revolutionary” events and fell victim to the system, and after 1989 was caught up in a political game. Naively believed in broadening freedom and raising the standard of living. Citizens, being manipulated by propaganda slogans about liberty and prosperity, values they also longed for, poor miners from the Jiu Valley – all were victims of a political game. They were manipulated to play a role in the pre-planned coup. Mute puppets, miserable actors, extras of bloody performances that brought Ion Iliescu to the political scene of the 1990s, lost their lives for nonsignificant changes. Iliescu was lucky that the long-term marginalization of Romania in the international arena allowed him to play all the acts of his performance. Only 30 years later, the international community saw the scene in its full splendour. Guilty of crimes against humanity – Ion Iliescu was unmasked, and the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s were shown in a different light. The ideal fell – Ion Iliescu, the great leader and “saviour of the nation,” turned out to be a child of totalitarianism, who had been cheating his nation for years. Although not so many citizens were killed for Iliescu as in Yugoslavia for Slobodan Milošević or in Sudan for Omar al-Bashir, the very fact that there was a cheat is upsetting. Romanians were unlucky to have such leaders and governments. In December 1947, the King of Romania Michael I was forced to

abdicate.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the events, the parliament proclaimed the Romanian People's Republic and annulled the 1938 Constitution. "People's democracy" was introduced with the Constitution of April 13, 1948. The new Romanian Basic Law was adopted on September 12, 1952, based on the provisions of the Soviet constitution of 1936. A dozen years later, i.e., on August 21, 1965, the next Romanian Constitution entered into force, renaming the country to the Socialist Republic of Romania. The 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought changes in Romania. It became typical to combine party and state positions and form a joint party and state organs. Communist leaders, dictators, initially Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and from 1965 Nicolae Ceaușescu, concentrated party-state power in their hands. Their totalitarian methods of government deprived Romanian society of the possibility of deciding its fate, honour, and dignity.<sup>6</sup> Communism, which was accepted in Romania, seemed to permeate the state like no other in Central Europe. Following the example, in Romania, the multiparty system was utterly abolished, leaving the only one in power – the communist party. Then the era of Ion Iliescu came. The phenomenon of Romanian power after 1989 consists in the constant presence of post-communists, even when Emil Constantinescu or Traian Băsescu took office. This testified to the meticulously prepared "revolution," followed by further efforts to maintain the system's foundations. The Romanian "revolution" in political and functional terms bore Russian features, even though it happened 70 years later. However, as it turned out, after December events, the adopted solutions were subordinated in Romania to the interests of post-communists and bureaucracy, with the latter being controlled by Iliescu. His seemingly democratic rule, different from his predecessors, was far from the ideals of democracy. The democracy of the Iliescu reforms was declarative and formal. In practice, it was the same political system which can be described as "enlightened" Romanian communism.

Researchers of transitology, studying the democratization of Central European countries and model explanations, point to the importance of several factors affecting the course of democratic changes in the country. Among them, there are primarily the duration of the undemocratic regime, the type of overthrown undemocratic system, the type of transition from authoritarianism to democracy, the democratic experience of the countries, their ethnic structure, the impact of civil society, and problems related to the adaptation of the armed forces.<sup>7</sup> One thing is certain, if "democratization took ten years in Poland, ten

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<sup>5</sup> In January 1948, King Michael I emigrated. He was able to return only in 1992 when the Romanian government allowed him to enter the country. In 1997, when Emil Constantinescu became president, Michael I regained Romanian citizenship. *Były król wystawia kandydaturę zięcia w wyborach prezydenckich*, PAP, Bukareszt 2009, April 23.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bichta, M. Wichmanowski, *Bułgaria i Rumunia – od komunizmu do demokracji*, [in:] W. Paruch, A. Mironowicz, T. Wicha (eds.), *Wprowadzenie do Studiów Wschodnioeuropejskich*, t. 1: M. Podolak (ed.), *Batkany: Przeszłość – teraźniejszość – przyszłość*, Lublin 2013.

<sup>7</sup> E. Bujwid-Kurek, D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

months in Hungary, ten weeks in East Germany, ten days in Czechoslovakia, in Romania it lasted only 10 hours.”<sup>8</sup> Romania’s problems with democracy today inevitably recall its complicated fate. Romania is like mamaliga. “Mamaliga does not explode,” – Lucian Boia writes. Mamaliga is a traditional, cheap, and simple Romanian meal. Corn porridge cooked in lightly salted water on low heat. It is necessary to stir it so that it does not stick to the bottom and gets the right consistency. Otherwise, it begins to sputter until it finally explodes, dirtying the entire kitchen. Romania is just like the porridge; it lasts; it gathers problematic experiences. The crowd protests and calls for changes but does not introduce them because of the fear. The previous leaders managed to control the crowd. Protests related to the shift in power, poverty, corruption, unfulfilled promises of the authorities, a fire in the Colectiv club, and other difficulties and events that the society faces every day are like bubbles on thick mamaliga. It is difficult to “treat” the syndrome of Romanian culture. “The chronic identity crisis is again in harmony with the chronic penchant for extreme solutions, which prolongs the post-totalitarian impasse.”<sup>9</sup> However, there are some encouraging effects of democratic transformation in the country. Some of them were imposed by NATO, others by the European Union, in the form of the Copenhagen criteria. Like the 2018 referendum on homosexual marriages, some attempt to divert attention from political issues that are relevant to the country.<sup>10</sup> Communism is no longer a real threat in Romania. Romanian writer Norman Manea states that

„in a sense, it never was: Ceaușescu’s Stalinism was gradually transformed into camouflaged fascism. What raises concerns is the forces of totalitarianism, which are still strong in Romania. The bankruptcy and defeat of the totalitarian left-wing were an important lesson for the right-wing. The question arises – will it learn from this lesson? The Romanian parliament vindicated Ion Antonescu, Romanian military dictator and Hitler’s ally. It is an outrageous and unprecedented event in the history of post-war Europe and a warning to the political future of the country. Romania is not only Ceaușescu, Codreanu, or Antonescu; it is not just green shirts of Legion terrorists and miners from Securitate. Romania is its citizens. A society in which the legacy of democratic thought is ingrained. Although over decades it had been destroyed by right-wing and left-wing dictatorship, it has maintained deep ties with European culture. The young generation today wants freedom and prosperity. For Romania, where nothing is black or white, there is hope, but the condition for its success is to support democracy clearly and sincerely strive to build a civil society.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> T.G. Ash, *Wiosna obywateli*, Londyn 1990, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> N. Manea, *O kłownach. Dyktator i artysta*, Sejny 2001, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> The referendum had 30% turnout which meant that the constitutional right restricting marriage to the relationship between a man and a woman was not changed.

<sup>11</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 148.

The hopes are placed on the middle and young generation. Rejuvenation of political elites and social activists is a necessity in Romania. There is no such far-reaching necessity in the countries of Central Europe, even in those that were part of the former Soviet Union. A firm pro-democracy policy by NATO and the EU is needed. In Romania, it is difficult to refer to democratic traditions; there were only several short periods of freedom in its history. The ideas of freedom in Romanians' political consciousness are not deeply rooted; hence they are distant to political and even cultural elites. Their beliefs are confirmed by everyday life, without a sense of civic integration in society and with limited freedom, justice, and equality in practice. This phenomenon applies to most citizens, including the former democratic opposition. The country needs extensive help; without it, Romania will again go through social and political instability and become an object of power competition.

## CHAPTER 1

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# ROMANIAN REVOLUTION OF 1989. A SOCIAL REBELLION

In scientific literature, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia is often considered to be the major social uprising of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is an opinion of journalists, although it has found its place in scientific studies. The Bolshevik revolution in the Romanov Empire should be viewed through a prism of World War I, civil war, and national conflicts, then the use of the term “revolution” in the context of the events of 1917 in Russia becomes disputable. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to use the term “Bolshevik revolution” than the “Russian revolution.”

Most often, historians are inclined to recognize the Bolshevik uprising in 1917 as a revolution and the most significant social rebellion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historians’ mindset is sensitive to dating social and even civilizational phenomena that have a duration in time. Only for two decades, historians from Central Europe started gradually withdrawing from capturing history by describing facts and presenting social aspects in the context of time. The “event” history also often appears in the methodology of Russian (Soviet) studies. The works of Vladimir I. Lenin, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels, who evaluated social and political phenomena through a time perspective, had a significant impact in this respect. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the most important for them – industrialization, strengthening the socio-political position of the bourgeoisie and a new political force entering the arena of history – the working class. The two above-mentioned political writers were influenced by the methodology of Western researchers. Hence, defining a social rebellion in Romania in 1989 as a revolution and comparing it to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia is just the misuse of the term “revolution.” The real events in Russia in 1917 can be described, with emphasis, as the Bolshevik revolution.

The Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was deeply rooted in feudal absolutism, both socially and politically, and mentally. That situation lasted for a long time after the events of 1917. It is difficult to say that the revolution in Russia was a proletarian one. It was a Bolshevik revolution.<sup>12</sup> There is a particular analogy between Romanian and Russian society, distinguished from a social and political point of view. In both cases, the working class was not the dominant group in society. In both cases,

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<sup>12</sup> L. Kolakowski, *Główne nurty marksizmu*, t. 2, Warszawa 2004, pp. 396–398.

the peasantry dominated. Even a small working class had a peasant mentality. However, Romania's socio-political and cultural phenomenon happened under different civilizational conditions which were set by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Eastern Orthodox Church supported the attitudes that were being adopted by Romania and Russia. The axiological system of the Eastern Orthodox Church set limits to the outbreak of the social revolution. It is possible to point to the relationship between the Eastern Middle Ages and the eastern idea of the communism. Romania was influenced by the ideals of the Eastern Middle Ages but was, to a greater extent, inspired by the Soviet model. The form of government was almost identical as in the USSR until 1989. Interests of the "red" bourgeoisie were above all. The actual division of society, ideals, governance, and official ownership was the same. All this limited the chances of a revolution in Romania and the USSR at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Romania and the USSR were deeply rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in terms of attitudes and political mindset of the society. While Lenin could not give the social uprising of 1917 a proletarian character, post-communists in Romania were not sure about the working class attitude. They were even afraid of it. There are also more analogies: while Lenin was fearful of the Spring of Nations in Russia and the empowerment of society, Romanian communists-reformers, including Ion Iliescu, were not interested in forming a civil society and deep democratic reforms. Romanian post-communists feared the need to create a state according to the Western model, Lenin was afraid of the socially conscious working class and the adoption of the Marxist model of state authority organization. He wanted to create a state consistent with Leninism concept (Bolshevism), controlled by one leading communist party. That is why Lenin came up with the theory of "the weakest link in the imperialist chain."<sup>13</sup> Lenin's thoughts in this case had nothing to do with Europe's historical location. Lenin's attitude to the assumptions of Marx's theory of historical materialism was, therefore, at least equivocal. The ideologists of the times of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu took a similar attitude. They only declaratively accepted Marxism as a guideline in their ideological reflections, which were mostly journalistic. The Bolshevik leader denied the transformation of the bourgeois revolution into a proletarian one, just as the Iliescu group wanted to democratize the country following Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms. Only in the distant future would Romanian democracy be in line with the Western values. Such a theoretical assumption sounded unreal but was to serve propaganda purposes. Especially that for several years, most of society received it with understanding. So Romanian democracy was supposed to have a hybrid form, just as Bolshevik democracy was a hybrid of socialist democracy.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 395–400; M. Waldenberg, *Leninowska koncepcja państwa i dyktatury przedstawicieli i jej krytycy*, Warszawa 1978.

The social uprisings at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were classic revolutions.<sup>14</sup> One of the reasons for such a statement is that they led to greater social and national awareness of the whole society. Even Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej could not ignore the circumstances.<sup>15</sup> After coming to power, the communist (Bolshevik) parties ceased to be revolutionary groups. The same situation was in all the countries of the Soviet Bloc. Therefore, it is difficult to agree that Leninism was a development of revolutionary Marxism and constituted the theoretical basis for building a socialist democratic state. The so-called proletarian revolutions in semi-feudal states or with rural society, as we see in the cases of Romania and Russia, were not considered by the classic representatives of leftist ideology. Such thoughts may be found in Lenin's works, who also hid that his ideas apply only to Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Romania. To put it simply, the Bolshevik leader wanted his theoretical assumptions to have universal significance. The Bolshevik revolution and the establishment of the state were in the hands of the party, called professional revolutionaries. They were members of non-proletarian provenance. In Russia dominated by the Bolsheviks, there were no organizational structures, and there were no people prepared to hold democratic elections. This situation was favourable to Russian communists. A similar situation occurred in Romania after World War II.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Romania and Russia developed in terms of social, political aspects and form of government in a different way than the countries located on the west side of the river Bug.<sup>16</sup> Only the Spring of Nations prompted the Bolsheviks to display the slogan about the self-determination of nations whose interests were to be subordinated to workers led by the communist party. It determined the conditions of social and political life. The adopted principle was mainly about a dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin's opinion was that the Western working class did not have a revolutionary attitude associated with civil war. Therefore, it was necessary to export Bolshevik's form of revolution and strengthen faith in the Soviet model of the state, characterized by the lack of signs of "dying".<sup>17</sup> The theoretical and program

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<sup>14</sup> L. Bazyłow, M. Leczyk, M. Pirko, *Historia międzynarodowego ruchu robotniczego*, Warszawa 1980, pp. 336-339.

<sup>15</sup> G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Artykuły i przemówienia*, Warszawa 1954, pp. 248, 249, 259.

<sup>16</sup> More in: J. Juchnowski, J. R. Sielezin, E. Maj, *The image of "white" and "red" Russia in the Polish political thought of the 19th and 20th century: Analogies and parallels (studies in politics, security and society)*, Frankfurt am Main 2018; K. Marks, *Przyczynek do krytyki ekonomii politycznej*, Warszawa 1966, pp. 9-12; W.I. Lenin, *Wielka inicjatywa (O bohaterstwie subotników w zapleczu. Z okazji „komunistycznych robotników”)*, [in:] *idem, Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 29, Warszawa 1956, pp. 396-416.

<sup>17</sup> A. Besançon, *The intellectual origins of Leninism*, Oxford 1981, pp. 144, 219, 221; F. Engels, *Pochodzenie rodziny, własności prywatnej i państwa*, t. 21, Warszawa 1969, pp. 186-190; K. Marks, *Kapitał. Krytyka ekonomii politycznej*, t. 1, ks.1: *Proces wytworzenia kapitału*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 7-11; R. Panasiuk, *Filozofia i państwo. Studium myśli politycznej lewicy heglowskiej i młodego Marksa*, Warszawa 1967, Part 2, Ch. 3; W.I. Lenin, *Rozwój kapitalizmu w Rosji. Proces kształtowania się rynku wewnętrznego*

assumptions justify the 19<sup>th</sup>-century nature of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and prove the ideological inconsistency between Leninism with Marxism.<sup>18</sup> Many of the premises, particularly about the non-revolutionary nature of the Western proletariat, were found in Romanian publications.

Some scholars agreed with the rhetoric of October, respected by the Bolsheviks, and used as propaganda to justify the Russian “revolution” as a “20<sup>th</sup>-century and proletarian uprising.” The Bolshevik ideologists did not understand the educated group of Russian society, which from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was torn between the demand for changes and reforms related to the ideals of progress and the maintenance of established social and ideological conditions. It was also a problem in most Western revolutionary movements, at least until World War I. Russian “revolutions” in February and October were characterized by high political participation. They resembled, at least in the first phase, more a coup or a revolt. Only from January 1918 that social rebellion and anarchic spontaneity became a mass phenomenon, i.e., a typical aspect of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century revolutions. However, in Central and Western Europe they were characterized by bigger precision in the accomplishment of goals, and the spontaneity of uprisings gradually took organized form. An example here is the Spring of Nations and the events of the 1960s and 1970s in Germany and Italy, and even in the territory of Poland. From this perspective, in the Bolshevik revolution there are factors related to the coup and to the revolt. In any event, it was not a proletarian revolution, and the slogan of dictatorship itself was the opposite of “dying” of the state’s political functions. It referred to tsarist absolute monarchy which was encoded in the ideological formulation of “democratic centralism.”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, Soviet Russia became a highly centralized and bureaucratic state with a politically hierarchical society. The phenomena of the Bolshevik revolution and its consequences in many aspects were recreated in Romania after 1945. In Central European countries, they did not proceed the same way as in Russia, and they did not have the form that appeared when Romanian communists took power. Karl Marx wrote about Eastern and Southern Europe that this part of the continent is a peculiarity in the civilizational development of Europe.<sup>20</sup> The Balkans and entire Southeast Europe were similar to Russia in the social and political development. It became evident even during the Romanian “revolution” in 1989.

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*nego dla wiejskiego przemysłu*, [in:] *idem, Dzieła wszystkie*, t. 4, Warszawa 1985; *idem, Co robić? Pałące zagadnienia naszego ruchu*, Warszawa 1951.

<sup>18</sup> J. Szacki, *Historia myśli socjologicznej*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 510–519; A. Walicki, *Marksizm i skok do królestwa wolności. Dzieje komunistycznej utopii*, Warszawa 1996; G. Lukacs, *Historia świadomości klasowej. Studium o marksistowskiej dialektyce*, Warszawa 1988; zob. *idem, Lenin. Studium struktury myśli*, “*Studia Filozoficzne*” 1978, nr 10, pp. 10–12.

<sup>19</sup> M. Waldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–58.

<sup>20</sup> K. Marks, *Zarys krytyki ekonomiki politycznej*, Warszawa 1986, pp. 371–378; A. Jasińska, *Mikro- i makrosocjalne determinanty myśli Karola Marksa*, “*Studia Socjologiczne*” 1966, nr 1, pp. 35–36.



Lenin and his successor Iosif V. Stalin, who advocated the “export” of the revolution, were also aware of the phenomenon of socio-political similarities between the development of Russia and development of Eastern and Southeast Europe. It means that they supported the well-organized sequence of the events that would lead to civil war. Lenin thought that after World War I, the initial political effect of this “export” would be Germany which, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had had a significant influence in Southeast Europe. However, “thanks to” World War II, Stalin was able to conduct “revolutions” in Central and Southeast Europe. Lenin, writing about the export of revolution, stated, among others that:

the fact of armed struggle and civil war between both courses has also been revealed: support for Kolchak and Denikin in Russia by the Mensheviks and “socialists-revolutionaries” against the Bolsheviks, supporters of Scheidemann and Noske in Germany together with the bourgeoisie against the Spartacus League, the same in Finland, Poland, Hungary, etc. So, what is the economic basis of this historical phenomenon of global significance? It is parasitism and the limits of capitalism, which are its highest historical stage, i.e. imperialism. [...] Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. From 1917, this was confirmed globally.<sup>21</sup>

The leader of the Bolshevik revolution even explained the need for a world revolution following the example of Russia by writing:

Opportunism cannot now be the winner in the labor movement of one of the countries for a long time, just as it happened in England in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in many countries, it eventually developed and even got overripe and rot, completely blending with bourgeois politics as social chauvinism.<sup>22</sup>

In his comments, Lenin often referred not only to the social conditions prevailing in Central and Western Europe, which mostly corresponded to Russia’s situation. The Paris Commune was to be a classic example and proof that Europe was in a condition of approaching revolution on the continent, which began with the Bolshevik revolution. Revolutions in Europe and the world were to follow the Bolshevik pattern. Lenin wrote about it as follows:

The transformation of the current imperialist war into a civil war is one correct proletarian slogan, emerged from the experience of the Commune, brought up in the Basel resolution (1912) and arising from all the conditions of the imperialist war that the highly developed bourgeois countries wage with each other. Since the war broke out, the socialists (meaning the Bolsheviks) will never renounce

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<sup>21</sup> W.I. Lenin, *Imperializm jako najwyższe stadium kapitalizmu*, Warszawa 1980, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 149, 150.

systematic, persistent, relentless preparatory work in this direction, no matter how huge the difficulties of such a transformation would seem now or then.<sup>23</sup>

Similar opinions were expressed by ideologists of the communist parties of Central and Southeast Europe after World War II. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in October 1945 wrote in his statement: "In this war, which ended in the destruction of Hitler forces and Japanese imperialism, the Soviet Army covered itself with immortal glory. This aroused even greater admiration of the whole world for the powerful Soviet state of workers, peasants, and intelligentsia."<sup>24</sup> In 1967, Nicolae Ceaușescu wanted to make revolutions in Central and Southeast Europe look for the West countries like humanitarian and democratic ones, at least when speaking of them. Romania started to play the role of the "dissident" of the Soviet bloc.<sup>25</sup>

In 1945–1953 the USSR authorities' statement on the "export" of the revolution was as follows:

The second stage of the general crisis of capitalism hit, the main sign of it was a new wave of revolution. Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and Hungary have dropped out of the capitalist system in Europe. [...] In the countries of Central and Southeast Europe, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a people's republic won.<sup>26</sup>

Such a perception of the conditions of the revolution and its course were a leitmotif of equality between the Bolsheviks and the Russian people, and between the USSR and Russia. That is why anti-Sovietism turned into anti-Russianism. Hence, until the late 1970s the West political literature was full of terms and formulations that treated the terms "„anti-Russian" and "anti-Soviet" equally. 20<sup>th</sup>-century European philosophers of democratic thought believed that Russia has succumbed to the spirit of oriental despotism throughout its entire history. The leading authority for such political culture was organized power with dictatorial institutions, and manifesting ideological and political expansiveness towards Western civilization. That is why the Bolshevik leadership was against perceiving the 1917 revolution as spontaneous. Such fears accompanied the Romanian post-communists in 1989.

Polish scholars and political journalists were right that it was not possible to equate Russia with Bolshevism fully. Nevertheless, it should be considered that Russian expansionism and Soviet and revolutionary strive for hegemony have

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<sup>23</sup> *Idem, Wojna a socjaldemokracja w Rosji*, [in:] Marks, Engels, Lenin, *O internacjonalizmie proletariackim*, Warszawa 1958, p. 460.

<sup>24</sup> G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> L. Betea, *Convorbiri neterminte. Corneliu Mănescu în dialog cu Lavinia Betea*, București 2001, pp. 167–178.

<sup>26</sup> N. Ponomariew, W.M. Chwastow, A.P. Kuczkin, I.I. Minc, L.A. Sierpow, A.I. Sobolew, N.I. Szatagin, W.S. Zajcew, *Historia Komunistycznej Partii Związku Radzieckiego*, Warszawa 1960, p. 765.

a common source and that understanding this phenomenon requires knowledge of Russia's history and the political mentality of its social elite.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, ideologists and politicians of the socialist-democratic movements of the West criticized above all the subordination of the state to one party, the official adoption of one ideological and axiological system. However, they did not thoroughly investigate the reasons for this phenomenon.<sup>28</sup> The ideological attitude and revolutionary practice of the Bolsheviks were unacceptable to Western thinkers. The events of 1917 were often evaluated as a coup combined with the revolt of a part of the society frustrated by war conditions. The Romanian "revolution" had a similar pattern to the Bolshevik Revolution in political and functional terms. All socio-political solutions were oriented towards the interests of post-communists and bureaucracy subordinated to the Iliescu group. Their task was simplified because the society was disciplined in a Leninist way. It presented reluctance to thinking independently and to the content of Western social sciences. The Romanian people, who were brought up in the spirit of communist absolutism, were easily politically controlled and submissive to the non-democratic rule of President Iliescu, which was considered progressive compared to the authorities of the Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu period.<sup>29</sup> Even the ideas of Western communism – Eurocommunism – were unacceptable to communists-reformers, and so were the theoretical assumptions of the Social Democrats. Some post-communist politicians considered the ideological and political assumptions of Western socialists as bourgeois categories. The post-communists realized that they were dealing with a society with political attitudes of the 1920s rather than those of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. So, they manipulated a part of the society to carry out a revolt combined with a coup. The Romanian political mentality did not allow for a peaceful revolution the communists-reformers were not interested in. Even the leaders of oppositional political movements were burdened with the syndrome of Romanian political culture.

The negation of the principles of Leninism by Western left-wing political writers and their critical attitude towards Marxism, initiated by Antonio Gramsci and György Lukács, was adopted by Romanian politicians before the mid-1990s very suspiciously, not only by communists but also by the leaders of democratic

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<sup>27</sup> J. Juchnowski *et al.*, *op. cit.*, ch. I; M. Golinczak, *Związek Radziecki w myśli politycznej polskiej opozycji w latach 1976–1989*, Kraków 2009, pp. 207–211; R. Bäcker, Z. Karpus, *Emigracja rosyjska. Losy i idee*, Łódź 2002, pp. 17–21; F. Konieczny, *Dzieje Rosji od najdawniejszych czasów*, Komarów 1997, pp. 44–61; M. Łożeński [W. Worczuk], *Źródła despotyzmu, "Wyzwolenie" 1984, I-II, nr 2-3; idem, Od Rosji carskiej do radzieckiej, ibidem, IX, nr 9.*

<sup>28</sup> W.I. Lenin, *Materializm a empiriokrytycyzm*, Warszawa 2012; L. Stołowicz, *Historia filozofii rosyjskiej*, Gdańsk 2008, pp. 561–567.

<sup>29</sup> D. Barcan, B. Sterpu, *Regimul comunist in Romania (decembrie 1947 – decembrie 1989)*, București 2003, pp. 20–23; J.F. Soulet, *Istoria comparată a statelor comuniste din 1945 pîna in zilele noastre*, Iași 1998, pp. 77–80.

and national groups. They were above all intellectuals, whose criticism of the Western interpretation of Marxism was expressed in words rather than actions.<sup>30</sup> This was demonstrated by, among others, bloody events in December.<sup>31</sup> Many democratic oppositionists and communists-reformers believed in the proletariat and its historical mission. Such a position in the West was outdated and silenced by Western Marxism, and even rejected. After all, the Romanian political thought of democratic and post-communist provenance was influenced by Leninist propaganda as to the role of the proletariat. It can be assumed that Romanian ideologists and politicians were not fully aware of the changes that the world and its social solutions had undergone since Marx, Lenin, Stalin, or even Nikita Khrushchev. They also did not deeply analyse the critical theory of the “Frankfurt School” which since the 1960s has influenced European political thought and depended more on investigating the nature of social phenomena than on short-term political effects.<sup>32</sup> Romanian progressive idea at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s focused primarily on direct political implications and the overthrow of the “Genius of the Carpathians” regime. A similar distribution of accents accompanied Soviet political thought which had not changed its main priorities for years. This phenomenon is characteristic of this political thought which must consider rural mentality of the majority of the nation. The thought emphasizes the cult of power and the head of state, promoting him to the spiritual leader of the nation. For example, Romania, mainly from the beginning of the 1970s.<sup>33</sup> In other Soviet bloc countries, except the USSR, such a socio-political situation did not exist, or at least not to such an extent. It is also crucial that Romania and the USSR were inhabited by national minorities which constituted a significant part of society. Democratic intelligentsia was scarce in both countries, some of it represented patriotism with an Eastern Orthodox Church interpretation.<sup>34</sup> In Romania, after World War II, patriotism, and even nationalism, took the form of slogans of internationalism combined with Byzantine values regarding governance and worship of the state and Soviet society. This exotic mix of values

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<sup>30</sup> M. Willaume, *Rumunia*, Warszawa 2004, p. 245; P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Anii numărătorii inverse*, Iași 2002, pp. 528–531, 534, 535.

<sup>31</sup> S.V. Crupaci, *Revolucja w Rumunii. Trudne rozliczenie z przeszłością*, Wrocław 2005, pp. 97–104; Ș. Tănase, *O istorie politică a caderii regimurilor comuniste. Miracolul revoluției*, București 1999, pp. 272–274, 358, 359; A. Marino, *Donna revoluției*, “Dreptatea” 1990, February 20, no. 42.

<sup>32</sup> More in: J. Juchnowski, R. Juchnowski, *O niektórych aspektach państwa w myśli nowolewicowej*, [in:] A. Dudek (ed.), *W kręgu nauki. O stosunkach międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 345–358; R. Rózanowski, *Pasaże Waltera Benjamina. Studium myśli*, Wrocław 1997; M. Horkheimer, *Teoria tradycyjna a teoria krytyczna*, [in:] J. Łoziński (ed.), *Szkoła frankfurcka*, t. 2, Warszawa 1987, pp. 140–171; M. Jay, *Marxism and Totality. The adventures of a concept from Lukács to Habermas*, New York 1984.

<sup>33</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat. Dyktatura Nicolae Ceaușescu 1965–1989*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 19, 25; P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Anii...*, pp. 16–20; J. Demel, *Historia Rumunii*, Wrocław 1986, pp. 331–340.

<sup>34</sup> R. Levy, *Gloria și decăderea Anei Pauker*, București 2002, pp. 31–39; D. Deletant, *Teroarea comunistă în România. Gheorghiu-Dej și statul polițienesc, 1948–1965*, București 2001, pp. 16–18.

was typical of countries and nations that had been submitted to eastern empires in their history. The peak of “Byzantine internationalism” of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was how Ceaușescu exercised power, for whom Gheorghiu-Dej was only partly a role model.<sup>35</sup> Ceaușescu gave the dictatorial rule of Dej, often having a primitive form, a setting resembling Byzantine sanctification. That is why the Romanian “revolution” of 1989 was similar to the Bolshevik one of 1917. Of course, its extent and significance are incomparable. It is about how it was organized and how the uprisings were managed. Besides, both were events and not processes, a series of destructive and violent accidents. On and off, the events were contradictory to each other, and its main political actors pursued different goals. Similarly to 1917, it began by adopting an attitude of indifference towards the actions of the head of the state. In the first period of the rebellion, the representatives of the power elite only thought about improving government efficiency and giving it a liberal-humanist image.<sup>36</sup> In this way, the post-communists hoped that they would prevent the uncontrolled expansion of the revolt and keep power in the state, reforming it towards “socialism with a human face.” Later it was confirmed by the rule of the communists-reformers headed by Ion Iliescu, which led him to be elected president. After the dictator’s overthrow and the revolt spreading throughout the country, it mainly covered bigger cities. It turned out that state power is fragile despite support from the army, bureaucracy, and police. Decades of dictatorial rule and the deprivation of private property have led to a lack of profound relations between the rulers and the ruled. A similar situation occurred in the “white” and “red” Russia. There were many similar features in the political life of Romania and the USSR. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Romania, difficult socio-political issues are resolved in an undemocratic way and have nothing to do with the Central European model of problem-solving.

The beginning of socio-political changes in Romania was bloody and a little turbulent in the first years. It was a typical phenomenon for the political East and the Balkan Peninsula. From the 1980s, Romania was marginalized internationally, as was the USSR. An economic collapse followed in both countries. The cut off of Romanian society from the world was of great importance for the outbreak of the revolt and the coup. It seems that this reason was more important than the lack of essential goods necessary for everyday life. A similar situation occurred in the USSR during the Gorbachev era.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the situation impacted the top-down approach to the coup in Romania. Political elites, primarily

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<sup>35</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, p. 58; J. Vykoukal, B. Litera, M. Tejchman, *Východ: Vznik, vývoj a rozpad sovětského bloku 1944–1989*, Praha 2000, pp. 437, 439.

<sup>36</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, p. 471; T. Kunze, *Nicolae Ceaușescu. O biografie*, București 2002, pp. 468, 470, 471; M. Tucă, *Ultimele zile ale lui Ceaușescu*, București 1999, pp. 17–24.

<sup>37</sup> A. Burakowski, A. Gubrynowicz, P. Ukielski, *1989 – Jesień Narodów*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 247–249; R. Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 525–529.

communists-reformers and democratic oppositionists, determined the course of public uprisings in Romania. The international constellation was also significant.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the term “revolution” was included in political philosophy, which meant a cyclical change in the ruling elite without the majority of society’s participation. Most frequently, it was the political people, led by the elites, who participated in the uprisings. Most of the nation, which did not have civil rights, was manipulated by the elites to express views of a favourable group of political leaders or take the attitude of passive observers. Thus, until the outbreak of the Great French Revolution, socio-political uprisings happened, in most cases, in a calm way, and in combination with a cyclical change of the political elites dominating the state. The riots in 1789 in France were already a modern revolution, suggesting the forms of future great socio-political revolts. Its socio-political solutions were used in the writings of the classics of socialism and communism, mainly by Marx and Engels and giving the French revolution anti-capitalist character and formulating the concept and model of communist revolution. The myth of the communist revolution began to collapse after the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

The Romanian revolution, as already emphasized, was a mixture of revolt and a *coup d’etat*. Mainly due to conditions and direct causes, it can be compared to a Bolshevik coup, considering socio-political differences, and broadly understood civilizations that differed the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from the last one. The Bolshevik revolution did not broaden the scope of democracy but brought greater injustice, inequality, exploitation, and repression. From the revolution in 1917, social phenomena of this type were regarded as disturbing the development of civilization and incompatible with the ideals of democratic socialism.

The modern concept of revolution is most often associated with rapid evolution or transition in which almost the entire society is involved. There are profound changes in the social structure, taking control of the state’s apparatus, and new systemic solutions are adopted primarily by democratic movements that are recognized by the majority of the nation, among others because of the tendency to eliminate violence when overthrowing the existing regime.<sup>38</sup> Communists-reformers and representatives of the democratic opposition favoured another way of overthrowing the government of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The Bolshevik variant was more suitable for them; the Iliescu group was interested in it in the first place. During social uprisings, they also manipulated social groups that had no idea of internal policy to cause a revolt social. Some social riots were bloody and were expected by all political forces.

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<sup>38</sup> P. Sztompka, *Socjologia zmian społecznych*, Kraków 2005 pp. 281, 282; A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, Warszawa 2005, p. 732; S.P. Huntington, *Political order in changing societies*, New Haven 1968, pp. 264, 265.

Nowadays, it is not easier to define a revolution because the concept was burdened with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century content of political thought. It is difficult to clearly identify whether a given social phenomenon can be described as a revolution or a revolt. Besides, it can be noted that the phenomenon of revolt and coup often occurred simultaneously, complementing the course of action and political goals. However, revolt and coup are not as massive as a revolution. The so-called Romanian revolution '89 did not lead to the takeover of power by a new class or even a new establishment.

In the situation of rapidly changing world in terms of society and civilization it is difficult to predict what changes will occur, how they will happen and what political solutions will be strived for. This issue requires separate consideration. No theory could reasonably foresee the forms and content of future revolutions. At the current level of social development in Europe, it can be argued that a revolution might take place when the state institutions and forms of social life decompose rapidly. First of all, when we deal with the distribution of basic types of power, police, and army.<sup>39</sup>

In Romania, as in Russia, there was no revolution in the Marxist sense, because it was not interested in any big social group and any progressive political elite. Also, the powers were not interested in the Bolshevik revolution that was bringing chaos to international relations. In Romanian society, like in Bolshevik Russia, a similar phenomenon occurred, imbued with communist nationalism. Therefore, i.e., communists-reformers and democratic opposition were not interested in revolution. They were aware of what the Bolshevik revolution and civil war led to – terrorism and terror. Each party feared that the winners would use the Bolshevik government method, disregarding the political and ethical conditions existing at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it was decided to prompt a revolt combined with a *coup d'état*. Such situations have already been described in the political works of John S. Mill, Karl R. Popper, and Henri Bergson.<sup>40</sup>

In general, social uprisings in the form of rebellions, as history proves, do not occur in pure form. Most often, they can be mixed and can be technically prepared. In Romania, the revolution could not occur because there was a phenomenon known in history, confirming that political misery and oppression protect tyrannical power. Therefore, it must be an initiation in the form of a *coup d'état* that leads to popularization and revolt. Similar events happened in Russia.<sup>41</sup> The December revolt in Romania did not lead to far-reaching social

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<sup>39</sup> See: L. Kołakowski, *Rewolucja jako piękna choroba*, [in:] *idem*, *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony i 27 innych kazań*, Kraków 2006, pp. 318–329.

<sup>40</sup> H. Bergson, *Dwa źródła moralności i religii*, Warszawa 2007; K. Popper, *Spółczesność otwarte i jego wrogowie*, t. 1: *Urok Platona*, Warszawa 1993; J.S. Mill, *O wolności*, [in:] *idem*, *Utylitaryzm*, Warszawa 1959.

<sup>41</sup> L. Kołakowski, *Rewolucja jako...*

and political changes in the first years. It only brought a liberal form of rule from the Ceaușescu period.<sup>42</sup> This fact is not surprising, because, after the overthrow of the dictator, the power was taken over by post-communists, some of whom were involved, in various forms, in the authority structures of the “Genius of the Carpathians.”

Immediately after the fall of Ceaușescu, General Victor A. Stănculescu took power, then transferred it to Ion Iliescu, a prominent party and state activist in the dictator’s time. The very trial of Elena and Nicolae Ceaușescu was a farce from Târgoviște. On December 25, 1989, the Ceaușescus were tried, sentenced to death, and executed immediately by shooting. The way the court tried the case, and immediate execution demonstrated the moral and political level of Romanian communist. They were convinced in their political mentality that complicated matters should be resolved uncompromisingly. They were guided by Soviet experience.<sup>43</sup> The “revolution” in Romania did not have a social core. Minor and insignificant changes in the law and functioning of state organs were made during the Iliescu presidency. The ruling group was unable to change their political consciousness, which was typical among the communist elites. The leaders of the Romanian “revolution” could stimulate the masses’ reaction, but mainly of the rural community, or rural mentality. Most of the capital’s residents had a political mindset that could be described as peasant-workers. Social changes taking place after the coup were imposed from above and did not have the fundamental social principles that dominated during the Ceaușescu rule.<sup>44</sup> Coercion was still an essential element of politics. If one considers the lack of self-limitation of the revolt towards humanitarian solutions and the lack of a “velvet character,” one can see how the picture of Romanian events was far from the situation in Central Europe.<sup>45</sup> The new communists-reformers’ authorities emotionally stirred the masses up to commit acts of terror. After a short time, they gave up under the influence of democratic oppositionists and warnings from the West.<sup>46</sup> Generally speaking, social uprisings in Romania can be described in 1989 as a fusion of a revolt, an uprising, a putsch, and a *coup d’etat*. It was mentioned earlier.

“Revolutions” in Central Europe were peaceful and massive, leading to the democratization of the political system and functioning of state authorities. During the Romanian “revolution” even intellectuals could not speak out explicitly in favour of the immediate adoption of democratic socio-political

<sup>42</sup> Compare: I. Iliescu, *Revoluția română*, București 2001.

<sup>43</sup> More in: P. Scani-Davus, *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989*, București 1989; Ș. Săndulescu, *Decembrie '89. Looitura de stat a confiscate revoluția română*, t. 1, București 1996.

<sup>44</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 307–309; J. Chalmers, *Revolutionary change*, London 1968, pp. 68–71.

<sup>45</sup> More in: J. Topolski, *Wolność i przymus w tworzeniu historii*, Warszawa 1990.

<sup>46</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 250, 255; T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 471, 476–478, 480, 481, 491, 492, 496, 497; V. Domenico, *Ceaușescu la Târgoviște*, București 1999, pp. 19, 72, 111, 178.



solutions. In Central Europe, there were disputes between democratic movements about shaping the political future. Democratic forces in Central Europe did not opt for partial and gradual reforms because they were aware that communists and society would see such a position as a sign of weakness. However, there were no such solutions in Romania during the Iliescu era. They resembled Stolypin's reforms in Russia.<sup>47</sup> The model of the revolution that appeared in Czechoslovakia, Poland, or Hungary did not correspond to the solutions and activities that accompanied the revolutions in Europe almost throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A "revolution" in these countries broke out at a time of great chance of victory and the conditions of political and intellectual preparation of people to rule the state. The peaceful model of the "revolution" was accompanied by a more specific vision of the state and the systematic aspirations of the nation, deprived of rather utopian dreams in economic, legal, and libertarian terms. In comparison with Romanian society, the educated masses participated in reforming social life. Central European societies were primarily the inhabitants of cities and had post-industrial attitudes.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, the Romanian revolt and its participants were characterized by utopianism, lack of specific actions, and so-called communist anarchism in thinking in the categories of state and nation. This was important for the future political solutions.<sup>49</sup> Here and there, even groups of assassins and tragic bloodshed in neighbouring countries, often combined with "Balkan revenge," also linked the Romanian revolt in terms of events and mentality with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Other important common factors went with the uprisings: first, the forces that inspired the mass revolt were located within the state and abroad; secondly, suppression of desires by the authorities and far-reaching limitations related to everyday life.<sup>50</sup> World War I allowed the soldiers to see how other European nations live. On the other hand, the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries opened up possibilities in information and communication technology that made it possible to contact everyone. Romanian society, like Russian one in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, experienced the so-called relative devaluation, which can be summarized as a discrepancy between expectations and the possible level of satisfaction of needs. The meaning of this mental syndrome is sometimes questioned.<sup>51</sup> One could agree that it was less significant for Russian society in 1917, but it was very important for Romania in 1989. It can be considered that this had an impact on the classification of the Romanian revolt as a revolution. It was and is a journalistic assessment. It is true

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<sup>47</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 309, 361–373; J. Goldstone, *The comparative and historical study of revolutions*, "Annual Review of Sociology" 1982, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 192–203.

<sup>48</sup> See: T. Skocpol, *States and social revolutions*, Cambridge 1979, pp. 13–17.

<sup>49</sup> P.A. Sorokin, *The sociology of revolution*, New York 1967, pp. 32–163, 367, 372–376.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 369.

<sup>51</sup> J. Davies, *Przyczynek do teorii rewolucji*, [in:] W. Derczyński, A. Jasińska-Kania, J. Szacki (eds.), *Elementy teorii socjologicznej*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 390–395; T. Gurr, *Why men rebel*, Princeton 1970, pp. 24, 50–52.

that during the revolt there were elements of revolution that were similar to the Bolshevik one. The Romanian “revolution” did not solve basic socio-political problems, did not meet the basic needs; it created groups of people who began to dream of the old order and the so-called stabilization. The Central European countries avoided it to a greater or lesser extent (depending on the country). Peaceful revolutions and transition had a humanitarian form typical for the Euro-Atlantic world’s processes, and the turn of the century. Central European “revolutions” did not create dictators and tyrants or did not cause disruptions in the functioning of states and societies. The latter happened in Romania when the enthusiasm for rebellion was exhausted.<sup>52</sup> This phenomenon was quite politically extensive, particularly visible during the presidential election. The choice of Ion Iliescu was determined not only by political support but also to a large extent by his charisma.<sup>53</sup> It is a phenomenon of research interest, sporadically found in Western political culture. It resulted, among others, from ruthless policy towards one’s own nation, and from diplomatic and political skills. Such skills from the leader were not valued among European societies, from Warsaw to Lisbon. Hence, research of some historians, such as Theda Skocpol, who tries to make an analytical comparison of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, cause incomprehension. She makes a methodological mistake, not taking into account civilization and far-reaching cultural differences, resulting from dogmatic and doctrinal assumptions of religion. All of it had an impact on the basic systemic solutions, including power-citizen relations. The values adopted in the family, the level of education, and even the geo-environmental zone were also important. These phenomena were accompanied by psychological aspects; however, Theda Skocpol seems not to worry about them. In the analysis, she also omits the leadership group involved in carrying out the revolution and achieving its goals. Skocpol formulated her opinions and statements based on a review of old events in Europe and taking place in non-Euro-Atlantic cultural circles.<sup>54</sup> Such a research perspective could be justified for the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After World War I, the revolution was identified not only with the radicalism of reforms but also with neighbouring countries’ subordination, most often in the form of blocs. Such goals were in Russian and Chinese revolutions but were not in the Romanian “revolution.” Nevertheless, Romanian post-communists sought to make Romania shine culturally to the Balkans. Romanian elites, but also society, looked down on the Balkan nations. The myth of Roman and French political culture’s representation was in the doctrines of the Romanian state and political parties

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<sup>52</sup> W. Brodziński, *Ustrój konstytucyjny Rumunii po „rewolucji” z grudnia 1989 roku*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 35, 38.

<sup>53</sup> O. Aron, *Zmiany na scenie politycznej postkomunistycznej Rumunii*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 51–53.

<sup>54</sup> More in: T. Skocpol, *op. cit.*

regardless of their political provenance. Romanian political thought was also influenced by the political traditions of Tsarist and Bolshevik Russia, Turkey, and Austria. First of all, the Turkish-Russian disputes, from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, reflected on the political mentality of Romanians. However, Romanians were convinced that they did not dominate the cultural values of Roman and French, deeply rooted in the soul of an average Romanian.<sup>55</sup> During the last world war, the Romanian state was under total German control, but its influence on Romanian politics was superficial. The French ideological party was too strong, active, and greatly influenced “politically and ideologically colourless society.”<sup>56</sup> An average Romanian, and even a middle-level party activist, did not dream of freedom, but of material paradise. In addition, Romanians believed that every prize should be material, regardless of the political system. The cult of physical labour and particularly intellectual work was rooted in the society. A similar way of thinking about work and gratification occurred in the Soviet society.<sup>57</sup> The material attitude of the Romanians did not favour the classical Marxist revolution. That is why the Romanian revolt had an economic and social dimension with elements of the extension of political freedom. In Central Europe, libertarian and civic values dominated, which were to be a determinant for increasing the material level. Peaceful “revolutions” in the central part of the continent were led by democratic leaders, which Romanian society could not have dreamed of for many years after the ’89 revolt. The main forces seeking change were democratic opposition and communists-reformers convinced of the necessity of transformation due to internal conditions and international.

The relationship between the rebellion of Romanian society and Christian values and the Orthodox Church requires additional research. The role of the church is difficult to determine. During the revolt, the church took a wait-and-see approach, here the long-time idea of the unity of the throne and the altar in the Orthodox Church prevailed. Thus, Romania’s membership of Central Europe, in terms of axiology and ways of solving political problems, raises doubts. Norman Manea, the author of many books and stories, professor at American universities, well-known writer in Romanian and international circles, wrote:

Belonging to Central Europe is rather a spiritual matter, [...] we should refer to scepticism as the distinguishing feature of Havel [...] as something somewhat mysterious, somewhat nostalgic, often tragic, and sometimes even heroic, or to the cultural-political counter-hypothesis [...] Konrad, whose concept the Central European spirit is attributed to some rational and humanist, democratic,

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<sup>55</sup> W. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, 31-39, 53-57.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 132, 137, 141-145, 148-149.

<sup>57</sup> D. Leszczyński, *Marksizm i fenomenologia politycznego nastawienia*, [in:] J. Hołowka, B. Dziobkowski (eds.), *Marksizm, nadzieje i rozczarowania*, Warszawa 2017, p. 194.

sceptical, and tolerant West. Ultimately, Havel and Konrad's visions actually meet in this civil society, Michnik advocates.<sup>58</sup>

It was sharp criticism of Romanian society, its political and creative elites, and ethical norms arising from the Eastern Orthodox Church. At the same time, Manea criticized some of the values exposed by the West and even expressed suspicion about the moral principles represented by circles associated with the doctrine of liberal democracy. Manea exhibited the values arising from the political thought of Central Europe. It was a sign what path Romania should take. If the changes did not go in the indicated direction, it would lead society and the state to a bitter defeat in the ideological and material dimension. We were dealing with such symptoms. Manea warned that Romanians' social life should not, despite political transformations, be based on corruption, Byzantism, an opportunistic game of interests, demagoguery, abuse of power, and cronyism. This state of affairs was especially encoded in Romanian social life from the early 1920s.<sup>59</sup> The Romanian revolt could not turn into a 20<sup>th</sup>-century peaceful revolution due to the nature of the Eastern Orthodox and Balkan communities. In general, it can be said that Romanian society was disgusted with politics, the way it was practiced by the authorities and the way the opposition exposed it. Both were suspected of having morbid ambition, pettiness, and personal interest. The good of the nation and state was to be of secondary importance to them. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the society avoided any involvement in politics. The allegation of passivity, often made against the Romanian people, should be understandable and explained from this perspective. Romanian society did not have revolutionary traditions, but it should also be taken into account that no European country of the Soviet bloc did not apply pervasive supervision and ruthless repression in Romania. History has taught Romanians, particularly since 1945, that a pro-state attitude is one thing. The energy needed to survive, opportunism, cynicism, and self-preservation instinct are another, sometimes more important. Sceptical pragmatism and acceptance of fate for a long time prevailed in Romanian everyday life and did not give excellent opportunities for action for the opposition. Democratic ideas were easier to be found in the individual's minds than in the mind of the community.<sup>60</sup> A society with such a mentality was challenging to stimulate revolutionary uprisings, but it was different when it came to short-term revolts, protests, and hateful acts. Romanian society was and is still a 20<sup>th</sup>-century community with a rural mentality. It is easy to be ruled, hard to democratize, and reform. To some extent, culture, and its folk character was an "enclave" of freedom. Communists-reformers wanted such a social situation. They were afraid of the revolution, so they were getting

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<sup>58</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 31, 32, 40.

help from the West and the East. The “affair” of the opposition and reformers ended quickly, immediately after 1990, and the election of President Ion Iliescu. The Romanian revolt and coup were accompanied by megalomaniac frustration on the part of post-communists about the allegedly exposed importance of Romania on the European continent. The post-communist governments, after the Bucharest uprisings of December 1989, in the first two years were followed by an extravagant combination of doctrines that could be described as anarchist-barracks. It was, among others, the result of the apologetics of various philosophical systems, mainly Marxism and liberalism, enclosed in various slogans and present in the minds of people, even intelligentsia and politicians of various provenance, but without political preparation and education in the field of social sciences. The consciousness situation was conflicted by the fact that from 1945, Romania’s political power attempted to rebuild the “superstructure” without democratic changes and the development of the “base.” Gradually, but particularly from the 1970s, disappointment, and quiet but firm disagreement with the theoretical creation of reality started growing in Romanian society. Utopian nature of reality began in the time of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, taking the affirmative form during the rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu. From the second half of the 1970s, the created reality was transformed by political writers into a doctrine of faith, which took the role of a myth.<sup>61</sup> Among Romanian communist leaders, there was a belief that they were given the privilege and the gift to predict socio-political processes and the destruction of alienation in any area of life. There were accents of this attitude among some oppositionists.<sup>62</sup> For some of the communists-reformers, the Ceaușescu doctrine also appeared like a new religion. Religion without God. Also, many leaders of the Eastern Bloc did not realize that Marxism and its emanation – Leninism, is a perfect system and contains problems of unfulfilled forecasts.

These issues were particularly evident in Romania of Ceaușescu. The opposition was aware of this, but not entirely. In the economic dimension, the Romanian system was extremely technologically non-innovative; it had no implementation capacity, new technological, and technical solutions. It also did not manage to absorb the new rules of work organization, i.e., because of the centralized management mechanism. Labour productivity was very low, because of the factors mentioned earlier, as well as the lack of private property and the inability to meet mass social needs.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–183, 707–719.

<sup>62</sup> A. Burakowski et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 286–296; M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 243, 244; I. Iliescu, *Revoluția română...*; V. Georgescu, *Istoria românilor de la origini pînă în zilele noastre*, București 1995, pp. 131–142; D. Deletant, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea*, București 1998, pp. 360–365.

<sup>63</sup> J. Hołówka, *Reformatorzy i rewolucjoniści*, [in:] J. Hołówka, B. Dziobkowski (eds.), *Markszizm, nadzieje i rozczarowania*, Warszawa 2017, p. 251; P. Opreș, *Transformacja rumuńskiej gospodarki: lata 1989–2009*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 31–35.

However, in the political dimension, the communist system justified the violence and adapted legal provisions guaranteeing security for dictatorial power. There was the enslavement of the society, including the working class. It was mostly visible in Romania and the USSR.<sup>64</sup> Social alienation in Romania has taken on an unprecedented dimension in Central European countries. Culture and the media were completely subordinated to the power and ideology of Romanian communism. Hence the belief among oppositionists that the communist party was responsible for all the evil that Romanians experienced.<sup>65</sup>

Romanian communist ideologists believed or suggested that they believed that broadly understood alienation would disappear as a result of the “revolutionary act.” This was supposed to be done by the new Messiah – the proletariat. At the same time, they put the concept of the proletariat in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century categories, believing that it needed a party that fulfilled the role of an ideological, political, and necessary guide in practical activities. Romanian ideologists did not treat Marxism as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century radical Aristotelianism. Modelled on Lenin and the Bolsheviks, they gave this system religious values. That is why they so eagerly fought against all forms of religiousness.<sup>66</sup> Romanian communism ideologically and politically referred more to the idea and practice of Lenin, Russian narodism than to Marx and the First and Second Internationals. Post-war Romanian leaders followed rather Iosif V. Stalin and Leonid Brezhnev than Yuri Andropov and Mikhail Gorbachev. It had a significant impact on the revolt without starting a revolution that threatened communists-reformers like Iliescu.

Even a brief analysis of Romanian communism, from the time of Gheorghiu-Dej to Ceaușescu, led to the conclusion that the doctrine was not in practice an expression of the interests of the working class. It expressed and represented the interests of the party and state communist apparatus. This phenomenon occurred not only in Romania. Similar policies were seen in many Eastern Bloc countries. However, it was most visible in the land of the “Genius of the Carpathians.” There was a lot of truth in Marx’s diagnosis about social phenomena, but the prognosis for social development and political predictions turned out to be wrong. Romanian political writers treated Marxism as a source of faith, something like the “Old Testament.” without giving it a scientific interpretation.<sup>67</sup> Hence, there were problems with ideological and adaptive functions, and even a gradual loss of the ability to perform ideological functions and intensified unacceptable social

<sup>64</sup> R. Cichocki, *Podmiotowość w społeczeństwie*, Poznań 2003; P. Câmpeanu, *Filozofie și cultură*, București 1978, p. 187; *Congresul al IX-lea al Partidului Comunist Român*, București 1965, pp. 22–27.

<sup>65</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 136–139, 166–171, 188–195, 363, 364; R. Cichocki, *op. cit.*; N. Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, vol. 19, București 1966–1989, pp. 194–197.

<sup>66</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–266; J.M. Bocheński, *Lewica, religia, sowietologia*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 290–296; G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, pp. 625–637.

<sup>67</sup> More in: J. Tittenbrun, *The middle class or you only live twice*, Munich 2016.

consequences. For the leadership group centred around Ceaușescu, political tactics were more important than the social development program. After World War II, Romanian authorities adopted this way of exercising power. The Central European countries already knew it. The principle was adopted that theory and practice are analysed using various criteria of values. The fundamental value was the maintenance of power by the communist party.<sup>68</sup> This was most evident when showing the relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and an ideal welfare state. However, the link between Leninism and totalitarianism was not recognized.

It is difficult to identify large socio-political events with a significant emotional load, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, called: revolution, revolt, rebellion, or *coup d'état*. An important factor influencing the definition of a given event is the level of civilizational development of a given community and state as well as the international relations surrounding it.

By adopting Piotr Sztompka's reasoning, which is spontaneous but also intellectually engaging, it is evident that it is not easy to provide a reasonably specific definition of a revolution due to the nature of this phenomenon. Determining the main causes of the outbreak of the revolution, those with a social, material, and psychological and social dimension are extremely difficult. The enormous activation of the majority of society and high determination, leading to a change in political relations, give rise to reflection. Why some revolutions stimulate progress in every aspect of social life, while others point to so-called civilization degradation? This issue is difficult to interpret clearly. The predictability of the outbreak of the revolution, and particularly its course, is also a serious problem.<sup>69</sup> Considering the Romanian "revolution" of December 1989 that interests us, it was marked by opposition to the Ceaușescu cult, not anti-communist. This was a proof of the low public awareness, and its vigour and passion for the protest was characteristic of the Roman peoples and had an emotional foundation. The spontaneity of the masses, however, had a limited range, mostly covering the inhabitants of big cities. If one accepts the working thesis that in Romania, in December 1989, a revolution took place, then one can notice its Bolshevik character and qualify it as social phenomenon of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Bolshevik revolution resembles the Romanian revolt in terms of unexplained facts that happened between the spontaneous reflex of society and Iliescu's post-communist group which took over the power. In general, many episodes have not been explained in which the participants of the revolt were murdered, "or they have passed the euphoria of change and were disappointed

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<sup>68</sup> J. Hołówka, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 263; A. Curticăpean, *Oblicza tożsamości: integracja Rumunii z Zachodem a polityka tożsamości w latach 90.*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 65–68.

<sup>69</sup> P. Sztompka, *op. cit.*, pp. 294–296.

in the way they exercise democracy.”<sup>70</sup> The Romanian revolt, like the Bolshevik revolution, had few anarchist episodes. In most revolutions, in Europe from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the phenomenon of anarchist activities occupied a lot of place. At least in the early stages of the revolution, anarchist ideas and actions were visible and sometimes dominant. A leadership group governed the planning and management of the revolution in Russia and the revolt in Romania from its outbreak and throughout its duration. Hence, it is not easy to describe the Bolshevik revolution as a proletarian one which should be characterized by spontaneity. However, taking into account the socio-political conditions in the tsarist state, Russia’s place in Europe, and the civil war and its course, this rebellion can be described as a revolution with the adjective Bolshevik. It was a revolution typical only for 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia, in social and civilizational terms.<sup>71</sup> The term “revolution” is inadequate for Romanian events, because they took place in different socio-political and geopolitical conditions. There was no civil war in Romania, and rebellion was often directed by reformer communists and the state’s special forces. The communists-reformers were not known to the public as an organized political grouping, which could be seen in the countries of Central Europe.<sup>72</sup>

The revolutionary phenomena at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries require separate analysis. Perhaps the forms and ways of overthrowing communism-Leninism in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe will be classified as revolutions typical of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The phenomenon of defeating the “proletarian” dictatorship is often referred to in the literature as a transition. The notion of transition corresponds to the deprivation of the power of mono party in Central Europe. In contrast, Romania’s social uprisings were more in line with the notion of social revolt and a coup. The facts testify to this. And yes, it is difficult to answer the question why did the soldiers, having been given orders to quell the demonstrations in Timișoara on December 16 and 17, not have enough ammunition? The arrests made by the militia, the Securitate, and the army were no longer impressive. So, what role did the Minister of National Defense Vasile Milea and the head of Securitate Iulian Vlad play? Despite *Conducător’s* specific orders, they did not bloodily suppress the protests in Timișoara, where the population destroyed everything that was associated with the system of power. Ceaușescu accused both ministers of betraying the interests of the nation, state,

<sup>70</sup> S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> R. Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików*, pp. 525–548; *idem*, *Rosja carów*, Warszawa 1990.

<sup>72</sup> More in: A. Burakowski *et al.*, *op. cit.*; E. Neubert, *Unsere Revolution: die Geschichte der Jahre 1989/1990*, München 2008; B. Góralczyk, *Węgry. Transformacja pokomunistyczna 1990–2003*, Warszawa 2003; J. Staniszkis, *Postkomunizm: próba opisu*, Gdańsk 2001; A.P. Melone, *Creating parliamentary government. The transition to democracy in Bulgaria*, Columbus, OH, 1998; L. Holmes, *Post-communism. An Introduction*, London 1997; J. Fiszer, J. Holzer, *Przemiany w Polsce i NRD po 1989*, Warszawa 1996; M. Otáhal, *Opozice, moc, společnost: příspěvek k dějinám „normalizace”*, Praha 1994; J. Jackowicz, *Bułgaria od rządów komunistycznych do demokracji parlamentarnej: 1989–1991*, Warszawa 1992.



and communism, but did not dismiss them from their positions. The army opened fire on people only on December 18, when Ceaușescu was paying an official visit to Iran.<sup>73</sup> Concerning this event, the question arises: was it not done to weaken or even neutralize *Conducător's* position, which would make a coup superfluous? There are two more facts and important arguments in favour of such a scenario: 1) the leaders of the coup and people having a significant impact on the course of the rebellion came from the power elite; 2) Romanian society was diverse in social and political terms, characterized by low political awareness and rural culture of social being.<sup>74</sup> The Romanian community was and is sociologically exciting and complicated. Still, it had and has many features of consciousness that are common among the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. In this respect, it is essential to be aware of this fact. In-depth sociological research would answer the question of why Romania so quickly underwent Stalinization with nationalist elements? And why did they say goodbye to Bolshevism so expressively? There is no doubt that this phenomenon was influenced by the history of the nation and the Romanian state.

The outbreak, and then the course of rebellion in conditions of chaos throughout the country, however, mainly affected central institutions. In the provinces and small towns, it was hardly noticeable. It was like the Kerensky period in Russia. The state's limited decomposition was convenient for the takeover of power by the communists of Iliescu, in a so-called peaceful way. For a short while, in revolutionary Romania, there were three or four main centres of power: the Ministry of National Defence, the Central Committee of the PCR, the third centre was created with the National Salvation Committee's disclosure headed by Corneliu Mănescu. Ultimately, the power was taken over by Ion Iliescu and Dumitru Mazilu's group.

The events of December 22, 1989 and the firing at the building of the Central Committee of the PCR, the seat of the Fourth Studio and the square in front of the Central Committee by unidentified "terrorists" give us some thought: were the so-called terrorists the defenders of Ceaușescu or was it a struggle between the emerging centres for power? The centre, managed by Iliescu and Mazilu, who enjoyed Gorbachev's support, had the most exceptional opportunities from the beginning. The estimated 515 killed and 1100 wounded were mainly in Bucharest.<sup>75</sup> This is an additional vital argument to claim that in December 1989, there was a political takeover on the basis of a *coup d'état*. The vast majority of activities were planned and were a kind of political marketing. Television

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<sup>73</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 468, 469; M. Tucă, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–19.

<sup>74</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 241–246; P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata odliczane wstecz*, Warszawa 2004; L. Boia, *Rumuni., Świadomość, mity, historia*, Kraków 2003; P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Anii...*, pp. 541–544; J. Darski, *Rumunia. Historia. Współczesność. Konflikty narodowe*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 170–182.

<sup>75</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

not only reported on events regularly but also manipulated them. As for the operating principles, there are many similarities with the activities of Lenin's party, mainly the manipulation of the crowd.<sup>76</sup>

The events in Romania in 1989 took place during the *glasnost*, revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, and deep thaw in international relations. Liberal thought was triumphing, but not in Romania. Romanians wanted to overthrow the Ceaușescu dictatorship; they were not convinced of the full political change and government change. They were more interested in fixing the Romanian political and, above all, economic model. They expected significant personnel changes within PCR and the state. It was not, as in Russia, in 1917, the destruction of the current political system. Democratic reform assumptions made by the opposition did not break into the political consciousness of Romanians. Post-communists were afraid of progressive changes, as putting them into practice would weaken the position of the ruling group. They took advantage of the concerns of Romanian society which was still under the influence of regime propaganda lasting for half a century, to implement the economic model of liberal democracy. They were rather in favour of creating in practice a socio-conservative model with a strong leader who would rule without paying particular attention to parliament and elections. Such a phenomenon in Central Europe did not appear until the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> The coup itself, not the revolution, is evidenced by the very course of the trial. The military arrested the Ceaușescu, and the hearing was held before a military court. General Victor Stănculescu took care of the process and its implementation.<sup>78</sup> This showed that the authorities' political structures were not seriously violated, and their functioning was adapted to the situation. Its goals were partially modified.

In Romanian literature on political science, there is no clear-cut opinion about the events of December 1989. The works that have been published so far, present the December situation in Romania as a revolution or as a revolt and a *coup d'état*, associated with external conspiracy. Most often, supporters of the view that Romania had a coup emphasized its connection with the organized revolt. In contrast, supporters of the opinion that there was a revolution in Romania were influenced by Timișoara events. They pointed out that the Romanian "revolution" had two stages – material and spiritual. That is why the "revolution" was to last from December 1989 to spring 1990, i.e., until the West strongly criticized the authorities that organized the miners' invasion of Bucharest. Western criticism was supposed to protect Romania from dictatorship

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. R. Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików*, pp. 289–312; *idem*, *Rewolucja nihilizmu*, Warszawa 1996; H. Buchheim, *Totalitarian rule*, Middleton 1968.

<sup>77</sup> A. Antoszewski, *Zrozumieć europejski populizm*, [in:] J.R. Sielezin, R. Wiszniowski, M. Alber-ska (eds.), *Od historii myśli do praktyki politycznej*, Toruń 2017, p. 167.

<sup>78</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 491, 492, 496; V. Domenico, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 112.

and the civil war.<sup>79</sup> Some Romanian political scientists described the events in the country at the turn of 1989 and 1990 as the revolution of big cities, politically pacified by the National Salvation Front with Iliescu at the head of it.<sup>80</sup> Iliescu himself was one of the greatest supporters of the view that the December events of '89 were typically revolutionary. In this way, he wanted to defend himself against the accusations of the conspiracy, whose participants were communists-reformers, associated with Western and Eastern protectors. In the study devoted to the December rebellion, *Revolution and reform*, Iliescu wrote that the dramatic situation in December 1989, in the country, but mainly in the capital itself, was "a social explosion of authentic folk and national character."<sup>81</sup> In his opinion, the revolution took place because of the lack of liberal reforms, analogous to those that had taken place in Central Europe from the 1970s. On the other hand, the established FSN was supposed to prevent anarchy and lead to a program for democratic change in Romania and to secure structures organizational necessary to carry them out.<sup>82</sup> The followers of the idea of revolution referred to their adversaries as supporters of the old regime or the opposition without agenda. According to their leaders, the reformer communists had the most radical, democratic, and realistic program that even the broad anti-communist opposition did not have. There were many reasons for this, as the democratic opposition was already in ideological and political conflict from the beginning of 1990. Iliescu put it this way: "we should sum up the revolution through its program, see how thorough it is, how radical it is, what purpose it has and how dynamically it is changing."<sup>83</sup> A group of communists associated with Iliescu, organized as a part of the FSN, strongly emphasized the national-folk nature of the revolution and its radicalism directed against the Ceaușescu regime. There was a lot of propaganda, but FSN had to win citizens' trust and foreign countries. It was also about convincing public opinion, both domestic and international, that the whole course of social uprisings was a bottom-up, authentic plan. Besides, they wanted to prove that the allegations against Iliescu and his supporters of participating in the plot were unfounded. Political writers and FSN politicians themselves claimed that the revolt evolved into an organized revolution thanks to this institution. They were afraid of associating them with the coup.<sup>84</sup> The so-called organized manner of the Romanian revolution made it similar to the Leninist revolution, taking into account the civilization differences between the beginning and end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>79</sup> S. Tănase, *O istorie politică...*, pp. 273, 274; M. Milin, *Timișoara în revoluție și după*, Timișoara 1997, pp. 27-37; L. Tökes, *În spiritul Timișoarei – Ecumenie și reconciliere*, Patra Craiului 1996, p. 31; I. Anghel (ed.), *Timișoara 16-22 decembrie 1989*, Timișoara 1990.

<sup>80</sup> S. Tănase, *O istorie politică...*, pp. 358, 359.

<sup>81</sup> I. Iliescu, *Revoluție și reformă*, București 1994, p. 12.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55; S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>83</sup> I. Iliescu, *Revoluție și reformă*, p. 38.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

The FSN leaders evaded calling the December rebellion a coup by stating that opposition elites had made mistakes in judgment, noticing only the change of political actors, not the state's political system and way of functioning. In the post-communists' opinion, in the first period after the uprisings of the population of bigger cities, there were significant political changes, as evidenced by the "Appeal to the Nation", edited by the management of the FSN. It was, according to the Front leadership, "the basic text of new Romania."<sup>85</sup> A detailed analysis of Iliescu's political writings showed that in December 1989, in Romania, there was a revolt combined with a coup, agreed with the West and Russian politicians to its extent and primary goals.<sup>86</sup>

The conspiracy was not denied by the former French ambassador (1987–1990) in Romania Jean-Marie Le Breton. However, he believed that there was a kind of synthesis of the revolution and the *coup d'état*. He mentions two stages of Romanian events, namely: the first stage, until December 22, 1989 – a revolutionary phase; after December 22, the revolution transformed into a coup combined with a conspiracy between forces associated with the Ceaușescu regime and the communists-reformers – this was the second phase of events.<sup>87</sup>

The coup in Romania in December 1989 was confirmed by historian Dan Zamfirescu, who was close to the dictator, in a book entitled *The war against the Romanian people*. He argued that a plot between the national anti-communist groups and the Western states to overthrow Ceaușescu had been prepared for a long time. However, the conspiracy was partly thwarted by the revolution that broke out on December 22 and created opportunities for Iliescu to seize power. Although the book is not fully objective, the statements it contains deserve attention, for example, the issues of agreements on the way of exercising power and steps that should be taken to lead to a *coup d'état*.<sup>88</sup>

However, most people support the mixed theory, combining a coup with revolt features of the revolution, such as spontaneity of the masses, goals not precisely identified, the randomness of events, a multitude of political centres with ambitions to seize power. There was also a nationalist factor in Romanian conditions. Romanian society was nationalist, with nationalism based on well-established values in Eastern and Southern Europe. Declarations about the relationship between Romanian, French, and Italian cultures came from the traditional intelligentsia circle. Even after years of democratization and accession to the European Union, Romanians see the West from the perspective of benefits, particularly of material nature. The model of Swedish socialism as well as the economic development and increase in the standard of living in China seem

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 189; S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, p. 99; P. Roman, *Libertatea ca datorie*, București 1994, p. 105.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. S. Nicolaescu, *Un senator acuză!*, București 1996; P. Roman, *op. cit.*, p. 105; T. Ardeleanu, R. Savalic, I. Baiu, *Procesul Ceaușescu*, București 1994, pp. 111, 112.

<sup>87</sup> J.M. Le Breton, *Sfârșitul lui Ceaușescu. Istoria unei revoluții*, București 1997, pp. 80–89.

<sup>88</sup> D. Zamfirescu, *Războiul împotriva poporului român*, București 1994.

attractive to them, South Korea and Turkey have also become the reference point. This attitude of the public should not come as a surprise. As Lucian Boia wrote: "within a century and a half, the Romanian people experienced the trauma of three radical turns: breakup with the East, departing from the West with the beginning of communism and finally returning to the West."<sup>89</sup> This resulted in the lack of reasonably uniform socio-political patterns to which Romanian society would refer. This social status corresponds to the transitional period.

Even supporters of the conspiracy theory and the coup did not deny the revolt, which was quickly used by the post-communists Iliescu. The coup was to have been prepared from 1988. The guarantor of the coup's success was the USSR ruled by Gorbachev, who consulted such a possibility with the United States and Britain. In the country, Ion Iliescu and general Iulian Vlad and Victor Stănculescu played a particular role.

To sum up, the changes in Romania in 1989 were to follow a coup based on revolt, and the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom ensured political guarantees and logistical security.<sup>90</sup>

In the context of statements mentioned earlier, the question arises: Were there other options, i.e., a bottom-up overthrow of the regime? It is hard to find such a society with a communist-nationalist political culture and a rural vision. In such a social and political reality, it was necessary for the communists-reformers from PCR to take power, who, from 1988, deeply analysed the need to change the form of government. Initially, it was not about profound political changes. It was beyond FSN's political perception and resulted from agreements with Western powers. The leadership of the "Front," like the vast majority of society, was overwhelmed administratively, legally, and institutionally by the organs of a totalitarian state. In contrast, the anti-communist opposition was weak, divided politically, and organizationally. Its weakness was the lack of orientation in the attitudes of Romanian society, its economic goals and in terms of the efficiency of power in the crisis. They moved the centre of gravity related to the need for political changes from the overthrow of the government to the phenomenon of revolt. The opposition had far-reaching political hopes and hoped for society to affirm the traditional spiritual culture and values contained in French political thought. In social martyrdom, and above all, democratic intelligentsia, they saw the basis for the practical development of progressive ideas. Symbols of democracy could not replace specific actions. This democratic opposition should be aware of living in communist-nationalist Romania for decades. During a country's major crisis, even democratically experienced, a strong individual with enormous authority is treated with greater confidence

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<sup>89</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. ŚwiadomośĆ...*, pp. 212-214.

<sup>90</sup> I. Stoian, *Decembrie '89, arta diversunii*, Bucureşti 1998, p. 45; A. Băcescu, *Din non în calea năvălirilor barbare. Complot împotriva României*, Bucureşti 1996, p. 3; R. Portocală, *România - autopsia unei lovituri de stat - in tara in care a triumfat minciuna*, Bucureşti 1991, pp. 22-28, 53, 154.

than the political system.<sup>91</sup> Romania expected such solutions in the first phase of changes. The democratic opposition could not take action for citizenship, and a civil nation was just needed to build a democratic state.<sup>92</sup> The opposition did not have any experience in teaching citizenship. Problems can also be seen in the opposition's activities for communication with the public. This issue was not resolved even after the overthrow of the dictator. The opposition thought that the revolt was a sufficient political school for the Romanian society, which is why they did not accept the role of an intermediary between the new state authorities and Romanians, guaranteeing compliance with democracy's principles. They did not consider that it would take Romanians longer to learn good citizenship than other nations in Central European countries. The democratic opposition was familiar with Western democracy but could not adapt it to Romanian conditions. Even the rural and working-class origins of some of the intelligentsia did not create such an opportunity. The country and society characterized by clientelism, where informal relationships were above the law and institutions of the state, and ubiquitous corruption and hypocrisy were combined with newspeak, hindered the shaping of democratic attitudes by the opposition. The principles of social life of the 1980s were functioning in the 1990s, both in interpersonal relations and citizen-state relations.<sup>93</sup>

Such a socio-political state of the Romanians was not conducive to the outbreak. This is why the revolt itself was a great achievement of anti-totalitarian forces. It was not peaceful, as in Central Europe. It was also not bloody, given the Romanian character shaped, i.e., through the Balkan and Turkish surroundings. Mainly the Turkish mark made Romanians supporters of compromise, on the one hand, and uncompromising people, on the other.<sup>94</sup> Besides, Romanians can be considered a strongly mythicized society in terms of nationalism. Societies of this type cannot carry out a classic European revolution leading to progressive political reforms. This exceeded its political imagination, especially since he was convinced of a great nation and an important world state.

Most of the nation adapted to life in communism. People were poor, but poverty was ubiquitous and gave a sense of equality. They helped themselves by stealing from the state which provided them with employment in the workplace, among others, due to the control and limited free time. The scope of freedom also contributed to a sense of equality. Even intellectuals were content with minor concessions from the authorities.<sup>95</sup> It gave them a sense of superiority

<sup>91</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. ŚwiadomośĆ...*, pp. 239, 264, 265.

<sup>92</sup> More in: D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. Współczesne debaty i jej źródła*, Wrocław 2004.

<sup>93</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, pp. 410, 411, 415.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 427–429, 432, 433.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 443; V. Mihăilescu, *Iarna vrajbei noastre. Protestele din România, ianuarie–februarie 2012*, București 2012; A. Mungiu, *România după '89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri*, București 1995, pp. 231–236; N. Ramesh, *Romania. The entangled revolution*, New York 1991, pp. 89–111.

over other professional groups. The process of disciplining intelligentsia within the communist system also brought results.

Anti-communists were the minority, and the so-called revolution turned out to be manipulative broadcast on television, misleading Romanian society, and European countries, as to the extent of public support and essential goals. The post-communists who formed the Social Democratic Party in place of the FSN decided to stay in power, and they were only afraid of the streets. That is why on television, their coup combined with the revolt had a revolutionary dimension.<sup>96</sup> This scenario was also used in “operetta political art” with mineriads. It consisted in the fact that the social and legal order in Bucharest is introduced by the working-mining class, not the police and the army, or authorities. This fact was to prove and justify those social uprisings in December '89 were revolutionary, and the takeover of power by communists-reformers was a historical necessity. What has already been emphasized, Romanian society was characterized by low civic awareness, and this state of affairs was terrific for a European country. A similar phenomenon occurred only in Albania. Individualism, along with selfishness hardened by the communist-nationalist system, severely limited society's organizational capacity, preventing the European revolution. The gathering of about a thousand people was considered in Romania at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s a big-scale protest.

The outbreak of the revolt, combined with a coup that had foreign support, was not denied by the head of Securitate – Iulian Vlad. Other well-known activists associated with the post-communist faction also confirmed the existence of such a plan as the only way to repair the existing system. Democratic oppositionists, who drew attention to the meeting between George H. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev on the Soviet ship on the coast of Malta on December 2–3, 1989, did not deny the preparations for the coup and revolt. The conspiracy thesis with high involvement of the East and the West enjoyed media popularity and even limited opposition support.<sup>97</sup> One can think that the United States' involvement in the internal affairs of Romanians added optimism to the intelligentsia's democratic attitude.

In the view of the facts, one can agree with Silviu Brucan's thesis that the events of 1989 were a combination of the revolt and the *coup d'état*. Dumitru Mazilu took a similar position in his book. However, one can have doubts about the claims that the reformer faction of the PCR planned to oust Ceaușescu twice – in 1976 and 1983–1984. The plans for the attacks were not implemented. The creators concluded that the nation was not ready for political changes and

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<sup>96</sup> A. Mungiu, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>97</sup> I. Stoian, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–46; Ș. Săndulescu, *Decembrie '89...*, București 1997, pp. 171–184; A. Băcescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 3.

the particular way to initiate them.<sup>98</sup> Mazilu and Brucan's statements are worth emphasizing to understand that the events of December '89 could not turn into a revolution. Similar claims were made in the considerations of Lucian Boia and Vladimir Tismăneanu. The latter described the December revolt as "Christmas revolution." According to Tismăneanu, we were dealing with the "social revolution" and the FSN revolution, which was defended in 1990 by miners, which gave the impression, as previously noted, of the classic revolution in Europe.<sup>99</sup> The leaders of the "Front" hid that the army and the Securitate were in charge of the coup's technical side.

At the end of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, Romania was close to anarchy under political, economic, and moral collapse. The social life of communist and post-communist Romania was minimized and controlled by the PCR, which led to the collapse of friendly and democratic relations between an individual and a group, and between the society and the state. Social mobility, as previously written, was low. Romanians were used to "backstage activity," being afraid of open uprisings.<sup>100</sup> Encoded in social consciousness, integration had a Byzantine form, based on the assumption that only the state is authorized to initiate it. Such an attitude, which can be described as a synthesis of Stalinism and nationalism, could not in the long run lead to a "new" democracy based on channelling social discontent and directing it against local authorities and workplace administration, which was what post-communist wanted. Post-communists also wanted to divide the nation and base human relations on suspicion. The intention was also to convince the public that everything is standard, "and therefore everyone is responsible and guilty."<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, the media conveyed nationalist obsessions and Stalinist slogans with the help of new terms and phrases, adopting a new language. If we add to this authorities' undertakings, the phenomenon of the privatization, and the rapid and opportunistic change of political attitudes of the party-state bureaucracy, it is not surprising that in Romania, the revolt did not turn into a peaceful revolution. Neither was there a bloody revolution leading to dictatorship. A bloody Bolshevik revolution could not have taken place in the view of the powers' attitude, changes in international relations, political popularity, liberal political thought, globalization, or the world's becoming of a multipolar political plane. Under these conditions, Romania could not afford a bloody Bolshevik revolution. However, Romania was not prepared for a peaceful revolution. Changes in the state of Ceaușescu had to be carried out quickly, without

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<sup>98</sup> S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, p. 111; Ș. Brucan, *Generația irosită. Memorii*, București 1992, pp. 66–82; D. Mazilu, *Revoluția furată. Memoriu pentru țara mea*, București 1991, pp. 12–91.

<sup>99</sup> V. Tismăneanu, *Revoluția română văzută de ziaristi americani și englezi*, Iași 1993, pp. 129–142; Ș. Brucan, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–80.

<sup>100</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 88.



unnecessary involvement of the powers; hence the leaders of the powers put on communists-reformers who eagerly took advantage of it. Did they pass the political test against their society, against the West and the East? This is another issue to consider. A significant problem will also be the assessment of the post-communist-society relationship, precisely: did the post-communists initiate civic awareness among Romanians, or did they delay these processes?

Communism is not a threat to today's Romania. It is doubtful that nationalists will seize power, even though parliament has rehabilitated Ion Antonescu. Although we should not draw too far-reaching conclusions from this politically unreasonable decision. Romania cannot be associated only with Antonescu or Ceaușescu, with the miners' and Securitate's uprisings. There is hope that democracy destroyed by the right-wing and left-wing dictatorship will be rebuilt by the young generation to lead to the creating of civil society, and will not allow for extreme solutions. It will break the chronic identity crisis and post-communist impasse not so visible in the current political system as in the social consciousness. All mentioned above encourages the process of democratic transformation. It will probably be a long process, much longer than transformational processes in Central European countries. The civilizational development of society and its culture and ideological foundations have a fundamental impact on the dimension and pace of reforms. The democratization of the Romanian nation and state will depend a lot on the Western world and, above all, the European Union. Romanian society requires consistently conducted political education. The problem is whether Romanian democrats are prepared to work from the foundations. In any case, the West should give them support and extensive help. Romanian society mentally is not like the people of Central Europe. In the Romanian community, an individual and a social group, in everyday life, followed the rules adopted by the authorities. This was the case in Antonescu and Ceaușescu's times. In Romania, the authorities promoted lofty ideas, mainly to justify their power based on force.

In the countries of the Soviet bloc, particularly in Romania, it turned out that force does not necessarily serve the legitimization power. Romanian communists interpreted Marxism in all possible ways. Marxism was treated as an ideology and religion, mobilizing people to gain and maintain control. Even part of the "Romanian intelligentsia knew Marxism interpreted by the ideologists of the PCR." The communists in Romania gained power without a revolution. Such a phenomenon occurred in Central Europe. However, in the case of Romania, pro-totalitarian processes had already occurred from the interwar period. Right-wing totalitarianism was replaced by left-wing one. The existence of such processes explains why the process of democratization of society and the state will take place gradually and slowly, which will be accompanied by social unrest. One could not expect a change in the view of a country with several hundred years of history in a few years. The same people, heirs of the same past, could not change their attitudes even as a result of a sudden change of government.

In Romania, as in Russia, patrimonialism was firmly situated in the consciousness of society, on which the powers of Antonescu and Ceaușescu were based. This contributed largely to the fact that neither in Romania nor before in Russia was a European and proletarian revolution. In both cases, the dictatorship collapsed, following a revolt, coup, or civil war. Romanian governments were taken over by communists-reformers, as was the case in the USSR. Both Romanian and Soviet communists-reformers only imitated the model of a democratic state, counting on economic aid from the West. Representative bodies often performed a ceremonial function. In Romania, real power was in the hands of the president and the government. Post-communists, not as much at home as abroad, had to convince them that they had broken entirely with the Ceaușescu system. The fact was that the similarity between the Ceaușescu regime and the post-communist governments had a small formal aspect, but in fact, significant and influenced the functioning of the nation and state.

Many Romanian intellectuals and political writers, including Lucian Boia and Norman Manea, drew attention to the similarity between the regime of the “Genius of the Carpathians” and post-communist governments. They also assessed the revolt in spiritual terms and denied the possibility of a revolution in Romania. In their opinion, as well as many Romanian and foreign political scientists, society will be coming to democratic solutions for a long time. The state will not support the process because Romanian democratic politicians are also burdened with the communist past. The tragic social uprisings in December 1989 were only the initiation of a democratic reform process. The post-communist bureaucracy did not have other ways of functioning than those from the previous system. Politicians also did not encourage it to change and work for the citizens. Continued work was facilitated by the fact that officers of Ceaușescu took a significant proportion of managerial positions in the new administration.<sup>102</sup> The secret police were only partially reformed, its officers had formal and informal connections with the former Securitate. Finally, censorship did not exist formally, though in practice, it was different. Not only did government spheres want to have a significant impact on the media, but also various political and business groups.

As previously mentioned, Romanian communism collapsed as a result of a revolt combined with a coup, with the participation of the army and special forces. However, this does not exhaust the root causes. It fell first and foremost because it relied on the wrong doctrine of treating people, society, nations, individuals as subjects that could be subjected to ideological and political training. However, it is difficult to answer the question: how could such an

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<sup>102</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 365–373; A. Burakowski *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 289–296; L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomośc...*; M. Oprea, D. Deletant, *Banalitatea rãului. O istorie a Securitãții în documente 1949–1989*, Iași 2002, pp. 57–72; D. Deletant, *Ceaușescu and the Securitate. Coercion and dissent in Romania 1965–1989*, New York 1995, pp. 386–405.

absurd regime of Ceaușescu stay in power for so long? After all, he enjoyed the support of only a part of the society. The communist dictatorship in Romania lasted about half a century and collapsed within a month. Of course, its effects were seen for many years in all areas.

Similarly to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, PCR owned the state. The relationship between the communist party and the state and local authorities was particularly strong in Romania and the Soviet Union. Besides, in Romania, the authorities had an exclusive character, reminiscent of operating principles and political rules to some medieval orders or currently oligarchic corporations. Membership in the PCR, at least until the mid-1970s, was considered a privilege, and the possibility of joining it was associated with having great recommendations. Party leader Nicolae Ceaușescu was the law and defined the goals of the state and the nation. He was the most important judge, who decided on the hierarchy of interests of an individual, social group, and society at a given time. Even in the USSR, after the death of Lenin and Stalin, dictatorship of the communist type was transformed into collective and oligarchic. In Romania, the commander's system of power after the death of Gheorghiu-Dej strengthened. Ceaușescu demanded discipline, obedience, and rejected reform proposals addressed to him by the opposition and some communist politicians. He was afraid his power would weaken. Political police received extraordinary powers. To create the illusion of civic and political life, the dictator organized fictitious elections and large-scale workers' celebrations such as parades, rallies, and performances. In Romania, during the dictatorship, communist ideas were expressed in the form of mass performances. Romania was, therefore, a developed totalitarian state. Hence, the Romanian authorities treated the law only as an instrument of power. It was possible, among others, because of the sharp social and cultural divide between rural society and its Europeanizing part of the intelligentsia, entrepreneurs, and wealthy people. The communists failed to eliminate the polarization in society, which facilitated the rule of the nation.

Lack of respect for the law, the pursuit of a unification of society during the rule of Ceaușescu, but also Iliescu, to a great extent contributed to the emergence of a corrupt system that for many years after 1989 could not have been controlled by the state. The people of the old system used it, but post-communists and some former opposition members did not despise it. The first institutions to fight the prevailing corruption system were established in 2002, and in practice, anti-corruption operations began in 2006. It was not an initiative of the Romanian authorities. The Romanian authorities had to start fighting against corruption under the EU's political and economic pressure.<sup>103</sup> For some politicians from the

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<sup>103</sup> O. Aron, *Wyzwania dla rumuńskiej administracji*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 62, 63.

communists-reformers group and former democratic oppositionists, Western pressure was not unnatural. Gradually, common sense began to prevail. People with democratic ideals referred to the problem with greater understanding.

Romania in the 1990s declared itself as a Western country with Latin culture. It sought to be included in the states of Central Europe. Romanian political leaders do not want the country to be included in Eastern or Balkan Europe.<sup>104</sup> Hence, the processes of integration with the West have been given a basic rank. Since the early 2000s, a crucial factor Europeanizing the Balkan countries has been seen in Romania.

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<sup>104</sup> A. Curticăpean, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 75.

# POLITICAL IDENTITY OF ROMANIAN SOCIETY AND THE REBELLION IN 1989

The conditions for the formation of a nation and state fundamentally determine political development – its forms and level of civilization processes. In Europe, in the process of creating nations and the formation of states, ethnic, economic, and cultural relations were essential. Economic factors were important, but not as crucial as civilization and cultural ones. Considerations about their impact on socio-political processes require separate types of analysis. There are many contradictory hypotheses in the literature on this subject.<sup>105</sup> It also applies to the Romanian people.

From the Middle Ages, communication has been increasingly important. In the early modern period, geographical discoveries were of great importance for Europe, particularly its Western part. They influenced the vision of the world and the functioning of European countries. However, the local factor in the Middle Ages and the early modern period was important in shaping the community's social and political life.

Ancient history left its mark on the communities inhabiting the Balkans, and above all, in the area of today Romania. The Balkans and Romanian territory were distant from the civilizational and political centres of Europe. It affected the formation of the nation and state. First of all, it gave specific features to political consciousness, i.e., a tendency to isolate and lock themselves in their worldviews, to the principles of political culture, and to create their local ideas. To this day, Romanians argue that their origin should be associated with the Roman "tribe" which, for unknown reasons, lived in isolation from their country and developed ethnic and civilizational relations with the Dacians. Romanians strongly believe that the nation is derived from Roman-Dacian or Dacian-Roman tribal connections.<sup>106</sup> Apart from a simple set of facts and descriptions of historical occurrences, studying the genesis of the Romanian nation and state is difficult, because history, social development, and politics are mythologized by historians

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<sup>105</sup> R. Juchnowski, *Miejsce geopolityki w polskiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku*, Toruń 2018, pp. 80–195; M.W. Solarz, *O funkcjach i zadaniach geografii politycznej w świecie współczesnym*, [in:] M.W. Solarz (ed.), *Polska geografia polityczna wobec problemów i wyzwań współczesnej Polski i świata. Wybrane problemy*, Toruń 2012, pp. 28–35; A. Nowak, *History and geopolitics: A contest for Eastern Europe*, Warszawa 2008; M. Moczulski, *Geopolityka. Potęga w czasie i przestrzeni*, Warszawa 1999; K. Pomian, *Europa i jej narody*, Warszawa 1992.

<sup>106</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, pp. 39–48.

and politicians, particularly the latter ones. Emphasizing the ethnic relation to the Romans served political and propaganda goals and resulted from the Romanian complex. In this way, Romanians wanted to highlight their relationship with the West and their unique role in Southern Europe. The idea of the Roman origin of the Romanian people was particularly overused by communist propaganda throughout the rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu. Romanian principalities were also influenced by Turkey, the House of Habsburg, Poland, and Russia. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanian intelligentsia became strongly associated with French culture. Romania had always aspired to the status of a Western country and protested when it was defined as a Balkan state. Despite such references, most of the population was influenced by the Balkans. Romanians have always tried to “mute” the impact of Turkish culture on their common mentality. It was feared that this would be an argument for Romania being recognized as a typical Balkan state. It is reasonable to state that Romanian political awareness and its statehood are a mixture of Orientalism and Western progressive ideas,<sup>107</sup> which has translated into today’s political attitudes. The natural uniformity of consciousness had a significant impact on Romanian people’s political coherence until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In various historically important moments for the nation and the state, Romanians’ behaviour demonstrated it. Romanians’ attitude also resulted from regionalism, from weakly outlined differences between the village and the city, which was and is visible in everyday life. It is also significant that Romanian people, like no other in Central and Western Europe, were shaped by the nation-state’s centralized power. As Lucian Boia wrote, it is not surprising that “federalism is treated as suspicious in Romania as any decentralization.”<sup>108</sup>

For centuries Romanian society was politically divided. The division was to have a negative impact on the statehood and national uniformity. Consequently, it would affect the political attitudes of Romanians and the difficult democratization of the state. The political position of Romanians was revealed during the revolt in 1989. The rebellion of the society was directed against political elites gathered around the Ceaușescu family, not against the system.

For a short period, the political myth of the Dacian-Roman world was criticized in Romania. We had been dealing with this from the mid-1950s. However, it did not gain much recognition among the Romanian community. Even manipulating the sources and describing the Dacians as free people fighting Roman imperialism and representing the fight as the one between the classes did not change the stereotype much. Historical policy changed when Ceaușescu came to power. Propaganda in the mid-1970s already clearly reflected this fact.

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<sup>107</sup> V. Georgescu, *The Romanians. A history*, Columbus, OH, 1991, pp. 61–72; A. Rosetti, *Brève histoire de la langue roumaine des origines à nos jours*, The Hague–Paris 1973, pp. 21–23.

<sup>108</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomość...*, pp. 24, 120–126.

Past rhetoric was given a different narrative – class, and nationalist. The history of the Dacians is a history of patriotism, struggle against external domination, and social divisions which the neighbours and Rome wanted to strengthen. The propaganda and official teaching of the Ceaușescu era no longer referred to the Roman origin of Romanians. First of all, the nation was identified with the Dacian tribes. Romanians were to be organized Dacians that fought against the Romans. This was to lead to the conclusion that the Romanian people and their contribution to the development of democracy on the continent were highly influential in the ancient history of Southern Europe.<sup>109</sup>

Emphasizing the importance of Romanians in the civilizational development of Europe, giving the centralized state great significance for the development of the nation, and referring to the class and ethnic struggle against Rome, left its mark on the character of the '89 uprisings. The reformer-oriented part of the nomenclatura took a position that all changes should be made by political elites which must take into account the interest of society. Hence, a revolt and a coup together. The attitude severely limited the chance of a revolution and then took the form of rebellion against the dictatorial rule of the “Genius of the Carpathians” team. It also explains the weakness of the anti-communist opposition which was at odds and poorly organized compared to Central European countries. The average Romanian kept in mind that the political majority dominates over the statistical majority.

Slavic-Romanian issues are interestingly described in the literature. Romanian historians, journalists, and politicians, regardless of their ideological and political views, believed the Slavs did not significantly influence the Romanian nation's civilizational development. It was mainly contained in 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature. Rehabilitation of the role of the Slavs did not happen until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the part of Young Turks movement. Until the end of World War II and the seizure of power by Romanian Bolshevik, there was a dispute in the literature about Slavic influences on Romanian statehood's genesis. It was about the rule of the Bulgarian state for three centuries over part of the Romanian lands. At the time numerous elements from the life of the Slavs, their cultural gains, and, above all, the system of political organizations got into Romanian society.<sup>110</sup> Anti-Slavism was to emphasize the sovereignty of the state and ideological pro-Western direction. Romanian elites associated Slavdom with political and economic submission. After World War I, anti-Slavism was clearly weakened among Bucharest politicians. However, in their political concepts, they continued to emphasize the Dacian-Roman origin of Romanians,

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<sup>109</sup> I.H. Crișan, *Burebista și epoca sa*, București 1977, pp. 180–446; *Programul Partidului Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism*, București, 1975, p. 27.

<sup>110</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomośc...*, pp. 137–139; P.P. Panaitescu, *Problema originii clasei boeresti*, [in:] *idem, Interpretari românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială*, București 1994, pp. 30–59.

while the state model was acquired from the Slavs.<sup>111</sup> It is obvious that historians and political scientists have clearly overused the ideas and methodological principles of the “Annales School”.

In the era of Ion Antonescu, rural Romanian nationalism was influenced by the young intellectual generation and assumed the character of national messianism. It was about fulfilling the national aspirations and dreams of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, making “Greater Romania” real.<sup>112</sup> Antonescu’s authoritarian regime, combined with the idea of political messianism, strengthened Romanian society’s conviction about the necessity of a symbiosis between nation and state. This state of consciousness would be used by communists, particularly during the rule of Ceaușescu. Romanian communists were able to skilfully combine national, nationalist, and communist values. Political writers from the Ceaușescu period sought to create an ideological synthesis that would combine national, communist, and Western European values. Mainly, it was to serve propaganda purposes.<sup>113</sup> Until the 1970s, Romania was implementing the Soviet model of communism. In practice, it operated longer compared to the countries of Central Europe. There were two main reasons for these differences, namely: Romanian society was rural, the role of socialist parties since the interwar period was negligible.<sup>114</sup> Romanians’ political sensitivity was of a character that can be described as right-wing folk, or Christian-national. Hence, even Romanian socialists had to expose the model of “peasant democracy” in their theoretical assumptions. After World War II, the communist authorities “messed” with Romanians’ political consciousness, although without violating general populist-national attitudes. Rural populism “moved” from villages to cities. With the country’s industrialization, the new “leading” social class, i.e., the working class, could not break free from the rural mentality until the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This mindset made it possible for the communists to seize power. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, politically influenced rural-urban populism connected with the system of values resulting from the Romanian variant of Bolshevism emerged. Such attitudes were revealed during the coup and revolt in 1989. There were no Western values instead in the process, mainly in international policy issues. The relationship expressed in the form of independence from the USSR and Russia was more theoretical and narrative than real. The authorities quickly

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<sup>111</sup> More in: E. Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, București 1972; A. Oțetea (ed.), *Istoria poporului român*, București 1970; M. Constantinescu, C. Daicaiciu, S. Pastru (eds.), *Istoria româniei*, București 1969.

<sup>112</sup> P.P. Panaitescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–63.

<sup>113</sup> More in: D. Barcan, B. Sterpu, *op. cit.*; C. Sawa, C. Constantis, *Libersiure, revoluție*, București 1998.

<sup>114</sup> More in: M. Bielawski, *Teologia rumuńska w pięciu odłonach*, Bydgoszcz 1999; W.M. Bacon, *Nicolae Titulescu și politica externă României 1933–1934*, Iași 1999; T. Saudu, *Le système de sécurité français en Europe centre-orientale – l'exemple roumain 1919–1933*, Paris 1999; C. Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, București 1998; J. Demel, *op. cit.*



convinced the public of such a policy and imagination that overinterpreted the importance of Romania on the international stage.

The mentality and political life of the society were determined by Byzantinism, right-wing and communist dictatorship, rural and communist populism, and Christian and Bolshevik nationalism. After 1945, two doctrines intertwined: a nationalist and a Romanian Bolshevism, which at the beginning of the 1970s adopted communist-nationalist symmetry. Its ideological basis was collectivism and the absolutist role of the state. However, the part of the individual was degraded.<sup>115</sup> The individual disappeared as a value from Romanian political thought. The exception was the ruler – the class and national “anointed” leader.<sup>116</sup>

The Balkan Peninsula rather was not diverse in terms of civilization and culture. The Balkans, to a great extent, influenced Romanians. Romanian tribes were also influenced by Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine cultures, and the elements of their value systems were always revealed when it came to state and power. The Byzantine part had an overwhelming social impact in the Balkans in shaping forms of exercising power. Romanian statehood did not resist this influence. The mythologization of state power impacted society that treated power and state as God’s goods. People could not question them but had to surrender to their will. Karol Modzelewski writes that “classical culture is easier to recognize in the Hellenistic civilization of Byzantium than in the states of Charlemagne, or Otto I.”<sup>117</sup> Not only classical but also barbaric cultures influenced Balkan Europe and Romania’s ideological pattern. Christianization partly linked the Balkan society with the culture and model of the Latin state. However, it is not certain that the extent of Byzantine influence on the Balkan Peninsula was pervasive. The Balkans and Romanian lands were a specific field of a clash between Hellenistic and Byzantine values and those of Roman political thought.<sup>118</sup> Slavic values also impacted the functioning of the authorities in Romanian principalities, where the individual’s role was appreciated within the community.<sup>119</sup> Slavic rallies were a remedy for the lack of state institutions. But, as it might seem, this social organization led to the emergence of freedom, equality, and justice. The ideas emerged in the Romanian social consciousness in organizational form only in the 1930s, which paradoxically facilitated the seizure of power by Romanian fascists and Bolsheviks and contributed to

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<sup>115</sup> E. Simion, *Mit, mitizare, și demitizare*, “Curentul” 1999, July 22; D. Bartu, *Destinul colectiv, servitutea involuntară, nefericirea totalitară: trei mituri ale comunismului românesc*, [in:] I. Boia (ed.), *Miturile comunismului românesc*, București 1998, pp. 170–200.

<sup>116</sup> J. Juchnowski, *Istota państwa w zachodnioeuropejskiej myśli politycznej. Od polis do państwa narodowego*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 11–27; J. Marzęcki, *Systemy religijno-filozoficzne Wschodu*, Warszawa 1999; I.P. McGreal, *Wielcy myśliciele Wschodu*, Warszawa 1997.

<sup>117</sup> K. Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*, Warszawa 2004, p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8; W.R. Jones, *The image of the barbarian in Medieval Europe*, “Comparatives Studies in Society and History” 1971, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 370–404.

<sup>119</sup> G. Castellana, *A history of the Romanians*, New York 1989, pp. 15–41.

the bloody coup in 1989. Even during the revolt, there were great differences between the cultural elites and the majority of society. The elites themselves were inadequate, without a proper understanding of democracy, had complexes and were ideologically poor. This division was not only the result of social processes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its genesis dates back to the Middle Ages.

Byzantine's values and principles of functioning of society in the country were reflected in Eastern Europe's organizational solutions and the Balkan Peninsula. This facilitated the development of a strong relationship between the community and the state regarding the assumed goals and a shared national and international political vision.<sup>120</sup>

The political culture of Slavic and Germanic peoples was low in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, there were many misunderstandings and internal disputes over the creation of statehood modelled on the Roman Empire between the barbarian communities and the Roman state. The Balkan peoples and the Romanian community did not deal with such problems. In the early Middle Ages, the Orthodox Church was auxiliary in solving the problems of the organization of the state. Its doctrine identified secular power with spiritual power. The unity of the Orthodox Church and the state influenced Romanians' political culture, which fundamentally limited all kinds of revolts against the authorities, thereby setting conditions for absolutism and even tyranny.<sup>121</sup> In the initial phase of the establishment of barbaric countries, including the South-Slavic ones, the monarch was only a tribal chief. There was no administration apparatus. The collectivist tradition meant that by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Central and Southeast Europe, social and political changes did not occur quickly, as was the case in the West. In Eastern and Southeast Europe, and even in Central Europe, feudal principles began to function late. The maintenance of tribal principles did not create conditions for feudal democracy. The so-called spirit of Byzantinism and the Orthodox Church contributed to this. First of all, we deal with this phenomenon in Russian, Balkan, and Romanian territories. The political fate of the Balkan states and Romanian principalities turned out differently than in Central Europe. The political traditions of the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the High Porte also had an influence here.

The Christianization of the Slavs was the beginning of political changes and had the aspects of a social revolution. It destroyed the old order, and above all, the Eastern Orthodox Church gave the new rule an oriental character.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> K. Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*, p. 115; B. Zientara, *Historia powstania Średniowiecza*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 145-155.

<sup>121</sup> J. Kłoczkowski, *Młodsza Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza*, Warszawa 1998; K. Modzelewski, *Europa romańska, Europa feudalna, Europa barbara*, "Buletyn dell'ISIME", 1995-1996, no. 10; W. Wipszycka, *Kościół w świecie późnego antyku*, Warszawa 1994; H. Łowmiański, *Religia Słowian i jej upadek*, Warszawa 1979.

<sup>122</sup> S. Bylina, R. Kiersnowski, S.K. Kuczyński, H. Samsonowicz, J. Szymański, H. Zaremska (eds.), *Kościół, kultura, społeczeństwo. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych*, Warszawa

Christianity in the Eastern rite brought the values that indicated the need for the society to submit to the privileged elite and ruler. Karol Modzelewski accurately described the continent's political and government development by writing: "The balance of interactions between classical and traditional Barbaricum cultures is very different, and this diversity is present in today's Europe. It was and is, sometimes, a source of divisions and tensions."<sup>123</sup> Modzelewski's statements aptly reflect Romania's social and political past and present.

Romanians were not a classic eastern orthodox nation. They also referred to Western values. However, the Romanian state was dominated by political and administrative solutions typical of the Balkan countries. In the Middle Ages, faith and religious policy related to it played a different role than today. Romania was not a "Latin island" but became an ideological and political conglomerate.<sup>124</sup> We have been dealing with this phenomenon to this day, as evidenced by the socio-political situation. Hence, it is difficult to define the uprisings of December 1989. Neither it was a revolution, nor a peaceful form of transformation was possible. The events of December 1989 took on a specific logic that can be described journalistically as a "small revolution." The Marxist revolution has never been in the Balkans and Romanian lands.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Romanian statehood was outlined in the form of the Principality of Wallachia and Moldova's Principality. The differences in political solutions adopted in these countries reflected the specific differences between Roman and Byzantine political thought. They were most visible until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The occurrence of such a situation contributed to the imbalance in awareness of Romanians, which lasted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and would contribute to the emergence of a strong political complex. That is why from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian political thought, the individualistic path of social development of Romanians was promoted. It ensured them independence, while the countries of Central Europe lost it. However, it did not stabilize the political development of the principalities. Anarchist element and cultural hybridity, which combines Byzantine values with Western European and Turkish ones, were visible in Romanian political life. That is why quite a great deal of fatalism was preserved in Romanian consciousness.<sup>125</sup> As a result of ideological and political eclecticism, social groups are often strongly polarized and do not have enough faith in democracy. Romanians remain in this state of political awareness.

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2000; A. Brückner, *Mitologia słowiańska i polska*, Warszawa 1980, pp. 39–102; J. Matuszewski, *Słowiański tydzień. Geneza, struktura, nomenklatura*, Łódź 1978, pp. 78–87.

<sup>123</sup> K. Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*, p. 464.

<sup>124</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomość...*, p. 24; *idem*, *Dlaczego Rumunia ...*, pp. 69–130.

<sup>125</sup> *Idem*, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, pp. 74–76; C.A. Stoica, V. Mihailescu (eds.), *Iarna vrajbei noastre. Protestele din România, ianuarie – februarie 2012*, București 2012; D. Obolensky, *Bizantijskaya obšnost. Istočna Europa 500–1453*, Sofia 2001, pp. 402–436.

The state played a unique role in the awareness of Romanian society because it led to ethnic and political unity. The country has become an antidote to political fatalism. Therefore, the institutions of the state were treated with respect. If there were signs of dissatisfaction with the government, particular people were blamed.<sup>126</sup> For many centuries, Byzantium was the model for Romanians to a greater extent than Bulgaria or Turkey. However, Romanian feudal lords did not display this pattern of power. Byzantium was an enemy to Romanian princes and threatened their independence.<sup>127</sup> The attitude of Romanian rulers was understandable because Byzantium threatened the foundations of Romanian society. The military conquest of Romanian principalities could lead to denationalization. Byzantium dominated in the Balkan Peninsula not only militarily and economically, but also culturally and ideologically. It was the centre of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Eastern European countries treated Constantinople as the second Rome.<sup>128</sup> Romanians found themselves on the ideological border between Imperial Constantinople and papal Rome. From the perspective of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Romanians were torn between ideologies, which did not serve to stabilize Romanian political awareness. Being a border country between the East and West of Europe, the Romanian people feared for their independence. These fears accompanied Romanians until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Romanian society, shaped by Byzantine influences, there was a cult of the leader and respect for educated, talented people who enjoyed authority. The Romanian political mindset also had an impact on "homeliness." These values and principles were used by the communists, reaching the apogee for Ceaușescu's dictatorship.

From the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ottoman, Polish, and Moscow influences intersected in today's Romania. Turkish influence harmed the economy of the Balkans and Romanian principalities. The economic crisis of that period delayed civilizational processes and ideological and political integration with the West.<sup>129</sup> The political thought of the Renaissance and Baroque did not reach the Balkan countries. Societies inhabiting the Balkans revolted throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Political and economic reforms in Turkey did not take place until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Still, they were slow and insufficient at the beginning of the economic and industrial revolution. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Czech and Hungarian influences in Wallachia and Moldova increased.<sup>130</sup> From then

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<sup>126</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–21; M. Bărbulescu, D. Deletant, K. Hitchins, Ș. Papacostea, P. Teodor, *Istoria României*, București 1998, pp. 19–44.

<sup>127</sup> R. Komsalowa, *Procesy zjednoczeniowe w Europie Południowo-Wschodniej a bałkańska elita polityczna w okresie średniowiecza*, [in:] E. Znamierowska-Rakk (ed.), *Integracja i tożsamość narodowa w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej na przestrzeni dziejów. Z prac polsko-bułgarskiej komisji historycznej*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

<sup>129</sup> Z. Wójcik, *Historia powszechna XVI-XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 261, 262.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 529.

on, the influence of Central European countries more strongly has influenced the political consciousness of Romanian aristocracy. Romanian political scientists and historians tried to deny the existence of this process. First of all, it was evident in the works of the 1970s. Statements expressing the integrity of Romanians with Slavic countries came up in the 1950s and 1960s, i.e., in the era of total dependence on the USSR. In this regard, Gheorghiu-Dej stated:

The events that followed World War II have fully confirmed Stalin's brilliant words. For some Central and Southeast European countries, the victory of the Soviet Army meant liberation from Hitler's fascism and liberation from imperialism. That is why the working masses of Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania rightly consider their liberation by the Soviet Union as a decisive factor in the creation and development of the system of people's democracy, they consider friendship and alliance with the Soviet state as an invaluable achievement.<sup>131</sup>

From the moment of the strengthening of the position by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the special and original path of development of civilization and, above all, the Romanian political society was emphasized. It was about stressing the importance of the cult of personality in the oriental aspect, taking into account the general conditions of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The element of the worship of the leader in Romanian terms resulted from a specific ideological and political mixture. It included mainly Russian, Bolshevik, Ottoman, and Western elements. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a clear epistemological and axiological reevaluation. Western values appealed only to the intelligentsia. They had little impact on political and moral attitudes of most Romanians' who still had a rural mentality.<sup>132</sup> Even political decisions causing Romanian entry into the European diplomacy circle, in 1848, 1879 and 1918, did not fundamentally change the attitude of most Romanians. On the other hand, the idea of the unity of Wallachia, Moldova, and Transylvania within one state was strengthened.<sup>133</sup>

The interwar period also was not conducive to changing political thinking of the Romanian nation. The parliamentary system in Romania lasted only 20 years, which means that there was not even one generation living in it. In 1938, the political system assumed the dimension of royal dictatorship. The Romanians, the educated strata, did a lot to break away from the East and turn to the West. But, as it turned out, it was insufficient. There was not strong support from state institutions to count on. It was an unfavourable period for expressing democratic attitudes at the same time it provided the conditions for developing nationalism and fascism ideas. So, Romania began to balance politically as a state. As Lucian

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<sup>131</sup> G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, pp. 616, 617.

<sup>132</sup> W. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-35; C. Durandin, *Histoire de la nation roumaine*, Paris 1994, pp. 45-51.

<sup>133</sup> C. Durandin, *Histoire de la nation...*, pp. 72-76.

Boia wrote: "Romanian space appears a borderland space."<sup>134</sup> Romanian states have always been situated on the outskirts of civilization influence, and even today, Bucharest is in the complicated interest of the European Union.

Romania was a place where different influences crossed – ranging from Turkish to Western European. Romanian society, overwhelmed by this, often withdrew itself, making an area of parochialism, easily yielding extreme ideas and extreme politics, i.e., fascism and communism. Europeanism, Russian Orientalism, and autochthonism are an expression of the attitudes of even modern society. Part of the Romanian intelligentsia was also affected. Hence, nowadays, we are dealing with the weak political condition of the nation "which in relations with neighbours, not only with the West, created in the modern consciousness of Romanians an inferiority complex and, understandably, various tactics to compensate for it."<sup>135</sup> This phenomenon also occurred in Central Europe, but definitely to a lesser extent. Hence, the countries of this region were not characterized by fatalism; on the contrary – it was optimism. Romanians with their fatalism and ideological and political conglomerate tolerated the cult of personality, which began its march in 1938, i.e., from Antonescu and continued to the dictatorship of Ceaușescu. Romanian political culture created conditions for a fascist and communist dictatorship. Even the current adoption of the Western political system is mostly formal. It has a low impact on contemporary political life.<sup>136</sup> It is a typical situation for rural society. Before World War II, 80% of the population lived in the country. The transformation of a village into a city after World War II, mainly in the Ceaușescu era, did not bring far-reaching changes in the average Romanian political mindset.

The rural socio-political vision excluded liberal solutions, and even the Soviet model. It had his opponents among Romanian communists due to the too-soft practical form towards his opponents and, in their opinion, extensive self-governance. For the most part, the communist party, taking over power in the state, was not mostly ethnically Romanian. The Bolshevik regime was imposed on Romanians by force, insidiously, and through criminal actions. In addition, the unity of the rural society combined with parochialism has contributed to weak resistance to the imposition of an undemocratic and anachronistic system. The objections, considering poorly educated and rural communities, were not raised regularly and were ambiguous in terms of ideology.<sup>137</sup>

Gheorghiu-Dej was already aware of the ideologically and politically unstable opposition. It was demonstrated by the reforms carried out by the communist from the so-called liberal environment. As early as in October 1945, during the National Conference of the Romanian Communist Party, Gheorghiu-Dej stated:

<sup>134</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, p. 16.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 74.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 101; K. Hitchins, *Romania 1866–1947*, Oxford 1994, pp. 368–401.

<sup>137</sup> See: H.L. Roberts, *Rumania. Political problems of an agrarian state*, London 1951.

At that time, a significant part of the People's Democratic Front joined the National Peasant's Party, headed by Anton Alexandrescu, constituting a progressive faction of that party. Later [...] the People's Democratic Front ensured the cooperation of Gheorghe Tătărescu, chairman of the National Liberal Party.<sup>138</sup>

These statements would require critical commentary, but this indicated the existing political chaos among democratic groups and the lack of rigid attitudes in the opposition's leadership. Opposition parties against PCR could not even take advantage of the communist organizational weakness when seizing power in the state.<sup>139</sup> They did not even lead to the end of the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. The communists took advantage of the dispute and the fight for the faithful. In 1948 in an uprising on the occasion of the return of the Romanian government delegation from Moscow, the General Secretary of the PCR said: "We are convinced that the position of the Catholic clergy contrary to the interests of the entire nation, including Catholics themselves, cannot remain indifferent, nor for the clergy of the Eastern Orthodox Church or the faithful Catholics themselves."<sup>140</sup> The statement was an announcement of activities aimed at convincing the rural population of communist ideas. The leadership of the communist party knew that they had to take advantage of the situation of the political neglect of the village by the previous authorities. The conflict between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church was to serve this purpose. In 1948 Gheorghiu-Dej mentioned this situation in his uprising in Bucharest during an election meeting.<sup>141</sup> Again negligence, this time from the democratic camp, was revealed in 1989. Social revolts in Romania had to have an organized form, which was used by the communists reformers. The spontaneity of the uprisings did not have much political significance, did not reach smaller cities, and above all the villages. If the phenomenon of a strong relationship between the inhabitants of villages and cities is considered, then it is realized that all actions against the "Genius of the Carpathians" had to be organized. The spontaneous actions of the opposition did not bring much effect. In Europe, every revolution had elements of spontaneity, even to a lesser extent during the revolution in Russia. The weakness of the opposition and its lack of interest in the communities of smaller towns and villages, which constituted the majority of citizens of the state, influenced the extravagant manner of carrying out the reforms in 1989 and 1990, and in practice had little political and economic significance compared to changes in Central European countries. However, Romanians and even the opposition welcomed them with high hopes. The low

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<sup>138</sup> G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 166.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 192.

level of awareness of society, including differences of views related to ethnicity, influenced the imperfection of democratic reforms.<sup>142</sup>

Post-war Romania was associated with the so-called French myth and referred to some Western European political thought values. From the time of the Gheorghiu-Dej rule, the society had been indoctrinated with models of first Yugoslav social and political solutions along with the Soviet ones, and after 1990, Serbian ones. The democratic opposition did not fully consider the existence of three political life models in the consciousness of society: eastern (Bolshevik), Balkan-Yugoslav, and Western. This made it difficult for the opposition to provide one transparent and democratic system solution. Lucian Boia described this state as transitional, writing: "Contemporary Romanian civilization is a civilization of a transitional state, hence the hectic search for someone else's offers and the simultaneous fear that contact with strangers will deprive us of many things, hence a mixture of fascination and aversion, in other words – obsession with strangeness."<sup>143</sup> This state of affairs has lasted to this day, and post-communists and democrats got involved in its consolidation. Romanian democracy cannot free itself from the shackles of the past, and nowadays, writers and political leaders are not in favour of leaving this "vicious circle." A turning point in the political consciousness of Romanians is necessary. Without the help of the European Union and European democratic associations, the current society cannot cope, and social uprisings in an expressive and silent form will contribute to the degradation of state institutions.

The myth of conspiracy is the most common category in the modern consciousness of Romanians. It has historical justifications. Romania had a complex of besieged fortress even to a greater extent than Poles did. While the Poles gradually got rid of it after 1945, Romanian society strengthened the belief.<sup>144</sup> The political conspiracy was also rooted in opposition political thought. What is more, in the way it worked, it was more accessible for communists-reformers to carry out a coup and introduce "soft" initial democratic changes. The meeting in Malta in 1989 convinced the communists-reformers of the possibility of prolonging political changes. In turn, some opposition was convinced that the Bush-Gorbachev meeting had the character of a new grand post-Yalta conspiracy against Central Europe, the Balkans, and Romania. Romanian society and its political elites did not notice in this meeting a sign of the necessity of reforms and fitting the state in the ideological and political system of the West.

Romanian political culture was also based on compromise and clientelism as well as on the values developed by the social and political history of the

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<sup>142</sup> See: H. Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, București 2011; V. Michăilescu, *op. cit.*; V. Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for all seasons. A political history of Romanian Communism*, Berkley 2003; A. Mungiu, *op. cit.*

<sup>143</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Știință și conștiință...*, p. 214.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 220, 221.



nation.<sup>145</sup> In the context of the values, power could be absolutized. Therefore, Nicolae Ceaușescu could use the principles of political culture and hesitation of opposition to the fight against totalitarianism. The slow pace of social change also resulted from this cultural phenomenon. The very course of the rebellion was an expression of compromise and involvement of state and military authorities.

One of the complications to the influence of the opposition and taking over the leadership of social uprisings was the idea of a superpower rooted in Romanians' minds. State propaganda, particularly from the 1970s, instilled into society the conviction of Romania's power position. Society could not infinitely repel aggressive indoctrination, especially being at a low European cultural and political level. Hence, for the sake of comfort, slogans about Romania as the legitimate heir of the fallen Byzantine Empire were accepted.<sup>146</sup> Consequently, this idea sunk into the political mindset. There was also the Romanian idea of Rome III, which assumed that Romania, as a European and regional power, should strive to integrate the Balkans, creating a Slavic-Byzantine community with the peninsula countries. This community should be based on shared ideological, political, and economic principles. Already during the reign of Gheorghiu-Dej, the idea of high power and integration was popular, and its origins date back to World War II. It developed during the time of Ceaușescu's rule.<sup>147</sup> The "Genius of the Carpathians" wanted to enter and shine on the international arena, also assuming the role of a conciliator in Southeast Europe. Low political awareness helped convince the majority of society to a totalitarian order for the good of the global position in Europe and the world. At the same time, in 1989, the propaganda ideas had an impact on limited uprisings. In Romania, Ceaușescu and the communist party clearly referred to national and even nationalist values, and in such a way, they would dominate the whole of social and family life. The Securitate had significant achievements in this respect.<sup>148</sup> Considering the ratio of the number of members to the number of the adult population of the country, the Romanian Communist Party was the biggest communist party from the 1970s. Various environmental and regional interests crossed in its bodies, which is why membership benefits depended on opportunism, cynicism, the so-called cunning, and self-preservation – combined with cowardice and philistinism. The shaping of society by Gheorghiu-Dej and then Ceaușescu led to the destruction of Romanian communism. The origin of

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<sup>145</sup> A. Curticăpean, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–76; S. Denca, *Orientacja proeuropejska w rumuńskiej polityce zagranicznej po 1989 roku*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, p. 99; P. Opris, *Transformacja rumuńskich Sił Zbrojnych w kontekście zmian w polityce obronnej Rumunii (lata 1989–2009)*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, p. 127; M. Kurczewski, *Rumunia. Koniec Złotej Epoki*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 130–178.

<sup>146</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>147</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 162–165; R. Komsalowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 31; P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata...*, pp. 18–21; G. Gheorghiu-Dej, *op. cit.*, pp. 400, 401.

<sup>148</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 34.

communist leaders influenced the situation. They were the classical sons of their nation, without education and political experience, without diplomatic reflexes and understanding of the modern world. Their oriental cunning turned out to be insufficient to hold a totalitarian form of power. Based on the synthesis of the values of Stalinism and nationalism, the government was to lead to the creation of a “new democracy,” and turned out to be a utopia. Even the procedures leading to the replacement of the terrorized, authentic intelligentsia with a grotesque substitute of a well-paid “elite,” with a controlled range of contestation, failed. Human poverty made Romania move away from European civilization. Romanians ceased to understand Western and even Central Europe, and likewise.

Western and Central Europe could not understand the evolution of Romanian communism towards democracy. Especially that Stalinism collapsed even in the USSR. The mobilization of Romanian society from the 1970s to the 1990s was based on models from Lenin and Stalin’s times, i.e., not even based on the values of Marxism, but on personal symbolism.<sup>149</sup> Even the economy was not to be based on economic determinism but state voluntarism. In the political consciousness, historical politics created a “communist pantheon” from Spartacus, through Dacian kings and lords, Robespierre, and to the initiators of communist ideology and other leading politicians did help neither Ceaușescu nor Iliescu to stay in power. This form of political and propaganda activities resulted from the superpower and nationalist aspirations of the leaders of the PCR and the uncertainty about the retention of power by the communists-reformers. The communist party in Romania was the weakest in the Soviet bloc in terms of ideology and content. The party leaders realized that their socio-political activities must strengthen the power transferred to it by the Soviet army. The complex of the lack of legitimacy combined with the lack of staff to rule the state forced Romanian Bolsheviks to formulate a slogan about the unique role of the Romanian state in Europe in political, economic, and cultural terms.<sup>150</sup> Ceaușescu was convincing that Romania was high power, but did not change the fact that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the country was a mixture of urban and rustic culture. This mindset continues up to this day. It should be noted that the idea of a native civilization strengthened the communist authorities, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

The mythologization of the “communist pantheon” also gave the Romanian rebellion a socially limited character. Central Europe did not know such a phenomenon; hence the political changes were not as formal as in Romania. The changes were in the form of a radical transformation. In the mind of the

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<sup>149</sup> See: L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, pp. 420–443; V. Georgescu, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români. 1944–1977*, București 1991.

<sup>150</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 118, 119, 154–161, 166–171; A. Koryn, *Rumunia w polityce wielkich mocarstw 1944–1947*, Wrocław 1983, pp. 58, 59, 99, 100.

average Romanian, the national hero was a figure who stood at the forefront of national unity. The unity of the nation, respect for leaders, and power, in general, were specific qualities of Romanian political consciousness in a historical and contemporary dimension.<sup>151</sup> The mythologization of the “communist pantheon” referred in content and form to the mythology of the Iron Guard. The fascist movement referred to such values as family, an affirmation of Roman spirituality, unity of the nation and state principles, the idea of right-wing rebellion, martyrdom of political figures. Ideology was the religion. Those were the values quickly adopted by Romanian communism. For most Romanians, the impression was created by the communists’ continuation of pre-war nationalist and romantic ideas. Only monarchs and right-wing politicians were withdrawn from the pantheon and replaced with “red” heroes who began to write a new history of the country.<sup>152</sup> On the part of the Romanian Bolsheviks, it was a political game also played in other Soviet bloc countries. In Romania, it was used particularly intensively. In the Ceaușescu era, it took a vulgarized form, as historical figures were combined with the presidential couple, emphasizing the unity of their goals. Everything served the so-called “brainwashing” of the average citizen and shaping the awareness of the need for submission to power, which primary goal is and will be the good of the nation and the state. The identification of the past and present, ideologically and politically, and the affirmation of leftist politicians brought the communists’ desired results. Especially because it was a rural society. Romanian intelligentsia combined the monarchist, republican, rural populism, and recognition of the Roman West’s values. It could not break free from recognizing the strength and leadership role of the “white” or “red” unit. Especially that from 1958, the course towards intelligentsia became more severe. The mass arrests took place from December 1958 to January 1960 at the time of offensive propaganda for the nationalization of communism.<sup>153</sup> Bolshevik internationalism was replaced by Romanian communist nationalism. It should be noted that the West well received the changes. Politicians of the democratic West received Nicolae Ceaușescu. Under their influence, they introduced a thaw for people of culture, which was noticed from the beginning of 1963. It had an impact on the ideological and political disruption of Romanian society and even creative intelligentsia. Consequently, these actions of the authorities hindered the mobilization of opponents of the “red” regime and gave social protests a local character. Thanks to the army and communists-reformers, the uprisings of December ’89 went nationwide. During the uprisings, it was difficult to count on intellectual elites, some of whom in the

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<sup>151</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. ŚwiadomośĆ...*, p. 264.

<sup>152</sup> M.L. Murgescu, *Galeria națională de personaje istorice*, [in:] L. Boia (ed.), *Mituri istorice românești*, București 1995, pp. 42–77.

<sup>153</sup> S. Tănase, *Anatomia mistificării*, București 2003, pp. 209, 210; V. Georgescu, *Politica și istorie...*, pp. 34–36.

70s were willing to collaborate with the dictator's regime. The creative elites of the 1960s, 1970s, and even the 1980s cannot be compared with the elites of the 1950s and 1960s, often representing almost European level.

The so-called revolution of the young intelligentsia in the West and the events related to the Prague Spring in 1968 and student uprisings in Poland influenced the tightening of the course towards the intelligentsia and society whole. Adam Burakowski aptly defined the political state introduced by Ceaușescu, writing:

So one can risk the statement that the other members of the administration and the middle-level apparatus were also interested, at least to some point, in such a system evolution. The cult of the leader, imposed from top-down, and the lack of any internal discussion enabled the party apparatus to copy the pattern from the headquarters in the field - i.e., constantly strengthening its position, extreme nepotism, and lack of responsibility. The system led to economic and social collapse, but for a long time allowed both Ceaușescu himself and his counterparts at lower levels to lead a prosperous life without the slightest responsibility for the state of the country and individual regions.<sup>154</sup>

So, there was political and moral destruction, concerning almost the entire society. Both sides - the rulers and the opposition - ended up in a social and political low point and could not get out of it until the 1990s.

Since the end of World War II Romanian society has been accustomed to a low standard of living. Until the 1960s, Romania's standard of life did not differ from the conditions in the Soviet bloc countries. Stability at a low level and guaranteed jobs have proved to be a sufficient asset for internal peace for a long time. Political freedom was a secondary issue for rural society. So Romanian communism did not collapse for political reasons. The main reasons were economic problems, extreme impoverishment of the nation, lack of essential goods in stores, which could no longer be supplied by the family in the countryside. "In Romania, the communist economy collapsed under its weight: too much steel! Too much cement! Too much utopia."<sup>155</sup> Too much particularism and irresponsibility.

The characteristics of the Ceaușescus were also important. They contributed to the way of exercising power and giving Romanian communism exploitative features and a criminal aspect. As the authors have already mentioned, the middle-level party-government apparatus was for some time interested in this form of using power.<sup>156</sup> Only social unrest in Central Europe in the 1980s caused reflection in some communist dignitaries who were afraid of losing their power. The weak Romanian opposition has also made progress in consolidating its ranks and has established broader contacts with Western democratic centres.

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<sup>154</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, p. 135.

<sup>155</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, p. 443.

<sup>156</sup> P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata...*, pp. 25-28.

It was also the reaction to the tightening of political and administrative activities towards creative intelligentsia. This is evidenced by the plenum's decisions of the Romanian Communist Party of November 3–5, 1975.<sup>157</sup> It is difficult to say to what extent the “small cultural revolution” was conducted under the influence of a visit to China, and to what extent it was affected by fears related to uprisings of the young intelligentsia in Europe in 1968. The so-called small cultural revolution of the 1970s encompassed party activists of the highest and middle level belonging to the intelligentsia. There was a rotation of employees and the appointment of ordinary but fully committed to the “Genius of the Carpathians” people in high positions.<sup>158</sup> On the one hand, the Ceaușescu clan was strengthened; on the other, the quality of exercising power over the centralized state declined. In this situation, the democratically oriented intelligentsia and the party elite adopted the wait-and-see tactic which involves silencing political activity. Political threads were omitted even in the art. First of all, the oriental way of exercising power and the oriental style of conducting international politics were not criticized. This second sphere of Ceaușescu's activity was difficult to criticize; it was a definite asset of the rulers. Romanian society was satisfied with the reception of their leader by the highest-ranking Western politicians. However, it did not realize that it was paying a low standard of living for it. The dream of Romania as a European and regional power has been shared by many community members. The criticism of Ceaușescu's international policy was not favoured by the crisis of 1977 when problems with the Hungarian minority emerged, and a wave of mining strikes followed. The power of the Ceaușescu clan began to weaken. Party dignitaries had to deal with current economic affairs. The conviction about the spontaneous revolutionary collapse of the regime was established among the opposition. Especially that state leadership decided to consistently implement the plan of significant investments, which led to a sharp economic crisis in 1978. However, what was worse, the central authorities had no intention to recover from the economic collapse and did not know the actual condition of the economy. In other Soviet bloc countries, a first countermeasure was used, namely – strengthening control in the economic sphere and disciplining the society with the help of police, administration, and media techniques. The actions taken did not bring any positive effects, so corruption, embezzlement, and faster than before the enrichment of party dignitaries were growing in the country.<sup>159</sup>

Regarding the above, the question arises: was the see-and-wait tactic applied by the democratic opposition justified? It can be presumed that such an attitude was a solution delaying democratic change. Even incomplete understanding

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<sup>157</sup> C. Păiușan, N.D. Ion, M. Retegan, *Reginul communist din România, o cronologie politică (1945–1989)*, București 2002, pp. 160–162.

<sup>158</sup> A. Burakowski, *Geniusz Karpat...*, pp. 147–149.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 231.

of the essence of democracy by society did not explain the wait-and-see stance for the opposition. This attitude was demonstrated, among others, towards the ideological and political instability of many representatives of the opposition circles. It contributed to the fact that after the revolt in 1989, the power was taken over by communists-reformers, coming from the PCR and pursuing a policy of slow transformation full of political particularism. The communists-reformers were burdened with the past, performing relevant party and government functions. It was a short-lasting phenomenon in Central European countries. Romania had to fight it for many years. The PCR structures competed for influence in society and power in the state with the Securitate and the army. The cult of the leader largely weakened the party in the eyes of the public in the conditions of this rivalry, but the biggest threat would be the takeover of power by the management of Securitate. Part of the nation was critical of the fact that managers of central government units devoted more and more time to demonstrate the greatness of the Ceaușescu at home and abroad.<sup>160</sup> Among others, this involved the promotion of nationalist values in the society that has caused national and regional problems. The first official clash between nationalist communists and reformers and the creative opposition occurred during the Conference of the Writers' Union, on July 1–4, 1981. From this event, it can be assumed that communist intelligentsia and creators in opposition found some common ground on the necessity of reforms. It did not lead to an increase in the significance and impact of dissident movements on the society.<sup>161</sup> Romanian society was strongly imbued with nationalist and communist slogans in the 1980s. Program content in the press and television was a mixture of Stalinist and pre-war, far-right slogans.<sup>162</sup> Poor, with a rural mentality, Romanian society did not see the gap between traditional European political thought and the new Romanian communist ideology which from the 1970s had reached not only social-democratic and agrarian values but also fascist ones. Opposition intelligentsia also succumbed to propaganda pressure. They received the statements made about Romania's massive contribution to world culture with satisfaction. This movement of the communist authorities made it possible to conduct a fierce anti-intelligence campaign, the treacherous work of the Ceaușescu regime.<sup>163</sup>

However, the reality in the totalitarian communist state was far more complicated than it appeared from modern scientific research. This is evidenced by today's Romania's problems with democracy, combined with an identity crisis, unsuccessful reforms, and post-communist impasse. There is no longer a return to communism. Still, the totalitarianism of Ceaușescu, and earlier

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 246, 247.

<sup>161</sup> More in: A.U. Gabanyi, *The Ceaușescu cult: Propaganda and power policy in communist Romania (Istorie)*, Bucharest 2000.

<sup>162</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 134–145.

fascism of Antonescu, left their mark on the current political life of the nation and state policy.

In the new semi-democratic reality, the parliament vindicated Ion Antonescu. Romania and its society are used to have a hero – a symbol of substantial power and the so-called father of the nation. This state of consciousness also contributed to the earlier, in 1984, attempt to launch a coup that would lead to the overthrow of Ceaușescu. The rivalry for power between the army and special forces had a significant impact on his defeat. It can be presumed that some military commanders counted on more considerable involvement of the Romanian intelligentsia, because there was a devastating reconstruction of the centre of Bucharest, sharply criticized by its inhabitants. The buildings of one of the city's oldest parts were demolished to build a presidential palace and a modern district to symbolize the will of the *Conducător*. Residents of the capital were shocked when 19 eastern orthodox churches were demolished in 1984–1987.<sup>164</sup> First of all, the effects of the economic crisis were severely felt, which took extreme forms: lack of necessary food products, electricity in cities, and central heating in winter. The decisions of the XIII Congress of the PCR were a joke as *Conducător* stated that it was necessary to continue the policy of “building a comprehensive society and cultivating the communist tradition” and “systematizing” the country on the hills of civilization.”<sup>165</sup>

The described phenomena did not bring the results expected by the conspirators. The attempt was unsuccessful, and the president had been aware of its arrangement many months before there was an attempt to implement it. Leaders were punished following the political custom of totalitarian states; at the same time, political pressure was put on society by surveillance and development of security forces and the reporting system. At the end of 1989, secret services numbered 14,259 employees, 8,159 of whom were officers. One-third of Securitate employees operated in Bucharest. The number of informers ranged from 400,000 to 700,000.<sup>166</sup> The last straw was the decree severely restricting abortion. In the second half of the 1980s, a program called “systematization” began. At that time, there were about 13,000 villages and municipalities in Romania. Ceaușescu planned to eliminate 8,000 of them by the year 2000.<sup>167</sup> The systematization program involved relocating rural populations to cities or transforming villages into urban settlements and blurring folk culture. Such policy of the dictator must have come as a surprise, for rurality served his absolute power.

There is a phenomenon known as being bored by tradition. The fate of communism in the countries of Central Europe was the best example here.

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<sup>164</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>165</sup> N. Ceaușescu, *Raport la cel – de al XIII-lea Congres al Partidului Comunist Român*, București 1984, p. 16.

<sup>166</sup> D. Deletant, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea*, pp. 359, 361, 363.

<sup>167</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 407.

However, this was not the case with Romania. While in the 1980s, Central Europe experienced social and political upheavals, led by the opposition, and with the massive participation of society, Romania was in ideological and political stagnation. This was probably also influenced by the political tradition, combined with Orthodoxy's social experience and ideological principles. The addition of new, totalitarian ideas and values has been adopted for a long time by the Romanian people's political mentality. This created the possibility of autocratic rule. The political backwardness of the society was evidenced by the fact that the Romanian opposition was not clearly divided ideologically, as it was in Poland. The tradition and political mentality of rural communities can quickly adopt populist ideas if they refer to the past's pride and suggest a happy future.<sup>168</sup> This function of tradition does not necessarily have to be beneficial to society and its state, as exemplified by Romania.

The rural mentality of Romanian society negatively affected social life at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In no European country of the Soviet bloc, the creativity of society and the opposition was so limited. There were overwhelming stagnation and apathy.<sup>169</sup> Besides, in the 1970s, there was a tendency to adhere to the traditional lifestyle, despite the change in socio-political conditions and measures to "systematize the countryside." In this case, there was a flagrant contradiction, indicating a lack of transparency and consistency in the program. It was a substantive weakness of dictatorial governments which used, as in Romania, the inertia of society. The Bolshevik system created *homo sovieticus*, i.e., a man with a social mentality able to adapt to the totalitarian regime.<sup>170</sup> In the case of Romania, this attitude has been observed long after the fall of the Ceaușescu dictatorship. Such a state of public awareness hinders the transformation of the political and economic system, which is worse – it can create conditions for the development of populism. In dictatorial times, the Romanian opposition sought help from "ancestors" or escaped from everyday life, looking for consolation in a bright future.<sup>171</sup>

Nicolae Ceaușescu, wanting to give his governments the features of democracy, used a thoughtful and smart way to convince society to his actions and limit the modest opposition's influence. Like Stalin and Khrushchev, he tried to remove his direct predecessors from the historical memory, criticizing directly or indirectly the way they governed the country. In the case of Ceaușescu, the way to create an impression of his rule's democratic nature was to remove from memory the positive feeling of Dej's government and set up a commission to rehabilitate the victims of the previous leader. It included the

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<sup>168</sup> E. Shils, *Tradition*, Chicago 1981, pp. 202–207.

<sup>169</sup> P. Sztompka, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–76.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 76.

<sup>171</sup> More in: S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the transformation of societies*, New York 1978.



closest collaborators of the “Genius of the Carpathians.”<sup>172</sup> The rehabilitation of former communist activists was aimed at creating Ceaușescu as a fair, honest, and brave leader. This image was built for Romanians, but above all, for foreigners. His rating increased in the Western world, after refusing to intervene in 1968, against democratizing Czechoslovakia.<sup>173</sup> This moment was used by Ceaușescu to emphasize the sovereignty of the state against the Soviet Union and to lighten the atmosphere of nationalism in the country. These phenomena were favoured by the period of relative economic prosperity until the first half of the 1970s. It was a period of creating the cult of the personality, combined with the principle of hereditary power. The church was subordinated to the state, following the Bolshevik model. Labour camps were created. The collectivization of agriculture was almost complete. The heavy industry was expanded to the size which became a tremendous economic burden for the society. The profession of an engineer became a symbol of social promotion. In general, Romania’s socio-economic programs in the 1970s and 1980s grew into mythology which, with its extent of utopianism, surpassed Soviet propaganda.<sup>174</sup>

The policy of the Romanian authorities was only seemingly independent of Moscow. Until the end of the 1980s, the structures of official political life were preserved, straight from Soviet communism. Independent elites have been turning more and more towards the West from the 1980s when most of the population was stuck in communism’s chains. The situation resembled the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Romanian elites were delighted with French solutions, and society cultivated peculiarity and Balkan character.<sup>175</sup>

The 1970s, as has already been mentioned, were a period of creation of ideological and political utopia by Nicolae Ceaușescu and Emil Bodnăras. Separate research requires the answer to the question: did dignitaries believe in the promised bright future? In principle, the nation did not rebel; the opposition did not react too strongly to the introduction of the so-called small cultural revolution.<sup>176</sup> In 1974, Ceaușescu became the president of the Socialist Republic of Romania. He took office without changing the constitution. Amendments were made a year later. It was a year of the dictator’s dream coming true.<sup>177</sup> He became an absolute monarch, institution, and the source of the law. In 1974, he still enjoyed the nation’s support and recognition among the members of the PCR. He officially denied the cult of the individual, discreetly criticizing the policy of Gheorghiu-Dej. He openly stated, “We don’t need idols or flag carriers.

<sup>172</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–211.

<sup>173</sup> W. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 227, 228; V. Dimitriu, *Urcuș pe cascade înghețate. Din memoriile unui fost diplomat*, București 1996, pp. 24–27.

<sup>174</sup> L. Boia, *La mythologie scientifique du communisme*, Paris 2000.

<sup>175</sup> *Idem*, *Rumuni. Świadomość...*, pp. 210–212.

<sup>176</sup> S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 50; C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Sufletul neamului nostru: calități bune și defecte*, București 1992, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>177</sup> P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Anii...*, p. 31.

Our idol is Marxism and Leninism and the concept of the proletarian world."<sup>178</sup> As Simona Crupaci said, "[The Diamond Age] became a parody in which the Romanian people played the sad but passive role of a background actor."<sup>179</sup> Such a formula of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the countries of Central Europe in the 1970s would be impossible. To a large extent, it was feasible that such a political situation might be encountered due to, as already mentioned, the specific cultural and political mentality of the Romanian nation, which had great adaptability. It agreed with his fate. Small opposition groups, and even more so, were unable to act offensively without public support. This specificity was used by the "guarantor of Romanian wealth," who was aware that society's prestige and authority would be accepted because it involves power. In the mentality of the Romanian people, respect for power was great, unheard of in Central Europe, but inherited and connected with the history of the Balkans.

The main assumptions of the state policy included Romania's becoming an economic power. This had been an essential goal of the Romanian dictator from the 1970s. The main focus was on two factors to help achieve the superpower position, namely slave labour and technological espionage. Alongside political and military intelligence activities, technological surveillance was an essential feature of the general functioning of the so-called Leninist states. However, Romania was one of the leaders in technological espionage ventures. These actions, the authorities encapsulated with the nationalist idea and slogans of the nation's good and state. Ceaușescu himself was an ardent nationalist. An example would be appointing ethnic Romanians to all senior state positions, although in the country, national minorities constituted a significant proportion. So, he imitated the USSR. This was not an unusual situation in the Balkans. In almost every uprising, Ceaușescu reminded that the Romanian people are the heirs to proud Roman and Dacian warriors, and the national tradition dates to two millennia. He appealed to national pride to maintain sovereignty and freedom at all costs.<sup>180</sup> Explaining in this way, but not *expressis verbis*, all actions, even immoral ones, contrary to international law and principles of global coexistence. Large-scale industrial espionage was a part of such activity.

Along with the country's deteriorating economic situation, from the mid-1970s and social unrest, mainly among miners, the actions of industrial espionage intensified.<sup>181</sup> The DIE (Departamentul de Informații Externe), founded by Ceaușescu, was in charge of espionage. Its activity led to a significant reduction in imports and made Romania a country of export in the field of goods based on the latest technology. To this end, clusters of Romanians in the West were

<sup>178</sup> I. Petcu, *Ceaușescu – un fanatic al puterii. Biografie neretușată*, București 1994, p. 187.

<sup>179</sup> S.V. Crupaci, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>180</sup> I.M. Pacepa, *Czerwone horyzonty. Prawdziwa historia zbrodni, życia i upadku Nicolae Ceaușescu*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 100, 101, 187.

<sup>181</sup> M. Willame, *op. cit.*, pp. 233, 234; T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

engaged, including clergymen influencing the political attitudes of emigrants. During the meeting of the PCR Political Executive Committee in the early 1970s, Ceaușescu ordered the creation of a “fifth column” from Romanians living in the West, whose task was to promote and support the policy of Bucharest and to obtain the secrets of new technologies for the neglected Romanian industry. In the spring of 1978, Ceaușescu formulated a secret ideological and political doctrine in which he stated: “Modern communism equals national communism plus technological intelligence and money from capitalism!”<sup>182</sup> With great appreciation, political elites approached these assumptions and the resulting actions because they wanted to live like the Western elites. This level of life was achieved only by politicians of the highest rank. The average political staff lived at a lower level than their counterpart in the West.<sup>183</sup> This was a common phenomenon in the so-called folk democracies. The foresight of the ruling class for material goods was contrary to the proclaimed ideals formulated by the General Secretary of the KPR during the XII Congress on November 19, 1979, who did not say a word about the country’s difficult situation. He talked about: “ideological activity and the role of political education in creating a new man with high socialist awareness and the development of socialist democracy in all social areas.”<sup>184</sup>

Ceaușescu’s aspirations to transform Romania into a remarkably industrial country have only seemed to be fulfilled. Industrial production increased fourfold between 1950 and 1989. The economy dramatically reduced imports; the industry produced almost everything: cars and trucks, machine tools, agricultural machinery, steel, concrete, textiles, and footwear. In the years 1981–1989, over 750,000 new apartments were commissioned.<sup>185</sup> Despite this, the economy was still mostly agricultural, and citizens still had a rural mentality. Work in enterprises was treated as administrative coercion; therefore, the productivity was low, and the quality was outrageous. The industry was unprofitable. It had to be supported by loans from the West, which increased between 1971 and 1982 from 1.2 billion to 13 billion dollars.<sup>186</sup> The extensive process of industrialization and modernization of the economy led, as a consequence, to the political collapse of Ceaușescu and the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime in Romania. This process of industrialization of the economy can be described as a “joke of history.”

From the interwar period, Romanian society had been taught the idea of great power. This propaganda intensified after World War II, and above all,

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<sup>182</sup> I.M. Pacepa, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 118, 119.

<sup>184</sup> N. Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul...*, p. 194.

<sup>185</sup> *Idem*, *Raport la cel...*, p. 10.

<sup>186</sup> V. Georgescu, *Istoria românilor...*, p. 313.

during Ceaușescu's rule.<sup>187</sup> As already mentioned, Romania wanted to be at least a regional power and act as a political intermediary between the political East and West, between China and the Soviet Union. The intrusive propaganda of the superpower had positive effects on the national arena. This was needed for the more and more economically unstable neo-Stalinist regime.<sup>188</sup> At least until the first half of the 1970s, a large part of society believed in the possibility of accomplishing their political mission. That was a typical phenomenon among rural societies. Also, in Romania's case, it was strengthened by a system of ideas, also present in the political thought of the Balkan countries. In turn, some of the intelligentsia educated at Romanian universities and owing to their scientific advancement to good relations with the authorities were afraid to criticize the utopian thinking of the government directly. However, the opposition had little chance of influencing society and articulating its position. The idea of a thaw of the second half of the 1960s faded away in the so-called small cultural revolution.<sup>189</sup> This sharpened the relationship between the initiators and the rulers. The opposition was not fully aware that Ceaușescu cared more about getting rid of Gheorghiu-Dej's collaborators in the state and party authorities, hence Ion Iliescu's promotion to the highest level. He was identified with the liberalization of cultural policy and towards artists. He almost became a symbol of the thaw and wanted to remain so until the end of neo-Stalinist absolutism.

Such political solutions were not new in Central European countries, but they had a subtle form. Ceaușescu knew his society's political mentality; he came from the people and the most impoverished strata. Therefore, his political solutions were not subtle. They usually had a primitive theoretical formula and were distinguished by a primitive method of implementation. From the mid-1970s, Romania had been stuck in the shackles of false modernity and the idea of great power, from which Central European countries began to grow. On the other hand, Romanian communism led to false strive for hegemony and consensus, mocking the existence of civil society, where "ethnic, regional, and religious diversity has disappeared."<sup>190</sup> However, in the 1990s in all the countries of the Soviet bloc, it turned out that the divisions between countries and within countries were greater than anyone could think. After eliminating the idea of neo-Stalinism from Romanian political thought and policy, it was clear that the state was in a total social, political, and economic crisis. Backwardness in these matters turned out to be enormous and large enough that democracy and the free market encountered difficulties that have not been resolved to this

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<sup>187</sup> More in: A. Korybut-Daszkiewicz, *Czarujący książę ludzkości. Potęga i upadek Nicolae Ceaușescu*, Łódź 1993; A. Sowińska-Krupka, A. Kosyna, *Geneza Rumuńskiej Republiki Ludowej*, 1987.

<sup>188</sup> J. Darski, *op. cit.*

<sup>189</sup> R.R. King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, Stanford 1980.

<sup>190</sup> P. Sztompka, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

day.<sup>191</sup> It can be assumed that from the 1980s, the leitmotif of Romanian political consciousness became more of a crisis than progress. Hence a rather vague idea called the “Third Way” appears in Romanian political thought. The idea of the “Third Way” appeared among the group of communists who saw the need for reforms, as well as in opposition circles. However, whether this was a real way and would be accepted by society, the reforming political centres were not entirely convinced. Besides, various opposition groups and factions put different content into the concept of the “Third Way.” In any case, the basis for the analysis of this concept was transition and transformation, provoked by large social instances, revolt, and *coup d'état*. All major anti-dictatorial centres opted for the initiation of social rebellion. The start itself was a problem. The differences in this context resulted from the ways of indoctrination in society. The first was related to the functioning of totalitarian government institutions and their responsibility for personality and political thinking. However, the second way, more sunk in consciousness, referred to the uprising, the so-called adaptive mechanisms, i.e., coping in Romanian-communist conditions. While the democratic opposition attached more importance to the attitude of a frightened society and not manifesting their views, future communists-reformers emphasized Romanians’ adaptability. This affected the subsequent interpretation of the December events in 1989.

At the end of the 1980s, totalitarianism of Ceaușescu ceased ideologically and politically without achieving its goals. The state structures began to weaken. The state elites were afraid of their social and material status. Consequently, this form of government failed. The communists-reformers and the democratic opposition won was a “victory in defeat,” because the reformers, headed by Iliescu, did not thoroughly learn from the Ceaușescu’s defeat, and did not define all weaknesses. Despite the reservations, after 1989, there was a partial change in the attitude of the nation. Above all, people stopped being afraid of power and hoped for a better future, but did not fully realize when it would happen. But someday it was to happen... Hence, the balance of the post-communist rule was always complicated in assessing a society learning democracy.<sup>192</sup> What was successful with one factor could prove to be a failure with another.

The power exercised by post-communists had its genesis. After the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, Gheorghiu-Dej placed the responsibility for political mistakes on “politicians who already removed from office, describing them as dogmatists or opportunists, justly punished.”<sup>193</sup> This approach to the problem

<sup>191</sup> I. Iliescu, *Revoluția română*, pp. 38, 113, 115, 181–189; P. Roman, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–105, 108–111.

<sup>192</sup> More in: O. Aron, *Zmiany na scenie...*, pp. 43–53; P. Oprea, *Transformacja rumuńskiej...*, pp. 31–42; N. Pélissier, A. Marrié, F. Despres (eds.), *La Roumanie contemporaine. Approches de la transition*, Paris 1996.

<sup>193</sup> J. Tomaszewski, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia 1944–1968. Powstanie, ewolucja i kryzys realnego socjalizmu*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 235, 236.

could not satisfy the intelligentsia and even some PCR members. In the shadow of disputes, Ceaușescu's political career developed. The hypocrisy of PCR's leadership bodies was unheard of even in the communist parties of Central Europe. Romanian society's rural political mentality and obedience to the authorities for centuries created the conditions that the discussions did not take on such scope as in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and even Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic. The political structures of the Romanian state and the role of the communist party did not change significantly. Only the scientific and artistic-literary circles were partially satisfied, but it did not last long. In the early 1960s, the ruling PCR group, to maintain public support, appealed to Romanian national traditions, while suggesting that the Soviet Union imposed the Stalinist system. "This was accompanied by the emphasis on Romania's historical and cultural links with western Europe, while the connection with the east was diminished."<sup>194</sup> The Russian seizure of Bessarabia was criticized. From 1963, teaching Russian has been restricted. The Hungarian university in Cluj integrated with the Romanian university. In 1967, the Hungarian Autonomous Region was disestablished.

The year 1968 was particularly hard for the countries of people's democracy. Social uprisings, combined with an increase in the opposition's activity, even in the USSR, gave the governments of the countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe much to think about. There were also aspirations to build national communist ideologies. This phenomenon was most common in Romania, at least in the narrative and media layers. This was followed by the strengthening of the authority of Ceaușescu and his family, whose representatives held high state positions. "Socialism in one family" was to be the evidence of the construction of Romanian national socialism.<sup>195</sup> These political efforts temporarily stabilized the Romanian authorities and created a valuable opportunity to build socialist absolutism, which paradoxically contributed to the takeover of power at the end of 1989 by post-communists. The top-down revolution of 1989 did not bring about any broad system changes. In politics, economics, culture, in everyday life and people's personalities, the differences were negligible. The December events did not evoke emotional reactions in the vast majority of the population, including intelligentsia. At most, but it was significant, the level of fear of the authorities decreased. The events of 1989 in Romania would not have solved any critical problem if there had not been a post-communist coup. Society alone could not bear future changes. It was uninvolved politically, materially, and intellectually. Even great revolutions did not end as revolutionaries dreamed it would. All the more so, the December revolt did not wholly abolish violence and coercion. It did not give society freedom. At most, it brought the nation

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 261.

<sup>195</sup> R. de Fles, *Socialism in one family*, "Survey" 1984, no. 4.

a promise of democratic change and hope to improve tomorrow. The revolt and coup itself were not without violence against parts of society and parts of dictatorial power structures. This phenomenon did not occur in Central Europe. Because of their massiveness, peaceful revolutions were indeed non-violent. Romania was a tragic exception.<sup>196</sup> In Romania, neither the loyalty of intellectuals and the entire opposition was transferred to the new authorities, nor did the phenomenon of euphoria associated with the victory over the old regime occur and there was no rapid change in public awareness. The malaise dominated, which was reflected in the implementation of reforms on a scale that is difficult to notice in Central European countries. This was influenced by factors such as the political awareness of Romanians and the nature of the opposition, but also by the way in which the Ceaușescus were overthrown and eliminated from political life. Here and there may have been concerns about whether the new government will adopt forms of government that will involve the physical elimination of opponents.

As Noam Chomsky puts it, Romanian society consisted of “disarmed citizens, i.e. subordinated to power, propaganda indoctrinated, and politically obedient.”<sup>197</sup> The process of “disarming” lasted from 1945, but it intensified in the early 1970s. Ceaușescu’s government deprived people of all civil virtues, even a sense of responsibility for the state. A large part of society lacked the desire to change power while being aware of its weakness and causing total material and moral poverty. The vast majority of the creative intelligentsia, realizing that there was no unity between Romanian political thought of the Ceaușescu era and practice, was also helpless. They often did not distinguish Ceaușescu decisions aimed at achieving a specific result from a propaganda agreement with the public. Hence, there was a dissonance between the state authorities and everyday social life, despite control by state structures and special services.<sup>198</sup> The theory and practice of the “Genius of the Carpathians” had little to do with Marxism, but it strongly related to Leninism and Stalinism. This statement can be paraphrased by saying that humanism is unnecessary to achieve goals and that terror is necessary. In the longer term, this meant that Romanian society’s aspirations played a negligible role. Interventionism was replaced by scientist rationalism and the formation of the national communist party modelled on the CPSU.<sup>199</sup> From Ceaușescu’s time, the PCR had had less of a class spirit and internationalist brotherhood. The image of Romanian life

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<sup>196</sup> H. Trevor-Raper, *Europe’s new order*, “The Independent Magazine” 1989, December 30.

<sup>197</sup> S. Wróbel, *Noam Chomsky 1928*, [in:] P. Nowak (ed.), *Historia filozofii politycznej*, cz. II, Warszawa 2016, p. 1003.

<sup>198</sup> J. Juchnowski, R. Juchnowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 346–354; A. Kaniowski, *Filozofia społeczna Jürgena Habermasa. W poszukiwaniu teorii i praktyki*, Warszawa 1990.

<sup>199</sup> More in: J. Migasiński, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1908–1961*, [in:] P. Nowak (ed.), *Historia filozofii politycznej*, cz. II, Warszawa 2016, pp. 784–822.

was in stark contrast to the idea of proletarian humanism. Romania, like the countries of Central Europe, was building a model of “state socialism” from the end of World War II. In the case of Romania, it was “enriched” with native and atheistic and sacred elements. The affirmation of leftist totalitarianism, alongside the USSR, occurred primarily among the leadership of the PCR, which “escaped into the false myth of a leader capable of delivering the nation from weakness and creating a superpower position for it.”<sup>200</sup> While the fight against communism in Central Europe was also born based on ethnic opposition, in Romania, the political interests of the communists-reformers and society’s economic interests were significant. Also, the use of violence in the policy of Romanian communists was intended to intimidate; it was also an end, also destroying obedient people. Violence and crime were institutional.

While in other communist countries, and even in the Soviet Union, a civil movement developed, Romanians were an obedient society. In the 1970s and 1980s, when the existential situation deteriorated from year to year, Romanians still did not protest. The acts of opposition were spontaneous or individual. When the dictator “began to demolish temples incompatible with the new urban landscape (or at best move them and hide behind other buildings) the Eastern Orthodox Church did not oppose to this in any way.”<sup>201</sup> Although it was the only institution at that time, somewhat autonomous towards the state authorities. If such an institution did not protest, then it is not surprising that society was ideologically and politically broken! Romanians were in a state of apathy. Omnipresent individualism became obvious, and the state apparatus used it. “In the absence of minimal dialogue, minimal protest, minimal compromise, one should look for the causes of the unexpected and powerful explosion of December 1989,” wrote Lucian Boia.<sup>202</sup> In all Central European countries, and even in the Soviet Union, political changes took place calmly, without bloodshed. The exception was Romania. “Once again, Romania turned out to be a country ‘other than all’.”<sup>203</sup> In December 1989, Romanian protesters and demonstrators were unable to formulate specific demands. The communists-reformers took advantage of this, giving the protests the right course and channelling some dissatisfaction with the dictatorial system. In material and freedom issues, it was expressed in a general way. Nevertheless, Iliescu was aware that Romanian communism collapsed for material and corrupt reasons. Romanian anti-communists proved to be a minority, as evidenced by the 1990 elections, during which Ion Iliescu received 85% of the vote.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> P. Graczyk, *György Lukács 1886–1971*, [in:] P. Nowak (ed.), *Historia filozofii politycznej*, cz. II, Warszawa 2016, p. 541.

<sup>201</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, pp. 441,442.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 442.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 443.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibidem*.



The acceleration of the social crisis was caused to a great extent by Ceaușescu's decision of 1982 to repay a foreign debt by 1990 without taking new international loans.<sup>205</sup> This decision fundamentally contributed to a further reduction in the already low standard of living. In 1980, the Romanian authorities announced two decrees aimed at limiting public consumption. The management of the state economy was more and more centralized. From 1982, the rationing of bread, butter, flour, milk, sugar, and oil was introduced in some cities and provinces. The meat was becoming less available.<sup>206</sup> In 1985, about 15% of Romanians owned household appliances and 5% – cars<sup>207</sup>. Due to the energy crisis, Romania was drowning in the darkness in the evenings. Gasoline was rationed – 30 litres per month, which limited the traffic of passenger cars and public transport. In 1984, the use of household appliances that consumed electricity was banned. Restrictions on the supply of hot water to apartments were introduced. It was decided that in offices and universities, the maximum indoor temperature could be 12 °C. Health care became inefficient, which affected mortality, particularly among newborns and children in orphanages. In this situation, the authorities issued a decree prohibiting women from terminating pregnancy.<sup>208</sup> The life of the average Romanian was hard and did not resemble people living in Central Europe. Loan repayment and the country's difficult economic situation did not stop the implementation of the Danube-Black Sea canal construction project. It was the invention of *Conducător*, who wanted to emphasize absolutism of his power. The economic sense of this undertaking was not clear. After completing this project, Ceaușescu began to rebuild the centre of Bucharest and build a new presidential palace.<sup>209</sup> The palace itself is a symbol of the era of Stalinist splendour and fascist monumentalism. The contrast between reality, monumentalism, and utopia have never been as transparent as it was during the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the PCR in November 1984.<sup>210</sup> The resolutions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of 1989 on the continuation of communist tradition and the location of the country “on the hills of civilization” were already adopted with disbelief, even by the devoted supporters of *Conducător*. Only his immediate family trusted him completely. The 14<sup>th</sup> Congress resolutions were all the more unreal because they were also associated with the village systematization program which was utterly defeated. The Romanian village was to become modern and prosperous. At the same time, there was to be migration from the village to the city. The nation was to consist of new citizens living in blocks of flats. The idea was utterly misguided and was not accepted by the rural community. The systematization program

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<sup>205</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

<sup>206</sup> V. Georgescu, *Istoria românilor...*, p. 259.

<sup>207</sup> T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

<sup>208</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 238–240.

<sup>210</sup> N. Ceaușescu, *Raport la cel...*, pp. 10, 16.

was associated with the permanent blurring of folk culture. This also directly concerned national minorities, particularly the Hungarian and the Székelys, living in the villages of Transylvania.<sup>211</sup> Crisis clouds were gathering over *Conducător*. Should the implementation of decrees that restricted civil liberties to an extent unknown even to the highly indoctrinated part of the society be added to this, it becomes clear why the coup and the revolt were supported. Post-communist calculations have come true. The nation received the events of '89 with relief, but also with concern about their material and civic existence.

From the second half of the 1980s, Romanians increasingly faced the need to answer the question: who exactly are they as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century society? Does the development path proposed by the PCR lead to the goal outlined by Ceaușescu and his closest associates? Indoctrination of society limited the rational response to these issues. Politics of civic interest required a universal definition of identity, and it was not easy. Also, existing political models collapsed in times of accelerated change in Central Europe and the USSR. A new definition and a new model had to be found, and the society and fragile opposition and the Church were not prepared for it.

Regardless of their universalistic goals, religions schematically define the ethical and moral model, which implies a socio-political model. There was no such deal in Romania. In general, the religious revival in Central Europe, which was a reaction to the socio-political system, secularism, and moral relativism, did not occur in Romania to such an extent. Christianity approved of such values as order, discipline, mutual assistance, and human solidarity. Central European Christian Churches met social needs neglected by the communist bureaucracy. The collapse of the socio-political system in Romania, the authorities' failures, and the polarization of society formed a "vacuum" that religious institutions could not enter.<sup>212</sup> It is necessary to take into account the specificity of Romania which in geographical terms does not belong to the Balkans, but, given the historical and cultural context, is a Balkan country.<sup>213</sup> Romanian society has a mentality more similar to the Balkan than the Roman one. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, Romanian society became civil without religion and ideology. Romanians' democratic identity could not be built around liberal values, so there were no religious institutions.<sup>214</sup> There was also the problem of whether unified European values would not replace the longer-term national identity in Romania. Some Romanian political writers considered the possibility of reacting

<sup>211</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, 241; T. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 407; L. Betea, *Alexandru Bârlădeanu despre Dej, Ceaușescu și Iliescu*, București 1997, pp. 195, 196.

<sup>212</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14, 89; I. Conovici, *Państwo i kościół w Rumunii po 1989 roku*, [in:] K.P. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 184–194; *idem*, *Liberta religioasă în context românesc și european*, București 2005, p. 149.

<sup>213</sup> F. Gołębski, *Balkany. Determinanty stabilności*, Warszawa 1982; J. Demel, *op. cit.*

<sup>214</sup> More in: M. Castells, *End of Millennium*, Series The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, vol. III, Oxford 1998, pp. 282–333.

to the “socialist” nation’s nationalist-communist propaganda. The more that Romanian Orthodoxy after 1989 was still politicized because post-communists and democrats referred to Christian values. The church identified a part of society with Ceaușescu’s policy. However, it turned out that the Orthodox Church quickly revised its strategy and adopted a mediators’ attitude between the nation and the state authorities, between political forces which were often in a state of strong emotions due to ideological and political controversy, from the 1990s. Fears regarding the possibility of rapid atheization processes in Romanian society were also not fulfilled. Similarly to Central Europe, in the circumstances of transformation, state-religious institutions, both formal and legal, as well as informal, gained particular significance. Throughout the 1990s, the citizenship of society in Central Europe, but also in Romania, was associated with freedom of religion. The return of the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, in new political conditions, to social life was evident in Central Europe. A similar situation occurred in Romania but to a lesser extent. Orthodoxy has always had limited and systematic possibilities for the state of functioning at the general social level.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, the religion in Romania after 1989 also legitimized the policy of the new authorities.

The weakness of the Orthodox Church’s position, together with the opposition’s reduced ability to influence society made it difficult for citizens to adapt to democratic conditions. The politically and morally unstable nation was not particularly capable of social mobilization for democracy. To change the political system, the nation had to submit to a well-organized political structure. At the end of the 1980s, the only such force was the Iliescu group which had influence in the army and the Securitate. Only post-communists could carry out political changes. The proof was the “Letter of Six Veterans” of March 10, 1988.<sup>216</sup> That is why the Romanian “revolution” was carried out so precisely. Although the new post-communist authorities rejected communist ideology using democratic rhetoric, society began to perceive democratism and the market economy negatively. The transformation in Romania is taking a long time and is still politically complicated. Democratic institutions, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mainly remained the facade of the political system.

From 1986, the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu became likely to happen. Already in 1987, there were, besides demands for bread, electricity and heat, demands for the dictator’s resignation. In the view of the few strikers and demonstrators in total, not only militia and Securitate were used, but also the army. Gentle criticism has even appeared in the ranks of the PCR. In 1985, the underground party *Acțiune România Democrată* (Romanian Democratic Action) was

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<sup>215</sup> I. Borowik, *Religia jako element tożsamości w warunkach transformacji w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. Perspektywa socjologiczna*, [in:] M. Mróz, T. Dębowski (ed.), *Państwo – społeczeństwo – religia*, Toruń 2009, p. 32.

<sup>216</sup> P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata...*, p. 531.

founded, which sought to overthrow the regime. One of its founders was Ion Iliescu.<sup>217</sup> The underground magazine “Idei” began to be released, where leading oppositionists posted their articles criticizing social and economic relations in the state. The village systematization program was particularly criticized.

Parallel to the democratic opposition, the reformers’ fraction operated under the PCR and the government bureaucracy. From the beginning of 1988, its members protested against Ceaușescu’s policy by sending increasingly strongly worded letters to the dictator. They established contact with the BBC, Free Europe, and Voice of America.<sup>218</sup> As mentioned, the Iliescu group’s political determinant was the “Letter of Six Veterans” to Ceaușescu. The content of the letter pointed to the criticism of the dictator’s internal and international policy. Gheorghe Apostol, Alexandru Bârlădeanu, Corneliu Mănescu, Constantin Pîrvulescu, Grigore Răceanu, Silviu Brucan sharply demanded political reforms, claiming that the constitution is virtual, even suspended and there is no legal system functioning in the country, and the state authorities do not care about the law. The authors of the “Letter” accused Ceaușescu of: 1) failure to comply with the Helsinki Final Act; 2) limiting democratic freedoms expressed, *inter alia*, by punishing citizens for maintaining contact with foreigners; 3) granting extraordinary power of attorney to Securitate which directs its activities even “against workers” and “honest intellectuals and members of the PCR”; 4) violation of the confidentiality of correspondence; 5) policy towards the village, consisting of the so-called systematization; 6) poor economic management and unjustified raising of production requirements and utopianism in economic planning; 7) wrong policy related to forced assimilation; 8) erroneous international policy which harms Romania’s position in Europe and the world, also in economic terms.<sup>219</sup>

The “Letter of Six Veterans” not only strengthened the opposition within the PCR but also weakened the dictatorial structures of the state. Regional politicians began to have concerns about their social position in the future. The army also adopted a wait-and-see position. There was political confusion at Securitate. Hence, Câmpeanu’s statement that the consequences of the “Letter of Six Veterans” were more significant in the international arena than on the national level because the governments of Western states accepted the appeal with kindness, counting on political changes in Romania cannot be accepted.

Although the “Letter of Six Veterans” testified to the weak condition of the democratic opposition, it also demonstrated the growing importance of the reform faction in party and state institutions. The attitude of “veterans” presented in the “Letter” contributed to the possibility of carrying out a coup

<sup>217</sup> M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–244; R. Cesereanu, *Decembrie '89. Deconstrucția unei revoluții*, Iași 2004, pp. 22–42.

<sup>218</sup> P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata...*, p. 531.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 528–531.

and revolt. Poet Mircea Dinescu tried to save the uncomfortable situation for the democratic opposition by giving an interview to the Paris daily "Liberation", in which he demanded more radical reforms than the "veterans" suggested. Its first stage was to be political changes, modelled on the decisions taken by Mikhail Gorbachev, in the form of perestroika and glasnost. The same did the leading Romanian dissident Doina Cornea and known opponents of the regime as George Vasilescu, Bogdan Urban, Marian Brâncoveanu, and Mihai Terja.<sup>220</sup> In 1978, Ion Mihai Pacepa, deputy interior minister and former head of Romanian intelligence, Ceaușescu's trusted man, fled to the United States of America. He published the book *Red horizons* in which he revealed, among others, compromising situations of the Ceaușescus, who had been taking care of their financial security from 1973. From 1978 they began to boldly steal from the state treasury.

Account [secret for N. Ceaușescu only – J.J., R.J. M.L.-M.] had the code number TA-73, this year, respectively – TA-78 [...]. However, the sums earned by DIE in cash – most of them came from the Germans and Jews export, were transferred to the account "TA" Ceaușescu. [...] The dollars received from Bonn and Tel-Aviv with no serial numbers – in case they were recorded – and accumulated in the underground in the DIE treasury. [...] No more than four million were spent in five years – which seems a pittance, given the overall balance of the account, which amounted to \$ 400 million in 1978.<sup>221</sup>

Romanian society has always been adaptive, with no exceptions, and intelligentsia as well. It was evident at the turn of November and December. Overall, however, the situation in Romania has become increasingly tense. The society was aware that substantial changes were taking place in Europe. Central Europe was returning to the democratic system. Meanwhile, in Romania, the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party met in the old style. The democratic opposition primarily considered a political compromise rather than direct resistance to Ceaușescu, although, on December 4, 1989, it was known that the dictator had been left alone.<sup>222</sup> The lack of determination in the political activities of the opposition and the intelligentsia was caused by the lack of the middle class. Besides, the opposition could not politically solve the social dilemma based on the paradox that communist elitism was the result of Romanian populist attitudes. The idea of equality and obedience was a mixture that influenced the mentality of the average Romanian, which caused a lack of favour "for large-scale collective manifestations."<sup>223</sup> So, social conditions were not conducive to revolution. In such a situation, the attitude of society, opposition, and

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 528–535.

<sup>221</sup> I.M. Pacepa, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>222</sup> Ș. Săndulescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 290–292.

<sup>223</sup> L. Boia, *Dlaczego Rumunia...*, p. 433.

communists-reformers cannot be explained by saying: "Oh, sad country, full of humour" and the statement about the political specificity of the Romanian people.<sup>224</sup> However, in many social respects, you can see greater eccentricity than the countries of Western and Central Europe. This is still visible today. In Romania, political awareness and the functioning of state structures are changing with excellent resistance. This phenomenon not only occurs in society but also at the political class levels and covers a large part of the intelligence. At the same time, it can be seen that the society's pervasive political impotence in the 1990s and early 2000s concerned the senior level of government and post-communists least. The Westernization of some representatives of the communist elite and part of the opposition only deepened the socio-cultural split and gave a major part of the society an inferiority complex. Material differences between ethnic minorities living in cities and Romanians who had a lower level of life were important.

Even today, Romanians are relatively poorly integrated and nationalized towards their neighbours. It should be emphasized that Romanian nationalism is strongly mythologized. This type of nationalism limited the possibility of a revolution. Opposition elites mainly came from rural areas and they owned their upward social mobility to communist Romania. This had an impact on the interpretation of Western civilization's progress. Ceaușescu himself, from a rural, low-income family, was a symbol of social advancement for a large part of Romanian society. Romanians' dependence on power had historical foundations, and the dominant values were and are primarily national, but not yet European in the EU sense.

The limited form of protests against Ceaușescu's dictatorial rule was influenced not only by creating a politician who did not comply with Moscow's decisions, but also by mythologizing his power. The West underwent mythologization until at least the mid-1970s. This affected the activities of the opposition and more politically oriented intelligence.

The political specificity of Ceaușescu, which served the adoption of dictatorial rule, resulted from the following circumstances. 1) Ceaușescu became Gheorghiu-Dej's successor due to the vote following the statute within the Political Executive Office of the PCR. In other Soviet bloc countries, positions also changed as a result of the election. 2) He was not a Kremlin nominee and had great national support during the seizure of power. 3) Initially, the cult of Ceaușescu was psychological, and he did not strive to transform it into a political one. 4) Ceaușescu refused to participate in the military interference of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia, which facilitated the gradual transformation of psychological worship into political. In this respect, he had Western support. He was considered a defender of Romania's political and national independence.

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 417.

The Ceaușescu cult became a widespread cult, which set limits to the opposition's influence on the outside and in internal affairs. 5) He used media policy to create a cult. This contributed to a kind of dichotomy. On the one hand, he managed to gain recognition in the society; on the other, he was hated, which was expressed by the death sentence pronounced to the Ceaușescus as a result of the "revolutionary judicial process."<sup>225</sup>

After the execution of the Ceaușescus and the seizure of power by post-communists, reforms were initiated, but they were democratically limited. This form of transformation was of interest to Iliescu and a large proportion of Romanians whose socio-political life was burdened by the previous system's pathology. Norman Manea wrote: "opportunism, due to which the dictatorship persisted and the widespread feelings of hatred against it, too. A lot of things have not changed yet, but some changes are already being felt [...] we should hope that at least the direction of evolution has changed."<sup>226</sup> Many political phenomena nowadays belong to the recent past, although they have a declining tendency. Romania faces cultural, social, political, and economic challenges. Romania must solve many civilization problems. However, the issues should be resolved through reforms. In recent times, all types of revolts and coups are not recommended or even possible. Romania belongs to NATO and the EU which are guarantees of its gradual restoration of democracy in social life and political awareness. This does not mean that Romania will not experience political crises. However, it is to be hoped that they will be within the scope of constitution and democratic pluralism.

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<sup>225</sup> P. Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu. Lata...*, pp. 16–22.

<sup>226</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

## CHAPTER 3

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# PROBLEMS OF ROMANIAN DEMOCRACY

Nowadays, a characteristic tendency in Romania is to avoid the subject of communism which deprived Romanians of hopes and prospects for a better life and stopped the economy for a long time. Romanian society is divided into those who have benefited from communism and those who claim that if there had not been communism, their lives would have been completely different. Romanians are susceptible to the influence of history and even more to mythology, full of stories of supernatural and extraordinary personalities who sought to “save” the state. Scientists, historians, and university researchers do not want or “cannot”, for the sake of their safety, reach sources explaining that there is a lack of information and objectivity as to events that took place relatively recently. There is no information in textbooks – the period of 1919–1944 is superficially covered, without mentioning the complexity of the history of the communist period, which Romania and its citizens had experienced so strongly in their time.<sup>227</sup> In the 1950s, social degradation and even physical extermination of the pre-war elite on an extremely large scale occurred, not being equivalent to the one in other communist bloc countries. The elite was aggressively treated by Romanian communism. However, it had its actual cause. In pre-communist Romanian society, there was a unique gulf between the sophisticated social elite and the people – mainly peasants, and workers, whom the upper classes’ representatives intensely despised.<sup>228</sup> It is true that the political elites and intellectuals being in power today, to no small extent, grew up and were shaped during the communist period and came to power thanks to extensive connections.

Romania tended to imitate various types of statehoods.<sup>229</sup> China, South

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<sup>227</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomość...*, pp. 290–295.

<sup>228</sup> B. Luft, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>229</sup> Romania of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a country with no well-established role models. After World War I, it pursued a pro-French policy, striving to create a system of regional alliances that would guarantee the borders of Greater Romania (Romania Mare) approved in peace treaties in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-sur-Seine, and Trianon. In the interwar period, Romania was governed by two political groups – the National Liberal Party (1922–1928 and 1933–1937) and the National Peasants’ Party (1928–1931 and 1932–1933). From the mid-1930s, the fascist Iron Guard, financed by Germany, aspired to power. In 1938, King Carol II assumed dictatorial power and dissolved all political parties. French favour was becoming less secure. Romania began to support a course of the Third Reich, expressed by the agreement on the development of Romanian-German diplomatic relations. After the invasion of Poland by Germany and the USSR, in September 1939, under the pressure of the Third Reich, Romania declared neutrality. 1940 was a tragic year for Romania. Under pressure from Germany and the USSR, it had to give part of the territory to neighbouring



Korea, and France were the prototypes at some points.<sup>230</sup> The „radicalism of imitative solutions”<sup>231</sup> was shocking. “French, national-conservative, Soviet models were a true religion for their followers.”<sup>232</sup> It was manifested primarily in copying the constitution – in 1866 a Belgian one, in 1948 – Soviet one, and in 1991 – French one. This shows how poorly prepared, and unreliable Romanian society and its leader were. Perfect patterns had been sought for many years. Those that were borrowed and implemented, after some time, became mythic. So, they were changed to the next, testing and trying to adapt to the leaders’ expectations.<sup>233</sup> The Romanian people, stuck between the East and the West to this day, cannot quite determine their identity. The various, sometimes even contradictory elements that make up its history, have brought some dissonance into the nation’s life. The policy of establishing and breaking

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countries – Bessarabia and northern Bukovina went to the Soviet Union; Hungary took northern Transylvania; southern Dobruja joined Bulgaria. In the view of the defeat of his policy of “equal distances,” King Carol II transferred the power to General Ion Antonescu, abdicating in favour of his son – Michael I. In November 1940, Antonescu, who exercised power, made it possible that Romania joined the Axis (Berlin-Tokyo-Rome). German troops already stationed in Romania at that time controlled the extraction of Romanian oil. In 1941, after the break of the war with the USSR, Romania took the side of Germany. Under the influence of failures on the front in 1944, the People’s Democratic Bloc was formed, bringing together communists, social democrats, liberals, and supporters of the tsar. When the Red Army defeated the German army in the Chişinău-Iaşi region, the uprising in Bucharest started. As a result, the dictatorship of Antonescu was overthrown. The parties of the People’s Democratic Bloc seized power in the country and declared war on Germany. Before the war ended, the communists, supported by the USSR, intensified efforts to take power in the country and eliminate other political parties. In October 1944, they left the National Democratic Bloc and formed the National Democratic Front. As a result of Stalin’s pressure, in February 1945, a communist government was formed, led by Petru Groza. In November 1946, the communists rigged parliamentary elections and took full control over the country. Political terror intensified in Romania. Opposition parties were dissolved, King Michael I was forced to abdicate and deprived of Romanian citizenship. Romania was proclaimed a republic. After 1945, it turned from the pro-Western side towards the East, until 1965 remaining faithful to its ideology. In 1948, the Grand National Assembly adopted a constitution and laws to nationalize large industries, banks, and communications. Romania was included in the system of satellite states of the USSR. It joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (1949) and the Warsaw Pact (1955). In 1965, a new constitution of the renamed state – the Socialist Republic of Romania (RSR) – was adopted. The death of communist leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who was in dictatorial power on behalf of the Romanian Workers’ Party (renamed later the Romanian Communist Party), in 1965 led Nicolae Ceauşescu to power. In Ceauşescu’s time, a one-party system of government based on police terror was based on the cult of the leader. The socialist management system, collectivization of agriculture (1949–1962), industrialization of the country led to the economic crisis in the 1980s. The new leader, pursuing a policy of limited independence from the USSR, established closer contacts with Western countries, balancing between East and West. However, the system could not withstand the changes, leading to the events of December 1989. More in: W. Korsak, J. Tokarski, D. Czerniak, P. Skrzypiec, *Rumunia. Przewodnik Pascala*, Bielsko-Biała 2006, pp. 44–46.

<sup>230</sup> L. Boia, *Rumuni. Świadomość...*, p. 214.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 210.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibidem*.

alliances<sup>234</sup>, depending on immediate needs, manoeuvring between world powers, permanently fit into the lives of citizens, highlighting painful historical experiences in their biographies, theoretically even from the Middle Ages.

In December 1947, the King of Romania Michael I was forced to abdicate.<sup>235</sup> As a result of events, Parliament proclaimed the Romanian People's Republic and annulled the 1938 Constitution. "People's democracy" was introduced by the Constitution of April 13, 1948. The new Romanian Basic Law was adopted on September 12, 1952, based on the provisions of the Soviet constitution of 1936. Later, i.e., on August 21, 1965, the next Romanian Constitution came into force, changing the name of the state to the Socialist Republic of Romania. The 1960s brought changes in the country. It was popular to combine party and government posts as well as joint party and government organs. Communist leaders, dictators, initially Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and from 1965 Nicolae Ceaușescu, concentrated party-state power in their hands. Their totalitarian methods of government deprived Romanian society of the possibility of deciding its fate, honour, and dignity for a very long time.<sup>236</sup> Communism, which was accepted in Romania, seemed to permeate the state like no other in Central Europe. Following the example, in Romania, the multiparty system was utterly abolished, leaving the only one in power – the communist party.

### Political transformation after 1989

The change of political regime in Romania took a dramatic course and occurred due to the people's protest against the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu. However, if the collapse of the communist system had not happened in Europe, it can be assumed that there would have been no change in Romania. Signals from Poland and Hungary about liberalization and the communists giving up the power had a significant impact on further events. "Revolution" was carried out under the slogan of spontaneous movement.<sup>237</sup> However, these were propaganda slogans formulated by post-communists. The uprisings were contradictory in terms of organization, prepared in a way a *coup d'état* is prepared. It was

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<sup>234</sup> The 20<sup>th</sup> century was particularly tough for Romanians: participation in World War II, the fight alongside Hitler against the Soviets, and later the spectacular betrayal of a German ally in the view of defeat. More in: B. Luft, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 156.

<sup>235</sup> King Michael I was forced to abdicate at the age of 26. He emigrated in early 1948 and returned to Romania only in 1992. Ion Iliescu received him in the presidential Cotroceni Palace. He treated the former monarch as an enemy. Being afraid of his enthusiastic reception, the president forbade Michael I to enter the country for another five years. In 1996, when Emil Constantinescu became president, Michael I regained Romanian citizenship. The former ruler was legally recognized thanks to the Act on the Status of Former Heads of State issued in 2000, prepared by President Constantinescu, but finally signed by Ion Iliescu. B. Luft, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–161.

<sup>236</sup> T. Bichta, M. Wichmanowski, *op. cit.*

<sup>237</sup> W. Brodziński, *Republika*, Warszawa 1996, p. 102.

extended to include uprisings characteristic of a revolt. Only 28 years after the events accompanying the overthrow of Ceaușescu's dictatorship in December, Ion Iliescu, former Prime Minister Petre Roman, deputy Prime Minister Gelu Voican-Voiculescu and Iosif Rus, who was in command of military aviation during the coup, were brought to justice. The prosecutor's office confirmed that the chaos caused in December 1989 in the first days after the fall of Ceaușescu was not accidental. Over 800 people died in the name of the "revolution" which turned out to be a coup. The new authorities of '89, through official channels, specifically misinformed the public and manipulated people to "create the impression of a civil war."<sup>238</sup>

When the appeal of the National Salvation Front Council was addressed to the nation on radio and television stations, its sixth point stressed that it was necessary to "reject ideological dogmas that caused so much harm to the Romanian people and promote true universal values, reject lies and falsely set the culture on new foundations."<sup>239</sup> On December 23, citizens were informed about the formation of a 40-member National Salvation Front Council (FSN). It primarily brought decision-makers, creators, and intellectuals, representatives of the army and repressed political activists, as well as many students, together.<sup>240</sup> The political program of the Council presented by Iliescu included: free elections in April, basing the economy on the principles of rationality and efficiency, abandoning the systematization (of villages), political pluralism, respecting the rights of national minorities, clearing educational programs of dogmatic ideology.<sup>241</sup>

In "revolutionized" Romania, the society supported the democratization of the economy and the change of political course in the broad sense through internationalization of relations with the West and the United States (which is now Romania's key ally in the region). With two roads to choose – Hungarian or Serbian in Milošević's style – it was decided to select a soft dictatorship, referred to in Romania as "democracy". Petre Roman, who comes from the younger generation of the Communist Workers' Party, supported by a wide range of students, who were the driving force of the revolution, was appointed as the prime minister. The new government included 21 members of the Interim Cabinet (Guvernul Provizoriu); among them only two ministers were not communists.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> dmi/kar, *Rumunia: Iliescu oskarżony o dokonanie w 1989 roku zbrodni przeciwko ludzkości*, PAP, Bukareszt 2019, April 8.

<sup>239</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja. Rumuńska perspektywa*, Kraków 2013, p. 119.

<sup>240</sup> Ł. Szymański, *Kronika narastania kryzysu społeczno-politycznego i rewolucji w Rumunii*, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>242</sup> Later, as part of a "rematch", the National Salvation Front entrusted Iliescu with the duties of the president of Romania. J. Darski, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–89.

The National Salvation Front began operating on December 27, 1989.<sup>243</sup> The new authorities announced that Romania would remain in the Warsaw Pact and give an overview of the country's democratization. To show the new political team's responsibility and strength, they simulated the threat of terrorist attacks from the Ceaușescu-friendly Securitate troops.<sup>244</sup> The new organization of the authorities was temporary. The Provisional Council (Consiliul Provizoriu) with a multi-party composition, the newly created National Salvation Front (Frontul Salvării Naționale – FSN), took responsibility for the country's future. It held the office of parliament until the first democratic elections.<sup>245</sup> Communists-reformers dominated the Council. Their decrees modifying power in the country had little effect in practice. The old order was maintained in everyday social life. In foreign policy, the FSN adopted a dichotomous attitude; they did not want to be at risk because of the USSR but wanted to gain recognition in the US government circles. All in all, political solutions adopted by Mikhail Gorbachev were closer to the team of Ion Iliescu. Only the King Michael, who was outside of Romania, spoke openly about the events; he was not afraid to proclaim that the Romanian revolution brought in reality neither democracy nor freedom, only put the country in a state of suspension between communism and democracy.<sup>246</sup>

The National Salvation Front began its activities with the introduction, on December 27, 1989, a new name of the state – Romania. Following the model of the Basic Law of 1923, the bicameral parliament was restored, and the communist power structures were dissolved. On December 29, radio and television announced a decree on the organization and operation of the FSN Council, its field offices, and the 10-point FSN program. Mihai Corneliu Drăgănescu and Gelu Voican-Voiculescu were appointed as deputy prime ministers.<sup>247</sup> At the end of December 1989, new parties were formed, including: the National People's Party, the Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party, free trade unions, the Free Youth Organization, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania; liberal, democratic, ecological, Christian, and social-democratic parties were established, as well as the parties of socialists, democrats.<sup>248</sup>

When Nicolae Ceaușescu was “ousted” from power, Romania was forced to present a new political pattern that would refer to those recognized among European countries. For the new authorities and Romanian society, an essential step on the road to the democratization of the state was to face and

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<sup>243</sup> A. Jarosz, *System polityczny Rumunii*, 2005, <http://www.psz.pl/117-polityka/system-polityczny-rumunii> (accessed: 10.09.2019).

<sup>244</sup> A. Patek, J. Rydel, J.J. Węc, *Najnowsza historia świata 1979–1995*, t. III: *Rumunia*, Kraków 2009, pp. 116, 117.

<sup>245</sup> W. Skrzydło, *Ustroje państw współczesnych. Republika Rumunii*, Lublin 2002, pp. 156, 157.

<sup>246</sup> db/mc, *Były król Rumunii liczy na powrót Mołdawii do Rumunii*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, August 27.

<sup>247</sup> Ł. Szymański, *op. cit.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibidem.*

deal with the political, social, and historical legacy of the Ceaușescu regime's security apparatus. To a large extent, also with the ubiquitous Securitate, which, according to researchers, was involved in the operation of removing Ceaușescu and destructing the structures loyal to the dictator.<sup>249</sup> The Securitate and its members allowed the new state authorities to take power over society.<sup>250</sup> Having been kept under a particular protective "umbrella," members of security service changed the banner and became co-present in shaping the new national consciousness and the fate of Romania. When in 1993, democratic parties formally asked for general lustration and requested the former members of Securitate to be removed from politics, the authorities did not understand it.<sup>251</sup> The motion of Ticu Dumitrescu, president of the Association of Former Political Prisoners, to disclose secret files, was not accepted by the Senate in its full version. All stigmatization of Securitate members was rejected. Former correctional officers, executioners, and torturers, perpetrators, were not held accountable for their actions for a long time, because they were protected by, among others, the Foundation for Homeland and Solidarity. At the time, they avoided justice, and it seemed that due to their old age, they would never be brought to the judicial system.<sup>252</sup> Justice was served 30 years later.

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<sup>249</sup> Most probably the Securitate was inspired by the KGB.

<sup>250</sup> J. Solak, *Rumunia. Narodowe i ponadnarodowe aspekty integracji ze strukturami euroatlantyckimi*, Toruń 2004, p. 48.

<sup>251</sup> In December 1993, the Senate of Romania argued for the ban on taking state positions by former Securitate informers. Following the adopted resolution, lustration was demanded based on agent lists kept from 1945. Until 1993, Securitate officers were protected; none was made responsible for the repression of opponents of the communist regime. *s/mc, Senat za lustracją konfidentów Securitate*, PAP, Bukareszt 1993, December 14.

<sup>252</sup> In October 1997, the Romanian government adopted a draft law on declassifying the archives of communist security services – Securitate – and making them available to citizens. The issue of lustration was a problem in 1997, i.e., seven years after Ceausescu was killed. The central coalition, many activists of which spent years in communist prisons, made the access to files a centerpiece of their election campaign in 1996. The left-wing, which assumed power after the anti-communist revolt, opposed lustration and warned against unleashing a vendetta and even a civil war. Securitate, the powerful secret police from the communist period, was dissolved in December 1989. Its archives were handed over first to the Interior Affairs and Defence Ministries and then to the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) which was established only three months after the Securitate was dissolved. SRI employed 6000 former employees of Securitate. From the very beginning, it was planned to destroy secret files containing information about Securitate officers and confidential informants, but also people tracked by the secret police. *az/mi, Wywiad chce się pozbyć akt Securitate*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 8. Former SRI chief Virgil Măgureanu revealed on a television program that Securitate had collected over a million files of anyone "who posed a threat to the regime". More than 100 000 files were destroyed, including documents of post-communist President Ion Iliescu. The adopted bill provided for the lustration of people in high positions, including the president, government members, members of parliament, and councillors. According to it, they were to make statements about possible cooperation with Securitate, and their files were to be made available to the media. "In case they denied that they were informants and the investigation showed the opposite, they would be asked to resign. If they had refused, the content their file

In 1997, people from the Securitate circle were again protected from possible repercussions. Similarly, 10 years later, in 2007, but even the establishment by President Traian Băsescu of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Dictatorship in Romania, the so-called Tismanescu Commission, did not help clarify the case. The result of its work was only the condemnation of communism before Parliament as “a mechanism of repression based on violence by Securitate and had the most totalitarian image during Ceaușescu time.”<sup>253</sup> This situation could only take place in Romania. It would be impossible in Central Europe, at least on such a scale. The reforms were carried out by the post-communists. Romanians were an ideologized and mythologized society because of propagandists and activists of the Romanian dictator, who adored terror and denunciation. In the 1990s, the former opposition had organizational problems, which limited its activity and impact on society. Political disputes within democratic movements also did not serve the authority of small parties. Besides, many intellectuals had previously collaborated with Securitate. High positions in the government and newly founded or privatized companies were given to communist police officers from Securitate or their relatives. This was demonstrated by the restless decade of the 1990s.

Historical conflicts became an extension of political disputes. There were more and more confrontations in Romania. The so-called *mineriads*, during which miners pacified anti-communist opposition demonstrations and destroyed the headquarters of parties hostile to the Front, became popular. The intensification of *mineriads* occurred in the period from February to April 1990. After years of trials, it is seen that Ion Iliescu was behind social protests. In April, his authoritarian conduct led to the outbreak of social protests which intensified when he won the presidential election in May. It took place in the atmosphere of accusations of votes manipulation.<sup>254</sup> The protests of young demonstrators on the University Square in Bucharest proceeded quite calmly until the miners summoned by Iliescu arrived on 13 June.<sup>255</sup> According to the prosecutor’s office, during the suppression of the protest lasting until June 15, at least four people lost their lives, around 1400 were wounded, 1250 people were illegally arrested. The action was accompanied by robberies and tremendous damage done to the city, including demolishing the headquarters of opposition parties and editorial offices of the newspapers that criticized the government. For Iliescu “miners

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would have been published in an official newspaper, and they would have been tried for fraud” – commented minister Gavril Dejeu. *Rzqd postanowił odtajnić archiwa Securitate*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, October 18.

<sup>253</sup> *Civil society and post-communist transitional justice in Romania* – Lavinia Stan, [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTnLyUNCLd1rN4d\\_TD5uXBA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTnLyUNCLd1rN4d_TD5uXBA).

<sup>254</sup> *Akt oskarżenia wobec byłego prezydenta Iliescu*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, June 13.

<sup>255</sup> Iliescu then emphasized that the opposition had attempted to launch a fascist coup.

from the Jiu Valley were, however, the rescuers of the new democracy.”<sup>256</sup> The assaults, both preceding the overthrow of dictator Ceaușescu and his wife,<sup>257</sup> as well as those after their death, carried out by “terrorists” were in fact carried out in accordance with the orders of Ion Iliescu and Petre Roman given to Securitate troops. They were subordinated to the Ministry of National Defence and military Special Counter-terrorism Unit (USLA), supported by about 20,000 miners in 1990. The miners were intentionally brought to the capital by buses to blend into the crowd, “stage” to help calm the crowd protests against the transitional government led by a “party dissident” and later President Ion Iliescu.<sup>258</sup> After completing their tasks, the authorities rehabilitated Securitate, clearing them of charges for the next 25 years.<sup>259</sup> Undoubtedly, the events slowed down the transformation and stopped foreign investment in Romania for years.

After 1989, for almost 30 years, many representatives of the communist regime in Romania remained on their political and judiciary positions. They

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<sup>256</sup> The investigation of the events of June 1990 was conducted by the Romanian military prosecutor’s office, later by the Prosecutor General’s Office, which unexpectedly discontinued it in 2009. As a result of numerous complaints from victims or their family members, in 2015, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Romania had committed grave procedural errors in this case. Proceedings were resumed. Ion Iliescu, Peter Roman, Gelu Voican-Voiculescu, and the head of the central intelligence service Virgil Măgureanu were investigated. *Akt oskarżenia wobec byłego prezydenta Iliescu*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, June 13.

<sup>257</sup> It is mainly about the period of December 17–30, 1989, when thousands of mostly unarmed demonstrators went to the streets of Romanian cities and were shelled by “unidentified” perpetrators. During the revolution, in December 1989, 1104 people died in Romania, of which 162 before the fall of Ceaușescu, who ordered the repression of anti-government demonstrations in Timișoara and Budapest, and 942 people in the following days. *jo/mc, Wznowiono śledztwo ws. śmierci demonstrantów w 1989 roku*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, November 2.

<sup>258</sup> *ik/mc, Były prezydent i były premier oskarżeni o zbrodnie przeciwko ludzkości*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, December 23. Under Romanian law, state approval is required to initiate criminal proceedings against former members of the government. In October 2015, Klaus Iohannis approved to launch an investigation against Prime Minister Roman (1989–1991), former Deputy Prime Minister Voican-Voiculescu (1989–1990), and former Defence Minister Victor Atanasie Stănculescu (1990–1991). *az/mc, Rozszerzenie śledztwa ws. stłumienia demonstracji w 1990 r.*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, October 27.

<sup>259</sup> After the events, on January 10, 1991, Miron Cozma, the miners’ union leader from the Jiu Valley, was arrested and questioned. He was charged with causing the resignation of Prime Minister Petre Roman in September 1990. In June 1990, miners from the Jiu Valley, led by Cozma, came to Bucharest to “bring order,” speeding demonstrations against President Iliescu up. In September 1991, they overthrew the first post-communist government of Petre Roman, which tried to implement radical economic reforms. Ion Iliescu was blamed for persuading Cozma and the miners to break up opposition demonstrations in Bucharest. However, the former president rejected the accusations, repeating that the invasions of the capital were “spontaneous.” In his defence, Cozma said that the events were controlled by Gelu Voican-Voiculescu – Deputy Prime Minister in the Roman government, who in June 1990 organized a visit to Bucharest of 20,000 miners who terrorized residents, politicians, and opposition journalists. In Cozma’s opinion, the miners were subject to constant manipulation by the former and current authorities. *mw/ro, Przywódca związkowy oskarża poprzednie rządy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, February 2.

managed to scrupulously conceal information necessary for the investigations, conceal the reports of the interrogations and report the internal intelligence service SRI relevant to the parliamentary committees. The investigation of historical events was significantly delayed. Having returned to the investigation after 25 years, the military prosecutor's office described it as "a crime against humanity." Responsibility for it was placed on the "new political and military leadership" which took power on December 22, 1989 as a consequence of mass demonstrations.<sup>260</sup>

After removing Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife from the political scene, the "new-old power" went on to implement the rest of the meticulously prepared plan. The mid-1990s, full of political events, was the second stage of activities, a political turning point after December 1989. Romania's political fate was at stake. They decided that in Romania, democratic reforms would be limited in nature and extended in time. Therefore, efforts were also made to set limits on the influence of democratic parties. There was a second "coup" that undoubtedly has affected Romania's problems with democracy today. It smothered and silenced the intellectuals and the opposition, which failed to face the new authorities, supported by reliable secret services and miners.

It can be assumed that the events of 1990 alarmed even the post-communists. Iliescu understood that this way of political struggle in Europe was already obsolete and poorly received by Western democracies and Central European countries. Russia was in crisis; its leaders were not able to get involved and support the communists-reformers. The position of the Iliescu camp would be significantly weakened if the West actively supported the oppositionists. Hence the ethnic riots that broke out in Târgu Mureș that same month became the basis for Iliescu to finally deal with the Securitate power that was increasingly compromising him and taking away the control.<sup>261</sup> He founded (on March 26, 1990) a new security service - the Romanian Intelligence Service (Serviciul Român de Informații - SRI) instead of the Securitate.<sup>262</sup> SRI became a central state body. Its opinion was respected when it came to nominations for critical public positions. The SRI could perform intelligence, counterintelligence, and anti-terrorist functions, had its own mobilization body, the ability to establish military units, was supposed to counteract and combat acts of terrorism. It was headed by Virgil Măgureanu and included officers of the dissolved Securitate. SRI took over the acts of its predecessor, and its superior was directly

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<sup>260</sup> jo/mc, *Wznowiono śledztwo wsp. śmierci demonstrantów w 1989 r.*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, November 2.

<sup>261</sup> *Spoleczeństwo obywatelskie...*

<sup>262</sup> *Lege nr. 14/1992 privind organizarea și funcționarea Serviciului Român de Informații*, Mof, no. 033/1992, [in:] J. Solak, *Rumunia. Narodowe i ponadnarodowe aspekty integracji ze strukturami euroatlantyckimi*, Toruń 2004, pp. 48.



subordinated to the president.<sup>263</sup> So these were changes, but not “revolutionary” ones. The “softness” of political, economic, and even ideological differences was a factor distinguishing the Romanian transformation.

Counterintelligence was active in Romania, but intelligence structures were also organized. In 1990, the Foreign Intelligence Centre (renamed the Foreign Intelligence Service – SIE (Serviciul de Informații Externe)) was established, in 1996 the Special Telecommunications Service (STS) was founded which, having access to secret information, increasingly interfered in Romania’s political situation and demanded the possibility of influencing strategic decisions of the state. Numerous scandals involving STS, in which widespread corruption and nepotism prevailed, contributed to eliminating many leading personalities. However, these changes, both in name and structure, did not put an end to the activities of former Securitate members once and for all. They infiltrated all positions, joined the services, took positions from managerial to the lowest ones. Being protected by law, they became inviolable. Securitate files in thousands of copies were “lost” in mysterious circumstances. The National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității – CNSAS), established to investigate the cases, became an instrument of retaliation for the new authorities against ideological opponents.<sup>264</sup> Another essential factor limiting democratic political reforms and, above all, involving the state authorities’, was the newly established corrupt structures of particular organs. Their ubiquity was the reason for much-delayed lustration.

On March 14, 1990, the Council passed a decree – a resolution on elections to the Parliament and the president of Romania; it became an *ad hoc* constitution

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<sup>263</sup> Virgil Măgureanu was one of the leading personalities of the December revolution of 1989 who was able to keep his original position. He was the person who appeared on television as a member of the judges who sentenced Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife Elena to death on Christmas 1989. Many liberals consider the December Revolution to be a palace coup organized by Securitate and secondary party activists such as Ion Iliescu. Therefore, it is not surprising that in March 1990, the director of Romanian intelligence Virgil Măgureanu became the head of the SRI, when it officially replaced the former political police. SRI was involved in many scandals. When Măgureanu resigned in 1997, it was said that this was due to “domestic and foreign pressure [...] on a Kremlin man who, as the head of secret services, was an obstacle to Romania’s admission to NATO.” In May 1991, the press discovered several tons of secret documents from SRI in a ditch in Berevoești (not far from Bucharest), which were partly destroyed. In the documents, there were notes about opposition parties that came to power in the 1990s. This was considered as evidence that the SRI uses “methods of political police” to surveill the opposition. Then several other scandals erupted that additionally undermined the credibility of the secret services. An attempt to recruit a historian was disclosed, and two SRI officers were caught spying on two journalists. Măgureanu was a “resident” (the head of a group of informants) of Securitate in the 1960s. Meanwhile, the law prohibits former Securitate agents from holding responsible positions in SRI. Although many parties sharply demanded the resignation of the head of SRI, the then President Ion Iliescu – with whom Măgureanu was reportedly closely related – preferred to forget about the case. kar, *Kryzys w kierownictwie tajnych służb*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, April 25.

<sup>264</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

of the state. The act declared pluralist democracy and the division of power, regulated the method of election and tasks of the new parliament, and the powers of the president. The main task of the bicameral parliament, elected according to the proportional representation system, was to adopt a new constitution within eighteen months.<sup>265</sup> According to the assumptions, the Romanian president came from general and direct elections, and the parliament consisted of two chambers.<sup>266</sup> On March 18, 1990, a new electoral law was adopted, specifying how to appoint the head of state and the Romanian parliament. It defined the form of government in Romania and pointed out the necessity for adopting the new Basic Law procedure. The new governments were to be based on a pluralist democracy with a three-branch division of power: legislative, executive, and judicial. The newly elected parliament was to act as a constitutive and legislative body. The electoral law for parliament was to be based on the principle of proportionality.<sup>267</sup>

The first democratic parliamentary and presidential elections in Romania took place on May 20, 1990.<sup>268</sup> The turnout was high – 86%.<sup>269</sup> Over 80 political groups participated, most of which did not play any significant roles in political life.<sup>270</sup> However, the election campaign was marked by a confrontation between the National Salvation Front and opposition parties, among which the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants' Party dominated. The election took place in an atmosphere of social unrest and was characterized by numerous irregularities.<sup>271</sup> Citizens voted for the National Salvation Front (67% of the votes).<sup>272</sup> However, the Front initially declared that they would not turn into a political party and would not, in the announced first free elections, put forward their representatives.<sup>273</sup> In elections to the Chamber of Deputies (391 deputies),

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<sup>265</sup> B. Dziemidok-Olszewska, *System polityczny Rumunii*, [in:] W. Sokół, M. Żmigrodzki (eds.), *Systemy polityczne państw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej*, Lublin 2005, p. 435.

<sup>266</sup> A. Jarosz, *op. cit.*

<sup>267</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>268</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Konstytucja Rumunii z 21 listopada 1991 roku*, transl. A. Cosma, Warszawa 1996, p. 7.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>270</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>271</sup> J. Steiner, *Demokracje europejskie*, Rzeszów 1993, p. 141.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>273</sup> The situation did not seem to be precise. Questions arose about the idea of the revolution, the participation of outsiders, including Arab terrorists, who supported the Securitate's activities. No explanation of not injured terrorists, or evidence why the only building, in which leading politicians of the National Salvation Front were staying, was not shot; no answer to the question why the perfectly trained Securitate forces that took care of Nicolae Ceaușescu, did not take the television tower in which they gathered the new government, or why were the key decisions of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) which was trained under the watchful eye of Iliescu, highly influenced by Securitate officers in the early 90s. There are many questions without answers. Most of them refer to the Securitate, its members, who, after the events of 1989, held high, well-paid positions in Romania, and the archives that were lost forever.

the Front<sup>274</sup> obtained 66% of votes (263 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 91 seats in the Senate), The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) – 7%, Liberal Party – 6%, Green Party and Peasant Party – 3% each. In the elections to the Senate, Front received 67% of the vote, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, and the Liberal Party – 7% each, and the Peasants' Party 2.5%.<sup>275</sup>

In the presidential election, the leader of the Front and interim President Ion Iliescu proved to be unrivalled and won as much as 85% support.<sup>276</sup> Only 10% of the votes were received by the Liberal Party candidate Radu-Anton Câmpeanu, and Ion Rațiu, supported by the Peasant Party, won 4% of the votes.<sup>277</sup> The success of the National Salvation Front was influenced by the excellent organization of party members, their access to radio and television, and the use of the former communist party's apparatus.<sup>278</sup> Ion Iliescu held the office of the head of state for three terms. When he took the oath for the first time before the Parliament and nation, he promised that "his term as president of Romania would be a term of the revival of hope, renewal of national and social solidarity and national dignity."<sup>279</sup> However, even though the nation treated him as a liberator from the oppression of Ceaușescu, a hero who freed citizens from the rule of tyranny, universal control over the media and security forces, Iliescu was a symbol of fragile stability, the epitome of final compromise and a guide on the road from the communist past to the uncertain future. He was

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<sup>274</sup> The National Salvation Front (FSN) started in elections as a political movement aiming to stabilize the state, advocating for the peasants to maintain the subdivision of land, preventing inflation, and internal security while liberalizing citizens' lives. FSN gained an advantage in Romania, leaving the opposition divided internally, unprepared in terms of politics or economics to rule the country. The intended effect was achieved, among others thanks to the support of FSN by smaller parties, such as the Romanian National Unity Party in Transylvania, the Republican Party, the Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania, The National Reconstruction Party of Romania, the Democratic Group of the Centre, the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Labour Party. The parliamentary opposition primarily comprised liberals, forming part of the National Liberal Party, the National Peasant Party, the Christian Party, the Democratic Party, Romanian Social Democratic Party, which cooperated with the Hungarian Alliance UDMR; the Ecological Movement focused mainly on criticizing the government and accusing it of communist lineage, anti-democracy and maintaining the former structures of state administration, including Securitate. In addition to the Parliament, there was also an opposition which was represented, among others, by the Group for Social Dialogue and relatively new groups in the form of the Democratic Antitotalitarian Forum, the Civil Alliance, the Alliance of Democratic Unity, or the Democratic Progressive Party, the Christian Social Democratic Party, and the Romanian National Party and other smaller student parties and organizations. More in: A. Burakowski, *System polityczny współczesnej Rumunii*, Warszawa-Kraków 2014.

<sup>275</sup> B. Dziemidok-Olszewska, *op. cit.*, p.435

<sup>276</sup> A. Patek, J. Rydel, J.J. Węc, *op. cit.*, p.118.

<sup>277</sup> Official data.

<sup>278</sup> J. Steiner, *Rumunia*, Rzeszów 1993, p. 146.

<sup>279</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*, p. 139.

a leader who postponed the necessary reforms awaited by Romanians for years. No Central European country undergoing political transformation had as many problems with incorporating the ideals of democracy into social life as Romania. There was a gap between political solutions and political practice that political forces could not overcome. The post-communists and Iliescu were stuck deeply in Romanian Bolshevism, and democratic parties were weak and unprepared for the anti-system political struggle. That is why the post-communists, using the political confusion of the nation and using political play, widely used in the Ceaușescu's time, remained in power, which the West did not like. Changing the head of state did not solve the problems accumulated over the years and did not affect the changes that the opposition expected. Besides, the difficult economic situation in Romania intensified tensions and modified, even destructively, the society.<sup>280</sup> The beginnings of economic transformation were particularly tricky for Romanian society. Counting on the "economic miracle," Romanians became victims of the financial pyramids – about one million Romanians became involved in one of them, i.e., 20% of the population. Similarly to the privatization which was described as criminal, the financial pyramids concentrated billions in the hands of the former party nomenclature.<sup>281</sup> As a result of the unrest, at the end of September 1991, the Romanian economy lost almost \$ 3 billion because of the delay in granting loans and losing investments. This situation had the most significant impact on financial and restructuring reforms, and the energy sector.<sup>282</sup>

In the second half of 1991, there were calls for the resignation of Prime Minister Roman and President Iliescu. People demanded the creation of a coalition government of national unity, dissolution of parliament, and the announcement of early new elections. Already in December 1990, opposition parties formed the National Convention for the Establishment of Democracy.<sup>283</sup> The opposition and the Orthodox clergy were mainly joined by December's events, when the king was brutally expelled from Romania on Christmas day.<sup>284</sup> His concept of national consent, became a threat to the rulers, mainly if economic aid from abroad was included. This casus again brought to mind the need to restore the monarchy or submit this idea to a nationwide vote, which became a clear expression of objection to the ruling authorities.<sup>285</sup> Distrust of individual

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<sup>280</sup> Interview with the Honorary Consul of Romania in Wrocław, M. Cornel Calomfirescu, 2018, November 23 [in the author's possession].

<sup>281</sup> E. Mańołowa, *25 lat po upadku komunizmu Rumunia odbija się od dna*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, December 25.

<sup>282</sup> In 2004, the daily newspaper "Evenimentul Zilei" reported that over 14 years from the fall of communism, the Treasury had lost around € 25 billion due to fraudulent financial operations. *Ibidem*.

<sup>283</sup> Ocena sytuacji wewnętrznej, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sygn. zesp. 000228.

<sup>284</sup> Interview with the Honorary...

<sup>285</sup> When in 1997 King Michael I officially visited Bucharest (for the first time after he regained the right to stay in Romania, it was emphasized that the victory in the presidential election of Constantinescu and the parliamentary election of Christian Democrats – the king's traditional po-

social strata, poor cooperation between the intelligentsia and workers, and peasants' passivity have brought failure to the power of new democratic parties. On the one hand, Romania seemed to be the subject of considerable interest to Western countries and Russia, which was partly awakened after the collapse of the USSR. The main reason for interest in this part of Europe was primarily the fact of the geopolitical location in which Romania is located – having access to the Black Sea and the Danube. The European Community noticed Romanian potential, wanting to deepen cooperation and influence the distance Bucharest and Moscow relations. Still, the events in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s did not provide an opportunity to monitor the situation. They diverted the West's attention from Romania and left the current situation, thus giving the Iliescu camp a free hand in its actions. It allowed him to stay in power. Also, the first actions of the state were focused on unification with the European Community. The tendencies aimed at bringing Romania closer to the Central European nations with the features of Western culture began to be noticeable after the overthrow of Ceaușescu, mainly through the prism of Romania's links with the EU countries. Historical experience, mostly promoted by democratic forces, also had an impact.

Romania was afraid of isolation in the first half of the 1990s. Good relations with Latin and Mediterranean countries – Italy, France, Spain, and Latin America – as well as with China and Turkey did not bear the threat of loneliness in Europe. In a closer environment, relations with the Balkan countries seemed to be correct, but they did not contribute to Romania's involvement in the Pentagonal initiative (the Central European Initiative). Cooperation between the Black Sea countries developed at a relatively slow pace, noting only an increase in electricity supply from Turkey. Contacts with the Soviet Union were considered "correct," and aroused dissatisfaction among the public, further fuelled by the Romanian opposition, criticizing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and demanding respect for the rights of the Romanian people in Bessarabia and Bukovina.<sup>286</sup> Regarding the Republic of Moldova, there was a common belief that it would either join Romania itself or be returned by the Soviet Union. On April 5, 1991, a section of the friendship treaty was discussed, which confirmed Romania's loss of Bessarabia. Since the Soviet state collapsed, the agreement was not finally ratified. When the USSR collapsed, great attention was paid in

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litical allies, paradoxically reconciled the nation with the republican option in Romania. In the past, many politicians and intellectuals associated republic with communism, stressing that it was Petru Grozy's pro-communist government that forced the monarch to abdicate on December 30, 1947, and even deprived him of his citizenship in May 1948. In 1997 when Romania sought membership in NATO, the new government used the position of King Michael to promote the country on its path to NATO and the EU. *Były król pozyskany dla zabiegów w NATO i UE*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, March 5.

<sup>286</sup> *Ocena polityki zagranicznej Rumunii*, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1990, sygn. zesp. 000228.

Romania to the integration with Moldova and border disputes with Ukraine.<sup>287</sup> Moldova's proclamation of independence in August 1991 gave rise to the hope that "a liberated nation would legally, orderly and democratically choose its future within the great Romanian family."<sup>288</sup> This event was recognized as the beginning of a "democratic process aimed at the overthrown of communist regimes."<sup>289</sup>

Ion Iliescu had high hopes for holding power with the possibility of Romania joining NATO.<sup>290</sup> Membership in the organization was to be not only a guarantee of national security, which confirms Romania's qualification as a Central European country, which was treated as the eastern flank of the Euro-Atlantic world.<sup>291</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, Romania was a country that was looking for a new path. Dealing with the past seemed a good reason for further change. The dictator's decision, in the early 1980s, to repay of external debt cost citizens a lot of sacrifices and caused hardship. The reduction in domestic consumption contributed to the daily power cuts, home cooling, and the lack of food and medicine. However, thanks to the sacrifices of citizens, Romania emerged from the shadows. For the West, it seemed to be an interesting case – rich in deposits, located on the Black Sea, requiring help in carrying out political, economic, and social change. Romania's relations with Hungary and Germany remained neutral. The chance of threat from the West was not even taken into account,

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<sup>287</sup> In relations with Ukraine, after 1989, Romania mainly demanded the condemnation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – as a result of the Pact, it lost Bukovina and Bessarabia in 1940. Part of Northern Bukovina became part of Ukraine, but most of the lost land went to Moldova. The Ukrainian authorities were concerned that the condemnation of the pact could give rise to Romania's territorial claims. The 17-hectare Snake Island in the Black Sea, about 60 km east of the Danube Delta was also a contentious issue. Before the war, it belonged to Romania, then to the USSR, in 1997 to Ukraine. It was an attractive acquisition because there were abundant deposits of gas and oil. *Rumunia parafuje 3 maja uklad o dobrym sqsiedztwie z Ukrainq*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, April 28. On May 3, 1997, the Treaty on Relations of Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation between Ukraine and Romania was signed. In the document, both sides obliged to respect each other now and in the future, and condemned the historical documents of "totalitarian and military-dictatorial regimes" under which the current border was shaped. The solution to the problem of the division and operation of the shelf around the Snake island in the Black Sea was postponed. *Ukraina-Rumunia. Parafowano traktat o przyjazni, dobrym sqsiedztwie i wspqłpracy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, May 3.

<sup>288</sup> By 1940, i.e., by the annexation by the USSR, a significant part of Moldova's territory belonged to Romania. After the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in Romania, the demands for reunification intensified. The official position of the Romanian government was, however, that the re-joining of former Bessarabia to Romania was not a priority of Romanian policy. It seemed that pushing this issue would be risky. db/mc, *Byly król Rumunii liczy na powrót Mołdawii do Rumunii*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, August 27.

<sup>289</sup> *Rumunia wita niepodległość Mołdawii*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, September 3.

<sup>290</sup> mw/mc, *Rumuński MSZ na temat radzieckiej inicjatywy pokojowej*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 9.

<sup>291</sup> er/mc, *Rumunia chce współpracować z NATO*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 9.

especially that Romania cooperated in the framework of various types of bilateral and multilateral initiatives. Thanks to tripartite cooperation between Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest, the idea of a community of European states and nations, particularly important and necessary for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which for political reasons were in a phase of deep, dynamic socio-political and economic transformations, was particularly widespread.<sup>292</sup>

The year 1991 was recorded in the history of Romania, mainly due to the new Constitution's adoption. The adoption of the constitution was a signal that the country was heading towards democracy.<sup>293</sup> That year did not bring any significant changes in the parliamentary-government balance of power. In October, Theodor Stolojan became the new prime minister of Romania, who replaced the head of government Petre Roman.<sup>294</sup> In general, it can be assumed that the first years after the transition left a question about further political solutions unanswered. The main actors involved in creating reforms represented the programs adopted by their parties. In the area of electoral transformations, poorly educated, ignorant of constitutionalism and party systems, political activists preached views that were not transparent or understandable. However, the most critical problem for the ruling party was the drastic decline in popularity. Post-communists were gradually losing trust. They did not have a specific plan for modernizing the economy and overcoming the social and economic crisis. The National Salvation Front was losing support every month. During one year, the support dropped from 67% (1990) to 30% (1991). FSN also lost 19 of 263 seats (out of a total of 396) in the Chamber of Deputies and 3 of 91 seats (out of 119) in the Senate. A definite number of deputies who left the FSN moved to independent positions or went to the National Liberal Party.

The Romanian political scene of the 1990s was characterized by vague ideological direction, sudden changes in political options, unpredictable alliances of distant political parties, and party leaders' ups and downs. The party programs were not clear and factual, and the politicians' declarations were realistic. The transition of political scene activists from one party to another, regardless of their beliefs and views, was regular. Well-known right-wing politicians suddenly became politicians supporting the views of left-wing parties. Extreme left-wingers realized that they favoured the opinions of right-wing parties.<sup>295</sup> In Romania's case, the possibility of actual reconstruction of the state could only take place as a result of thoughtful action, the introduction of a strong democratic system, which further reinforced the belief in the need to introduce the presidential model. It would ensure more excellent political

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<sup>292</sup> *Ocena polityki...*

<sup>293</sup> J. Ciesielska-Klikowska, *Rumunia i Bułgaria na drodze do Unii Europejskiej (1900–2007) – perspektywa Niemiec i Francji*, "Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej" 2011, no. 5, p. 213.

<sup>294</sup> *mw/stb, Premier Stolojan nowym premierem*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 1.

<sup>295</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 36.

stability and, in the present situation, would be more resistant to changes in the balance of political forces that occurred in the conditions of a multi-party system.<sup>296</sup>

The work on the constitution's provision, which was to replace the constitution of 1965, began in July 1990.<sup>297</sup> During the joint meeting of the two chambers, the Constitutional Assembly's work regulations were adopted (it was amended three times – in February, March, and September 1991), which included determining the procedure for the Assembly to consider the draft Constitution.<sup>298</sup> As a result of further actions, a special constitutional commission was appointed, it comprised 23 deputies and five experts. It was headed by a former PCR activist.<sup>299</sup> Work on the project, which was one of the most controversial legal acts from the fall of Ceaușescu, lasted 16 months. The assumptions of the future constitution were presented in February 1991.<sup>300</sup> The mere fact that the constitution was co-created by the representatives of the opposition (representatives of the National Peasants' Party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party), and the majority were members of the National Salvation Front, many of whom remained faithful to the previous system's policies, meant that it was impossible to achieve the expected effects. Voting on the project was personal, with the possibility of postal voting.<sup>301</sup> It was agreed that a constitution would require a 2/3 majority of the statutory number of members constituting the Assembly to be adopted.<sup>302</sup> Out of 510 deputies and senators from the Romanian Constitutional Assembly, 371 deputies and 105 senators participated in the vote on the draft (November 21, 1991), 20 deputies and 13 senators by postal voting.<sup>303</sup> 414 members of the Assembly were in favour of adopting the draft constitution, 95 were against.<sup>304</sup> According to President Iliescu, although all political parties did not vote in favour of adopting the final version of the constitution, the mere fact of its adoption "testified to the development of the democratic system in Romania."<sup>305</sup> On December 8, 1991, the final text of the constitution was approved by the public through a democratic referendum.<sup>306</sup> According to the procedure, it was necessary to gain support of over half of the citizens participating in the vote.<sup>307</sup> To conduct it,

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<sup>296</sup> W. Skrzydło, *op. cit.* p. 158.

<sup>297</sup> syl/mi, *Rumuńskie referendum w sprawie nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 8.

<sup>298</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 8.

<sup>299</sup> syl/mi, *Rumuńskie referendum w sprawie nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 8.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>301</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 10.

<sup>302</sup> W. Brodziński, *Republika*, p. 154.

<sup>303</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 10.

<sup>304</sup> B. Dziemidok-Olszewska, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

<sup>305</sup> mw/st, *Rumunia dąży do zacieśnienia stosunków z Rosją*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, November 26.

<sup>306</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 9.

<sup>307</sup> az, *Prezydent wzywa naród do poparcia nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 6.



a Central Election Office was established, composed of seven judges and nine delegates of political parties represented in the parliament.<sup>308</sup> Approximately 11 million citizens (67.25%)<sup>309</sup> took part in the referendum, which President Iliescu recognized as “the crowning of the democratic process.”<sup>310</sup> 77.3% were in favour of the new Constitution, 20.4% were against. 248,000 invalid votes were recorded (i.e. 2.3%).<sup>311</sup> The Parliament adopted the constitution by voting on November 21, 1991.<sup>312</sup> As Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan emphasized, “if the Basic Law had not passed the vote, the referendum would have taken Romania two years back in its pursuit of democracy and a market economy.”<sup>313</sup> However, this did not happen. Romania adopted the new constitution, becoming a republic, as France, with a multi-party system and division of powers between the president and the prime minister, close to the standards of European democracy. This solution cancelled the monarchy’s return, although part of the society still missed it<sup>314</sup>, and which was “the only way to the final breakup with communism that was mentioned by King Michael I.”<sup>315</sup>

In the Constitution of November 21, 1991, the essence of the changes was breaking the system of the dictatorship of the Communist Party and rejecting the dictatorship of the proletariat, creating a statutory basis for the functioning of the multiparty system and ordering new parliament (already bicameral) and presidential elections.<sup>316</sup> The Constitution provided for relatively extensive use of instruments of direct civic participation.<sup>317</sup> It regulated the issues of the political and legal system of the state. In the Basic Law of Romania of 1991, however, regulations regarding the democratic, freedom, and sovereign character of the state come first.<sup>318</sup> Title I contains the general political principles of the Romanian state, i.e., the principle of sovereignty and independence,

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<sup>308</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 10.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>310</sup> az/ek, *Trzy czwarte Rumunów za nową konstytucją*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 13.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>312</sup> On November 21, 1991, the previous Basic Law of August 21, 1965 was repealed. In fact, however, the old Constitution was not applicable since December 1989. W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 7.

<sup>313</sup> az, *Prezydent wzywa naród do poparcia nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 6.

<sup>314</sup> az/ek, *Prezydent wyklucza restaurację monarchii*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, April 29.

<sup>315</sup> In the interview in May 1992, i.e., before the parliamentary and presidential elections, the king said he could restore hope and faith in the future, enabling him to mobilize energy and experience required to rebuild the country. He emphasized that his return would not remove the day-to-day difficulties but would create an atmosphere in which everyone could face the challenges. According to the king, “the monarchy is not a relic, but it protects democracy and gives the possibility of consolidating it, [...] more than any other form of government, constitutional monarchy can bring stability, rule of law and unity to the country because the king is not involved in party feuds”. węg/jk, *Król Michał wzywa do przywrócenia monarchii*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, May 9.

<sup>316</sup> syl/mi, *Rumuńskie referendum w sprawie nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 8.

<sup>317</sup> P. Uziębło, *Demokracja partycypacyjna*, Gdańsk 2009, p. 109.

<sup>318</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 10.

uniformity, and indivisibility of the Romanian national state (Art. 1 §1).<sup>319</sup> The State foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people. Romania is the “common and indivisible” homeland of all its citizens.<sup>320</sup> According to the provision, it is a unitary state, the territory of which is organized administratively into communes, towns, and counties. The Article 2 of the Basic Law indicates that it is impossible to separate any part of its territory from the state, and the resettlement of people or the settlement of international groups of people is prohibited.<sup>321</sup>

The constitution defines that Romania is a democratic and social state governed by the rule of law (Art. 1.3). National sovereignty resides within the Romanian people who exercise supreme power through their representative bodies and directly by referendum or folk initiative. The Article 4 states that “The State foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people” and “Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin”.<sup>322</sup> National minorities living in Romania are guaranteed the right to the preservation, development, and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity, under the Art. 6 §1.<sup>323</sup> The constitution points to the Republican form of government. In the Art. 1 §3 it is pointed out that Romania is a democratic and social state governed by the rule of law, in which human dignity, the citizens’ rights and freedoms, the free development of human personality, justice, and political pluralism represent supreme values. The legislator returned to the principle of political pluralism in the Art. 8 §1 which emphasizes that pluralism in the Romanian society is a condition and guarantee of constitutional democracy. The principle of people’s sovereignty and the principle of political representation were considered necessary. According to them, it is the people who exercise national sovereignty through their representative bodies and by a referendum (Art. 2 §1).<sup>324</sup> In Romania, persons belonging to national minorities are recognized and guaranteed “the right to the preservation, development, and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity” (Art. 6 §1). The measures taken by the state to preserve, develop, and express this identity shall conform to the principle of equality and non-discrimination to the other Romanian citizens.<sup>325</sup> The Basic Law grants freedom to constitute political parties and trade unions

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<sup>319</sup> *Konstytucja Rumunii z 21 listopada...*, Art. 1.1.

<sup>320</sup> The leaders of the Hungarian minority severely criticized the above mentioned provision in Romania, W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 10.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

while pointing to the fact that political parties are obliged to respect national sovereignty, territorial integrity, legal order, and democratic principles. The control of the legality of political party activities rests with the Constitutional Tribunal.<sup>326</sup> The Basic Law also specifies the freedom to establish and operate trade unions which shall carry out their activity according to their statutes under the conditions specified in the Act (Art. 9). In the Title I, the reference to elements of national tradition and symbolism deserves attention (Art. 12).

The Title II of the Constitution contains provisions on fundamental rights, freedoms, and duties. The Romanian legal system is constituted by constitution, basic laws, organic and ordinary laws. Regulations concerning the citizens' rights and liberties shall be interpreted and enforced in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with the covenants and other treaties Romania is a party to, and – in the event of inconsistencies – the international regulations shall take precedence (Art. 20 §2).<sup>327</sup>

Citizens are equal before the law and public authorities and institutions, without any privileges or discrimination. The access to public functions and dignities can only be granted to persons whose citizenship is Romanian and whose domicile is in Romania (Art. 16). The constitution prohibits extradition and expulsion of a Romanian citizen from the country. "The creators of the constitution tried to reflect at least the current scope of economic, social and cultural rights (right to education, Article 32, right to health protection, Article 33, right to work and social protection, Article 38, the prohibition of forced labour, Article 39). The chapter 'Fundamental rights and freedoms' also includes provisions on the protection of children and young people (Article 45) and disabled persons (Article 46)."<sup>328</sup> According to the Art. 21 of the Constitution, "Every person is entitled to bring cases before the courts for the defence of their legitimate rights, liberties, and interests", which indicates that the legal system guarantees citizens their rights and freedoms. Due to the events in Romania it should be necessary to consider the Art. 48 which includes the rights of the person aggrieved by "any public authority". The aggrieved party has the right to demand the annulment of the act (or decision) infringing his or her rights and reparation for the damage. The state is also financially responsible for damages caused because of juridical errors.<sup>329</sup>

The Advocate of the People institution plays an essential role in protecting citizens' rights. Appointed by the Senate, he/she defends the rights and freedoms of citizens for four years. The Advocate of the People shall exercise his powers *ex officio* or at the request of persons aggrieved in their rights and freedoms, within the limits established by the law. The Romanian public authorities

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<sup>326</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibidem*.

gave the Advocate of the People the necessary support in the exercise of his powers. The Advocate of the People is required to present annual reports before the Parliament. The reports may contain recommendations on legislation or measures of any other nature to defend the citizens' rights and freedoms (Art. 57). According to the Art. 49 there are situations specified in the Constitution in which the exercise of certain rights or freedoms may be restricted.<sup>330</sup>

The principle of separation of powers, which is one of the basic principles of the Romanian system, is not directly reflected in the Basic Law. Instead, the Art. 148 § 1 draws attention to inviolable provisions relating to the national, unitary, and indivisible Romanian state, the Republican form of government, territorial integrity, independence of the judiciary, political pluralism, the official language, and going further, the Art. 148 §2 says that no revision shall be made if it results in the suppression of the citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Romanian system is referred to as a mixed, semi-presidential, president-parliamentary system, although it may also be referred to as "parliamentarized" or a system with a "parliamentary inclination."<sup>331</sup>

The adopted government system is the result of striving to establish a strong executive power, which was determined by the need for transformation at that time, Romanian political culture, the lack of democratic traditions, and support for strong individual power.<sup>332</sup> Undoubtedly, the establishment of a semi-presidential system was determined by the lack of political groups that would obtain permanent support from the electorate and exercise power within the parliamentary system.<sup>333</sup> Parliament is the only legislative authority in the state, it consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The structure of the Romanian Parliament is important. It is noteworthy that by December 1989, the unicameral Parliament had not met the expectations of either politicians or citizens. The establishment of two chambers was a solution to improve the quality of the legislative process and to weaken possible conflicts between the government and Parliament.<sup>334</sup> The adoption of such solutions in the Constitution also resulted from a lack of a sense of citizenship in Romanian society. As it turned out, neither the chambers nor their numbers influenced political relations in Romania for the next 30 years.

The Romanian Constitution, alongside the Parliament, president, and government, recognizes the following as the fundamental constitutional institutions: judicial power (courts, the Supreme Judicial Council), the Constitutional

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<sup>330</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

<sup>331</sup> J. Steiner, *Rumunia*, p. 204.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>333</sup> A. Antoszewski, *Forma rządu*, [in:] A. Antoszewski, R. Herbut (eds.), *Demokracje Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w perspektywie porównawczej*, Wrocław 1997, p. 53.

<sup>334</sup> W. Brodziński, *Wstęp*, p. 13.

Court, the Advocate of the People, and public administration. The judiciary is exercised by the Supreme Court and by other courts.<sup>335</sup>

Following Chapter II of the Romanian Constitution, the president gained enormous powers which largely remained outside any institutional control (leading the government, the right to interfere with parliamentary affairs, direct subordination of the army, intelligence services, the right to introduce a state of emergency without consulting the parliament first, etc.).<sup>336</sup> The new powers listed below were far beyond those that Nicolae Ceaușescu had.<sup>337</sup> The president of Romania represents the Romanian state and is the safeguard of the national independence, unity, and territorial integrity of the country. The president guards the observance of the Constitution and the proper functioning of the public authorities. Thus, the president acts as a mediator between the Powers in the State and between the State and society.<sup>338</sup> He is elected by universal, equal, direct, secret and free suffrage.<sup>339</sup> The president's term of office is four years, starting from the date the oath was taken in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.<sup>340</sup> The term of office may be extended by an absolute majority in the Parliament in the event of war or catastrophe.<sup>341</sup> No one cannot hold the office of president for more than two terms, that can also be consecutive.<sup>342</sup> The president of Romania has the following prerogatives and powers:

- ◆ designates a candidate to the office of prime minister and appoints the government on the basis of the vote of confidence of Parliament;
- ◆ dismisses and appoints, on the proposal of the prime minister, some members of the Government in the event of government reshuffle or vacancy of office;
- ◆ may consult with the Government about urgent, extremely important matters;

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<sup>335</sup> According to the new constitution, the judiciary is subject to the president and the government. *Ibidem*.

<sup>336</sup> The institution of the presidency was introduced in Romania in 1974. An amendment to the constitution of March 28, 1974, was adding to the Republic of Romania's Socialist Constitution on August 21, 1965, a chapter on "President of the Socialist Republic of Romania." The Articles 71–76 were devoted to it. In the 1965 Constitution, following the 1974 amendment, the president was responsible for all his activities, according to the Art. 76 §1, before the Grand National Assembly. After the political transformation, the new Romanian Constitution was adopted on November 21, 1991. Chapter II of Title III contains provisions relating to "the President of Romania." Provisions were regulating the competences and power of the head of state (Art. 80–100). S. Grabowska, *Odpowiedzialność karna głowy państwa na przykładzie Prezydenta Rumunii*, "Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego" 2010, nr 1, p. 127.

<sup>337</sup> syl/mi, *Rumuńskie referendum w sprawie nowej konstytucji*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 8.

<sup>338</sup> *Konstytucja Rumunii z 21 listopada...*, Art. 80.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 81.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 83.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 81.

- ◆ may participate in the meetings of the Government debating upon matters of national interest with regard to foreign policy, the defence of the country, insurance of public order, and, at the prime minister's request, in other instances as well, and shall preside over the Government meetings he participates in;
- ◆ addresses Parliament by messages on the main political issues of the nation;
- ◆ may dissolve Parliament, if no vote of confidence has been obtained to form a government within 60 days after the first request was made, and only after rejection of at least two requests for investiture, after consultation with the presidents of both Chambers and the leaders of the parliamentary groups;
- ◆ after consultation with Parliament, asks the people of Romania to express, by referendum, their will on matters of national interest;
- ◆ concludes international treaties negotiated by the Government, and then submits them to the Parliament for ratification within 60 days;
- ◆ on proposal by the Government, accredits and recalls diplomatic envoys of Romania, and approves the setting up, closing down or change in rank of diplomatic missions;
- ◆ is also responsible for conferring decorations and titles of honour, making appointments to public officers, under the terms provided for by the law, and granting individual pardon.<sup>343</sup>

In the exercise of his powers, the president issues decrees which shall be published in *Monitorul Oficial al României* (the Official Gazette of Romania). Some decrees regarding certain competences, issued by the head of the state specifically mentioned in the Constitution require the countersignature of the prime minister.<sup>344</sup> The president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and presides over the Supreme Council of National Defence (CSAT).<sup>345</sup> Due to the CSAT powers, he has a direct impact on the overall defence policy of the state, budget assumptions of the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and special services, appointing people to the high positions in the ministries of national defence and internal affairs, as well as functions such as Director of the Romanian Information Service, Head of Foreign Information Service and the Head of the Protection and Guard Service. The president may declare a partial or widespread mobilization of the Armed Forces, and in the event of armed aggression directed against the state, he is obliged to take measures to repel the aggression. The president of Romania has the right to make promotions to the ranks of general and marshal during the war also the rank of marshal.<sup>346</sup> The Romanian Constitution of 1991 adopted the principle of

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<sup>343</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 85-91.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 99.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 92.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 94.

the president's inviolability in the case of crimes committed in the performance of his duties, except for the high treason, and responsibility for other crimes that are unrelated to his position.<sup>347</sup> According to Art. 72 §1 and 84 §2 of the Constitution, the president enjoys immunity. He therefore is not held accountable for the political opinions expressed while exercising his office. He is protected against liability during the office and after the termination of the mandate. It applies to any acts or damage he has caused in connection with his rights in this position. The president's immunity assumes that he will be responsible for all acts committed that are unrelated to his function. The immunity that the president is entitled to while in office does not protect him after his term has expired, hence it will be possible to search, detain, arrest, or try the former president in criminal or misdemeanour cases in accordance with the principles of the universal law.<sup>348</sup> The president's constitutional liability towards voters and suspension in performing his function, which may result in his dismissal from office. The president's constitutional liability includes two separate aspects: the constitutional responsibility that the president incurs before the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (Art. 95 §1) and responsibility before the people, which is expressed in a referendum regarding the dismissal of the president from office (Art. 95 §3).<sup>349</sup> The president's criminal liability should be understood as the lack of criminal and civil liability for committed acts and opinions expressed in connection with the office exercised by the president.<sup>350</sup> However, according to the Art. 96 §1 of the Constitution, the parliament may prosecute the president for treason (the so-called high treason).<sup>351</sup>

The adoption of the Constitution in 1991 and the granting the president extraordinary power, as per European standards, was apparent and was noted by the international environment. On some critical issues, the powers of the president of Romania were far more extensive than the scope of the French president's power. Such constitutional solutions were dangerous to the democratic process, particularly considering the lack of democratic traditions in Romania and, more importantly, the lack of civil society.

At the time, most of the nation remained inactive. People were accustomed to protection by the state and the authorities, especially that the new government announced liberalization in the scope of duties and the extension of freedom rights. Hence, quite good activity records during the election and referendum. Society was concerned mainly about social issues related to employment. Thanks to the adopted basic law, the Iliescu camp strengthened its position in the country. The members of the camp dreamed and began to pursue a policy

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<sup>347</sup> C. Ionescu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice*, București 2004, pp. 300, 301.

<sup>348</sup> S. Grabowska, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>350</sup> T. Drăganu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice – tratat elementar*, București 1998, p. 302.

<sup>351</sup> S. Grabowska, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

that resembled the Ceaușescu period. The model, you might think, was for them the USSR, and then Gorbachev and Yeltsin's Russia.

As it turned out, years later, the changes were not introduced without reason. There were numerous politicians, including President Ion Iliescu, accused of crimes against humanity.

"Under Iliescu's rule, in the first half of the 1990s, Romania became not so much a capitalist as a liberal communist state in the Gorbachev style. This happened after long decades of Stalinist rule, and it was particularly visible from Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit to North Korea."<sup>352</sup> The first half of the 1990s was limited to a large extent to pro-Western declarations. At the time, Romania was still conducting a pro-Russian policy. The years 1990–1996, when Iliescu was taking power, were a difficult time for Europe. The crumbling Yugoslavia, which shocked Europe with the brutal fights and the unpredictable cruelty towards civilians, diverted attention from other events. Although President Iliescu spoke with appreciation of the country's leadership's moves aimed at unifying the national currency exchange rate, increasing Romania's economic balance, and praised Stolojan's economic policy reforms, at the same time it was difficult to talk about economic democratization and the country's economic sustainability.<sup>353</sup> Fuel prices were rising in Romania, and food was scarce.<sup>354</sup> As Robert D. Kaplan writes, it was this

slow pace of reforms in Romania, with an emphasis on the security of regime officers, that saved the state from civil war, [...] because the country was seriously threatened by the outbreak of violence against ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania and "general anarchy" after Ceaușescu's death, when Romania had a few unusable institutions, dozens of new political parties and a serious problem of poverty in cities and in the countryside. The greater the tyranny, the greater the power vacuum that follows it, hence Iliescu wanted above all to keep the country whole."<sup>355</sup>

The authorities tried to take tensions related to the Hungarian minority<sup>356</sup> in stride, assuming that they would disappear with the development of democracy. It seemed then that Romania "needed a leader for a transition period more than just a democrat."<sup>357</sup> The collapse of Romania's statehood and the collapse of the

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<sup>352</sup> R.D. Kaplan, *W cieniu Europy. Dwie zimne wojny i trzydziestoletnia podróż przez Rumunię, a nawet dalej*, Wołowiec 2017, p. 194.

<sup>353</sup> mw/mc, *Iliescu wezwał do zachowania tempa reform*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, November 15.

<sup>354</sup> Before the presidential election, the Romanian government abolished state subsidies worth approximately \$ 100 million. As a result, food prices doubled, and energy prices increased significantly. Syl/ro, *Rząd obcina dotacje*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, August 17.

<sup>355</sup> R.D. Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>356</sup> Emerging demands for autonomy for the Hungarian minority in Romania were assessed as destructive for the unity of the state. The issue of a federation in Romania was not considered. Syl/syb, *Rumuński prezydent odrzucił koncepcję ustroju federalnego*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, November 22.

<sup>357</sup> R.D. Kaplan, *op. cit.*



state was a disputable issue. Post-communists formulated this view. It was about maintaining a strong power system with a semi-authoritarian dimension. This does not change the fact that the Romanian state was in a multidimensional crisis, and a leader with public support and international recognition was necessary. There was no such personality, only Iliescu. Ion Iliescu was a member of the highest party authorities for many years, but due to a personal conflict with *Conducător* he was pushed to the side. After the coup, he became the most recognizable face on the Romanian political scene. Romanian society saw him a saviour, which in the 1990 general presidential election ensured him an unquestioned victory. It was difficult then to find in Romania a rival for this “extraordinary personality.”

In view of the state crisis, Iliescu was forced to form a new multi-party government. For a long time, talks on this matter were at an impasse. 154 candidates aspired to take 24 ministerial positions. In Romania, there was no such thing as an action program at the time. The pre-election discussions were basically about who would be given the ministerial portfolios.<sup>358</sup> The talks, led by the new Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan, were not easy. His predecessor, Petre Roman, who headed the one-party government (FSN), resigned after the incidents in Bucharest.<sup>359</sup>

Exacerbated political struggles dominated the first half of 1992 as part of the pre-election campaign. They were also accompanied by the National Salvation Front's efforts to maintain their role which unfortunately had drastically weakened. Expectations of the opposition that are difficult to implement, including to bring about changes in the agrarian structure, meant that President Iliescu abandoned cooperation with its representatives. The pace and continuity of economic changes have been becoming bigger and bigger problem in the country. Parliamentary and presidential elections (September/October 1992) formed a bipolar political arrangement.<sup>360</sup> On the one side was the presidential-government camp. Its core was the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR – a fragment of the former FSN), supported by other parties, two of which were nationalist ones (the Romanian National Unity Party and the Greater Romania Party and the Socialist Party of Labour). This camp had a majority in Parliament and enjoyed the support of Ion Iliescu,<sup>361</sup> even though the position of the head of the state itself continued to weaken gradually.<sup>362</sup> The opposition, which

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<sup>358</sup> az/mi, *Impas rozmów w sprawie utworzenia nowego rządu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 11.

<sup>359</sup> Prime Minister Roman resigned from the position in September 1991 after the riot. Over the time he was in the government, he repeatedly appealed to NATO to help stabilize Romanian reforms. Mw/stb, *Sekretarz generalny NATO spotkał się z Petre Romanem*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, October 29.

<sup>360</sup> syl, *Rządząca partia głęboko podzielona na zjeździe*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, March 27.

<sup>361</sup> The ruling camp held 53% of the votes in Parliament.

<sup>362</sup> In June 1992, public support for President Iliescu fell, resulting from research conducted by the Institute for Market Research and Public Opinion. However, surveys indicated that Iliescu still had the chance to win the biggest number of votes in the first round of presidential elections

remained on the other side, was weak and failed to create a viable alternative to the presidential-government system. The Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR), a coalition that included over a dozen folk groups, Christian Democrats and Liberals, was formally chaired by Emil Constantinescu. In addition to the Democratic Convention, the Democratic Party of Petre Roman, a faction of the FSN, was also influential on the political scene. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, which cooperated with the Democratic Convention, also remained in opposition. In the presidential election, the primary fight was between Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu. 75.7% of approximately 16 million went to vote for the current president.<sup>363</sup> According to a close ally of Ion Iliescu, then Minister of Foreign Affairs – Adrian Năstase, discontinuance of Western aid mostly helped the post-communists to win. “The rejection of the most-favoured-nation treatment of Romania by the US House of Representatives only supported the Iliescu campaign” – he said.<sup>364</sup> The advantages of Iliescu were probably also experience and maturity, allowing him to understand citizens. For Romanians who had been oppressed for years, it was difficult to “jump from extreme dictatorship to market economy and democracy.”<sup>365</sup> Iliescu was the one who promised to spare them “the suffering from switching to the new economic system.”<sup>366</sup> That is why Romanians preferred to limit the scope of democracy in favour of specific social security.

According to US observers, the election in Romania was “free and fair,”<sup>367</sup> although even before the closure of all polling stations, the media reported the poll results. “The fact that more than a third of Romanians voted in favour of stagnation could testify not only to fear of change, but also to a dangerous turn to the left”<sup>368</sup> – this is how Constantinescu from the Romanian Democratic Convention summed up the election results in a public appeal to “all Romanian democratic forces.”<sup>369</sup> He also warned the public that he should not exclude the possibility that “that one of the current president’s satellite parties could transform into a monolithic force aspiring to play an exclusive and dictatorial role.”<sup>370</sup> This statement was not groundless.

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scheduled for September 27. In the 1990 election, he received the support of 85.7% of the citizens. In 1992 it was about 30%, which meant a huge drop in popularity. mw/ro, *Poparcie dla Iliescu spada przed wyborami*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, June 19.

<sup>363</sup> wit/ek, *Iliescu i jego ugrupowanie*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, September 28.09. Ion Iliescu – in the second round of the presidential election he received 61% support vote. ws/mi, *Rumunia – wybory. Prezydent Iliescu wzywa do pojednania*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, October 12.

<sup>364</sup> syl/ro, *Zachód powinien wynieść nauczke z głosowania*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, October 5.

<sup>365</sup> rb/mc, *Dlaczego Rumuni popierają Iliescu?*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, October 22.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>367</sup> syl/ro, *Obserwatorzy zadowoleni z wyborów*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, September 29.

<sup>368</sup> syl/mc, *Constantinescu ostrzega przed dyktaturą*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, September 29.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibidem*.

President Iliescu, calling on the Romanians to reconcile, formed a new government in which his supporters prevailed. The Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan warned that “slowing down the reform course in Romania would be a political crime.”<sup>371</sup> He pointed out that “Romania needs democracy and a market economy based on free entrepreneurship.”<sup>372</sup> Re-introduction of authoritarian rule in the communist style, in his opinion, would not succeed. Stolojan, an expert in finance, emphasized in his annual financial report on government activities that “strict monetary and financial policy reduced inflation and led to a positive return in foreign trade. Inflation then fell from 19.5% in January to 3.4% in September. [...] For the first time after 1989, the Romanian trade balance was in surplus.”<sup>373</sup>

However, President Ion Iliescu did not consider re-appointing Theodor Stolojan as prime minister. He entrusted the government to Nicolae Văcăroiu on November 4, 1992.<sup>374</sup> As it turned out, it was not the right decision in the long run. Two offices of Prime Minister Nicolae Văcăroiu (November 19, 1992 – December 11, 1996) proved to be permanently incapable of governing the country. Romanian foreign policy assumptions adopted by the parliament, such as “seeking full integration with European and Euro-Atlantic structures, strengthening Romania’s role as a factor in stabilizing the situation in the region by developing regional cooperation and bilateral relations with neighbours,”<sup>375</sup> were only beautiful clichés said by Romanian politicians in the view of internal problems.

In 1993, the opposition requested the government’s dissolution, accusing it of lack of responsibility and contributing to the outbreak of a severe social and political crisis. Strikes of miners, railway employees, workers, a motion of no confidence submitted to the government by the media, changes in the government, showed how much the government is not coping with the situation in the state. Among others, the left was accused of “three-digit inflation and

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<sup>371</sup> syl/ro, *Premier ostrzega: reformy muszą być kontynuowane*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, October 15.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>374</sup> The official results showed that the clear winner of the 1992 parliamentary elections was the Democratic National Salvation Front, supporting President Iliescu. The other force was the opposition – the Democratic Convention. The Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania suffered a defeat – it failed to overcome the 3% threshold; its representatives were not in the Chamber of Deputies. The turnout was 76.5%. The results of the Chamber of Deputies elections were as follows: Democratic National Salvation Front – 27.71%, Democratic Convention – 20.01%, National Salvation Front – 10.18%, Romanian National Unity Party – 7.71%, Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania – 7.45%, Greater Romania Party – 3.89%, Socialist Labor Party – 3.03%. Results of the elections to the Senate: Democratic National Salvation Front – 28.29%, Democratic Convention – 20.16%, National Salvation Front – 10.38%, Romanian National Unity Party – 8.12%, Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania – 7.58%, Greater Romania Party – 3.85%, Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania – 3.30%, Socialist Labor Party – 3.19%. sp/kan, *Rumunia: oficjalne wyniki wyborów do parlamentu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, October 7.

<sup>375</sup> M. Głuski, *Zdecydowanie w kierunku Europy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1993, December 6.

millions of unemployed,"<sup>376</sup> widespread poverty, growing hopelessness among citizens, corruption scandals, embezzlement, and tax fraud.<sup>377</sup>

1993 brought the main opposition forces closer together: the Democratic Convention and the Democratic Party, which in June presented a joint statement of readiness to govern the country together. For a long time, talks and proposals from the president and the government directed at opposition parties, aimed at strengthening the government's position against economic shortcomings, were rejected. The government underwent constant reconstruction. Ministers, secretaries, and undersecretaries of the state have changed at a dizzying pace.<sup>378</sup> After several attempts to vote in the Parliament a motion of no confidence in the government, the opposition gave up, and President Iliescu again began talks with all parliamentary parties. Four ministers were replaced: of national defence, home affairs, justice, and transport. This did not have a positive effect on the already weakened state economy or the position of key politicians on the Romanian political scene. In the elite circles, monarchist sentiment was increasingly voiced. The opposition, offended by the absence of the King Michael I during the celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unification of the country in November 1993, tried to find various opportunities to approach the ruler.<sup>379</sup> In 1993, Romania joined the community of Francophone countries. Still, because it was rarely discussed in schools at that time, hardly anyone could understand what connected Romania with France, and how the latter had an impact on the Romanian people.<sup>380</sup> In May 1994, thanks to the Romanian diaspora and the leadership of groups associated in the Democratic Convention,

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<sup>376</sup> mw/mc, *Opozycja domaga się ustąpienia rządu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1993, July 8.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>378</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>379</sup> Interview with the Honorary...

<sup>380</sup> In November 1991, Romania participated for the first time in the Forum of French-speaking countries. There were hopes that this involvement would bring political and economic benefits. *zf, Rumunia chce zintegrować się z państwami francuskojęzycznymi*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, November 19. The friendship and cooperation agreement between France and Romania was signed on November 20, 1991. The term "francophony" was created in 1887 by the French geographer Onésime Reclus to refer to this group of inhabitants of the land who speak French. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Francophone community numbered about 250 million people and comprised the population of countries and individual regions where French was the official language, native language, or the first foreign language taught. French is the native language of about 75 million people in and beyond Europe. At the Paris meeting, presidents or prime ministers represented over 30 countries; the other delegations were chaired by foreign or culture ministers. Presidents Zhelyu Zhelev and Ion Iliescu also came to Paris. Bulgarians and Romanians did not hide that they considered joining the Francophone countries as a means of overcoming their isolation. President Mitterrand took the initiative to organize such meetings. The first took place in 1986 in Paris, the second in 1987 in Quebec, the third in 1989 in Dhaka. Paris was the fourth in a row. Participants of the Francophone forum discussed political problems, democracy, and democratization in the third world, economic issues (numerous countries, the summit participants were in debt, faced economic difficulties and without international assistance had no chance to overcome them). At the meeting, they also dis-

a meeting was organized in Paris. During the symposium, the former Romanian King Michael I presented his views on Romania. He was supported by some activists of the Democratic Convention who began calling for the restoration of the monarchy, guaranteeing the state system's truly democratic nature.<sup>381</sup> It seems that the democratic opposition parties treated the restoration of the monarchy as one of the factors used to overthrow the rule of Iliescu.

In March 1995, in the view of disagreements between the leaders of the Convention, four parties left the Democratic Convention: Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, the Party of the Civil Alliance, the Romanian Social Democratic Party, and the Liberal Party<sup>93</sup>. This situation strengthened, at least temporarily, the position of President Iliescu before the presidential election planned for 1996.<sup>382</sup> To clear the atmosphere and temporarily silence voices regarding political *faux pas*, Iliescu again took the portfolios from the ministers. At the beginning of 1996, the minister of industry, trade, the minister of research and the minister of communications were replaced.

Romania's opening to international cooperation was slow. During the first presidency of Ion Iliescu, all decisions were made about "unity with European countries and the protection of ideals and principles constituting a common heritage of member states and facilitating economic and social changes" (Art. 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe), which was to guarantee Romania membership of the Council of Europe.<sup>383</sup> However, reports presented by CoE rapporteurs did not put Romania in the positive light. The authorities were accused of insufficient implementation of several commitments in the democratization of social life. The rapporteurs – Koenig and Jansson, pointed out, among others, to the lack of a law on national minorities (which greatly hindered Hungarians' life), the lack of provisions regarding the actual independence of judges, the superficiality of changes in the organization of the prosecutor's office, the lack of a law regulating the return of nationalized goods in 1948 (including goods

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cussed the issues of multilateral cultural, scientific, technical, and ecological cooperation. mc/rb, *Szczyt frankofoński w Paryżu*, PAP, Paryż-Bukareszt 1991, November 19.

<sup>381</sup> When in 1992 King Michael arrived in Bucharest, he was greeted by crowds of citizens, supporters of the monarchy. The king emphasized that he was aware of the changes that had taken place in the country from 1990, among others, permitting him to enter the country. FSN denied the king the possibility to enter Romania. The polls showed that monarchist tendencies in Romania were strong. Supporters of the return of royal power demanded a referendum to be conducted to decide whether society prefers the monarchy to the republic – a system imposed by communists. MW, *Tłumy entuzjastów powitały króla Michała*, PAP, Bukareszt, 1992, April 26.

<sup>382</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej i o rumuńskiej polityce zagranicznej, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sygn. 936.33.06.

<sup>383</sup> Romania submitted its official application to join the Council of Europe in mid-December 1991. Ws/ek, *Oficjalny wniosek o przystąpienie Rumunii do Rady Europy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1991, December 19.

and real estate belonging to churches of various denominations).<sup>384</sup> The lack of independence of the media and limiting the journalists' right to criticism in the mass media also aroused considerable concern.<sup>385</sup> The authorities took actions to cooperate with Western countries, but on the Romanian side, they were purely consultative. The cooperation of the state (since 1993) with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) had a positive effect on cooperation since May 1994 with the Western European Union, becoming its associated partner. Relations with the Council of Europe continued to be marked by tensions arising from the critical assessments of the rapporteurs, who pointed out in reports that the Romanian authorities were not accurately fulfilling their commitments regarding the democratization of social life.<sup>386</sup>

After the fall of communism, in Romania, for several years, efforts were made to balance between the East (Russia) and the West. However, as it turned out, it was a road to nowhere.<sup>387</sup> To maintain their position, democratic political and even post-communist elites chose rapprochement with the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. Society supported the idea, and all political parties cooperated in this regard. All political parties represented in parliament have declared their willingness to participate in the National Consultative Council for Euro-Atlantic Integration.<sup>388</sup> In cooperation with representatives of the presidential office, members of the Romanian delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, representatives of the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade, key decisions were to be taken regarding the adjustment of Romania's internal legislation to EU requirements. The association agreement of Romania with the European Union was ratified by EU member states and came into force on February 1, 1995.<sup>389</sup> Romania was the third country in the region, after Hungary and Poland, to apply on 22 June 1995 for admission to the European Union.<sup>390</sup> From

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<sup>384</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej i o rumuńskiej polityce zagranicznej, Archives of the President of Poland [in the possession of the author].

<sup>385</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>387</sup> A. Burakowski, *Na ile Rumunia może być partnerem Polski?*, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2010, [www.omp.org.pl/stareomp/index2cc4.id=733](http://www.omp.org.pl/stareomp/index2cc4.id=733) (accessed: 20.10.2019).

<sup>388</sup> The Council was founded in November 1993 on the initiative of the Democratic Party.

<sup>389</sup> Information on the internal situation and Romanian foreign policy, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 13/95, nr wiązki III.

<sup>390</sup> Romania was the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to establish official relations with the European Community in 1967. At the time, talks were initiated to conclude a series of technical and sectoral agreements relating to agri-food products and the exemption of Romanian products from additional fees. Still, the Romanian side was obliged to comply with a precise price level, which would result in a similar situation in the Member States markets. In 1974, by signing the bilateral treaty, Romania found itself in the European Community's general, privileged system. Developing relations with the Community were suspended in the 1980s due to the political situation that preceded democratic changes in 1989.

then, it also took steps to intensify relations with the organization. President Iliescu, who was in favour of integration, established a Commission for the National Strategy for Preparing Romania's Accession to the European Union. The prepared and signed Declaration (the so-called Snagov Declaration) on the strategy of Romania's integration with the EU<sup>391</sup> became a confirmation of the acceptance and aspirations of all circles and party representatives to include Romania in the organization's structures. The declaration was attached to the application for Romania's membership of the European Union.<sup>392</sup> In July 1997, the European Commission adopted Agenda 2000 which contained an opinion on Romania's application for membership of the European Union.<sup>393</sup> It pointed out that Romania would not be able to join the organization without further changes in the institutional system. As a consequence of the European Agreement's ratification, new administrative structures and coordination mechanisms were created that were adapted to the guidelines of the EU integration process. Amendments to legal regulations and their adaptation to EU requirements provoked criticism mainly from the middle-level activists of the Iliescu camp. They wanted political influence and maintaining a good standard of existence.

The local elections that took place in June 1996 brought victory to opposition groups throughout the country. It was confirmed that citizens are fed up with a coalition government led by the Romanian Social Democracy Party (PDSR), which had been in power from 1990. Its policy was slowly turning against itself. As a result of the reaction of President Iliescu, even before the parliamentary elections, social dissatisfaction was alleviated, i.e., due to the dismissal of the current nationalist coalition partners in the members of the Greater Romanian Party (PRM). The group lost its support.<sup>394</sup> A treaty was signed to silence the protests of the Hungarian minority with Hungary.<sup>395</sup> In the first phase of the transformation, in the years 1989–1996, many political parties were accompanied by the apparent dominance of several post-communist groups that previously belonged to the FSN. The year 1996 was a political turning point that changed

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<sup>391</sup> The declaration in Snagov was signed by the president, prime minister, presidents of the upper and lower parliamentary chamber, and chairmen of 13 parliamentary parties. Previously, representatives of all parties in Parliament, government and academic circles also took part in discussions.

<sup>392</sup> Information on the internal situation and Romanian foreign policy, 1996, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 239/42.

<sup>393</sup> *Agenda 2000 - Commission Opinion on Romania's Application for Membership of the European Union*, Brussels, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1997, [https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/romania\\_EC-Romania%20opinion-1997.pdf](https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/romania_EC-Romania%20opinion-1997.pdf) (accessed: 12.01.2019).

<sup>394</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>395</sup> In Romania, the conflict with the Hungarian minority, which constituted over 7% of the country's population, continued. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania requested an extension of language rights in areas inhabited mostly by Hungarians. In 1995 it was politically blocked by the Romanian majority in the parliament. All they could do was carry out ineffective action of rallies and protest marches. A. Patek, J. Rydel, J.J. Węc, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

the political system and changed the order on the Romanian political scene. The multi-party system on the Romanian political scene has taken a new direction. Parliamentary and presidential elections brought the opposition to the summit with Emil Constantinescu, leader of the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR), who, taking power, emphasized that Romania after 1989 lost seven years in implementing reforms and announced the introduction of social plans and solutions that were to improve the situation in the country.<sup>396</sup> The Democratic Convention (being the main force of the current opposition, comprising 15 political parties) obtained 30.2% of the vote.<sup>397</sup> The centre-right appointed Victor Ciorbea to the post of prime minister.<sup>398</sup> The government included representatives of the Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat - PNTCD), liberals from the parties, and associations forming the Romanian Democratic Convention (Convenția Democrată Română - CDR), members of the Social Democratic Union (Uniunea Social-Democrată - USD) and representatives of the Democratic Party. This time the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România - UDMR<sup>399</sup>) was also invited to the coalition.<sup>400</sup> For the first time, after the election, the democratic opposition came to the fore.<sup>401</sup> The party system on the political scene pointed to the beginnings of the bipolar system, where the centre-right (centred around Christian Democrats) and centre-left (centred around Social Democrats) were to compete.<sup>402</sup> However, this system did not last long, and in 2000 multi-party system returned in an extreme form, with the advantage of one party - the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat - PSD, until 2001 - the Party of Social Democracy in Romania - PDSR).<sup>403</sup> 1996 was the third stage of the revolt that began in December 1989. While the first stage was sometimes bloody and associated with the coup, the next two were more peaceful. From 1996, political elites have increasingly felt the need to make Romanians a civil society, but this problem has proved to be difficult to solve.

<sup>396</sup> Constantinescu: *Rumunia straciła siedem lat*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 1997, February 18.

<sup>397</sup> Informacja o wewnętrznej sytuacji Rumunii i o polityce zagranicznej, 1996, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 239/42.

<sup>398</sup> Victor Ciorbea was then mayor of Bucharest and a member of the National Peasant Party.

<sup>399</sup> Democratic Alliance of Romanian Hungarians - Hungarian minority party founded in 1989. It was headed by György Frunda, later Béla Markó.

<sup>400</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>401</sup> According to President Constantinescu, "Romania was then subjected to an experiment with the ruling coalition, which included Christian democrats, social democrats, liberals, and environmentalists. There was also a Hungarian national minority in it, which was a unique experience". Constantinescu: *Rumunia straciła siedem lat*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 1997, February 18.

<sup>402</sup> D. Kasprowicz, *Europejskimi oczami, z transylwańską duszą - etnoregionalizm Unii Demokratycznej Węgrów (UDMR) w Rumunii*, "Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Politologica" 2013, no. 11, pp. 42, 43.

<sup>403</sup> S. Batko-Jakubiak, *System partyjny Rumunii*, [in:] B. Kosowska-Gąstoł (ed.), *Systemy partyjne państw Unii Europejskiej*, Kraków 2010, p. 301.



The extensive bureaucracy did not want further changes. The rural political mentality of society was also not conducive to the democratization of life. Emil Constantinescu's first democratic government met with such a specific climate.

On December 6, 1996, representatives of the CDR, USD and UDMR parties signed an agreement on governmental and parliamentary solidarity, the underlying assumptions of which were: decentralization, reduction of bureaucracy, privatization, elimination of monopolies and increased competition, decrease in taxes while protecting and providing social assistance to the population particularly affected through system changes. The adopted program assumed in the short term (6 months) the improvement of the living conditions for people, support the neediest social groups and initiate the state's economic stabilization.<sup>404</sup> In the long term, however, there were talks about Romania's aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. Romania was the first country of the communist bloc to sign the Partnership for Peace framework document in 1994, constituting the initial stage on the road to full membership in NATO.<sup>405</sup> The invitation to Romania became the culmination of many years of efforts, initiated at the time of the unification of the nation, of Romanian politicians' efforts to ensure collective security, which was clearly expressed in the work of Nicolae Titulescu in the 1940s.<sup>406</sup> Romania's efforts to join the North Atlantic Alliance were one of the priorities of the country's foreign policy.<sup>407</sup> Membership dependence on the presence of American troops on Romanian territory initially raised many doubts.<sup>408</sup> In the past, any Soviet military presence was rejected, and

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<sup>404</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>405</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej i polityce zagranicznej Rumunii, 1996, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 239/42.

<sup>406</sup> The document was presented in Brussels in April 1994. A. Pop, *Wyzwanie dla Rumunii*, "Przegląd NATO" 2003, Spring, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue1/polish/analysis.html> (accessed: 12.01.2019).

<sup>407</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*, p. 145.

<sup>408</sup> The number, organization structure, and armament of the Romanian armed forces after the fall of Ceausescu did not change for the first years. The Romanian army was one of the poorest. In September 1991, previously under the Ministry of National Defence authority, Border Forces were subordinated to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. At the end of 1991, the Romanian Army had 225 000 soldiers. The military budget accounted for 13.5% of total state expenditure and was intended primarily for army maintenance and training purposes. At the end of October 1991, the Supreme Defence Council of Romania approved the new "Romanian Military Defence Doctrine." It was of a defensive character. According to the state authorities, the Romanian Army remained "the leading force ensuring the cohesion, stability of life and integrity of state borders". Interestingly, the Army, which did not support the leader, enjoyed a great deal of public confidence. It was demonstrated by, among others, results of surveys examining public confidence in the country's public institutions. The Romanian leadership of the Ministry of National Defence maintained lively international contacts. Acting from May 1991 as Minister of Defence, Nicolae Spiroiu made official visits to Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, Britain, Bulgaria, Belgium, the USSR, Ukraine, and Brussels – in NATO Headquarters, to maintain good bilateral relations. Secretary of State and Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Army, Gen. Lieutenant Dumitru Cioflină

Romania did not participate in the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. It was also feared that activities on the territory of the state of foreign soldiers could lead to a severe dispute with Russia which would not accept such solutions. However, the desire to belong to the West prevailed. In 1995 and 1996, the cooperation with the Alliance proceeded smoothly. However, NATO pointed to the need for structural changes in the army, indicating, among others, that civilian control over the military and special services should be guaranteed.<sup>409</sup> The appeal issued on June 5, 1996, by both chambers of parliament to 16 countries, members of the Alliance, to support Romania's efforts to join NATO was an excellent diplomatic step. It drew the attention of Western countries to Romania. With the simultaneous active diplomatic campaign in the capitals of the Pact members, changes in the presidency and reshuffles in the government, Romania's chances of membership increased. Italy and France proved to be particularly conducive in this respect, opting for Romania's inclusion in the first wave of enlargement of the Alliance. The position of the USA and Canada was not clear.

Consequently, military-strategic issues that were relevant to the Alliance and Washington decided to include Romania in the Alliance. However, Britain objected to such a solution.<sup>410</sup> In 1997, "Die Welt" inclined even to claim that

The issue of Romania's membership in NATO acquired existential significance in the minds of Romanians. [...] According to the results of opinion polls, 90% of the population supported joining Western Alliance; accession candidates – Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic – could only dream of such a result. The main motive for pursuing the Alliance and the security aspect, i.e., protection against Russia, was the cultural aspect. According to Romanians, NATO membership was to be proof that the country, after years of forced friendship with the Russians, returns to the community of values called "Europe." Europe to which Romania belongs, at least because of its Romanesque roots.<sup>411</sup>

This act of 2004 turned out to be an essential step to empower the Romanian people, who needed actions leading to the so-called civic optimism.

When the war in Kosovo continued in 1999, Romania, by supporting NATO operations and US military initiatives, made its airspace available for aircraft heading for Kosovo. To a large extent, this "favour" affected the progress of negotiations with the Alliance. Romania's accession to NATO itself, on March

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paid visits to Turkey, the PRC, North Korea, and Greece. The chief of the General Staff of the Hellenic Army and the chairman of the NATO Military Committee visited Romania. This exchange clearly showed Romania's new opening up to bilateral cooperation. In 1991, military cooperation agreements were signed with Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the USSR. Notatka informacyjna na temat sytuacji wewnętrznej Rumunii, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>409</sup> *Rumunia zabiega u Stanów Zjednoczonych o przyjęcie do NATO*, PAP, Bukareszt 1996, February 9.

<sup>410</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej i polityce zagranicznej Rumunii, 1996, Archives of the President of Poland sygn. 239/42.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibidem*.

24, 2004, became a turning point. It was a historic moment, meaning a complete break with the past and the definitive anchoring of Romania in the Euro-Atlantic zone. It was the most tangible proof of the radical changes that began during the revolution – in December 1989. The enlargement of the Alliance was an efficient reintegration mechanism with Western Europe of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Thanks to it, support for democratic transformations in post-communist countries, strengthening their internal stability, and pro-Western course became real. For the United States, Romania was a convenient point of reference that helped them improve their position in Europe (Romania and the United States have an agreement on the possibility for the US to use military bases).<sup>412</sup> Romania's membership in NATO was supported mainly by its geopolitical and geostrategic significance: area, population, location close to "Russian space" and "Islamic space."<sup>413</sup> France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey were supporters of Romania joining the Alliance.<sup>414</sup> NATO, thanks to the inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria, has strengthened the Alliance's southern flank by creating a land bridge between Hungary and Turkey. It also gained easier access to Balkan peace operations. By annexing a large area, the Alliance could count on intensifying cooperation in the region and achieving stability in Southern Europe. Romanian and Bulgarian membership in NATO significantly increased the Alliance's presence in the Black Sea basin.<sup>415</sup> Romania, becoming a member of NATO and then of the European Union, ended the era of "storm and pressure." Bucharest became the capital of a democratic state, at least in formal terms. Still, the need remained to build a civil society along with a service bureaucracy. It was a complicated issue, full of social uprisings. However, their nature was not directed against the state's political solutions. Nevertheless, they destabilized social life and hindered reforms on the one hand, and on the other, accelerated pro-democratic decisions and disciplined the ruling elites.

Due to the fact that corruption, weak economy, remaining in the power of representatives of the Securitate communities remained in control, and the annual defence expenditure barely exceeded one billion dollars, Romania undertook some political, economic, social, and military reforms. The costs of these reforms were considerable and not easy to bear. However, thanks to them, the state in the field of defence planning, developed a system compatible with NATO and reached the level of NATO planning. By participating in peace-keeping missions, Romanian soldiers contributed to stability in South-Central

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<sup>412</sup> *Prasa zagraniczna: Welt o stosunku Rumunii do NATO*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, May 20.

<sup>413</sup> Ł. Kudlicki, *Bułgaria i Rumunia: Specyfika nowych członków Unii Europejskiej*, "Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe" I-II 2007/3-4, p. 79.

<sup>414</sup> *Konferencja prasowa szefa Departamentu Integracji Euroatlantyckiej i Polityki Obronnej MON G. Maiorescu*, Ziua, 22.08.2002 [in the author's possession].

<sup>415</sup> *Były król pozyskany dla zabiegów w NATO i UE*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, March 5.

Europe.<sup>416</sup> Romania took up the fight as a NATO ally in the campaign against terrorism.<sup>417</sup> The events of September 11, 2001, influenced the redefinition of the international security system and policy on a global scale, within the alliance and in bilateral relations with the USA and other countries. They drew attention to the position and functioning of supranational structures responsible for international security, making them aware of the inadequacy of terrorism prevention activities. The new threats overshadowed the decision to include new allies in the membership.<sup>418</sup>

The political will and willingness to help fight against threats have become the main bargaining chips on the road to NATO membership. The Romanian Parliament then adopted a resolution on a new security strategy. Romania has made available its forces and means for joint defence, with the proviso that they can only be used to defend Romanian territory. In the meantime, Romanian soldiers participated in missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia. Romania has separated its units for the needs of collective defence operations and NATO allied operations. Romanian forces for mutual defence and activities under the Partnership for Peace Program were made available for tasks both inside and outside the state. Romania decided to participate in the new structures of NATO forces.<sup>419</sup> As a part of its activities in international organizations, in 2001, it became the head of the OSCE states, taking over the organization's presidency. It was a time when relative stability in Kosovo and Macedonia was maintained, the OSCE mission in Yugoslavia was opened, and the OSCE Support Group was again sent to Chechnya. During the Romanian presidency, it was possible to establish a platform for cooperation between the OSCE and NATO.<sup>420</sup>

On Romania's accession to NATO (29<sup>th</sup> March 2004), President Traian Băsescu emphasized that

the values of democracy, freedom of civil rights, the rule of law and social justice are recognized and defended in the state. Conditions were created for the free expression, preservation, and consolidation of national and cultural identities of national minorities. We provided an atmosphere of tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation, both within the state and in relations with its neighbours.<sup>421</sup>

On the occasion of 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Romania's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 both chambers of the Romanian Parliament

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<sup>416</sup> A. Pop, *op. cit.*

<sup>417</sup> Romanian soldiers took part in missions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Angola.

<sup>418</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*, p. 140.

<sup>419</sup> A. Pop, *op. cit.*

<sup>420</sup> R. Jaxa-Małachowski, *Sukcesy i porażki Bukaresztu*, "Raport: Wojsko – Technika – Obronność" 2001, nr 12, p. 13.

<sup>421</sup> A. Koseski, M. Willaume, *Nowe kraje Unii Europejskiej: Bułgaria, Rumunia*, Warszawa 2007, p. 136.

adopted a solemn declaration on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO. It emphasized the political, economic, social, and military changes that had taken place in recent years. Progress in Romania's democratization has been noticed since the country acceded to this political and military organization.<sup>422</sup> During 15 years of membership in NATO, Romanian soldiers, apart from the missions mentioned above, participated in operations supplying the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), and in operations in Iraq. In the years 1991–2008, over 11,000 Romanian soldiers took part in missions in various regions.<sup>423</sup> The year 2008 was important for the Balkan countries. On April 2–4, a NATO summit was held in Bucharest. During the opening ceremony, President Traian Băsescu pointed out that Romania lies in an area of fundamental importance for the security of its members and also of the entire globe.<sup>424</sup> "With Romania's accession to NATO, the Alliance found itself near Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The Black Sea, where the Alliance is present through sovereign states, is a link with Russia and the South Caucasus. Through Turkey [...] this region is adjacent to the Middle East."<sup>425</sup> During the Bucharest summit, a decision was made to invite new countries to the Alliance – Albania and Croatia. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro received an invitation to an intensified dialogue on political, military, financial, and security matters, and Serbia deepened the Partnership for Peace program. Due to the regional nature of the narrowing of relations, the Bucharest Summit decisions could be considered a significant success for Romania. Just three years after accession, universal military conscription in the state ceased. Romanian troops were in favour of maintaining professional soldiers.<sup>426</sup> Romanian armed forces include land forces, navy, and air forces. The Romanian army is well equipped, there are 1609 armoured personnel carriers, 124 infantry fighting vehicles, 437 tanks, 69 aircraft. The Navy has three destroyers, four corvettes, and 101 minesweepers. Romania has its MIGs (part of the old production, unfortunately), is negotiating the purchase of Caracal helicopters.<sup>427</sup> The main advantage of the Romanian army is to be a strong anti-aircraft defence, for which efforts are being made. Ambitious plans to modernize the Romanian armed forces have already resulted in the country's defence spending of 2% of GDP, which means that Romania is meeting its financial commitments to the North Atlantic Alliance. Membership in the North Atlantic Alliance is a guarantee of security for Romania against the expansionary policy

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<sup>422</sup> J. Potocki, *Rosnąca rola Rumunii w NATO*, "Polska Zbrojna" 2018, March 13, <http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/24958?t=Rosnaca-rola-Rumunii-w-NATO> (accessed: 12.01.2019).

<sup>423</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>424</sup> L.C. Dumitru, *Romanian participation in peace support operations*, "Euro-Atlantic Studies" 2008, no. 12, p. 87.

<sup>425</sup> *Address by H.E. President Traian Băsescu*, Bucharest Conference, Transatlantic Forum, Bucharest 2008.

<sup>426</sup> K. Marczuk (ed.), *Dwie dekady zmian: Rumunia 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>427</sup> In 2014, Romanian troops had 73.4 thousand professional soldiers and 80 thousand reservists.

of Russia, for which the attractiveness of Moldova and Wallachia has always been visible (they were the route leading to the Balkans, to Constantinople and the Mediterranean world), both in geopolitical and agricultural terms.<sup>428</sup>

Romanian soldiers' participation in exercises and numerous missions<sup>429</sup> confirms that the choice made several years ago was right.<sup>430</sup> Experts estimate that the Romanian arms market is the second largest in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>431</sup>

Romania's external transformation can be assessed positively. Indeed, it results from the attitude of democratic political elites which played more important roles in the state and were supported by Western allies. The elites were worse at solving internal problems. In this case, democratic reforms were contested by a large part of society. The informal structures of connections between members of the previous regime and post-communists functioned well enough to limit the pace and scope of reforms. The society, particularly in the provinces, was confused. On the one hand, it was in favour of changes; on the other, it was afraid of their effects, primarily in the material sphere. This attitude is not surprising; it is characteristic of developing nations and people living in Southeast Europe, subject to centuries of influence of East and West. This was evidenced by the fluctuation of government and the too-often changing attitudes of political parties towards reforms undertaken.

In the long run, a large variety and ideological mix of representatives of political groups proved to be the wrong solution. At the end of December 1997, a government crisis began in Romania. It was caused by the dismissal of the Social Democratic Minister of Transport – Traian Băsescu<sup>432</sup>, considered one

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<sup>428</sup> J. Potocki, *op. cit.*

<sup>429</sup> Romanian soldiers were actively involved, among others, in missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. More in: *Defence news*, [defensenews.com](http://defensenews.com).

<sup>430</sup> Romania is trying to be an active member of NATO. It participates in various types of ventures, including EU military-police operations – EUMM Georgia, EUFOR. Since 2007, it has been a member of the Balkan Battlegroup which has been cyclically gathering. In April 2016, it became an associated country of the Eurocorps. It supports the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PE-SCO) mechanism, a valuable field of defence cooperation in the European Union, mainly due to financial possibilities and technology transfer. More in: J. Pieńkowski, *Polityka europejska Rumunii*, Biuletyn PISM, no. 99(1541), 2017, October 20, [https://pism.pl/publikacje/Polityka\\_europejska\\_Rumunii](https://pism.pl/publikacje/Polityka_europejska_Rumunii) (accessed: 20.11.2018).

<sup>431</sup> J. Potocki, *op. cit.*

<sup>432</sup> Before 1989, Traian Băsescu was a member of the Romanian Communist Party. In 1990 he became Undersecretary of State for Maritime Transport at the Ministry of Transport. From April 1991 to November 1992, he was the Minister of Transport, in the governments of Petre Roman and Theodor Stolojan. From December 1996 to February 1998, he was again the Minister of Transport in Victor Ciorbea's government. He returned to the office in April 1998 in the cabinet of Radu Vasile. He held it in the government of Mugur Constantin Isărescu until June 2000. B. Turner, *Romania*, [in:] B. Turner (ed.), *The statesman's yearbook 2010: The politics, cultures and economies of the world*, London–New York 2010, p. 1029.

of the most vibrant and most popular Romanians ministers. The minister's departure came after he accused the government and Prime Minister Ciorbea of "incompetence" and "disengagement."<sup>433</sup>

This led to disputes in the government and an unstable coalition led by Victor Ciorbea. Under his rule, in the first six months, budget deficit was reduced, and a drop in living standards by 20% was recorded.<sup>434</sup> From then, the theme of "failure to reform in 1997" became the leitmotif of the Democrats' campaign against Victor Ciorbea.<sup>435</sup> Social dissatisfaction and the crisis in the government in 1998 brought further changes. In early 1998, the Romanian Social Democrats withdrew their support for Prime Minister Ciorbea and demanded the creation, in just two months, of a new government capable of reforming faster. The ongoing conflict brought an exchange of five ministers and left the minority government with dominant Christian democrats and liberals and the Hungarian minority party.<sup>436</sup> In the meantime, Ciorbea government was reforming, but implementation slowed down, causing dissatisfaction among Western investors complaining about delays in privatization and industrial restructuring. The standard of living in Romania also left much to be desired, it was one of the lowest among post-communist Eastern European countries.<sup>437</sup>

As a result of his predecessor's resignation, Radu Vasile, who headed the reform-liberal wing of the Christian Democratic National Peasant Party (PNTCD),<sup>438</sup> became the new Romanian prime minister on April 17, 1998.<sup>439</sup> PNTCD was the main force of the ruling coalition. The cabinet of Radu Vasile was made up of the same four parties that joined the previous government and took power from the left after the election in November 1996. Most of the 24 ministers were already in Ciorbea's office.<sup>440</sup> Unfortunately, despite these slight changes and announcements of the acceleration of market reforms, the new prime minister's activities turned out to be unsuccessful. Radu Vasile was gradually removed from power. The support of the post-communist PDSR and

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<sup>433</sup> *Premier Ciorbea zapowiedział przyspieszenie reform*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, January 16.

<sup>434</sup> *Premier Ciorbea: mniejszy deficyt Rumunii, spadek poziomu życia*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, October 6.

<sup>435</sup> *Premier Ciorbea zapowiedział przyspieszenie reform*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, January 16.

<sup>436</sup> *Socjaldemokraci będą tolerować rząd mniejszościowy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, February 6.

<sup>437</sup> *Socjaldemokraci wycofują poparcie dla premiera*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, February 14.

<sup>438</sup> As he was taking office, Radu Vasile said: "I hope to be prime minister until 2000, because there is no room for early elections in our country." He promised to accelerate industrial restructuring and privatization, announcing specific deadlines for each stage of reforms that they have a year to implement the changes. However, his reform program was very similar to his predecessor's one. As announced, the budget deficit was 3.6% of GDP, and annual inflation was to be reduced to 45% from 151% in 1997. *Vasile uzyskał poparcie parlamentu dla nowego rządu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, April 15.

<sup>439</sup> In early April, President Emil Constantinescu appointed Radu Vasile, the Christian democrat, as the new prime minister. Following the Constitution, he had 10 working days to present the structure of the new government. *Vasile oficjalnie wyznaczony na premiera*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, April 2.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibidem*.

CDR was getting weaker and began to reach a lower level than that attributed to the opposition. The coalition in power in 1998 was supported by only 14%, and the PDSR – by 47% of the population.<sup>441</sup> The third political force turned out to be the Alliance for Romania (Alianța pentru România – ApR) formed after the split with PDSR, with Teodor Viorel Meleşcanu at the head. An essential political role was played by the Democratic Party<sup>442</sup> with Roman at the head, from which the leading figures of the Romanian political scene came from. Unfortunately, it was also not spared by the crisis which was manifested by decreasing public support. The extremely nationalist Party of Greater Romania (PRM), under Corneliu Vadim Tudor, gained popularity.<sup>443</sup>

The years of the reshuffle on the Romanian political scene did not bring any specific changes, as could be expected, did not introduce surprising reforms in the state. Romanian citizens, for whom strikes and protests have become commonplace, did not feel the difference. Uprisings of miners, railway employees, health workers, teachers, and students shocked Romania almost every day. The destabilization of the state was becoming a common subject. In January 1999, almost like a decade ago, miners from the Jiu Valley,<sup>444</sup> led by Miron Cozma, took to Bucharest's streets.<sup>445</sup> History began to go around in a circle. Although a settlement was signed with the strikers, it did not save the government from falling.<sup>446</sup> The protesting society, as in 1989, began to stand up for itself. Demands increased, state funds did not change. Workers striking in Braşov entered the prefecture building and demolished it. The situation in the country was getting worse day by day.<sup>447</sup> As a result of internal disputes in the Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD) and the view of strikes, another political split took place. Constantinescu, seeing an opportunity for his

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<sup>441</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>442</sup> The Democratic Party was preceded by the National Salvation Front. It supported a market economy with elements of social welfare of the state. It was led firstly by Petre Roman and then by Traian Băsescu.

<sup>443</sup> The Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare) was founded in 1991, it is incredibly nationalist, led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor.

<sup>444</sup> Miron Cozma, the union leader of miners, was arrested on January 10, 1991 and interrogated for leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Petre Roman in September 1990. During the trial, in 1997, he accused the government of politicizing the case and Gelu Voican-Voiculescu – Deputy Prime Minister in Roman's government – that in June 1990 he organized the arrival of 20,000 miners in Bucharest miners who terrorized residents, politicians, and opposition journalists. As he reported, Voiculescu flew in a special helicopter to the Jiu Valley. As emphasized in Cozma's testimony, miners were subject to constant manipulations by the authorities. *Przywódcą związkowy oskarża poprzednie rządy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, February 5.

<sup>445</sup> 15,000 among 17,000 working miners took part in the strikes the reason was the lack of salary. The sum of arrears was about 30 million leu (3.3 million dollars). *Zastrajkowali górnicy z doliny Jiu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1998, September 14.

<sup>446</sup> *Przywódcą związkowy oskarża poprzednie rządy*, PAP, Bukareszt 1997, February 5.

<sup>447</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*



actions and strengthening his position, immediately, on December 12, 1999, organized a meeting with the coalition leaders. When presenting his ideas, he urged for further changes in the government. In the view of events, the president spoke to the nation on television. The harsh criticism of the government was not left unsaid. On December 13, 1999, Prime Minister Radu Vasile was finally removed from power. This action turned out to be a well-prepared “conspiracy.” In the view of declarations from the prime minister himself about his possible resignation and the removal of minister of agriculture – Ioan Mureșan, minister for European integration – Alexandru A. Herlea, and the president of the State Property Fund (Fondul Proprietății de Stat – FPS), his resignation seemed to be justified. The change in the position of prime minister was to silence protests and calm the society. Until a new cabinet was created, Alexandru Athanasiu, acting as a labour minister, was appointed the prime minister. At the request of the president, ministers holding offices in the government of Vasile were asked not to resign. Long discussions as to the choice of a new prime minister led to the appointment of a non-party technocrat and pragmatist to this position. From December 22, 1999 Mugur Constantin Isărescu (in 1990–1999 and from 2000 he was the president of the National Bank of Romania) held this office until December 28, 2000. His successor was Adrian Năstase,<sup>448</sup> who was also elected for the new president of the PDSR.<sup>449</sup> After four years, the centre-right coalition was pushed back, quarrelling, corrupt, unable to get the state out of the economic collapse. This resulted in a radical change in the balance of Romanian political forces.<sup>450</sup> A typical phenomenon for Romanian political life was the political downturn and corruption among leadership bodies and opposition media, which after 1989 evolved into parties. We had such a phenomenon in Central European countries, but not on such a scale as in Romania.

Unexpectedly, President Emil Constantinescu withdrew from reelection on July 17, 2000.<sup>451</sup> He stated that he was disappointed in politics and widespread corruption and pointed to the candidate Mugur Isărescu. The elections were preceded by numerous scandals, focused on Ion Iliescu and his office four

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<sup>448</sup> In 1990–1992, Adrian Năstase held the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He served as prime minister of Romania in 2000–2004. In 2014, the Supreme Court sentenced him to four years in prison for corruption while he was the head of government. The former prime minister was accused of receiving goods for 630,000 euros from China’s illegal imports in 2002–2004 for the interior decoration of his apartment. The court ruled that he would be deprived of active and passive suffrage for five years. In the summer of 2012, Năstase was sentenced to two years in prison for breaking the law on collecting money for an election campaign. In March 2013, he was released on parole. The prime minister himself claimed that he was innocent and that these were political allegations. dpa, *Były premier Năstase wraca do więzienia*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, January 6.

<sup>449</sup> Internal situation after the 2002 election, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>451</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia, “Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia”* 2000, R. 10, Warszawa, p. 184.

years earlier. The centre-right authorities, citing information from confidential sources, revealed the scandal's details about financing the left's election campaign from the state money (the so-called Costea affair). They also pointed out that the special service and custom service broke the embargo on fuel supplies to Yugoslavia (the so-called Jimbolia scandal). However, it was not possible to compromise Iliescu, Meleşcanu, and PDSR in the eyes of society.<sup>452</sup> In the election, President Iliescu (PDSR) defeated the leader of the opposition nationalist Greater Romania Party (PRM) headed by Corneliu Vadim Tudor.<sup>453</sup> The victorious post-communist Social Democratic Party of Romania (PDSR, former Party of Social Democracy in Romania) formed a minority government supported by parliamentary opposition parties, i.e., the National Liberal Party, the Democratic Party, and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. The second place in the parliamentary elections on November 26 was taken by "xenophobic, chauvinistic, totalizing and enemy of integration with NATO and the European Union – the Greater Romania Party (PRM)."<sup>454</sup> The most influential party of the previous coalition – Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD),<sup>455</sup> was accused of bringing the country to ruin and failed. The party, which for 10 years was the leading force of the Democratic Convention, lost its representatives in the parliament, which completely changed the system on the political scene in Romania. The victory of the Social Democratic Party of Romania meant, on the one hand, that the electorate questioned the chaotic and inefficient rule of the Romanian centre-right. On the other, for many citizens, it was the choice of the lesser evil as the post-communist party of Iliescu and himself were considered.<sup>456</sup> The lack of professionalism in ruling the state among the centre-right was also significant. The Democratic Convention often behaved like an opposition political force. It made mistakes and wanted to bend social reality to her ideological and political assumptions.

It is not easy to give a straight answer to whether the activities undertaken in the years 1997–2000 by the centre-right coalition can be considered appropriate. For the first time in Romanian history, a democratic change of power happened, which was undoubtedly a positive sign of the rule of that period. It brought further, systemic changes in the state. Integration with Euro-Atlantic structures became mainstream, so the members of most political groups and society supported it. The rule of the right-wing brought significant changes among the leftist parties which, to regain their position on the political scene, were forced to change their political image. For the new authorities and the majority of

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<sup>452</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>453</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia*, 2000, p. 182.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>455</sup> The Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD) was the backbone of the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR) ruling in 1996–2000.

<sup>456</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia*, 2000, p.185.

Romanian society, the most important step on the path of democratization of the country was to face and deal with the political, social, and historical legacy of the security apparatus of the Ceaușescu regime, as well as with the Securitate. The results of the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000 were upheld in 2001 and confirmed the ruling party's strong position. Social tensions and strikes temporarily subsided, which was crucial for the prime minister. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) became the successor of the PDSR,<sup>457</sup> and under the watchful eye of Adrian Năstase the party distinctly dominated both chambers of parliament.<sup>458</sup> It also included expatriates from the Democratic Party (PD)<sup>459</sup> and the Greater Romania Party (PRM).<sup>460</sup> Representatives of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) received 70 seats in the Senate (out of 140), and 172 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (out of 345).<sup>461</sup> The second part of the mandates went to the Social Democrats with Viorel Hrebenciuc.<sup>462</sup> The minority

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<sup>457</sup> The Social Democratic Party (PSD) was founded in June 2001 as a result of the merger of the Romanian Social Democracy Party and the Romanian Social Democratic Party (founded in 1990). The Romanian Social Democracy Party was founded in April 1992 after a split in the National Salvation Front. In July 1993, it merged with the Romanian Social Democratic Party and the Republican Party. It stayed in power until 1996. In the years 1992–1996, its deputies held 117 out of 341 seats. After 1996, it remained in opposition, and after 2000 was the main force of the government coalition. It was headed by Adrian Năstase.

<sup>458</sup> The reunification took place on June 16, 2001.

<sup>459</sup> The Democratic Party (PD) was a leftist party with a liberal economic program. It had a communist origin, as evidenced by both its activists and electorate. Nevertheless, its members described it as a centre-right, republican party with social democratic doctrine. It is believed that it was a group that respects the fundamental principles of democracy, freedom, dignity, the rule of law and solidarity, promoting equal opportunities for citizens. The beginnings of the party are being associated with the National Salvation Front (February 1990 – March 1993), then as the Democratic Party – the National Salvation Front, until 1993 when it took the name Democratic Party. It became the support of Petre Roman. It broke with the ruling national-populist coalition and Iliescu. Until the Roman's defeat in the presidential election, he was the head of the party. He was replaced by Traian Băsescu – the charismatic mayor of Bucharest.

<sup>460</sup> The Greater Romania Party (PRM) took a prominent place on the Romanian political scene. It supported nationalism, calling for Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, i.e., part of the Ukrainian state, to rejoin Romania. It took the position that national minorities should be restricted in their rights, especially the Hungarian minority. Its leadership, activists, and electorate came mainly from nationalist circles of Romanian communists. Tudor, the party leader, was an extreme populist and xenophobe, as were the many activists in the party – once associated with Securitate. Its slogans were supported primarily by the unemployed from the most impoverished regions. As a result of the 2000 elections, PRM gained importance, and its leader rivalled with Iliescu in the second round of presidential elections. In 2001, support for the party fell, and it was moved aside. Tudor was deprived of his immunity for radicalism and declarations harmful to the image of the state. Activists who joined the Romanian Humanist Party (PUR) or opted for PSD began to leave the party. Despite this, the PRM had a strong representation in parliament and strong links with the PSD wing, derived from the structures of the former Romanian Communist Party (PCR).

<sup>461</sup> PSD was so strong that it did not even need the support of national minorities or UDMR votes.

<sup>462</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

cabinet signed protocols of parliamentary cooperation for a year with the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), the initiative was not supported by the Democratic Party (PD). In November 2001, the agreement between trade unions and PNL was terminated due to the lack of a concept and a timeline for constitutional changes expected by the liberals. The Social Democrats' cooperation with the UDMR allowed for maintaining the stability of governments, adopting necessary normative acts (budget acts) and strengthening the image of the ruling party in line with the European standard. Two years after the parliamentary election, the Social Democrats could boast of a strong position. The party controlled the situation in Romania. The trick meaning the uniting the PDSR with the Social-Democratic PSDR, unencumbered by communist heritage, was the solution for the post-communist grouping and was supposed to contribute to the party's introduction to the Socialist International. The new Social Democratic Party (PSD) was the old PDSR, operating under the new banner. The party even included the same representatives, guided by the same assumptions they had made 10 years earlier.<sup>463</sup>

Following the government's program approved by the Parliament (December 28, 2000), the underlying assumptions of Romanian foreign policy remained the invitation to join NATO at the Prague Summit in 2002 and accession to the European Union in 2007 the latest.<sup>464</sup> During foreign visits, the prime minister confirmed each time that his cabinet's primary task was to rebuild international trust and integration with NATO and the European Union.<sup>465</sup> According to pre-election promises, the one-party minority government sought much more than the centre-right governments at all costs to strengthen relations with the international environment. Loyalty to European values and the need to join NATO and the European Union were strongly supported by political parties in Romania (PRM, PNR, PUNR, and AN). National programs for membership in organizational structures developed by Năstase were consulted with representatives of all groups. Efforts were made to overcome the shortcomings of its predecessors by introducing appropriate changes to the legislative provisions. In 2000, the Ministry of European Integration was established. The president's adviser on integration with the European Union was also appointed.<sup>466</sup> In February 2001, an agreement was signed between the Romanian government and the European Union regarding the financing of the SAPARD program (agricultural and rural

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<sup>463</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn.450/18.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>465</sup> Among 12 EU candidates in terms of the pace of political and economic reform, Romania was the last.

<sup>466</sup> At the same time, a department was founded that reported to the prime minister, who, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, still had responsibility for coordinating European affairs.

development). The European Union announced that by 2006 it would allocate EUR 150 million per year for this purpose.<sup>467</sup>

In March 2001, leaders of Romanian political parties signed a joint political declaration supporting the state's efforts to become a member of the North Atlantic Alliance. According to it, representatives of the ruling PDSR, the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition committed to supporting the government's activities, both within and outside the state. A huge propaganda and media campaign accompanied political unanimity. Even though the Declaration was accepted by most parties (PNL, PD, UDMR, PSDR, PUR, Parliamentary Group of National Minorities), Corneliu Vadim Tudor was very unfavourable to it.<sup>468</sup> Contrary to widespread euphoria, he tried to prove that Romania's so-blown efforts to become a member of NATO and the European Union were only a way to draw attention to a new government that craves for success, and in fact had not even taken sufficient steps to familiarize the heads of central ministries with relevant documentation.<sup>469</sup> Probably, such actions were a reaction to the progressive process of fragmentation of the Romanian right-wing and eternal tensions that occurred between the group leaders. It allowed post-communists to make their assumptions and chances to beat their opponents in the next parliamentary elections.<sup>470</sup> Corneliu Tudor was quite right. The left-wing, including post-communists, wanted to make themselves more trustworthy by seeing such a possibility in its integration with the European Union.

To meet the socio-economic problems that evolved during the elections and constituted the main reason for slowing down progress of future accession with the European Union, measures were taken to stimulate economic growth and balance the situation in the country.<sup>471</sup> Based on the work of Prime Minister Mugur Isărescu, his successor (Adrian Năstase) presented in Brussels the assumptions of the "The Strategy for Medium-Term Development of Romania for 2001–2004."<sup>472</sup> Its main task was to improve citizens' quality of life and guarantee economic growth at an average level of 4.5–6% in the following years.<sup>473</sup> The plan included, among others, the abolition of customs duties and VAT on imported equipment for the modernization of small and medium-sized enterprises. For the average citizen, the new fiscal policy concept meant more affordable prices for primary food products and higher prices for luxury products. It was assumed to grant subsidies from a guaranteed fund for the

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<sup>467</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>468</sup> Leader of the Greater Romania, the biggest parliamentary opposition party in 2001.

<sup>469</sup> J. Solak, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>470</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>471</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*, p. 49.

<sup>472</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>473</sup> It was successful, but the global economic crisis devastated the authorities in 2008. The unstable political situation in Romania caused a rapid decline in economic indicators.

development of agriculture, supporting small and medium enterprises, and supporting counties where the economic situation was particularly difficult. According to the document, the underlying assumption of the government's monetary policy was to support continued economic growth in the conditions of reducing the inflation rate to 10% in 2004 (against 40% in 2000).<sup>474</sup> The European Commission approached the document with a lot of criticism. In its opinion, the plan was "exaggerated" and unrealistic to implement, it required correction.<sup>475</sup> The progress in implementing economic reforms was very slow in Romania. Implementation of the assumptions of Romania's foreign policy largely depended on the major powers and was subordinated to activities aimed at Euro-Atlantic integration. Great attention was paid to relations with Germany, France, and Italy. Due to its future membership in NATO, bilateral ties focused on cooperation with the United States which had a growing interest in Romania. It was confirmed by the fact that American capital was flowing into Romania. Facing a possible loss of influence in the Black Sea region, Russia tried to slow down Romania's efforts to join NATO, which was confirmed, among others, by the objection to changes in the provisions of the Basic Treaty between Romania and Russia. The version presented by the Russians would deprive Romania of the possibility of conducting further negotiations on joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, as an active investor in Romania and the sole supplier of gas and oil, Russia was a crucial partner in Romania's foreign policy.<sup>476</sup>

The Prime Minister Năstase's government, with the participation of the Minister of National Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared the intensification of activities related to the invitation of Romania to NATO membership during the Prague summit in 2002. A positive sign of the government's actions was the support that citizens gave to Romania's integration with NATO. In February 2001, it reached the level of 84%.<sup>477</sup> Prime Minister Adrian Năstase even honourably declared that if Romania had not received the invitation to join NATO during the Prague summit, he would consider resigning. The consequence of this action was to be parliamentary elections, accelerated by a year. It was a bold commitment on the part of the prime minister, which was not though understood by all other politicians. President Iliescu treated it sceptically. He believed that such a move on the prime minister's part would only mean confirmation of a sense of responsibility for the careless actions of the government he led.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>476</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>477</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>478</sup> *Ibidem.*

The government became a “hostage” to NATO, the Prague summit – an obsession and censorship, according to which, in Romania, time was divided into “before Prague” and “after Prague.” On March 7, 2001, leaders of all political parties signalled a joint political declaration to support Romania’s efforts to seek NATO membership. They mainly counted on the support of the Mediterranean and long-term ally – France.

The social and economic reforms that began in the early 1990s, in the years 2000–2002 were suspended for “the time of accession.” They were rescheduled on “after Prague,” i.e., for the years 2003–2004. However, it was not very certain whether they would be put into practice. The parliamentary and presidential elections in Romania in 2004 were left in the background, considering them to be less engaging than seeking NATO membership. The implementation of political, economic, and military membership guidelines absorbed Romanian politicians. Their involvement increased even more after Romania was sharply criticized in mid-2002 for the lack of results in the fight against corruption and inadequate privatization,<sup>479</sup> inefficient reforms in most areas, as well as the politicization of state administration.<sup>480</sup>

The year 2003 brought amendments to the Romanian Constitution. There were no changes in the government’s competences. Compared to the previous constitution, one provision was changed – in Art. 107 (in the previous constitution, it was Art. 106). In the new version, Art. 107.2 said “The President of Romania cannot dismiss the Prime Minister,” while Art. 107.3 was as follows:

If the Prime Minister finds himself in one of the situations stipulated under Article 106,<sup>481</sup> except for him being dismissed, or if he cannot exercise his powers, the President of Romania shall designate another member of the Government as Acting Prime Minister to exercise the powers of the prime minister until a new Government is formed. During the Prime Minister’s impossibility to exercise the powers of the said office, the interim shall cease if the Prime Minister resumes his activity within the Government.<sup>482</sup>

The addition of these regulations, particularly the ban on dismissing the prime minister, resulted from the desire to prevent the situation in Romania in 1999, when Constantinescu dismissed Radu Vasile. He then created a precedent

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<sup>479</sup> *zf*, *Trudny początek masowej akcji prywatyzacyjnej*, PAP, Bukareszt 1992, June 1.

<sup>480</sup> It was proved by, i.e., Jackson report, pushing Romania to the end of the list of NATO candidate countries. The allegations against Adrian Năstase pointed to the government’s inefficiency in 1999–2000.

<sup>481</sup> “Membership of the Government shall cease upon resignation, dismissal, disenfranchisement, incompatibility, death, or in any other cases provided by law” – Art. 106 Cessation of membership of the Government, *Konstytucja Rumunii. Constituția României*, transl. A. Cosma, Biblioteka Sejmowa, [http://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Rumunia\\_pol\\_010711.pdf](http://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Rumunia_pol_010711.pdf) (accessed: 12.09.2019).

<sup>482</sup> A. Burakowski, *System polityczny współczesnej Rumunii*, Warszawa–Kraków 2014, p. 185.

that could change the balance of power in the political system in the long run. The introduction of Art. 107.2 meant “putting a dam to the expansion of the president’s power towards the head of government.”<sup>483</sup>

The Constitution of 2003 also contained a provision on extending the term of office of the president to five years (Art. 83.1), which undoubtedly strengthened the position of the head of the state. Another modification was introduced – it was made possible (Art. 96) to prosecute the president for treason. In this case, the decision was to be taken at the joint session of both chambers of parliament, by a two-thirds majority. The indicted president would be suspended, and his case would be tried by the High Court of Cassation and Justice which would issue a verdict of his guilt or innocence. In the first case, he would lose his position; in the second – he would be cleared of charges and return to the office.<sup>484</sup> The 2003 Constitution was the last act of this rank to specify the prime minister’s powers and government. As with other authorities, at the beginning of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, determining their position was completed. In this way, the “dualist-conflict” system of government was finally established, in which the powers of the executive were divided between the head of government and the head of the state.<sup>485</sup>

In the referendum on the adoption of the new constitution,<sup>486</sup> which took place on October 18 and 19, 2003, 9 938 441 (i.e. 55.70%) out of 17 842 103 entitled to vote participated. At the time, citizens were asked one fundamental question: Do you agree with the amendment to the Romanian Constitution as adopted by Parliament?<sup>487</sup> 8 915 022 (i.e., 89.70%) were in favour of the changes in the Constitution, 875 172 (8.81%) were against. 148 247 (i.e., 1.49%) votes were invalid.<sup>488</sup> Amendments to the Constitution came into force on October 22, 2003. The adoption of the new constitution was to facilitate the country’s accession to the European Union. The low turnout on the first day of voting alarmed Prime Minister Adrian Năstase. At his suggestion, a teleconference was convened with all 42 counties. Representatives of the ruling Social Democratic Party expressed optimism about the result of the referendum. “One of the

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<sup>483</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>484</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>485</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 186.

<sup>486</sup> The referendum was based on the provisions of the Constitution (Art. 144g) and the Act on the organization and functioning of the Constitutional Court (Art. 35 of Act No. 47/1992) as amended and the Act on the organization and conduct of a referendum (Art. 45 § 1 No. 3/2000) as amended. Curtea Constituțională – CCR, *Hotărârea nr. 3/2003 pentru confirmarea rezultatului referendumului național din 18-19 octombrie 2003 privind Legea de revizuire a Constituției României*, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gqzdknrs/hotararea-nr-3-2003-pentru-confirmarea-rezultatului-referendumului-national-din-18-19-octombrie-2003-privind-legea-de-revizuire-a-constitutiei-romaniei> (accessed: 12.11.2019).

<sup>487</sup> Președintele României, *Parlamentul României – Constituția din 31 octombrie 2003*, [www.presidency.ro](http://www.presidency.ro) (accessed: 12.10.2019).

<sup>488</sup> Curtea Constituțională – CCR, *Hotărârea nr. 3/2003...*



county governors even promised trips to China to heads of municipalities where the turnout would exceed 50%.”<sup>489</sup> Over 50% of citizens took part in the general vote. Thanks to the approved changes resulting from the announced accession of Romania to the European Union, Romanian citizens gained the opportunity to participate in elections to the European Parliament, the right to move freely in the European Union, the possibility of voluntary participation in conscription for military service, regardless of religion, beliefs gained the right to own private property. Nationalization was banned, and the transfer of goods based on social, religious, ethical, or political affiliation or other forms of discrimination against the owner was opposed. An ombudsman office was established in Romania. Rules for the functioning of the upper and lower houses of parliament were specified.<sup>490</sup> The change also covered the provision on the supremacy of EU law over Romanian law.<sup>491</sup>

In November 2004, parliamentary elections were held, along with the first round of presidential elections (the second round took place in December 2004). The Senate included: National Union of PSD-PUR (Union of the Social Democratic Party and the Romanian Humanist Party) 36.88%, 57 seats in total, Justice and Truth Alliance D.A. (National Liberal Party and Democratic Party) 31.41%, 49 seats in total, Greater Romania Party (PRM) 13.65%, 21 seats, and The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) 6.87%, 10 seats.<sup>492</sup> The Chamber of Deputies was composed of representatives of the National Union of PSD-PUR (Social Democratic Party and the Romanian Humanist Party) 36.37%, a total of 132 seats, Justice and Truth Alliance D.A. (National Liberal Party and Democratic Party) 31%, 112 seats, Great Romania Party (PRM) 12%, 48 seats, and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) 6.87%, 22 seats.<sup>493</sup>

In the presidential election, in the second round (December 12, 2004), Traian Băsescu won with 51% of the votes and defeated Adrian Năstase.<sup>494</sup> The head of the state recognized the rapprochement of Romania with the European Union, scheduled for January 1, 2007, as the primary goal. When assuming the president's office, the current mayor of Bucharest was supposed to change the political system on Romania's political scene permanently. The post-communist Social Democratic Party (PSD) governments were crouched, as the decision to form a government fell to the D.A. Alliance. On December 8, 2004, Călin

<sup>489</sup> *W Rumunii odbyło się referendum konstytucyjne*, 2003, October 19, <https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/W-Rumunii-odbylo-sie-referendum-konstytucyjne-902329.html> (accessed: 29.10.2019).

<sup>490</sup> Parlamentul României, *Legea nr. 429/2003 de revizuire a Constituției României*, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gq3dcnrv/legea-nr-429-2003-de-revizuire-a-constitutiei-romaniei> (accessed 17.06.2017).

<sup>491</sup> A. Żelazo, *Stosunki UE z Bułgarią i Rumunią*, “Biuletyn PISM” 2003, December 19, no. 83(187).

<sup>492</sup> Notatka informacyjna na temat sytuacji wewnętrznej Rumunii, January 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>494</sup> In the first round, Băsescu had only 7 points less than his competitor – Adrian Năstase.

Popescu-Tăriceanu became the head of the new government.<sup>495</sup> The portfolios of the state ministers were given to Adrieian Videanu (PD), Béla Markó (UDMR), Gheorghe Copos (PUR); Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu (non-party member) became the minister of foreign affairs.<sup>496</sup> The new cabinet, with the decisive vote of President Băsescu, was finally filled by young representatives from four groups: PNL, PD, UDMR, and PUR. From the beginning, there was a sharp rivalry between the groups in the government that had different ideologies and different political experiences. The coalition, which the president came from, did not contribute to ending the crisis. Former PD chairman Traian Băsescu charged the government and Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu of ineffectiveness and tolerance of indefinite influence groups in the cabinet. Mutual accusations, which began to appear connected with lustration, only increased the distance and cooperation between the president and the prime minister. Despite big pre-election promises, Prime Minister Popescu-Tăriceanu did not fulfil them during his term. The improvement in citizens' life that he had promised did not take place. However, in the country, cuts and savings continued, which were the result of the International Monetary Fund decision, demanding assistance, an increase of VAT rate, and cuts of budget employees' salaries in exchange for USD 26 billion assistance.<sup>497</sup>

On December 2, 2006, the Conservative Party (formerly PUR) left the coalition. This decision resulted in withdrawal from the political scene of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Bogdan Pascu (he was replaced by Varujan Vosganian from the National Liberal Party), Minister of Economy Codruț Șereș (Mircea-Nicu Toader was his successor), Minister of Agriculture Gheorghe Flutur (he was replaced by Dan Motreanu). Changes also took place among undersecretaries of state and management positions in several agencies. The conflict in the coalition was developing. Expensive food and lack of support from the government to reduce the tax on primary food products from 19 to 9% only aggravated the differences between parties. Although there was a renewed

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<sup>495</sup> Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu was the prime minister of Romania in 2004–2008, later chairman of the ALDE party, he was accused of giving false testimony on the unauthorized return of landed property. However, after examining the cases, the court acquitted him in May 2018. *jo/mc, Sąd uniewinnił przewodniczącego Senatu*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, May 22. In November 2018, further allegations were brought by the Romanian Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (DNA), asking the Senate to remove Popescu's parliamentary immunity. It was reported that the politician "was involved in corruption to raise funds to finance the election campaign costs." It was mainly about the purchase of 40,000 Microsoft licenses for USD 26 million, for which Tăriceanu was to receive a bribe of USD 800,000. Tăriceanu said he was innocent. A similar case came up in 2014 when a dozen former ministers were accused of activities related to the purchase of Microsoft DNA licenses. *ik/mc, Rumuńska prokuratura chce pozbawienia immunitetu przewodniczącego Senatu*, EFE/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, November 8.

<sup>496</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibidem*.

coalition of PNL, PD, and UDMR, the crisis severely affected the prime minister (from PNL). His public support began to decline dramatically. Relevant laws related to national defence and the activities of information agencies were also discussed at that time. They assumed subordinating the services to the president at the expense of the prime minister's powers, which emphasized his diminishing role. Ultimately, in this matter, the Parliament blocked the process of adopting laws, suspending the dispute between PNL and PD.<sup>498</sup> The insubordination of the president and the prime minister was evident at every turn. When, at the turn of March and April 2006, the Parliament adopted the lustration act, and elections to the National College for the Investigation of Securitate Archives (CNSAS) were carried out, despite previous arrangements within the coalition, CNSAS was headed by a supporter of the president and the PD party. Following prior agreements, a representative chosen by the prime minister was to take over the functions. The compromise was the introduction of changes in the CNSAS regulations. According to it, it was agreed that there would be a rotating chairmanship of the College's work.<sup>499</sup>

The lustration reached the president and prime minister himself.<sup>500</sup> The dispute between the president and the prime minister deepened each month. In June 2006, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Theodor Atanasiu (PNL) decided to withdraw Romanian troops from Iraq. This move surprised the president and the Supreme Council of National Defence (CSAT), as they were omitted in the decision-making process. The president then accused the prime minister and defence minister of "attacking Romania's national interest." The harsh words of the head of state meant that the soldiers were eventually not withdrawn from Iraq. The Minister of Defence was suspended. He faced severe accusations of committing a crime and exceeding his official powers. The prime minister stood in his defence, but his lack of authority did not help solve the case. The president appointed a new minister of defense – Sorin Frunzăverde. In October, without consulting the prime minister, he submitted a motion to the parliament to appoint his adviser Claudiu Elwis Săftoiu as the head of Foreign Intelligence Service (SIE) and George-Cristian Maior from the opposition as the head of Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI). It was a meaningful play that was to show that the head of the state, in the event of the snap parliamentary election, did not oppose the alliance of PD with PSD.<sup>501</sup> This situation on the political scene had a positive impact on the country's internal situation or its image during the period of applying for membership in the European Union. Democratizing Romanian society was disappointing by the attitude of the

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<sup>498</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>499</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>500</sup> AS, *Lustracja po rumuńsku*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2006, December 6.

<sup>501</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

political elite. Decomposition among political elites was used by organized criminal groups which largely corrupted the central and local administration.

In 2006, standing in opposition to almost all political parties – the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) forced a bill on national minorities. The law was supposed to give Hungary extensive powers. In the case of the new creation of the Hungarian autonomous district, which included three Transylvania counties, UDMR wanted to gain a significant position among Romanian Hungarians. The growing support for radical groups threatened them.<sup>502</sup>

In October 2006, there was a split in the PNL, as a result of which the opponents of the prime minister were thrown out of the party – Theodor Stolojan and Valeriu Stoica – and founded a liberal platform willing to move to the opposition. This significantly weakened the position of PNL. Especially that its representatives had already massively left both chambers of the Romanian parliament. As a result of the moves, a new party was formed – the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD).

Once again, after 2000, due to the conservatives' transition to the opposition, there was a change in the balance of power in the Romanian parliament. The events mentioned above had shown that the coalition in Romania was weak. It was realized that there were no specific prospects for its exercising power. Integration with the European Union turned out to be the only particular action, gaining the favour of all political parties. Fears of delaying accession were the only condition that prevented the parties from escalating the conflict. Significant differences in the programs of oppositional parties in parliament prevented the creation of an alliance. There was a period of stagnation of PSD. At that time, the nationalist party Greater Romania of Corneliu Vadim Tudor tried to rebuild its influence. Having been discouraged by actions, it kept its nationalist direction. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party, struggling to find its way on the opposition side, fought for survival.<sup>503</sup> The reconciliation of the interests of the three-party coalition, with a weak parliamentary advantage, harsh criticism from the president, and his sometimes unforeseen moves, ongoing efforts to integrate with the European Union, meant that the prime minister, being tired of his role, was increasingly compromising. Unfortunately, thus, the head of the government, not having his own opinion, lost support in the eyes of the public. The conflict in the coalition and the complicated situation on Romania's political scene, with the weakening position of the prime minister, only affected President Băseșcu's popularity. His position grew, and he gained the support of the citizens (mainly due to him showing favour to reckon with the history). However, due to the lack of diplomatic skills, he got into conflicts with

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<sup>502</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>503</sup> *Ibidem.*

government representatives, presidents of both Houses of Parliament, Adrian Năstase, Nicolae Văcăroiu, and the heads of the parties PC, PSD, and PRM.<sup>504</sup>

Meanwhile, in Romania, work was underway on provisions to free the prosecutor's office and the judiciary from political influence and improve its operation. Even though the Lustration Act was passed in 1997, only during Băseșcu's rule, it was possible to implement the Act. Thus, the files of the communist security service from before 1989, concerning over 60,000 persons were forwarded to the National Council for the Investigation of Securitate Archives – CNSAS.<sup>505</sup> On December 18, 2006, the president presented in the Parliament a report describing the crimes of communism (the so-called Vladimir Tismăneanu Report). The predecessor – President Iliescu, sharply criticized him. According to the present president, during 50 years of communist dictatorship, from 500,000 up to 2 million people were murdered, imprisoned, and sent to labour camps.<sup>506</sup> The Report made it clear that the Securitate structures were still present in Romanian political, economic, and social lives. The issue that communism was imposed on Romanians by representatives of hostile national minorities, i.e., Jews and Hungarians, was refuted. Such rhetoric dominated in the views of Vladimir Tudor's nationalist party Greater Romania. Thus, it had a very negative impact on society's relations with national minorities. The victims of the system in Romania were Romanians and Hungarians, Germans, Jews, and Romani people.<sup>507</sup>

Băseșcu's role in international relations was significant.<sup>508</sup> His term of office was marked by rapprochement with the European Union. In connection with Romania's accession to NATO (March 29, 2004), attention was focused on the proper implementation of reforms in the Armed Forces. The focus was on modernizing equipment and building a significant position among Alliance countries. Relations with Hungary, mainly due to a different concept of minority rights between Bucharest and Budapest (individual rights versus collective rights), had been tense for several years. However, Hungary supported Romania's efforts to join NATO and the European Union. Romanian soldiers actively participated in operations to stabilize and fight terrorism and improve security in the Black Sea region, an area of "frozen conflicts". It was particularly important for the region's countries to undertake joint actions to combat human, drug, and arms trafficking. Maintaining good relations with countries aspiring

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<sup>504</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>505</sup> The National Council for the Investigation of Securitate Archives – CNSAS, is equivalent to Polish IPN, AS, *Lustracja po rumuńsku.*

<sup>506</sup> A. Skieterska, *Dwa miliony ofiar komunizmu*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 2006, December 18.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>508</sup> In the capitals of France and Germany after the presidential election in 2004 and Băseșcu came to power, it was even emphasized that the choice of a new leader meant a desire to end the rule of former communists, despite the fact that it was Prime Minister Năstase and President Iliescu who finalized the accession negotiations. J. Ciesielska-Klikowska, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

to the organization was also in the interest of the state. President Băseșcu has contributed to improving relations with Moldova.<sup>509</sup>

In 1993 Romania signed the Association Agreement with the European Union. Two years later, it applied to join the EU. In June 1997, it obtained the status of a candidate country.<sup>510</sup> From 2000, it conducted accession negotiations. The summit in Copenhagen (December 2002) was very favourable for Romania, and its results allowed for specifying the date of Romania's accession to the European Union (2007).<sup>511</sup> Significant pre-accession assistance was also promised then, i.e., in 2004–2006, approximately EUR 900 million per year.<sup>512</sup> Accession negotiations, by the decision of the European Council, were completed after four years, on December 16–17, 2004. In April 2005, the signing of the Accession Treaty was announced. December 1, 2007 was the day of Romania's accession to the European Union.<sup>513</sup> "Despite the unrest and political and social shocks accompanying our changes, despite the various ideologies professed by the Romanian leaders during the years of change, the program of the Romanian revolution has never been questioned. The main goals of this program, adopted with the unforgettable enthusiasm of those days, particularly in the first years, were an indispensable reference point on the winding and full of obstacles path,"<sup>514</sup> – said President Iliescu. Romania was primarily supported by France, Germany, Britain, and Italy.<sup>515</sup>

On April 25, 2005 Romania and Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Union.<sup>516</sup> Thus, Romania gained the right to participate in discussions on Europe's future and was involved in the activities of the Community institutions on a political and technical level.<sup>517</sup> The prospect of Romania's accession to the European Union has become a driving force for reforms. The efforts made by the state authorities have contributed to the modernization and democratization of the country. NGOs and civil society participants in Romania have made a significant contribution to democratization, the fight

<sup>509</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>510</sup> J. Solak, *op. cit.*

<sup>511</sup> J. Ciesielska-Klikowska, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>512</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>513</sup> In the conclusions of the European Council meeting on December 12, 2003, it was stated that the Union would strive to admit new states in January 2007, provided that all membership criteria were met. More in: A. Żelazo, *op. cit.*

<sup>514</sup> I. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*

<sup>515</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>516</sup> On April 23, 2005, the European Parliament agreed by most votes, 497 in favour, 93 against and 71 abstentions. A. Koseski, M. Willaume, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>517</sup> *Rumunia*, Europa.eu, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries/romania\\_pl](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries/romania_pl) (accessed: 12.01.2019).

against corruption, the protection of press freedom, and the pursuit of an independent judiciary. It is worth noting that Romania's integration with the European Union took place under challenging conditions for the state and the external environment. The complicated political situation, the EU countries' inability to ratify the Constitutional Treaty, the ongoing discussions about the future borders of the Community, and the crisis that followed the referendums in France and the Netherlands caused many discussions and fears of the next enlargement. Requirements for future members were the responsibility of the EU institutions.<sup>518</sup>

On September 26, 2006 the European Commission presented the latest periodic report monitoring the state of Romanian preparations before joining the European Union. It was officially set for January 1, 2007, as a day of Romania's accession to the European Union. Areas of activity were outlined in which the degree of fulfilment of negotiating obligations was not satisfactory and required intensive efforts from Romania. Among them were:

- ◆ the need to continue the fight against corruption (particularly at a high level and at the level of local government), which "destabilizes social and economic life and state policy, tarnishing Romania's image on the international stage;"
- ◆ the need to ensure the proper conduct of criminal and civil trials will be free of ambiguities, by increasing the powers of the Supreme Judicial Council;
- ◆ establishment of the National Integrity Agency with the responsibility to "verify the property status of politicians and check the likelihood of a conflict of interest and to make decisions based on which it would be possible to prosecute and apply sanctions against infringers;"
- ◆ the need to ensure control over the future EU external borders, migration flows, the need to prevent human trafficking;
- ◆ the need to guarantee full media independence and unrestricted freedom of expression;
- ◆ the need to respect, recognize and support minorities;
- ◆ the need to introduce appropriate Community *acquis* at a local and regional level;
- ◆ the need to implement legislation regarding the protection of children's rights (entered into force on January 1, 2005);
- ◆ the need for the proper and transparent application of the new state aid law and its strict control by the Romanian Competition Council;
- ◆ the need for additional measures in the field of environmental protection.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Informacja o sytuacji wewnętrznej w Rumunii, MSZ, styczeń 2007, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 37/93.

<sup>519</sup> *Wniosek Rumunii o przystąpienie do UE. Rezolucja Parlamentu Europejskiego w sprawie wniosku Rumunii o przystąpienie do Unii Europejskiej* (2005/2028(INI)), Dz. Urz. UE C 33 E/410, 9.02.2006, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6d5da2b5-2564-4546-bfbc-2f77e45188e4.0016.02/DOC\\_60&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6d5da2b5-2564-4546-bfbc-2f77e45188e4.0016.02/DOC_60&format=PDF) (accessed: 3.01.2019).

In the report, the European Commission also drew attention to the difficulties encountered in implementing the provisions of the new codes of criminal and administrative proceedings, which raised considerable doubts regarding the authorities' approach to the issue. The Parliament, accused of trying to limit the Ministry of Justice activities, was criticized. Its actions were perceived as those that could seriously impede the effective fight against corruption. The Commission also pointed out that "Romania is still not well prepared to ensure the proper management and distribution of EU funds."<sup>520</sup> "Therefore, in the case of agriculture, there is a real danger that agricultural subsidies agencies will not function properly at the time of accession,"<sup>521</sup> – it was emphasized. This could result in Romania losing ¼ of European funds. A deadline of three months was set for Romania to eliminate the backlog resulting from the launch of the agricultural subsidy agency. This indicates that if the condition is not met, EU payments would be suspended.<sup>522</sup> The Commission took a similar approach to the continuation of justice reforms. It informed that in non-compliance with the assumptions, a sectoral security clause would be introduced, which could lead to the Member States not recognizing the verdicts of Romanian courts.<sup>523</sup> The EU report, which was devoted to the current lack of democracy in Romania's social, political, and economic life, was a thorough analysis of the state, primarily its internal sphere. Ceaușescu's spirit hovered over the daily functioning of the nation and state. There was a lively discussion in the Union on whether to grant Romania membership rights in an integrated Europe.

Romania's accession to the European Union took place on January 1, 2007, despite the negative opinions of individual member states of the organization. For the first three years, Romania was monitored by the European Commission due to the criticism resulting from the 2006 report and the conditions the state had to adopt to enter the organization. It had been assumed that the implementation of the assumptions would be presented in semi-annual reports; in the event of non-compliance with them, protective clauses will be applied – the general economic clause and the clauses in the areas of "internal market," "justice and home affairs."<sup>524</sup>

Romania's membership in the European Union has somewhat improved the situation of citizens. After 2007, mass labour emigration became noticeable. Italy and Spain became Romanians' favourite destinations. For Romanian society, migration was the solution to family problems.<sup>525</sup> In the years 2000–2015, the

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<sup>520</sup> Information on Romanian foreign policy, Archives of the President of Poland, 2007, sygn.450/18.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>522</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>523</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>524</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>525</sup> Romanian society can be described as "young." Half of the population is not older than 41 years, and people up to the age of 25 constitute 27.1%. *Ludność*, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/c/mobile/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/c/mobile/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 12.02.2019).



size of the Romanian diaspora in the world increased by 7.3% per year, and the number of Romanians living outside their homeland in 2015 was estimated at 3.4 million.<sup>526</sup> The most massive clusters of Romanians outside the country are Italy and Spain. The United Kingdom also became a popular destination among immigrants – in 2017, there were over 400,000 people with Romanian citizenship. It is the second biggest immigrant group after the Poles in the UK.<sup>527</sup> Thus, emigration became one of the reasons why Romania began to opt for a visa-free regime and strive to join the Schengen area. Since 2011, it has been trying to ensure its citizens equal treatment among Community citizens. Romania was held back by Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands, despite the resolution issued by the European Parliament, and did not join Schengen area in 2012.<sup>528</sup> It was not determined by the fact that Romania meets the technical criteria for membership. Fears of EU Member States have accumulated around the quality of border control standards, the visa system, and the work of services and data protection. They are additionally aggravated by the problem of migration and widespread corruption in the state. The latter is probably the most serious reason for postponing Romania's accession to the Schengen area. The fact that the state lies on one of the main trafficking routes also seems to be a big problem. In the Black Sea basin Romania, located between Bulgaria and Ukraine is located on the drug and human trafficking route leading from the East.<sup>529</sup> It is highly exposed to the development of organized crime in various forms. After the migration crisis, as an external border of the European Union, it has also struggled with illegal immigration.<sup>530</sup> Romania is one of the countries which in May 2015 voluntarily agreed to accept 1785 refugees on their territory and repeatedly, despite opposing their forced relocation, tried to handle the issue. However, when, in 2015, the European Union attempted to divide thousands of emigrants without prior consultation with Member States (Romania was to receive an additional 4646 migrants), President Klaus Iohannis protested.<sup>531</sup> Prime Minister Victor Ponta made a clear statement in the media –

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<sup>526</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>527</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>528</sup> Romanians migrate mainly to Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and Britain. It is estimated that around 3.5 million citizens have left the country since 2007. J. Pierkowski, *op. cit.* The 2011 Census showed that over 15 years, the population has declined from around 22 million people in 2002 to 20.1 million in 2011. The downward trend continues, in 2018 it was estimated that there would be less than 19.6 million people living in Romania, *Ludność.*

<sup>529</sup> K. Marczuk, G. Popa, *Trafficking in human beings in the post-communist states of the Balkan area*, "Human Security Journal" 2008, vol. 6, Spring, pp. 78–80.

<sup>530</sup> J. Rojewski, *Rumunia obejmuje prezydenturę w Unii Europejskiej. Co to dla nas oznacza?*, "Polityka" 2019, January 4, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/swiat/1777238,1,rumunia-obejmuje-prezydenturę-w-unii-europejskiej-co-to-dla-nas-oznacza.read?page=127&moduleId=4781> (accessed 4.01.2019).

<sup>531</sup> agy/kar, *Prezydent: nie ma zgody na obowiązkowe kwoty uchodźców*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, September 10.

“his government would be willing to accept the additional number of refugees provided that the European Union agrees that Romania joins the Schengen area.”<sup>532</sup> Talks on the inclusion of Romania in the Schengen area are ongoing. When Romania took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in January 2019, the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker emphasized that “the European Union will be incomplete without Romania, and Romania’s place is in the Schengen area.”<sup>533</sup> The President of the Commission emphasized that “Romania’s historical path was not easy, but the country was able to preserve its values.”<sup>534</sup>

In 2004, Traian Băsescu from the Democratic Party won the presidential election. From the very beginning, he worked to create his political base. The watchwords of his term became three directions of action: the western direction of Romanian policy, the fight against corruption, and decommunization. During the time of President Băsescu, Romania entered the EU structures. His success was also granted elements of a missile shield to Romania. It is also worth noting that two Băsescu terms were noted as a time when corruption finally started to be fought in Romania. Society believed that reforms were possible in a state that would end lawlessness and deal with people who should not have been in power on the Romanian political scene for a long time. In line with the President’s pre-election promise, a “national strategy against the culture of bribery” was introduced.<sup>535</sup> *Nuda spaga!* posters (“Don’t give it!”) hit the streets of Bucharest and many cities and towns. In the final European Commission report on Romania’s progress in preparing for accession, on September 26, 2006, corruption was the most criticized.<sup>536</sup> Data from the World Bank report for 2000 confirmed that 42% of Romanians once “gave a bribe,” “every third official admitted to taking it,” “corruption is available to train conductors, doctors, teachers, customs officers, and policemen.”<sup>537</sup> Similarly, Transparency International surveys showed that nothing had changed in terms of bribery; the Corruption Perception Index for Romania in 2006 was 3.1.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> The prime minister’s statement was denied in the following days, but it can be assumed that the translation was in line with the government’s assumptions. *Ibidem*.

<sup>533</sup> Juncker: Rumunia powinna stać się częścią strefy Schengen, “Sputnik News” 2019, January 11, <https://pl.sputniknewpp.com/swiat/201901119559392-Juncker-Rumunia-strefa-schengen-Sputnik-Polska/> (accessed: 15.02.2019).

<sup>534</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>535</sup> The Minister of Justice Monica Macovei introduced a law on the obligation to disclose all public officials’ income. The act brought to justice among others former Prime Minister of Romania Adrian Năstase. D. Maschmann, *Rumunia: idzie jak po grudzie*, Cafe Babel, 2006, September 9, transl. J. Janeczko, <https://cafebabel.com/pl/article/rumunia-idzie-jak-po-grudzie-5ae004d6f-723b35a145dbf39/> (accessed: 10.01.2019).

<sup>536</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>538</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *Old wine in new bottles. The Romanian elections of 2008*, “Problems of Post-Communism” 2008, vol. 56, no. 5, p. 50.

Unfortunately, the image of Romanian politics was negatively affected by personal animosities between the President Traian Băsescu and the Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (National Liberal), which was already mentioned. On September 31, 2004, in the view of social unrest, the election campaign started, and criticism of power came up. The paths of the National Liberals and Democrats diverged, where the latter moved to the opposition side. The dissolution of the alliance brought political skirmishes and divided the society into two camps – favourable to the president and Democrats and supporting the prime minister and the National Liberals.

After the 2004 election, the parliament was very diverse in terms of politics and nationality. The former leader of the National Liberal party Theodor Stolojan, who dared to support the Alliance and the president, was expelled from the party. As a result, he founded a new party – the Democratic Liberal Party. The situation that took place then positively influenced the increase of support in the Parliament of National Liberals representing the minority government. Thus, in post-communist Romania, they became the first ruling group that managed to gain support during their office. It resulted in adopting the law on the introduction of 16% income tax and the possibility of increasing budgetary allocations for education to the level of 6% of GDP.<sup>539</sup> However, there was no support in adopting laws regarding the independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption. Criticism of President Băsescu's actions and natural disasters that hit Romania several times during this period plunged it into an even greater crisis. The European Union, which was observing the situation, drew attention to the problem, often alerting about Romania's deteriorating status and stagnation in the integration process.

The years 2004–2008, under Popescu-Tăriceanu's rule, brought short-term government profits and led Romania to the abyss. After joining the European Union, it was the poorest and worst governed country in Europe, as reported by "The Economist."<sup>540</sup> In Romania, there was a noticeable increase in populism, which indicated that the government had initiated policies that benefit social groups. Their support for the government grew, which gave impulses to smaller political parties and hoped to win their supporters. In 2008, the promises of a 50% pay raise for teachers, an improvement in citizens' financial situation, and no actual financial coverage for the declaration appealed to the public. However, selective treatment of employees pushed trade unions for strikes, intensified the inflationary spiral, and, as a result of strikes, eventually led to widespread stagnation.<sup>541</sup> Social unrest, combined with the first signs of the global economic

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<sup>539</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>540</sup> C. Rumulus, *România poate ateriza dur in 2009*, "Romania Libera" 2008, November 29.

<sup>541</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 52.

crisis, has caused Romania to be in a deep economic recession. The upcoming election campaign has become a long-awaited event.

The situation suddenly turned back on October 1, when the PDL and PSD government coalition collapsed. Two weeks later, a motion of no confidence against the centre-right government of Emil Boc, leader of PD-L, was submitted. To a large extent, it was a consequence of the long-term unfavourable economic situation. In a deep recession, Romania took \$ 17.1 billion loan from the IMF to finance public sector wages. A political crisis accompanied the economic collapse that neither the prime minister nor the head of the state could cope with.<sup>542</sup>

The collapse of the Romanian minority government and political conflict were typical tactical actions in Romania, led by political groups before the presidential election announced in November.<sup>543</sup> After the fall of the government, President Băsescu appointed Lucian Croitoru<sup>544</sup> – an advisor at the Central Bank – as prime minister. Three opposition parties – Social Democrats, the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, demanded the withdrawal of the nomination and put forward as a candidate for the prime minister Klaus Iohannis,<sup>545</sup> mayor of Sibiu, leader of a small party representing the German minority.<sup>546</sup>

In the field of bilateral relations, in 2006 and 2007, Romania tried to work towards warming ties, which was undoubtedly influenced by the prospect of the accession of Bulgaria, Romania, and then Croatia to the European Union. In politics, a change of emphasis on regional problems became noticeable. It was a time when interest in the Black Sea area and the Eastern dimension of European Union policy grew. Despite active contacts with Serbia and Montenegro, President Băsescu's declaration of support for Serbia's position in the conflict in Kosovo and Metohija, and discussions of cooperation between the parties in the field of energy,<sup>547</sup> it can be said that overall the activity of Romania

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<sup>542</sup> The situation caused numerous strikes throughout Romania. Trade unions and public sector employees wanted to introduce a minimum wage of 650 leu (\$ 228) in 2010 and give up the 10-day unpaid leave for state employees forced by the government. This solution was to help the government save around 360 million euros. ap, *Pracowniczy protest przeciwko niskim płacom*, PAP, Bukareszt 2009, October 7.

<sup>543</sup> *Băsescu wyznaczył na premiera ekonomistę Luciana Croitoru*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, October 15.

<sup>544</sup> Lucian Croitoru was associated with the Democratic Liberal party close to the president. In the years 2003–2007, he represented Romania in the International Monetary Fund. Despite his extensive experience, his chances of obtaining parliamentary approval were small.

<sup>545</sup> President Băsescu did not exclude the candidacy of Iohannis for the new prime minister, provided that his cabinet would include representatives of all major political parties. The president expected a government of national unity to be formed in Romania, supported by all political groups, including the Democratic Liberal Party removed from power after the collapse of the ruling coalition.

<sup>546</sup> *Początek kampanii przed wyborami prezydenckimi*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, October 23.

<sup>547</sup> Romanian-Serbian relations were dominated by the subject of the Constanta-Pancevo-Trieste oil pipeline construction and the extension of the Iron Gate power station on the Danube. *Informacja o rumuńskiej polityce zagranicznej*, Archives of the President of Poland, 2007, sygn. 450/18.

in the Western Balkans has decreased. Relations with Bulgaria were assessed as well. Cooperation with the Republic of Moldova was strengthened; presidents signed a joint Declaration on the need to enhance cooperation in trade, economy, people-to-people contacts, and support Moldova's European aspirations. The signing of the Basic Treaty by the authorities, which was discussed from 1993, remained a pending issue. The introduction of visas for Moldovan citizens by the Romanian side because of Romania's accession to the European Union was considered a significant problem.<sup>548</sup>

In Romanian-Hungarian relations, the commitment was made to meetings at the level of members of government during which joint documents were to be adopted regarding economic, political, and social cooperation. The years 2006 and 2007 were marked by arrangements for further cooperation between states after Romania's accession to the European Union. The focus was on discussing economic cooperation and the field of transport infrastructure and the energy industry. The establishment of Hungarian consular offices in Romania was received positively, in exchange for which Hungary agreed to the opening of Romanian Institute of Culture in Budapest. The adopted act concerned that granting ethnic Hungarians living abroad a long-term national visa did not negatively affect bilateral relations. On the Hungarian side, it was decided to open the labour market for Romanians after January 1, 2007, allowing Romanian labour migration to Hungary, while introducing a list of 140 occupations that would not be permitted to be taken by neighbours. The Romanian parliament was responsible for passing the law on national minorities, which many Hungarians feared, assuming that it would not be in line with their expectations.<sup>549</sup>

The election campaign in 2008 was not surprisingly focused on economic problems. Issues of national significance were brought up. No new programs appeared. The candidates tried not to refer to matters concerning national minorities or local issues, so as not to cause unnecessary discussions that cast a shadow on their win in the elections. Those of the politicians who spoke made unrealistic promises – for example, highway construction.<sup>550</sup> Farmers were promised free tractors equipped with GPS.<sup>551</sup> Even Vladimir Tudor, who almost won the presidential election in 2000, and his nationalist slogans no longer impressed anyone. In the campaign, the slogans “nationalism,” “corruption” and “decommunization” were rare. The autonomy of Hungarians in Romania or the Romanian minority living in the Republic of Moldova was not discussed loudly. The Hungarians ceased to be a threat to Romanians, their previous efforts to restore the land and the creation of Great Hungary were no longer relevant.

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<sup>548</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>549</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>550</sup> It was promised, among others, to build 1000 km of new roads, while in 2008, there were only 300 km of highways in Romania.

<sup>551</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

Nobody wanted to discuss the problems of the old political regime or mention agents, members of the secret services who were involved and mobilized the electorate during the previous election campaigns, i.e., in 1990 and 2004.<sup>552</sup> Although Romania was already a Member State of the European Union, no attempt was made to bring justice to former communist collaborators and secret agents. The past was not analysed, and there were no attempts to influence the discussions about the need to give back the property confiscated from citizens. In return, it was pretended that secret agents were not recognized, and even inclined to claim that all post-communist politicians were somewhat connected with cooperation with repressive organs. Care for the good of the country and its future should make citizens forget about the past and forgive the communists for the crimes and actions they had done to them. Nonetheless, as a result of the actions of President Băsescu, in 2004, the Securitate archive was, as mentioned earlier, transferred to the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, and later, to the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania. The Presidential Commission for the Investigation of Crimes of the Communist Regime was formed. The established property fund was to be compensation for owners deprived of property by the communist authorities. Parliament's decision blocked several lustration proposals. The council was not allowed to publish the names of former secret agents, which ultimately meant that in 2004–2008 the subject of decommunization was pushed to the margins.<sup>553</sup> Romania and Romanians began to think about the future. Political elites were becoming less and less interested in the past. A significant part of the society focused on improving their financial situation, making use of EU membership. However, the issue of settlements remained and was not a factor conducive to building a civil society. In 2008, the Romanian society clearly understood civic obligations. Of course, this was not an ideological state with which we dealt in Western Europe, and even among the nations of Central Europe. The mentality marks of the previous era were felt.

According to Transparency International corruption still lived in Romania. It dominated in the public sector, healthcare, education, public administration bodies, and the judiciary. Although it was a serious problem for the European Union, it was evident among Romania's political elite and society. Most Romanian politicians have been involved in scandals and cases of corruption, embezzlement. Anti-corruption measures were a subject of discussion in the state, but they were, to a great extent, treated with distraction. For example, Art. 53 of Act 3/2008 banned election bribes. It defined them as "goods of significant economic value," such as "food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco." Therefore, before the elections in Romania, other products

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<sup>552</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>553</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55.

were accepted, such as “tinctures, flowers, umbrellas or money”<sup>554</sup> bypassing the provisions of the Act. Before the elections, the achievements of Romanians and their links with the West were not emphasized either. It was believed that the problem of the mass emigration of citizens after the accession of Romania to the European Union as a consequence, as it was usually called “a decline in national sentiment.”

In the parliamentary elections, people of various moral types, with different social backgrounds, and levels of education sought to seat in the Assembly. Some candidates were experienced politicians who held the mayors’ position or won the councillors’ office in local elections. Some politicians were members of the government, such as former prime ministers Adrian Năstase and Petre Roman, former ministers of the Tudor cabinet: Tudor Chiuariu, Ludovic Orban, Bogdan Niculescu-Duvăz, Sulfina Barbu, Victor Ponta, and László Borbély. The other candidates had no experience or relation to politics. They earned fame thanks to the media and show business, such as Mircea Diaconu, Florin Călinescu, singers Dida Drăgan, Nicolae Furdui-Iancu, and Victor Socaciu, athletes: footballer Helmuth Duckadam, football commentator Cristian Țopescu. Theodor Paleologu was on top among intellectuals. It was also possible to distinguish local “barons” who began their careers with the support of the communist regime and who held positions in public administration. After 1989 they managed to strictly control local political and economic life – Nicolae Mischie, Dag Morega, Culiță Tărăță. Due to their popularity, the “barons” had the opportunity to involve in politics their relatives and cousins, who would also find their places in the parliament.<sup>555</sup>

On November 30, 2008, the sixth parliamentary election in Romania occurred since the fall of the communist regime in December 1989. While the election campaign was devoid of any sensible debate on the country’s main directions and challenges, the president, like in the previous elections, held a dominant position over other candidates. As it turned out, the 2008 elections were a significant event in Romania’s political scene. It was thought that they would be a turning point in the country’s contemporary history, primarily because that was the first election since Romania joined the European Union. Before 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections were held at the same time. It was the first time the elections took place separately. The presidential election was scheduled for 2009.

On the day of parliamentary elections, the turnout was only 39.2%.<sup>556</sup> 6 886 894 valid votes went for representatives of the Council of Deputies, 139 139 were empty, blank ballots. A similar number of votes were cast for representatives of

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<sup>554</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>555</sup> A.L. Dordea, *Baronul de Buzau si-a făcut băiatul parlamentar*, “Evenimentul Zilei” 2008, December 3.

<sup>556</sup> *Biroul Electoral Central*, 20 November 2008, [www.becparlamentare2008.ro/rezul/anex-a8abun.pdf](http://www.becparlamentare2008.ro/rezul/anex-a8abun.pdf) (accessed: 12.09.2018).

the Senate, i.e., 6 888 055 and 176 217.<sup>557</sup> 334 deputies to the Chamber of Deputies and 137 members of the Senate were elected.<sup>558</sup> Five political parties were represented in the parliament: Social Democrats, Conservatives, Democratic Liberals, National Liberals, Democratic Union of Hungarians. Women entered the political scene as representatives of various parties.<sup>559</sup>

For the first time, a mixed system was applied in the elections, and candidates were selected from party lists in single-member constituencies.<sup>560</sup> After the election, it turned out that, despite some advantages, the new system, similar to the European countries' systems, also had many imperfections. The system did not favour inexperienced candidates, did not put them in the position of winning or privileged before politicians. However, the disadvantage was that there was a considerable discrepancy of votes between the successful candidates. For example, there was a situation where one of the candidates received only 34 votes, while the other received 43 000 votes, but as a result, both obtained the same seats in parliament. The parties supported their candidates, primarily the party leaders, thus paving the way for them to reach the summit during the elections. Leading Romanian politicians tried to avoid direct rivalry with experienced political rivals. Hence, they most often fought against unknown and inexperienced competitors, which, however, did not always work. The new system preferred party candidates and left independent candidates aside. While independent candidates had to obtain most votes in constituencies, party candidates could get votes through the distribution of votes, even if they received a few. Redistribution of votes made parties the leading players in elections, because the constituencies in which no candidate won the majority of votes became independent of the primary candidates, even when voters preferred party politicians and wanted to block party candidates' access to the parliament.<sup>561</sup> The electoral system supported big parties and parties which had strong local support from citizens, which meant that their position was much stronger than that of small, young groups with weak local support.<sup>562</sup> The new electoral system was promoted as a radical departure from the previous proportional representation, primarily because the win was determined by the information about candidates, not about the party. Three out of four seats were allocated according to party affiliation and not for the candidates themselves. Only in the case of the Democratic Union of Hungarians, most candidates gained the majority of votes required to obtain seats in parliament. A significant number of candidates representing the remaining groupings won seats due

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<sup>557</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>558</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>559</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>561</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>562</sup> *Ibidem.*



to the distribution of votes, unable to get the majority of votes at the district level alone. While the Social Democrats-Conservatives and Democratic Liberals – received a similar number of votes, the Democratic Liberals benefited to a greater extent from the distribution of votes (as one in four Democratic Liberal candidates obtained a seat due to party activities, compared to one in three Social Democrats-Conservatives). Among the leading, gaining the mandates of political parties, the Liberals who benefited most from the redistribution of votes. Approximately 95% of their candidates obtained seats.

The 2008 election consolidated the Romanian party system. It influenced the reduction of the number of parties in parliament. The Greater Romania Party lost its chance to be represented in the parliament, despite the efforts directed at women and luminaries, to compensate for the loss of activists neglected by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, who was considered one of the party's most unpredictable leaders. For the first time, the social support given to Social Democrats was similar to the one that the public opinion gave to the Democratic Liberal Party. Almost 20 years after the fall of the communist regime, weakened by the dispute between the president and the prime minister, the Social Democrats party was weakened. This confirmed the changes in the society and the weakness of the Romanian pro-democratic and anti-communist camps.

In both 2004 and 2008 elections, the Social Democracy Party (PDSR) formed a coalition with the Conservative Party (PC), formerly known as the Humanist Party of Romania (PUR). In addition to the PDSR and the coalition partners in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Romanian Parliament included the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L) and the National Liberal Party. The latter was revived in January 1990. In this dynamic UDMR system, under the leadership of Belá Markó, it maintained and expanded its structures. Thanks to this, it gained more significant voters support.<sup>563</sup>

The 2008 elections divided Romania into two parts. One part is the one where there was a distinct disgust with politics; the other part belonged to politicians who gained 70% (seats) in the parliament. The second one, Democratic Liberals and Social Democrats, “divided states, cities, villages, streets, state positions” by trampling on democratic principles. Corrupt politicians were recognized only by other unethical politicians who wanted to take their positions without being noticed. Young people were particularly promoted, which was because they were much more susceptible to manipulation than experienced politicians. Nobody remembered those who died in the “revolution.” The subject had become boring for Romanians, and that is why they were not involved in politics.<sup>564</sup> The Romanian people were divided into politically active citizens and

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<sup>563</sup> A mixed system has been in force since 2008, combining elections in single-mandate constituencies with proportional representation. As a result of the changes, the electoral thresholds for the party increased from 3 to 5%. D. Kasprowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>564</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *op. cit.*

a society, passive towards the authorities. This second group had to take care of their existence. On the other hand, "civil" society became more comfortable with being involved in politics. Such socio-political phenomena took place in Central European countries in the 1990s. In Romania, it continues to this day. It was influenced by the history of Romania and the geopolitics and politics of the communist period. The course of the Romanian revolt also left its mark on the political consciousness of Romanians.

The first presidential election from Romania's accession to the European Union was organized on November 22, and the second round took place on December 6, 2009. The elections were to end the political crisis caused by the Parliament passing a motion of no confidence in the government of Prime Minister Emil Boc of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) and subsequent attempts to establish a new cabinet. 12 candidates ran for the election, but the final competition took place between Traian Băsescu, representing the centre-right and his new coalition ally, the head of the Social Democrats – Mircea Geoană.<sup>565</sup> Ultimately, Traian Băsescu won the election with a slight advantage of around 70 000 votes. His rival, along with the Romanian Social Democratic Party, protested against the results, arguing that the vote had been falsified.<sup>566</sup> Liviu Dragnea (PSD representative), questioning the election results, pointed first of all to the "big number of annulled votes [...] and mass electoral tourism."<sup>567</sup> Finally, after the Constitutional Court considered the case and the votes were recalculated, Băsescu's victory was confirmed.<sup>568</sup>

He was sworn in for a second five-year term on December 21, 2009.<sup>569</sup> During his speech in Parliament, the president promised to continue reforms and modernize the state. The primary purpose of his presidency was described as "the transformation of formal membership (of Romania) in the European Union" into a reality for every citizen.<sup>570</sup> He emphasized the need to reform the justice system and reduce the number of MPs from 471 to 300. In foreign policy, he pointed to the need to maintain close ties with Moldova and the United States.<sup>571</sup> The society decided to change the situation on the Romanian political scene, mainly because the person of the president was crucial for breaking the impasse since it was his job to appoint a prime minister, who still had to be approved by the Parliament.<sup>572</sup> Along with the first round of elections, a referendum was held on the reform of the parliamentary structure. The public was to speak on the

<sup>565</sup> *W Rumunii rozpoczęły się wybory prezydenckie*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, November 22.

<sup>566</sup> *Przeliczono unieważnione głosy, wygrana Băsescu*, PAP, Bukareszt 2009, December 13.

<sup>567</sup> *Băsescu zwyciężąc wyborów prezydenckich*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, December 7.

<sup>568</sup> *The Constitutional Court confirmed Băsescu's victory*, PAP, Bukareszt 2009, December 14.

<sup>569</sup> *ap*, *Băsescu zaprzysiężony na drugą kadencję prezydencką*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, December 21.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>572</sup> *Basescu nie zamierza zabiegać o głosy innych partii*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2009, November 24.

matter proposed by President Bănescu to limit the number of parliamentarians from 471 to 300 and abolish the upper house of parliament.<sup>573</sup>

On December 22, 2008, President Traian Bănescu introduced the new government because of “uncompromising political compromise.” The unstable political situation that followed the collapse of the government coalition of Bănescu’s Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) and the Social Democratic Party (PSD) on October 1, 2009, meant that the next prime ministers designated by President Bănescu did not find support in parliament.<sup>574</sup> This crisis made the International Monetary Fund suspend the next transfer of EUR 1.5 billion to Romania in October 2009, which was supposed to support the country plunged in the economic crisis.

The youngest Romanian prime minister – Emil Boc (Democratic Liberal Party, PD-L),<sup>575</sup> “a man of dialogue, a politician who took responsibility for difficult decisions made during the economic crisis,”<sup>576</sup> declaring his commitment to the president and the society, held his office until February 6, 2012. The main parties in the parliament had different opinions regarding the return of property taken away from the communists’ citizens. Democratic Liberals thought that it should be returned in the form it had been taken. The Social Democrats pointed to financial compensation. The lifting of immunity and accusations against Social Democratic leaders Năstase and Mitrea accused of corruption also divided MPs. While the Democratic Liberals supported the presidential system of government, the Social Democrats wanted a parliamentary system that would deprive the president of any influence and participation in ministers’ appointment.<sup>577</sup> The new government began its term without public confidence, facing a large wave of criticism. The greatest threat to the ruling coalition did not come from outside, from the weak opposition, but resulted from different objectives, programs, assumptions, and views among partners. Democratic Liberals in 2008 formed a government that the national oligarchs did not join, which was in line with President Bănescu’s expectations.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> European Commission, *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on progress in Romania under the cooperation and verification mechanism*, Strasbourg, 13.11.2018, COM(2018) 851 final, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/progress-report-romania-2018-com-2018-com-2018-851\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/progress-report-romania-2018-com-2018-com-2018-851_en.pdf).

<sup>574</sup> Liviu Negoita, appointed as the prime minister at the beginning of November 2009, withdrew on December 16, 2009, to “enable talks about government.” He was another politician who unsuccessfully tried to create a minority cabinet to replace the outgoing centrist Emil Boc, whom the Parliament did not give a vote of confidence in October, AFP/Reuters, *Prezident desygnował Emila Boca na premiera*, Bukareszt 2009, December 17.

<sup>575</sup> Emil Boc headed the government formed in December 2008 of the coalition of PDL and the Social Democratic Party (PSD). *Ibidem*.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>577</sup> L. Stan, D. Vancea, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

In July 2012, the previously appointed government with Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta launched a campaign of hatred and allegations against the president and his associates. With his economic irresponsibility and pro-Russian attitude, Prime Minister Ponta led the country to an economic crisis and made it largely politically and economically dependent on Russia. The European Union strongly protested against Ponta's decisions, and the European Commission then issued a list of demands to the new Romanian authorities.

Nine months before the presidential election, at the end of February 2014, the National Liberal Party (PNL) announced the abandonment of the centre-left coalition that had been ruling from 2012 because of misunderstandings on the reshuffle in the government of social democratic Prime Minister Ponta.<sup>579</sup> Even though 14 candidates were running for the president's seat, their clear favourite was from the beginning the Prime Minister himself – Victor-Viorel Ponta,<sup>580</sup> the only candidate of the united left (the centre-right was divided). Thanks to him some taxes were reduced, introduced business concessions.<sup>581</sup> In polls, he gained a significant advantage over his rival Klaus Iohannis. The presidential election was important because it ended the 10-year period of power of the centre-right president Traian Băsescu, who, according to the Constitution, could not run for the third time.

Although Victor-Viorel Ponta was victorious in the first round, he was sharply criticized by Romanians living outside the country who encountered difficulties during the election, which weakened his position.<sup>582</sup> Romanian

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<sup>579</sup> It was a consequence of the head of the Ministry of Finance Daniel Chițoiu and the minister of economy Andrei Dominic Gerea (PNL) leaving of the coalition when Prime Minister Ponta did not agree with the liberals' proposal to appoint the likeable mayor of Sibiu Klaus Iohannis as deputy prime minister and the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The liberals believed that Ponta wanted to get rid of them before the presidential election. Tensions also caused difficulties related to the amendment to the constitution, a crucial project of the centre-left coalition. *Rozpad rządzącej koalicji, rząd powinien się utrzymać*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, February 25.

<sup>580</sup> Victor-Viorel Ponta was supported by his own Social Democratic Party and its coalition partners in the government – the Conservative Party and the National Union for the Progress of Romania. He gained an advantage over the candidates before the beginning of the election campaign, collecting 2.3 million signatures required to register in the election. It was much more than needed to register, and then other candidates had gathered. Ponta's most dangerous opponent was in the 2014 election Klaus Iohannis, supported by the Christian-Liberal Alliance which included the Democratic-Liberal Party and the National-Liberal Party. Iohannis, an ethnic German, and a long-term mayor of Sibiu in Transylvania was seen as a man who could correctly manage the city thanks to the famous German effectiveness. Sociologists pointed out that although it attracted the votes of young and better-educated residents of large cities, the majority of voters in a country where 80% of the population is of the Orthodox religion will not vote for a German protestant. *Victor Ponta faworytem wyborów prezydenckich*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, October 31.

<sup>581</sup> In 2013, Ponta reduced VAT on bread and flour from 24 to 9%. In the following year, he contributed to lowering the tax on groceries and introduced reductions for people who earn less and a 5% reduction in contributions for employers for social insurance.

<sup>582</sup> The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was accused of deliberately limiting the number of polling stations. According to various sources, only 294 of them were opened for a huge number

media, citing polls, did not give Klaus Iohannis much chance. However, voters returned to the 2004 elections, when the Socialist candidate Adrian Năstase led in the first round. In the second, he was defeated by centre-right politician Traian Băsescu.<sup>583</sup> In Romania, nothing is ever guaranteed – the situation that happened 10 years ago, was repeated. In December 2014, the function of the head of the state was taken over by Klaus Iohannis – “a man of action, not a man of words”, who stood in the election as a candidate for an alliance composed of two main opposition parties – the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL).<sup>584</sup> He gained popularity, emphasizing the need to fight corruption and the need to reform economic structures.<sup>585</sup> According to the saying “the third time’s the charm,” during the presidential election in 2004, 2009 and 2014, there were similar situations when the Romanian centre-left suffered a defeat in the second round of the election, after its candidates led in the first round.

During the rule of Klaus Iohannis, Romania took up an effective fight against corruption. On the wave of arrests and directed charges, mainly bribery, in May 2015, Liviu Dragnea from the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Minister of Regional Development of Romania and the Deputy Prime Minister resigned.<sup>586</sup> Dragnea was also the chairman of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies.<sup>587</sup> The court found the minister guilty and gave a suspended sentence, removing

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of emigrants, ranging from 2.5 to 4 million people. Romanian citizens who wished to vote stayed in front of polling stations in major cities in Western Europe – there were lines in Vienna, Munich, and Paris. E. Manolowa, *Wyrównany wynik rywali w 2. turze wyborów prezydenckich*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, November 16. As a result of allegations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs resigned.

<sup>583</sup> There was 3% difference in votes. Klaus Iohannis won 54% of votes. *Victor Ponta faworytem wyborów prezydenckich*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, October 31.

<sup>584</sup> *Kandydat opozycji na prezydenta Klaus Iohannis: więcej czynów*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2014, September 27.

<sup>585</sup> In 2013, anti-corruption services handed over to the justice system the cases of over 1000 people, including six ministers and deputies and 34 mayors. A month before the presidential election, Romanian anti-corruption services (DNA) launched an investigation into two influential Social-Democratic deputies. They were suspected of corruption in the creation of an amnesty bill that would benefit one of them. The investigation into the abuse of the reprivatisation of 43 000 ha of forests was also extended. Both left-wing politicians, including Ponta’s father-in-law, Ilie Sârbu, and centre-right politicians, are involved in the scandal. E. Manolowa, *Druga tura wyborów prezydenckich – Ponta faworytem w sondażach*, PAP, Bukareszt 2014, November 14. Former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, politician, businessman and media magnate Dan Voiculescu, and Mircea Băsescu, brother of the President, were arrested. In November, one of the leading figures in the anti-corruption system was arrested – Alina Bica, head of the department for combating economic crime and terrorism. E. Manolowa, *25 lat po upadku...*

<sup>586</sup> There are 329 deputies in the Chamber of Deputies, and 136 senators in the Senate.

<sup>587</sup> The number of deputies in the Romanian Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate is not constant. Both chambers are elected every four years by secret, equal, direct, and proportional ballot. The liberal electoral law guarantees seats in the parliament for representatives of national minorities (18 seats) and the Hungarian minority issues its candidates in the ordinary electoral procedure. The strong position of the Hungarian grouping in the current elections reached the electoral threshold above 5% (for the coalition 8%).

him from his functions. Dragnea, a man in the office of Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta, like his colleague – the Minister of Finance of Romania Darius Vălcov – resigned after the intensified fight against corruption had begun. In addition to bribery, the main charge was the orchestrating electoral fraud during the 2012 presidential impeachment referendum and the attempt to remove the centre-right president Traian Băsescu from power by the Romanian ruling leftist Social Democratic Party (PSD) of Prime Minister Ponta and allies. Dragnea and officials close to him encouraged citizens to vote, among others by giving bribes and falsifying ballots. A referendum on impeachment plunged Romania into a constitutional crisis and caused criticism from the US and European Union for legal irregularities. The low turnout was the reason for his nullity.<sup>588</sup>

Social Democrat Victor-Viorel Ponta took the place of the head of government. Shortly after the election, the Romanian anti-corruption prosecutor's office initiated proceedings against him in connection with the suspicion of corruption, false testimony, money laundering, and tax fraud.<sup>589</sup> Trying to prevent another political crisis in the country, President Iohannis attempted to persuade the prime minister to resign.<sup>590</sup> The accused, not wanting to renounce his functions, stressed that he was innocent, and "the purpose of the accusations is to bring a change of government which would be synonymous with the *coup d'état* in Romania without the consent of the Parliament."<sup>591</sup> Finally, the Romanian Parliament in June 2015 rejected the request of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) for depriving the prime minister of his immunity.<sup>592</sup> His centre-left government managed to survive the vote of no confidence in the parliament. Since coming to power in 2012, Ponta has succeeded for the third time.<sup>593</sup> A big case of "knee injury" and prime minister's need for surgery in Istanbul meant that by "escaping into illness" he distanced himself from politics and accusations against him. At

<sup>588</sup> *Minister skazany za korupcję i fałszerstwa podał się do dymisji*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, May 15.

<sup>589</sup> Suspicions were related to the case of Dan Șova, former minister of transport (March–June 2014), whose candidacy was proposed by Ponta, and Ponta's activity as a lawyer in 2007, 2008. The prosecutor's office suspected Victor Ponta of "seventeen times forgery of documents, participation in operations involving the avoidance of paying taxes and money laundering," the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) wrote. DNA accused the head of the government that in 2011, a year before taking office, he accepted 50 000 euros from his former associate, Dan Șova, whom he appointed twice as a minister (2012, 2014). According to investigators, he issued false bills dated 2007 and 2008, confirming that he received the alleged fees for legal services for Șova's office. Prime Minister Ponta, having been accused of plagiarism a year earlier at the University, had to renounce his doctoral degree when the scientific journal "Nature" proved that he did not write his work alone. ik/kar, *Prokuratūra žąda odebrania premierowi Poncie immunitetu*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, June 5.

<sup>590</sup> Ik/ro, *Wobec zarzutu korupcji prezydent wezwał premiera do rezygnacji*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, June 5.

<sup>591</sup> jo/tim, *Premier Ponta znów odmawia podania się do dymisji*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2015, June 7.

<sup>592</sup> awl/jhp/ro, *Parlament przeciwny pozbawieniu premiera immunitetu*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, June 9.

<sup>593</sup> ksaj/ro, *Rząd Ponty przetrwał głosowanie nad wnioskiem nieufności*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, June 12.

this time, following Art. 106 of the Romanian Constitution, the Deputy Prime Minister Gabriel Oprea, appointed by the president, was the prime minister of Romania. For the EU representatives it was weird that Ponta held on power, despite facing allegations. They began to perceive it as “the main obstacle on Romania’s path to transparent policy, transparent business and independent judiciary”<sup>594</sup>, which are the key expectations of the European Union.

In October 2015, former President Ion Iliescu became another high-ranking person who was under investigation by the prosecutor’s office. The charges against him related to “crimes against humanity.” Just a few days later the prosecutor’s office initiated an investigation into the case of the former Prime Minister – Petre Roman (1989–1991), Defence Minister – Victor Atanasie Stănculescu (1990–1991) and Deputy Prime Minister Gelu Voican-Voiculescu (1989–1990), i.e., against persons who in December 1989 participated in the overthrow of the communist dictator.<sup>595</sup>

Big-scale actions launched since the accession of Romania to the European Union, on corruption and offenses at the highest levels, intensified in 2014. The actions of prosecutors and judges and the investigations they initiated among the political elites were highly rated by special monitoring of the European Union’s justice system. For example, in 2015, 1250 criminal proceedings were instituted in Romania against high-ranking officials suspected of corruption. By court decision, about 200 million euros were returned to the state budget.<sup>596</sup> Former Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta (accused of corruption), former Member of the European Parliament Adrian Severin<sup>597</sup>, general prosecutor Tiberiu Nitu (abuse), deputy prime minister Gabriel Oprea (due to abuse of power), mayor of Bucharest Sorin Oprescu (bribes), former Minister of Interior Affairs Gabriel Berca (for corruption) were brought to justice.

The year 2014 can be described as a systematic fight against corruption, a basic malady of Romania. It soon turned out that the fight against this „cancer” would be long and would require public involvement. At the end of 2000, Romanian society was aware that widespread corruption was a burden, not

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<sup>594</sup> akI/ap, *Premier postawiony w stan oskarżenia w sprawie korupcyjnej*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2015, September 17. *Prime Minister indicted in a corruption case*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2015 September 17. The trial against Ponta began on September 21, 2015. A few days later, there was another motion of no confidence that Ponta endured. The opposition’s request did not pass.

<sup>595</sup> az/mc, *Rozszerzenie śledztwa ws. stłumienia demonstracji w 1990 r.*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, October 27.

<sup>596</sup> mmi/ap, *1250 śledztw w sprawie korupcji wśród elit politycznych w 2015 roku*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, January 27.

<sup>597</sup> Adrian Severin was sentenced to three years and three months in prison for corruption. According to DNA, he agreed to submit amendments favourable to the alleged lobby in exchange for the remuneration of 100 000 euro per year. MEP, filmed with a hidden camera, also agreed to accept 4000 euro a day to work for the right-wing. He issued a false invoice for 12,000 EUR for “consulting services” with the annotation that “the amendment they requested was notified on time”. *Ibidem*.

only economic, but also socio-political and hindering international relations at both the state and universal levels. The conflict between state authorities and local government and the society was growing. This was demonstrated by local and parliamentary elections in 2016. Even the young generation of Romanians was no longer as tolerant of political elites as their predecessors.

An event that had a massive impact on Romania's political developments was the explosion and fire in the Colectiv night club in Bucharest, which took place at the end of October 2015. 64 people died, more than 180 were injured. Crowds of demonstrators flooded Bucharest and other cities over the next days after the tragedy demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Victor Ponta, Minister of Interior Affairs Gabriel Oprea, and the mayor of the Bucharest district where the club was located. They were accused of contributing to a drama which, as emphasized, would never have happened had the country not been corrupt. The Colectiv club did not meet the essential safety requirements,<sup>598</sup> and the event (concert) that took place on October 30, 2015, should not have taken place.<sup>599</sup>

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education Sorin Cîmpeanu from the Social Democratic Party (PSD) became the temporary and next prime minister. According to the provision of the Romanian Constitution, "the government is appointed by the President and then approved by Parliament. However, if it fails twice, snap elections are organized."<sup>600</sup> Put in a difficult situation, President Iohannis obliged to consult political groups and designate a new prime minister. In the view of the government's resignation, following a demonstration, the mission to form a government was entrusted to the former EU Commissioner for Agriculture Dacian Cioloș, assisted by the right wing, who, as announced, was to remain in office until the parliamentary elections. He continued the implementation of the policy of raising income, started in 2013 by Victor Ponta. Romanians "needed an independent prime minister, a technocrat, who was not involved in scandals and who showed that he could manage in a complicated situation."<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> There were no fire safety and evacuation routes in the club, which confirmed that only money and political deals mattered in the country.

<sup>599</sup> Ponta served as prime minister in the years 2012–2015. *dmi/ro, Premier Ponta zrezygnował ze stanowiska*, PAP, Bukareszt 2015, November 4. The prosecutor's office charged Ponta in July 2015. He stepped down as chairman of the ruling PSD. According to the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA), actions against the prime minister concerned allegations of forgery of documents, complicity in tax avoidance and money laundering, probably from 2007 to 2011. Ponta was also accused of accepting 50 000 euro in 2011, i.e., one year before taking the prime minister's office from his former associate Dan Șova, whom he later appointed as a minister. According to investigators, Ponta also issued false bills dated 2007 and 2008, confirming alleged fees he was to receive for legal services for Șova's office. In May 2018, the court acquitted Victor Ponta. *jo/mal, Sąd uniewinnił b. premiera Victora Ponta*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, May 10.

<sup>600</sup> *Konstytucja Rumunii. Constituția României...*

<sup>601</sup> *kot/kar, Były komisarz UE Dacian mianowany premierem*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2015, November 10.



The political situation was complicated. People were in bad mood, which was confirmed by the very low turnout during the elections (33% of those who could vote).<sup>602</sup> The election of local government in June was overshadowed by corruption scandals of which dozens of candidates and city officials were suspected.<sup>603</sup> As there was not a ban on running in elections, the accused themselves also submitted their candidatures. In the elections for mayors (45%) and city councils (42%), the PSD won, followed by the National-Liberal centre party (PNL), gaining 35% and 32% of the votes, respectively.<sup>604</sup>

Finally, parliamentary elections took place in December 2016. About 6,500 candidates from over ten parties claimed to participate in them.<sup>605</sup> According to the new electoral law (amended in 2015), the number of deputies and senators was reduced, and 19 seats were assigned to representatives of national minorities. 338 deputies to the Chamber of Deputies, and 136 senators were to join the bicameral Parliament of Romania. After two consecutive votes, with the majority system, in 2016 Romania returned to the proportional system. It was agreed that 5% of the electoral threshold would apply to individual parties, 7-10% for the coalition depending on the number of parties joining them.<sup>606</sup> Citizens, who emigrated (out of 18.9 million citizens, as many as 3 million were abroad) also had better voting opportunities (also postal voting).<sup>607</sup>

A new person on the Romanian political scene was then a man of no political experience – a 46-year-old mathematician Nicușor Dan, who perfectly matched the expectations of society, tired of corruption and nepotism in public life. He became known as a “fighter for saving parks and monuments in Bucharest.”<sup>608</sup> the founder of a party that, by proclaiming a program of a thorough reform of public services, gained, in just half a year, the significant support of young Romanians.

The struggling Social Democrats, with the leader Dragnea, who had a suspended sentence, and could no longer apply for the position of the head of the government, were looking for a new leader. After loud scandals involving its representatives (including Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta), who had serious problems with DNA anti-corruption office, and were trying to limit the

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<sup>602</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>603</sup> After the fire in the Colectiv club, the mayor of Bucharest Sorin Oprescu was accused of bribery (25 000 euros, e.g., bribes from companies carrying out orders for the town hall), five out of six mayors of the capital districts elected in 2012 were convicted or sentenced. About 50 out of 109 mayors of the leading Romanian cities have been convicted or investigated for bribery. *cyk/akw, Wybory samorządowe w cieniu afer korupcyjnych*, AFP/PAP Bukareszt 2016, June5.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>605</sup> E. Manolowa, *Wybory w Rumunii – socjaldemokracja może wygrać, ale nie rządzić*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, December 9.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>607</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>608</sup> *Ibidem.*

fight against corruption, the party had serious concerns about their return to power. To gain the support of citizens, they increased public spending while also exceeding the budget set for Romania by the Council of the European Union.<sup>609</sup> According to the Romanian Central Bank data, in the years 2016–2018, salaries in the Romanian public sector increased at a rate exceeding 20% each year. To silence society, apart from raising wages, retirement benefits (by 30%), and other social benefits from the state (by approximately 50%), VAT was reduced, and the basic rate fell from 24% to 19%. This resulted in a decrease in state revenues. In the long run, as it turned out, these measures led to problems with budget-balancing and serious financial issues that led the country towards a deficit.<sup>610</sup>

Romanians, demanding further fight against corruption (95% of the population), improvement of their living conditions, and raising salaries<sup>611</sup>, in the elections on December 11, 2016 supported the Social Democratic Party (46%). The centre-right National-Liberal Party (PNL) came second with 20% support, followed by the new grouping, the “non-systemic”<sup>612</sup> Union of Salvation of Romania (USR), led by Dan Barna (9%).<sup>613</sup> PSD’s long-time ally – the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), won 6% of the vote.<sup>614</sup> The Social Democrats were supported strongly by poor, and by older people from impoverished regions. The representatives of the grouping persuaded the people by promising significant increases in pensions. Appealing suggestions of pay raises for public sector employees, reducing personal income tax from 16 to 10%, and uncontrolled expenses were supposed to show that prosperity prevailed in Romania.<sup>615</sup> Again, as a few years ago, increases were to guarantee the victory.

Low turnout, similarly, to the local elections (about 40%), confirmed that the public’s trust, particularly of young people, in the authorities was insignificant. According to the survey conducted for the independent television station DIGI24, a month before the elections, despite “charming citizens with the

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<sup>609</sup> K. Strzępka, E. Manolowa, *UE coraz bardziej zaniepokojona kierunkiem, w jakim idzie Rumunia*, PAP, Bruksela 2017, December 2.

<sup>610</sup> M. Lipka, *Rumunię czeka bardzo twarde lądowanie*, “Partnerstwo” 2015, March 22.

<sup>611</sup> The economic situation in Romania in 2016 still was not good, although it was improving. After 2009, the state was in a recession but managed to get out of thanks to restrictive government policies, with a 25% reduction in public revenues. The situation was improving very slowly, GDP grew at a rate of 6% per year; however, the average salary of the citizens was still about 420 euro. It is worth emphasizing that since 2007, i.e., the accession of Romania to the EU, the state has received aid funds from various sources in the amount of approximately 26 billion euro. E. Manolowa, *Wybory w Rumunii...*

<sup>612</sup> Union of Salvation of Romania can be recognized as a centre-right party.

<sup>613</sup> akl/ap, *Postkomuniści zwyciężyli w wyborach parlamentarnych*, Reuters, Bukareszt 2016, December 13.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>615</sup> K. Strzępka, E. Manolowa, *op. cit.*

raises,” only 10% of the society declared trust in parliament and 11% trust in political parties.<sup>616</sup>

Despite the decisive victory of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the choice of the head of government turned out to be a big problem. Klaus Iohannis objected to the appointment of Liviu Dragnea. Despite the objections of the Dragnea himself, the president has repeatedly stated that he did not intend to entrust the person who had been sentenced to two years in prison suspended for forgery during a referendum in 2012. The allegations also concerned “urging citizens to participate in a referendum regarding the removal of the then-president – Traian Băsescu from power.<sup>617</sup> And here a question should be asked: was the call for civic deed, talking out loud about the rights and obligations of citizens an offence?

Responding to the allegations, the chairman of the PSD proposed a solution that the future Prime Minister of Romania was to become the former minister of development, originating from the Muslim minority – Sevil Shhaideh.<sup>618</sup> However, the president did not accept this proposition.<sup>619</sup> The coalition of the PSD together with ALDE, in order not to plunge the country into a political crisis, put forward a new candidacy – Sorin Grindeanu, who in the former PSD government was the minister of communications and the information society, held the position of vice-mayor of Timisoara, was a local activist of PSD.<sup>620</sup> On January 4, 2017, the new, historic Romanian government, led by Sorin Grindeanu of the post-communist Social Democratic Party (PSD), was approved by the parliament. The new prime minister promised that he would personally try to stop economic migration, build new highways, and stimulate consumption. His government pledged to raise salaries and pensions, free rail transport for students, and reduce social security contributions and taxes.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> K. Drogowska, *Dlaczego Rumuni się zbuntowali?*, “Newsweek” 2017, February 6, <https://www.newsweek.pl/swiat/protesty-w-rumunii-dlaczego-rumunii-sie-zbuntowali-sie-przeciwko-korupcji/kqrjs23#articleGallery>.

<sup>617</sup> PSD took 154 out of 332 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 67 out of 134 seats in the Senate. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats obtained 29 seats for its deputies and senators. Together with the PSD, they won 250 seats, i.e., an absolute majority in the parliament. kot/kar, *Postkomuniści z sojusznikami mają większość w parlamencie*, Reuters, Bukareszt 2016, December 15.

<sup>618</sup> Sevil Shhaideh is close to Liviu Dragnea, in 2011 she was a witness at his wedding. Designating a close person was to ensure that Dragnea would continue to lead the government, but indirectly, with his friend’s help. “She will be the prime minister, but political responsibility will rest primarily with me,” said Liviu Dragnea. kot/ap, *Prezydent zapowiada mianowanie premiera po świętach*, Reuters, Bukareszt 2016, December 22.

<sup>619</sup> akl, ap, *Prezydent odrzucił kandydaturę byłej minister na premiera*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, December 27.

<sup>620</sup> kot/kar, *Sorin Grindeanu nowym kandydatem postkomunistów na premiera*, PAP, Bukareszt 2016, December 28.

<sup>621</sup> jo/mc, *Rządząca Partia Socjaldemokratyczna mianowała nowych ministrów*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, January 3.

Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu began his rule with giving resounding speeches. The government's idea to provide amnesty for prisoners, and thus, as explained, contribute to the thinning of overcrowded prisons in which protests had been taking place was the first big thing. The idea aroused considerable controversy from the very beginning. The amnesty was to cover persons with a sentence of fewer than five years in prison. The convictions for sex offences, violence, and corruption, were to be an exception.<sup>622</sup> According to prison authorities, around 3700 people were expected to have the sentence cut (2500 according to the government).<sup>623</sup> The society, which again began to go out on the streets, did not like the changes in the criminal law<sup>624</sup> and subsequent ideas of the prime minister. Chanting the slogans "we want democracy with thieves in prisons", they began to identify those in power with the PSD as "the red plague."<sup>625</sup> President Iohannis, who joined the citizens, clearly emphasized that he did not want to cooperate with "a gang of politicians who have problems with the law, want to change laws and weaken the rule of law."<sup>626</sup> The social position of the president was then strengthened; the prime minister's - fell down. There was a bitter conflict between the head of the state and the prime minister<sup>627</sup> and the coalition government. For the first time in Romanian history, since 1989, the country's president has united so firmly with the nation. His firm opposition to the ruling party, rejecting corruption, was upheld and supported by diplomats of the US, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, who also made a joint declaration expressly opposing corruption in their country of residence. Faced with the most massive demonstrations since the fall of communism, President Iohannis attacked a government regulation at

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<sup>622</sup> Furthermore, the sentences of prisoners over 60 years of age, pregnant women, and prisoners with young children would be cut by half, regardless of the charges on which they were convicted. The general prosecutor and many judges did not support the plans. ulb/ap, *W wielu miastach protestowano przeciwko amnestii dla więźniów*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, January 30.

<sup>623</sup> mmp/ap, *Tysiące ludzi protestowało przeciwko planom amnestii dla więźniów*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, January 22.

<sup>624</sup> The Ministry of Justice of Romania extraordinary submitted a draft amendment according to which several offences were to be penalized. Up to 44 thousand euro (198.2 thousand leu) was the threshold of the so-called prejudice to the treasury, which was to be subject to prosecution *ex officio*. Such a procedure was introduced because a few days after its announcement, a trial was to be held of the leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) - Liviu Dragnea, who was accused of employing fictitious people in his subordinate companies. He exposed the country to losses of about 24 000 euros (108 000 leu). Therefore, if a new threshold were adopted, the accusation against Dragnea would be pointless. mars, *Rząd wprowadził wygodne dla polityków zmiany w kodeksie karnym*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, February 1.

<sup>625</sup> mmp/ap, *Tysiące ludzi protestowało przeciwko planom amnestii dla więźniów*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, January 22.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>627</sup> Prime Minister Grindeanu personally was not in favour of the changes introduced in criminal law. As the head of the government and protégé of Liviu Dragnea, he had to comply with his demands.

the Constitutional Court. This was also done by the Romanian Ombudsman – Victor Ciorbea. As a sign of protest against the rule of the PSD, Florin Nicolae Jianu stepped down as minister of entrepreneurship, trade, and contacts with the business community.<sup>628</sup> Under the influence of mass pressure, the government's controversial regulation on corruption was finally withdrawn.<sup>629</sup> However, it was not possible to avoid another crisis – voting on the motion of no confidence against the Romanian government, which was a consequence of over a month's protests.<sup>630</sup>

The data that prosecutor Laura Codruța Kövesi, head of the Anti-Corruption Agency (DNA), presented at the end of February were alarming. In 2016 alone, 1300 people were accused of corruption in Romania.<sup>631</sup> Among the detained were 3 ministers, 17 parliamentarians, 20 members of the management staff of state-owned enterprises.<sup>632</sup> This only confirmed how corrupt Romania was and showed how strong the links and arrangements between politicians were. The indicated candidate for prime minister at the beginning of the year was only a weak, deprived of voice and unable of decision making, exposed to the political stage “puppet,” which Liviu Dragnea managed from behind the stage. When it stopped working as instructed, it became uncomfortable and had to be removed. Liviu Dragnea pursued his vision of politics. To divert public attention from temporary problems, he made a proposal that would radically “change the history of Romania.” The bill on salary increases in the public sector put forward by the government of Liviu Dragnea was to be a turning point. According to it, the salaries were to increase (twofold rise) until 2022, among others in the health service,<sup>633</sup> dealing with the outflow of employees, and in education. Providing around 1.2 million wage increases for 20 million Romanians was to cost the state around 10 billion euro.<sup>634</sup> Contrary to widespread concern for the future of state finances, the growing risk of a public finance deficit, the project was not rejected.

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<sup>628</sup> jhp/ro, *Prezydent zaskarżył kontrowersyjne przepisy ws. korupcji*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, February 2.

<sup>629</sup> Minister of Justice Florin Iordache, the initiator of the rejected regulation, resigned. akl/mc, *Dziesiątki tysięcy ludzi w 13. dniu antyrządowych protestów*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, February 12.

<sup>630</sup> On February 8, 2017, there was a vote of no confidence in the Social Democratic government. The government survived it. mmp/mc, *Rząd przetrwał wotum nieufności*, PAP, Bukareszt, 08.02.2017.

<sup>631</sup> az/ap, *Prawie 1300 osób przed sądem za korupcję w ubiegłym roku*, AP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, February 23.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>633</sup> In fact, the act, announced for entry into force in January 2018, reduced the income of physicians who were to receive 30% of the current extra pay for overtime and on-call duty. It also excluded their previously free meals at the treatment facility. The strikers came out again on the streets of Bucharest, around 10 000 doctors. ik/kar, *10 tys. lekarzy protestuje przeciwko redukowaniu ich dochodów*, EFE/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, October 19.

<sup>634</sup> kot/mc, *Rząd realizuje wyborcze obietnice ogromnych podwyżek pensji*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, June 7.

Changes, however, took place much faster than expected. The political impasse intensified again. In mid-June 2017, just half a year after Sorin Grindeanu had become the head of the government, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and coalition representatives from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) decided to withdraw support for the prime minister. Ministers resigned, expecting the same from the prime minister. As Liviu Dragnea emphasized in interviews, such behaviour of government members was a consequence of the failure to implement the government's assumptions, "out of the 390 measures provided in the government program, about 260 were not implemented"<sup>635</sup> – emphasized ALDE leader Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu. Another dispute, this time inside the coalition between the "disobedient" prime minister and Liviu Dragnea, led to the boycott of a parliamentary session in which the centre-right opposition and the prime minister led the way.<sup>636</sup> However, this did not stop the parliament from dismissing the prime minister. In June 2017, lawyer specializing in the field of defence, the Minister of Economy Mihai Tudose was appointed as a head the government. Unfortunately, his luck did not last long. Only three months after being sworn in, there were changes in the government. Deputy Prime Minister Sevil Shhaideh, right hand and good friend of Liviu Dragnea, Minister for European Funds Rovana Plumb, and Minister for Transport Răzvan Cuc resigned.<sup>637</sup>

Meanwhile, the reform of the judiciary became another planned "attack on the rule of law." The assumptions presented by the Minister of Justice (Tudorel Toader) were another attempt to move away from the practice of avoiding the responsibility of politicians and supporters of the old regime for their actions. It was proposed, among others, to reduce the competence of DNA anti-corruption prosecutor's office and exclude the head of the state from the process of appointing leaders of DNA's general prosecutor's office, which aroused the objection of both the president and the general prosecutor's office.<sup>638</sup>

Another important event for further changes in Romanian politics and the democratization of the state became the accusation of the most influential person in the country – Liviu Dragnea. The allegation of "founding a criminal group" and embezzling money from the European Union was brought against the politician on November 13, 2017, by the anti-corruption prosecutor's office DNA.<sup>639</sup> A property

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<sup>635</sup> kot/mc, *Rządząca lewica wycofuje poparcie dla swojego rządu*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, June 14.

<sup>636</sup> To accept the motion of no confidence, it was necessary to obtain 233 votes in both houses of parliament with 464 seats. PSD and ALDE had a total of 246 votes.

<sup>637</sup> mbud/dmi, *Zmiany w rządzie z poparciem głównej partii koalicyjnej*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, October 13.

<sup>638</sup> sp, *Demonstracje przeciwko reformie wymiaru sprawiedliwości*, APA/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, August 28.

<sup>639</sup> jo/mc, *Prokuratura zamroziła osobisty majątek szefa rządzącej partii*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2017, November 21.

of US dollars 32.25 million was seized.<sup>640</sup> The accusations were that “in 2002–2009, as head of Teleorman County Administration, he abused the power and using confidential information, he provided Tel Drum, which he controlled, with two subsidies for road repair granted by the European Union. [...] Overstated invoices for the orders exposed the Romanian state to losses of 31.3 million leu (6.8 million euro).”<sup>641</sup>

With loud protests against the controversial law reforming the justice system, that even President Klaus Iohannis objected to, and an unfortunate statement when the Hungarian Transylvania party’s declaration on autonomy was commented on caused indignation from Hungarians – support for the prime minister began to decline dramatically. The leadership of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), citing the conflict between Mihai Tudose and Liviu Dragnea at the time, denounced the prime minister’s support.<sup>642</sup> Tudose became the second prime minister in a row (in the December 2016 elections) who lost the support of the PSD and, in connection with the reform of the judiciary,<sup>643</sup> resigned in less than half a year. In January 2018, the first woman in the history of Romania – Viorica Dăncilă (PSD) – became the head of the government.<sup>644</sup> Her promises included wage increases, reduced bureaucracy, and construction of road and rail infrastructure.<sup>645</sup> She was the first to express support for the reforms of the justice system introduced by the government and sharply criticized by the president and the public.<sup>646</sup>

Interrogations of Laura Codruța Kövesi, who from 2013 had been the head of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) and was accused of “numerous violations” by Tudorel Toader, the Minister of Justice, was a big case in 2018.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>640</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>641</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>642</sup> az/kar, *Premier Tudose stracił poparcie partii, rezygnuje ze stanowiska*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, January 15. President Iohannis appointed the minister of defence, Mihai-Viorel Fifer, as acting prime minister.

<sup>643</sup> It is worth recalling that the three judicial acts cited earlier, enforced by the PSD, in December 2017 allow the Minister of Justice to interfere in the activities of judges and prosecutors and to exert pressure on prosecutors by establishing a special disciplinary chamber for them. Amendments to the Penal Code reduce the number of offences for which pre-trial detention is used and significantly reduce the duration of an investigation. President Iohannis did not sign the laws, referred them to the Constitutional Tribunal and the Venice Commission, stressing that the changes were aimed at clearing and freeing justice of corrupt politicians, including the leader of the ruling party (PSD) – Liviu Dragnea, who was subject to two corruption proceedings. akl/kar, *Skonfliktowany z rządem prezydent z grzywną za dyskryminację*, AP/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, May 9.

<sup>644</sup> Viorica Dăncilă, MEP, a close collaborator of Liviu Dragnea.

<sup>645</sup> ami/mal, *Parlament udzielił poparcia premier Vioricy Dancili*, dpa/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, January 29.

<sup>646</sup> *Współpraca dwustronna, Władza wykonawcza*, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/c/MOBILE/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/c/MOBILE/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.01.2019).

<sup>647</sup> akl/kar, *Rada Sądownictwa odrzuciła wnioski o dymisję szefowej DNA*, APA/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, February 28.

In her defence, Kövesi reported that, despite the “unprecedented attacks” of the ruling party, DNA brought a thousand people to courts in 2017, including three ministers, two deputy ministers, five deputies, and a senator. Most of them were then accused of embezzlement of EU funds.<sup>648</sup> The young, ambitious Kövesi, at the forefront of DNA, praised by the EU institutions, at one point became an “awkward person”, who “started the anti-corruption campaign” in Romania and brought justice to thousands of people, and above all, the most influential Romanian politician, the head of the Social Democratic Party – Liviu Dragnea.

Not only did President Iohannis stand in defence of Kövesi claiming that the accusation was ungrounded,<sup>649</sup> but also big crowds of demonstrators on Romanian streets who called for her staying in power as the head of DNA. A petition in this matter, addressed to the head of the state, was signed by over 110 000 citizens.<sup>650</sup> The Minister of Justice – Tudorel Toader, however, remained adamant and led to the removal of Kövesi from the position of the head of the anti-corruption agency. He accused her of “abuse of power” and harming Romania’s image abroad, which he described in detail in his report as the Ministry of Justice. He also claimed that Kövesi “was seeking convictions at all costs.”<sup>651</sup> At the end of May 2018, under the pressure of the Minister of Justice, the Constitutional Court ruled that President Iohannis should dismiss the head of the National Anticorruption Directorate “to end the institutional conflict with the government.”<sup>652</sup> Laura Codruța Kövesi was ousted from office. Another punishment was to ban her from leaving the country, at a turning point for Romania, when Kövesi was announced one of the two candidates for the highest position in the new European prosecutor’s office. Romanian social-democratic authorities tried to block Kövesi’s candidacy in the EU Council at all costs. At the beginning of March 2019, a second investigation against a former official was announced regarding alleged irregularities that were to occur at the anti-corruption agency while she oversaw it. A newly appointed body conducts the investigation that has been initiated in the Kövesi case. It is to investigate irregularities committed by representatives of the judiciary. It is surprising that the Prosecutor General of Romania has no authority over it.<sup>653</sup> However,

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<sup>648</sup> jo/mc, *Prezident odmówił odwołania szefowej agencji antykorupcyjnej*, AFP, PAP, Bukareszt 2018, April 16.

<sup>649</sup> Kövesi’s term of office ended in May 2019. The president could dismiss her at the request of the head of the justice department. The Romanian Supreme Judicial Council (CSM) has a consultative role, consisting of judges and prosecutors. However, the Council issued a positive opinion of Kövesi.

<sup>650</sup> az/mc, *Spór o odwołanie szefowej agencji antykorupcyjnej*, dpa/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, April 23.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>653</sup> Due to the possibility of taking action without unnecessary control, this body is susceptible to political pressure. bjn/ap, *Władze Rumunii próbują utraćić kandydaturę Kövesi na szefową prokuratury UE*, PAP, Bukareszt 2019, March 29.



this case did not affect the candidate's support from the European Parliament. Appreciated for qualifications and skills, in October 2019, Laura Codruța Kövesi was appointed the first European Attorney General.<sup>654</sup>

This ongoing "war for the head, tit for tat" between politicians, aimed at depriving the head of DNA of the position<sup>655</sup> (thereby weakening the position of the President Iohannis), confirmed and highlighted the problems with the rule of law that Romania has been struggling with since Social Democrats took over the power in the state. Based on the cooperation and verification mechanism (CVM) to which the state is subjected, the reports show that there is a regression in Romania regarding the rule of law. The Romanian government has been accused of many months by the opposition of obstructing the fight against corruption, particularly among politicians and officials. The cabinet's criticism intensified at the beginning of July 2018, when the anti-corruption act was amended against judges, prosecutors, the centre-right opposition, and the Council of Europe. However, as it is commonly known, it was a procedure intended to protect Liviu Dragnea for whom the National Anticorruption Agency (DNA) demanded a prison sentence of 7.5 years. A final conviction for the fraud, including the unlawful takeover of EU funds<sup>656</sup> ruined the plans of the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies Dragnea to take the prime minister's office. A relentless politician, he had been controlling the Romanian government for years and did not let anybody remove him from the politics. At the end of May 2019, the Romanian Supreme Court rejected the appeal, and eventually upheld the sentence and the penalty imposed at the first instance. As justified, Liviu Dragnea was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison "for inciting public officials to abuse their position."<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> A.M. Henriksson, *Prokuratura Europejska: Laura Codruța Kövesi wskazana przez Radę na pierwszą prokurator generalną*, Rada Europejska, 14.10.2019, consilium.europa.eu (accessed: 17.10.2019).

<sup>655</sup> In July 2018, President Iohannis, complying with the Constitutional Court's decision, signed the resignation of the head of the anti-corruption office (DNA) – Codruța Kövesi. People who support Social Democrats sit in the Constitutional Tribunal. akl/kar, *Prezydent podpisał dymisję szefowej urzędu antykorupcyjnego*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, July 9.

<sup>656</sup> jo/mal, *Szef Partii Socjaldemokratycznej skazany na 3,5 roku więzienia*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, June 21.

<sup>657</sup> The case concerned the years 2006–2012 when Liviu Dragnea was the chairman of local authorities in the Teleorman district in southern Romania and the leader of the local branch of PSD. He was accused of forcing the head of the social welfare office in this district to transfer, despite her duties, remuneration to two women allegedly employed in her institution. They worked for the local branch of PSD. According to the prosecutor's office, the state treasury lost 24 000 euros. Although Dragnea rejected the accusations and emphasized that they were only gossip, the paid women confessed to receiving remuneration from the social welfare office and doing work for the party, which took the politician down. mtom, *Sąd podtrzymał wyrok. Szef rumuńskich socjaldemokratów skazany*, tvn24, 27.05.2019, <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/liviu-dragnea-skazany-sad-najwyzszy-rumunii-podtrzymal-wyrok,939457.html>.

The ongoing Dragnea case had an impact on further political implications. The divided, central Romanian opposition, at the end of June 2018, submitted a motion of no confidence against the government that was accused, among others, of: objection to the European Union, counteracting the fight against corruption started in 2007 and bringing measurable results, pressure on officials, forcing in the parliament a set of amendments to laws that would directly allow the Minister of Justice to interfere in the cases of judges, prosecutors, or limiting the competences of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA) and the desire to take control of the Supreme Council of Justice.<sup>658</sup> The Social Democratic government survived the no confidence vote, confirmed its strong position, and resumed work on amending the penal code. Western countries were deeply concerned with the problem which the Romanian President objected to in mid-June emphasizing that “Social Democrats want to destroy the justice system.”<sup>659</sup> Representatives of legal circles, members of the Council of Europe and the European Union criticized Liviu Dragnea.

We, Romania’s international partners and allies, call on all parties involved in modifying the Romanian Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure to avoid changes that weaken the rule of law or Romania’s ability to fight crime or corruption. [...] We are concerned that some of the changes may harm international cooperation in the field of law enforcement and negatively affect the fight against violent crime, international organized crime, financial crime and drug and human trafficking<sup>660</sup>

this is what a joint statement issued by the embassies of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Still, it did not stop the Romanian Parliament which in early July 2018 adopted an amendment to the controversial criminal law, which was supposed to be signed by the head of the state.<sup>661</sup> However, the well-known ruling party’s attitude to the bill prompted it to adopt the solutions applied previously, in the case of President Traian Băsescu (in 2007 and 2012) – in the form of suspension of the president’s

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<sup>658</sup> klm/mc, *Socjaldemokratyczny rząd przetrwał wniosek o wotum nieufności*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, June 27.

<sup>659</sup> President Iohannis believed that the amendments adopted by the Parliament would reduce the number of crimes in which pre-trial detention was used and compromise the Romanian anti-corruption process. Due to the amendments, the accusation against Liviu Dragnea would be unfounded. jo/kar, *Prezydent Iohannis alarmuje w sprawie złagodzenia kpk*, AFP/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, June 19.

<sup>660</sup> ulb/kar, *Kraje zachodnie wzywają Rumunię, by nie wprowadzała zmian prawa karnego*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, June 28.

<sup>661</sup> Pursuant to the changes introduced by PSD and ALDE, abuse of power is to be punishable “only if it brings personal benefits to the offender or his family.” az/ap, *Parlament przyjął kontrolującą nowelizację prawa karnego*, dpa/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, July 4.

duties.<sup>662</sup> In the opinion of political activists, such a step was supposed to put the end to the cases started by Social Democrats and push through difficult subjects without involving opponents.

Thousands of Romanian emigrants came to the country at the beginning of August to participate in an anti-government protest and loudly oppose the Social Democratic Party.<sup>663</sup> They called for the government to resign and organize early elections. It is estimated that about 50 000 people came out on the streets of Romanian cities at that time (Reuters reported 100 000).<sup>664</sup> During the protest, which turned into a riot, 440 people were injured.<sup>665</sup> Commenting on the events, Social Democratic Party (PSD) leader Liviu Dragnea made it clear that in Romania, on August 10, 2018, citizens, supported by the country president Klaus Iohannis, failed to overthrow the government. He was “the target of a failed assassination attempt,” he added, “George Soros was responsible for.”<sup>666</sup>

In Romania, once again, attempts were made to deal with the ingrained system. In the view of the accumulation of problems and connections among the rulers, it was difficult to outline the stages of further changes and implement them. Romania’s political elite had a big problem in understanding the principles of democracy and implementing its ideas into political practice. The most democratic-resistant were the Social Democratic Party and post-communists. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they were able to manipulate a large part of society for their purposes, but after 2010 it became more difficult. We had a similar phenomenon in Central Europe, but its scale was much smaller, and the process of limiting the principles of democracy in state policy did not last that long. It continued, on average, several years, not nearly 30. In the nearest future it will not be easy to instil democratic ideas into politicians’ and, unfortunately, part of the society minds.

After August 2018, the Romanian citizens woke up. Almost as in December 1989, they wanted to free themselves from the politician, who had become the party’s greatest weakness and “the source of a constant crisis of confidence, both in internal politics and in relations with the outside world.”<sup>667</sup> Leading activists of the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) addressed an open letter on Liviu Dragnea’s dismissal, accusing the chief of “ignoring criticism and leading the party

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<sup>662</sup> In the case of President Bănescu, a referendum was announced in 2012 regarding his dismissal, but due to too low turnout, it appeared to be invalid.

<sup>663</sup> Reuters reports that it was about 7000 people. ndz/mc, *Tysiące emigrantów wzięły udział w antyrządowym proteście*, PAP/Reuters, Bukareszt 2018, August 10.

<sup>664</sup> ndz/pś, *Potyczki protestujących z policją; 440 osób poszkodowanych*, Reuters, Bukareszt 2018, August 11.

<sup>665</sup> The strike took place on August 10, 2018. *Ibidem*.

<sup>666</sup> mmp/mc, *Lider partii rządzącej utrzymuje, że próbowano go zabić*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, August 22.

<sup>667</sup> mars, *Czołowi działacze rządzącej PSD za dymisją jej szefa Liviu Dragnea*, Reuters, Bukareszt 2018, September 20.

at his discretion,” and trying to use changes in the penal code for his political profits, which compromises the PSD party.<sup>668</sup> “This has particularly negative effects on the eve of the presidential and European Parliament elections, which were scheduled for 2019, and the elections to the Romanian Parliament in 2020,”<sup>669</sup> – emphasized politicians. Romanian Euro MPs also spoke on this matter. Contrary to reports informing about Romania’s progress in the rule of law, they were no longer hiding criticism of the authorities, including Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă (PSD), and stressed that “Romania suffers from the work of the government which is acting against the country.”<sup>670</sup> Opposing corrupt politicians, they finally stood up for citizens, stressing how many people had to leave the country, because of corruption, seeking decent living conditions and earnings so that the government finally understands that there is injustice in the state.

During the 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanian revolution, President Klaus Iohannis promised citizens that he would seek the truth. Activities of the PSD carried out in earlier years largely weakened the country and created a kind of “cocoon” for politicians and government officials involved in corruption activities. The amendment to the anti-corruption law, which was contrary to the assumptions made by judges, prosecutors, and the opposition, as well as representatives of the Council of Europe, was adopted despite objection because the new law was to protect Dragnea and his people from justice.<sup>671</sup> In such a difficult and tense atmosphere the months flew preceding the celebration of December events. A warning from Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans, addressed to the Romanian authorities, hinting that if Bucharest did not solve the problems, the European Commission would start proceedings against the country regarding the rule of law, after the events of 2015<sup>672</sup> was another painful experience for the head of the state.<sup>673</sup> However, it showed that Klaus Iohannis was firmly on the side of the nation and against the prevailing corruption and embezzlement. The defence of Laura Codruța Kövesi,<sup>674</sup> who was fighting corruption and bringing justice to the most

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<sup>668</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibidem*. In the European Commission’s report on Romania’s progress in fulfilling its obligations on judicial reform and the fight against corruption, Romania did not receive the best opinion under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). The independence of the judiciary and the fight against high-level corruption underlying recent events in Romania have raised doubts.

<sup>670</sup> stk/ulb/mal, *Premier Rumunii bez obrońców w europarlamentcie*, PAP, Strasburg 2018, October 3.

<sup>671</sup> mtom, *Sąd podtrzymał...*

<sup>672</sup> In the second half of 2015, two events shocked Romania. On September 17, Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta (PSD) was arrested; on October 30, more than 60 people were killed in a fire in the Colectiv club. In both cases, the reason was corruption.

<sup>673</sup> asty/adso, *Timmermans ostrzega Rumunię w sprawie łamania praworządności*, PAP, 13.05.2019, <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/timmermans-wyslal-list-do-premiera-i-prezydenta-rumunii-w-sprawie-praworzadnosci,935183.html> (accessed: 20.09.2019).

<sup>674</sup> Laura Codruța Kövesi was dismissed by the government as the head of the Romanian agency to fight corruption. Her earlier actions had brought positive results that the government did not

recognizable faces of the Romanian political scene of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the president's approval of the indictments that were brought in December 2018, were confirmation of the upcoming changes in Romania that were supposed to be a kind of catharsis for the state. It took 29 years for the prosecution to bring to justice those who were responsible for the events of December 1989: former president of the state Ion Iliescu<sup>675</sup> and members of the National Salvation Front (FSN) – former prime minister Gelu Voican-Voiculescu, and former air force commanders Iosif Rus and Emil Dumitrescu.<sup>676</sup>

Meanwhile, there were further political changes in Romania which took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union at the beginning of 2019. In November 2018, Victor Negrescu, Minister for European Affairs, resigned and was replaced by George Ciamba. The European Commission stated in its annual report that Romania has started to withdraw from democratic reforms after years of progress in their implementation. The embittered Prime Minister, Viorica Dăncilă referred very negatively to the report and stated that she would not follow the Commission's recommendations. Dissatisfaction with governments was escalating. Citizens gathered in the streets of Romanian cities expressing their dissatisfaction with the dispute between the prime minister and the president about the dismissal of the head of the anti-corruption agency. The government was accused of dismissing Kövesi only in order to stop the anti-corruption campaign. Even Romanians living abroad came to the country for anti-government protests.<sup>677</sup> Negatively assessed government, in June 2018,

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like. However, they were sufficient reason for the European Parliament to nominate Kövesi as her candidate for the position of the head of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

<sup>675</sup> In mid-2017, the military prosecutor's office indicted Ion Iliescu and a dozen people close to him for crimes against humanity. A former member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, head of the National Salvation Council, two times president of Romania (1989–1996 and 2000–2004), according to the prosecutor's office, "disseminated false information on television and in its communications to induce widespread psychosis." According to the prosecutors, manipulation of public opinion led to the issuing of conflicting orders, fratricidal fights, and bloodshed, more than a thousand people lost their lives at the time. Moreover, the indictment also contained the statement about the participation of Iliescu in "the judgment and conviction of Ceaușescu's marriage in a faked trial" The indication says that as the initiator and coordinator of military and political power, later the leader of the FSN, he accepted and formalized measures of a military nature, including those of a subversive nature. Iliescu, being an authority, could of course intervene, but he did not do it. M. Torz, *Akt oskarżenia 29 lat po rewolucji, W Rumunii.pl*, 26.12.2018, <http://wrumunii.pl/index.php/polityka> (accessed: 28.12.2018); SJ, AK, *Były prezydent Rumunii oskarżony o zbrodnie przeciw ludzkości*, TVP Info, 21.12.2018, <https://www.tvp.info/40540042/byly-prezydent-rumunii-oskarzony-o-zbrodnie-przeciw-ludzkości> (accessed: 28.12.2018).

<sup>676</sup> M. Torz, *Akt oskarżenia...*

<sup>677</sup> According to the World Bank report, between 3 and 5 million out of 19.6 million Romanians have already left the country for work and a better life. Most of them, i.e., approximately 2.6 million are of working age, which is about 20% of Romania's workforce. The main reasons for emigration were corruption, low pay, lack of prospects. There is a lack of support for the Social Democratic Party among the emigrants. From the moment the PSD won the election, Romanians regularly

endured the vote of no confidence.<sup>678</sup> In December 2018, the Dăncilă government, accused by the opposition of introducing reforms destroying the justice system and paralyzing the fight against corruption, was put to another test. To push it through, it was necessary to obtain 233 votes (50% + 1), 161 were obtained, which postponed the opposition's plans to change power.<sup>679</sup> As it turned out – just for a few months.

Romania took over the Presidency of the European Union at the beginning of January 2019 in the shadow of political scandals and accusations of corruption and social protests. For a long time, internal divisions in the country overshadowed its leadership in the European Union. However, they did not deprive the citizens of their right to vote. At all costs, they tried to show that they support European values and count on the EU institutions and their help in the fight against corruption, the lack of independence of the judiciary or the rule of law. Romania's six-month presidency finally managed to avoid embarrassment. 90 documents were adopted, thanks to which new legislation was drawn up. Among the most significant achievements of the Romanian presidency is the adoption of the energy policy directive, proposed by the European Commission in 2017, which reduces the profitability of Russian Gazprom and the success of Nord Stream 2; the decision to strengthen border protection in connection with the migration crisis, which will result in creating in 2027 a permanent corps supporting control at the external borders of the European Union. The challenge of the Romanian presidency was the work on the European budget for 2021–2027, particularly sensitive due to Brexit. Efforts have also been made to strengthen the European banking system and discussed the threats of climate change.<sup>680</sup>

The elections to the European Parliament that took place at the end of May 2019 brought the victory of the opposition National Liberal Party (PNL) which received 28.12% support, leaving the Social Democratic Party in the second place with 23.48% of the vote.<sup>681</sup> In the view of announced by the leader of the winning party Ludovic Orban plans to overthrow the government, the position of prime

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protested in 2016. ndz/mał, *Emigranci przyjeżdżają do kraju na antyrządowy protest*, PAP, Bukareszt 2018, August 9.

<sup>678</sup> klm/mc, *Rumunia: socjaldemokratyczny rząd przetrwał wniosek o wotum nieufności*, Reuters/PAP, Bukareszt 2018, June 27.

<sup>679</sup> *Parlament odrzucił wotum nieufności dla rządu*, PAP, Bukareszt 2018, December 20.

<sup>680</sup> M. Torz, „Lepsza niż oczekiwano” – Podsumowanie prezydentury Rumunii w Radzie UE, Warsaw Institute, 23.07.2019, <https://warsawinstitute.org/pl/lepsza-niz-oczekiwano-prezydenca-rumunii-w-radzie-unii-europejskiej/> (accessed: 10.08.2019).

<sup>681</sup> As early as during the May European elections, a crisis was visible in the parties' ranks, mainly because party leader Liviu Dragnea was brought to justice. PSD failed to enter the European Parliament. The voters also rejected the government's project to change the justice system in the referendum. The next day the High Court of Cassation and Justice upheld the sentence of 3.5 years in prison for Liviu Dragnea, the leader of the PSD, and chairman of the lower house of parliament. P. Oleksy, *Rumunia to nie Polska, Dragnea to nie Orban*, Nowa Europa Wschodnia, 28.05.2019, new.org.pl (accessed: 22.09.2019).

minister was threatened again. On October 10, 2019, the Romanian Parliament passed a motion of no confidence against the social-democratic government of Viorica Dăncilă, submitted by opposition parties. The opposition accused the head of the government of, among others, incompetence, and blocking public investment.<sup>682</sup> She was charged with forcing the changes in the judiciary system under Liviu Dragnea's influence, providing lenient treatment of politicians suspected of bribery. The behind-the-scenes rule of Liviu Dragnea and the implementation of the regular promises of the Social Democrats proclaimed during the 2016 election campaign, were to silence protesting crowds, which, however, failed. According to the announced assumption, in Romanian salaries for health care workers and teachers increased almost twice in two years, so did pensions. The adopted plan includes further increases until 2022, which are expected to cost the state budget about 10 billion euros. As can be presumed, this fact will not have a positive impact on the situation in the country in the long run. As emphasized by Romanian analysts, the European Commission and representatives of the International Monetary Fund, "there is a high risk of an increase in the public finance deficit, which will break the budget balance, which was exacerbated by a gradual reduction in taxes."<sup>683</sup> Such actions and the Social Democrats' grasping possible options to satisfy and silence a turbulent society are only temporary solutions that divert attention from the fraud and corruption prevailing in the state. The earlier change of prime ministers three times in only seven months certainly did not contribute to the state's excellent image, and of course it did not get better with another rotation. Changes in the government have been a threat to structural reforms and certainly reduce the chances of their implementation. "The potential for economic growth in Romania is limited by the lack of structural reforms and a weak institutional environment, particularly in the areas of management of public investments, absorption of EU funds [...] and improvement of infrastructure. In addition, ever higher fiscal deficits and current account balances have deepened the country's vulnerability to potential changes in risk assessment by foreign investors"<sup>684</sup> – a report prepared by Moody's rating agency says.

The circumstances in which Prime Minister Dăncilă left the Parliament coincided with the presidential election announced on November 10, 2019. The new prime minister of Romania was designated on November 4, 2019, it was leader of the opposition National Liberal Party (PNL) Ludovic Orban, an ally of President Klaus Iohannis, a pro-EU conservative liberal. The newly appointed

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<sup>682</sup> ndz/akl, *Prezydent desygnował lidera opozycyjnej PNL Orbana na premiera*, PAP, Bukareszt 2019, October 15.

<sup>683</sup> kot/mc, *Rząd realizuje wyborcze obietnice ogromnych podwyżek pensji*, PAP, Bukareszt 2017, June 7.

<sup>684</sup> tus/jtt, *Częste zmiany w rządzie Rumunii zagrożeniem dla reform strukturalnych*, Moody's/PAP, Warszawa 2018, January 22.

cabinet obtained 240 votes, corresponding to the number of MPs present at the vote (required quorum min. 233 votes). His victory was also ensured by votes of independent parliamentarians, several MPs from PSD, and Pro România. In Orban's minority government, which was a big surprise for many parties, there were experienced politicians from the Romanian political scene, e.g., Bogdan Aurescu, Cătălin Predoiu, Virgil Popescu, Lucian Bode, Victoria-Violeta Alexandru, Ioan Marcel Boloș, as well as new people without experience in managing departments, such as the heart surgeon Victor Costache recognizable in the medical community.<sup>685</sup> Due to Romania's political situation, it could be assumed that the government would not enjoy much support in the parliament, and the changes it introduced would be met with numerous comments. The prime minister's vision, which dates back to December 2020, i.e., to announce timely parliamentary elections, includes unblocking public investments, actions to improve legislation in the judiciary, amendments to the current and preparation of the next year's budget, and efficient conduct of the November presidential election. The following year will not be easy; the prime minister will have to face a massive hole in the budget, in many sectors, and above all in healthcare and social security.<sup>686</sup> The first steps to dismiss senior officers and offices – linked to former PSD and ALDE activists – have already been made.

Facing the government's collapse, President Iohannis emphasized that it was possible to "stop the Social Democratic Party from harming Romania."<sup>687</sup> However, while the motion of no confidence was the "logical consequence" of mass protests of citizens against the PSD government, the result of the May European elections and numerous abuses by the cabinet dismissed from power<sup>688</sup> became an opportunity for Social Democrats to issue their candidate in the presidential election. The former prime minister and current head of the party, Viorica Dăncilă, who replaced Liviu Dragnea, after his imprisoning for over seven years in May, became the silent opponent of Klaus Iohannis. 50% support was needed to win the first round, but none of the candidates succeeded. Klaus Iohannis, who won 37.49% of the vote and Viorica Dăncilă (22.69%), were the front-runners,<sup>689</sup> who moved to the second round of the election. Among the candidates registered by the Central Election Office were: Dan Barna (Union of Salvation of Romania) – obtained 14.73% of votes, Mircea Diaconu (ALDE & Pro România) – 8.96% of votes, Theodor Paleologu (the People's Movement Party, PMP) – 5.70% of votes, Hunor Kelemen representing The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) – 3.96% of votes, Ramona Bruynseels

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<sup>685</sup> *Rumunia ma nowy rząd. Ludovic Orban premierem*, Forum Ekonomiczne, <https://www.forum-ekonomiczne.pl/rumunia-ma-nowy-rzad-ludovic-orban-premierem/> (accessed: 13.11.2019).

<sup>686</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>687</sup> akl/kar, *Rząd upadł po głosowaniu ws. wotum nieufności*, PAP, Bukareszt 2019, October 10.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>689</sup> *Rezultate parțiale*, <http://www.ziare.com> (accessed: 12.11.2019).



(Humanist Power Party) – 2.67% of votes, Alexandru Cumpănașu (Coalition for Modern Romania) – 1.51% of votes. Less than 1% of votes were won by such candidates as Viorel Cataramă, Bogdan Stanoevici, Cătălin-Sorin Ivan, Sebastian Popescu, Ninel Peia, John Ion Banu.<sup>690</sup> The second round of presidential elections took place on November 24, 2019. From the beginning, the public and politicians talked about the upcoming reelection of President Klaus Iohannis. It was emphasized that he was a good personality who, in cooperation with the newly elected prime minister, would manage Romania properly. Fighting corruption, Iohannis and Orban, whom he has indicated, would be an excellent duet that would remove from power all persons who, due to their origin or acquaintance with former members of the party apparatus, the Iliescu camp, performed state functions.

Undoubtedly, such actions would be a shock on the Romanian political scene which was almost exclusively controlled by the mentioned politicians. Changes in Romania could be implemented if young, well-educated citizens came to power. Otherwise, it would be impossible to change the mentality and habits of the nation. Deep political and economic reforms, gaining support among citizens would be the biggest challenge for the authorities over the next few years. If Viorica Dăncilă's "dream of the ruling" came true, one would assume that it would be difficult to talk about rapid change. The mere fact that she came from Liviu Dragnea's camp could significantly slow down reforms and maintain chaos. Dăncilă is a woman with a character who, as she has shown, can do a lot for power. After Dragnea was imprisoned, she openly criticized the way he pursued politics. There were several other reasons for Viorica Dăncilă's candidacy. First, within reconstruction of the government in July 2019 the prime minister dismissed Minister of Interior Carmen Dan. She was responsible for the brutal suppression of anti-government protests, which is why the public well-received this move. Secondly, despite the significant doubts and loud criticism, Romania's six-month presidency of the European Union turned out to be conducted in an excellent way. It was very well received by European countries and was even praised by the President of Romania himself. Thirdly, Dăncilă would be the first woman in Romanian history to rule the country. Fourthly, during the election campaign, the topic of "real estate" of Klaus Iohannis returned, which only confirmed the belief that in Romania is nothing "black or white".

Unlike other Central and Eastern European countries with the centrally planned economy, Romania has numerous natural resources. One of the most important is oil, with documented resources estimated at 38 million t in 2016, and possibly even 19 million t more, while annual extraction in recent years fluctuated around 4 million t. According to the data in the Energy Strategy of

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<sup>690</sup> *Ibidem.*

Romania for 2016–2020, Romanian oil deposits will be depleted in less than 20 years.<sup>691</sup> Natural gas reserves in Romania have been estimated at around 100 billion m<sup>3</sup>, while annual extraction is approximately 11 billion m<sup>3</sup>. Natural gas resources in the Black Sea, in areas where wells have already been drilled, amount to approximately 200 billion m<sup>3</sup>, which with maximum production rates, will allow for reaching 9–10 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas per year (of which Petrom extracts 6 billion m<sup>3</sup>) for another 20 years. During this time, it will bring revenues of around EUR 2.8 billion.<sup>692</sup>

The country's energy independence is one of the strategic goals of Romanian governments. High hopes are associated with the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources from the Black Sea. If all projects planned in the Black Sea are implemented, in 2025, total gas production in Romania will amount to approximately 20 billion m<sup>3</sup> annually. On June 4, 2018, Transgaz, the national gas network operator in Romania, began constructing the BRUA gas pipeline. BRUA is part of the Phase I cross-border gas project covering Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria.<sup>693</sup>

Romania also has uranium resources used in two operating blocks of the Cernavodă nuclear power plant which produces approximately 20% of the country's electricity.

Other important natural resources in Romania include lignite (confirmed deposits of 280 million t), black coal (exploitation deposits of about 590 million t), manganese, iron, copper, rock salt, zinc-lead, and gold. The main area where they can be found is the Transylvania Plateau and the Carpathian region.<sup>694</sup>

In various parts of the Romanian Carpathian Mountains, many mines (quarries, borings, and less often deep mines) are exploited. Copper, zinc, and lead ores are mined in the Eastern Carpathians, in the Maramureş Mountains (around Baia Borşa), and pyrite on the southeast slopes of the Rodna Mountains, in Rodna Veche. In the Gutâi mountains, zinc and lead ores are mined, as well as some gold. In the Bistriţa valley (near Iacobeni and Vatra Dornei) and nearby Călimani mountains, the manganese ore is mined (quarry on the slopes of the Pietrosul Summit). Copper ore is extracted near Bălan, in the Hăşmaş mountains. In the Moldavian Subcarpathians near the river Trotuş valley and near Bacău, rock salt and lignite (Comăneşti) are mined. To the north of Ploieşti, at the mouth of the Prahova Valley, oilfields are exploited.

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<sup>691</sup> *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Gospodarka*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [https://bukareszt.ms.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.ms.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.02.2019).

<sup>692</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>693</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>694</sup> *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Współpraca dwustronna. Gospodarka rumuńska*, [https://bukareszt.ms.gov.pl/pl/c/MOBILE/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.ms.gov.pl/pl/c/MOBILE/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.01.2019).

The Southern Carpathians' central mining basin is the region of the upper part of the Jiu River valley (around Petroșani, Vulcan, and Lupeni), where hard coal is mined.<sup>695</sup>

In the Cerna Valley south of Hunedoara in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains, deposits of zinc, lead and pyrite ores is exploited, and farther to the West – iron. The next mining basin on the western edge of the Southern Carpathians is the Banat Mountains (Munții Banatului). Iron ore is mined here (Ocna de Fier and the Anina Mountains region). The Western Mountains, particularly their south-eastern part, are rich in zinc and lead, mercury, and gold (Zlatna and Gura Barza). Bauxite is mined in the northern region and the Someș highlands. Natural gas is the basic raw material extracted on the Transylvania Plateau. Its primary deposits are around Mediaș and Saroș. It is also worth mentioning the exploitation of mineral springs, considered to be the best in Europe. There is a significant number in the Romanian Carpathians (most in eastern Transylvania, in the Harghita mountains).

According to the 2010 EU Council decision, the Romanian government financially supports the closure of unprofitable hard coal mines: a total of five mines in 2012 and 2016. These plans are supported by the European Commission and systematically implemented by the Romanian government.<sup>696</sup>

The economic situation in Romania after 1989 was like the situation in all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, that were introducing the market economy. It was the result of an economic system called central planning, which method was not an intelligent planning system, but an economics of shortage, as the eminent Hungarian economist – János Kornai called it.<sup>697</sup> A better description of the Romanian economy is a command and distribution economy, developing from the “big shortage” to the “smaller shortages.” Shortages in Romania had to be supplemented with imports. In Romania, these shortages were particularly noticed and felt by society. Romania's foreign debt in 1980, i.e., when it was decided to pay it back, reached over \$ 11 billion. The agreement concluded in 1982 with the International Monetary Fund, due to unfavourable conditions, was rejected, as emphasized, the reason was the “disorganization of the national economy.” The Ceaușescu program assumed, along with production for export purposes, to keep the country's

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<sup>695</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>696</sup> *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Współpraca dwustronna. Gospodarka rumuńska*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumuńska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumuńska/) (accessed: 20.02.2019).

<sup>697</sup> He has become well-known internationally after his publication was released in 1980 under the title *Economy of shortage* – being an analysis of the economic system of the so-called “real socialism” of the centrally managed command and distribution economy and its authentic mechanisms of functioning.

development pace, based on the principle of allocating approximately 30% of national income annually to the accumulation and development fund.<sup>698</sup>

The interest rate in the domestic financial flow has been reduced to around 5%, in agriculture entirely in exchange for strict price control.<sup>699</sup> In the years 1980–1989, the value of investments carried out in Romania was \$ 200–220 billion.<sup>700</sup> Wages and pensions were increased twice. With constant prices of consumer goods and cost reductions in some industries, such moves could even seem like a very favourable trend. In March 1989, \$ 24 billion in debt repayment was announced, and no foreign loans were banned, “also in the future.”<sup>701</sup> Romania was the least indebted state in the region. The austerities and suffering of Romanians, related to that, reached the peak, and the prospect of raising the standard of living was slightly blurry, the political elites were not trustworthy.

In the economic sphere at the beginning of the 1990s, Romania was dominated by tendencies to move to a market economy, equalize ownership forms and move away from the command and distribution system. Restructuring of industry and demonopolization of various areas of the national economy followed slowly. Romania was just looking for favourable conditions for economic cooperation, seeing support mainly in the West.

The imbalance prevailing in Romania in the early 1990s persisted. Romania’s international financial position was weak, with no prospects for significant improvement. Besides, it was difficult to acquire the real statistics of the Romanian economy of the early 1990s because the authorities partly concealed them. During the first nine months of 1990, industrial production dropped by 27.7% compared to the same period of 1989.<sup>702</sup> Similarly, industrial productivity and investment decreased drastically (by 22 and 44%, respectively).<sup>703</sup> Working time decreased by 16.7%, while the wages fund increased by 11.2% and the monetary income of the population by 26.1%. Hidden unemployment was around 10%.<sup>704</sup> While Romania’s foreign exchange reserves at the end of 1989 amounted to \$ 1 239.1 million, the balance of current payments from the eight months of 1990 clearly showed a negative balance of \$ 145.4 million. Thus, for current imports, Romania spent \$ 2.4 million in just eight months of 1990.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>698</sup> Sytuacja i polityka gospodarcza Rumunii, 1990, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 11/95 IX no. 4.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>700</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>701</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>702</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>703</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>704</sup> M. Walewski, *Bułgaria i Rumunia: rynek pracy, edukacja i demografia – wybrane trendy*, [in:] *Bułgaria i Rumunia w UE. Szansa czy konkurencja dla Polski?*, Zeszyty BRE Bank – CASE, nr 88/2007, [http://www.case-research.eu/files/?id\\_plik=4218](http://www.case-research.eu/files/?id_plik=4218) (accessed: 10.01.2019).

<sup>705</sup> *Ibidem.*

The economic reform was to start with the reprivatization of state property. It was to rely not so much on its sale as on the free transfer of shares. The first stage included the privatization of 30% of state-owned assets. In response, the opposition tried to implement its variant under the name "Cojocaru," consisting in free "distribution" of national property which, as could be presumed, was considered by the government to be "risky." The competitive variant of "Rugina" assumed the rapid enfranchisement of the peasants and the full privatization of trade, which did not involve industry. Along with the implementation of this concept, a leu would be introduced for internal ("paper") and foreign ("silver") turnover.<sup>706</sup> To curb inflation, the government in the area of price reform assumed to control currency exchange rates, credit rate, and partly wages in the future. As emphasized, however, the authors of price liberalization had to consider social tensions.<sup>707</sup> And the public mood was not calm. Strikes were initiated at the news of the next stages of price liberalization. Railway employees, miners, and employees of many branches of the economy participated in them.

The Romanian investment policy was supposed to be based primarily on structural changes, training managers, expansion and modernization of infrastructure, expansion of the water supply system, development of agriculture, and environmental protection.

With the oppressive Romanian bureaucracy, legislative difficulties, and a slow pace of reforms compared to other Central European countries, Romania still could not improve investment level.<sup>708</sup>

As a result of shortcomings, 1990 finally brought a deterioration of the country's situation and a decline in all industrial production indicators. In the case of a widespread shortage of raw materials, energy shortage, fuel, lack of progress in the field of restructuring and privatization of production enterprises, the process of reforms of the Prime Minister Roman, collapsed being blocked by the old structures. The number of unemployed increased by over 300,000. In the view of the collapse, the new government of Prime Minister Stolojan considered the economic equilibrium to be the main goal to introduce the full convertibility of the internal leu and the principle of strict compliance with the budgetary policy. Romania managed to survive thanks to the help of international financial institutions. The need for big changes, including the legislative sphere, has become the only salvation for the powerless old structures of the Romanian market economy.<sup>709</sup> Old economic structures were difficult to overcome, but at the same time convenient for post-communist governments, whose representatives quickly expropriated. Democratic parties did not have

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<sup>706</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>707</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>708</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 1995, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn.153/11.

<sup>709</sup> Sytuacja i polityka gospodarcza Rumunii, 1991, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nr nabytku 38/93, nr wiązki 1.

professional staff to manage the economy. Besides, there was also a desire for ownership among some democratic activists. This complicated the situation of healing the economy and systematizing the banking system.

There was a financial decline in 1993. Debt at the level of \$ 6 billion, a 40% decrease in industrial production compared to 1989, over a million unemployed showed clearly how bad it was in Romania. Inflation was exacerbated by the activities of unprofitable heavy industry enterprises.

According to the assumption of the privatization act of November 1992, there was a clear dominance of the state sector. The lack of apparent progress in implementing economic reforms became the reason why the IMF has postponed the conclusion of a new stand-by agreement with Romania. At the end of 1993, a memorandum was signed in which the Monetary Fund indicated that the granting of loans depended on tightening financial discipline and limiting inflation.<sup>710</sup> Romania revived contacts with international financial organizations due to the new stand-by agreement. New funds have reached the state. As a result of the World Bank's decision, Romania gained, among others, \$ 400 million to modernize the oil extraction industry and to help private companies that were in the process of privatization. G-24 decided to allocate \$ 220 million to support macroeconomic transformation in the Romanian economy.<sup>711</sup> At the end of 1994, Romania recognized South Korea, Italy, France, Britain, USA, Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands as the most prominent foreign investors. 42 000 companies with foreign capital were registered in Romania, with an average share of approximately \$ 30 000. The amount of this type of investment in 1989–1995 exceeded \$ 1.3 billion. Romania began coming back to the international arena during the Văcăroiu rule. 1994 was defined as the "year of economic success," as GDP increased by 3.4% compared to 1993, and amounted to 26.7%.<sup>712</sup> The share of the private sector in GDP also increased from 32 to 35%, industrial production increased by 3.3%, foreign trade deficit amounted to \$ 330 million (in 1993 amounted to \$ 128 million), exports recorded an improvement by 22.6% to the level \$ 5.99 billion. Inflation, which reached 300% in 1993, fell to 61.7% in 1994. The unemployment rate has exceeded 10%.<sup>713</sup> The Romanian economy recognized the creation of an interbank currency market in exchange for a system of currency auctions, adopted the laws on income tax, excise, tax on agricultural income, stock exchange, and state monopoly as important enterprises reforming economic life. With these spectacular moves, however, numerous problems arose. Low economic efficiency and almost complete lack of clear and professional restructuring measures were obstacles to further active development. At the beginning of 1995 industrial production

<sup>710</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia, "Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia"* 1993, R. 3, Warszawa, p. 140.

<sup>711</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 1995, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 153/11.

<sup>712</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>713</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia*, 1993, p. 142.

was growing again (by 11.1% compared to 1994), exports increased (by 30.4% compared to 1994), of which over 50% was directed to countries EU, a positive trend was also seen in imports (an increase of 26.3% compared to 1994).<sup>714</sup> But society did not feel any improvement. The Romanian economy was still weak, and undergoing structural changes with difficulty. A negative element of social change was the constant deepening of the poverty zone. In 1995, over 70% of Romanians lived below the subsistence minimum.<sup>715</sup> The products of backward economy could not compete with imported ones, which in October 1995 led to a significant decrease in the value of the Romanian currency and a further increase of import duties.<sup>716</sup> As a result of pressure from international financial organizations that pointed to the need to eliminate and restructure unprofitable industrial plants, the parliament, by unblocking the 1991 law, approved the law on accelerated privatization. According to it, 4000 enterprises from 6500 were to be privatized, and society was to receive 30% of their capital in the form of coupons with a nominal value of 975 000 leu.<sup>717</sup> Other coupons were to be sold at auctions that foreigners had access to. The privatization process was completed on March 31, 1996.<sup>718</sup> Ultimately, it covered 3000 companies. Coupons were distributed to over 75% of citizens.<sup>719</sup>

A positive sign of the changes was the revival, in December 1995, of the stock exchange which was closed in 1948. The prospects for economic development for the next year were not the best. In the 1996 budget, the planned GDP growth was 4.5% (industrial production by 4.7%, agriculture by 3.5%, investment by 8.8%, and exports by 12%, import by 4.5%). A further reduction of the budget deficit in relation to GDP was anticipated; however, the unemployment rate was to rise to 14.5%. When the IMF special mission visited Bucharest, it recognized that "the condition of the Romanian economy is much worse than one might think."<sup>720</sup> A minimum of 50% of inflation and about 6% of GDP of the budget deficit was considered a follow-up to the election year when Nicolae Văcăroiu's government stopped reforms and manipulated statistical data for propaganda purposes. As a result of omissions and lack of implementation of the land reform, the agriculture, and related branches of the economy saw a dramatic drop in production.<sup>721</sup>

When Victor Ciorbea came to power in December 1996, he found it reasonable to balance the budget. He took it right to reduce taxes and expenses from central

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<sup>714</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 153/11.

<sup>715</sup> See: B. Luft, *op. cit.*

<sup>716</sup> A. Patek, J. Rydel, J.J. Węc, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>717</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 153/11.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>719</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>720</sup> Materiał informacyjny nt. sytuacji w Rumunii, 1996, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 239/42.

<sup>721</sup> *Ibidem.*

administration, tighten control over money issues, accelerate privatization, and fight corruption and economic abuse. In the macroeconomic program, the government projected the consistent implementation of bankruptcy procedures, the restructuring and privatization of industrial enterprises, and the facilitation of foreign capital. They began to discuss the need to introduce a reform of the social security system, lower customs tariffs, income tax, and properly stimulate economic development. In the 1997 budget, priority was given to health service, education, science, culture, social protection, justice, defence, and public order.<sup>722</sup>

In the years 1999–2008, i.e., until Europe and the world were hit by the economic crisis, the Romanian economy recorded growth at an average rate of 6.5% per year.<sup>723</sup> At the time of crisis, it continued its upward trend, although at a slower pace. Out of a population of over 21 million, 3 million Romanians worked in Western Europe. That time was an extremely complicated, full of intrigues and deals, a period in which the national elites, after more than 40 years spent in the Eastern Bloc, tried unsuccessfully to switch to Western patterns.<sup>724</sup> It was difficult for them, even for rational reasons.

The 2000 program was characterized by strict savings, cuts in social spending, and reduced employment in the budgetary sphere and central and local administration.<sup>725</sup> At the end of 2000, foreign exchange reserves amounted to \$ 2.5 billion, which meant an increase of \$ 1 billion. External debt amounted to \$ 9.2 billion and increased by \$ 1 billion. The inflow of foreign direct investment was very low, which in 2000 amounted to only \$ 270 million. It has reached \$ 7 billion over the last decade.<sup>726</sup> In 2001, the Romanian economic did not perform well. Overwhelming corruption hindered economic development. The average monthly salary was around \$ 90. The purchasing power of average wages remained at 68% of the purchasing power of average wages in 1990. This proved a vast impoverishment of the society and the threat of social tensions. 10 million Romanians lived below the poverty line. In public opinion polls, 56% of the population said they lived worse than under Ceaușescu's regime. Sales of food fell by 12% compared to 1999, and by 47% compared to 1990. Unemployment reached a peak of 12.2%. 43% were made redundant from private workhouses constituted 43%.<sup>727</sup> Romania recorded an annual decline in GDP (in 18 years it reached 18%), in 9 months of 2001 GDP increased by 5.1%. The reduction of inflation compared to previous years was considered a success. In 2000 it was

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<sup>722</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>723</sup> Interview in Radio Trojka

<sup>724</sup> R.D. Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>725</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia*, 1993, p.186.

<sup>726</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>727</sup> A. Sowińska-Krupka, *Rumunia*, 1993.



45%.<sup>728</sup> The banking sector remained non-privatized and poorly managed, which led to the bankruptcy of large banks and the bankruptcy of investment funds. Looking for cooperation opportunities, in the years 1999–2002, Romania tried to develop trilateral cooperation: Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, Romania-Turkey-Bulgaria, Romania-Greece-Bulgaria, contributing to strengthening stability and security in the region. In the second half of 2001, an agreement on economic, technical, and scientific cooperation in the field of agriculture was signed in Istanbul by nine Balkan states.<sup>729</sup>

On December 7, 2001, the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union decided to lift the visa requirement for Romanian citizens, which was considered the most significant foreign policy success under Prime Minister Năstase rule.<sup>730</sup>

In 2005, the European Parliament noted that Romania's industrial policy had gained stability and predictability but the administrative capacity was still considered insufficient. It pointed out that structural obstacles to investment should be eliminated, i.e., excessive bureaucracy, and unstable legal environment. The Parliament also found it important to secure energy supplies and to eliminate inefficient heating systems and to solve the problem of unprofitable mines.<sup>731</sup>

Romania, for a long time, unlike most European transformation countries, struggled with high inflation. Inflation began to fall below 10% in 2005, and in 2006 it went down with the price increase index to around 5%.<sup>732</sup> The situation of public finances in Romania in the indicated period was not favourable. The authorities have managed to influence the deficit reduction since 2003, but the prospects for the future were not very optimistic. Internal demand and investments became the driving force of Romanian economic growth in 2006. It is worth noting that until 2000, the inflow of foreign direct investment was relatively low. It began to grow in the years 2002–2003 (by approximately \$ 1–2 billion a year) to record an increase in foreign investment before Romania's accession to the European Union (it began to exceed \$ 6 billion, in 2006 – \$ 10 billion.<sup>733</sup> At the end of 2005, foreign direct investment reached around 24% of GDP and was related to large-scale privatization.

In 2008, the Romanian economy grew even faster than the Chinese economy, according to the GDP growth rate *per capita*. Of course, for China, it was a big problem because the population of China (1.3 billion people) meant that the

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<sup>728</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>729</sup> The cooperation agreement was signed by Albania, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Macedonia, Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

<sup>730</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>731</sup> *Wniosek Rumunii o przystąpienie...*

<sup>732</sup> Informacja o sytuacji w Rumunii, 2002, Archives of the President of Poland, sygn. 450/18.

<sup>733</sup> *Bułgaria i Rumunia w Unii Europejskiej – szansa czy konkurencja dla Polski?*, Zeszyty BRE Bank – CASE, nr 88/2007, [http://www.case-research.eu/files/?id\\_plik=4218](http://www.case-research.eu/files/?id_plik=4218) (accessed: 18.05.2017).

global GDP of China already exceeded the US GDP, but the GDP *per capita* was not very impressive.

GDP *per capita* calculated by the PPP method (Purchasing Power Parity) in international dollars is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. PKB *per capita* in international dollars, i.e., according to the purchasing power parity (PPP) in 1980–2017

State	Ranking position 1980	Ranking position 2017	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
Romania	48	58	4 769	7 319	7 970	16 471	23 991
Poland	49	45	4 744	6 557	11 608	21 084	29 521
The Czech Republic	n.d.	37	n.d.	n.d.	16 609	27 559	35 512
Slovakia	n.d.	39	n.d.	n.d.	12 296	24 555	33 025
Lithuania	n.d.	40	n.d.	n.d.	9 619	20 552	32 299
Latvia	n.d.	51	n.d.	n.d.	8 888	17 856	27 644
Estonia	n.d.	41	n.d.	n.d.	12 113	21 721	31750
Hungary	39	46	6 354	11 052	14 285	22 031	29 474
Germany	14	16	11 274	20 726	29 840	40 081	50 425
China	139	79	310	979	2 918	9 252	16 660

Source: Own elaboration based on: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista\\_panstw\\_swiata\\_wedlug\\_PKB...](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista_panstw_swiata_wedlug_PKB...) (accessed: 23.02.2019).

Table 3.1. shows several important issues. Firstly, the Romanian economy is the fastest-growing economy of the European Union. In 2018, it reached a GDP growth rate of around 8%. Nevertheless, considering the period from 1980 to 2017, according to PPP ranking in the GDP *per capita*, the country fell by as much as 10 points from 48 to 58. By contrast, while in the period 1980–2017 Hungary and Germany lowered their ranking positions, Poland moved from position 49 in 1980 to position 45.

Romanian growth is driven by accelerated consumption. In the second quarter of 2017, household expenditure increased by 10.4% compared to 2015, which added up 7.5% to GDP growth. Against this background, public sector expenditure added only 0.2% to GDP growth and even investments that increased the index by 2.6%.

The sources of such increased consumption can be found in Romania primarily in reducing the VAT rate. At the beginning of 2016, the basic rate of this tax in Romania was reduced from 24% to 20%. The next cut, by another 1%, took place on September 1, 2017, which means that Romanian VAT returns to the pre-crisis level; in 2010, the government in Bucharest decided to increase

the rate from 19 to 24% (a year later, also in Poland, VAT was “temporarily” increased from 22 to 23%, and the rate is valid until now).

In the context of an increase in consumer spending, it is also worth mentioning that 2016 and 2017 brought an apparent increase in Romania’s minimum wage. The government then bowed to trade union demands and increased the lowest wage from RON 1050 to RON 1250, i.e., by as much as 19%.<sup>734</sup> As indicated by the IMF in its March 2018 study, in Romania the percentage of persons receiving the minimum wage is higher than in other countries of the region, just like the size of the gray economy. Salaries grow faster than employees productivity.

The increase in expenses is also supported by the interest rates of the National Bank of Romania, which, although higher than in Western Europe or even in the region’s countries, are still the lowest in history (1.75% since May 2015).

The tax reduction ordered by the government did not entail spending cuts or an increase in revenues from the privatization of state-owned enterprises. As a result, the country, which has successfully reduced the budget deficit in recent years, may reach the EU limit of 3% at the end of 2019.

In general, the foundations of the Romanian economy are “fragile,” mainly because the state has neglected investment and “blown” consumption.

Table 3.2 presents the macroeconomic foundations of the Romanian economy in 2013–2018. In general, it can be assumed that the data are positive, but it is worth paying attention to several issues:

1. After a period of deflation in 2015–2016, which was unfavourable for the economy, there was a rapid jump in inflation to 5% in the first quarter of 2018.
2. The state budget deficit at a very low level of 0.8%, in 2015, increased to 3% in 2016 and slightly decreased to 2.9% in 2017. According to analysts, in 2018 its level fluctuated around 3%, i.e., at a level exceeding the Treaty standards.
3. The current account deficit is increasing.
4. The other macroeconomic foundation indicators presented in Table 3.2 should be assessed positively.

The Romanian currency is leu (RON). Romania has a floating exchange rate, the National Bank interferes with the currency market, and does not announce dates or the scale of intervention. In 2017, the average EUR/RON exchange rate was 4.5681. Currency can be exchanged in banks and exchange offices. Exchange offices usually do not charge transaction fees.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>734</sup> It was decided that the pay raise will cover approximately 1.2 million people in 2016. On average, wage increases are to be 56%, Romanian Labour Minister Lia-Olguța Vasilescu announced. PAP, *Rząd Rumunii podwyższył pensje nawet o 100%*, Puls Biznesu 2017, June 7, <https://www.pb.pl/rzad-rumunii-podwyzszyl-pensje-nawet-o-100-proc-863717> (accessed: 12.08.2019).

<sup>735</sup> *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny...*

Table 3.2. Macroeconomic foundations of Romania in 2013–2018

Item	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 – I quarter
Nominal GDP (current prices, EUR million)	144 253	150 357	160 313	169 771	187 868	37 958
GDP <i>per capita</i> (current prices, EUR)	7 200	7 500	8 100	8 600	9 600	1 900
GDP (PPP, billion international dollar)	396	410	427	453	474	
GDP <i>per capita</i> (PPP, international dollars)	19 859	20 609	21 566	23 027	23 991	
GDP growth rate (%)	3,5	3,0	3,6	4,9	6,7	4,2
Budget deficit to GDP ratio (at the end of the period) (%)	2,1	1,3	0,8	3,0	2,9	
Total public debt to GDP ratio (at the end of the period) (%)	42,5	44,3	44,4	44,6	42,9	39,4
Inflation rate (at the end of the period) (%)	4,0	1,1	-0,6	-1,5	1,3	5,0 (03.2018)
Unemployment rate (%)						
◆ according to ILO	7,1	6,8	6,8	5,9	4,9	
◆ recorded, at the end of the period	7,1	6,8	6,6	5,5	4,7	4,7
Value of foreign trade turnover (EUR billion)	104 826	110 962	117 562	124 727	138 240	36 690
Export value (million EUR)	49 562	52 458	54 597	57 385	62 642	16 987
Import value (EUR million)	55 264	58 504	62 965	67 342	75 598	19 703
Current account deficit to GDP ratio (%)	1,1	0,7	1,2	2,1	3,4	
Value of annual inflow of foreign direct investment (USD million)	3 601	3 211	3 839	4 997	5 160	
Value of annual outflow of foreign direct investment (USD million)	-281	-373	562	5	10	
Accumulated value of foreign direct investment in Romania (USD million)	84 596	73 087	70 148	73 906	88 199	
Accumulated value of Romania's foreign direct investment abroad (USD million)	1 465	321	811	767	883	

Source: *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Współpraca dwustronna. Gospodarka rumuńska*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca-dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca-dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.02.2019).

Table 3.3. Exchange rates of Romanian leu

Exchange rate	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 - I quarter
USD/RON (average)	3,0486	3,4682	3,3279	3,3492	4,0057	4,0592	4,0525	3,7860
EUR/RON (average)	4,2379	4,4560	4,4190	4,4446	4,4450	4,4908	4,5681	4,6553
PLN/RON (average)	1,0308	1,0657	1,0529	1,0621	1,0626	1,0293	1,0731	1,1138

Source: *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Współpraca dwustronna. Gospodarka rumuńska*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.02.2019).

Table 3.4. Share of the economic sectors in the nominal GDP value in 2017 (%) and the GDP growth rate in 2017(%)

Sector	Share in nominal GDP in 2017 (%)	Share in GDP growth rate in 2017 (%)
Agriculture, forest sector, hunting, and fishing	4.4	0.7
Mining and quarrying; manufacturing; production and supply of electricity, gas, steam, hot water, and air conditioning; water supply, sewerage, waste management, and remediation activities	24.2	1.9
Construction	5.9	0.0
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles; transport and storage; accommodation and food services	18.7	1.6
Information and communication	5.1	0.6
Financial and insurance activities	2.8	0.0
Real estate market services	7.7	0.3
Professional, scientific, and technical activities as well as administrative and support service activities	6.9	0.7
Public administration and national defense, compulsory social security; education; health protection and social assistance	11.4	0.3
Culture, entertainment, and recreation activity; repair of household goods and other services	3.2	0.2
Gross value added	90.3	6.3
Net taxes on products	9.7	0.7
Total (GDP)	100.0	7.0

Source: *Polska w Rumunii. Informator ekonomiczny. Współpraca dwustronna. Gospodarka rumuńska*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/gospodarka\\_rumunska/](https://bukareszt.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/gospodarka_rumunska/) (accessed: 20.02.2019).

## **Evaluation of trends in macroeconomic indicators in Romania in 2015–2019**

### *Budget, public debt, foreign reserves*

According to the Eurostat data, the budget deficit in relation to GDP in 2017 slightly decreased compared to the previous year, from 3.0 to 2.9%. Despite this, it remains at a higher level than in past years. In the period from 2013 to 2015, the budget deficit amounted to 2.1, 1.3, and 0.8% of GDP, respectively.

As of December 31, 2017, public debt reached 42.9% of Romania's GDP, which means a decrease compared to the same period of 2016. At the end of March 2018, it declined to 39.4%.

The currency reserves of the National Bank of Romania at the end of 2017 amounted to EUR 37.1 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2018 – EUR 38.3 billion.

### *Inflation, interest rates*

Successive VAT reductions contributed to a real decline in the price level first in 2015, then in 2016. In June 2015, the VAT reduction on agri-food products fell from 24 to 9%. The decline of the basic VAT rate from 24% fell to 20% in January 2016, and in January 2017 from 20 to 19%. However, the increase in energy prices and wages in the Romanian economy has become the driving force behind the growing inflation rate, which has started to reach its highest levels since 2014.

According to INS data, deflation of 1.5% was recorded in 2016. In 2017, the inflation rate was already 1.3%, and in March 2018 – 5%. The National Bank of Romania regularly revised its estimates of projected inflation for 2018, 2019. For example, in May 2018, the projected annual inflation rate was raised from 3.5 to 3.6%. It was assumed then that in 2019 it would amount to 3.0%.

### *Unemployment*

Romania continues to record the lowest unemployment rate since the economic crisis in 2008. The unemployment rate dropped to 4.9% in 2017. According to INS data, in the first quarter of 2018 the unemployment rate was 4.7%, and in April 2018 – 4.6%. In the Romanian capital and the surrounding county Ilfov, unemployment was below 1.5%. For companies, it meant growing problems with the recruitment of employees, which in the long run may contribute to the slowdown in enterprise development and, consequently, to the reduction of private investment.

Tables 3.2 and 3.4 show supplementary data allowing the assessment of the “macroeconomic picture” of the Romanian economy. “The growth, typical for

China, should prompt decision-makers to think further,"<sup>736</sup> – said Ionuț Dumitru, chief economist at Raiffeisen Bank Romania and the head of the Romanian Fiscal Council, an independent body advising the government on budgetary policy. Today, Romania is facing “deviations that financial markets will not ignore,” he added.<sup>737</sup>

The current disruption of the Romanian economy should not be underestimated at least because the budget deficit is increasing, consumer demand contributes to the import and current account deficit increase, and the rise in product and service prices is accelerating after the first deflation attack since communism.

The profitability of debt securities has recently increased significantly in response to the National Bank's future activities, which in 2019 will end the two years of record-low interest rates. In 2017, the Romanian leu in relation to the euro was the most unstable among all Central European currencies, which caused its weakening. Mugur Isărescu, the Governor of the National Bank of Romania, recalls how proud Romanian politicians were when they emphasized that they had surpassed China in 2008. At that time, however, they did not learn that the economy could be “defeated” again. “We are not against stimulation of consumption or raising wages, but we need to pay attention to the extent – how many times you can accelerate without having to slow down?”<sup>738</sup> – asked Governor Isărescu.

Internal policies, including economic decisions, have had an impact on the social awareness of Romanians. Over time since the events of 1989, Romanians have undergone an evolution in the behaviour. It allowed the followers of different denominations to profess religion equally. Since the 1990s, the standard of living has been a sensitive issue for Romanians. Above all, it was determined by three factors: firstly – poverty has always been around since the end of World War I; Romanians have always worked for the future, never for themselves. Secondly, after 1989 they could travel without any restrictions and observe the Western style and standard of living. Thirdly, the 1990s and 2000 were associated with enfranchisement, corruption, mafia's financial speculation, which resulted in income disparities in the population and visible social differences. All these were reflected in the consciousness of citizens.

At the end of the 1990s, some changes were introduced in the look of big cities. Casinos, clubs, and new shops were opened in Bucharest. There are only few material elements of civilization left after communists had been destroying them for many years. The need for restoration of earlier eras in material and spiritual terms has become a need in itself.

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<sup>736</sup> *Rumunia rozwija się szybciej niż Chiny. Ale cud gospodarczy przywołuje złe wspomnienia*, Forsal 2017, November 21, <https://forsal.pl/artykuly/1085854,rumunia-rozwija-sie-szybciej-niz-chiny-a-le-cud-gospodarczy-przywoluje-zle-wspomnienia.html> (accessed: 19.02.2019).

<sup>737</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibidem*.

Romania was civilizing, the features of the Western state were shaping. Social life and even architecture gradually resembled Western cities.

Francophone tendencies returned in the names of the cafes *Charme*, *Rembrandt*, *La Muse*, and the need to imitate the metropolis has become a kind of *must-have*. In big cities, glass and steel building began to be built, and the designs were modelled on the architecture of Berlin, Viennese, and New York City. The collision of the old with the new caused aesthetic dissonance. An example is Bucharest itself. In 1990, Silviu Brucan said that "it will take the lives of one generation to fix what Ceaușescu did to Romania," and probably he was right.<sup>739</sup>

Electronic media and newspapers gained more freedom. It was allowed to broadcast in the languages of the minorities living in Romania. The information method and content have changed. The jargon language of the previous era has disappeared. In Romania, ensuring free and equal access to cultural events has become one of the conditions of democracy. It has the same meaning as guaranteeing freedom for the individual. It was mainly a creative intelligentsia who had such an attitude. Most of the nation attached great importance to showing patriotism – it was left in the mindset from Ceaușescu's time. Therefore, people knew how to manifest nationalism. Mentality of Romanians could be summarized as follows: patriotic-nationalist awareness, the economy organized according to the Western European model.

The year 1990 radically changed the political and social situation of Romania. The revolution abolished censorship, allowed contact with foreigners, openness was proclaimed in cultural, scientific, and information policy, as well as the autonomy of creative environments and institutions. Culture has finally found sources of funding. Eventually, open-minded people, who were eager to cooperate with other communities, were appointed as the heads of the ministries, and cultural and scientific institutions. The changes had a positive impact on the image of the state.<sup>740</sup> It was an essential asset against the background of the complicated political situation and economic problems that have lasted for two decades. Romanian society used to express their emotions in the form of strikes and demonstrations on city streets. People mainly protested against corruption and theft of national property. Bureaucracy, judicial staff, prosecutors, and secret service officers were accused of this. It is not surprising, then, that citizens' confidence in justice for years has been very low. It is not surprising that the judiciary was assessed as bad by observers from the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the so-called Venice Commission) and observers from the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Council of Europe.<sup>741</sup> Society also criticized thinking in categories of state and nation and accused of particularism and pursuit of prosperity at the expense of the entire society and Romania's position in the world.

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<sup>739</sup> L. Boia, *Jak zrumunizowała się Rumunia*, Kraków 2018.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>741</sup> European Commission, *Progress Report, Romania...*



The grounds on which the contemporary political system of Romania has been drawn up undoubtedly are as follows: the achievements of modern European democracy, the legacy of communism, local conditions, the experiences of the period after 1989, and earlier, pre-communist state traditions.<sup>742</sup>

Although Romania seems to be a country open to representatives of various nations, the implementation of the law guaranteeing freedom to national minorities has proceeded in stages. In 1995, the Balladur plan was adopted, and on its basis, in 1996, Romania signed a treaty on good neighbourly relations with the largest and most strongly represented group – the Hungarians. The second stage, in the years 1996–2000, was referred to as “absorption time”.<sup>743</sup> A real transformation in the field of minority rights took place in 2000. The turning point was the signing of an official agreement between the ruling Social Democratic Party and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) – the Law on Local Government Administration. It guaranteed ethnic minorities in local government units the use of a minority language, while in regions where they constitute at least 20% of the population – bilingual names and announcements of administrative decisions in the language of the minority language. These efforts could have been an effect of the Romanian elite’s desire to introduce the state into the structures of the European Union. In its pre-accession reports, the European Commission has repeatedly stressed the need to normalize neighbourly relations and recognize the rights of national and ethnic minorities in Romania.<sup>744</sup> They constituted one of the most important signs of the democratization of the state community.

Ensuring security is of great importance to Romania, particularly when we consider the fact that Romania’s role in the Black Sea Basin and having ports important from a military and economic points of view have made it a place of competition for many global interests. The fact has not been left out of the State Security Strategy and seems to have been decisive when it comes to Romanian accession to NATO (2004) and the European Union (2007). Ion Iliescu wrote in his dissertation on integration and globalization in 2003:

The western part of the Black Sea coast and important ports belong to Romania. The Black Sea’s connection with the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and the Middle East makes it an important link. Romania controls a significant part of the Danube shipping section – the Black Sea (last 1000 km), its mouths, and the Danube-Black Sea channel. The above elements become more important with the opening of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal, which gives new opportunities to

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<sup>742</sup> A. Burakowski, *System polityczny współczesnej...*, p. 241.

<sup>743</sup> A. Dobre, *The europeanisation of the Romanian minority rights policy*, “Romanian Political Science Review” 2004, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 631. The Hungarian Party (UDMR), which at the time was part of the coalition, co-created the cooperation system, opted for adopting as many solutions as possible for the representation of minorities (by the way, they did not remain later). D. Kasproicz, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>744</sup> D. Kasproicz, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

transform this symbolic river of the continent into an important communication channel, connecting the main points of Europe – from the Black Sea to the North Sea – and the old continent with neighbouring areas.<sup>745</sup>

Romania is still one of the most corrupt countries in Europe. Verification of Romania's progress in the fight against corruption, which has been conducted since 2007 thanks to the adoption of special cooperation and verification mechanism (CVM), shows that the process slowly and gradually brings the desired effects. In Romania, the process of reckoning with the past is underway. People, regardless of age, wealth, or positions, are held responsible for the things that had happened. However, the 2017 European Commission report confirms that this fight is not over yet. 93% of respondents believed that Romania was a country where corruption was a "serious problem." 79% claimed it was a "severe problem."<sup>746</sup> This shows that Romania needs *catharsis*. The society is exhausted by constant intrigues and trials, and wants justice and honesty. There is a visible lack of trust in democracy through representation, which is reflected in the low turnout in referendums, the decrease in the number of members and supporters of individual political groups, and political scandals. It is believed that Romania has dealt with political and economic dynasties, which is reminiscent of monarchist rule. In Romanian political scene it is necessary to completely eliminate people coming from the "system" – former communists and Securitate employees. Since 2014, Romania has been shaken by new information about the arrests of leading politicians – Adrian Năstase, Traian Băsescu, Liviu Dragnea, and Ion Iliescu. In July 2018, the ruling Social Democrats also removed the head of the National Anti-Corruption Office (DNA) – Laura Codruța Kövesi.

Romania's problems with democracy today inevitably recall its complicated fate. "The chronic identity crisis is again in harmony with the chronic penchant for extreme solutions, which prolongs the post-totalitarian impasse."<sup>747</sup> However, there are some encouraging effects of democratic transformation in the country. NATO imposed some of them, others by the European Union, in the form of the Copenhagen criteria. Like the 2018 referendum on homosexual marriages, some attempt to divert attention from political issues that are really relevant to the country.<sup>748</sup> Communism is no longer a real threat in Romania, and, according to Romanian writer Norman Manea

in a sense, it never was: Ceaușescu's Stalinism was gradually transformed into camouflaged fascism. What raises concerns is the forces of totalitarianism,

<sup>745</sup> J. Iliescu, *Integracja i globalizacja...*, p. 26.

<sup>746</sup> European Commission, *The cooperation and verification mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania – third wave*, Report, Flash Eurobarometer 445, 2017, [https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d5e0d363-e780-11e6-ad7c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en\\_z](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d5e0d363-e780-11e6-ad7c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en_z), p. 4 (accessed: 10.07.2017).

<sup>747</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>748</sup> The referendum had 30% turnout, which meant that the constitutional right restricting marriage to the relationship between a man and a woman was not changed.

which are still strong in Romania. The bankruptcy and defeat of the totalitarian left-wing were an important lesson for the right-wing. The question arises – will it learn from this lesson? Romania is not only Ceaușescu, Codreanu, or Antonescu; it is not just green shirts of Legion terrorists and miners from Securitate. Romania is its citizens. The young generation today wants freedom and prosperity. For Romania, where nothing is black or white, there is hope, but the condition for its success is to support democracy clearly and sincerely strive to build a civil society.<sup>749</sup>

Bearing in mind the internal conflicts that Romania is facing, frequent changes in the government, damaging its efficiency and limiting progress in implementing structural reforms, it can be assumed that the coming years will be a huge challenge both for the state itself and for the Union experiencing the Brexit crisis and migrations.

Romania was formed in 1859<sup>750</sup> due to the unification of two principalities – Wallachia and Moldavia. Being in the region, which had been “open” for a long time, the vaguely structured, current Romanian territory has experienced both the dominance of various political systems and ethnic and cultural influences.<sup>751</sup> Economically, the state has always been weak. A significant part of the Romanian economy was in the hands of “non-Romanians”. In the interwar years, Romania remained a country with a strong agricultural and rural character (80% of citizens). The level of education of citizens was not high. According to official data, in 1930 only 57% of the country’s population could read and write Romanian. This confirmed the mental impoverishment of the society. In the 1950s and 1960s, Romanian society was additionally subjected to terror. Mental and physical harassment, imprisoning the citizens, often “for the ideas,” suppressed the Romanian people even more, depriving them of the right to vote. After the death of Gheorghiu-Dej, for many Romanians, Nicolae Ceaușescu, a Romanian citizen, who grew up in poverty and understood the concerns of the society, came to power, seemed to be a salvation, which, however, did not last long. Romania was one of the first socialist countries to introduce the institution of the president into its legal order. The establishment of the office of president was a goal the Romanian Communist Party was pursuing. At the conference in 1972, this party entrusted Nicolae Ceaușescu with the function of the president of the Council of State.<sup>752</sup> The next step was to present social practice as a justification for the need to establish a president institution.<sup>753</sup> The “Genius of the Carpathians”, however, did not fit into Romanian society, he adored terror and denunciation.

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<sup>749</sup> N. Manea, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 148.

<sup>750</sup> The official name – The United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.

<sup>751</sup> L. Boia, *Jak zrumunizowała się...*, p. 5.

<sup>752</sup> S. Grabowska, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>753</sup> W. Sokolewicz, J. Zakrzewska, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Konstytucja Socjalistycznej Republiki Rumunii*, transl. S. Gebethner, Wrocław 1978, p. 46.

At the expense of the people, he built his mighty Palace on the ruins of human misery. His decisions, particularly those in the early 1980s, suggesting paying off foreign debts at the expense of a drastic reduction in domestic consumption, plunged society even deeper. Lack of electricity, food, medicine, daily struggle for survival, life in the conditions depriving a man of dignity strongly affected the mentality of the nation which was suppressed by dictatorships, deprived of the right to vote, frozen in a dispassionate system.

It was difficult for Romania to take the path towards democracy, not only because of the bloody incidents of 1989. The restoration of the multi-party system and the first free elections in 1990 were supposed to be a turning point and bring citizens a better life. The rule of Ion Iliescu and the National Salvation Front did not change the citizens' financial situation and did not bring the promised spectacular changes. In the era "after Ceaușescu" electricity and goods in stores were brought back, but people still did not have money. Romanians were victims of financial scandals; they became victims of financial pyramids. As in other post-communist countries, representatives of the old nomenclature came to power in Romania. They were everywhere – in politics, the media, army, and in the process of creating a market economy. The people of Iliescu, responsible for the events of the late 1980s, invariably stayed in power. Protected from the society, inviolable, they were co-present for years in shaping the nation's new national consciousness and the fate of the nation and state. Three terms of President Ion Iliescu seemed to confirm that the citizens trusted their statesman. However, it is difficult to say to what extent it was trust, and to what extent dishonest actions revealing such state of affairs. Solutions from the Ceaușescu era continued to be used and approved by the rulers. Over the years, the entry ban for King Michael I only confirmed that any interference in the authorities' internal policy and deals between people in the power camp was impossible. Iliescu's rule continued. The bloody conflict in the former Yugoslavia undoubtedly diverted the attention of the West and the countries of the Community for a dozen years. They were somewhat interested in Romania due to its natural resources, but the bloodshed in the heart of Europe entirely absorbed their attention. It can be assumed that had it been not for the Balkans situation, Iliescu would have been removed from a power much earlier. In the following years, the Romanian leaders were unable to deal with the situation. Although the new presidents were already from the "younger generation," their policies did not work. Deeply rooted operating principles, connections, and political deals prevented the possibility of change in the state. Emil Constantinescu's announcements about economic reform, rooting out the corruption, prevailing in Romania and the examination of the course of revolution did not come true. Traian Băsescu, who assumed the office in 2004, also did not become the favourite of the crowds, although in 2006 he officially condemned the crimes of the Ceaușescu period. Reports of corruption published during his term, political crisis, disputes over budget savings and

related loud protests, the threat of bankruptcy of the state, influenced changes of the prime ministers and in the government, which affected even the president. The dynamics of change on the Romanian political scene confirm that Romania has been a country balancing between communism and democracy. Political elites, "infected" with communism, understand democracy differently than the nation. For the society it is synonymous with "better life," for the authorities – with "connections." However, a large part of citizens did not experience a better life in Romania. After 1989 waves of emigrants left Romania, permanently fleeing for a better life to Italy, Spain, Britain, and France. Salary and pension raise, free rail transport for students, cuts in social security contributions and taxes have not improved the country's overall situation.

The accession of Romania, one of the poorest countries in Europe, to NATO, and its membership in the European Union only formally confirmed that Romania had undergone democratization. In fact, it did not happen. Preparations of Romania for the membership in the EU structures forced the authorities and the Romanian judiciary to take more restrictive actions and imposed the necessity of cooperation with representatives of the anti-corruption prosecutor's office. A special anti-corruption department was established in Bucharest and the EC monitored Romania in terms of the effectiveness of reforms in the judiciary and the fight against corruption (excluding organized crime).<sup>754</sup> The change of legal awareness and stricter legislation eventually was effectual. In the beginning, courts started to pass suspended sentences. Since 2012 they have been imposing prison sentences. In 2013, anti-corruption agencies handed over to the justice system the cases of over 1000 people, including six ministers and deputies, 34 mayors, 25 legal representatives, dozens of former police officers, and customs officers. In 2014, the anti-corruption department investigated over 200 cases involving 800 people, including eight parliament members and 10 former ministers. Over 1000 convictions were delivered, assets worth € 150 million were confiscated. Former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase; a politician, businessman, and media magnate Dan Voiculescu; brother of the President of Romania Mircea Băseșcu; even "anti-corruption" head of the department for combating economic crime and terrorism Alina Bica were sent to prison.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> EU advisers to Bucharest were invited by Prime Minister Adrian Năstase himself, who was sent to prison in January 2014, convicted under the charges of the same anti-corruption department. E. Manolowa, *25 lat po upadku...*; jku/mc, *Rumuni: Za Ceausescu bylo lepiej!*, PAP, Bukareszt 1999, November 18.

<sup>755</sup> E. Manolowa, *25 lat po upadku...*

## AFTERWORD

Romania is an extraordinary country, as Romanian scientists, writers, and publicists claim; foreign writers also emphasize this fact. Nonetheless, it is not an answer to problems of the country and nation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Understanding the issues of today's Romania requires extensive studies in socio-political, cultural, and customs history. Romanian society glorifies its history, yet does not find the answer to why there are more problems with the processes of Western-style democratization in Romania than in the countries of Central Europe. Phenomena and facts occurring in the history of Romania are noticed but not interpreted multidimensionally. Such issues arise not only in Romanian but also in foreign literature. Understanding Romania and its current problems will be gradual, but it will not cause cognitive dissonance among researchers of Southeast Europe. Romania, like the countries of Central Europe, was torn at some point. However, the political winds blowing in Central Europe were not as intense and volatile as those in Romania. Romania was under the influence of Turkey, Russia, the Soviet Union, and Germany; the Romanian intelligentsia equated itself with French culture and political thought. Its dreams have always been around "Greater Romania," in terms of territory or status on the world stage. Actions did not follow the socio-political aspirations, and no facts were supporting them. However, part of the society stayed with them. In December 1989, the dreams were revealed during the so-called Romanian revolution and still pose a danger to the transformation of the socio-political life. In Romania, we deal with the phenomenon of limited opportunity to break away from the past. Therefore, political solutions contained in the Romanian constitution are a mainstay for transformation. This is why it is necessary to learn about the nation's political mindset, which cannot be achieved without deepening the study of the Balkan countries, the influence of political thought, Ottoman-Turkish policy, and the West. The relations between the countries of Central Europe, Russia, and the former and contemporary Romania were and still are significant. Romanians have the opportunity to open up to the world, including Europe, which will probably set conditions for a democratic understanding of Romania's history and take responsibility for the need to build mentality and institutions functioning in a democratic and socially transparent way. Romania needs a "third wave of democracy." The first wave was the post-communist takeover of power; the second wave was the takeover of power by the former opposition and the adoption of democratic political and legal

solutions. The third wave should include democratizing the administration and political mindset of society. This will be the most challenging task.

Romanian society's attitude, resulting from its social, political, and cultural history, was shown during the social rebellion in December 1989. There was no revolution; there were a revolt and a coup against poverty and dictatorial rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The uprisings were not even targeted at the system. Such as those occurred in the countries of Central Europe, although their extent was not fundamental and did not determine social uprisings in a basic way. In Romania, the majority of the nation were not involved in public uprisings; the opposition was politically and organizationally weak. That is why the uprisings were a top-down decision, not the other way around as in Central Europe, where the opposition had a draft reform program, support of the majority of the nation, and organizational structure was related to Western political circles. The situation in Romania was not the same. Hence, it only experienced a violent coup which undoubtedly was one of the significant political events in Europe in the late 20th century and indicated that society was ready for change. Recent years show that Romanians have already come a long way of democratizing their state and are slowly implementing political, economic, and administrative reforms. However, there is still a lot of work ahead. There is a need for political commitment, which is necessary to reconsider the political mindset of citizens to lead the country out of the "totalitarian spell" and give the society a sense of citizenship and responsibility related to it. It is impossible to understand the events in Romania after 1989 without considering, to a great extent, the political culture of the society. Most studies in Polish and foreign languages focused rather on political and economic issues. In Central European countries, there was a small liberalization of the Bolshevik system in the 1970s. In Romania, however, the system of patriarchal communism and the cult of personality developed. Along with the putting an end to the dictatorship, with the help of bureaucracy and the family, autocracy, and autarky economy - merged with closed society and limited contacts with the West came to Romania. Stimulating nationalist attitudes in society served this goal.

The political culture of Romanian society and current phenomena and events influenced the country's political situation and atmosphere after the so-called Romanian revolution. As early as in 1990, the conflict between post-communists and the opposition intensified. It was fuelled by tensions between generations that were not always divided into two groups - the post-communist and the opposition. The young and middle-generation Romanians opted for rapid and decisive reforms when the older generation wanted the narrowly defined model of "perestroika." Such a phenomenon could be encountered even in the hierarchical structure of the army. Romanian conditions were a political sensation that the FSN, and the opposition should have taken into consideration. They did, but only in the early 2000s.

In the first half of the 1990s, Ion Iliescu's team managed to stay in power despite numerous strikes and street riots. Post-communists even controlled some of them. In contrast, opposition groups were internally polarized, with no program and no close contact with the society. The same situation was among liberals. Besides, opposition parties were unable to develop a coherent program of political and economic reforms, which was essential for the economy in crisis. Although the Orthodox Church and the ex-King Michael I made attempts to unite the opposition, it did not bring the desired results. The political culture made itself known and concerned all social groups. Part of the opposition and part of the young generation counted on the second phase of the Romanian revolution. What was not considered is that the society was exhausted, and still obeyed the authorities. The situation in the international arena was also underestimated. The FSN and the Petre Roman's government knew better the political mindset of an average Romanian and were able to talk to the so-called lower strata. In addition, his government was experienced and had an ability to manage the society. An example would be Prime Minister Roman proposition to form a coalition government with the opposition. Opposition leaders responded negatively to this proposal. It was a political mistake and a lack of familiarity with society's moods because the ruling elite was no longer a monolith, and the other factions had undergone various evolutionary transformations. Despite the changes in the ruling team and a 27.7% decrease in production, Petre Roman's government stayed in power, which negatively influenced the political prestige of the opposition at home and abroad. The army played an important role in keeping post-communists in control. The opposition feared that the overthrow of the FSN government could lead to a second coup and the takeover of power by General Stănculescu, who had high political ambitions.

The extent of economic reforms was the basis for the conflict between the authorities and the legal opposition in 1990 and 1991. While the opposition favoured instant and mass privatization, the post-communists implemented a program of gradual privatization which was too slow and corruptive. The FSN elites were afraid that too radical economic reforms and, above all, mass privatization would lead to social uprisings that the post-communist government would not be able to control, and that the opposition was not prepared politically and programmatically to assume power. However, the main concern prevailing among the post-communists at that time was the progressive isolation of Romania on the international stage. Traditionally, the Romanian authorities had the best relations with the Mediterranean and South American countries. On the one hand, Romania was striving for good relations with Germany and the countries of the "triangle" – Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, but, on the other, cared for good relations with the Soviet Union. Such an arrangement of international cooperation was aimed at, both from the government and the opposition sides, the unification of Europe within the EU, which Romania wanted to become a member of.



Some opposition parties united before the May election in 1990. One of the significant factors influencing the integration of the opposition was the change of the FSN policy towards greater legal and political openness to the world. It included the option of free travel for citizens to foreign countries. The ruling group sought to ensure greater economic stability to confused society and to maintain the subdivision of land. The authorities even tried to form seemingly opposition groups, such as the Civic Alliance, channelling the radical wings of opposition groups. The political efforts of post-communists led to the establishment of a united oppositional party – the National Convention for Democracy Implementation in December 1990. However, it was soon dissolved. At the turn of 1990 and 1991, the pace of reform implementation clearly slowed down, mainly due to socio-political pressure and inertia and resistance of the middle and lower levels of the state apparatus. The society did not trust political forces, both post-communists and the elites of the opposition parties. The majority of Romanians could not realize political pluralism and the related democratic competition. Romanians demanded the creation of a high welfare state, even at the cost of democratic and political reforms. The Romanian state could not afford it in the 1990s.

Lack of progress in the Romanian economy, increase in the political activity of the opposition parties, which resulted in a big influence on the middle-aged and young generation, and personal conflicts within the FSN, led to the elimination of political unity among post-communists and the formation of factions. The factional divisions among the FSN leaders were conditioned by the conflict between Prime Minister Roman and President Iliescu over the scope of power and the level of democratic reforms. The antagonism was also significantly influenced by the government crisis, caused by mining uprisings in September 1991, which Iliescu was responsible for. The presidential and local elections in 1992 were also significant. The government crisis and the crisis within the FSN led to distinct divisions within the leadership of the post-communist group. Among the members of the FSN there was a division into three groups that remained in conflict: conservative, headed by Senator Vasile Văcaru, supporting Ion Iliescu; reformatory, called the young wing of the Front, led by Petre Roman, evolving towards social democratic values; and the third one that was striving to keep the unity of the FSN and Iliescu's strong position. Among the factions, the "young" group was stronger, and it was increasingly influencing the attitude of society which showed a gradual change of direction to a pro-democratic one. The signing of the friendship treaty with the USSR by President Iliescu in April 1992 had a significant impact on the FSN division and on accelerating the integration of the opposition groups. The changing nation's mentality was influenced by the change in the EU's economic policy towards Romania, and in the first place by the signing of the Association Agreement with the Community on February 1, 1993. It was Bucharest's first step to joining the European Union on January 1,

2007. The final division of the FSN into the Democratic National Salvation Front and the Democratic Party in 1992 was also important.

All the events strengthened the political position of the opposition parties. There were processes of progressive consolidation of democratic and opposition forces resulting in the formation of the Democratic Convention. It comprised 14 main groups and parties, previously operating under two agreements: The National Convention and the Democratic Anti-totalitarian Forum. In the newly formed Convention, the Civil Alliance Party, headed by Nicolae Manolescu, played an increasingly important role – it was linking the partially antagonized opposition parties. It influenced the changes in the political culture of Romanian society and understanding of the ideals of democracy, which became evident in 1992 and 1993. The economy remained Romanian Achilles heel as the Romanian authorities could not cope with it until joining the EU. However, the Community did not solve all Romania's economic problems. There is still a lot to be done by Romanian society and state. It requires reforming economic governance, further democratic privatization, and a change in the society's political mindset, expecting full responsibility of state institutions for the standard of living.

Nationalists used a demanding attitude of the society, lack of skills in economic management, ubiquitous corruption, political divisions in the FSN, and lack of political determination among democratic opposition parties from the Greater Romania Party, the Romanian National Unity Party, and the Romanian Hearth Union. The reminiscence of the PCR's political and propaganda influence was also significant. All in all, however, the nationalist parties did not influence the Romanian political scene because the post-communist governments underwent ideological and political evolution in 1992–1996, adopting principles based on left-wing and democratic values. President Ion Iliescu was becoming more and more familiar with these values. However, the democratization of former FSN leaders was too slow; middle-level officials could not completely break away from the political principles of the Ceaușescu era. They were guided, as always, by particularism and individualism, reinforced by the steady and unpredictable situation in Romania in the 1990s. Under these circumstances, the parliamentary elections in 1996 were won by the Romanian Democratic Convention and Emil Constantinescu became the president of Romania. The society clearly was growing out of Romanian communism, and many of the post-communist FSN leaders could not keep up with it. The situation was influenced by the progress in the Romanian economy. In 1995, GDP increased by around 7%, and private-sector production already accounted for 45% of GDP. Despite positive changes, the economy was still in crisis, and no one from either the left or the democratic opposition wanted to undertake radical reforms. The society was also afraid of the improvements. Thus, over the years of the rule of the former opposition 1996–2000, nothing changed in terms of economy. Even the democrats got caught up in corruption scandals, which became almost a national mark.

The governments of the Romanian Democratic Convention did not revive the Romanian economy. It went into recession, and the standard of living declined. The average salary in 2000 was \$ 90 per month, and its purchasing power was 68% of the purchasing power of the average wage in 1990. It was a sign of the considerable impoverishment of the society which was accustomed to caring for material goods rather than for civil rights. The nation supported the populist Romanian Social Democratic Party, and its candidate Ion Iliescu was again elected to be president in 2000. Politics of populism and a noticeable rise in living standards were not sufficient reasons for the Romanian left to stay in power. This was proved in the next election in 2004, which was won by the centre and right-wing conservative parties. At that time, the parties had a more specific and developed economic and political program that showed sympathy for the society. Moreover, the Romanian society that went to 2004 elections was a society that began to learn good citizenship. It was illustrated by the escalation of the conflict between President Traian Băsescu and Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu over implementing the Lustration Law adopted in 1997. The Lustration Report (the so-called Tismăneanu Report) presented by President Băsescu in December 2006 was shocking for the public. However, the crimes of the totalitarian Romanian system were not a secret. When giving the report, the president officially apologized to the victims of communism, emphasizing that the Romanian regime was unlawful and criminal. The subject of lustration has always been extremely controversial. The dispute also concerned the bills related to national defence and the activities of information services. As a consequence, the Conservative Party withdrew from the government in December 2006. The Popescu-Tăriceanu government faced a crisis which was additionally fuelled by the tolerance of the plunder of national wealth and a weak fight against corruption. However, the key reason for the crisis was the lack of an apparent increase in society's standard of living.

Romanian society had high hopes of the Popescu-Tăriceanu government, but pre-election promises were not fulfilled, mainly about improving the citizens' standard of living. However, government economic reforms were more efficient, at least better than those carried out by post-communist authorities. Inflation was falling, though not as fast as expected. There was an increase in consumption caused by the rise in the society's income, despite increasing energy prices, including gas. In Romania, unemployment remained low, but this was partly due to high labour migration. In Central European countries, labour migration was already limited in the first decade of 2000. It alone was a sign of the unsatisfactory progress of reforms in Romania. The phenomenon of a long-lasting economic crisis after introducing the political changes was characteristic of Southeast Europe. To this day the Balkan countries and Romania have problems with economic reforms. It has been the result of the lack of determination to implement democratic changes and the

low level of the political culture of societies which, as in Romania, cannot step back from the past for a long time. The past, to a great extent, determines actions for the future. Even the membership of the EU and NATO has not entirely changed Romanians' political mindset; the sense of citizenship has not anchored as in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Hungary. Romanians place themselves in the political circle of Central Europe, but this is not the actual state of affairs.

After the democratic groups took power, Romania's international policy was very active and thriving, although internal affairs required democratic and significant reforms. The society had to be skilfully and culturally inspired to get a sense of citizenship. It was a task for the intelligentsia, which was not entirely accomplished. However, Romania's growing position in the European arena set conditions for the political strengthening of democratic parties. Besides, the society was convinced that the democratic reforms carried out by the government are social and not only serve the emerging private business. In the 2000s, Romanians criticized the method of privatization more than its very idea. Since the mid-2000s, the society's attitude towards foreign capital has changed. Romania sought to operate actively in the Balkans and the Black Sea basin. As a part of cooperation in these regions, ministers of economy of 15 states arranged a meeting in Bucharest in December 2005. The meeting was devoted to implementing regional development projects and bilateral infrastructure development projects aimed at improving the functioning of transport, particularly energy and raw materials transport. In this context, attention should be paid to the involvement of Romanian authorities in the construction of the Nabucco gas pipeline.

The increased international activity of Romania and the development of a democratic legal system significantly contributed to the education and re-education of society regarding civic participation and the functioning of state and local government bodies. 30 years after the Romanian revolt, we are dealing with a compelling political science phenomenon, namely: a significant part of the society has changed its political mindset a lot, and the authorities have not, even the former oppositionists. It is a thesis that requires more extensive research, not only in the area of political science but also sociological and cultural ones. Presidential elections should be a subject of similar research. One of the most important qualities of a candidate for this office, according to Romanians, should be social recognition and charisma. Such attributes were first and foremost appreciated in Eastern Europe and the Balkan peninsula, where oriental values spread quickly.

During the 2014 election campaign, Romanian society noticed the qualities mentioned above in a teacher of physics, the mayor of Sibiu in 2000–2014. Klaus Iohannis – the leader of the National Liberal Party (PNL), won the presidential election on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the overthrow of Ceaușescu.

An ethnic German, pragmatist, and supporter of a determined fight against corruption, unexpectedly became the opponent of Prime Minister Victor Ponta, and defeated him in the second round of presidential elections winning 55% of the vote. At that time, the support granted to him constituted not only his win, but was also a sign of objection to Victor Ponta's announcements of amnesty for corrupt politicians, including people associated with the social democratic party. The most "European" of all presidents, Klaus Iohannis did not hide his negative emotions, speaking publicly about the ruling party. "Romania needs a strong government, not one that shamefully obeys party orders," he emphasized, starting a permanent conflict with the government. Even though there has been an ongoing investigation of the Iohannis family's illegal activity since 2003, the president seemed to have gained many supporters. In Romania, every politician has a past behind him and that is why the not fully transparent purchase of the real estate in Sibiu was nothing special.<sup>756</sup> It is not surprising that President Iohannis gave the head of the Romanian Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) – Laura Codruța Kövesi, considerable support. Until she was removed from the office, she had been one of the most committed people in the state investigating abuse of power among political elites and authorities. She showed great determination and courage as she sought justice among the elites of the Romanian political scene. With the support of the President of Romania and the European Parliament, in September 2019, Laura Codruța Kövesi was appointed European prosecutor. According to members of Parliament, her impressive achievements in the fight against corruption – "underestimated" in her homeland – gained recognition in Brussels. Therefore, since 2020 Kövesi has been dealing with crimes related to fraud, bribery, money laundering, and cross-border severe VAT fraud (for an amount exceeding 10 million euro) at the European level.<sup>757</sup> All we have left is to believe that in this important position, she will not try to harm Romania she represents and the people she could count on when the national prosecutor's office tried to slander her.

The European Commission Report published in 2017 confirmed that Romania is one of the most corrupt countries, and its justice system has been

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<sup>756</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Iohannis claim to be the owners of, i.e., big retail space in the center of Sibiu, the rental of which over the past 14 years has brought them 320,000. euro. However, as it turns out, the retail space partly belongs to the Bastea family which acquired the property with the Iohannis family in 1999, when nationalization took place. Three of the six houses in the center of Sibiu, which are property of the presidential couple, were bought with the money from the rental of the above-mentioned retail space. Who was the seller of the property and what are the terms, how much they were sold for – the court will answer these questions. *Moștenirea din spatele averii imobiliare a lui Klaus Iohannis*, Rise Project 2015, August 24, <https://www.riseproject.ro/articol/mostenirea-din-spatele-averii-imobiliare-a-lui-klaus-iohannis/> (accessed: 10.08.2019).

<sup>757</sup> K. Strzępka, *PE i Rada UE zgodziły się, że Kövesi zostanie prokuratorem europejskim*, PAP, Bruksela 2019, September 24.

particularly monitored by Brussels. Loud protests in response to grave abuse of power and privilege by the authorities, a fire in the Colectiv club, growing social dissatisfaction due to changes in the penal code, promises of amnesty for more than 2500 people and new scandals involving politicians, did not affect positively the image of Romania in Europe and the world. The amendments to the penal code were particularly received as the most serious step backward on the path of reforms that Romania took in 2007, i.e., at the moment of accession to the European Union. Romania's accession to international organizations only formally confirmed that it had undergone democratization. In fact, it did not happen. Preparations of Romania for the membership in the EU structures forced the authorities and the Romanian judiciary to take more restrictive actions and imposed the necessity of cooperation with the representatives of the anti-corruption prosecutor's office. A special anti-corruption division was established in Bucharest. The EC monitored Romania in terms of the effectiveness of reforms in the judiciary and the fight against corruption (excluding organized crime).<sup>758</sup> The change of legal awareness and stricter legislation eventually was effectual. In the beginning, courts started to pass suspended sentences. Since 2012 they have been imposing prison sentences. In 2013, anti-corruption agencies handed over to the justice system the cases of over 1000 people, including six ministers and deputies, 34 mayors, 25 legal representatives, dozens of former police officers, and customs officers. In 2014, the anti-corruption department investigated over 200 cases involving 800 people, including eight parliament members and ten former ministers. Over 1000 convictions were delivered, assets worth € 150 million were confiscated. Former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, a politician, businessman, and media magnate Dan Voiculescu, brother of the President of Romania Traian Băsescu Mircea Băsescu, even "anti-corruption" head of the department for combating economic crime and terrorism Alina Bica were sent to prison.<sup>759</sup>

2017 was a year of crisis and chaos. In Romania, theoretically, until 2018, i.e., until Ion Iliescu was brought to justice, the sense of unfinished revolution continued. Political parties with no ideas or charismatic leaders were not able to overcome the old system. The rotation of the names, appointments and resignations of prime ministers, political conflicts between the head of state and government heads, and social uprisings did not strengthen the state, to the contrary - weakened its structures. Practically, today's Romania is the same state as in December 1989, seeking an answer to a key question: What next? As a result of fraudulent financial operations and corruption, Romania, next to Bulgaria, was and is one of the European Union's poorest countries. Over 40% of the

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<sup>758</sup> EU advisors to Bucharest were invited by Prime Minister Adrian Năstase himself, who was imprisoned in January 2014, convicted on the basis of charges by the same institution. E. Manolowa, *25 lat po upadku...; jku/mc, Rumuni: Za Ceaușescu było lepiej!*, PAP, Bukareszt 1999, November 18.

<sup>759</sup> E. Manolowa, *25 lat po upadku...*

country's population is imperilled by poverty, about 4 million people emigrated. The time went by, but there were no sentences for corruption in the state.<sup>760</sup> The death of King Michael I, who had fought for the good name of the state, ended a particular stage of the Romanian road to Europeanness. Despite his efforts, he did not manage to overcome the system of deals. Appreciated during his lifetime, glorified after death, he became a symbol for Romanians, which reminds that truth is the most important thing. Surprisingly, some Romanians might feel nostalgic and be interested in the "Genius of the Carpathians." As Romanians emphasize, during the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu life was poor but fair. Public opinion polls conducted by the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and Remembrance of Romanian Refugee (IICCMRE) confirm that "half of the respondents believe that life in Romania was better before December 1989, 23% think it is worse, 14% think it is the same."<sup>761</sup> According to participants, it is primarily due to job security (62%) and standard of living (26%), which were far more important than lack of freedom (69%), food, or information (11%). According to 25% of the population, Nicolae Ceaușescu "did good work for Romania," 15% think that he did terribly.<sup>762</sup> There is still nostalgia and interest in the former leader.<sup>763</sup> Places associated with the dictator – his family home, villas, the Palace of the Parliament with the area of 350 000 m<sup>2</sup> built on the site of the demolished old district, where 40 000 people lived; the place where he and his wife were shot on December 25, 1989, and other traces of the difficult history of his period – are tourist attractions that attract thousands of visitors from around the world. Auctions of Ceaușescu's items are also very popular.

As a result of the presidential election in November 2019, in which Klaus Iohannis competed with former prime minister Viorica Dăncilă, using the slogan "For normal Romania," he was again elected the president. During the election campaign pro-European, 60-year-old Iohannis promised that he would continue to fight for modern Romania. As his primary goal, he indicated the continuation of the fight against corruption, activities to strengthen the rule of law and democracy, promotion of education, and restoration of confidence in public institutions.<sup>764</sup> The last presidential election with the second-round turnout 49.87%<sup>765</sup>, the lowest since 1989 (36.9%), although almost one million

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<sup>760</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>761</sup> mw/mc, *Połowa mieszkańców uważa, że za komunizmu żyło się lepiej*, PAP, Bukareszt 2010, September 23.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>763</sup> ik/jj/lm, *Demonstracje uliczne – bieda i nostalgia za Ceausescu*, PAP, Bukareszt 1999, November 19.

<sup>764</sup> *Rumunia: sondaże exit polls dają zwycięstwo obecnemu prezydentowi*, PAP, Polskie Radio 2019, November 24.

<sup>765</sup> mfu/dpa, *Wähler bestätigen den proeuropäischen Kurs von Staatspräsident Iohannis*, "Der Spiegel" 2019, November 24, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/rumaenien-klaus-iohannis-als-staatspraesident-wiedergewaehlt-a-1298037.html> (accessed: 12.12.2019).

Romanian emigrants supported it, showed that Romanian society wanted changes, but was already tired of politics. The supporters of Klaus Iohannis believe that one day something will change in the country. Romania is, as it was mentioned in the Introduction, like mamaliga that never blows out. Everyone protests, goes against corruption, and porridge is bubbling ... but it has never exploded ... And will not explode this time. In the last presidential election, it was clear that the winner would be Klaus Iohannis. Although it took two rounds, hardly anyone doubted what the result of the vote would be. Viorica Dăncilă in her election statements promised that she would defend the constitutional order. Still, the mere fact that her government was ousted by a motion of no confidence submitted by the opposition put Dăncilă's candidacy at the outset. It seemed evident that no matter what the prime minister would promise, in the view of allegations of incompetence, blocking public investments, which are so crucial for the state, and unprofitable use of EU funds allocated to Romania, she was no longer a trustworthy person.<sup>766</sup> Indeed, some of the population expressed support for her, but not enough to change the final result of the election completely. Dăncilă won mainly the votes of pensioners when her government increased pensions and minimum wage. She also offered a significant pay raise for administration employees, physicians, and teachers. Some got a 50% raise. It was finally tangible. Dăncilă rather could not count on the European lobby group because in March 2019 – even before her government collapsed – she lost international support. She wanted to move the Romanian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which was contrary to the European Commission's idea. However, this could not be said of her opponent, a reliable, pro-EU partner of the European Union – Klaus Iohannis. Supported by crowds, combating corruption, he became an advocate of the fight against Romanian “ghosts of the past.” So different from his opposition candidate, who came from the Social Democrats' camp, he was from the very beginning the first in electoral polls. Viorica Dăncilă came from the Liviu Dragnea camp, associated mainly with plans for legislative changes which, according to prosecutors, were to further hinder the fight against corruption, lack of prospects for the future, low wages, high unemployment, the terrible condition of the health service, she had to face difficulties at the outset. In recent years, protests in Bucharest and other major cities have brought crowds of citizens together (50 000–80 000). They demanded a change of government and a resignation from the current policy, which the president objected to. Victory in the November election allowed Iohannis to act. The earlier change in government and Ludovic Orban coming to power, with whom he has good relations, facilitated the actions. After many years, there was a chance

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<sup>766</sup> Rumunia: sondaże exit polls dają zwycięstwo obecnemu prezydentowi, PAP, Polskie Radio 2019, November 24.



to finally reach an agreement in Romania and begin harmonious work at the president-prime minister level. Iohannis and Orbán today have common goals and assumptions: the fight against corruption, strengthening the judiciary's independence, and attracting new foreign investors. In addition to EU funds, the latter will bring Romania permanent changes in its infrastructure and budget. For now, their implementation will last until the parliamentary elections scheduled for autumn 2020.

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