



From: *USR Parliamentary Groups from the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania*

To: *The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR)*

For the attention of:

Following the invitation to participate in the meetings scheduled for March 4, 2025, between representatives of the parliamentary groups in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of Romania and representatives of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and in light of the refusal by the parliamentary leadership to approve a separate meeting with the parliamentary groups of the Save Romania Union (USR), we hereby submit our position in writing on the current electoral context and future prospects in Romania.

We have opted for this method of communication with the ODIHR delegation as we find it unacceptable to be compelled—through an arbitrary decision, unprecedented in Romania’s history of cooperation with OSCE-ODIHR—to participate in a joint format alongside extremist pro-Russian parties in Romania.

Romania is currently facing an unprecedented situation concerning the functionality of its electoral framework. A well-organized election depends on a legal framework that prevents the recurrence of issues similar to those encountered during the Romanian presidential election on November 24, 2024 - an election that was annulled by the Constitutional Court of Romania (CCR).

In this regard, we wish to emphasize the following points:

The declassified reports from Romania's intelligence services indicate that the alleged fraud did not concern vote counting, but rather violations of the electoral legislation, particularly on the Saturday preceding the election day. This day is crucial as Romanian electoral law prohibits electoral activities during this period, given its proximity to election day, when illegal methods could decisively influence the electorate. Reports from the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) provide evidence of a well-orchestrated operation in favor of former presidential candidate Călin Georgescu, which exhibits "the modus operandi of a state actor."

TikTok accounts were created as early as 2016, and Telegram accounts were set up in 2022, all mobilized during the electoral campaign. Of the 797 accounts initially forming the network, many had remained dormant (with 1% activity) until November 11, 2024, when the entire network was activated at full capacity.

SRI reports indicated that approximately €1 million was funneled into this operation, with \$381,000 explicitly paid to TikTok, an amount acknowledged by the Chinese company.

According to data provided by TikTok to Romanian authorities, 76 new accounts were created on November 28, dedicated exclusively to promoting Călin Georgescu. Evidence suggests non-transparent financing methods that circumvented electoral legal requirements.

Additionally, investigative journalists at *Snoop* uncovered instances where political advertisements funded by Romanian parties were manipulated through hashtag alterations to benefit candidates other than those for whom the funds were allocated. A notable case involved an ad campaign paid for by the National Liberal Party (PNL), which was ultimately redirected to significantly promote Călin Georgescu on TikTok. More details can be found in the following article:

<https://snoop.ro/anaf-a-descoperit-ca-pnl-a-platit-o-campanie-care-l-a-promovat-masiv-pe-calin-georgescu-pe-tiktok/>.

TikTok officials have stated that the account **@propagatorrcg**, created on June 15, 2024, had amassed 3,755 subscribers by November 28, who were actively instructed on disseminating videos, posting comments and utilizing specific hashtags across Facebook, YouTube and TikTok.

In the aftermath of the November 24 elections, including the allegations of foreign interference, the new legislation fails to provide strong guarantees that the May elections will be fair and that the vote will not be compromised. In a political climate marked by suspicions of foreign

influence and by attempts to manipulate public opinion, it is essential that electoral rules are clear and capable of preventing any potential fraud.

The newly proposed legal provisions do not establish effective mechanisms for online protection, leaving room for the same questionable practices previously observed, including illicit voter influence and non-transparent financing, as noted earlier. Examples of such manipulative tactics include fake websites that replicated legitimate domains such as Digi24 and Radio France Internationale (RFI) Romania, as documented in Snoop's investigative report:

<https://snoop.ro/strategia-cu-bani-rusesti-cum-au-ajuns-reclamele-la-medicina-naturista-si-stirile-cu-sfinti-sa-influenteze-votul-romanilor-la-prezidentiale/>.

The report also highlights advertising campaigns promoting natural medicine, which opposed the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns of 2020-2021 and prominently featured the 2024 presidential candidate, Călin Georgescu.

Once again, we emphasize that the reach of these digital tools is extensive, currently difficult for Romanian authorities to control, and has long-term implications. Under these circumstances, the May elections could face serious irregularities, raising doubts about their legitimacy.

The declassified reports from SRI, SIE (Foreign Intelligence Service), STS (Special Telecommunications Service), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as made publicly available by the President of Romania, can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/comunicate-de-presa/comunicat-de-presa1733327193>

Furthermore, on January 27, 2025, the Venice Commission issued an urgent report regarding the annulment of the presidential elections, highlighting multiple deficiencies in Romania's electoral process, particularly concerning the use of artificial intelligence in political campaigns. The report identifies gaps in public transparency, strategic communication, regulation of social media electoral campaigns, campaign financing oversight and overall electoral legislation. The full report is available at:

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI\(2025\)001-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI(2025)001-e)

A key concern for our parliamentary groups is the lack of substantive parliamentary debate during the adoption of amendments to the presidential election law. We emphasize that all legislative amendments proposed by the Save Romania Union (USR) were rejected during committee debates. The absence of genuine dialogue and the disregard for proposals advanced by the democratic opposition undermine public confidence in the integrity of the elections.

USR submitted amendments to the presidential election law in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission, aimed at:

- a) Ensuring that the Constitutional Court of Romania (CCR) cannot annul presidential elections;
- b) Allowing candidate registration documents to be submitted electronically;
- c) Eliminating penalties for citizens who publicly express their voting preferences online;
- d) Reducing the required number of signatures for candidacy registration.

Additionally, USR has proposed a legislative initiative to reduce the number of signatures required for submitting candidacy applications.

In light of these developments, we reiterate our serious concern regarding the integrity of the upcoming elections. The lack of effective regulatory measures, the precedent of foreign interference and the refusal to engage in meaningful parliamentary dialogue all raise serious questions about the fairness of the electoral process.

With the utmost respect and consideration,

Senator Ștefan Pălărie

Leader of the USR Parliamentary Group
in the Senate



Deputy Ionuț Moșteanu

Leader of the USR Parliamentary Group
in the Chamber of Deputies

