

BUCHAREST, A COLLATERAL VICTIM IN THE 2014 BATTLE FOR EUROPE

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It is in Bucharest that both the EPP and the PES have decided to launch their campaign for the 2014 European elections. The main two European parties are launching their offensive for the control of the European Parliament and the European Commission. But why choose Bucharest as a battleground?

The European Popular Party (EPP) organises its 2012 congress in Bucharest next [October 17-18](#). Also in Bucharest, the Party of European Socialists (PES) will organise its 2012 congress next [September 28-29](#). During their respective congresses, the main two European parties are to present their vision for Europe after 2014 and to present the way to nominate their candidate for the succession of José Manuel Barroso whose second mandate is coming to an end.

EPP vs. PES, a clash of titans

It will be the launching event in the campaign for the 2014 European elections, with great hopes for the PES to finally succeed to secure political change in Brussels.

The image shows a screenshot of the EPP Calendar website. The header features the EPP logo and the text "EPP CALENDAR". Below the header, the calendar is set to "octobre 2012". A pop-up window titled "EPP Congress" displays the event details: "Date: jeu., 18 octobre, 08:30 - 14:00" and "Lieu: Bucharest (plan)". The calendar grid shows the event on October 18th, with a detailed view of the schedule for that day: "15:00 EPP Politica", "18:15 EPP Congre", "09:00 EPP Congre", "19:15 EPP Summi", and "08:30 EPP Congre".

The EPP had announced its choice to organise its 2012 Congress in Bucharest at the end of its Summer School, which already took place in Romania, on [September 24, 2011](#). The EPP had chosen last year to give its support to the Romanian right wing facing difficulties prior to the November 2012 legislative elections. The PES had declared at the end of its Council, organised in Brussels on [November 24, 2011](#) that it also chose to hold its 2012 Congress in Bucharest, three weeks *before* the EPP congress. The European socialists seem to have intended to defy the EPP, holding the majority at present, by making Bucharest their first battleground for Europe in 2014.

The screenshot shows the PES website's news section. The main headline is "Statement by Party of European Socialists (PES) President, Sergei Stanishev on the result of the Romanian referendum on 29th July". The article is dated 30/07/2012 and includes a photo of people at a polling station. The text discusses the referendum results, the impeachment of President Basescu, and the PES's stance on the political situation in Romania. A sidebar on the left lists "NEWS & MEDIA" categories like News, Newsletters, Videos, and Photo Library. The right sidebar contains promotional banners for "A EUROPEAN YOUTH GUARANTEE NOW!", "Join PES activists", and "Re:new Progressive Convention Brussels, 25-26 November 2011". A "PES in the news" section at the bottom right lists recent news items from June 2012.

After this choice, the dynamics seem rather favourable for social democrats in Europe, in spite of their [recent defeats](#) in Spain, Finland, Hungary and Greece: the European right wing has been disapproved due to its management of the crisis in Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Romania. In Romania, after violent protests against a policy of austerity, the social democrats have made an alliance with the national liberals and have won by a large majority the municipal al local elections last June. But the “Social Liberal Union” has failed to agree on a governing programme, on economic stimulus, or on social or fiscal matters, and the Prime Minister (affiliated to the PES) has tried to make the President (affiliated to the EPP) the sole accountable for their difficulties to act. Then, they skipped steps in order to impeach him as soon as possible.

Hence, the PES seems to arrive in force in this battle of congresses that is under preparation in Bucharest. However, the conviction to two years in prison for corruption of the former Romanian social democrat Prime Minister, who keeps commenting the news [on his blog](#), the challenge of the electoral lists *after* the elections and the impossibility to establish the results of the referendum that took place last week show that Bucharest is most likely a minefield for the PES. ***Does Romania give a preview of the kind of change the social democrats will put forward for Europe 2014?***

EPP: 2 vs. PES: 3 vs. Bucharest: 0

The EPP has won the first point by choosing the battleground for Europe 2014. Then a second one, since the Romanian social democrats have shown their incapacity to govern and given the fact that a trap seems to be closing on the PES in Bucharest. For its part, the PES has three points considering the positive dynamics for socialists at least in France, Germany and Romania.



For the moment, however, the main casualty in this game of titans in which everything seems allowed are the Romanians. The social democrats have failed to propose a new economic policy and their tenacity to debark at all costs the EPP affiliated President before the congresses is deepening Bucharest into crisis. The choice of the EPP and PES to launch their battle in Bucharest is therefore causing a new European country to sink. This is shown by the speculative attacks on the local currency (leu) that have occurred after the refusal by the Romanian Constitutional Court to rule on the results of the referendum. Also, the EU and the IMF are waiting to see who the head of state is now before granting new funds to Romania.

Financial abyss, speculative attacks, pressure on Justice and elections without results, is it really what the EPP and the PSE have to propose for Europe 2014?