
IN EUROPE: FROM PRIDE TO CIVIL WAR?

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“The world needs to realize the gravity of the situation, [Bucharest is] on the brink of civil war”. Monica Macovei, Member of European Parliament (EPP group)

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An MEP announces Civil War

Sunday, August 12th 2012 [Monica Macovei](#) MEP (EPP) told the Romanian TV ([Realitatea TV](#)) around 22:30: *“[The world needs to realize the gravity of the situation \(...\) we are on the brink of civil war](#)”*.

Macovei, a former prosecutor, former President of the [Helsinki Committee for Romania](#) and a founding member of [Transparency International Romania](#), was Minister of Justice during the first term (2004-2007) of President Basescu (whose impeachment is still suspended in order to [verify the results](#) of the referendum of July 29th). In May, her report to the European Parliament revealed many conflicts of interest at the head of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

After the accession of Romania to the EU, [The Economist](#) was full of praise, even presenting Monica Macovei as a heroic figure: *“Talk to senior EU officials and European diplomats who worked on Romania’s accession to the union, and they call Ms Macovei an heroic figure, and pretty much the only reason Romania achieved entry into the EU in 2007 (...) I will never forget how she talked about the years Romania had “wasted” after the fall of communism”* ([The Economist](#), [Why are Europe’s Socialists defending corruption?](#) May 28th 2009).

Smoking barrels or smoke and mirrors?

Of course, one should not over-interpret the arguments of each side in the serious political crisis in Romania [since the beginning of the summer](#). But MEP Macovei boasts about being heard in Brussels and Berlin: *“Yes, I’m very influential. What I am saying is found both in the statements of the European Commission than in those of Merkel and Barroso. They trust me because I have never lied in my life”* (Sunday, August 12th, in the [same televised statement](#)).

In Romania, the Constitutional Court refused, on Friday, August 3, to rule on the [validity of the referendum](#) of 29 July concerning the dismissal of the head of State. It had planned to rule on September 12th, then it moved up the date to August 31. Since the mandate of the President of Senate as Acting President of the Republic in Romania ended with the July 29th ballot, for a week now it is no longer possible to know who the head of State is.

Now, Romania has two Presidents of the Republic, one suspended but neither deposed nor reinstated, the other acting, but whose term expired (see our paper of August 1st, [Has Romania fallen into the hands of anarchists?](#)).

Civil war or coup forewarning?

In fact, the Constitutional Court of Romania has done in early August just what the “Sages” in France [had not dared to do](#) in 1995: to challenge an election on the choice of head of State. The result is a *political cataclysm*, since it is not possible to know who the head of State is.

Saturday, August 11th, Mircea Dogaru, retired Colonel and head of the Union of militaries made redundant told the Romanian newspaper [Adevarul](#): **“We will ask for the abolition of the Constitutional Court of Romania”**. He confirmed his comments on Sunday, August 12th in the Romanian newspaper [Evenimentul Zilei](#), adding: **“if the Constitutional Court of Romania does not validate the referendum [on the dismissal of the head of State], we will launch a call for disobedience and take it to the streets to create chaos”**. And since it has no longer been possible to know for over a week who the head of State is in Romania, the Romanian army officers will no longer know to whom they must obey ... (see our paper of August 1st, [Has Romania fallen into the hands of anarchists?](#)).

Is this really the threat of a new [23-F Spanish](#)-like coup? And why now?

Washington, mediator of political change in Europe?

Monica Macovei’s declaration can therefore be interpreted as a very serious warning.

But it can also be seen as a final call for help for Romania’s partner to help this country find an honourable solution to the political crisis that is worsening every day since the beginning of summer. This weekend, [Philip Gordon](#), special adviser to Hillary Clinton for Europe, NATO and the EU arrived in Bucharest. He has met today, Monday, August 13th, first Traian Basescu, the suspended President who is no longer suspended, then Crin Antonescu, the acting President who is no longer acting and Victor Ponta, who is still Prime Minister, and also Minister of Justice since the August 6th reshuffle (see our paper of August 10th, [Sea, sex and silence](#)). We had recalled by mid July the geostrategic challenges of the political crisis in Romania (see the paper with Catherine Durandin and Violette Rey of July 19th, [En Roumanie, une crise politique qui secoue l’Europe](#) [in French]).



But do the Europeans really need Washington to come and mediate this conflict? We have repeated it since Friday, August 4th (including by [Romanian television](#) and the 3,400,000 references on [google.ro](#)), this critical political crisis in which everything seems allowed is mainly connected to the launching of the campaign for the 2014 European elections.

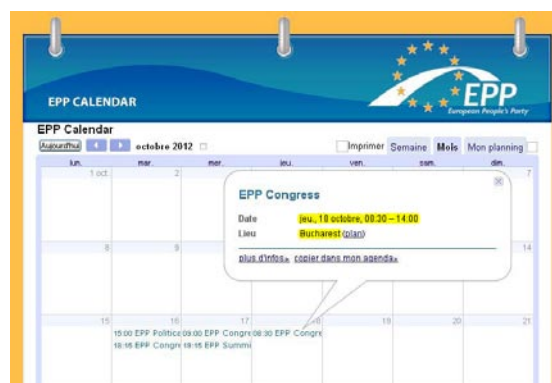
The battle of congresses goes on

The campaign for the 2014 European elections and a possible change of majority in Parliament but also in the European Commission will be launched in early autumn precisely in Bucharest. The main two European parties have chosen Bucharest as a battleground to launch their offensive for the control of the European Parliament and Commission.

The **Party of European Socialists (PES)** is holding its campaign launching congress for the 2014 European elections on 28 and 29 September 2012 in Bucharest: see our paper of Bucharest on August 4th, [Bucharest, a test for the Party of European Socialists \(PES\)](#).



The **European People's Party (EPP)** is holding its campaign launching congress for the 2014 European elections on 17 and 18 October 2012 in Bucharest: see our paper on August 6th, [Bucharest, a collateral victim in the 2014 battle for Europe](#).



For now, *neither* of these parties, which are the two strongest political parties in Europe, has taken a clear position on the long-lasting political chaos in Romania.

And neither one has yet proposed to move its European Congress in a quieter place in the world than Romania and Hungary (see our paper on July 30th, [Viktor vs Victor?](#) [in French]) in order reduce the political pressure.

But who will yield first?

As in the fable *The Two Goats*: “For want of giving back, in troth, / A common fall involved them both”.

It seems that only [The Voice of Russia](#) realises that August 15th does not prevent the military from doing their job (see our paper of August 10th, [Sea, sex and silence](#)).

Yet the stakes are high at several scales:

1. **at national level**, it is about who is the head of State in Romania, and incidentally who are the Romanians entitled to vote and how to resist speculative attacks (see our paper on 1st August, [Has Romania fallen into the hands of anarchists?](#)).
2. **at European level**, it is about the choice of solutions to the economic crisis, the political struggle against the austerity policy and the launch of the campaign for the 2014 European elections with more or less achievable historic political change (see our paper of August 6th, [Bucharest, a collateral victim in the 2014 battle for Europe](#)).
3. **at international level**, the geostrategic challenges remain the same since the beginning of the summer and the crisis: the Nabucco gas pipeline project, NATO’s ABM missile system etc. (see the paper with Catherine Durandin and Violette Rey on July 19th, [En Roumanie, une crise politique qui secoue l’Europe](#) [in French]).