

Large win for the Social Democratic Party in the parliamentary elections in Romania

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Results

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) led by Liviu Dragnea easily drew ahead in the parliamentary elections that took place on 11th December in Romania. The PSD won 45.47% of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies and 45.67% in the Senate. The National Liberal Party (PNL), which had set itself the goal of winning a quarter of the seats on the Chamber of Deputies, won 20.04% of the vote and 20.41% in the Senate. Its leader Alina Gorghiu might resign from office. During the electoral campaign she promised to leave the leadership of her party if the latter was not to become part of the future parliamentary majority. "The National Liberal Party underperformed in Bucharest and in its bastions in the west of the country, losing a great deal of its traditional urban and the most qualified electorate," stressed Alex Coita, a political consultant.

The Union for the Salvation of Romania (USR) came third with 8.87% of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies and 8.92% in the Senate. Founded in 2015 by the young mathematician Nicusor Dan, the USR aims to be "neither on the right or the left" and targets corruption.

The Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania (UDMR) led by Hunor Kelemen won 6.18% of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies and 6.24% in the Senate. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) led by Calin Popescu Tariceanu

and Daniel Constantin won 5.62% of the vote in the lower Chamber and 6% in the Upper Chamber. Finally the sixth party to be present in the Romanian parliament will be the People's Movement (PMP) led by former President of the Republic (2004-2014) Traian Basescu, which won 5.34% of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies and 5.65% in the Senate.

Turnout was low totalling 39.49%, 2.27 points less than in the previous parliamentary elections on 9th December 2012.

Parliamentary election results of 11th December 2016 in Romania

Chamber of Deputies || Turnout: 39.49%

Political Parties	Votes won (%)	Seats
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	45.47	154
National Liberal Party (PNL)	20.04	69
Union for the Salvation of Romania (USR)	8.87	30
Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania (UDMR)	6.18	21
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE)	5.62	20
People's Movement (PMP)	5.34	18
Others		17

Source : Central Electoral Bureau <http://parlamentare2016.bec.ro/>

Parliamentary election results of 11th December 2016 in Romania

Senate || Turnout: 39.49%

Political Parties	Votes won (%)	Votes won (%)
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	45.67	67
National Liberal Party (PNL)	20.41	30
Union for the Salvation of Romania (USR)	8.92	13

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Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania (UDMR)	6.24	9
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE)	6.	9
People's Movement (PMP)	5.65	8

Source : Central Electoral Bureau <http://parlamentare2016.bec.ro/>

One year after the resignation of the Prime Minister (2012-2015) Victor Ponta, following the dramatic fire at the Colectiv discotheque in Bucharest on 30th October 2015, which cost the lives of 64 and led to the injury of 150 people, in which the authorities were directly to blame (lacking safety standards were discovered at the discotheque due to corruption or negligence on the part of the local authorities after an inquiry undertaken by the police), the Social Democratic Party made a historic victory by coming back to office.

"The vote shows what the Romanians want. There is no doubt about who the winners are (...) The Romanians have voted for economic growth, for more money in their pockets, for better paid jobs," stressed Liviu Dragnea, the PSD leader who added, "the Romanians want to feel at home in their country and I want to do everything to make Romania a good home for all Romanians (...) Romania is a pole of stability in the region. All political players must understand and respect the vote."

In a country in which the average wage is 270€ per month, where one person in four lives in poverty (Romania is the second poorest Member State of the EU after Bulgaria) and where the GDP per capita only totals 57% of the European average, the PSD, which campaigned with the motto "Dare to believe in Romania"(Indrazneste

sa crezi in Romania), convinced people by promising to raise wages and retirement pensions, reduce taxes and make massive public investments (the construction of new hospitals; faster transport etc.). "The PSD has a stable electorate, notably in the countryside and the small towns. No other party spoke to these people who are the most affected by poverty and unemployment. The relatively aged rural electorate is traditionally more motivated," analyses Barbu Mateescu, sociologist.

A 2001 law prohibits anyone condemned by law from occupying ministerial posts. This measure might prevent PSD Chair Liviu Dragnea, who was sentenced in the spring to a two year suspended prison sentence for electoral fraud, from becoming the head of government. The President of the Republic Klaus Iohannis also indicated that he would "exclude anyone who might have had problems with the law," from potential ministerial lists (even if they have not yet appeared in court), which might mean that the former head of government Victor Ponta, accused of money laundering and tax evasion, will not have a seat.

The Social Democrats indicated that they would only reveal the name of the potential Prime Minister after the investiture of the new Parliament, i.e. on 19th December next at the earliest.

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