# Top US officials criticise Romania election annulment amid concerns over foreign influence



Top US officials have publicly criticised Romania following the annulment of its presidential election held late last year. The Eastern European nation, a member of both the European Union and NATO, had invalidated the vote where Calin Georgescu, a prominent critic of the EU and NATO, emerged as the frontrunner in the first round in November. Subsequently, Georgescu was barred from participating in the re-run presidential contest scheduled for 4 May.

Thousands of Romanians have taken to the streets to protest the annulment and the exclusion of Georgescu from the ballot. The government justified its decision by citing concerns over Russian interference and an intense wave of social media campaigning allegedly backing Georgescu. These developments have attracted sharp denunciations from the United States, with Vice President JD Vance and entrepreneur Elon Musk voicing their disapproval of the Romanian authorities' actions.

JD Vance criticised the annulment as "based on the flimsy suspicions of an intelligence agency and enormous pressure from its continental neighbours," highlighting concerns over the robustness of Romanian democracy. He added, "If your democracy can be destroyed with a few hundred thousand dollars of digital advertising from a foreign country, then it wasn't very strong to begin with." Meanwhile, Elon Musk has intermittently used his social media platform X to comment on and challenge the Romanian government's measures.

The upcoming repeat election features eleven candidates, with the far-right leader George Simion widely expected to win the first round. Simion, who heads the AUR party, has gained considerable attention for his vocal admiration for former US President Donald Trump, often seen sporting "Make America Great Again" caps. Following Georgescu’s disqualification—Georgescu himself being an "ultra pro" Trump figure—Simion has expressed support for his former rival and is anticipated to inherit a significant portion of Georgescu's voter base.

Political analysts point to an underlying influence of American conservative politics within Romania's electoral arena. Sorina Soare, a political scientist at the University of Florence, told AFP that "the campaign has been stirred up by indirect pressure fuelled by US officials' comments," and that Romania "cannot afford to enter into confrontation with its American ally over economic and security issues," given that the country hosts over 1,700 US troops.

Aside from the far-right, other candidates include former Social Democratic Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who has also publicly indicated connections with Trump, notably holding a red MAGA cap during campaign appearances. However, Ponta’s electoral position has weakened amid controversial statements, allowing two pro-European candidates—Bucharest mayor Nicusor Dan and ruling coalition nominee Crin Antonescu—to gain greater traction. Polls suggest one of these pro-European candidates will likely advance to a second-round runoff on 18 May, where they will compete against Simion. That contest is expected to be closely fought, with a significant proportion of undecided voters and a large European diaspora, often supportive of far-right policies, contributing to the uncertainty.

Romania is one of Europe's poorest countries, grappling with high inflation and widespread perceptions of political corruption, factors that have created a complex backdrop to the vote. The presidential role, while largely ceremonial, carries influence on foreign policy—a significant consideration in light of Romania’s strategic position neighbouring conflict-affected Ukraine.

Among the public, reactions are mixed. Diana Maftei, a 24-year-old accountant in Bucharest, described the election's importance amid lingering tension after the vote annulment. Her partner, Bogdan Badaluta, a digital artist, expressed relief at Georgescu’s removal from the race, viewing the new election as a source of renewed hope. Conversely, some voters, such as 68-year-old retiree Smaranda Tache, remain disillusioned; she said she would abstain from voting, asserting that "whoever wins is pretty much the same" and criticising politicians as self-serving.

The Romanian presidential election, closely monitored internationally, reflects broader regional and global political dynamics, including the impacts of foreign influence and domestic dissatisfaction ahead of the May 4 poll.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.ifes.org/publications/romanian-2024-election-annulment-addressing-emerging-threats-electoral-integrity> - This article provides context on the constitutional court's decision to annul Romania's presidential election due to alleged electoral irregularities, aligning with claims of concerns over the integrity of the election process.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024%E2%80%932025_Romanian_election_annulment_protests> - This Wikipedia entry details the protests and reactions following the election annulment, supporting claims about widespread public outrage and demonstrations across Romania.
* <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2024/12/13/the-annulment-of-romanias-presidential-election-reflects-both-foreign-meddling-and-domestic-failures/> - This blog post explains how the annulment of the election reflects concerns over foreign interference and domestic failures, corroborating the notion of external influence on Romania's electoral process.
* <https://www.ideainternational.org/publications/despite-court-rulings-romania-still-risks-seeing-extremist-president-leading-academic> - This article highlights concerns about extremist candidates and the impact of court decisions on the political landscape, reflecting the continued risk of far-right influence in Romanian politics.
* <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-000150_EN.html> - Although not directly addressing the Romanian situation, this document from the European Parliament touches on broader political issues in Europe, including election integrity and foreign influence, relevant to the context of Romania's recent electoral drama.
* <https://www.noahwire.com (assuming the article provided is from this source)> - This source explains the current political climate in Romania, including the international reactions and the anticipation for the upcoming election, aligning with the narrative about US officials' criticism and the significant role of far-right candidates.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMipAFBVV95cUxPNHEwZFR5NGJWZ3NSb0F1N0NnTXZjTVEwVXNlZkxkZW94eWYxY3FwRW5VU1JheFVkb0pTd1dJSS1yRklnRGJ3RUlXdTk2cHoxRFYxNnFvN0sxaEI3d2tLbzJLM1NTSnNRUEdHbHBYOHNOS210NWg2TEtGNThWbFcycnlSMUlkQmdETHRnZVB3TW9tWlFubno1NEFyZVdOVERSZEplNg?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data