

Romania's Constitutional Court annuls presidential elections

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17 December 2024

Romania's Constitutional Court decided on December 6 to annul the presidential elections, two days before the second round was scheduled to take place. The flagrant trampling upon the result of the vote was intended to block an expected win by Calin Georgescu, a neo-fascist candidate who had expressed skepticism of the war against Russia.

The Constitutional Court had already intervened in October, when it barred the participation in the election of another neo-fascist candidate, Diana Sosoaca. In Sosoaca's case, the Court claimed that her "public discourse" threatened "the removal of essential guarantees of the state's fundamental values and choices, namely EU and NATO membership."

The latest Court decision was based on the outgoing president's declassification of secret service reports purporting to show a Russian "cyber-attack," ostensibly responsible for Georgescu's first round win. The reports did not provide any evidence, instead describing the candidate's social media campaign, claiming it found a *modus operandi* "consistent with a state actor." Lacking concrete arguments, the intelligence agencies instead focus on Russia's supposed intents, which are proven by reciting previous unsubstantiated accusations and even the discussion of the topic of Romanian elections on Russian talk-shows.

Evidence or not, the reporting that followed in international and Romanian media declared the country the victim of a Russian "hybrid attack."

The election campaign for the run-off was subsequently dominated by an atmosphere of official hysteria. It followed parliamentary elections, held on December 1st, that saw a third of the seats go to far-right parties, with traditional ruling parties—the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and National Liberal Party (PNL)—collapse to historic lows. All the main political

parties, as well as editorials, podcasts, actors and universities rallied behind an official pro-EU and pro-NATO campaign, and the country's "euro-Atlantic Road."

This campaign was directed not against Georgescu, who was at pains to repeat that he was, in fact, a supporter of both the EU and NATO. It was first of all designed to browbeat widespread working-class opposition to the decades long policies pursued under the aegis of the two organizations.

There was a particularly surreal quality to endless pageants to the economic benefits of the European Union, as vast layers of the population throughout Europe are driven to poverty by price hikes and austerity measures.

In Eastern Europe, the restoration of capitalism by the Stalinist bureaucracy and the subsequent "European road" have produced an unmitigated catastrophe over the past 35 years. All forms of backwardness, anti-communism and national exceptionalism became official state dogmas, as vast swaths of the population were pauperized. Privatizations, mass unemployment and exodus of workers have been accompanied by the degradation of social and cultural life.

Bourgeois democracy, proclaimed by the former bureaucrats in the 1990's, remained a dead letter. Accession to NATO was marked by the torture of prisoners in CIA torture centers and Romania's participation in imperialist wars abroad, such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

With the decision of the traditional ruling parties to scrap the election result, while the main electoral alternative to these parties is a fascist, it is evident that bourgeois democracy, or the pretense of it, is rotting on its feet.

Eurostat figures for 2023 give a glimpse of the social

wasteland left in the wake of EU integration. 32 percent of the population and 39 percent of children are classified as at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Sixty percent of people cannot afford a 1-week vacation and 23 percent cannot afford a meal with meat every other day.

Eurostat figures show 16 percent of youth are early leavers from education or training, while the Romanian Education Ministry admits to almost a third of youth were missing from the education system in the 2022-2023 school year. The number of youths that are neither in education nor in training is the highest in the EU, at 19.3 percent. According to National Statistics Institute, Romania has a 22 percent youth unemployment rate.

After the unprecedented gesture by the Constitutional Court, the main political parties are preparing for a large national unity government formed by the “pro-European parties,” a government that is set to carry out a ruthless policy of austerity and preparations for war with Russia.

President Iohannis, who will remain in office until at least the spring of next year, succinctly expressed the concerns of the Romanian ruling class: “I am saying this for the economy, for the investors, the financial markets, I am saying this for the EU. Romania remains a secure and solid ally, and I believe it is very important that we all know that Romania is not in any difficulty.”

The crisis in Romania reflects developments internationally, a broad realignment of bourgeois politics in line with the level of the international crisis. The new Government will be one of war against Russia and class war at home.

The EU has vowed to take measures against the “Chinese platform” Tik Tok, while both EU and US officials rushed to support the machinations of the Romanian establishment against the supposed Russia’s “hybrid war.”

Rather than the hallmarks of a “Russian operation,” the rise of Georgescu appears as the work of a section of the Romanian establishment that emulates the far-right movements cultivated by Trump supporters around the world. The fascist AUR party, to which Georgescu’s name is associated, attempted as far back as December 2021 a copy-cat attack on the Romanian Parliament building modeled on US President Donald

Trump’s failed coup of January 6, 2021, on the US Capitol.

On December 8, Romanian police arrested 20 men headed for the capital, Bucharest, in possession of various weapons and explosives. The individuals were part of a paramilitary group headed by Horatiu Potra, a former mercenary and owner of a private military company. Potra, a far right activist and local politician with ties to mainstream parties, was featured prominently during the campaign as Georgescu’s bodyguard.

Sources close to the investigation told Romanian media that Potra’s men had prepared a list of journalists and politicians to be intimidated or attacked if Georgescu won the presidency. Other far right networks with ties to Georgescu have come to prominence in recent weeks, and Roma rights activists and public personalities received death threats. One of financial backers of the campaign, a crypto-currency mogul from the city of Brasov, directly compared his role to that played by oligarch Elon Musk in Trump’s campaign.

Georgescu also received support on social media from Musk and from Trump’s son, who ranted on X/Twitter about a “Soros/Marxist attempt at rigging the outcome & denying the will of the people.”

The networks linking Georgescu to international financial and fascist circles show that the antidemocratic decision to cancel his first-round victory will not stop the rise of far-right forces in Romania. While it seems likely that Georgescu will not be allowed to stand again, his networks will be reabsorbed into the fascist milieu that controls a third of the country’s parliament and that is now effectively the only opposition force in the legislature.



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