



Weekly Briefing

Romania external relations briefing:
Important achievements for Romania following high-level visits in
US
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Important achievements for Romania following high-level visits in US

Romania's voice regarding its main concerns and measures for tackling climate change, conflicts around the Black Sea region and fight against terrorism was heard through the declaration of President Iohannis at the 74th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The event was an opportunity for bilateral meetings where important topics were addressed, such as the problems of the Romanian minority in Ukraine and the decision to strengthen efforts for the Black Sea-Caspian Sea freight corridor to become operational. In addition, Romania took part in founding the Global Hub on the Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals. The visit of the Prime Minister Viorica Dancila in US during the same period also brought several benefits to Romania, among which the signing of the loan agreement with the World Bank for a programme aiming to increase citizens' access to primary health care services, especially in less developed areas.

Romanian President, Klaus Iohannis, participated at the 74th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, which was held in New York, US, in the last week of September. The theme of the current session was related on “Galvanizing Multilateral Efforts for Poverty Eradication, Quality Education, Climate Action and Inclusion”.

President Iohannis delivered a national declaration to the General Assembly, in which both concerns and support for three hot areas were iterated. The first topic addressed was that of climate change, an issue with dramatic consequences for Romania too. In this respect, Romania designed a National Strategy on Climate Change, in which policies are meant to be integrated for ensuring a sustainable development by 2050, with special actions for lowering carbon emissions and promoting smart growth, which shows consideration for climate policies. The second topic was related to security and the conflicts around the Black Sea, in regions near Romania, which lead to instability and affected regional cooperation. Romania is a supporter of the multilateral rules-based international order enhanced by UN and further intends to remain a pillar of stability in the region. Finally, the last topic emphasized the insecurity due to terrorist acts which was also experienced by Romania following the attack on the embassy in Afghanistan at the beginning of September. Romania committed to fight against terrorism and to support the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The President pointed Romania's efforts on advancing the EU agenda on climate change during the

Presidency of the EU Council, the adoption of a specific strategy for meeting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

Other important events were the speech during the Leaders Dialogue 5 – Partnerships for Sustainable Development meeting and the participation in the High Level Political Forum on the topic of “Accelerating the Implementation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Forum was the first one targeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 and its aim was to evaluate the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to draw the coordinates of the next four-year cycle. Romania presented the progress in the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the events organized for promoting regional partnership under this topic.

The event also brought the opportunity for a series of bilateral meetings with the presidents of Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, where Romania’s perspectives on certain issues had been envisaged and specific areas of further strengthened cooperation were agreed.

Several issues which drags on the bilateral agenda could be approached, such as the problem of the Romanian minorities in Ukraine. A recent law adopted in Ukraine would restrict the education in the language of the minority population. The Ukrainian President, Voodimir Zelenski, ensured upon identifying a solution to the problems created by the adoption of the Education Law, so that the rights of persons belonging to the Romanian minority to learn in their mother language would not affected. At the same time, the two Presidents agreed that Romania and Ukraine should conduct a closer dialogue on regional security issues. Romania provides support for a close cooperation between NATO and Ukraine and for ensuring energy security, following the concerns raised by the Nord Stream 2 project.

The meeting with Georgia’s President, Salome Zurabisvili, lead to decisions of intensifying the bilateral dialogue on security in the Black Sea, on the implementation of the Black Sea Package adopted by NATO in April and on encouraging further efforts for the Black Sea-Caspian Sea freight corridor to become operational, following a good collaboration between Romania and Georgia in the implementation of the project during this year. In addition, Romania’s President guaranteed to support Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations and proposed a transfer of expertise in order to enhance the reform processes. A similar support is provided to the Republic of Moldova, which already has a Bilateral Strategic Partnership for European Integration. Romania usually carries out and finances strategic interconnection projects and projects with positive social impact and improvement of the citizens’ living

standard. An opinion on solving the Transnistrian conflict without the federalization of the country was suggested by Klaus Iohannis to Moldova's President, Igor Dodon.

Another achievement following the participation in the UN General Assembly is that Romania is among the founders of the Global Hub on the Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals, an initiative whose role is to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and exchange of best practices in the view of the implementation of the 17 SDGs. OECD, the UN Programme for Development and the governments experience will enable the provision of the best public policies solutions for sustainable development. An online knowledge platform will deliver successful examples for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, while assistance in ensuring the coherence, monitoring and evaluation of public policies is facilitated. One of the aims is that of constructing public budgets based on results and on including the implementation of the 17 SDGs. In this way, through the Department of Sustainable Development inside the Government, Romania assumed to carry out the efforts needed at domestic level for being able to sign, in 2020, the document "Emergency Declaration for Nature and People" through which global leaders intend to give a strong signal about the future of the planet.

In the same period, Prime Minister Viorica Dancila carried out a working visit in the United States, where she had several meetings with the US officials. The aim of the visit was to strengthen the Strategic Partnership with the US, besides the efforts Romania advances for consolidating the relationships with the EU member states. In addition, Romania looked for support in two of the objectives envisaged for the following period: the liberalization of the US travel visa regime for Romanian citizens and the candidacy for the OECD.

Among the meetings, there was a special one dedicated to the representatives of several companies in which the opportunities Romania offers in key areas such as energy, health, research and innovation, information and communication technology have been made known. In addition, there were presented the government measures to stimulate investment and details about projects that might be carried out in public-private partnership, which could be attractive for American companies, as favourable conditions such as extended contract terms and increased flexibility of financing conditions could be provided. The Government presented several major projects that could be of interest to US companies, regarding road infrastructure, railways, ports and airports, the subway network, energy, tourism and healthcare, which can be realized through public-private partnerships.

The meetings with the representatives of Jewish associations in the United States was an opportunity for envisaging the actions Romania took for combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia or other forms of manifestation of intolerance. In this respect, a very recent law at the beginning

of October was promulgated for the opening of a National Museum of Jewish and Holocaust History in Bucharest, while Holocaust study programs will further be developed. The fight against anti-Semitism is a constant topic in the attention of the Government of Romania and represented a priority even during the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council.

For the representatives of the Romanian community, the delegation emphasized the programmes provided by the Government for Romanians returning home. The Diaspora Start-up programme provides non-refundable funds of maximum EUR 40,000 to Romanians who come back home and want to open small businesses in Romania. The programme is financed through European funds. Another programme is Start-up Nation, financed through governmental funds, which support SMEs and capitalize on professional and entrepreneurial skills. Another opportunity is represented by the non-reimbursable financing that the Government allocates for the preservation, promotion and affirmation of the Romanian identity in the diaspora. A potential outcome of the Prime Minister's visit in US would be the start of the project for opening a direct airline between Bucharest and New Jersey, one of the points in the discussions with the mayor of Jersey City, where is an important community of over 35,000 Romanians.

The official meeting with the representatives of the World Bank ended with the signing of the loan agreement aimed at increasing citizens' access to primary health care services and promoting preventive medical services, especially in less developed areas. The programme, which also targets to increase access to medical services provided by family physicians and to improve the efficiency of healthcare spending, total up to EUR 500 million. Citizens from isolated or with difficult access areas will benefit of increased access to health services, to the establishment of the diagnosis in the early stages, while medical offices will be equipped with high performance equipment.