



## **Weekly Briefing**

**Romania external relations briefing:**  
**Working for peace and food security, Romania's priorities at the**  
**77th UN General Assembly**  
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## **Working for peace and food security, Romania's priorities at the 77th UN General Assembly**

*Present at the 77th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York, Romanian representatives showed coherence in the external policy actions taken so far and hinted the directions that are going to be followed in the major topic of interest nowadays: sustainability, food security, climate security, humanitarian and energy crises, international justice etc. Romania keeps close cooperation with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine regarding the energy security and the implementation of NATO measures adopted at the Summit in Madrid. In addition, it continues efforts for ensuring global food security, by smoothing the cereals transit on the "solidarity corridors" from Ukraine.*

The 77th UN General Assembly held in New York in September provided the occasion for international leaders to reiterate the actions to be taken related to the most important topics on the global agenda. For Romania, it was an event for confirming the strategic decisions in the external field adopted so far, presenting the major directions on which efforts are envisaged and reassuring on the major partnerships already adopted. The Romanian delegation included President Klaus Iohannis, who delivered a speech during the general debates of the Assembly and with the occasion of the Global Food Security Summit, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu.

The topics of discussions were broad, including security and peace, climate changes, energy problems, lack of access to food and education and social inequities. The conflict in Ukraine was, however, on top of the list. President Iohannis stated that, "Our response, especially to this war, will shape our common future", therefore "protracted conflicts such as those in the Black Sea region need to be addressed without delay". In this context, the use of energy as a tool of blackmail should be avoided. In addition, with a view on the COP27 Climate Change summit in Egypt, President Iohannis also envisaged that, "Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to overcome the triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss<sup>1</sup>". It is expected that the Egypt event to end with more commitments of world leaders on climate neutrality.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.presidency.ro/ro/presedinte/agenda-presedintelui/interventie-nationala-sustinuta-in-cadrul-dezbaterilor-generale-ale-celei-de-a-77-a-sesiuni-a-adunarii-generale-a-organizatiei-natiunilor-unite>, accessed September 29

Peace and security were further emphasized in meeting with different countries representatives. For example, under the format of reunion between the foreign affairs ministers from Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, as well as the European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Romania continued to be involved in the discussions of the current topics on the international agenda<sup>2</sup>, with an emphasis on the developments in Ukraine. Participants agreed that, in the international context marked by Russia's unjustified military aggression in Ukraine, strengthening resilience and the transatlantic relationship remain essential.

In fact, Romania took part, a week earlier, at the at the first trilateral meeting<sup>3</sup> of the ministers of foreign affairs from Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, held in Odesa, Ukraine, envisaging a closer format of cooperation, especially in the energy sector. The focus was on the immediate support measures that are necessary for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to face the winter season, but also on the long-term measures to strengthen their energy security, with an emphasis on regional interconnection, also considering the need to combat the use of energy for geopolitical purposes. In addition, all countries agreed on the need to fasten and fully implement the decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Madrid, which is related to the continuation of strengthening the defense and deterrence position on the Eastern Flank. A relevant moment to measure progress in achieving these objectives will be the meeting of NATO foreign ministers that the Romanian Minister will host in Bucharest at the end of November 2022. In addition, it was agreed on the fact that the priority must be the continuation of multidimensional support measures for Ukraine and those of pressure on Russia, including through a new package of sanctions<sup>4</sup>, or through holding Russia accountable through the instruments of international law.

Food security was a topic discussed at the Global Food Security Summit, hosted by the EU and the United States of America on the occasion of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. A speech of President Iohannis showed Romania's involvement in finding concrete solution for this phenomenon at international level. Strictly in the context of the Ukrainian conflict, President showed that "a key component of Romania's responsible and resolute support to Ukraine and its people has been to facilitate the transit of Ukrainian grain. Since the start of the invasion, the Romanian Black Sea Port of Constanța and our ports on the Danube

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mae.ro/node/59755>, accessed September 28

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mae.ro/node/59617>, accessed September 28

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mae.ro/node/59666>, accessed September 30

River have become main gateways for Ukrainian grain shipments abroad”<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, since the end of February and until now, more than 4 million tons of grain have already transited Romania, which represents 60% of the cereals exported by Ukraine. In addition, in March this year, soon after the start of the conflict, Romania facilitated and approved the presence on its territory of the UN World Food Programme, in order to support emergency operations in Ukraine. The programme was a response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the neighbouring country.

Another measure in this direction was the agreement<sup>6</sup> between the Ministries of Transport from Romania and France, established in September, in order to facilitate the transit of grain from Ukraine, as a way of accelerating efforts for ensuring global food security. One of the priorities envisaged by this form of cooperation is to increase the capacities of the Galati port and to enhance Ukrainian grain exports to developing countries, especially in the Mediterranean area. The Romanian authorities will work with the French authorities for a better endowment of the land border points between Romania and Ukraine and for increasing the number of freight wagons that cross the border. Romania faced great difficulties in managing such a large volume of agricultural goods. The problems started with issues related to different railway gauges and continued with insufficient personnel and equipment for dealing with the new situation, from the border until the final point of exiting the country, on this “corridor of solidarity”, as stated by the EU. Romania aligned to EU’s recommendations for increasing the infrastructure capacity and simplifying the bureaucratic side of transport, but the problems persisted. One of them was increasing the involvement of private companies. Given that the actual situation is a temporary one, the private companies’ interest is not to increase capacity<sup>7</sup> as Ukrainian shipping would resume to normal routes once the war is over and Ukrainian ports are opened. Therefore, such companies usually prefer to continue their focus on Romanian cereals, the shortest supply chain being always preferable for businesses.

Several bilateral meetings at New York also targeted the topics of food and energy security. In this respect, steps are taken for the development of economic cooperation between Romania and the United Arab Emirates<sup>8</sup>. The representatives of the two countries agreed on the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/alocutiunea-sustinuta-de-presedintele-romaniei-klaus-iohannis-in-cadrul-global-food-security-summit-gazduit-de-statele-unite-ale-americii-si-uniunea-europeana-in-marja-celei-de-a-77-a-sesiuni-a-adunarii-generale-a-organizatiei-natiunilor-unite>, accessed September 29

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rri.ro/ro/ro/acord-romano-francez-privind-tranzitul-cerealelor-ucrainene-2667938>, accessed September 28

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-25650717-salvarea-graului-ucrainean-romania-coridorul-preferential.htm>, accessed September 30

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bursa.ro/bogdan-aurescu-a-discutat-cu-ministrul-mediului-din-emiratele-arabe-unite-despre-investitii-in-agricultura-si-energie-04267740>, accessed September 29

importance of ensuring regional and global food security, given the current security and environmental challenges. The Emirati side is interested in the creation of effective coordination mechanisms in the fields of agriculture, environment, fair energy transition, sustainable food systems and climate change in Romania, and the prospects of cooperation are to be decided following further discussions in October.

The Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his support for the implementation of the Agreement on grains from Ukraine, known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, concluded in Istanbul in July this year and indicated that it is absolutely necessary to see a continuation of such an initiative after October 30<sup>9</sup>. In addition, in the meetings with counterparts from African states, Romania assured that EU countries are aware that the war in Ukraine has repercussions not only on Europe, but also on the multiple crises that already affect security and stability in Africa. In this regard, the minister reconfirmed Romania's special efforts to support Ukraine from multiple points of view, to facilitate the export of grain from Ukraine to combat a global food crisis and to take action in favour of citizens from third countries evacuated due to the war.

To conclude, the UN Assembly this year was an opportunity for showing an enhanced cooperation of the countries under the transatlantic partnership in order to combat the challenges raised, first of all, by the conflict in Ukraine, and to obtain the needed level of solidarity for putting an end to the war, as “maintaining European and Euro-Atlantic solidarity and unity is essential”<sup>10</sup>. The event also showed openness towards countries affected by the food crisis, occasion with which Romania restated the decision and efforts not only to counteract this phenomenon, but also to further enhance partnerships with longer term results in this area. The focus was on identifying the real threats of the actual times and on working together and emphasizing each country's contribution for fighting challenges and restoring peace and security.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mae.ro/node/59644>, accessed September 29

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mae.ro/node/59666>, accessed September 30