Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament: a Quest for Political Integrity
ROMANIAN COALITION FOR A CLEAN PARLIAMENT

A QUEST FOR POLITICAL INTEGRITY
www.polirom.ro

Editura POLIROM
Iași, B-dul Carol I nr. 4, P.O. BOX 266, 700506
București, B-dul I.C. Brâncianu nr. 6, et. 7, ap. 33, O.P. 37, P.O. BOX 1-728, 030174

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României:

A quest for political Integrity / with an introductory essay by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi. –

I. Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (pref.)

32(498)
Printed in ROMANIA
A QUEST FOR POLITICAL INTEGRITY

With an introductory essay by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi
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Fighting political corruption in postcommunist Europe

The main story

This book is about an anticorruption campaign that took place in Romania in 2004 and which prevented nearly one hundred controversial MPs from being reelected. While this campaign was considered “original” by many observers, the problems it addressed are widespread in the postcommunist world: political elites which at times look more like predatory elites, high state capture, constituencies with low civic competence and low interest in politics. This situation looks at times hopeless in the Balkans and former Soviet Union. But it is not. By and large, what we present here is a success story.

On the occasion of the local elections in June 2004 and the legislative and presidential elections in November and December, Romanian civil society organized itself for the first time into a broad coalition for integrity in politics: the Coalition for a Clean Parliament (CCP). Frustrated by the government’s lack of effectiveness in fighting large-scale corruption, civil society took matters into its own hands.

The CCP first determined the criteria that would make a candidate unfit for a clean Parliament. These criteria were 1) having repeatedly shifted from one political party to another in search of personal profit; 2) having been accused of corruption on the basis of published and verifiable evidence; 3) having been exposed as an agent of the Securitate (Ceaușescu’s former secret service); 4) being the owner of a private firm with important tax arrears to the state budget; 5) being unable to account for the discrepancy between one’s officially stated assets and one’s income; 6) turning a profit from conflicts of interest involving one’s public position. The second step was to discuss these criteria with the leadership of the political parties represented in the Parliament. The most important ones – the Social Democratic Party/Humanist Party coalition (SDP+HP), the Justice and Truth Alliance (DA), and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania (DAHR) – agreed with civil society criteria and process, and they publicly announced their support for the CCP’s campaign. It was only Greater Romania Party (GRP), Romania’s radical populist party, which resisted any cooperation.

The third step was to gather information about the candidates of these parties. CCP collected material published in the press over the years and researched the websites of various public authorities in charge of financial and commercial matters. Then it double-checked the information. The fourth step was to draw up lists of those candidates who met one or more of the agreed-upon criteria for being unfit to hold a seat in the future Parliament. The resulting “black lists” were then sent to the political parties, with the request that they reexamine each case and decide whether to withdraw the candidate
in question. The CCP also offered to analyze any cases where individual candidates contested its findings. Step five consisted of the withdrawal by the political parties of significant numbers of their initial candidates. Some of the candidates appealed to the CCP, which approved or rejected their appeals and adjusted its lists accordingly. The last step was to release the final CCP black lists in the form of nearly two million flyers, distributed in most of the 41 counties of Romania. The print press readership is low in Romania, which remains a rural country still. Although most of the twenty-one millions of Romanians are literates, less than 20% read regularly political reports in newspapers. Due to elections on the party list system, people seldom know their representatives. Balkan Trust, Romanian Soros Foundation and Freedom House provided funding for the campaign.

Smaller parties proved equally difficult to track. Hungarians tried to claim exception in virtue of them being a minority, and they were asked to resign positions they held in conflict of interest in order to be removed from the black list. HP was as a ground rule recruiting from other parties, so they were structurally opposed to such monitoring practices. After elections they jumped in the boat of winners, for instance, although they had been allies of SDP.

After the results showed that far more unfit candidates belonged to the ruling SDP than to the opposition, that party denounced the whole procedure and encouraged its candidates to sue Coalition members and ask the courts to stop distribution of the flyers. In public statements and open letters, the pro-government HP (and its private television station Antena 1) accused the CCP of “conspiracy,” calling its members “civic terrorists” and “a bunch of criminals.” The SDP and the HP also asked the Central Electoral Bureau, Romania’s highest electoral authority, to ban the CCP flyers, but judges from both the Bureau and the ordinary courts ruled in favor of the CCP.

Opponents of the CCP campaign found a more effective tactic, however. In many counties, they circulated fake flyers, using the CCP format but replacing the names of SDP candidates with opposition candidates.

Many domestic and international media outlets covered the activity of the Coalition, among others BBC, Reuters, AP, Le Monde, Financial Times, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Die Presse, and countless other European newspapers. Thanks to the combined efforts of both students and grassroots organizations such as the Civic Alliance and Asociația Pro Democrația (Pro Democracy Association – APD), nearly two million flyers were distributed in almost every county in Romania. More than two thousand people, from students to union members, participated as volunteers in this campaign.

What were the results of the blacklist campaign? The CCP initially documented 143 cases of unfit SDP candidates, including some on the county level. Under pressure from civil society, the SDP withdrew about 30 candidates from its electoral lists. The CCP also dropped from the black lists some candidates who appealed its findings, so the final count of unfit SDP and HP candidates was 95. Among the other black-listed candidates were 10 from the opposition Alliance (which also withdrew candidates from 28), 46 from the Greater Romania Party, and 3 from the DAHR.

A final accounting shows that 98 candidates on the original black lists lost their seats, having been either withdrawn by their parties or defeated by the voters. At the same time, 104 black-listed candidates won reelection. Measured in this way, the CCP’s rate of success was just below 50 percent. On the other hand, the SDP fell from power.

On the downside, while the new President, Traian Băsescu, and the new DA-led government are struggling to find adequate means to fight against systemic corruption,
Romanian civil society is saddled with defending itself against five lawsuits for defamation, filed by a former head of the secret service, a former minister of Justice, a former minister of Defense and a couple of other SDP top politicians. If Oscar Wilde is right that one should be judged by the quality of one’s enemies, then Romanian civil society has made enormous strides with its Coalition for a Clean Parliament. By end-April, in any event, the Coalition had won the first round in nearly all the trials.

The country

After a transition dominated mostly by former Communist elites symbolized by President Ion Iliescu, who managed to rule Romania ten years out of the first fourteen, Romania received in 1999 the invitation to join the European Union. The country also became a NATO member in 2003. However, lasting legacies of the Ceaușescu era still persist. The average wage is roughly 200 euro/month, although Romania is supposed to gain full membership in 2007. Corruption is usually singled out as the main obstacle to Romania’s progress towards Europe.

Romania’s separation from Communism was a blend of popular uprising and top elite conspiracy by groups from the Army and secret service (Securitate), which left one thousand dead in the winter of 1989-1990 and Ion Iliescu in power. A democratic Constitution was passed in 1991, and then revised in 2003. Under the Constitution, the Romanian Parliament has two chambers: the Assembly, with 332 deputies, and the Senate, which includes 137 senators. Net wages of MPs vary between 500-1,000 euros, but MPs also have a monthly allocation for expenses in their constituencies for which they are not compelled to submit expenses’ reports. MPs are elected on party lists, as Romania has a proportional electoral system.

Like most East Europeans, Romanians do not like their transition. A survey question saying “Communism was a good idea badly turned into practice” enjoyed majority for most of the transition. The Orthodox Church and the Army are the most trusted institutions. Political institutions are the least trusted (see Table 1), and MPs are amongst the most distrusted professions. 84% of Romanians consider that Romania has far too many MPs, and 50% consider that a conflict exists between representatives and the ordinary population. Institutional trust is generally low, with most Romanians distrusting Parliament and courts. Local governments have improved over years, helped by decentralization and direct election of mayors, and manage to score better in the top of public trust. The Parliament lags behind, and the usual headlines do not help, as far too often Romanians see road accidents provoked by MPs who walk out free, or projects to build expensive saunas and pools for MPs in their building – formerly Ceaușescu’s House of People. About 15% of MPs switched political allegiance to another political party between 2000 and 2004. The figure is low because of the list system. Directly elected mayors switched in proportion of over 50%, mostly from the opposition parties to the government. Their move was followed by infrastructure funds distributed by the central government.

While transition hit hard most of the people, and the purchase power is still below that of 1989, the last year of Communism, social inequality also increased greatly and an
impressive category of new rich people appeared overnight. Many of them dealt and still deal with the state sector, before, during and after privatization, and while most state privatizing companies agonize and spend important state aid to keep afloat, most businesspeople related to them are extremely prosperous. The 300 top rich men list yearly published by the weekly Capital reads like the list of tax arrears to the state budget. Many MPs are also on the list.

Jobs in the public sector are paid the national average, with executive positions going up to 3-400 euros. Jobs in industry pay similarly in the public or private sector at around 150-200 euros. An average pension (and Romania has over four million pensioners) falls beyond 100 euros. Between the state and the private sector an intermediate stratum was created during transition, the privatizing industrial assets. Those associated with strategic monopolies are often named “Regies Autonomes” and enjoyed a special status during transition, being privatized last. They have been granted autonomy, so that wages do not comply with public sector rules, but they have also been bailed out frequently from financial difficulties, mostly by postponing or wiping their tax arrears to the state budget. MPs were allowed for most of the transition to sit on the board of such companies, and even be their managers. MPs also have special pensions rights.

Table 1. Institutional trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(%) trusting</th>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Courts</th>
<th>Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(New Europe mean)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New Democracy Barometer V

Corruption is often invoked to explain how Romania works. But the term falls short of explaining anything. The banal definition of corruption is as use of public office to seek personal gain. This implies, however, that a public sector already exists and operates in a fair, non-discriminatory manner. This does not fit Romania. Its administration has never reached the stage of fully-fledged modernization and its governments have never achieved the impartiality, impersonality, and fairness that presumably characterize modern bureaucracies. Therefore, corruption often manifests itself not just by the use of a public position for personal gain but, more broadly, as the widespread infringement of the norms of impersonality and fairness that should characterize modern public service.
Influence – and therefore power – is here the main currency, not cash. Public goods are distributed in a particular, not a universal way, and the share of a person depends on the group he belongs to. Building standards of integrity and making them accepted is therefore as important as repressing deviation – since only an insignificant percentage of deviation can be repressed. How can one pursue traffic policemen if nearly all of them accept bribes, or repress doctors officially paid below 200 euros per month who accept gifts and judges who have more than ten times the number of cases in EU countries and are aware that nobody ever checks their doings? It is however politicians that people consider being the main problem, because them, who have the power to change things, choose to profit the most. People rank MPs on top of corrupted professions, followed by doctors, judges and policemen (see Table 2).

Table 2. The top of corrupted in the public perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived as the most corrupted</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policemen</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesspeople</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayors</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants local govt</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local councilors</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallup BOP 2004

Romania, like other countries in the region, adopted with little adjustment the standard recipes from the global anticorruption arsenal. Under such programs governments were asked to organize grand anticorruption campaigns, preferably on television, professions where traffic of influence was rife were encouraged to adopt codes of conduct, societies already suffering from informality and a deficit of implementation were pushed to adopt numerous laws and regulations. Finally, defective judiciaries and law enforcement agencies were burdened with the task to clean the rest of their societies. The results of this legalistic push were modest, in spite of the effort invested and the backing of donors. While in Bulgaria a majority considered in a Gallup survey that corruption decreased compared to earlier transition, in Romania after 2000, under a new SDP regime with Ion Iliescu President, the perception was different (see Table 3). Romanians felt that despite the adoption of numerous anticorruption laws after 2002, corruption, especially high-level corruption, was going up, not down. Newly created anticorruption institutions were shy to touch any of the new rich and high dignitaries who have made their fortunes during transition.
Table 3. Perception of corruption in the Balkans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Romania (%)</th>
<th>Bulgaria (%)</th>
<th>Serbia (%)</th>
<th>Montenegro (%)</th>
<th>Macedonia (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of central govt increased compared to previous years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of central govt decreased compared to previous years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency International Corruption Ratings*</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* CPI Score-2004 relates to perception of the degree of corruption as seen by businesspeople and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).
Source: IBEU Gallup survey 2003-2004 data, Transparency International

By 2004 Romanians were equally tired of corruption and anticorruption, and very cynical jokes were circulating on their behalf. A campaign to give up party lists and introduce single unit constituencies succeeded in gaining nearly one million signatories, but failed to achieve a change in electoral legislation. The mood was strongly against politicians, but tools were missing on how to tackle the problem.

The problem

Communism left many scars in East European societies. Amongst them, the tradition of a fully unaccountable political elite ranks as perhaps the most important. Communism was the opposite of an egalitarian society, creating in each and every Communist society special “politicocracies.” As power was the main instrument of allocating social rewards and political office was closely intertwined with social status, the result was what Andrew Janos called a “modern version of the old tables of rank”: a society divided no longer by class, but by status. The translation of Mihail S. Voslen斯基’s book on Nomenklatura in the eighties shed light on the “privileged class.” As it had no property of its own, nomenklatura was actually a status group. Each profession had its nomenklatura, not just politics, and an informal system of privileges derived from the links with these status groups underpinned the formal network of power and grounded it in the larger society. A driver of an important apparatchik had superior access to resources compared to a professor, even if the professor happened to be a member of the Communist party. Access to resources depended on the distance to the main source of power and privilege, and status varied accordingly. As Max Weber wrote: “The firm appropriation of opportunities, especially of opportunities for domination, always tends to result in the formation of status groups. The formation of status groups in turn always results in monopolistic appropriation of powers of domination and sources of income.”¹ As other resources

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or forms of social stratification had been de facto annihilated, status, this distance from
the source of power and privilege, became in fact the main provider of social hierarchy
under Communism.

The fall of the Communist regime shook this system to the bottom. But although the
monopoly of the party was gone, the system adapted. Various authors documented the
rise to economic power of that part of nomenklatura with better survival skills. Old
networks were valuable in the anarchical transition, especially when a new economic
regime was born and individuals needed others they could trust to form businesses with.
Some status groups were able to convert influence into wealth during the transition, and
in some postcommunist countries they still hold disproportionate control of all opportu-
nities, therefore hindering free market relations and fair competition. They control
access to most resources – most notably to the state and the public resources, which are
captured by them. They group in networks, which thrive at the expense of the larger
society, subverting social capital. Barrington Moore Jr. once described such groups as
“predatory elites,” who in the process of generating prosperity for themselves produce
social poverty of a scale otherwise unwarranted for in a certain society. In the transition
of the former Communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe social capital rebuild-
ing after the dictatorship took a wrong turn into the development of malign instead of
benign social capital. Whilst some networks are seen to allow “good” governance to
take place – civic engagement, association, trust and reciprocity – it can equally be
argued that networks of a different kind may also support “bad” governance. The
organization of institutionalized corruption also requires networks: “The illegal organi-
zation of corruption structures the behavior of various parties who possess unequal
resources ... and who want to develop a certain cooperation and coordination stability,
made necessary by the illicit nature of their activities. ... Corruption networks are ... an
extension of social legal networks (relational networks).”

This model is supported by public opinion data. Romanians perceive that some people
are above the law, and networked people and politicians come on top of privileged catego-
ries. What is more, these feelings are shared across the Balkans (see Table 4).

To put it briefly, “corruption” is a disease of the modern society and bureaucratic
state. However, in societies where modernization itself is far from finished and the state
has always been in the private property of certain privileged groups the very notion is
misleading as it suggests a completely different stage of evolution. The well-known
concept of state capture also gets a special twist in such societies: businesses do not
need to capture the state because the most important of them belong to people who
already “own” the state. They are MPs, ministers, and they have all their relatives and
friends in the network of power.

tion: A Handbook, eds. Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston, Victor T. Le Vine, Bruns-
Checking the lists of CCP new evidence is found to support this model. Many prefects, deputy prefects and secretaries of Prefectura offices can be found on the list of the Coalition, as well as many county councils presidents. SDP members tend to revolve around a few well-known regional businesses in which many of them hold shares and which thrive on public contracts. Many on the electoral lists pose in successful businesspeople and display in their assets disclosure forms flashy cars, villas and summer houses, but the debts of their companies to the state budget, if paid, would substantially ease the pressure of social expenditures. The national pattern is reproduced at the local level. Regional groups converge in a super-national network mixing business with politics. Many amassed fortunes clearly out of line with their income declarations (ranging from top SDP characters such as Ţerban Mihăilescu or Doru Ioan Târâcelă who are millionaires but have modest bank accounts balances to report, to the more humble but no less difficult to explain savings account of 200,000 Euro of Mircea Geoană, a former minister of Foreign Affairs).

The law is used to help the captors prosper. During the last summer recess of the Parliament, for instance, the government passed an ordinance allowing big debtors to the state budget to hide their debts until the very convenient date of November 30, two days after elections, with the perspective of complete write-off at the end of December. TV channels with a tame, pro-government line took advantage of this ordinance (94/2004), and so did other party clients. In November a special government ordinance was passed allowing a bail out for RAFO, a major contributor to the finances of SDP and one of the privatizing companies engulfed in public debts, although an investigation was pending on money laundering at RAFO.

The situation of the other parties does not allow any possible comparison. The 10 black-listed candidates from contender DA Alliance, the 3 Hungarian candidates and the 46 members of GRP denounced as lacking integrity by the civil society do not form networks on the size of a party. GRP, for example, displays a bizarre assortment of former petty cronies of Ceauşescu, such as his doctor, his architect, a couple of his propagandists and historians, but they cannot be charged of being the big sharks of

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6. Executive order taking effect immediately after publication, before being discussed and adopted by the Parliament.
corruption in Romania. However, the most notorious and corrupt politicians from these opposition parties, Hungarians included, are often in business with SDP people, in a nice example of cross-party cooperation. In some counties, the larger network does include opposition parties, as it is clearly impossible to be in the big business as a political outsider. While the opposition leaders have become aware of the problem lately and partially purged their candidates’ lists, much remains to be done still. Parties also accepted to develop internal screening procedures for integrity, but after elections these reforms were not pursued.

The map of Romania drawn following the black lists of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament is also illuminating. Parties tend to be cleaner in Bucharest, where grand fraud is done usually under the appearance of legality – by spotting loopholes in the law to skip tenders, or passing legislation to pardon the debts of political clients. In territory, however, we find a correlation between the low level of development and high percentage in agricultural-related occupation, on the one hand, and a high number of objectionable individuals on the ballots, on the other. Counties such as Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Gorj, Ialomiţa, Dolj, Botoşani, Teleorman, among the poorest strip areas counties in Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia, have almost all the top candidates on the lists. Unfortunate cases such as Bihor or Iași have situations where practically every political party is related to the network of influence and it is difficult to find any clean electoral list to vote for. At the other extreme, the more developed Arad, Alba, Sibiu in Transylvania have few names on the list, and all political parties tend to be cleaner there.

Of over three hundred candidates screened, none declared a conflict of interest in their disclosure form, mandatory since 2003. Many are current or would-be MPs, and more than half own businesses in their own name, or on the names of their wives and children. The main incentive to become a politician seems to be to become part of the inner circle. This means that one will not be bothered by the tax office, would get at least a share from every public contract in the region, that every public institution in one’s area will buy from one’s private business (insurance, medical supplies, pesticides, IT, office supplies, construction services). In short, that one will get a rent. Once one’s influence is secured as part of the status group, benefits accrue naturally. Elections threaten the system only partly, because local power monopolies are not seriously undermined by elections, especially in dependency areas of subsistence farming. Here public resources are so strictly controlled by local predatory elites that whole villages vote SDP almost without exception, and SDP gets nearly 100% of the mayors (directly in elections, or through administrative and financial pressures after that). The development map and the corruption map of Romania are strictly correlated.

Fresh evidence that it was all linked arose from verbatim transcripts of SDP meetings leaked to the press a few days before elections. In the words of Nicolae Văcăroiu, a SDP top leader and president of the Senate: “We must find a way to dissipate this image of SDP as the only corrupt party... I also talked to Blănculescu [the minister of Control] and I said, all right, I agree, you may expose one of ours in a press conference if you have five from GRP, four from Democrats and two from Liberals alongside him.”

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7. The Standing Committee of SDP, Oct. 20th, 2003. Full transcripts were published as *Stenogramele PSD*, 3 volumes, Bucharest: Editura Ziuă, 2004. The leaked transcripts of the Romanian then government Social Democratic Party (postcommunist) are under investigation by the Anticorruption
more: “Mr President, I beg you to talk to Mr Șaguna [the head of the Audit Court], on behalf of the party, he doesn’t listen to me anymore. He should stop all those files and investigations. Only God knows how many telephone calls I have to make to his subordinates… Especially, Mr President, remember that tomorrow – tomorrow! – all these files leave from the Audit Court to the ordinary courts. And if a crazy auditor writes something on paper, that file is not going to stay at the Audit Court, where we have our people at the top, I can make some telephone calls and have the case closed properly. No, it is going to reach … a territorial court among divorces or petty thefts, and it will leak to the media instantly.”

Can this be reproduced elsewhere?

In March 2005, at the request of the new government, in its turn requested by the European Commission, to organize an independent audit to assess effectiveness of Romania’s anticorruption strategies, Freedom House wrote:

Romania’s Freedom House Nations in Transit corruption score deteriorated gradually from 1999, the first year this indicator was added, until 2002, with Romania then recording a small positive evolution in 2003, due to the passage of an anticorruption bill and the adjacent strategy. However, since then it stagnated. The scores of Freedom House are consistent with other measurements, such as Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index or survey data, which show that both businesspeople and ordinary citizens have not yet perceived a decrease in corruption … The change in government at the end of 2004 brought some positive developments (passage of a more exhaustive declaration of assets, opening of a string on official investigations regarding alleged corruption, pursuit of businesses with tax arrears which previously enjoyed immunity from enforcement), but there is still a considerable way to go for Romania to make effective use of anticorruption instruments created in the last years’. The audit also praised the efforts of Romanian civil society. The statements of assets by dignitaries were not checked by any official institution since their introduction in 1996. CCP alone managed to check them and publish results. Only in 2005 the government decided the law will be changed to empower a more effective body with the checking of such statements.

The success of Romania’s anticorruption campaign “Coalition for a Clean Parliament/Meet Your Candidates” needed the coming together of a few key factors. We will outline them in turn:

1. **International pressure on Romania to curb high level corruption prior to entering the EU in 2007.** This led to the adoption of various pieces of legislation (such as the

Prosecutor beginning 2005. Former Foreign Affairs Minister Mircea Geoană was quoted by BBC World Service acknowledging the transcripts are genuine. Several others party members made similar statements to the Romanian press. The Prime Minister Adrian Năstase (after January 2005 chair of the Chamber of Deputies) denied their authenticity. See the review of transcripts in Romanian Journal of Political Science, fall 2004, p. 54-56, www.sar.org.ro/polsci/.

anticorruption “package” of 2003). Imperfect as they were, they provided fuel for civil society and the media. This also made acceptable the campaign for public integrity of CCP. Parties did not dare to show the door to civil society in 2004, when Romania was under close monitoring for corruption. This helped CCP in its first important success, establishing the norms of public integrity and making them accepted. If CCP alone had said that it is unnatural that no dignitary was ever investigated for corruption, parties could have continued to claim that nobody is guilty until sentenced by a court. Once regular reports of the European Commission started to notice that no big fish were ever caught in the net of official anticorruption, the need arose to show something was done at this top level as well. Initially parties probably hoped it would all come to a public show of good will and they did not expect that each candidate would be monitored and results would be made public.

2. **Legal instruments.** The compulsory filling of assets statements by dignitaries, as well as of the statements of conflict of interest is an important instrument. Once adopted, due to pressure of European Union in the accession process, Pandora’s box was opened. The lack of political will of Adrian Năstase government was shown in the fact that assets were never checked. The 1996 legislation provided that a citizen could go to a prosecutor asking to check the wealth of a dignitary or public servant only if he could already prove the statement was false. Nevertheless, once statements became public information in 2003 they allowed civil society and the media to turn themselves into monitors of public integrity. A similar instrument is the law on freedom of access to public information, passed as part of political conditions in 2001 when Romania was applying to NATO. Later civil society obtained information on distribution of infrastructure funds by filling a request under this law. It then correlated it with the map of political migration of mayors and proved that mayors were bought over by the government party with the help of infrastructure funds. These are crucial instruments in the hands of civil society, and their mere existence is enough to start a process of monitoring of public integrity.

3. **Widespread civil society and media will to fight corruption.** CCP succeeded because it gathered together the most visible Romanian NGOs, and despite effort by various politicians to plead their cause to individual members, the Coalition stayed together as a united front. It received support from most of the print press, despite high corruption in the media, and its opponents buying newspapers’ ad space to fight the Coalition and especially its leaders.

4. **A public opinion already against the “political class” and its privileges.** This condition is the easiest to fulfill, as survey data shows that across Eastern Europe the mood is similar.

5. **At least one political party willing to go along.** CCP had no allies within political parties initially, despite SDP’s later allegations that it was manipulated by the opposition. One opposition party was interested in CCP because it realized it will come out cleaner than the government party (no wonder: during fourteen years they only had a minor share of power during four years). Another was interested because its leader wanted to refresh its own candidates with a new generation, more flexible to the leader’s authoritarian style. Once they “bought” the CCP procedure and endorsed it, there was not much the government party could do without risking to
put itself in the position of opposing a public interest integrity campaign. It had to come on board.

This story is not finished. Half those on the black list managed to get into the Parliament. None of the politicians on the list are yet investigated by official bodies, although the new Agency for Integrity which would supervise assets declarations will clearly go after many. The Coalition members now speak of creating a Coalition for a Clean Government to continue monitoring. Regardless of future actions, however, CCP showed a more effective way to fight corruption: public exposure. Where laws do not work, public opinion can achieve a form of mobilization itself which would result in the elimination of those considered not to fulfill integrity standards. It takes solidarity among civil society, and a working alliance with the media. But it clearly works.

*Alina Mungiu-Pippidi*
I. The Story in Documents

The following press releases, news pieces, and public documents appear in chronological order. Together they offer a vivid account of the unfolding of the highly visible initiative “Meet Your Candidates” by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament in 2004.

1. Manifesto

January 2004

The organizations signing this appeal invite the country’s civic associations and journalists from the local and national press to join in a national program to combat political corruption.

In 2003 many laws were passed against corruption, the Constitution was amended and changes were proposed to be made to the electoral law. But the citizens of Romania feel that these legislative changes are not reflected in daily life; the legal country and the real country remain two separate worlds. Small functionaries or low level intermediaries are arrested and shown on television. But people ask, why just them? Opinion polls show that Romanians consider politics to be the most corrupt part of society, and politicians lead as the most corrupt profession.

These politicians, who are seen as the first priority for a clean-up campaign, did not attain their positions as the country’s leaders in an arbitrary way. They were voted for, even by those who complain about corruption in opinion polls. Some have even been repeatedly reelected, even though the accusations against them have been printed in newspapers and discussed on television. Why is this so? Many people do not read newspapers and do not know much about their members of Parliament or mayors; others know, but do not care that they are voting for corrupt people. They are all equally corrupt, the argument goes, so it does not matter.

Should things be like this? How can we encourage honesty if we do not distinguish between the corrupt and the decent? The moment has come to launch a program to expose the political class. Every voter in Romania must know their candidates well. For this reason, in each electoral district we will make a report on the candidates with details of their political past and their underhand business affairs. Each elector will receive this report and will decide which politicians deserve his or her vote. We will campaign against the corrupt regardless of which party they belong to. We will advocate with the political parties, that they should no longer nominate corrupt people as candidates for mayor, the local council or Parliament.
We would like to see a responsible and clean political class, regardless of the voting
system we use to elect them. We would like the political parties to stop promoting corrupt
people, who have changed parties countless times for opportunistic reasons. It does not
depend on anybody else but us to make 2004 the year of the cleansing of the political
class.

Signed by: Media Monitoring Agency, Civic Alliance, APADOR-CH/Helsinki Com-
mittee, Asociatia Pro Democrazia, The Association of Political Science Students, Asso-
ciation of Revolutionaries without Privileges, Center for Independent Journalism, Free-
dom House Romania, Open Society Foundation, Romanian Press League, Romanian
Academic Society (SAR).

2. “Meet Your Candidates” program. A proposal on behalf
of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament

Project description

Why do we need to act?

Eighty percents of Romanians are convinced that corruption is a widespread practice,
according the last Public Opinion Barometer (BOP). The political class has a disastrous
image; people believe the politicians are only looking after their own interests. 66.3%
are convinced that almost all or most of MPs are corrupt and 57.3% have the same
opinion on the ministers. Actually, only five out of one hundred Romanians really believe
that their representatives are not involved in corruption. Corruption is always singled out
as the main obstacle to Romania’s joining Europe in 2007. Indeed, Romania has the
worst scores on the Transparency International corruption indexes from all candidate
countries.

Why is the Romanian media an ineffective accountability actor? The overwhelming
majority of citizens claim their awareness of corruption is based on media reports.
Unfortunately, press freedom is limited in Romania, as shown in Freedom House reports.
The electronic media are controlled by economic means and the printed press through
blocking the distribution channels. Investigative journalism has suffered a serious de-
cline in recent years as publishers with economic problems discourage journalists from
upsetting politicians. The critical opinions and articles are limited to few central news-
papers and magazines, with a limited dissemination. Only 18% of Romanians read
political news or columns in newspapers; the 45% living in the rural areas do not even
have access to them. Moreover, the local press, which usually does not cover political
corruption, has a higher circulation (per total) comparing with the national press. Having
a more limited public, it is also more vulnerable to the pressures. In many counties of
Romania, local businessmen and politicians took control over the local newspapers, radio
and TV stations. A deep split has occurred between the independent media (especially
central newspapers and few others at local level, in big cities) and the one controlled
directly or indirectly by the central and local politicians (TV stations and the majority of
local publications). The impact of the first category is limited and, despite the aggressive
coverage of corruption cases, audience is very limited for the few independent national
dailies. In the end of day we find majorities of Romanians who do not know who their
representatives in Parliament are, and who believe that all politicians are equally corrupt.
Ignorance feeds cynicism. Direct action is needed to reach the broader mass of voters,
the 90% who do not read politics in newspapers, with tailor-made information on their
candidates. The interest is there, or these people would not complain in surveys or
identify the politicians as the most corrupted category.

Romanians are highly cynical about the political class and this pervasive cynicism is
eroding the very foundations of democracy. Political trust is low to none; people
constantly believe that others get rich by taking advantage of their position while they
remain poor. Although corruption is widely present in the public space, the particular
cases are rarely exposed. The convicted people are few. The phenomenon was called by
the media “corruption without corrupt people” and is extremely dangerous. If there is a
lot of talk about corruption but nobody seems to be guilty about it, it becomes difficult
to make the difference between the corrupt people and the honest ones, between good
and bad.

**What shall we do?**

While Romanian voters are aware of political corruption, and even assume that it is
widespread and the source of all evils (politicians are considered above the law and top
the list of corrupted professions), corrupted politicians, even those constantly sur-
rounded by negative media campaigns, get frequently reelected. Both MPs, elected on
party lists, and mayors, elected directly, seem to be able to survive very well the
corruption allegations of the media. While one reason is clearly the underperformance of
institutions of horizontal accountability – politicians are seldom investigated and excep-
tionally charged, especially if in government – another cause of this situation originates
in the lack of civic competence of the constituency. Few Romanian voters read political
reports in newspapers. Aware of this situation, parties and politicians rely on the poorest
and least educated constituencies to seek reelection, in open defiance to the media and
the civic competent citizens.

The project proposed by this coalition, which is bound to enlarge, seeks to solve this
lack of information of the citizens by targeting as many as possible million households in
Romania with information on their candidates in legislative elections. The information,
consisting in the corruption track record of candidates, will be synthesized by local
investigative journalists and checked by reviewers for accuracy. The parties targeted are
those which have the potential according to surveys to meet the 5% electoral threshold
to enter Parliament.

The project will operate therefore through three different networks:

1. A network of reporters and reviewers, with the task to collect and publish the
information. The products will be one tabloid-size sheet (corruption bulletin) in 42
versions (counties plus Bucharest) with the corruption track record of all candidates
(also to include political migration record). The reports will be based on investiga-
tions published by the local and national media quoted as source, eliminating
allegations with insufficient evidence.
2. A network of dissemination, consisting in volunteers convoked by local and national NGOs which will take the corruption bulletin to the voters’ mailboxes.

3. A network of support and advocacy, consisting in media outlets and opinion leaders who will publicize permanently the campaign in order to persuade political parties to give up candidates with a corruption record. Major newspapers, such as Evenimentul Zilei or Academia Catavenea have already joined the ranks of the Coalition, as did the League of Romanian Journalists, which has over 200 members.

These networks are already functional. The calendar of proposed actions is described in the next section. The Coalition elected a board made by representatives designated by every organization. A test will be made on a smaller scale for the local elections, when mayoral candidates from counties residences will be screened, but information will be disseminated through media only.

The Coalition has already organized two working groups, one to prepare in detail an organization chart of the dissemination network, formed by Civic Alliance, APD and SAR, and another to recruit and manage the network of reporters and reviewers, formed by SAR, Center for Independent Journalism and Media Monitoring Agency. Logistic support was provided to both teams by Open Society Foundation Romania. The second team has already recruited one journalist per county, and a few heads of the best investigative departments of the Romanian print press in order to train the reporters and edit the information.

The list of recruited journalists will not be made public. The names of the reviewers will also be secret. The public and politicians will only interact with the leaders of the Coalition. Based on a year long monitoring of corruption in the local media by Coalition member Media Monitoring Agency, the second team has also developed the criteria for corrupt political behavior to be included in the list. Following legal advice from APADOR-CH, a Coalition member, the word “corruption” will not be used in the informative bulletin where the candidates will be listed, in order to allow the listing of conflict of interest and other cases which are not considered corrupt by the Romanian legislation. To feature in the list, a candidate should be under investigation for corruption, traffic of influence or tax evasion by any Romanian or European agency, including European funds watchdog OLAF, to have been previously charged and sentenced even if the sentence was not carried out from various reasons, to be or have been in a proven situation of conflict of interest (for instance, the head of a state privatizing agency who passes into his own hands an asset from the agency list, but was never charged for this). Criminal records for other offences than corruption will also be mentioned. Politicians who switched political parties more than once in the past decade will also be mentioned, as this phenomenon is a main source of political corruption in Romania (15% MPs and over 50% mayors have switched party from 2000 in order to seek various positions or cash).

There will be no normative judgments in these short biographic lines, just the name and factual information, for example:

JOHN DOE. Previously he ran in 1992 for the Party for the Unity of all Romanians and held the position of head of Committee for Economics in the Chamber of Deputies. In 1996 he ran for the Social Democrats and was appointed head of the same committee, until he was compelled to resign a year ago. He currently runs for the Greater Romania Party.
Finally and based only on official information from the National Council for the Study of the Archives of the Securitate, the mention will be made if the Council identified the politician as a former informant. It is not forbidden under Romanian law for former collaborators of Ceauşescu’s political police to candidate in elections. However, the public should be informed of this fact.

The Coalition members will first warn parties of their intention and suggest that candidates with a public record of corruption should not be put on the list. Furthermore, a detailed list of criteria will be distributed to parties for them to be informed who would be covered in the informative bulletins. Second, after informative bulletins are compiled, each party leader will get a chance to read it prior to going public and will have a few days to decide if the candidates will continue to receive party support. If the party decides to retire support and drops the candidate from the list the Coalition will also remove the candidate from the bulletin.

This treatment will be applied indiscriminately to all political parties which are above or around the 5% threshold, meaning practically all parties which are now in the Parliament.

The main objective of this project is to prevent election and reelection of candidates with a corruption record from every political party. In other words, we seek to empower citizens to achieve real vertical accountability, when voters would become able to prevent a corrupted politician from winning office. We also seek to prompt the development within political parties of a mechanism to screen candidates better in order to raise the overall quality of politicians and improve political trust.

**Project calendar  (April 2004 – November 2004)**

1. **Setting up the documentation network**  
   (February-April)  
   Recruiting and training of the network of journalists and reviewers.

2. **Public support and awareness campaign**  
   (April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November)  
   The Coalition board and their member organizations will organize 4 joint press conferences and issue press statements that will constantly publicize the campaign, both at national and local level. Starting with the public launching of the campaign (March), the Coalition will constantly invite willing local NGOs to join and support the efforts to disseminate candidate information at local level. The Coalition will convene journalists, opinion leaders and civic personalities who will urge the electorate on the importance of informed voting. The messages will prompt voters to use their actual power to curtail down political corruption.

3. **Public pressure and advocacy campaign**  
   (April, May, June, July, August, September)  
   The Coalition board will also convey an explicit message to the political parties that will nominate candidates for the 2004 legislative elections. The message will warn parties on the political costs of nominating candidates with a corrupt record and publicly urge the decision-making bodies of the parties to dismiss such candidates,
should they get nomination. The Coalition will convey its message both directly, in 
meetings with party decision-makers, and indirectly, by means of 4 press conferences 
and public statements.

4. Documentation network national meetings 
(Febuary, March, April, May, June, July, August, September)
Two national network meetings will take place, getting together the members of the 
documentation and review network, the Coalition board and the national coordinator.
4.1. The first event (April) will provide the opportunity for intensive briefing and 
unitary training for all network members. The teams will become familiar with 
a common set of coherent methodological standards that will enhance their 
capacity to efficiently collect and compile information that is both useable and 
reliable for the specific goals of the project.
4.2. The second network event (September) will take place upon completion of the 
42 versions of the information bulletins. It will serve as a de-briefing by the 
regional 10 teams, helping the Coalition board to make the final content review 
on the informative county bulletins. The bulletins will present factual information 
on the nominated candidates, detailing their public integrity record – as 
documented and published by local and central media throughout the last decade.

5. Documentation and review 
5.1. Data collection (April, May, June)
The network of local investigative journalists will collect and compile data on the 
candidates seeking nomination by political parties for the 2004 legislative 
elections and in selected cases for mayoral elections. The compilations will be 
grounded on investigations already published by local and national media with 
additional checking wherever necessary. Criteria for including specific information 
were already designed by a board.
5.2. Review (June-September)
Regional reviewers will constantly check the data compiled by journalists for 
accuracy and consistency, eliminating unsubstantiated allegations on the candidates and submitting a draft version for each county bulletin to the Coalition board. The 42 final versions of the informative bulletins will finally be reviewed by the Coalition board. Coalition member APADOR-CH will give a final check to ensure the Coalition is not liable for any of the printed information.

6. Printing 
(August)
After final review and editing by the Coalition board, the informative bulletins 
presenting the candidates supported by parties in each constituency will be printed in 
150,000 copies for each county and 500,000 for Bucharest.

7. Dissemination 
(September, October, November)
A national network of volunteers will disseminate the informative bulletins directly to 
the voters’ mailboxes. Whenever possible, the volunteers will also deliver go-to-vote 
messages and make voters aware of the importance of casting an informed ballot in 
the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Dissemination will follow a number of 
strategies, different from the urban to the rural areas.
In the urban areas materials will be distributed in mailboxes, but also restaurants, pubs, waiting halls. Local newspapers and radios will be encouraged to print separate sheets with the lists and include them also in their editions. In Bucharest the distribution network of newspapers through mobile vendors will be used. In the rural areas materials will be disseminated to the target meeting points of villages: waiting halls of train stations, local pub, local shop and entrusted to local volunteers for gradual dissemination during campaign.

7.1. Setting up the dissemination network (April-August)
Volunteers will be summoned and coordinated by four of the Coalition member organizations, which have local branches: The Romanian Academic Society, The Civic Alliance, Asociația Pro Democrația, and The Association of Political Science Students. The list of partners will remain open, and other local NGOs with civic focus will be invited to join the dissemination effort.

7.2. Dissemination target
Besides the large urban area of Bucharest, dissemination will target both towns and poorly informed rural areas in each of the 41 Romanian counties. An estimated 2 million households will be reached. An average of two voters per household indicates that roughly 4 million voters will be informed on their candidates. This will be carried out by volunteers.

7.3. Dissemination timing vs. electoral schedule
The dissemination for general elections will start by the end of August and will last until the beginning of the electoral campaign and will also overlap it, thus providing the public with an alternate source of candidate information to party campaigns. The test campaign for mayoral candidates in counties’ residences will take place in May-June.

8. Creating and updating the public database (June-November)
An electronic database will be created and made available online, on the websites of member organizations, mostly for the use of journalists countrywide, but also for the information of the limited number of Romanian voters with Internet access. The database will contain the data included in the informative bulletins and it will constantly be publicized as a comprehensive source of candidate information for the 2004 legislative elections. It will be updated upon any official and confirmed change on the nominee list of political parties running in elections.

Anticipated results

By increasing the political cost of corruption, the Coalition will discourage political parties from promoting candidates with filthy pasts. Currently media campaigns do not work because politicians know how restricted their audience is. We also expect that citizens get a renewed interest in elections, watch more attentively the campaign and discuss more on politics on the opportunity of receiving the bulletin. Finally we expect that parties will set up at least formally a mechanism to screen candidates, which does not exist presently.
Is this project relevant for more than just Romania?

Romania is one of the many countries where consolidation of democracy is limited by the lack of quality of political elites and the general perception that democracy is not truly an accountable system of government. The protest against unaccountable political elites led in 2000 to near a third of the vote going to radical nationalist Vadim Tudor. Turnout has been decreasing steeply in Romania for the past two elections. Unless grassroots mobilization is achieved it is doubtful that corruption can be fought by legislative means only and that the interest in politics, reflected in turnout figures, will be restored. Donors who support this project assist the consolidation of democracy and the building of accountability in a key country for South Eastern Europe. The Romanian example, if successful, will prove that ways exist to turn electoral democracies into quality democracies by resorting to the mobilization of their own citizens to demand political parties for more accountability.

Evaluation of the project

We will use two indicators for evaluating the project’s outcome:

1. How many candidates that we singled out for bad corruption records were removed from the electoral lists by parties themselves?
2. How many of the candidates not removed by parties were not reelected after our awareness campaign?

We shall also assess the extent to which parties have set up formal bodies to screen candidates for corruption.

Who does what in the Coalition

Romanian Academic Society – Overall management. Fundraising. Relations with political parties and promotion of the project in domestic and international media
Civic Alliance – Dissemination
Center for Independent Journalism – Management of the whole part concerning journalists and reviewers
Media Monitoring Agency – Database on political corruption. Website of the project Freedom House Romania.
Helsinki Committee Romania – Legal defense in cases of libel suits
Asociația Pro Democrația – Dissemination
The Association of Political Science Students – Build a coalition of students’ associations to help dissemination
Group for Social Dialogue – Website
Romanian League of Journalists – Support in the media
3. Mediafax news agency

09.03.2004

Opinion polls show that 80% of Romanians are convinced that corruption is widely practiced, while at the same time it is considered the main obstacle in the way of entry into the European Union. For the overwhelming majority of citizens, the only source of information is the press, whose freedom is, unfortunately, increasingly limited, as Freedom House’s reports show. Critical articles or editorials can only be found in a few national newspapers with limited circulation. As for the local press, it is controlled, directly or indirectly, by the politicians in power. So a situation is reached in which many Romanians do not know who their representatives in Parliament are, still less do they know what business affairs they are involved in. Everybody talks about corrupt people, but nobody knows who they are. Consequently, politicians who are featured in negative press campaigns and accused of corruption can still manage to get reelected without problems. One of the causes of this dangerous phenomenon is the lack of correct information for the citizen, and the lack of civic awareness of the voter.

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament is firstly attempting to solve the problem of lack of information, by providing the majority of households in Romania with a report containing as much accurate data as possible about their candidates in the parliamentary elections. The reports will constitute a cataloguing of corruption records, without this term being directly used, as well as of situations of conflict of interests or incompatibility, in which candidates have been involved either now or in the past. In addition, candidates’ criminal records will be mentioned, as well as migration from one party to another, and possible collaboration with the former Securitate as revealed in official information from the CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Archives of the Securitate). The procedure will be applied in a non-discriminatory way to all parties which exceed the electoral threshold of 5%.

The Coalition intends to warn the political parties, suggesting that they should withdraw candidates with such records from the race. The parties will be provided with a list, outlining the criteria under which the names of candidates will feature in these reports, and they will be able to study them before they are made public. The decision as to whether or not to keep these candidates on the list will be theirs alone. Consequently, the main objective of the project is to prevent the election or reelection of corrupt candidates from any political party.

The project will be based on three distinct networks: a network of evaluators, who will collect and publish the information, with the finished product to be printed in 42 different versions, a distribution network, consisting of volunteers assembled by NGOs, and a support and promotion network, consisting of representatives of the mass media and opinion leaders. It is estimated that approximately 2 million households will receive these reports; this means around 4 million voters. A preliminary test on a more limited scale will take place for the local elections.
4. Associated Press news agency

Alison Mutler
10.03.2004

_Bucharest, Romania (AP) –_ Civic rights groups launched an aggressive campaign Tuesday to deliver information on allegedly corrupt candidates to voters’ homes before general elections later this year. Allegations of wrongdoing by politicians sometimes do not reach the media in Romania. Many newspapers and television stations have debts to the state and refrain from criticizing the ruling Social Democratic Party, and local newspapers usually are under political control. The United States and the European Union repeatedly have told Romania to clean up corruption. Romania is set to join NATO later this year, and hopes to join the EU in 2007. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, a US-educated political analyst who heads the Academic Society of Romania, which promotes democracy, is leading the Coalition for a Clean Parliament.

“Local journalists will be hired in each Romanian county, their identities kept confidential, and will collect information on all political candidates in the area, Mungiu-Pippidi said. They will note allegations of corruption during a candidate’s political career, conflicts of interest and whether a candidate worked for the communist-era Securitate secret police and did not reveal it. The information will then be checked before being passed on to parties to give them an opportunity to drop suspect candidates. If they do not, the information would handed to the media and in leaflet form to about 5 million rural homes.”

5. Financial Times

Christopher Condon
04.06.2004

Romania’s governing Social Democratic Party (SDP) may face an embarrassing set of defeats in Sunday’s municipal elections despite fielding prominent cabinet members in key mayoral races.

Most surprisingly, Mircea Geoană, the popular foreign minister, is likely to lose his bid to unseat Bucharest’s mayor, Traian Băsescu of the opposition Democratic Party (DP). In a poll released yesterday Mr Geoană trailed Mr Băsescu by 46 to 36 per cent. A second round will be held on June 20 if there is no majority winner.

The same poll suggested an alliance between the DP and the National Liberal Party (NLP) might also win a majority on Bucharest’s city council, which is now controlled by the SDP.

Another defeat could await the SDP in the Transylvanian city of Cluj, where Ioan Rus, the interior minister, is running for mayor. Some polls show Mr Rus leading the ultra-nationalist incumbent Gheorghe Funar but trailing his challenger from the DP, Emil Boc.
A defeat for both of the SDP’s high-profile candidates could prove damaging ahead of national parliamentary elections in November.

The issue of corruption may be undermining support for the ruling party. Romania, regularly ranked by Transparency International as one of the most corrupt countries in Europe, has been criticised by the European Union and the US for failing to tackle it.

Yesterday the Romanian Academic Society, a public policy group, published biographies of 25 mayoral and city council candidates in seven cities and detailing evidence of corruption. Most were SDP candidates.

“It is a big deal if the SDP cannot win either city with two good ministers,” said Dorel Șandor, director of Centre for Political Studies and Comparative Analysis, a Bucharest research group. He said a DP-NLP sweep in Bucharest would establish “a real island of opposition.”


12.08.2004

At this time when the political parties are drawing up their lists for Parliament, the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, made up of important organizations from Romanian civil society (Center for Independent Journalism, Romanian Academic Society, “Academia Cașăcăvé” Media Monitoring Agency, Civic Alliance, Group for Social Dialogue, APD, Association of Revolutionaries without Privileges, Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania – Helsinki Committee, The Association of Political Science Students [National School of Political Science and Administration], Freedom House Romania), launches this appeal to party leaders to adopt personal integrity as the main criterion for the selection of candidates.

The Coalition is sending to all parties the criteria under which the lists of candidates who do not correspond to the requirement of integrity will be drawn up. The lists will be sent to the press and directly to the voters during the election campaign. A biography of each candidate will be made, based on the following questions:

1. Was he/she a collaborator of the Securitate before 1989?
2. Has he/she moved from one party to another, while holding a paid office (local councilor, member of Parliament, mayor etc.)? In general has he/she changed parties more than once in the last fourteen years? Did he/she hold positions in PCR (Romanian Communist Party)?
3. Has he/she been involved in any major conflict of interest during the transition period, by being involved in privatisations, or being a member of the shareholder assembly or the supervisory board of state companies or regies autonomes, or in a private company which has had contracts with agencies of the state/local administration while at the same time holding political office, either him/herself or through a close family member? Does this conflict still exist at present?
4. Has he/she been accused (recently or in the past) of corruption, fraud, improper use of resources, embezzlement or other similar activities? What is the current situation with these accusations? Are they being investigated by official authorities? Is there
any verifiable proof? Is any ongoing investigation being carried out correctly, as for any other citizen?

5. Is he/she at present or has he/she been in the past the purchaser or manager of a privatised company or one which is being privatised? What is the current situation of the company and how has this developed since he/she became purchaser or manager of this company?

6. Does he/she have personal assets which do not appear to correspond to income? For example, even if he/she does not own a private company, does he/she have property or incomes from other sources than inheritances, which seem to exceed his/her net declared income?

7. If he/she is a business person, do his/her firms have debts to the state budget? What is the situation of these debts?

8. Has he/she been accused of a criminal offence?

At present, the Coalition for a Clean Parliament is making visits to the headquarters of the political parties to discuss this list of criteria. Visits have already been made to DAHR (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania) and NLP (National Liberal Party) and meetings are to follow with SDP (Social Democratic Party), HP (Romanian Humanist Party), DP (Democratic Party), and GRP (Greater Romania Party), who have already been invited to take part. This is the right moment for the parties to filter their candidates by themselves. Once the lists have been made, the Coalition will deliver the integrity biographies to the headquarters of the parties in September, and the candidates will have two weeks to challenge the information included in them. If countervailing evidence is not brought, the candidate will be included on the civil society “blacklist” which will be disseminated to voters. There will therefore be a clear mechanism, and consequently members of the Coalition will not agree to hold individual discussions with potential candidates. It should be remembered that the information will be compiled by a network of anonymous journalists and verified by independent reviewers. The Coalition calls on both party leaders and candidates for the interests of democracy to be placed higher than personal or party obligations. A clean democracy needs clean political parties. Clean parties are more powerful and efficient parties. Those candidates who are not clean are a source of weakness for their parties and it is not too late for them to show their lack of personal interest by withdrawing of their own accord.

Mihai Politeanu
Communications Officer,
Romanian Academic Society
Secretariat of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament

7. Mediafax news agency

20.08.2004

In a press conference on Thursday, the president of DP (Democratic Party), Traian Băsescu, stated that informers for the former Securitate, political opportunists (who change party for material advantage), people with dubious business activities, and
members of Parliament (from either chamber) who have not participated in its activities will not be included in DP’s electoral lists: “DP leaders will not accept past informers or political opportunists on the party lists.”

He stated that as well as the political criteria, related to political career, another set of criteria, recommended by civil society, will also be imposed on those who wish to stand as candidates for DP on the Alliance (DP and NLP) lists: “We had a meeting with several representatives of civil society, SAR and others, and as a result of this discussion, we decided that next Tuesday, in the Permanent National Bureau, we will adopt a number of criteria to change the political class,” Băsescu declared.

Among these criteria, he elaborated further on relations with the former Securitate: “We will take a very tough attitude towards those who worked as informers,” the DP leader explained. He said that all the county offices of the party will ask for information from the CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Archives of the Securitate) about Democrats who wish to stand. Băsescu stated that the situation of former Securitate officers will be debated on a case by case basis.

“We will also introduce an anti-opportunism criterion. Members of Parliament who have wandered around from one party to another will not have a place on the list, because such people change the vote of the electorate,” Băsescu explained, specifying that the measure would not be applied to those who have changed parties without being members of Parliament.

Another criterion recommended by civil society relates to candidates’ personal assets. Băsescu stated that those whose assets cannot be justified by their income will not be allowed to candidate. “Somebody with a modest state salary who owns three villas will not be able to join the DP lists,” the DP leader stated, by way of example.

He added that this could also apply to businesspeople with debts to the state. “Those from the business world should not have debts to the state, especially since we have always criticised the government on this issue,” Băsescu said, stating that his firms do not have debts to the state budget.

The DP leader also referred to people who are or were members of the administrative board of state companies they have done business with. “Conflicts of interest will not be accepted on the DP lists,” Băsescu stated.

He said that all these criteria will be sent to the regional offices, which will then revise the lists of candidates they have already sent to the party’s head office.

Băsescu also stated that at the next meeting of the Permanent National Bureau, a discussion would take place on the professionalisation, as politicians, of DP members. “In Parliament now, there are many members notable only by their absence. Good people, but their activity has not been noticed, and their value as politicians is almost zero,” the DP president declared.

He told the DP members of Parliament who had not been active in either chamber not to be annoyed if they no longer appear on the parliamentary lists. “Political life must leave amateurism behind,” said Băsescu, refusing to give any examples of this kind of member of Parliament in DP.

The Democrat leader also said that the parliamentary lists would be finalised around 15 September.
8. The Social Democratic Party,
Department for Media Relations: Press release

02.09.2004
www.psd.ro

In its meeting of 1 September 2004, the Council for Moral Integrity of the Social Democratic Party approved its own rules of organization and activity, and the document will now be decided on by the Central Executive Bureau of the party, which will meet in the near future.

In addition, the Council for Moral Integrity has discussed the proposals of the organizations representing civil society, which have formed the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, and has considered the selection criteria for candidates for this year’s parliamentary elections. The Council for Moral Integrity entirely agrees with the goal of the project proposed by the representatives of civil society as well as the idea of establishing criteria on the basis of which the evaluation of the candidates for the Romanian Parliament can be realised. Consequently, the Council intends to continue to cooperate with members of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament.

The Council for Moral Integrity has discussed a series of complaints received up until now, analysing the situation of certain candidates in the preliminary elections within the Social Democratic Party. Consequently, the Council has decided to drop the following candidates: Mr Aurel Tarău (Bihor County), Mr Iosif Armaș (Călărași), Mr Viorel Balcan (Brăila), and Mr Culiță Târăță (Neamț).

The Council for Moral Integrity will continue to examine the complaints it receives, and will ask the county executive offices of the party for supplementary information regarding a number of candidates. In addition, a number of people will be called in for oral enquiries in the near future.

9. Democratic Party: Response for the attention of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament

12.10.2004

At its meeting of 12.10.2004, the Permanent Bureau of the Democratic Party, after discussing your observations regarding the Democratic Party candidates on the lists of the Justice and Truth Alliance NLP-DP (DA Alliance), and following a vote, after analysis of each case separately, has decided the following:

1. Out of the DP candidates for the parliamentary election on 28 November named by your organization, the following have withdrawn on their own initiative: Drăgănuță Constantin (Bacău), Cladovan Teodor (Bihor), Seraficanean Gheorghe (Brașov), Nicolă Trâiță (Timiș), Adrian Gurzău (Cluj).

2. Regarding the candidates Ștefan Bardan (Alba) and Șerbănescu Virginia (Buzău), the Permanent National Bureau has noted your agreement to admit their appeal.
3. The Permanent National Bureau has voted to withdraw from the list of candidates Mr Bot Octavian (Bihor) and Puchianu Ion Dumitru (Braşov).

4. Regarding the candidates Stelian Duţu (Constanţa), Valentin Iliescu (Bucharest), Anuţa Handolesc (Vâlcea) and Viorel Stanca (Sălaj), in view of the explanations they have given and the examination of the documents presented, the Permanent National Bureau has decided to maintain them on the parliamentary lists, with the following observations:
   a. Stelian Duţu (Constanţa) cannot be considered a “political opportunist” since he was not a member of the FSN (National Salvation Front) as you state, because in the period 1990-2 he held the office of Secretary of Constanţa Town Hall. The first party he joined was the Democratic Party (1992 – October 2000), which he left because of a conflict with the former leadership. He returned to DP in April 2003.
   b. Valentin Iliescu (Bucharest) is one of the few members of Parliament with the strength of character to leave the ruling party only about a year before the general elections, joining DP in September 2003.
   c. Anuţa Handolesc (Vâlcea): the alleged conflict of interest is disproved by the documentary evidence presented today to the Permanent National Bureau. This shows that for the SC ETA and Acvarim insurance companies, public tenders were organised which respected legal requirements. She did not attend the meeting of the local council in which the car park concession was voted, and she understands that she will give up the concession in the case of the land being returned to its former owner, as set out in the concession contract.
   d. Viorel Stanca (Sălaj); Before 1990 he was a counter-espionage officer in the DIE (foreign intelligence service) and was not part of the secret police, as stated by the CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Archives of the Securitate).

We consider that we have taken note and analysed with full responsibility the observations made by civil society, for which we thank you.

Yours sincerely,
   Vasile Blaga
   Vice President, DP

10. Rm expres news agency : “Democratic Party excludes seven people from its lists for the parliamentary elections”

13.10.2004

“Seven people have been excluded from the parliamentary lists of the Democratic Party (DP), following examination by the Permanent National Bureau of DP of the points of view expressed by civil society,” declared Traian Băsescu, president of this political group at a press conference on Tuesday. “The seven who were eliminated from the list by their own agreement are Drăganuţ Constantin (Bacău), Bot Octavian (Bihor), Cladovan Teodor (Bihor), Puchianu Ion (Braşov), Serafinceanu Gheorghe (Braşov), Nicola Trăilă (Timiş), Adrian Gruzău (Cluj),” Băsescu declared.
The Democrat leader later explained the reasons why six other candidates were not removed from the lists, even though this had been requested by the civic organizations grouped into the “Coalition for a Clean Parliament.” Șerbănescu Virginia (Buzău) started her political career in the Agrarian Party, which merged NRP (National Romanian Party), which in turn was absorbed by DP, and so this cannot be described as political opportunism: Ștefan Bardan (Alba) was found not to be in a position of conflict of interests following an investigation carried out by the Permanent National Bureau of our party. Stelian Duțu (Constanța) and Valentin Iliescu (Bucharest), accused of political opportunism, remain on the list. The former was involved in a dispute surrounding the drawing up of the DP lists for the 2000 elections, but he is “the only politician who has no hesitations about fighting Radu Mazâre,” Băsescu declared. Valentin Iliescu (former member of PNUR [Romanian National Unity Party] and SDP) joined DP in January 2003, at a time when SDP’s popularity was at its height, and he made “an extraordinary contribution” to the DA Alliance’s campaign for the local elections. Anuța Handolescu did not “steal a street,” but obtained a concession on 62 sqm of land through public tender, from the town hall, Băsescu explained. Stanca Viorel was a counter-espionage officer, but “did not work for the secret police.” He is “a man who has revitalised the DP organization in Sâlaj County” according to Băsescu. “The explanations we give to civil society for those we will not drop will be made public, as documents adopted by the Permanent National Bureau,” Băsescu added.

11. Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament
to the Council for Moral Integrity of SDP

01.10.2004

To the Council for Moral Integrity of SDP
For the attention of Vice President Cristian Diaconescu

Dear Mr Minister,

In accordance with our earlier understanding, we enclose the lists of SDP candidates identified by our national monitoring network as not corresponding to the criteria of integrity which we discussed together, and which we understood your party has also adopted.

Appeals, together with photocopies of relevant documents, will be accepted by our secretariat until Friday, October 8. After October 10, we will send you the lists again, after verification of appeals, and we hope that your Commission will take action internally for the removal of the respective candidates. Two weeks after October 10, the names and biographical details of those who have not cleared their names satisfactorily and thus remain on our lists will be published on the Coalition’s website, and later printed on leaflets.

* The controversial SDP mayor of Constanța city.
In the case of new names being introduced onto the lists or the appearance of new information at the last minute, we reserve the right to revise a candidate’s biographical details.

We thank you for your excellent collaboration up to now.

Yours sincerely,
Mihai Politeanu
Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament
Secretariat of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament


Appeals can be sent by fax to 222.18.68, or by post to APADOR Helsinki Committee; Str. Nicolae Tonitza 8, Sector 3, Bucharest 704012 Romania. We request that you do not telephone the member organizations of the Coalition, since the investigative journalists who have carried out the monitoring do not work at the offices of any of our organizations.

12. Social Democratic Party, Council for Moral Integrity: Response for the attention of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament

14.10.2004

Following your address in which you communicated to us the names of the SDP candidates in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, who, in your opinion, do not correspond to the criteria of integrity established by the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament, we notify you the following:

I. The Council for Moral Integrity of SDP has excluded from the list of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate the following members of SDP considered incompatible with the criteria, or who are in positions of conflict of interest:

1. Liviu Maior – Brașov
2. Maria Shutz – Dolj
3. Dorin Meran – Galați
4. Eugen Vâlcovanu – Gorj
5. Nelu Badea – Ialomița
6. Cristian Nechifor – Iași
7. Corneliu Rusu Banu – Iași
8. Pavel Târăscu – Iași
9. Ion Rotaru – Neamț
10. Maria Ciucureanu – Prahova
II. The Council for Moral Integrity of SDP has noted the withdrawal from the list of candidates for personal reasons of the following:
1. Alexandru Retegan – Bihor
2. Mihai Bar – Brașov
3. Ion Seche – Brașov
4. Gheorghe Duțu – Brașov
5. Darie Mihai – Botoșani
6. Mihai Baltă – Botoșani
7. Viorica Afrăsinei – Botoșani
8. Ioan Olteanu – Buzău
9. Plătică Vidovici – Galați
10. Florin Georgescu – Olt
11. Ioncă Mihai – Olt
12. Liviu Bara – Sălaj
13. Trifon Belacurencu – Tulcea

III. The following are not in eligible places on the lists:
1. Nicolae Gavrilă – Arad
2. Avram Crăciun – Arad
3. Ion Mihăilescu – Argeș
4. Teodor Maghiar – Bihor
5. Ion Rotaru – Brăila
6. Marian Drăgan – Călărași
7. Elena Sporea – Ialomița
8. Aurel Chelbea – Ialomița
9. Cornel Vasile – Ialomița
10. Dan Verbina – Tulcea
11. Florin Hrițcu – Tulcea
12. Petre Dinuță – Vrancea

IV. The following did not stand in the preliminary elections in SDP, and are not on the final lists:
1. Eugen Durbač – Galați
2. Silviu Morarău – Mureș
3. Valentin Mogoe – Gorj
4. Matei Vintilă – resigned from SDP

We thank you for your collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Academician Mihai Drăgănescu, President
13. Social Democratic Party, 
Department for Media Relations: Press release

25.10.2004
www.psd.ro

The Council for Moral Integrity of the Social Democratic Party has today, 25 October 2004, completed its analysis of the material received from the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, in which the presence on the lists for the parliamentary elections of certain candidates of the SDP+HP National Union, considered incompatible with the criteria of integrity which a future member of Parliament should fulfil, has been challenged.

Following the discussions and investigations which have been carried out, the Council for Moral Integrity has established that some of the candidates nominated by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament have withdrawn from the lists, while others have been excluded by the Council. Consequently, 40% of those considered by the Coalition not to correspond to the status of a member of Parliament have been excluded or have withdrawn from the lists, 17% no longer hold eligible places, while in the other cases, the accusations levelled are not considered to be of such a nature as to determine the elimination of the candidates from the lists. The majority of accusations levelled in these cases by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament are tendentious and are based on speculation which has appeared in the national or local press.

The Social Democratic Party considers the collaboration it has established with the Coalition for a Clean Parliament to have been fruitful, and in view of the good relations achieved, has analysed all aspects on which the Coalition has expressed a point of view. However, a number of these do not correspond to reality. At the same time, it has been established that a number of accusations against the candidates have not been proved. We emphasise that the Council for Moral Integrity has used public sources of information in its activity. In this sense, in order to deepen their research, the authors of the “Meet Your Candidates” material can take advantage of procedures for making complaints to state institutions, including the National Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office.

The Council for Moral Integrity appreciates the support it has received, in terms of the evaluation of standards and criteria regarding competence, professionalism and the political aptitude of future members of Parliament.

14. Social Democratic Party, Department for Media Relations: 
Press release

27.10.2004
www.psd.ro

The SDP+HP National Union has expressed a very clear opinion concerning the political attack launched against the Union by the DP-NLP Alliance through the publication of so-called objections by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament to the lists of candidates.
We consider that this gesture, which will be continued by the distribution of electoral leaflets and encouraging the population not to vote for the people mentioned on the list, constitutes a flagrant violation of a fundamental political right guaranteed by the Constitution, namely the right of a citizen to be elected.

Consequently, the SDP+HP National Union candidates, who consider themselves to have been libelled by the accusations made by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, will immediately take the following actions in law against the authors of the aforementioned lists. Firstly they will solicit damages, which will be donated to orphanages. In addition, the courts will be requested to ban the distribution of the leaflets which contain libels against the SDP+HP National Union candidates.

15. Coalition for a Clean Parliament:  
Response to the received appeals

29.10.2004

The members of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament, assembled in a joint meeting on 29 October 2004, have discussed the appeals sent by members of the SDP+HP Union and by DAHR and have reached final conclusions. The latest version of the monitoring lists of the Coalition (after discussion of the appeals) has been posted on the Coalition website. On Thursday, the lists will be posted for GRP, the only party which has completely refused all collaboration with the Coalition.

Details set out below:

SDP+HP Union

The Council for Moral Integrity of the SDP did not fulfil its obligations as agreed with the Coalition to announce promptly to SDP+HP candidates that appeals must be addressed to the Coalition, and not just to the Council, if their objections were to be taken into account in the monitoring list. With a few exceptions, the majority of candidates did not realise this, with the result that the appeals period ended and the Coalition published their names after three weeks of waiting. Only then, the Council sent en masse around eighty appeals, which reached the Coalition the day after the posting of the lists on 28 October. Nevertheless, these were discussed, given that many candidates were not informed about the correct procedure.

The following appeals were accepted, leading to removal from the list: Aristide Roibu, Constantin Tamaga, Vasile Bleotu, Ion Tudor, Valeriu Ungureanu, Bogdan Niculescu Duvăz, Alexandru Athanasiu, Ecaterina Andronescu.

Detailed situation of appeals:

1. Tudor Mohora, SDP – partially accepted, not a political opportunist
2. Aristide Roibu, SDP – accepted
3. Petre Gabriel Vlase – rejected, text modified
4. Viorel Hrebenciuc, SDP – rejected, text modified
5. Aurel Nechita – rejected, text modified
6. Dan Nica, SDP – rejected
7. Ion Chelaru – partially accepted, reference to Angela Vântu removed
8. Constantin Huțu – partially accepted, reference to political opportunism removed
9. Răzvan Theodorescu, SDP – partially accepted
10. Ion Solcanu, SDP – rejected
11. Nicolae Văcăroiu, SDP – rejected
12. Filip Georgescu, SDP – partially accepted, reference to headquarters removed, text modified to “ contributed to the rescheduling”
13. Constantin Tamaga, SDP – accepted
14. Ioan Burnei, SDP – rejected, text modified
15. Alexandru Stănescu, SDP – partially accepted
16. Mihai Tănăescu, SDP – partially accepted
17. Vlad Câșunean, SDP – rejected
18. Victor Sanda, SDP – rejected
19. Ion Rădoi, SDP – rejected
20. Nicolae Bădălău – partially accepted
21. Dan Iosif, SDP – partially accepted
22. Pavel Todoran, SDP – partially accepted
23. Şerban Mihăilescu, SDP – rejected
24. Vasile Bleotu, SDP – accepted
25. Dan Voiculescu, HP – partially accepted, reference to political opportunism removed
26. Ion Tudor, SDP – accepted
27. Alexandru Mazărie, SDP – partially accepted
28. Doru Ioan Tărăcălă, SDP – partially accepted
29. Tudor Constantin, SDP – partially accepted
30. Mihai Tudose, SDP – partially accepted
31. Ion Rotaru, SDP – rejected
32. Octavian Știreanu, SDP – rejected
33. Valeriu Ungureanu, SDP – accepted
34. Corneliu Pascu, HP – rejected
35. Vioroiul Constantinescu, SDP – accepted
36. Aurel Gubandru, SDP – partially accepted
37. Ion Vasile, SDP – rejected, additional material included after appeal
38. Alexandru Athanasiu, SDP – accepted
39. Ecaterina Andronescu, SDP – accepted
40. Ioan Talpeș, SDP – rejected
41. Ion Honcescu, SDP – rejected
42. Gabriel Oprea, SDP – rejected
43. Şerban Nicolae, SDP – rejected
44. Antonie Iorgovan, SDP – partially accepted, reference to the accident removed
45. Horia Teodorescu – partially accepted
46. Bogdan Niculescu Duvăz, SDP – accepted
47. Ioan Mircea Pașcu, SDP – partially accepted
16. *Ziua* newspaper: “Don’t vote for them!”

Ana Dinescu  
27.10.2004

CCP (The Coalition for a Clean Parliament) is asking SDP (The Social Democratic Party) + HP (The Romanian Humanist Party) Union and NLP (The National Liberal Party) – DP (The Democratic Party) Alliance to remove several Parliament candidates from their lists for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. Lists include 110 politicians representing the ruling party and 12 from NLP-DP Alliance. Some of them are current names in Romanian politics: Nicolae Văcăroiu, Viorel Hrebenciuc, Mircea Geoană, Miron Mitrea, Dan Ioan Popescu, Dan Voiculescu, Dan Nica, Șerban Mihăilescu (SDP+HP Union), and Paul Păcuraru (NLP), Valeriu Gheorghe (NLP), Cornel Știrbăț (NLP), Stelian Duțu (DP), Valentin Iliescu (DP). Most incompatibilities refer to political migration, fishy business, owning shares at companies on debt, criminal deeds. The Coalition for Clean a Parliament is made up of several NGOs. Here are some of them: The Center for Independent Journalism, Asociația Pro Democrația, The Social Dialogue Group, the Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania – Helsinki Committee, the Media Monitoring Agency. CCP has monitored 138 persons from SDP+HP Union. SDP has withdrawn or agreed to withdraw 23 candidates from them. 4 have resigned from SDP or were not even included on lists in the preliminary stage. 28 people from NLP-DP Alliance have been controversial (13 from NLP and 15 from DP). In the end only, 12 names were left on the Coalition’s lists.

The lists with incompatible members from DAHR have not been released yet, as DAHR has not completed internal opposition procedures. GRP (Greater Romania Party) has released no election list at all, has stated Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, president of the Romanian Academic Society. She has specified DAHR is to send the lists to the Coalition tomorrow. Mungiu-Pippidi has explained that civil society lists might go through changes, depending on the official parliamentary lists, which are to be completed by Friday.

*Pressure and interference*

CCP representatives have mentioned that there has been “pressure and interference” lately so that lists would not be released or some names would be removed. “Yesterday we got phone calls from everywhere, Executive and Opposition members included,” said Mungiu. Rodica Stănoiu from SDP also wrote to Mungiu-Pippidi about the intention to sue her, in case her name was still present on lists. She informed that on Monday, just one day before the press conference, she had received interfering phone calls, asking that the lists should not “leak” to the press. The Coalition has started to spread information about lists by various means (brochures, leaflets), mainly aiming at rural areas and electors under 21, added Cristian Pârvulescu. According to Ioana Avădani, head of the Center for Independent Journalism, leaflets are to be distributed directly to electors’ mailboxes.
17. *Gardianul* newspaper: “SDP+HP: Băsescu and Tăriceanu are hiding behind Pippidi’s skirts!”

27.10.2004

“The objections presented by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament to the lists of SDP candidates in the parliamentary elections represent a political attack by the NLP-DP Alliance, which is hiding behind Mrs Alina Pippidi, an instrument of the political forces of the right in Romania, to whom she continues to do her duty,” declares a SDP+HP communiqué signed by the spokesman, Titus Corlățean. He considered that “the action is evidence of laziness by the NLP-DP Alliance, which has put Mrs Mungiu in the leading role.” “Two men, the co-presidents Traian Băsescu and Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, are hiding behind the skirts of a woman,” Corlățean added. He showed that the majority of important personalities in SDP are on the Coalition’s list, and “if we were to follow this logic, SDP should no longer run in the elections.” On the other hand, Pippidi declared that “Corlățean’s statement compromise him so much that it’s not worth commenting on them,” remembering, however, that in a communiqué published on Monday evening, SDP thanked the Coalition for a Clean Parliament for the objectivity of the criteria of moral integrity which it has put forward.

18. Associated Press news agency: “Romanian civic groups publish lists of allegedly corrupt and unfit politicians”

Alison Mutler

28.10.2004

Ahead of Nov. 28 elections, the Coalition for a Clean Parliament released a list of politicians they say are corrupt, have collaborated with the communist secret police, have conflicts of interest or have switched parties several times. The list is part of a seven-month campaign aimed at eliminating corruption in the legislature. Senior politicians on the list include Foreign Minister Mircea Geoană, Finance Minister Mihai Tănăsescu, Economy Minister Dan Ioan Popescu, Defense Minister Mircea Pașcu, Transportation Minister Miron Mitrea, Education Minister Alexandru Athanasiu, and Health Minister Ovidiu Brânză.

The Coalition investigated about 300 Romanian politicians who are running in the elections. It released the list Tuesday, and most newspapers printed some of the 130 names Wednesday, stirring controversy.

The groups accused Foreign Minister Geoană and Economy Minister Popescu of having unexplained income. They also accused Popescu of causing financial losses to the Romanian state by favoring foreign companies. They alleged that Mitrea, the Transportation Minister, unfairly distributed public funds to certain regions.

From the opposition, Liberal lawmaker Paul Păcuraru, and lesser known politicians Stelian Duțu, Valentin Iliescu and Valeriu Gheorghe were named. Former Justice Minister
Rodica Stănoiu, also on the list, has said she would sue for libel. The ruling Social Democratic Party and its coalition partner, the Humanist Party of Romania, dropped 29 candidates who appeared on the list. The opposition Liberal Party and Democratic Party also dropped some candidates.


28 October 2004

Bucharest – Local Romanian media Wednesday published a list of more than 130 politicians, including six government ministers, that civic rights groups say are “incompatible” with a clean parliament.

The groups, united in the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, released the list of politicians they say are corrupt, have collaborated with the communist secret police, have conflicts of interest, or have switched parties several times, after a seven-month campaign aiming to create a cleaner Parliament.

Though the campaign had the support of Romania’s major political parties, Coalition leader Alina Mungiu-Pippidi told The Associated Press she had “received countless appeals from the opposition not to publish names and threats from the ruling party.”

The Coalition investigated about 300 Romanian politicians who are running in the Nov. 28 elections.

The group released the list Tuesday, and most newspapers printed some of 130 names Wednesday. The results immediately stirred controversy. The ruling Social Democratic Party accused the campaign of being politically biased: “It represents the rightist political forces in Romania,” party spokesman Titus Corlătean said Tuesday. There was no reaction from the main opposition group, the Justice and Truth Alliance.

Leaders of the major political parties were exempted from the checks in exchange for their support.

The ruling Social Democratic Party and its coalition partner the Humanist Party of Romania dropped 29 candidates who appeared on the lists. The opposition Liberal Party and Democratic Party – which make up the Justice and Truth Alliance – also dropped some candidates.

The civic group coalition planned to distribute the information to 5 million rural voters’ homes before the election.

The U.S. and the European Union have repeatedly told Romania to clean up corruption.

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20. SDP+HP National Union, Department for Media Relations:
Press release – “Coalition for a Clean
Parliament and Alina Mungiu interfere with voting intentions”

04.11.2004
www.psd.ro

The SDP+HP National Union has taken note of the intention of Mrs Alina Mungiu and her friends to distribute two million leaflets, with the names of candidates for the parliamentary elections who, in her opinion, do not fulfil the criteria of moral integrity to be elected to Parliament.

The SDP+HP National Union considers this act as a clear demonstration of a smear campaign to support the opposition and believes that Mrs Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, in her capacity as self-declared representative of civil society, is using several organizations to continue her own political war, begun in 1996-7, when she was a passionate supporter of Emil Constantinescu and the DP-NLP-NPDC\[2\] coalition, then in power.

There is not a single argument to legitimise Mrs Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s claim to pose as the absolute authority on moral standards in society. Rather, the involvement of organizations which should be non-political, because they represent civil society, indicates that they have other objectives than a clean Parliament.

On the contrary, she has no right to pose as the moral auditor of Romanian society, considering that her denigrations of Romania, included in various international reports with the aim of being funded from abroad, are well known.

Mrs Alina Mungiu and her friends, joined together in the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, compromise civil society through their flagrant involvement in the electoral campaign, and by the clear attempt to interfere with voting intentions to the benefit of certain opposition parties.

Besides Mrs Mungiu’s moral inconsistency, the initiative has no legal foundation, bearing in mind that it requests the banning of the constitutional right of certain citizens to stand for Parliament, solely on the basis of simple suppositions. Consequently, several candidates of the SDP+HP National Union have commenced legal proceedings against Mrs Mungiu, in connection with the falsity of the accusations raised.

The SDP+HP National Union is curious as to the source of funding for the production and distribution of the 2 million leaflets, considering that according to data published on the CCP website, the project’s total financing is less than 50,000 USD.

* The ruling coalition of 1997-2000 made up of the Democratic Party, National Liberal Party and the National Peasant Christian and Democratic Party (plus the Hungarian Alliance). Emil Constantinescu was Romania’s President during the same interval.

04.11.2004

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament invites you to a press conference on Thursday, November 4, at 10 a.m. at the headquarters of the Group for Social Dialogue (GDS) on Calea Victoriei no. 120, Sector 1, Bucharest, in which the final results will be announced for the monitoring exercise into the integrity of the candidates for the SDP+HP Union, DA Alliance, Greater Romania Party and DAHR.

The following leaders of the Coalition will be present:

- Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (President) – Romanian Academic Society
- Cristian Pârvulescu (President) – Asociația Pro Democrația
- Mircea Toma (Director) – Media Monitoring Agency
- Monica Macovei (President) – APADOR-CH
- Ioana Voicu Arnăuțoiu (Vice President) – Civic Alliance
- Ioana Avâdani (Executive Director) – Center for Independent Journalism
- Radu Filipescu (President) – Group for Social Dialogue

We thank the press for its cooperation in this project and look forward to welcoming you. We point out that the final monitoring lists of the parties will be posted on the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament website: http://contracoruptie.ong.ro at the same time as the press conference.

Secretariat of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament

22. Jurnalul Național newspaper

05.11.2004

The president of the Humanist Party, Dan Voiculescu, sent yesterday an open letter to Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, in which he requests the removal of his name from the “blacklist” of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament.

Protest

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi is accused of having contested the constitutional right of the Humanist Party leader to be elected.

“[…] Although I do not understand in what capacity you incriminate me, for the sake of clarity, I will nevertheless briefly comment on the accusations which you level at me through the intermediary of the respective organizations. These are either crass lies – such as that I made contracts unfavourable to state companies, among others Băneasa Airport Authority, or that I am the owner of the Crescent firm – or dirty insinuations
about my supposed association with the Securitate or the source of my assets, all of which have been investigated thoroughly in the courts, resulting in the public condemnation of those guilty of the libel. Finally, you blame me for things which are true, but which I am not ashamed of: that I possess significant wealth earned through honest work, initiative and business ideas, that the party I lead has made an alliance with SDP, etc.

I have not given much attention to the activities of the demagogic Coalition for a Clean Parliament, because I consider them merely a little electoral pilfering, but I have no doubt that I would find many other honourable names on the ‘blacklist’ if I studied it attentively. This does not mean that you are absolved of responsibility and of the repercussions of your action. I recommend that you remove my name from the list, as well as names of those people, regardless of party, who ended up there, like myself, as a result of lies, insinuations and manipulations. I emphasise that this is a recommendation, not a request: you will do so in your own interests, so as not to compromise yourselves, and not in the interests of those people, which an organization such as yours cannot compromise. However, in my case, like probably in many others, your organization has formally made libellous and insulting affirmations which require recourse to legal action.

As well as calumny and insult, however, I am complaining about a much more serious aspects of your initiative. In effect, you are calling for the de facto suspension of my civic rights, for the following reasons:

- Because I am wealthy;
- Because I was the target of allegations in the press, which even you describe as ‘speculation’;
- Because you think this is correct.

All these reasons – the punishment of the rich because they are rich, regardless of the origin of their wealth, honest or otherwise, ignoring the principle of the presumption of innocence, the cornerstone of the rule of law in the Western sense, and, finally, the substitution of the electorate’s choice for the ‘qualified’ choice of a pseudo-elite – indicate some of the essential features of the communist mentality, ideology and practices. For that reason, I am studying the possibility of taking you to court not only for the crimes of calumny and insult, but also for breaking articles of the Constitution and laws which prohibit communist propaganda.”

Dan Voiculescu

23. Open letter to the Coalition for a Clean Parliament

From Dan Voiculescu, HP leader
09.11.2004

Dear Sirs,

We note with great regret that you have made a grievously mistaken step towards the moral destruction of Romanian society. You are going back in time fifty years, by promoting on a national scale the most despicable form of destruction applied to humanity the very axis of the Stalinist system of terror. You have rediscovered how to condemn an
entire group and have resuscitated the anonymous letter, the most vile form of libel. As you abuse the right of free association, you also form a secret organization for the purpose of stealthily promoting social stigmatization on a high scale. Camouflaged by confusing labels and taking advantage of the desire for correctness of our fellow citizens and profiting from the good intentions of civic activists, you have created an unlawful association, whose purpose and result is a new form of pseudo-civic terrorism. We believe in the right of free association, but not in associations formed for malicious purposes. We are the defenders of the freedom of speech, but not of deliberate dissemination of lies and libel. We are in favour of involving civil society in public life, but not of perfidious attacks on democratic institutions and procedures. This address comes from the seven candidates of the Romanian Humanist Party who were included in the black list which has been drafted and publicised by your cabal. We all regard the drawing up of this list and our inclusion as abusive, deceitful and unfair. The mere reading of your denunciations reveals your inconsistency and ill intentions. You criticise some of us for political opportunism, riding roughshod over freedom of conscience, promoting political slavery and ignoring that, in certain circumstances, there can be solid grounds for changing parties. Besides, you also criticise those who have left parties which no longer exist, or which have changed their names, in order to obtain a false image of opportunism. You criticise others among us, in a purely Bolshevik manner, for being rich. To equate wealth with dishonesty, just as to associate changing parties with corruption is one of the tricks of your disparaging campaign. Finally, you criticise others among us on the basis of simple rumors about facts in which we are not involved, actions we haven’t committed, connections we haven’t had. You try to compromise us in a perfidious manner, by using hints, innuendos and ambiguities. We don’t know on what moral grounds you elevate yourselves to the status of supreme civic judges, but we know, as you have proved, that you are nothing more than addicts to black lists, imitators of regimes of bleak terror, whether communist or fascist. Your initiative lacks a moral cover and is also profoundly illegal. The fact that you spread lies anonymously will not spare you of your responsibility. The fact that you hide under confusing names does not lend legitimacy to your actions. The fact that you call yourselves fighters against corruption does not hide your sleazy purpose. You have organized yourselves into a mysterious group of libelers. And since libel is a crime, you are nothing more than a group of criminals. The fact that you refuse to disclose your membership demonstrates the clandestine purpose of your action. The fact that you admit that your aim is to prevent the participation of certain candidates in the elections demonstrates the undemocratic character of your initiative. You explicitly stated your intention to replace the constitutional system, by specifying in your manifesto that you want a political class “irrespective of the form of voting that we use in order to elect it.” Therefore we consider you guilty of committing the crime of association for committing an offence as stated by art. 323 of the Penal Code. The offence for which you associated is libel (as stated by art. 206 of the Penal Code), as well as preventing, by any means, free exercise of the right to be elected (as stated by art. 10 of Law no. 373/2004). Before we bring this to the attention of the proper state institutions, we demand that you emerge out of your clandestine state by publishing the following:

1. The constitutional document, statute and judicial decision which legalises the self-denominated association Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament.
2. The structure and the membership of the board of the association, as well as that of the judicial institution which approved the spreading of libel in millions of copies.

3. The conventions by means of which you have obtained external financing, along with the display of tasks and the strategies to accomplish them, as established by those financing you.

4. The names (first and last) of the people who drafted entries no. 1, 4, 25, 33, 61, 82 and 92 in the list of candidates you claim do not fulfil the conditions of moral integrity of civil society (the numbers refer to the undersigned).

5. The rules governing the functioning of the “network” which drafted the documentary material and of the parallel network of referees, including the evaluation criteria entrusted to these networks.

6. The judicial person responsible from a civic point of view.

7. Any document which can demonstrate that your large scale action is not arbitrary or vindictive or deceitful or slanderous or criminal, that it does not have blackmail as its purpose, that it does not hinder the constitutional right to be elected.

We await your answer in three days.

24. SDP+HP National Union, Department for Media Relations:
Press release

11.11.2004
www.psd.ro

The SDP+HP National Union does not reject any initiative from civil society, if it follows the principles of correctness, objectivity and respect for minimum scientific standards.

From the beginning, it can be noted that the authors of the so-called monitoring of public advertising, published by the Institute for Public Policy, do not even know the names of the political groupings enrolled in the election campaign. For example, the SDP+HP National Union appears as “SDP+HP Union” and the Justice and Truth Alliance NLP-DP appears as “NLP-DP Alliance (Justice and Truth).”

Although the monitoring of advertising in the election campaign is under scrutiny, the methodology for the monitoring is not made public. Which newspapers, TV and radio stations are monitored? Are they local or national? Are the street campaigns and posters also monitored?

The report states, among other things, that the gross investment in advertising has been calculated, and no discount has been taken into consideration. Even the authors of the report recognise that “the differences between the sums calculated and the real ones could be significant.” In spite of this, the parties are accused of having spent certain sums of money, when in reality they have spent substantially less. Even though the radio and TV spots are broadcast free, with no connection to the funding of the election campaign, the number of showings for the spots is still presented for each political group.
The report refers to “the volume of advertising contracted by the government and other institutions of national public administration” even though this has no connection with the election campaign.

The SDP+HP National Union considers that the IPP monitoring is a political manoeuvre intended to discredit SDP+HP, because in the section for complaints about the presidential candidates’ websites a paragraph of so-called irregularities is reserved for Adrian Năstase, after which, finally, it is pointed out that the NLP-DP, NPCD (National Peasant Christian and Democratic Party) and AP (Popular Alliance) candidates are also in the same situation. However, in their case, the Internet address and name is not specified. Simply by accessing them, it can be seen that the sites www.da.ro, www.basescu.ro, and www.ciuhandu.ro are registered by private companies, not by parties.

These kinds of action are not new on the Romanian political scene. Civil society has also been used on other occasions to misinform public opinion. The initiative referring to a Clean Parliament, supported by Alina Mungiu, or the presentation of the list of SDP candidates by Stelian Tănase*, suggest the existence of a strategy in this sense.

We do not think it is normal for credible fora of civil society to be transformed into political voices, without their allegiances being recognised. It is a kind of lack of courage on the part of the representatives of NLP or DP, who prefer to hide behind such structures and to create false subjects, instead of leaving civil society alone to exercise its proper role in democracy. We hope that such gestures will cease, because they only serve to weaken the credibility of civil society, a sector which is still in its early stages in Romania.

We remind the authors of the report that in accordance with the law on funding of political parties, the record of income and spending is placed by the finance officer at the Court of Accounts 15 days after publication of the election results in the Official Gazette. Until then, any commentaries without clear justification are not welcome.


14.11.2004

The organizations formed into the ad hoc “Coalition for a Clean Parliament,” noting the threats made by certain candidates and party leaders in connection with the list of candidates who do not correspond to the criteria of moral integrity, as set out by civil society, would like to make the following clarifications:

1. The Coalition for a Clean Parliament Campaign is representative of the public opinion in Romania. Repeated opinion polls have shown that a large majority of Romanians consider politics to be the most corrupt profession, place members of Parliament at the top of the list of social categories considered to be above the law, and consider that elections do not change anything, regardless of who wins, because the same corrupt people rule Romania under any regime. Our campaign was born as a response to these public perceptions, which endanger Romania’s young democracy. Even if other institutions have done nothing in spite of being called on to

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* A well known talk show host, former dissident under the Communist regime.
respond to these concerns, civil society has shown this time that it has the force and
courage to be the bearer of this message. This campaign represents a form of despair
of the public opinion, which has lost confidence in the will of the government to
solve the problem of corruption. Two years after the introduction of anti-corruption
legislation, between half and two thirds of Romanians have stated through opinion
polls that instead of going down, corruption is increasing. In these conditions an
exercise in purification of the political class is absolutely necessary. The Coalition
is doing nothing other than to exercise its freedom of expression by informing
millions of electors that it does not recommend certain candidates on the lists for
various reasons. It is our right to recommend (or not to recommend) whom we
consider suitable to represent Romanians in the country’s Parliament, and this fact
in itself cannot form the object of any legal discussion. Candidates can contest the
facts selected for inclusion in their biographical summary, but not the initiative
itself. We do not ban candidates from standing and do not carry out criminal
proceedings, but simply inform the electors of our opinion and the criteria on which
it is based. Romania should not stay simply an electoral democracy, like in Third
World countries where, once elected, politicians do not behave democratically, but
should become a substantive democracy, following the European model.

2. The criteria for lack of integrity in politics – benefiting personally from use of a
public position, opportunism or movement from one party to another for material
advantage, illicit business affairs, or cooperation with the former Securitate – were
agreed upon by all the political parties, which made official declarations to this
effect (posted on the Coalition website: [http://contracoruptie.org.ro](http://contracoruptie.org.ro)). Equally,
the team for negotiating with the political parties, including Cristian Pârvulescu,
Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Roxana Ioniţă, Cristina Guseţ, Ioana Avâdani, Adrian
Moşneag was accepted by all the parties without objection. Denunciation of partners
and of the agreed criteria at the end of this exercise, after some candidates have even
been withdrawn by the parties for the above reasons is puerile, and only shows
complete inability to participate in any democratic exercise in which the rules are
applied in the same way to all. It is not acceptable to change the discourse overnight
to suit one’s own interests.

3. Consequently, the aggressive reaction and threats made to some members of the
Coalition, as well as pressures levelled in various forms against the judiciary to ban
our activities – one of the initial reasons which led to the placing of some candidates
on the lists being precisely their practice of interference in the affairs of the
judiciary – merely serve to prove we are right in our endeavours. In this sense, all
the signatory organizations of the present declaration and members of the Coalition
declare their solidarity with those personally accused by political parties or the
candidates who appear on our list. At the same time we express once again our
incomprehension as to why candidates with no concern for democracy should insist
on being part of a democratic Parliament.

4. Finally, the Coalition notes the declaration made by Prime Minister, Adrian Năstase,
in a television broadcast in which he denounced the agreement made between the
Coalition and SDP, under which SDP withdrew 29 candidates and the Coalition
accepted 18 appeals by his party. Given that Mr Năstase has declared that this
agreement no longer exists, the blank cheque extended to him as a party leader
struggling to apply the criteria of the Coalition is now null and void. Consequently, Mr Năstase will be monitored on the basis of the eight criteria, like any other candidate, and, if appropriate, may be added to the Coalition’s list for Bucharest constituency.

Media Monitoring Agency
Civic Alliance
APADOR – Helsinki Committee
Asociația Pro Democrația
Association of Political Science Students
Association of Revolutionaries without Privileges
Center for Independent Journalism
Freedom House Romania
Open Society Foundation
Group for Social Dialogue
Romanian Press League
Romanian Academic Society


18.11.2004

Bucharest, Nov. 18 (Reuters) – Romania’s ruling ex-communists asked election organisers on Thursday to ban a nationwide leaflet campaign naming corrupt politicians running in Nov. 28 general elections.

The campaign by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, comprising 10 pro-democracy groups, hopes to counter what it sees as pro-government bias in the state media, the main source of news for millions of Romans living in the countryside.

“We want to open the eyes of the people. Their right to be informed has been dealt a heavy blow. Many Romanians get news only about one political side, that of the ruling party,” said Ioana Avădani, director of the Center for Independent Journalism and Coalition member.

Eugen Corlățean, spokesman for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), said the campaign was “against the constitution because it calls for rejecting politicians based on newspaper speculation.”

The activists shrugged off the ban request, saying they were confident the election committee would not stop the distribution of 2 million leaflets describing about 150 candidates from all parties as corrupt.

“We expected such a move. There’s nothing against the constitution in our campaign,” Sorin Ionîță of the Romanian Academic Society, which is part of the leaflet campaign, told Reuters.

The EU has warned Romania it risks its 2007 entry goal if it does not fight corruption and increase press freedom.

Rights groups say endemic graft and rampant poverty have become defining issues for the upcoming polls. The SDP has denied accusations it is tolerating corruption within its ranks.

22.11.2004

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament wishes to draw the attention of the authorities and public opinion to events of an unprecedented seriousness, which could place in doubt the correctness of the elections in Romania. In the last few days, in several constituencies such as Timiș, Sibiu, Iași and others, fake leaflets have been circulating under the name of the Coalition, with identical layout to those of the electoral guide leaflets issued by the Coalition, even carrying the logos and signatures of the member organizations of the Coalition, but with a modified content. In the pages of these fakes, serious libels are made against opposition candidates, particularly those of the DA Alliance, in aggressive terms, which have no connection with the monitoring carried out by the Coalition. The SDP and GRP candidates are missing from these leaflets. In contrast to the Coalition’s electoral guide, which has the website, where the original can be checked (http://contracoruptie.org.ro) printed on a blank page, these fake leaflets either do not show this website, or show a fake one, which does not work.

It seems that the weapon of using our name to discredit political rivals has been discovered as a last defence redoubt by morally compromised candidates, after SDP+HP’s attempt to use the Central Electoral Bureau to ban the Coalition’s legal electoral guides failed. Equally, other attempts to intimidate both the judiciary and members of the Coalition failed, and consequently we are confronted with large scale illegal methods.

Beginning on Monday morning, complaints will be made to the courts in the counties in which these fake leaflets have appeared, and they will be called on urgently to investigate these crimes of fraud and use of fraudulent material. The investigating authorities are under legal obligation to discover who issued the leaflets, and in which printing house they were prepared, in order to establish criminal responsibility, and to try those who committed these criminal offences.

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament will organise a press conference on Monday, November 22, at 12:00, at the Group for Social Dialogue headquarters, Calea Victoriei 120, at which it will present further details, as well as the fake leaflets.


23.11.2004

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament has been the target of unprecedented attacks in the last few days, realised both through the falsification of leaflets to include fake names of candidates purportedly not corresponding to the criteria established by the Coalition, and by members and organizations which make up the Coalition being taken to court. A positive and encouraging sign, legitimising the Coalition’s activity, was given by the verdict of the District 4 Court in Bucharest, which rejected as groundless Nicolae
Văcăroiu’s complaint against the Coalition’s activities in distributing leaflets containing the names of the parliamentary candidates who were being monitored, under civil verdict no. 6054 of 18 November 2004 (case no. II237/2004). Further, in view of the fact that in the last few days fake leaflets with names of parliamentary candidates have appeared in many counties, the Coalition for a Clean Parliament would like to inform public opinion extremely clearly as to the names, by county, of the candidates included in the original leaflets. Consequently, in order to differentiate between the Coalition for a Clean Parliament’s leaflets and the fake ones, we hereby present the list, by county, of the candidates for Parliament who do not correspond to the criteria established by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, as reflected in the Coalition’s leaflets.

Alba ; 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Arad ; 2 GRP candidates
Argeș ; 1 GRP candidate, 6 SDP+HP Union candidates
Bacău ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Bihor ; 2 SDP+HP Union candidates, 1 DAHR candidate
Bistrița ; 1 GRP candidate, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Botoșani ; 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Brăila ; 1 GRP candidate, 4 SDP+HP Union candidates
Brașov ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 4 GRP candidates, 2 SDP candidates
Buzău ; 4 SDP+HP Union candidates
Călărași ; 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Caraș-Severin ; 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Cluj ; 3 GRP candidates
Constanța ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Covasna ; 1 SDP+HP Union candidate, 1 DAHR candidate
Dambovita ; 3 GRP candidates, 5 SDP+HP Union candidates
Dolj ; 1 GRP candidate, 3 SDP+HP Union candidates
Galați ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Giurgiu ; 3 SDP+HP Union candidates
Gorj ; 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Harghita ; 1 DAHR candidate
Hunedoara ; 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Ialomița ; 1 GRP candidate, 7 SDP+HP Union candidates
Iași ; 2 GRP candidates, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Ițava ; 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Mehedinți ; 1 GRP candidate, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Mureș ; 1 GRP candidate, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Neamț ; 1 GRP candidate, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Olt ; 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Prahova ; 2 GRP candidates, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Satu Mare ; 1 GRP candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Sibiu ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Suceava ; 3 GRP candidates, 4 SDP+HP Union candidates
Teleorman ; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 2 GRP candidates, 4 SDP+HP Union candidates

* SDP candidate for the Senate (currently chair of the Senate).
Timiș; 3 GRP candidates, 3 SDP+HP Union candidates
Tulcea; 2 GRP candidates, 3 SDP+HP Union candidates
Vâlcea; 3 GRP candidates, 2 SDP+HP Union candidates
Vaslui; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 1 GRP candidate, 1 SDP+HP Union candidate
Vrancea; 5 SDP+HP Union candidates
Bucharest; 1 DA Alliance candidate, 1 GRP candidate, 6 SDP+HP Union candidates


24.11.2004

Vienna and Bucharest, 24 November 2004. The Romanian Helsinki Committee (APADOR-CH) has informed the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) about unusual and non-democratic developments in Romania in connection with the forthcoming general and presidential elections, scheduled on November 28, which poses a real threat to democracy and free elections.

Twelve Romanian NGOs (including APADOR-CH) are under threat for trying to inform the voters about candidates with a questionable record from every political party. As a group, they are being sued by representatives of the ruling party who seek compensations of over Euro 120,000 for defamation. So far, there are three such court cases but more are expected. The Prime Minister himself, who is also president of the ruling party (SDP), publicly invited his party’s candidates to sue the group of NGOs. At the same time, they have been publicly labelled as “criminals” and “participants in a conspiracy” by a political party associated with the ruling party.

We ask the international public to closely watch the developments in Romania with regard to the court cases against this ad hoc coalition of NGOs, called the Coalition for a Cleaner Parliament (CCP), as well as to the forthcoming general elections and their results.

The CCP project

Bearing in mind the lack of alternative sources of information for over 80% of the Romanian population and in an attempt to draw people’s attention on the moral quality of some of the candidates, 12 Romanian NGOs (APADOR-CH included) have established an ad hoc coalition called the Coalition for a Cleaner Parliament (CCP) (see website http://contracoruptie.ong.ro).

The CCP first established the criteria which would make a candidate unfit for a cleaner Parliament as follows: a) having repeatedly shifted from one political party to another; b) having been accused of corruption on the basis of published verifiable evidence; c) having been exposed as agent of the former Securitate; d) owning private
firms indebted to the state; e) being unable to explain the difference between officially stated assets and revenues; f) turning profit from conflict of interest involving a public position, etc. The second step was to discuss those criteria with the leadership of the political parties presently represented in the Parliament: the Social-Democratic Party (SDP – the ruling party), the Justice and Truth Alliance (DA – the opposition rallying the Democratic Party and the Liberal Party), DAHR (UDMR), the Romanian Humanist Party (HP – associated with the ruling party. Very important, they own a private TV station, Antena 1, with nationwide coverage), and the Greater Romania Party (PRM, an extremist party, both on the right and on the left). The most important political parties – the SDP, DA and DAHR – agreed on the criteria and the further procedures the CCP had planned.

The third step was to gather information about as many candidates of all the above-mentioned political parties. That was done through: a) collecting information released by the press along the years; b) researching the sites of several public authorities in charge of financial matters: c) double checking the collected information. The fourth step was to draw up the lists of those candidates (from all the above-mentioned parties) who would meet some or all of the criteria and, therefore, believed by the CCP as unfit for a seat in the future Parliament. The “black lists” were sent to the political parties which were asked to re-examine each case and to decide whether to withdraw or maintain the candidate. The CCP also offered to analyze each possible individual contestation.

Step five consisted of the withdrawal, by the political parties, of tens of their initial candidates. Some of the contested candidates appealed the CCP which approved or rejected their applications and adjusted its lists accordingly.

The last step was to release the final CCP lists, under the form of nearly two million flyers, distributed in most of the 41 districts of Romania, starting from village level.

As already mentioned in the beginning, there are already three court cases for defamation, lodged by representatives of the ruling party. The plaintiffs are: the minister of National Defence (Mr Ioan Mirea Pașcu), the minister of Telecommunications (Mr Dan Nica) and the chair of the Senate of Romania, ranking second after the President of Romania (Mr Nicolae Văcăroiu).

In public statements and open letters, the HP (and the TV station Antena 1), a SDP satellite, accused the CCP of serious crimes under the Romanian Penal Code (in particular “conspiracy”), of being “a bunch of criminals” and “civic terrorists.” The ruling party, the SDP, also asked the Central Electoral Bureau to forbid CCP to distribute the flyers. The CEB declined responsibility, saying that each of the 41 district electoral bureaus should rule on the matter. Four bureaus did this promptly, denying they have jurisdiction over a civil society information campaign. So the attempt to use the judges in the bureaus to censor the CCP failed. It should be mentioned that, in the meantime, one of the most powerful trade-unions, the Cartel ALFA, publicly stated its support to the CCP and its actions. However, in many counties, including Bucharest, faked lists have started being circulated in large quantities. Authors simply use the format of CCP lists, including the signatures of civic leaders, but replace the names of candidates with members of the opposition. The content is truly insulting and libellous this time. The police, although several complaints were made, did not intervene allowing these fakes to circulate. In Bistrița the flyers of CCP were stolen overnight, found after investigation at the headquarters of extremist party GRP. The police did not manage however to prevent the GRP from burning them after a few hours of negotiating their return to the rightful owners.
Background

Romania has a list-voting system (each political party prepares its list of candidates and the voters cast their ballots for the whole list). The majority of the voters do not know who each candidate is, what s/he did or did not, what is her/his background, whether s/he was ever involved in wrongdoings etc. The main source of information should be the media. Unfortunately, press freedom is limited in Romania. The electronic media is controlled by economic means and the print press by distribution. Investigative journalism has suffered a serious decline in recent years as publishers with economic problems discourage journalists from upsetting politicians.

The critical opinions and articles are limited to few central newspapers and magazines, with a limited dissemination. Only 18% of Romanians daily read political news or columns in newspapers; the 45% living in the rural areas do not even have access to them. Moreover, the local press, having a more limited public, is also more vulnerable to the pressures. In many counties of Romania, local businessmen and politicians took control over the local newspapers, radio and TV stations. A deep split has occurred between the independent media (especially central newspapers and few others at local level, in big cities) and controlled media (TV stations and the majority of local publications). In the end of day we find majorities of Romanians who do not know who their representatives in Parliament are.

Although corruption is widely present in the public space, particular cases are rarely exposed. This is the more valid for high-ranking officials, as highlighted in the last EU Commission country report on Romania. While Romanian voters are aware of political corruption, and even assume it is widespread and the source of all evils (politicians are considered above the law and top the list of corrupted professions), politicians constantly surrounded by negative media campaigns get frequently reelected. Both MPs, elected on party lists, and mayors, elected directly, seem to be able to survive very well the corruption allegations of the media. While one reason is clearly the underperformance of institutions of horizontal accountability – politicians are seldom investigated and exceptionally charged, especially if in government – another cause of this situation originates in the lack of civic competence of the constituency. Few Romanian voters read political reports in newspapers. Aware of this situation, parties and politicians rely on the poorest and least educated constituencies to seek reelection, in open defiance to the media and the civic competent citizens.

Henriette Schroeder, IHF Press Officer
II. Newspaper Editorials and Interviews

1. “The leaflets menace”

Cornel Nistorescu

Evenimentul Zilei newspaper
10.03.2004

The whole plan plotted by the ruling Social Democratic Party (SDP) to deprive the opposition from a platform to express themselves fails. The strategists of Adrian Năstase and of the generals around him devised a Romanian trick aimed at bringing their opponents to silence, not to be heard or seen anymore. Just to appear now and then, at some show run by a chameleon-like guy, like Horia Alexandrescu, who plays the independent! And so to pretend to maintain the equidistance of the public channels of communications. To top it all, the trick frightened both the Liberals and the Democrats too! Often I have heard them whining like some childishly immature grown-ups that their toys were taken away. They can’t appear on television anymore to send smiles and cast amorous glances to families and mistresses.

The idea of the civic Coalition, made up of 12 organizations of the civil society, to launch the communication campaign “Meet Your Candidates” seems remarkable to me. It actually is an intelligent response to a large-scale operation to institute silence, plotted by the government led by Adrian Năstase. And therefore, what the opposition doesn’t say and doesn’t do, here it is, it happened at the level of civil society. The 12 organizations will print leaflets exposing the arrangements, thefts, mistakes, political commuting of the future candidates and references about the primitive nepotism. What will the SDP do? Will they sue the 12 civic organizations? Will they beat the citizens who want their fellow citizens to know who is the guy who runs for an office? Will the SDP activists go with some sticks full of glue to get the leaflets out of the mailboxes of the citizens? No matter what they do, they will fall into ridicule while the people will find out what isn’t transmitted through the media controlled by the acolytes of Adrian Năstase! The number and the scope of the arrangements, thefts and crimes! I feel like laughing. The idea is as simple as possible, not to say genius! It is a sort of popular atomic bomb. And considering the gossip appetite of the Romanians, I don’t want to imagine what stories will begin to circulate. And explanations like: how did you find out, man, the thing about the billion dollars? From a leaflet which I received last evening! How will Adrian

* Eventimentul Zilei was the best sold political newspaper in Romania in 2004. Cornel Nistorescu was director of the newspaper in 2004.
Năstase make the connection between the privatization of SNTR national tobacco company (as he is doing now when he’s trying to protect the great financial magician of the privatization, called Ovidiu Muşetescu)? When, on thousands of leaflets, will be written how the share capital increase was conducted. And then, the transactions of ALRO, and ALPRO, Sidex iron and steel mill, and many other transactions that lead to the tops of pyramids. And in the province, I imagine that in every country the local barons will find in their mailboxes the information about the petty barons, the baronesses and the smart guys at the top level, masked in various ways, but exposed by gossipmongers, patriots or political opponents.

The mechanism presented yesterday by the civil society can be the citizen’s antidote for a political octopus, spread across the country with an easiness that is greater than any lack of shame.

Like never before, the arrival of the swarms of leaflets might wake up the people! Therefore, we let you know right know: we will publish all of them!

2. “Several parties but just one piovra.”
   Interview with Alina Mungiu-Pippidi

Eugen Istodor
Academia Cătavencu magazine
II. 2004

Academia Cătavencu: Does a civil society list matter in hindering rich politicians, who can buy so much personal advertising so to make it choke?

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi: The list has the importance that people named on it grant it. And they certainly grant it importance, or we would not be threatened every day [...] These lists do for politics what it should have been done after 1989 for the whole Romanian society: an enunciation of what is right and what is wrong. If we do not manage this exercise more often, it is because it is rather difficult to find a significant number of individuals to agree to common norms. We found enough of them to endorse our lists and that makes them a reference point. Although the list starts by saying that people on it have not necessarily made anything illegal, nobody wants to feature on the list. […]

A.C.: The lists are based on media investigations. But we know that the media is paid either by the government or the opposition. Should we not have also a list of publishers and their connections with politics?

A.M.-P.: Main source is the media, but as a ground rule not just one newspaper. Stories which were not based on any document were eliminated; additionally, we asked candidates to challenge the information and those who proved it was a personal vendetta of some newspaper against them were cleared. So in the end there was little point in quoting articles or naming sources.

A.C.: Do lists tell us what we have not known already?

A.M.-P.: The lists show that we have several parties, but above them one piovra, one network. If one belongs to the network everything comes handy: contracts with the public sector, clients who insist to buy insurances or supplies from your company,
regardless of the price. If you do not belong to the network you still get visits, but from fiscal authorities who squeeze you hard. Migrating from one party to another is a way of reintegrating into the network when it moved leaving you behind in the wrong party. The list shows that the state is captured by predatory elite made by prefects, deputy prefects, and that it crosses parties’ boundaries. Corrupted candidates from opposition lists, for instance, do not have a network of their own; they are in the network with the government party. This is why we fought so hard with the opposition over each and every name. Branches of Liberals were occasionally a sort of second ranked SDP’s branches, filled with businesspeople who got what fell from the table of local SDP business. And we did not succeed in getting all of them out. Also the list shows that the monster grows as in Alien, where it has empty space to fill. Poorer counties, where everybody depends on social aid, are the most vulnerable. Richer counties where people are better off and more autonomous have few names on the black list.

A.C.: Why do politicians hide their past?
A.M.-P.: Our transition created two categories of incentives for people to be into politics, a trade where pay is poor and risks of losing job are high, so it should not be very attractive after all. The first incentive is that be getting into politics one reaches to be above the law, and this is the safe way to prosperity that many improvised businessmen search in our society. The second is that a certain slot of time in the media is allocated to politicians, so people take advantage to make those who did not grant them attention in their lives to have to watch them on TV. So they have good reason to hide their bios, if this is what attracted them into politics.

A.C.: Anybody stepped down of their own accord?
A.M.-P.: Plenty, about 20 out of 50 who vanished from the first version of the list retired by themselves. However, a SDP candidate who called me in a rage refused to fill a contestation on grounds that the party had already decided to bury him. On the list SDP sent me he was among those who retired of their own initiative.

A.C.: What were the most aggressive reactions?
A.M.-P.: Rodica Stânoiu [former minister of Justice] tried to send us a bailiff the morning of the media to make us drop her name from the lists. She only collected more negative media stories because of that. Dan Voiculescu [president of Humanists] and Vadim Tudor [president of GRP] comically asked to be excluded from the list because they are head of their own parties. Now let me state again that we excluded heads of parties from individual monitoring only to the extent they accepted the criteria and cooperated with us dropping problematic candidates from the list themselves. We have never granted exception to people who recycle politicians from other parties like Mr Voiculescu causing mass migration, or people like Vadim who should be prevented by the justice from running for office – if only courts would work. […] The very rich candidates claim we went after them because they are rich. They seem unaware that legislation has passed forbidding them to be both in business and in politics. […]

A.C.: Do you think that people on the list provided for the party?
A.M.-P.: The party is a small non-significant private business. The people on the list, especially many SDP people, own the state and they privatize it to themselves, slowly but firmly. Money to parties followed the path public funds – private funds – party, often with legal forms, so they look mostly clean. […]

A.C.: How stupid is the constituency which forgets? Why do voters like free burgers and beer better than truth and conscience?
A.M.-P.: There are voters and voters. If you are a Roma voter in Nușoaia or Ilfov and you pick mushrooms for one cent per day, free burgers matter greatly to you and social aid is crucial, especially if the mayor gives it to you one day before the vote after he had you starved for six months. If you have a job or a pension, live in the city and own a TV and vote that the state remains in private hands, then you deserve a filthy Parliament. And you may actually get it.

3. “Coalition for a Dirty Parliament”

Zoe Petre
Ziua newspaper
12.11.2004

An elementary solidarity urges me to express in public revulsion and disgust with which I observe the insane reactions of high officials in SDP, led by the highest of all, against the list of moral incompatibility published by the representatives of civil society. The most traditional and the most stale accusations, almost explicit insinuations about the “network of agents” who, so it seems, want to destabilise our poor little country, are linked harmoniously with the initiation of trials which, to cap it all, solicit moral damages for people who have proved for 15 years that their very organ of morality has been totally removed. Mr Iliescu has allowed himself the luxury of launching accusatory phrases like “clannish capitalism” and other populist barbs, but now is hunted down with a fury because these abstractions have taken on names, identities and faces, showing themselves all too often to have the most dubious and accusatory origins possible, directed towards his illustrious personality.

Is Mr Iliescu really now finding out for the first time that he is incriminated because he undermines the Constitution? Does Mr Vâcăroiu really not know that his relations with the FNI, which were far too profitable for a senator and vice president of the chamber, are of public notoriety? Confronted with a plethora of details, which had appeared before in different newspapers, in Bucharest and other cities, day by day, year by year, the Coalition for a Clean Parliament has included nothing on their lists which is not well known already. On the contrary, they have sifted the information drastically and with rigorous responsibility, they have cleaned it up of any detail which could not be verified on the basis of a credible source, and they have brought it all together.

Why then the violent reaction unleashed by this simple exercise in recapitulation? Firstly, it illustrates a recurrent syndrome: from Iliescu’s historic exclamations of 28 January 1990 (“you thorn in my side,” as he called the nascent opposition), 25 April 1990 (“you hooligans” in University Square), 14 August 1992 (“Oy, you animal”) to his violent reaction this summer – “that’s none of your business!” – the proofs abound that Mr Iliescu does not accept the legitimacy of the control exercised by society over the way he obtained and exercises power.

* A mutual investment fund, which collapsed in 2000.
However, the presidential fury likewise flows from the fact that citizens are now being reminded of the plethora of illegalities and corrupt acts, which illustrate the services of his toadies over the last 15 years, which the Coalition for a Clean Parliament will not allow them to forget. Mr Iliescu has based his authority and electoral success to a great extent on forgetfulness. As in the FNI television advertisement, he has always impelled Romanians to prefer to let their memories sleep rather than encourage any lucid or critical memory of the recent past, which only he has the right to sift. His most recent creation, a real mini-ministry for hiding the truth – the Institute for the Memory of the Revolution – emblematically crowns these repeated lobotomies to which he attempts to subject the nation.

However, beyond all this, and together with it, the anger of SDP leaders who fulminate against the list of shame is provoked by the fact that this systematisation of information clearly proves the existence of a system. Placed end to end, the lists published by the Coalition prove by themselves that all which could have seemed, in the ephemera of press revelations, a string of facts – blameworthy, of course, but separate, one from the other – are linked in a complex of complicities, occult interests and networks of crime.

It is no secret that Popular Action, the party I am a part of, has systematically denounced the mechanisms of systemic corruption which hold us hostage in poverty and backwardness. The lists of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament prove, above all electoral suspicions, that we were right to denounce, with precise and clear proofs, not only individual illegalities, but also the network of illegalities and occult interests whose political expression is at present the third Iliescu regime (and Năstase’s first), which has solidly thrust its tentacles into the entire political mafia system. I am honoured to represent Popular Action for the elections in Bacău, so I am following attentively the developments in this county. The oral folklore, which I have been able to gather, mostly in whispers, during the present campaign is even more sinister than the very recent revelations in the press. Leaving aside the stories, not altogether lacking in credibility, about strings of suspect suicides, about rockets kept in the courts of local dukes and barons, what is striking if we subject the chronology of the facts which have now been made public to an attentive analysis is the spider’s web, which leads invariably from the local abuses right up to the top of the pyramid of power. The repeated coincidences between the great battles for the deliberate bankrupting of RAFO or Dărmănești, or for the control over CAROM’, and the extremely sinuous curve of the conflicts between the Cotroceni [presidential palace] and the Victoria Palace [government headquarters], which first argued, and then made peace at a national level exactly in parallel to the way the illustrious Tender and Iacobov competed and then reached an understanding at local level, cannot and must not be ignored. The protection offered to the magnates on the ground by the top SDP leadership, from Mr Hrebenciuc and Mr Priboi upwards, explains in the most natural way the propensity of these people at the top to explode with fury at the publication of a list which, by its very existence, encourages the idea that there has been an association to commit frauds. The Coalition for a Clean Parliament is dangerous, because it turns stones and brings into daylight the leading political force of the former and future socialist Romania, the vital center of the Iliescu-style society: the Coalition for a Dirty Parliament.

* Oil refineries belonging to business groups associated with various wings of SDP, managed by the individuals mentioned further on.
4. “The benefit of the doubt”

Cornel Codită
*Bursa* newspaper
13.11.2004

In a political arena increasingly dominated by the methods of campaigning, where “whoever is not with us is against us,” where “no prisoners are taken,” where logic is replaced by publicity, and the argument with the electoral bribe, where the clarity of institutional reports barely counts any more, so that members of Parliament make both laws and propaganda, the president presides, but also campaigns, the Prime Minister prime ministers, but also shows himself off to everybody as the ideal candidate for the Cotroceni [presidential palace], the opposition writhes, but doesn’t really oppose because it has no spleen, and has no real ideals; in this territory in which the actors seem condemned to a permanent wrangling between comic derision and the tragic dissolved into the ridiculous, in this, our political scene, here at last we find there is still room for the Authentic. The Authentic is the battle around the initiative concerning “a clean Parliament.”

The initiative of SAR, supported by another 11 non-governmental organizations, was conceived and launched long before the start of the current campaign. The reaction of civil society could not be more justifiable. For 15 years, everybody has been complaining about the quality of the “political class,” even politicians themselves. Left to their own devices, however, and with the parliamentary lists at their own discretion, the parties do everything they can to take advantage of their position, so that the phenomenon continues unhindered from one electoral cycle to another. Taking advantage of messages which have been allowed to circulate “under the table” by certain “reformist leaders” signalling that they need support “from outside” to clean up the future parliamentary lists of “brushwood,” civil society has taken its role seriously. It has returned to center stage with the idea of making a sieve through which the future candidates for parliamentary and government office can be sifted out, based on certain criteria, accepted by the parties too. Nobody was concerned until the day the lists of “undesirables” appeared. It is highly probable that none of them considered, in the innermost depths of their thinking, that they should find themselves on the “infamous list.” This is their incontestable right!

The reaction of those sanctioned has been to invoke, in the first instance, the political and consequently partisan character of the SAR initiative. “A hundred of ours and ten from the opposition! Isn’t it obvious?” the SDP representatives asked with clear subtext. What is forgotten is the simple fact that by the nature of things in Romania, the representatives of a party in government have chances even more than ten times greater than those on the margins, in other words in opposition, of gaining access to the “forbidden fruit.” It is consequently not impossible that the proportion was not generated by the “partisan distortions” of those on the list, but instead by reality!

The second argument brought into the discussion is that by its initiative, SAR is interfering in the political battle in an illegitimate, if not even illegal way, for the simple
reason that it has no political status, and consequently does not have the right to be in the arena of electoral conflict. Even less should it undertake activities which could prejudice the chances of some of the proposed candidates, with negative effects even for the parties. The argument is flawed and its supporters overlook the fact that “civil society” has no purpose unless it has power to “sanction” and even “change” the political process, precisely at the point when the machinery of the parties gives no sign that it will react sufficiently to the corrective signals demanded by the electorate. In the United States, everybody considered Michael Moore’s film Fahrenheit 9/11 to be clearly political and profoundly partisan, but nobody pressed the idea that it should be banned, or that the author should be sued for “defamation of character.” If civil society is to have a role, this should be involvement in the political process. This is its purpose, and it benefits from the privilege at the same time of not being a player in the battle. Of course, not all involvement is beneficial, and the methods of intervention are not irrelevant to quality of the final result.

The main mistake committed by those who came out in public with the results of the SAR initiative was to leave the unequivocal impression of assuming the role of “judges.” In other words, that they are substituting themselves exactly for those who it seemed they wanted to help in their electoral judgement: the voters. What the organisers of the Initiative for a Clean Parliament have not understood, or have lost sight of on the way, is the fact that their role was not to pronounce judgement: but merely to promote discussions and debates among the political class, in the mass media, at the round table meetings of the chess players in Cismigiu park, or in rural pubs.

The second mistake was the “infallibility complex”: the lack of adequate reaction to the counter-arguments brought by some of those on the list. The rigidity and lack of response has encouraged the idea that the objective of the initiative is essentially to demolish. Once again, the interests of the electorate, the only important beneficiary of the action, have been ignored. It would not have been prejudiced at all by the idea that it is possible to make mistakes, that it is possible that some found themselves on the list because of errors. On the contrary, the credibility of the initiative would have been enhanced. The authors judged, however, from the viewpoint of their own credibility, which they considered threatened if they had made retractions.

The use in our political sphere of the legal principle which values the “benefit of the doubt” is an exercise for which we are evidently not prepared. This applies both to those who form part of the political class and to those who, in good faith, would like to heal it of its defects.
Le Jour relaie une opération « Mains propres »

avant les élections du 28 novembre

Avant les élections législatives et présidentielle prévues le 28 novembre, une douzaine d’associations de jeunes Roumains décident d’agir contre la corruption qui gangrène leur pays. « Ne votez pas pour eux ! » : publié en grosses lettres à la « une » du quotidien Ziua (Le Jour), ce titre a secoué l’échiquier politique roumain.

Sous le label Coalition pour un Parlement propre, ils ont mis en œuvre un programme qui fait trembler le parti du gouvernement. Après avoir mené une enquête sur tous les candidats au Parlement, du côté du pouvoir comme du côté de l’opposition, cette jeune coalition a rendu publics le nom et le parcours de tous ceux qui sont coupables de corruption.

« Parmi les 153 candidats incriminés, 95 appartiennent au Parti social-démocrate (au pouvoir), 46 au Parti de la grande Roumanie (nationaliste, dans l’opposition) et 9 à la principale alliance d’opposition, Justice et vérité », lit-on dans Le Jour. Les autorités ont toutefois contesté les critères utilisés dans la mise en cause de ces personnes et annoncé qu’elles porteraient plainte pour diffamation contre les membres de la Coalition. « Le premier ministre, Adrian Năstase, a d’ores et déjà contesté cette action, qualifiée de “tentative de dénigrement” auprès du bureau électoral central ». Cependant, les juges qui composent ce conseil de surveillance des élections n’ont pas trouvé d’arguments juridiques contre cette opération « Mains propres ».

La Coalition pour un Parlement propre compte parmi ses membres le comité Helsinki, l’association Pro-démocratie, Freedom House, la Fondation pour une société ouverte, et la Société académique roumaine. « Deux millions d’affichettes dénonçant les candidats corrompus aux élections législatives du 28 novembre sont distribuées dans les boîtes aux lettres des électeurs, notamment dans les départements où ces candidats briguent un siège de député ou de sénateur », annonce Le Jour.

Contrôlé par la nomenclature de l’ancien Parti communiste de Nicolae Ceausescu, l’actuel gouvernement accuse la Coalition pour un Parlement propre « d’utiliser la calomnie, l’insulte et les pratiques communistes » pour rendre service à l’opposition.

Dans un commentaire publié par Le Jour, un député du parti du gouvernement dénonce cette action. « C’est l’opération de propagande d’une opposition politique déguisée parce que l’opposition officielle est trop faible pour s’affirmer, écrit-il. Lorsque la société civile se propose de remplacer un gouvernement, c’est la société civile elle-même et le futur européen de la Roumanie qui sont mis en danger. Alors, à quand une coalition pour le nettoyage de la société civile ? »
«Je vous tuera tous»

Les initiateurs de la Coalition pour un Parlement propre sont sans arrêt menacés et présentés comme «une association aux buts maléfiques qui pratique une nouvelle forme de terrorisme» par le parti du gouvernement.

En province, les menaces visent aussi les journalistes qui médiatisent cette opération. «Je vous tuera tous après les élections!», leur a lancé le candidat du parti du gouvernement dans le département de Vrancea, situé dans le sud du pays.

Le lendemain, à la «une» du Jour, figurait cet autre titre en grosses lettres : «L’attaque des dalmatiens». Les journalistes roumains ont trouvé ce surnom pour désigner les candidats au Parlement qui, à l’image de cette race de chiens, ne sont pas sans taches. «Au top des partis peuplés de dalmatiens, le parti au pouvoir veut mettre la société civile le dos au mur», s’insurge un reporter de ce quotidien. Un bras de fer a commencé entre l’exécutif de Bucarest et la presse.

Dans ce conflit, le président du Conseil national de l’audiovisuel, proche du gouvernement, prévient que «les Européens vont réagir en qualifiant cette opération de harcèlement politique». Pourtant, selon le dernier rapport de la Commission européenne, ce n’est pas le gouvernement roumain qui est menacé, mais la liberté d’expression et les journalistes, qui subissent de plus en plus d’agressions.

6. “Cardboard reform”

Cristian Pârvulescu
Bursa newspaper
15.11.2004

The mimicry of political reform, in particular that of internal party affairs, reached its zenith in 2004. Just as with the free market economy, the political scene presupposes a subtle mechanism of supply and demand. But unlike the economic field, where the demand permanently affects and modifies the offer, in the Romanian political market, as a result of the electoral calendar with elections only every four years, the influence of the “elector-buyer” on the quality of the political product is limited. This year, the pressure of the elections in conditions of bipolarity has forced the important political parties to react systematically to the expectations of the different electorates. While the ideological differences between the parties remain relative in conditions of the marginalisation of the values dimension in politics, the transformation was possible with respect to the internal organization, and the most visible and most expected concerned the candidates. Starting with the local elections, the parties which promoted new candidates enjoyed a greater success rate. The lack of trust by many Romanians in the capacity of the “old” political class to reform itself guaranteed the efficiency of such an image strategy, particularly in urban areas. And although Ciuhandu in Timișoara, Filip in Oradea and Mazăre in Constanța were reelected (also because of the poor quality of their opponents), the electorate’s tendency to use their vote as an instrument of change when the credible
opponents are running was demonstrated aplenty. For the parliamentary elections, this new course of events has determined the recruitment method for political personalities.

The simulation of interest for electoral reform, and its procedural blockage, did not, however, change the perception of the electorate. The parliamentary elections will take place under the proportional system, in conditions in which support for the unimominal system has permanently increased, reaching 69% in October 2004. The last ballot in which Parliament and President will be elected simultaneously (2004) offers the alibi of a majority based system used for the election of the head of state, but electoral change cannot be postponed any longer. Up to now, the improvement of the lists, and especially of the candidates who hold eligible places on them, was the simplest way to respond to the social demands to transform the field of competition. However, the parties’ inertia has made its effect felt. The larger and more hierarchical the political groupings, the more protected was the position of local oligarchs, and the more improbable the likelihood of real change became. The electoral risk resulting from this situation has forced the parties to rapid reaction. DP and NLP, in opposition and more supple, having gone through their growing pains in 2001-2, were able to intervene more easily with their lists of candidates. Differences of organizational culture within the two Alliance parties led to different methods, but many politicians, both new and established, were sacrificed. SDP on the other hand, with its cumbersome structures of a hegemonic party, could not make changes easily. The primary elections offered a solution for the transformation of the lists without the party leadership becoming directly involved, and leaving an important margin of manoeuvre to the local leaders. Due to its dimensions and composite character, SDP could not effect radical change, especially at the leadership level. To eliminate any criticism of lack of internal change, the government party has chosen the tactic of a pre-emptive strike. By presenting the old guard leaders in the elections, the SDP is vulnerable, and consequently aggressive. Postponing internal reform to 2005, the government party cannot convince a part of the electorate, but is counting on general lack of interest in politics. The undecided are recruited from those who are not interested in politics, and in this background, political marketing can attract votes. Any activity which envisages making voters better informed is risky in these conditions, hence the absurd, yet comprehensible reaction to the lists of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament.

The lack of trust of Romanians in political institutions, the dramatic fall in the popularity of political parties, the refusal to implement transition policies, together with the dynamic and growth of anti-systemic movements demonstrate the urgency of political reform. Far from being only a restructuring of government in line with the process of European integration, political reform is the key to the democratisation of Romanian society. Dominated by partitocratic tendencies, the political class can no longer assure the minimum communication between the spheres of government and society. Political reform should be the priority of 2005. Only thus will the electorate and the political class be reconciled.
7. “Prime Minister Năstase on the Coalition for a Clean Parliament: ‘Had I been mean, I still was nice as long as I stroke a deal with them’”

Loredana Voiculescu
_Adevărul_ newspaper
16.11.2004

Taking the example of the Romanian President Ion Iliescu, who seems not to care about allegations regarding his active involvement in the electoral campaign of the governing party, Prime Minister Adrian Năstase claims it is “completely embarrassing” for the “so-called” Coalition for a Clean Parliament to monitor him. “As long as it looked like we had a deal, they were not monitoring me, and I was their nice partner, even if I remained a mean person. Now, since I broke the pact, I am suddenly mean and I should be pointed out. This seems to me as an embarrassing way to solve problems. Politics is extremely complex during elections. The Civic Alliance had a very important role indeed during 2000 elections. Unfortunately, some of the NGO’s have now become U-boats for right-wing parties. It’s not that bad though, I am sure we will survive this fight,” declared yesterday Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, during the inauguration of the Sun Highway. In turn, President Iliescu kept the pace. Although he had never been asked anything related to this subject, he insisted to express his opinion: “What kind of moral authority do these people that call themselves the Coalition for a Clean Parliament have? Some of them should actually be ashamed,” stressed Iliescu.

8. “The Prime Minister’s ‘BLAT’”

Andreea Pora
_Evenimentul Zilei_ newspaper
17.11.2004

“As long as it seemed that I had a ‘blat’ with them they didn’t monitor me, I was a good man.” I quoted from the last statement made by Adrian Năstase about the Coalition for a Clean Parliament. According to the Explicative Dictionary of Romanian language, the word used to describe a “blat” has two meanings: “a piece of dough especially prepared to make a cake” and “to travel without a ticket.” The term, used for the trains loaded with poor passengers riding for free, was and still is emblematic for our wonderful country governed formerly by communists, and now by the leaders of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). In one way or another, almost all of them made “blats,” then and now, trying to dodge the system. The few lei slipped into the pocket of the “godfather” (nickname for train conductor) ensured only the survival. A kind of necessary trick which entered the collective mentality. To which everybody pays tribute, including the prime minister, who raises the “blat” to the level of state policy.
For Năstase, the “blat” is that bargain, according to which almost everything functions in Romania. From domestic business, parties, the trade in markets to international relations. Probably the Premier can think only in these terms, and the method has proved to be infallible so far, bigger or smaller arrangements being the key to success in career. Especially in politics. What is needed there is versatility, a gross lack of principles and some intelligence. Slynnes has not come to be considered an outstanding virtue for nothing. A “blat” arrangement, especially when it can be denied the next day, is not available to anyone.

Perhaps that is why Adrian Năstase is so upset with the Coalition for a Clean Parliament. He probably imagined that he made a deal and it didn’t work as planned. It did not work for him, who is an expert in such things. More exactly, he believed that the deal between the SDP and the representatives of the Coalition, according to which, in case its integrity criteria are taken into consideration, he will not be on the black lists (not necessarily because he didn’t deserve a place there), is a sort of arrangement. That is, we discuss the matter and then we will think about it again. He probably imagined that the road from words to facts will remain uncovered.

That all will be “bargained.” But he was wrong.

The public threats, the Securitate-like language used by some of those on the black list, the urge to file as many lawsuits as possible, the public denunciation of the idea didn’t remain unpunished by the civil society.

Which reminded him that, “when it comes to rigour,” his name can also be put on the list. When it comes to rigour, meaning that the civil society, unlike him, is used to observing a deal. Adrian Năstase, who probably can feel that actually his name should be put on the list, didn’t understand anything of this message. He thinks that he made an arrangement and he is upset that it doesn’t “work” as usually.

This “arrangement” emerging from the Premier’s well of thinking isn’t surprising. After he promised the Council for the Study of the Archives of the Securitate that he would provide a location for the storing of its archives which are still in the possession of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), he thought he “made a deal.” But when the first lists with names of Securitate officers were made public, he couldn’t stand it anymore and called the CNSAS members “file lickers” affectionately. This is how we find out what Adrian Năstase actually believes about this subject. This is how we find out, as a matter of fact, what the whole ruling party thinks. The famous phrases “you, animal” (Ion Iliescu), “keep your mouth shut” (Șerban Mihăilescu), “life is short and health is precious” (Ioan Mircea Pașcu) are in the same register. They show the mentality of the ruling class. But all these outbursts are very useful. Without them we remain just some poor innocents in front of the voting box.
9. “After the Coalition for a Clean Parliament declared him incompatible with the holding of elected office, Iliescu wants his own civil society”

Raluca Dumitru
_Curentul_ newspaper
17.11.2004

At the end of his mandate, President Ion Iliescu has turned the tables and said NO to civil society. It seems the head of state was so displeased that he was included in the list of those incompatible from a moral point of view to be elected, drawn up by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, that he has proposed the formation of a new Coalition.

“I say we make another coalition, against the Coalition for a Clean Parliament,” President Iliescu said yesterday, with Prime Minister Adrian Năstase on his right. The head of state became very annoyed when journalists asked Năstase for his opinion on the fact that he is monitored by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament after he broke the understanding with this organization of civil society. Iliescu practically interrupted the Prime Minister, asking rhetorically in front of the microphones: “Is that what the Coalition is called?” After this he continued in an accusatory tone: “So is the Coalition clean, to give us a clean Parliament? What moral authority do all those who make up this Coalition have?” The head of state did not give up until he had done his best to demolish the initiative by civil society to show Romanians how, due to lack of information, they could vote in the parliamentary elections for political opportunists, former Securitate collaborators or those involved with dubious business affairs. “They should be ashamed of themselves,” thundered Iliescu.

_Năstase misses Civic Alliance_

As far as Adrian Năstase was concerned, his message about the Coalition for a Clean Parliament’s initiative was essentially the same as that of the President. If at the beginning, the SDP leader tried to be ironic – “I’m very preoccupied that I’m being monitored,” towards the end, he did not hold back, speaking about the “absolutely outrageous way” in which the representatives of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament were behaving. “As long as it seemed that I’d done a deal with them, they didn’t monitor me. Now that I haven’t done the deal, I have to be exposed,” the SDP president affirmed. Now, when he risks ending up on the Coalition’s list as not meeting the moral criteria to be elected, surprisingly Năstase looks back with nostalgia at Civic Alliance, whose members have criticised him on innumerable occasions. “Civic Alliance had an extremely powerful role. Now, unfortunately, some of the non governmental organizations have transformed themselves into political submarines for the right wing parties. It’s not serious, I’m convinced we’ll survive,” declared Adrian Năstase.
“I am not Switzerland”

Yesterday was a productive day in terms of wisdom cracks by Iliescu. Finding himself alongside the Prime Minister for the inauguration of the third section of Bucharest-Constanța “Sun Motorway” President Iliescu was asked if he was not breaching the principle of neutrality by appearing on SDP+HP election posters together with Adrian Năstase and Mircea Geoană. “What neutrality?” snapped Iliescu. “I’m not a little Switzerland, I’m the President of Romania. It’s normal to have business and to meet with the Prime Minister and the Foreign minister. So such groundless observations leave me unmoved.”

Campaign bitterness

Also yesterday, in Călărași, in front of 100 people, Ion Iliescu expressed “bitterness” over the way in which the town’s inhabitants had “judged” things, considering that the way they voted in the June 2004 local elections “leaves me speechless.” “If you want me to say so, my bitterness towards you, the citizens of Călărași, is the way you have judged things last summer.” The direction you have taken leaves me speechless,” said Ion Iliescu, without specifying what he was referring to. President Ion Iliescu was making a short visit to Călărași, where he was met by approximately 100 inhabitants who wanted to shake his hand, but also to tell him their problems. The elections for the Călărași town hall were won by the Liberal, Nicolae Dragu, which is where the presidential bitterness came from.

President Ion Iliescu also paid a short visit with a definite whiff of electioneering to Oltenița, his home town, with the official excuse that he wanted to get involved in solving the problems of the locality, especially those concerning the heating of homes in winter. Iliescu explained that he had come to Oltenița “in response to an SOS call from the mayor” about the problem of heating of homes, in view of the fact that funds for the acquisition of heating fuel had been blocked because of the town’s large debts.

More than free

During his tour through the country, Ion Iliescu expressed the hope that, beginning next year, he would be “freer,” and this would allow him to become more involved in solving the town’s problems, especially the revival of activity in the port. If he is “lucky” the party he is preparing to lead could go into opposition, and so Ion Iliescu could end up freer than he imagined.

* While in office, the Romanian President is supposed to be above party politics. In the fall of 2004 President Iliescu was blamed for actively campaigning on behalf of SDP.

** When they voted out the SDP mayor.
10. “Poisoned leaflets’: large scale operation”

Evenimentul Zilei newspaper
23.11.2004

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament has complained to the police and courts

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament announced yesterday that it had complained to the police and courts about fake leaflets with so-called non-compatible candidates. The president of SAR, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, declared: “There are reports that in several counties around the country, fake leaflets are distributed in large quantities.” She mentioned that the CCP had already made complaints to the police and courts in Iași, Timișoara and Sibiu, calling on the respective institutions to identify the authors of the fakes, the printing houses where they were issued, and the people who distributed them.

“This time we can talk about a criminal offence because certain people have been labelled under our signature,” said Mungiu. According to the SAR president, the fake leaflets are identical in form to those issued by the Coalition, except that the names of the incompatible candidates have been changed, with those initially blacklisted by the CCP, nearly all from the SDP+HP Union, being replaced by representatives of DA Alliance who are accused of various misdemeanours. “The pirate leaflets don’t contain any names from SDP, GRP or DAHR,” Mungiu said. In her opinion “it is a concerted action, we are probably speaking about a very large logistical effort.” However, Mungiu did not make any direct accusations against any specific party concerning its involvement in the distribution of the fake leaflets, affirming that this is a matter for the police to sort out. She added, however: “Yesterday, I thought of calling Viorel Hrebenciuc* and telling him: ‘You are an intelligent man. Don’t use weapons like that. It’s a big mistake at the end of the campaign.’” Asked why she had thought of Hrebenciuc, Mungiu said: “He just came into my mind.”

“Securitate methods; manipulation through disinformation”

Mircea Toma, the representative of the “Academia Cațavencu” Media Monitoring Agency, affirmed in turn that the operation to distribute the fake leaflets “is a method close to the culture of the Securitate from before 1989,” namely manipulation through disinformation. The executive director of Asociația Pro Democrația, Adrian Sorescu, presented another case, which he described as sabotage of the Coalition’s initiative. In this instance, leaflets with the incompatible candidates sent by the CCP to Bistrița were “stolen” and deposited at the Greater Romanian Party headquarters. According to Sorescu, GRP officials refused to hand the leaflets back to the representatives of the Coalition, even after they came with the police. During yesterday’s press conference, Sorescu said that he had received a

* A prominent SDP leader and political fixer.
message on his mobile phone telling him that Ioan Aurel Rus, one of the GRP candidates in the county in question, had destroyed the leaflets.

11. “German press on SDP ‘elite bandits’”

Ziua newspaper
24.11.2004

On Saturday Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), the most prestigious German daily newspaper, published the article “Romanian Elite Bandits.” It criticizes the fact that the highly corrupted are present in all Romanian parties. The article starts from the “black lists” with the 43 candidates to the Parliament which CCP (the Coalition for a Clean Parliament) has accused of corruption, collaboration with the former Communist Secret Service or political migration and mentions that the presence of 95 SDP (the Social Democratic Party) + HP (the Romanian Humanist Party) Union members on this list is “worrying.” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung states that Mircea Geoană, Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs, was thought to be “clean to a certain extent,” but now he no longer manages to justify his 200,000 Euro in bank accounts. Still FAZ says the sum is rather insignificant as compared to million Euro that other SDP members possess. The article explains this situation through the fact that fiscal authorities have activated companies owned by SDP candidates. On the one hand, the latter have got public contracts, but on the other hand, fiscal authorities protect them. FAZ reveals: “Groups operating locally under the SDP shadow have created a tight network together with politicians, finance staff and managers.” The above-mentioned source adds: “In southern and eastern Romania, there is an elite grounding political power on client-like relations. This elite has taken over state structures and it burdens market economy development.”

The German newspaper also criticizes GRP (Greater Romania Party) leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor, as the latter states that Romanian politicians “steal with four hands, just like in a concert by Rachmaninov.” FAZ comments ironically: “Tudor must learn this: 46 of his candidates are on the CCP list.” The newspaper also shows that the GRP leader himself was the court poet of Ceaușescu’s family and wrote odes praising Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi.

FAZ reminds that 40% of Romanian citizens live in poverty, but not because of system changes, but because such change has never indeed occurred. The author shows that just a few kilometers away from the villas of the new well-off living at the margin of Bucharest, there is the outskirts of the poor, an area of shabby cottages, muddy streets and dogs chasing food in the garbage. “The Monastery of Căldărușani provides the poor with food. This reminds us that Romania is far from reaching the modern era, even if it is to join EU in 2007 and it has already got market economy status,” FAZ comments. (D.E.)
12. “The (lost) honour of Prime Minister Năstase”

Sabina Fati
Evenimentul Zilei newspaper
26.11.2004

SDP is trying to escape from the crisis by hiding. A month ago, the monitoring of candidates conducted by the Coalition for a Clean Parliament received a tough reply from the government party. Almost all the 95 SDP candidates considered unsuitable because they have dubious business dealings or they are political opportunists have been given the official task of suing the CCP in courts. The trials have begun. On the other hand, after serious and shameful slanders against the Prime Minister appeared in România Mare Newspaper, neither the SDP, nor the president of this party has asked the judicial authorities to defend the honour of Adrian Năstase.

The Coalition for a Clean Parliament has used information of public interest for the verification of candidates for Sunday’s general election. By way of counter-attack, the SDP has tried to discredit in any way possible the leaders of the civil society who coordinated this programme: all the TV stations have been invaded by representatives of the government party, who instead of stepping back, have attacked the Coalition without scruples.

Yet the SDP is now quiet, when its leader is incriminated in a miserable way by România Mare. It might be thought that the party in power is just ignoring a trashy and infamous magazine, but if this were the case, here are some questions: Why on Wednesday did the entire print run of România Mare disappear from newsstands, and who had an interest for the magazines not to reach its readers? In a similar situation in 1996, before the election campaign, Ion Iliescu did not refrain from suing Corneliu Vadim Tudor, who had accused him in România Mare of collaboration with foreign intelligence agencies.

Adrian Năstase prefers to keep quiet. A better strategy than active defence, especially when scurrilous attacks appear three days before the elections. Yet the question remains: is the Prime Minister Adrian Năstase open to blackmail or not? If Adrian Năstase were just a private citizen, with no position in the state hierarchy, this issue would not interest us, but Adrian Năstase is the head of the government and aspires to the most important state function. If the suspicion hangs over him that he can be blackmailed, Adrian Năstase would be under obligation to give explanations to the electorate.

SDP and its leader find themselves in their greatest crisis of credibility of the recent years. The famous party meetings transcripts**, which reveal the mechanism of corruption at the highest level, have already reached all the Western chancelleries with which Adrian Năstase boasts of having such good relations. Traian Băsescu’s arguments about

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* The weekly newspaper of the right-wing extremist Vadim Tudor, the president of Greater Romania Party.
* Transcripts of various SDP leadership meetings from 2003-2004, leaked to the media in October 2004, in which many ministers and other party leaders inadvertently incriminate themselves for traffic of influence, media manipulation and attempts to control the judiciary.
the international arrangements made by Adrian Năstase involving significant sums of money have been demonstrated by these internal SDP documents, which have reached many of those who will vote on Sunday. The head of the government in Bucharest did not have the courage to come before the electorate to defend himself. He was scared to have a direct confrontation with Traian Băsescu. He is scared to defend his honour in front of Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Prime Minister Adrian Năstase appears more and more a man who in theory is not afraid of anything, but who in practice is scared of his own shadow.

13. «La corruption des élites domine les élections en Roumanie»

Le Monde
27.11.2004

Les Roumains, lassés de la pauvreté et de la corruption, ont commencé dimanche à choisir le président censé les accompagner aux portes de l’Union européenne, en 2007. À 6 heures du matin, les quelque 17 000 bureaux de vote ont ouvert leurs portes aux 18 millions d’électeurs qui doivent aussi désigner le nouveau Parlement.

Bucarest, de notre correspondant

À deux ans de son rendez-vous avec l’Union européenne, prévu si tout va bien en 2007, la Roumanie passe, dimanche 28 novembre, un grand examen électoral particulièrement attendu. Il s’agit à la fois des élections législatives et du premier tour de l’élection présidentielle. Élu déjà à trois reprises, la dernière fois en 2000, le président Ion Iliescu, qui ne peut se représenter, a dominé la scène politique roumaine depuis la chute de la dictature Ceaușescu. Il a conduit la Roumanie dans l’OTAN et préparé le chemin de son adhésion à l’Union européenne. Mais son héritage est contesté.

S’il a présidé avec fermeté ces dernières années aux réformes nécessaires pour l’adhésion à l’Union européenne, son Parti social-démocrate (SDP), qui s’appuie largement sur les anciennes couches dirigeantes du régime Ceaușescu, n’est jamais parvenu à incarner une vraie rupture démocratique. Les problèmes de corruption, d’abus de pouvoir, de pressions sur la presse continuent de jeter un doute sur la capacité de la Roumanie à tenir ses engagements pour entrer en temps voulu dans l’Union.

Bataille à trois

Mais l’opposition de centre droit, qui avait gouverné de 1996 à 2000, n’avait pas non plus réussi à s’entendre, entre ses diverses composantes, pour conduire les réformes. Si elle s’est unie derrière un candidat, le maire de Bucarest, Traian Băsescu, pour le scrutin présidentiel, elle doit encore faire ses preuves.

L’enjeu du double scrutin de dimanche est important. Les négociations sur l’adoption de l’acquis communautaire sont en passe de s’achever. Le camp qui l’emportera devra parachever l’adhésion. Il bénéficiera d’une aide importante de l’Union européenne pour
achever les réformes. Environ 10 milliards d’euros ont été promis à Bucarest au titre des fonds d’adhésion.

La bataille se joue entre trois partis politiques également désireux d’accéder au pouvoir. Le SDP, qui gouverne le pays depuis quatre ans, propose le premier ministre sortant, Adrian Năstase, comme président et Mircea Geoană comme premier ministre.

Dans le champ de l’opposition, deux formations inviennent les Roumains à choisir le changement. D’une part, l’alliance «Justice et vérité», qui réunit le Parti libéral et un petit Parti social-démocrate dirigé par le maire de Bucarest. D’autre part, le Parti nationaliste de la grande Roumanie (PRM), dont le leader, Vadim Tudor, est arrivé en 2000 au second tour de l’élection présidentielle, et qui contrôle un quart du Parlement actuel. Le discours anticorrupption, qui a fait son succès en 2000, a moins d’impact sur l’électorat depuis que le maire de Bucarest a empoigné lui aussi ce thème avec plus de succès.

Malgré la nouvelle dynamique économique que connait la Roumanie depuis quatre ans, le discours anticorrupption reste d’actualité. Le pays de feu Ceaușescu est un énorme chantier. À l’image de Bucarest, les grandes villes et de nombreux villages changent de visage. Des milliers de maisons ont été rénovées et le prix de l’immobilier a doublé en l’espace d’une année.

La croissance économique est de plus en plus nette : environ 5% par an depuis 2000 et 8% cette année, selon les prévisions de l’Institut national de statistique. Pourtant, la distribution de cette nouvelle richesse fait problème. En Roumanie, où le salaire moyen est encore de 150 euros par mois, 300 personnes contrôlent 13 milliards d’euros, c’est-à-dire le quart du PIB. Malgré le discours proeuropéen du gouvernement, la corruption règne dans les coulisses du pouvoir.

Après avoir accordé cet automne le statut d’économie de marché fonctionnelle à la Roumanie, la Commission européenne a sommé Bucarest de lutter contre la corruption et de respecter la liberté d’expression et l’indépendance de la justice. «En Roumanie, un juge coûte moins cher qu’un avocat», résume un diplomate européen. Les agressions contre les journalistes se sont multipliées et la campagne électorale n’a pas amélioré les choses. Les chaînes de télévision, les radios et la presse écrite sont largement contrôlées par le gouvernement.

**Médias sous pression**

Le premier ministre, Adrian Năstase, est présenté sur toutes les chaînes comme le sauveur du pays. Sa campagne a cependant souffert de la publicité, quelques jours avant les élections, de sténogrammes de réunions de son parti. Ces documents dévoilent les agissements du pouvoir pour museler les médias et couvrir les leaders corrompus. L’opposition agite de son côté la crainte d’une fraude massive lors des élections. «C’est la campagne la plus agressive que j’ai jamais vue en Roumanie, déclare Cristian Părvulescu, président de l’association Pro Democrația. Le gouvernement a instauré un état de terreur et nous nous attendons à une fraude significative.»

Une douzaine d’associations de jeunes, regroupées dans une «Coalition pour un Parlement propre», ont lancé une opération pour bloquer l’accès au Parlement des candidats jugés corrompus. Son slogan : «Votez les yeux ouverts». «Nous ne croyons pas
que le problème de la corruption puisse se régler au moyen de lois faites par des parlementaires eux-mêmes corrompus», affirme Alina Mungiu, présidente de la Société académique roumaine et initiatrice du projet. La plupart des 153 candidats incriminés appartiennent au parti du gouvernement.

Dès début novembre, 2 millions d’affichettes dénonçant les candidats corrompus ont été distribuées dans les boîtes aux lettres des électeurs. Cette opération, considérée par les autorités roumaines comme «une nouvelle forme de terrorisme», a été qualifiée par Adrian Năstase de «tentative de dénigrement» au bénéfice de l’opposition. Ses initiateurs ont été traduits en justice. «Notre démarche dérange, affirme Alina Mungiu. C’est la première fois que la société civile se mobilise à une telle échelle.»
III. Final Lists of the Coalition for a Clean Parliament as Published 4.11.2004

As a result of monitoring the public image of candidates for Parliament, the Coalition considers that the following candidates do not meet civil society’s criteria of moral integrity. This definition does not in any way imply that these candidates have necessarily broken Romanian law, or should be referred to the judicial authorities. Nor does it imply equality of status, since their situations are very different, necessitating judgment on a case by case basis. The evaluation has been made on the basis of the Coalition’s criteria, agreed with the political parties (in short, political opportunism – transfer from one party to another to gain or keep a public position, collaboration with the former Securitate or the Ceaușescu regime in general, use of a public position for personal or family benefit, discrepancies between declared incomes and transparent sources of income, breach of the principle of fair competition through favoring personal or party clients). Challenges were examined up to the last day, long after the deadline, successful ones leading to the withdrawal of candidates from our list. At present, this list includes 95 candidates from SDP+HP Union (Social Democrats and Humanist Party), 9 from Justice and Truth Alliance (DA), 46 from GRP (Greater Romania Party, populist nationalists), and 3 from DAHR (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania).

1. Names on the SDP+HP Union lists

Alba County
1. Nicolae Popa, HP, political opportunist; switched three parties: SDPR (ancestor party of SDP), ApR (Alliance for Romania, merged with Liberals in 2000), HP, in all of which he held leading positions.

Argeș County
3. Mihai Tănășescu, then minister of Public Finances of Romania and vice president of SDP Bucharest. As a minister of Public Finances he allowed the rescheduling of debts and of penalties for arrears to the state budget, consequently discriminating against companies which paid correctly and in time. Private companies owned by SDP clients benefited from these decisions, such as RAFO Onești and the National Society of Tobacco. The last of these rescheduling measures was put into effect.
through Government Emergency Ordinance no. 94/2004, which allowed the companies to postpone their debts until 30 November, i.e. two days after the elections, with a view to complete debt forgiveness by 30 December 2004. [Main TV stations took advantage of this provision and paid their arrears without penalties; the same TV stations were accused by media watchdogs for favoring the government.]

4. George Copos, HP, owner of Rapid Football Club, has a wealth of approx. 160 million dollars, according to Capital magazine. His businesses are in industry, commerce and tourism. According to the Romanian media, together with other soccer club owners he declared lower wages for soccer players in order to evade taxes. [Soccer clubs are also among companies with important arrears to the state budget.]

5. Nicolae Văcăroiu, SDP. He was investigated in the Jimbolia file opened by the General Prosecutor’s Office in 2000 regarding the breach of the embargo imposed by the UN on Yugoslavia. The investigation was fast aborted because Mr Văcăroiu enjoyed parliamentary immunity. After the 2000 elections, the Jimbolia file was closed. Nicolae Văcăroiu was for six months the president of the Bank of Investment and Development (BID), which was the object of a criminal investigation, involving the controversial businessman Sorin Ovidiu Vântu [founder of a huge investment fund which collapsed after he and a few others managed to retire important sums, leaving tens of thousands of investors bankrupt]. A subsequent inquest revealed that the money used to set up BID was taken from this fund. In 1999, Nicolae Văcăroiu signed a contract with Sorin Ovidiu Vântu, according to which he was to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars as an “expert.” Nicolae Văcăroiu was in a position of conflict of interest, being at the same time senator and president of the Senate, as well as holding a paid position as president of BID. He declares that he owns land of 5.28 ha, several plots in the city area, an apartment of 116.34 sqm and two houses, one of which is of 600 sqm.

[Mr Văcăroiu sued the Coalition asking for an emergency procedure to stop the printing of his above biography. He lost that trial and appealed, but lost again. He also sued the Coalition for defamation in a civil court, and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi and Cristian Pârvulescu for libel in a criminal court. The last two trials are pending.]

6. Filip Georgescu, member of the Chamber of Deputies and the president of SDP Argeş Branch. He held simultaneously two positions for more than three years, until the end of 2003: general manager of Romsilva [monopoly state company of forests’ administration] and member of the Chamber of Deputies. In 2002, in the position of general manager at Romsilva he contributed to the rescheduling of debts of over a million dollars for a company owned by Culliţa Târâţă, a businessman and colleague in the Party. Filip Georgescu owns 44.8 ha of agricultural land, 5.6 ha forestry land, an apartment of 86 sqm, a house of 360 sqm, a vacation home of 100 sqm, a Mercedes, made in 2000, plus bank deposits of 1,490 million lei.

7. Ion Burnei, SDP, until a year before elections, was a board member of Health Insurance of Argeş County [state monopolist health insurer]. The local media suspected his position as board member of the main medicine purchaser to have played a role in the success of his wife’s business. She is the only shareholder at SC Mona SRL, a chain of pharmacies that trade with the public health units. He owns
10,000 sqm of fields, 10,800 sqm of land in the city area. The villa and the car are on his wife’s name.

[The Chamber of Deputies secretariat found an incompatibility between the position of Mr Burnei as a senator and as a board member of Health Insurance Company, so he was forced to resign. Mr Burnei sued the Coalition, lost and did not appeal.]

8. **Alexandru Stănescu**, SDP, in the communist times (1983-1989) was deputy minister of Industry, and under the Văcăroiu government he became Industry minister. He is a shareholder in many businesses, some of which are associated with high ranking leaders of SDP. One example is Fineco SA Bucharest (here he was a member of the Administration Board), another shareholder of which is Gheorghe Oană (State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance). Other examples are BID SA (a bank owned by the controversial businessman Sorin Ovidiu Vântu, who is under criminal investigation) and Arcom SA (whose administrator was Ovidiu Mușetescu, head of the state property agency APAPS). Fineco was implicated in the collapse of the National Investment Fund (FNI), because BID (the bank of Sorin Ovidiu Vântu) had participated in the construction of this business. Uzinsider, another company at which Alexandru Stănescu is a shareholder, has important arrears to the state budget.

**Bacău County**

9. **Viorel Hrebenciuc**, SDP. Former mayor and prefect of Bacău. In 1991 the press accused Viorel Hrebenciuc of embezzling aid funds intended for citizens of Bacău affected by floods in that year. Also, on March 6, 1995 he signed (as a general secretary of the Government) a contract between the Department of Information of the Romanian Government and GSE, a company belonging to Adrian Costea. The contract involved GSE printing an album to promote Romania, which was supposed to be printed in 97,000 copies at a total cost of $ 5,797,740 dollars at a publishing house owned by Adrian Costea. The case was investigated by both French and Romanian authorities, because there was the suspicion that these public funds were actually used for printing materials for the electoral campaign of Ion Iliescu and SDPR in 1996. Mr Hrebenciuc signed a supplementary contract, after leaving the post of Secretary General of the Government, even though he had no legal right to do so. Viorel Hrebenciuc was called as a witness in the investigation of this case. In 2003, he came under suspicion because a firm in which he was a member of the Board, Arab German Insurance, obtained a contract to insure the cars owned by the Chamber of Deputies, of which he was a vice president. After the scandal, Mr Hrebenciuc resigned from the firm, but the contract was not cancelled.

10. **Vlase Petru Gabriel**, SDP, vice prefect, is the beneficiary of a concession on land in central Bacău, which the local SDP administration has refused to give back to its legal owners [after restitution laws of property nationalized by Communist regime were passed].

**Bihor County**

11. **Gheorghe Sărb**, SDP, prefect at the times of elections, owns a luxury villa, two apartments and two commercial spaces. The local press has reported that one of these commercial spaces was bought for much lower price than its real value from
the firm Mercur SC. The local media also were unable to find a private law school that the prefect claimed to have graduated from.

12. Teodor Maghiar, SDP. Allegations were published in the media that he misused budgetary funds, and gained land through deception. When his term as rector of Oradea State University expired he made his son his successor. His other son heads the County Hospital. He was investigated by the Public Ministry for electoral fraud in 1996, having been caught in the act of placing six ballot papers into the box. However he was never charged due to his local influence. His declared wealth consists of 4 ha of fields, a house worth 850 million lei and a Mercedes, with the rest of his goods being in the names of his sons, who also own businesses.

Bistrița County

13. Viorel Pupeză, SDP, alumni of “Ștefan Gheorghiu” Academy [the party apparatchiks training school], Communist Party activist in the National Council for the Organization of Pioneers (Communist version of Scouts) lead by Ceaușescu’s daughter in law. He passed from SLP (Socialist Labor Party) to SDP. He was general secretary of Bistrița prefecture, becoming prefect in 2002. During his time in office, the local council of Bistrița gave his daughter, Mirela Lorincz, a concession on a field of 300 sqm, intended to be used to build houses for young people.

Botoșani County

14. Răzvan Theodorescu, SDP, was president of Romanian public television (TVR) in 1990 (including during the miners’ riots of 13-15 June, when TVR sided with the miners who destroyed Romania’s capital Bucharest) and was serving as minister of Culture by the time of elections. He received criticism from the media and by the Association of Editors of Romania for discretionary distribution of subsidies from the Ministry of Culture for books, magazines and movies, which favored Communist times establishment people. Theodorescu initially supported the evacuation of the National Library in order to make it the office of the government, which would have meant sending of a large part of the archive of books to an inadequate deposit on the outskirts of Bucharest, a plan which was abandoned only after a public scandal broke. Even though the law did not allow him, he signed a decision that 15,000 sqm of Carol Park would lose its protected status as a historic site to allow a government supported construction project. He was also accused of ignoring decisions by the Commission of Historical Monuments at central and local levels to allow constructions which did not meet standards, such as a building near to Sinaia Monastery. In 2000 he was the beneficiary of the restitution of a 50 ha of agricultural ground, 10 ha of land, and also a mansion at Rugoaoasa, that he took charge of promptly.

15. Hifu Constantin, SDP, was an activist of the Romanian Communist Party and one of the leaders of “Electrocontact” enterprise. During the revolution of 1989 he signed an article in the local press in which he condemned the revolution, which had just broken in Timișoara.
Brăila County

16. **Mihai Tudose**, SDP. His wife is a shareholder at Carpatia SA, that had arrear payments to the state budget and was forced into liquidation. His business, AKMA Consulting, offers consultancy for writing project proposals for European funds by copying the name of a famous British company with which in reality it has no connection. The rate of success of the AKMA clients to locally distributed European funds is indeed very high, making local media to suspect that local public officers, which all belonged to SDP at elections time, have some hand in it. Mihai Tudose owns two brand new Peugeot and Audi cars.

17. **Alin Teodorescu**, the chief of the Prime Minister’s office, was in a position of conflict of interest due to his being the prime shareholder of the Institute of Marketing and Polling – IMAS. The institute received important orders from state agencies prior to elections. In summer 2004, IMAS owed the state budget over one million dollars, a debt which was rescheduled several times.

18. **Aurel Simionescu**, SDP, before 1989 was the first secretary of UTC (Union of Communist Youth) for the county. In 2004 he was the president of the Council of Brăila County.

19. **Ion Rotaru**, SDP, is associated with other SDP parliamentarians in the Carpatia SA, a company which was forcibly closed because of debts.

Brașov County

20. **Constantin Niță**, SDP, at the beginning of his mandate had assets of 4 billion lei, including a villa in Brașov, a house in his parents’ village, and 3,000 sqm land of at Ghimbav. At the end of his mandate his assets had increased and also included an inherited house, an apartment, and lands of over 10,000 sqm. He owns 5% of SC Nimpex SRL, a society that had debts at the state budget from which it got a rescheduling of payments, plus 95% of the Brick Factory Paneti SRL, which has debts to the state of almost one billion lei. He is a founder member of Pro Brașov Association, formed from SDP members, which has 80% control of the industrial park Roman SA. In December 2003, Pro Brașov Association formed the society Pro Roman, and all the profits passed automatically to this society.

21. **Ioan Cristoloveanu** switched from DP to SDP. While he was a senator, he was the president of the Board of Roman SA Brașov.

Buzău County

22. **Octavian Știureanu** migrated from DP to SDP in 2000 and was at elections time a senior advisor to the Romanian President Ion Iliescu. He has a flat in Bucharest and a country house. Nevertheless, Octavian Știureanu is a successful applicant for housing in a National Housing Agency program, under which land comes free. He is involved in a litigation with the Union of Professional Journalists of Romania, accused of breach of trust.

[Mr Știureanu claimed he resorted to the state housing program because his own apartment is in a building needing consolidation to be earthquake proof. He offered to change apartment with Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, who replied she also lived in a building in need of consolidation, but consolidated it without resorting to state...
grants meant for young people who build their first home. Mr Știreanu sued Alina Mungiu-Pippidi for libel. The trial is pending.]

23. **Ion Vasile**, SDP, was prefect in 2004, owned considerable cash, a villa at the seaside, another in the mountains, a manor and four houses in Săsenii Noi, plus a house in Buzău town and around 100 hectares of land, out of which only 24 are in his name, the remainder being owned by relatives. According to his statement of interests, he is a shareholder or associate in several companies, although these are not named. [A prefect gains under 500 euros per month.]

24. **Aurel Gubandru**, SDP, between 1997 and 2003 was director of the Buzău branch of Tîriac Bank and also has been a member of the Chamber of Deputies since 2000. According to his statement of interests, Aurel Gubandru is currently only a paid advisor at Tîriac Bank. His wealth consists of a dwelling house, an urban plot of 449 sqm, two cars (Espero and Ford) and a bank deposit of just 8,800 euros.

25. **Corneliu Pascu**, HP, before 1989, he was technical director of Antrepriza Română. He features in the list of wealthiest Romanians, with an estimated wealth of 10-20 million dollars, according to Capital magazine. He is owner of the Iridex Group Holding and another four firms. According to the Ministry of Finance website, EnergoPro IRIDEX recorded important debts to the state at the end of June 2004, and the compulsory recovery procedure has been initiated. The company had by elections a large part of this debt. He is a shareholder in ABC Insurance and Re-insurance, as well as Comenco SA, a firm in which Octav Cozmăncă and many other SDP leaders are involved, and which receives many commissions from public agencies.

**Călărași County**

26. **Doru Ioan Tărâcilă**, SDP, former Interior minister until 1996 and MP in every Parliament since 1990. Shareholder in many firms, Doru Ioan Tărâcilă is one of the wealthiest SDP parliamentarians, featuring in Capital magazine’s top 300 richest Romanians, with an estimated wealth of 12-14 million dollars. Nevertheless, one of the firms in which he holds shares, Agrozootehnica Pietroiu, had large debts to the state and is now in the process of compulsory recovery. His son runs a law firm which gets an important share of local privatization deals. The firm 2T SRL, in which his son holds 50% of the shares, has contracts with the majority of public institutions in Călărași for IT services. Doru Ioan Tărâcilă declares that he owns a flat in Bucharest and a villa in Călărași County, with current bank accounts holding small sums only. He was investigated in the Jimbilia case, which concerned breaches of the UN oil embargo imposed on Yugoslavia, opened by the General Prosecutor’s Office in 2000. The investigation did not go far, because he enjoyed parliamentary immunity.

27. **Tudor Constantin**, SDP, was prefect in 2003, 2004. The press revealed that he had been a Securitate officer, reaching a higher rank than normal recruits in the military training for the Securitate troops. Before 1989, he held leading positions in the State Archives, also under the Ministry of the Internal Affairs in Călărași. According to his statement of wealth, in 2003 alone he accumulated 3 hectares of land, a Toyota car and a villa.
Caraș-Severin County

28. **Ioan Talpeș**, SDP. Former presidential adviser, currently minister of State for coordination of national defense, European integration and justice. He declared that he owned several hectares of agricultural and urban land in Topolești and Slănic Prahova, acquired in 1978, 1995, and 1999, one flat in Bucharest (1991), a house (1978), 2 country houses (1995, 2003), a motorboat (2000), a Volkswagen Passat (2003). The biggest scandal in which Talpeș was involved was the Matser case. Wim Matser, a high NATO functionary, was arrested and condemned for forgery and attempts to launder money originating from Columbia. Talpeș, at that time presidential adviser, put Matser in touch with the Romanian businessman Ovidiu Tender, with a view to the development of a business in Romania, a fact which came to light at the time of the enquiry by the Dutch authorities. In his capacity as head of the Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS) he lent for free the room to a foundation owned by the American Kurt Treptow, specialized in historical propaganda for Romania. Mr Treptow was later condemned on a hint from FBI for acts of paedo-philia, which took place in the headquarters offered by FIS.

Constanța County

29. **Alexandru Mazâre**, SDP, the brother of the mayor, Radu Mazâre, he declares 350,000 euros, a flat, and a Daewoo Cielo car; he is a shareholder in Capri Company SRL, Năvodari (1997), APV Media Turism SA (2003), Nisipuri SA (1998), Thomas Cook Services, and Distribution SA, and Prismaserve. Thomas Cook Services and Distribution SA is involved directly in Aqua Land, a project organized by the Constanța town hall, through a network of firms, including Sigma Trading and Five Holding. The press has repeatedly commented on the relationship between the Mazâre family’s businesses and the positions of influence which they hold in Constanța County.

30. **Eduard Martin**, SDP, is the son of the then prefect of Constanța, Gheorghe Martin. After the latter took office, Gheorghe Martin took over Polaris Holding, formed of several companies involved with public cleaning in a number of towns. Some of the firms have large debts to the state budget, which have been rescheduled, with only three being subjected to compulsory recovery procedures.

Covasna County

31. **Vlad Cășunean**, SDP. His name has been cited in scandals involving conflicts of interest and privatization. He was the lawyer of Erdely Ede, who is accused of tax evasion and is currently under criminal investigation. In the appeal sent to the SDP’s Council for Integrity, he explains this as a party obligation, since Mr Ede was a SDP sponsor. His wealth includes a plot of agricultural land of 17.5 ha, forestry land, 2 houses with a surface area of 200 sqm, 3 stables, 2 Audi cars.

Dâmbovița County

32. **Victor Sanda**, SDP, as prefect of Dâmbovița County, was accused of corruption in the privatization of the Society of Communal Administration, Housing and Transport, Dâmbovița, subject of official notification to the Prime Minister Adrian Năstase. In spite of this, no enquiry was launched against Victor Sanda. Along with
other local SDP leaders, he is a shareholder and director of the firm Complis SA. On 30 April 2004, this firm had huge arrears to the state budget. Also, Complis SA won many tenders involving public funds in the county. His assets are made up of a 1872 sqm urban plot of land, a dwelling house of 400 sqm, and bank deposits of roughly 300,000 euro.

33. **Sergiu Andon**, HP, lawyer, was a controversial president of the Society of Journalists of Romania, since he was involved in a scandal concerning the sell-off during his period in office of the Golden Apple restaurant, the main source of income for the Society.

34. **Ion Dumitru**, SDP, was then the director general of Romsilva, the national forestry authority. In this capacity, he approved the transfer of 10 hectares of Snagov Forest into the private property of Remus Trucă, then head of Cabinet for Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, and he distributed public funds to institutions in which he, or his party colleagues are involved.

35. **Traian Novolan**, SDP. As manager of the Arctic Găeşti company, he was investigated for taking bribes, fraud and making false statements, and was taken into preventative custody in January 1998, following a complaint lodged at the International Court of Arbitration in Paris by the Ageco company in Luxembourg, which intended to participate in the privatization of Arctic. According to the investigation warrant, the bribe consisted of a Beretta hunting rifle worth $ 5,600, a Mercedes and $ 5,000 cash. The fraud involved double claiming on the bills for the Luxembourg journey, and the false statements involved failure to declare the companies which he and his relatives owned, where they were also appointed directors. Traian Novolan was not sentenced for any of these alleged offences, returning to head Arctic until 2000, when he was elected as a SDPR senator. Novolan declares that he owns a flat, a 269 sqm country house, and a 150 sqm dwelling house.

36. **Dinu Marin** entered Parliament in 2000 on the HP lists, after which he migrated to SDP, for which he is now a candidate. He is a shareholder in the Pre-university publishing house, which regularly wins Ministry of Education tenders for public funded textbooks. He owns assets worth over $ 200,000 in dormant and active accounts.

Dolj County

37. **Ion Călin**, SDP. The press reported that in his capacity as vice mayor, he took steps to sign a contract for the lease of city car parks between Craiova Town Hall and an Arab businessman, and that this contract was disadvantageous to the Town Hall.

38. **Ion Voiculescu**, SDP, before 1989 he was secretary of the Municipal Council of PCR (Romanian Communist Party) and mayor of Craiova. During his mandate as president of Dolj County Council, he was accused by the press of building a villa in Peştişani-Gorj, using workers of the construction firm commissioned by the institution which he led.

39. **Mircea Geoană**, SDP, then minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr Geoană came to the attention of the media because his wealth statement changed since June 2003, when he declared 120,000 euros in his bank accounts, to a year later when they rose to 200,000 euros. He claims to have saved this money from his salary as Ambassador to the US between 1996 and 2004, when he earned around $ 160,000 in four years,
and from his allowances as Foreign minister, which are non-taxable and which add up to around $ 30,000. During his tenure as ambassador in Washington, one of his subordinates was recalled by the minister in Bucharest, on the grounds of suspicion that he was an intermediary for business activities being carried out by embassy staff. Mircea Geoană obstructed this recall, so Minister Andrei Plesu summoned him in front of the Ethics and Discipline Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he received an administrative disciplinary sanction. Although the sums are not big by Western standards, the Romanian media compute the whole income during transition of Mr Geoană and concluded he saved more than he earned by a small margin.

Galați County

40. **Dan Nica**, SDP. The press has reported that in his capacity as minister he made decisions which benefited certain private companies, to the disadvantage of the public interest and also of free competition. A notable example was the normative act (Order of the Ministry 164/2003) through which mobile telephone charges were regulated, and which were set so that one operator could benefit from charges of around 10 million euros per year less than its competitors.

41. **Aurel Nichita**, SDP, was at the same time director of public health department in Galați, president of the County Health Insurance House (CHIH), county assembly member and director of the pediatric hospital. In 2000, while he was president of CHIH, St Andrew’s emergency hospital made illegal purchases discovered in 2003 by the minister of Control, Ionel Blănculescu.

Giurgiu County

42. **Ion Rădoi**, SDP, was leader of the “Unity” trade union and of the National Convention of Transporters, both from national trade union BNS, and preserved these offices during his mandate as a SDP senator. According to data in the Register of Commerce, the union which he led was a shareholder in the Sindromet company, which, as a result of a contract signed in 1994 with the Metrorex Autonomous administration (Bucharest metro), was the beneficiary of 75% of the rent paid by owners of commercial areas in metro stations. When the control body of the Ministry of Public Works carried out an audit in 2003, it was discovered that Metrorex had signed a disadvantageous association contract with Sindromet for the acquisition of technology. It was found that Sindomet’s price was higher than the market rate, although the money for production came from a credit of the Swiss government. He is also a shareholder in SWIS House Impex SRL.

43. **Nicolae Bădălău**, SDP, was a deputy prefect of Giurgiu county, when the local press revealed that firms in which he was involved benefited from projects using public money. The press revealed that nearly 1 billion lei was paid for building an ordinary toilet for a school in Gaiseni, and the mayor of the commune accepted the story as true.

44. **Dan Iosif**, SDP, was an adviser to President Ion Iliescu, and was involved in several scandals. During the time when Dan Iosif was a presidential adviser, his daughter bought a kaolin mine in Dobrogea for an undervalued price, according to a report
by the director of county privatization authority. He paid $ 120,000 from a bank loan to renovate the house he rents, yet in his statement of assets he declares neither property nor cash.

Gorj County

45. **Gheorghe Popescu**, SDP, was a member of the Chamber of Deputies Commission on Health and the Family. Between 1997 and 1999 he purchased a flat, two dwelling houses, a country house and a Volkswagen Passat car. Gheorghe Popescu took over a hotel in Târgu Jiu, which was transformed into a SDP guesthouse, together with Dumitru Brăilă, known to be close to the Gorj underworld and to the businessman Dan Bărcină.

46. **Ion Florescu**, SDP. According to his statement of assets, he only owns an 84 sqm flat acquired in 1990. On the other hand, his son, Mihai Florescu, has been a shareholder since 2000 in CS Sartex SA, with 2,000 shares. The parliamentarian holds shares in two well off companies. Recently, he admitted that he requested that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce grant him a license to develop a small quarry, which was functioning illegally and belonged to former local councilor Dumitru Baros.

Hunedoara County

47. **Adrian Păunescu**, SDP, was the main propagandist for the Communist Party and the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu through *Flame* magazine and “Flame” cultural circle, which he founded. In 1985, at a festival concert of the “Flame” cultural circle at Pitești stadium, an accident took place in which several young people died. This could have been avoided if Păunescu had cancelled the concert, as the authorities had requested in view of bad weather forecast. After 1989, he founded the Socialist Labor Party along with Ilie Verdeț, a former Prime Minister under Ceaușescu, and stood for the Presidency for this party in 1996. He moved to SDPR in 1998. He has considerable wealth. Under his name, he holds a house in Bârca and a villa in Bucharest, cars and land. In the name of his daughter, Ana Maria (14), there is another house, an urban plot of land, an agricultural plot in Tâncăbești, and 2 flats, one in Bucharest and the other in Craiova.

Ialomița County

48. **Șerban Nicolae**, SDP, was the minister for Relations with Parliament. He had previously been a presidential adviser. In his capacity as adviser on judicial affairs, in 2001 he drew up several reports in which he recommended that President Ion Iliescu should sign Decree 1101, published in *Official Gazette* on 28 December 2001, under which several people obtained pardons. Among these was the former deputy head of Ialomița financial police, Tănase George, who had been condemned to four years in prison in 1999 for taking bribes. When the report was written, Tănase had already been set free illegally. After the details were published widely by the media, Iliescu revoked the pardon decree on 7 January 2002, recognizing that his adviser Șerban Nicolae was to blame. Șerban Nicolae is an assistant professor in the law faculty at Spiru Haret University. He owns 7% of the shares in SC Laborex
SA, of which he is also auditor. The company had arrears to state budget in summer 2004.

49. **Elena Sporea**, SDP, was leader of the Agrostar union, which signed a protocol with SDP before the 2000 elections, and is a receiver of a pension from the union. She set up the Start XXI foundation, whose ruling council comprises most of the SDP Ialomița leaders, and which some dubious businesspeople sponsor. One example is Ion Nicolae, main actor of the “Romanian Tobacco” scandal, and who benefited from explicit support from Elena Sporea. Elena Sporea is also vice president of the Ialomița 2000 foundation, involving many SDP leaders from the county, and which has been publicly accused of benefiting from the sponsorship of some firms that won bids for public services.

50. **Alexandru Știucă**, SDP, was vice president of the County Culture Committee of PCR (Romanian Communist Party). Vice prefect 2000-2004. Under his mandate, the firm Londa SRL, whose owner is his nephew Știucă Ionuț, benefited from contracts for manufacture of furniture and doors for schools, and homes, constructed under the state housing program ANL.

51. **Ion Hanaru**, SDP. In the communist period, he was county representative in the Grand National Assembly. He was vice president of Ialomița County Council between 2000 and 2004, during which time funds of 300,000 euros from the Social and Economic Cohesion Program were spent, in partnership with Horticons SA, a firm which did not pay its employees, and which had its bank accounts blocked due to debts. According to press allegations, he was accused of selling fertilizer for export below the market rate, when he was director of state company SC Amonil SA Slobozia. His declared assets are of about $ 70,000.

52. **Gheorghe Cană**, SDP, was vice president of Ialomița County Council, and member of the ruling council of the “Ialomița 2000” foundation, generally made up of SDP members. During the time when Gheorghe Cană held this position, the Șișecheon mountain motel, part of the County Council patrimony, was sold to the “Ialomița 2000” foundation, a transaction which led to a criminal investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office. The sale document was signed by Gheorghe Cană. The investigation is still pending.

53. **Aurel Chelbea**, SDP, officially lives only from a teacher’s salary, yet after 2000 built a villa at Poiana Ță捆ului. He illegally purchased his flat in Slobozia, which had been allocated to him as a service flat. He is a member of the “Ialomița 2000” foundation, which benefits from sponsorship from firms owned by other SDP leaders.

54. **Cornel Vasile**, SDP, for two years he was in a situation of incompatibility (conflict of interests) holding at the same time the positions of local councilor and adviser to the prefect. He is a member of the Board of the Health Insurance House as a representative of an industrialists group and held the position of auditor in the SC Urban SA company, without the qualifications required by law. He withdrew from that position only before elections.

Iași County

55. **Ion Solcanu**, SDP vice president, president of the County Organization of SDP, leader of the SDP parliamentary group in the Romanian Senate. According to his statement of assets, Ion Solcanu has a 709.29 sqm dwelling house under construction,
with an estimated value, which cannot be justified with his declared income. According to press reports, in only three months, Senator Solcanu made over 2.5 billion lei (around $82,500) from land speculation. At the beginning of 2003, Senator Solcanu acquired 30,000 sqm on the Bârna-Bucium plateau for 600 million lei. After only three months, he resold the land to Tereza Prisecaru, the wife of businessman Ioan Prisecaru, owner of the Connex group and close to SDP, with a net profit of 2.5 billion lei. His son, Bogdan Solcanu, was a shareholder in the Red Point company, which carried out contracts with public funds for the development of IT facilities for CFR (Romanian railways) in the Iaşi region.

Ilfov County

56. Gabriel Oprea is president of SDP regional organization in Ilfov County, after being in turn Secretary of State, president of the National Administration of State Reserves (2001), prefect (2002), minister-delegate in the Ministry of Administration, and the Interior (2003-2004). He is a professional army officer. His main business interests are in property, which he began to develop in 1992 with construction of blocks of flats, whilst still a judicial officer in the military (therefore with a monthly pay or below 200 euros). He admits that between 1991-6, together with Anghel Iordănescu, then the trainer of the national soccer team, he acquired several properties (a block of flats), which he later sold or leased, without declaring any additional source of income to finance this activity. He owns 4 flats (one at the seaside, one in the mountains, and the others in Bucharest, with a taxable value of 1.5 billion lei), a dwelling house, and he inherited his parents’ house in Fundulea commune. He has 300,000 euros in bank accounts, his assets being “well over $100,000” according to his own statement of assets signed when he was minister-delegate. He violated the law on transparency by not revealing an exact quantum of his income, using the same tactic for his property transactions, listed in his statement of assets, but without stating the value. He also owns a Mercedes car, acquired in 2000. Finally, he owns several urban plots of land (1,350 sqm +128 sqm, 100 sqm +750 sqm, 1,200 sqm +150 sqm) where various properties are placed or are under construction. According to the Register of Commerce, he does not own any companies. Instead, he owns two commercial production spaces, whose taxable value is around 30,000 euros.

Mehedinţi County

57. Ion Honescu, SDP, former head of the Prime Minister’s control authority, was involved in the Petromin scandal. An investigation by the Court of Accounts revealed that Petromin suffered losses of tens of millions of dollars per day, while Honescu was member of the board and received a handsome monthly fee in this capacity. He was in a position of conflict of interest in 1995-6 when he was at the same time head of the control authority of the Prime Minister (Nicolae Văcăroiu) and a major shareholder in the Timişoara Beer Factory, a situation which brought him large financial gains.
Mureș County

58. **Pavel Todoran**, SDP, former leader of the CNSRL-Frăţia trade union. His name is linked to a series of damaging transactions involving assets of the union, which were widely covered by the press. A property belonging to the union was sold to the Fracom SA firm, whose Board included Todoran himself, at a price allegedly below its real value. Pavel Todoran’s assets include 20 ha of agricultural land, two tractors, an urban plot of 500 sqm, and two flats.

Neamț County

59. **Ioan Chelaru**, SDP, was the owner of Gelsor company, the firm which administered the National Investment Fund, which collapsed in 2000, leaving hundreds of thousands of investors bankrupt. He owns several plots of land, two flats, acquired in 1992 and 2003, a splendid 250 sqm villa. Since 1994, he has been co-owner of a 100 sqm country house, with a taxable value of 500,000,000 lei. He is also owner of two office spaces, acquired in 1999 and 2000, totaling 500 sqm. He is a shareholder in SC Turoag SA, Contexpert SA and the owner of the “North East” local radio station. The president of SDP Roman declares that he has 100,000 euros in his bank accounts.

Olt County

60. **Rodica Stănoiu**, SDP, was a senior presidential adviser, a former minister of Justice, and a SDP senator since 1996. The Petrom company, a state owned firm, acquired two buildings and a plot of land belonging to Rodica Stănoiu, both situated in Filiaș, Dolj county, for approximately $100,000. The press claimed, after consulting Filiaș estate agents, that the price was much inflated compared to the value of land in the area and the state of the buildings, so that the price obtained by the minister was higher than what any other inhabitant of the town would have got. Following the scandal, Rodica Stănoiu wanted to cancel the transaction, but Petrom refused. She owns 30 hectares of agricultural land, 8 hectares of forestry land, one hectare of urban land, a house, a flat, two cars, and a bank account with nearly $200,000.

61. **Reniță Diaconescu**, HP, political opportunist, has switched four parties; ApR, DP, NLP and HP.

Prahova County

62. **Mihai Sirețeanu**, SDP, held at the same time the function of senator and member of the Board of MFA Mizil and Agrozootehnica Drăgănești, as well as that of accountant for SC Emco CAS SA. He resigned from these positions only after the law on incompatibility of offices was passed. He remained a shareholder in the Astra Roman refinery and MFA Mizil, and is also an associate at SC Emco SA. He also holds 50% of the shares in Euro Business SRL. His assets consist of 8,782 sqm of urban land, acquired between 2002 and 2004, a dwelling house and a house under construction, as well as deposits of 46,500 euros.
63. **Antonie Iorgovan**, SDP. Although the law prohibits lawyers who are members of Parliament to plead in corruption cases, many people accused of corruption are on the list of clients of Antonie Iorgovan’s firm, for example George Domocos, former director in the Ministry of Agriculture, accused by the National Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office of taking bribes, and Adrian Tărău, son of the former SDP prefect of Bihor, who fled the country and is being pursued by Interpol for petrol smuggling. He started as an independent senator, then became president of the Ecologist Movement, to end up senator for SDP. His assets consist of a 199 sqm flat, a 320 sqm country house, and bank deposits of over $150,000.

**Satu Mare County**

64. **Ioan Mircea Pușca**, SDP, Defense minister, owner of a 3.8 ha urban plot, a 270 sqm house, a flat and a country house, shareholder in Turbomecanica. He is well known for his public threats against the press, as well as for a legislative initiative with the purpose of compelling the media to publish replies from persons who consider themselves negatively affected by coverage. When a Defense minister he intervened in a judicial action, in violation of the Constitution, by asking in the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, Paul Florea, that a case should be judged with priority. Recently, the minister was accused by the journalist Cornel Ivanciu of using the ministry as a political police force, through illegally recording the conversations of known opponents of SDP.

65. **Sever Șter**, SDP, director of Satu Mare forestry fold. His assets consist of: deposits in excess of 40,000 euros, a 75 sqm house, with 5 acres of garden in his name and his wife’s, an ophthalmology clinic, a flat in Cluj in the name of his children who are students, a house in Wine Valley with 7 ha of land out of which 1.6 ha is urban. His family owns 3 cars. The press has reported that in 2000 Satu Mare police prepared a criminal file for forgery, use of forged materials, and theft of public goods to obtain thousands of cubic meters of wood. The investigation has stalled and Șter sued the source of the information, winning his case in 2001.

**Sibiu County**

66. **Gheorghe Suditu** is involved along with other local SDP colleagues in Club 75, which benefits from fixed subsidies from enterprises under the control of the County and decentralized state authorities. He is an associate of the Hoser firm, which has debts to the budget, which have been rescheduled. His wife is director at a local branch of the insurance company Arab German Insurance, of which Viorel Hrebenciuc was a member of the administrative board. Transport companies controlled by the local administration are insured by this firm.

67. **Radu Podgoreanu**, SDP, an associate of Hoser, a firm which has debts to the state budget which were rescheduled. He owns a flat, a 325 sqm house, and two cars.

**Suceava County**

68. **Petru Tărniceru**, SDP, political opportunist. Businessman from Vatra Dornei. In 1996-2000 he won all the public bids to modernize railway stations on the Suceava-Vatra Dornei route. In 2000, he was a member of ApR, he resigned before the elections
and stood as an independent candidate for the Chamber of Deputies. In 2002, he became a member of HP, and at the end of 2003 joined SDP.

69. Grozavu Mihai, SDP, former vice president of the County Council, allowed projects financed with European funds to go ahead even though two of his subordinates had conflicts of interest. The firms belonging to their wives had won the projects, and the two subordinates were involved in the evaluation. Mihai Grozavu is a shareholder in the firm Cominco SA, in which Octav Cozmânca and Şerban Mihăilescu were involved, and this firm has won the majority of tenders for public works in Suceava County.

70. Tudor Mohora, SDP, was in turn in the Communist Party, Socialist Workers’ Party, Socialist Party and now SDP. This deputy was one of those who won a contract with the National Housing Agency (ANL), which allows the construction of houses in favorable conditions (the land comes free) in the future Henri Coandă district, even though he owns a flat, a dwelling house, and a country house.

71. Octav Cozmânca, SDP, former human resources director in the UTC (Union of Communist Youth), was executive president of SDP after 2003. Alongside Şerban Mihăilescu and other local associates he was a shareholder in Cominco Frasin, a firm that won many public contracts. In his statement of assets, he only listed privatization vouchers from Excelent SA. He used his influence to build a church in his native village of Talpa with public funds. Here he owns an impressive villa, which is difficult to explain on his modest salary as a MP. He dismissed several civil servants after the 2000 elections on political grounds, even though they were protected by the Law on Civil Servants. Many of these sued the state and won.

Teleorman County

72. Şerban Mihăilescu, SDP, held the office of Government Secretary General, and was involved in numerous corruption scandals. Two of his advisers were investigated for taking bribes, of 2 and 4 million euros respectively, for acting as intermediaries in business transactions. In 1994, as secretary of state in the Ministry of Transport, he arranged payments to a Greek firm, which was supposed to recover the wreck of the Rostock, a ship which had run aground in the Sulina channel (one of the arms of the Danube Delta), but the company did not carry out the work. This led to an investigation, which was closed without him being charged. Şerban Mihăilescu was a shareholder in many firms, even though he was a minister, a clear situation of conflict of interests. He owned shares in “Fineco,” a firm which was involved in the Bank of Investment and Development (BID), related to Sorin Ovidiu Vântu, and during the criminal investigation into this affair, it was discovered that BID contributed to the initial capital of Fineco. According to press reports, he administered “Cominco” SA (in which Octav Cozmânca, former minister of public administration, is a shareholder), a state firm privatized by the privatization authority. Cominco benefited from financing from the World Bank and European Union. Şerban Mihăilescu has an enviable number of homes. According to press reports, he owns in his relatives’ names 8 houses and flats, all in central Bucharest, yet was still granted use of a service flat in the trendy Primăverii district. In his statement of assets in 2000, Şerban Mihăilescu stated that he owned a “modest house” in Cornu, but in the meantime, according to his latest statement of assets, the “modest house” has turned into a 400 sqm country house.
73. **Teodor Nițulescu**, SDP, is prefect of Teleorman county, and a political opportunist, who migrated from SDPR to DP and then back to SDP. Teodor Nițulescu is an administrator of two companies, and his wife, Mariana Nițulescu, is a shareholder in 11 firms. The main company owned by the Nițulescu family is SC Saîcăr Teleorman SA Nanov, in which the prefect owns 43% of the shares. This firm obtained a contract from ANL (National Housing Fund) for the construction of two blocks of flats, a contract with Alexandria town hall for street repairs, and a construction of the new premises of the County Employment Office.

74. **Ionel Marinei**, SDP. In 2000 his assets consisted of 13.65 ha of agricultural land, but it grew significantly in the following years. He now owns 450 sqm of urban land, a country house, both acquired in 2001, and a dwelling house. In his second parliamentary term, he built a house on land in the central park of the town of Rosiori de Vede, through the intermediary of the Foundation for Social Democratic Politics, of which he is first vice president.

75. **Ovidiu Mușetescu**, SDP, appointed president of the Privatization Authority immediately after the 2000 elections, he was accused by the media for quite a few dubious and detrimental privatizations that he presided over. The privatization of Romanian tobacco was widely criticized, including by the IMF. RAFO reached a state of undeclared bankruptcy after Mușetescu signed off the sale to Corneliu Iacobov, a leading member of SDP. The workers from the Republica factory reached the stage of selling the company’s assets themselves after privatization went wrong, through a Russian consortium. Minister Mușetescu looked the other way when the purchaser of 4×4 cars ARO Câmpulung recovered all the money paid in the acquisition by selling a part immediately, although the privatization contract prohibited this explicitly. Hidromecanica was sold by the same minister to a dubious businessman, currently under arrest for his many bounced checks. He was nominated to the privatization commission of BCR (Commercial Bank of Romania) with a monthly salary of $ 2,000.

Tulcea County

76. **Horia Teodorescu**, SDP, is a millionaire. According to information from the Register of Commerce, he is a majority shareholder in no less than six companies. Horia Teodorescu controls SC Condor SRL Babadag contracting firm which thrives on contracts with the local administration led by members of the same party.

77. **Verbina Dan**, SDP, is a shareholder along with his wife in Wella SRL from Crișan, which holds a concession for fishing in the Danube Delta. The concession contract between Tulcea County Council and SC Wella SRL, valid for a ten year period beginning 19.04.1999, covers a surface area of 2,592 hectares, at a cost of only $ 6.8 per hectare. The deputy owns two urban plots, two flats and two houses, as well as a motorboat. He has deposits in lei and hard currency, as well as shares worth over $ 10,000.

78. **Hrițcu Florin**, SDP, was involved, during the time he was president of the local council, in scandals involving concessions on agricultural land in the Delta. Since becoming a senator, he acquired a dwelling house and an Audi A4 car. He is also a shareholder in the CONCIPS firm from Tulcea. At the end of June 2004, Concips had important debts to the social security budget and the state, and consequently ANAF has begun the compulsory recovery procedure.
Timiș County

79. Ilie Sârbu, SDP. As director of the Theological Seminary in Caransebeș prior to the 1989 Revolution, he was accused of collaboration with the Securitate, and the bishop of Banat, Nicolae Corneanu, pressed strongly for his resignation for this reason. He has estimated assets of over $150,000, but they are difficult to trace since they are registered as property of family members. For instance, in 2003 he stated that he did not own a home (his house being in the name of his daughter, Daciana Sârbu), although he had declared that he owned a 202 sqm property with a taxable value of 6,132 million lei.

80. Ovidiu Brânzan, SDP, was a shareholder in GEF facilities Timișoara, a company involved in the distribution and production of cosmetics and food. In 2003, tax inspectors established that the firm had arrears to the state budget. Another firm in which Ovidiu Brânzan was a shareholder, Saiftim, won a series of tenders in 2003 for construction of sports halls and other works contracts involving public funds. The SAIFTIM Timișoara company, in which Ovidiu Brânzan is a shareholder, won a public contract without tender. He owns two dwelling houses, one acquired in 2002 and a second bought with a mortgage during the time he was a minister. Both are over 200 sqm.

81. Titu Bojin, SDP, a mayor in the past, bought the state Lugomet factory, which benefited from repeated rescheduling of debts to the state budget, finally erased out as a result of a vote in the Lugoj local council. Titu Bojin was accused by the media that he lent without lease and concessions equipment belonging to the Romanian water authority of the county, whose director he was. During his mandate as mayor, but also when he was director of the water authority, Titu Bojin managed to buy about 140 hectares of agricultural land and he recently acquired one and a half hectares of urban land. He owns a flat and a country house.

Vaslui County

82. Florea Voinea, HP, Vaslui. Accused by the management of the Zimercam Trading SA company, in which Florea Voinea owns 9% of the shares, that in the general meeting of shareholders, he recommended the completion of a deal with two controversial businessmen from Craiova, for which he assumed responsibility, and as a result of this deal, the company lost a considerable sum of money. Following the completion of the transaction, Florea Voinea’s son received a Mercedes car from a company controlled by the two Craiova businessmen. He is also accused of involvement in unscrupulous money lending, since she lent $20,000 to his company and asked for $37,000 back. Florea Voinea is also an associate of the firm MKW construction 2000 SRL, which he did not mention in his statement of assets or statement of interests.

Vâlcea County

83. Aurel Vlădoiu, SDP, then prefect, was an activist in the Communist Party before 1989, in turn secretary of the county section of the UTC (Union of Communist Youth) and first secretary of the Party. Later he was mayor of Olănești, a health resort.
84.  *Mihai Eugeniu Popescu*, SDP, Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian army up to the start of the electoral campaign. Although it is illegal for army officers to be involved in politics, his candidature was announced before his retirement from active service was made public.

Vrancea County

85.  *Miron Tudor Mitrea*, SDP, is a former trade union leader, minister of Transport in 2004. Based on information obtained under the Law on Freedom of Information, the press has revealed that his ministry transferred a disproportionate amount of public money to SDP dominated counties such as Vrancea, Bacău and Constanța, breaking the law on distribution of infrastructure funds for the counties. The press has also revealed that several autonomous state companies under the control of his ministry, which are monopolies, and consequently have no reason to advertise, have nevertheless bought large amounts of advertising space by the media, spending public money in return for favorable editorial coverage. Nevertheless, in his statement of assets, he claims he is not involved in any business, his assets consisting of a flat and a dwelling house, a 2001 Audi A4 car, and bank accounts with a value of just over 50,000 euros.

86.  *Georgie Băeșu*, SDP, has been prefect of Vrancea county since the end of 2001. In spring 2002 he called for the banning of the independent daily *Ziarul de Vrancea* in a complaint sent to the county office for consumer protection.

87.  *Raluca Dan*, SDP, is considered one of the most loyal collaborators of Marian Opreșan, president of SDP Vrancea and of the County Council, one of the most notorious “local barons.” The local press has revealed that the firm belonging to Dan Raluca’s father, Harions Data, has been involved in contracts worth several billion lei with various public institutions, including the County Council, one of whose leaders is Raluca Dan.

88.  *Anghel Tilvar*, SDP, political opportunist, has switched several parties. He was in the former National Salvation Front, then moved to ApR, then to DP, where he was one of the local organizers of the election campaign in 2000, and in 2001 he moved to SDP.

89.  *Petru Dinuță*, SDP. Since June 2004, he has been a member of the county assembly on the SDP lists. He is director and majority shareholder in the former state company BIATM, one of the first companies to be privatized in 1990, and which was renamed SC Comat SA. This company is one of the main suppliers of building materials for major construction projects on public money.

Bucharest

90.  *Ion Iliescu*, SDP, has been President of Romania for 10 years. Since 1994, President Iliescu has spoken out strongly in public against restitution by the courts of nationalized property to the former owners. The 1991 Constitution sets out clearly the principle of the separation of state powers, under which the judiciary is independent from the executive, and does not follow directions from the government or president. Former owners later won their cases in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The Romanian state paid the costs of this judicial error, which
followed President Iliescu’s political directive, from the budget, i.e. from taxpayers’ money. Currently, the total damages paid to former owners has reached 4 million euros and other cases are pending. The European Commission country report for 2004 also criticized the appointment of one of President Iliescu’s advisors as president of the Supreme Court of Justice, citing this as further evidence of the application of political criteria to appointments in the Romanian justice system. The man, a professor of political theory at the Law School, has never been a judge.

91. **Dan Ioan Popescu**, SDP. Although he does not own businesses in his name, his assets are considerable. He owns two houses, acquired in 1995-1997, and other three properties acquired between 2001 and 2003. In his statement of assets, he claims that their total value is below 100,000 euros. The urban land he has acquired has a total surface area of 32,000 sqm. In his capacity as a minister, he awarded without competitive bidding two contracts of 0.5 million euros for the modernization of a water treatment plant to the company VA TECH HYDRO Ltd.

92. **Dan Voiculescu**, HP, owns one of the largest fortunes amassed since the Revolution. Voiculescu worked in foreign trade before 1989, in conjunction with the “Crescent” firm from Cyprus, which dealt with Romanian export-import companies controlled by the Securitate. Later, through the intermediary of the Grivco company, Dan Voiculescu became a shareholder in Crescent. This fuelled speculation in the Romanian and international press as to the source of his wealth. The press criticized some of his business deals after 1990 for being prejudicial to state companies. Examples are the association contract between some of Voiculescu’s firms and the Băneasa Airport Authority, or the transaction under which he sold electricity to Metrorex (Bucharest metro company) at an alleged higher price than the market rate. His assets, estimated by Capital magazine’s Top 300 at $ 250-260 million, are currently in the names of his daughters Camelia and Corina. They include a media trust – the TV station Antena 1 –, two daily newspapers, and a radio station, operated by the Intact corporation.

[Mr Voiculescu wrote two threatening letters to the Coalition and bought advertising space in various newspapers to attack Alina Mungiu-Pippidi. In December 2004 his party switched coalitions from SDP to the Justice and Truth Alliance after Traian Băsescu, the leader of the Alliance, won presidential elections. In January, while a member of the government coalition, he stated that he would sue Financial Times and everybody who would ever relate him to Nicolae Ceaușescu’s name.]

93. **Doru Giugula**, SDP, was a member of Bucharest municipal assembly, and in 2000 leader of the SDP group in the Bucharest city council. Following publication of a report prepared by the Prime Minister’s control authority, he was forced to give up his position as a member of the Board of Apa Nova, a firm under the authority of the town hall, because of conflict of interests. His assets consist of a flat and two country houses, with an estimated total value of $ 320,000.

94. **Ion Neagu**, SDP, is a lawyer, former president of the Judicial Commission of the Chamber of Deputies. He has defended a number of people accused of corruption. Ion Neagu was awarded an important government subsidy from the government for the completion of a hall of residence for his private university “Nicolaе Titulescu,” of which he is rector. The subsidy was cancelled, following press criticism that the university was being favored because of its connections with the ruling party (Prime
Minister Adrian Năstase used to teach there, for instance). His statement of assets reveals that he owns 780 sqm of urban land, a flat, three houses bought between 1996 and 1999, a car, and a bank deposit of 145,000 pounds sterling.

95. **Mircea Ursache**, SDP, held at the same time (2002-4) the post of vice president of the Authority for the Valuation of Banking Assets (AVAB), the state authority in charge of recuperating debts to the state, and that of president of the Board of the World Trade Center, which had debts to AVAB of over $ 70 million itself. Mr Ursache only resigned from his position at the WTC in August 2004, when he was appointed president of the Authority for the Valuation of State Assets (AVAS). Mircea Ursache’s assets consist of a house, with an estimated value of $ 320,000, a plot of urban land and four cars, one in the name of his wife. He is a minority shareholder in Omniasig, the company which recently won the tender for insuring Romania’s national airliner TAROM.

2. **Greater Romania Party (GRP)**

**Arad County**

1. **Aurel Ardelean**, political opportunist, moved from the Ecologist Movement to the Democratic Convention (CDR) in 2000, when he stood as a candidate on their lists, and he is now in GRP. As rector of “Vasile Goldiş” University in Arad, he was accused by the media of a series of suspicious moves, such as changing the institution’s status from company to foundation. This status allowed the transfer into the property of the foundation of municipal buildings and lands, and the creation of a network of university unregistered branches offering further development opportunities.

2. **Gheorghe Petru Feieș**, mayor of Sebeș town, 1996-2000. At the end of his mandate, the town hall had huge debts, so that energy was cut.

**Argeș County**

3. **Mihai Ungheanu** was a main actor in the development of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s national communist propaganda before 1989, when he worked as editor for *Luceafărul* magazine. The magazine was Securitate’s tool in the literary world. He is the author of a book about *The Holocaust of Romanian Culture* which was accused of anti-Semitism. He was a secretary of state in the Ministry of Culture at the time when GRP was in coalition with SDPR (1995-6).

**Bihor County**

4. **Paul Magheru**, vice rector at the University of Oradea, was accused of nepotism and the creation of an academic clan. His wife was hired as a professor in the Faculty of Letters, a son and daughter in law as assistant professors in the Faculty of Medicine, his daughter as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Letters. The secretary of his parliamentary office was also hired without the normal qualifications at the same University, and in addition a relative was hired as a driver for his parliamentary
office. His assets consist of two flats, a dwelling house, a country house, and a 700 sqm plot of urban land.

Bistrița County

5. **Aurel Rus Ioan** is a priest who was expelled from the Church and a political opportunist. He was initially in PNUM (Party for the National Unity of Romanians), then he moved to GRP. He is one of the few priests who have not respected the Romanian Orthodox Church’s ban on priests becoming actively involved in politics, or standing on party lists.

Bacău County

6. **Radu Ciuceanu** is a former political prisoner. He is a political opportunist who switched four parties to end up in GRP. He was accused by media and former cellmates of being a *Securitate* collaborator during his time in prison. According to press reports, he held partial control of the International Bank of Religions, which collapsed because of preferential loans, and is currently under criminal investigation. He used his position as a member of Parliament to promote the bank.

Botoșani County

7. **Dumitru Codreanu**, although he declares he has no business participation, owns 17 hectares of agricultural land, 1.5 ha urban land, a flat, a house, and a tractor. During his mandate as a senator, he also acquired 10 hectares of land.

Brăila County

8. **Daniela Buruiană Aprodul** was involved in several scandals concerning non-payment of maintenance for her block of flats and personal use of her work car. According to her statement of assets, she has a bank deposit of 180,000 euros and shares worth 18,000 euros. She writes regularly in *România Mare* (Greater Romania), a national communist tabloid, and noted obscenities even on her official statement of assets.

Brașov County

9. **Iulian Mincu**, migrated from SDP to GRP. Communist dignitary and Health minister prior to 1989, when he was Ceaușescu’s personal doctor and the father of the “national scientific diet plan,” which was used to justify the introducing of ratios for basic foods. He was Health minister during the period when GRP was in coalition with SDPR in government, but he withdrew before elections following a scandal over the falsification of the residency exam. Iulian Mincu owns a flat in Bucharest and a country house in Bușteni, a 1997 Renault Megane, a jeep, and an Opel Astra.

10. **Nicolae Iorga**. Before 1978, when he became a lawyer, he worked in the police. Last year, his two sons were questioned by police and the courts on the charge of kidnapping and attempted rape of two schoolgirls. The case was closed. According to the press, one of his sons was again involved in a violent scuffle, in which he attacked a young man.
11. **Gheorghe Dinu.** According to his Chamber of Deputies assets statement in 2000 he owned a Renault 5 car, a three room flat, and a house under construction at Cornu. At the end of his mandate, he was wealthier, owning two plots of urban land, with a surface area over 3,000 sqm, two houses, each worth 1.28 billion lei, a Renault Megane on lease, and two bank deposits. He has no other known source of income than his wage.

12. **Cristian Stănescu** is a political opportunist; he was in ApR, then DP and then in GRP. As a member of Brașov County Council between 2000 and 2004, he was in conflict of interest, since in the same period he was also a member of the Board of the County Authority for infrastructure. His assets consist of 5,000 sqm of land, a house acquired in 2001, a country house, a flat, a commercial space and three companies.

**Cluj County**

13. **Gheorghe Funar** was mayor of Cluj from 1992-2004, and was suspended from office for abusing his position in 2001; in 2003 was fined in criminal law by Cluj Magistrates’ Court, and by Suceava Court. In November 2003, the Court of Accounts confiscated Funar’s house, in order to recover the illegal bonuses and incentives he had awarded himself in 2002-3.

14. **Călin Petru** is general manager of a company with debts to the state budget.

15. **Dan Brudășcu**, GRP deputy, former propaganda secretary at Brașov Tractor Factory. He is the sole associate in the firm SC Sedan, which has debts to the state budget.

**Constanța County**

16. **Dorel Constantin Onaca** migrated from SDP to GRP. He has an estimated wealth of $26-28 million, featuring in Capital magazine’s list of the wealthiest Romanians. He owns 7 oceanic ships, of which 2 yachts and 5 trading vessels. He is building a 5 star hotel complex on 14,500 sqm of land in Eforie Nord, on the Black Sea Coast. According to his statement of assets, he owns a 1,000 sqm plot of urban land, 3 flats, 2 country houses, an Audi car, and a Grand Cherooke jeep. He has a $100,000 deposit in a Swiss bank. He is a shareholder in Onacva SRL, Onacva Group SA, Romanian Touring Press, Exoil SRL, Alakc Star SRL. The Constanța local press has speculated that the source of his fabulous wealth was collaboration with the former Securitate.

**Dâmbovița County**

17. **Dan Claudiu Tănăsescu.** In 2004, he moved from SDP to GRP. As mayor of Mogoșoaia commune, he was subjected to criminal investigation for illegal transactions involving giving housing plots for revolutionaries and high officials in the area around heritage Lake Mogoșoaia.

18. **Ilie Merce** was a colonel in the Securitate and was involved in political police activities. Ilie Merce was head of the art and cultural sector of Directorate 1 of the former Securitate. He coordinated the surveillance of intellectuals involved in the Transcendental Meditation movement. In 1983, Colonel Ilie Merce initiated the surveillance of Dumitru Iuga, an employee of public TV who headed a dissident
group. As a result of information given by Ilie Merce, Dumitru Iuga was arrested and condemned to 12 years in prison. A further 6 people were also arrested with him, receiving prison sentences. Between 1985 and 1986, Ilie Merce led Securitate actions against Radio Free Europe. After the Revolution, Ilie Merce remained an officer in the information services, but was later sacked by the institution’s head, who accused him of revealing secrets to GRP. A complaint against him by the secret service was also lodged with the prosecutors’ office.

19. Vasile Horga is one of the wealthiest parliamentarians from Dâmbovița County. He is also a university professor and a management consultant. He was a director of Electrica, Târgoviște branch, and of Romlux SA. He was investigated by police for the disappearance of a large quantity of material intended for the construction of a new headquarters for Electrica Târgoviște, but no charges were brought. Vasile Horga later penetrated the leadership structure of SC Romlux SA, by becoming president of the company’s Board, retaining the position during his mandate as a parliamentary deputy. The GRP senator is possibly the only investor who managed to get his money back from the National Investment Fund (FNI) SOV Invest, as a result of a court decision.

Dolj County

20. Mihail Lupoi, senator elected on the GRP Dolj lists in 2000. He was part of the controversial GRP Delegation which visited Saddam Hussein, exposing Romania to international criticism.

Galați County

21. Carol Dina was the last PCR (Romanian Communist Party) secretary in Galați county, and a minister under the last Ceaușescu government. After a few months under arrest at the beginning of 1990, Carol Dina became a businessman. Carol Dina’s firm, DIC Group, engaged in transactions with the state Sidex plant which led to losses of the state company. According to press reports, in 1999, the Directorate of Public Finances in Galați discovered that Carol Dina’s firm “DIC Group” acquired from the construction trust of the Sidex Combine, paying for it a only after a year, during which time the money was used for various transactions and also devalued. His assets comprise 1,380 sqm of land, acquired in 2002, a 200 sqm dwelling house, and a 500 sqm country house.

Gorj County

22. Ilie Petrescu, GRP senator since 2000. As a result of his low level of education and lack of even basic general knowledge, around a year ago, Corneliu Vadim Tudor (GRP leader) banned the Gorj senator from appearing on national television. Ilie Petrescu was frequently ridiculed in national entertainment programs.

Ialomița County

23. Marinache Văgrescu, political opportunist, was in turn member of DPAR (Democratic Agrarian Party), SDP and GRP. Press reports have revealed his involvement in several scandals, from trafficking gasoline to smuggling alcohol.
24. Dănuț Saulea was an officer at the Ministry of Defence before 1989, after which he worked as an official bodyguard. He was the subject of a number of scandals appeared by the media, and was accused by various people of trafficking of influence and taking bribes. He was dismissed from the official bodyguard body because of suspicions that he had been involved in traffic with radioactive material, and in activities incompatible with his status as a military officer.

Iași County

25. Gheorghe Buzatu is a historian, who belonged to the group of historians close to Ilie Ceaușescu, the dictator’s brother. He contributed to books written in homage to Nicolae Ceaușescu. After 1989, he went to the other extreme, supporting publications with an anti-Semitic character, or which praised the inter-war far right movement, the Iron Guard. He was associated with the American historian Kurt Treptow, who was later sentenced for paedophilia. His research center also intermediated for the publication of an anti-Semitic book under the auspices of the Romanian Academy. After the book provoked a scandal, Buzatu, who had allowed the book’s publication under the Academy’s aegis, formally resigned from the research centre, although preserving de facto control over the institution.

26. Anghel Stanciu is a shareholder in 5 companies: SC GEOTOP Construction (40%), SC FEG 1 SRL (25%), SC FEG SRL (through his wife, Virginia Stanciu, who is sole shareholder), SC Construcții 1 SA (3%), SC Top Consult SRL (2%), some of which are involved with education. He is president of the Education Commission in the Chamber of Deputies. The firms and foundations belonging to Stanciu obtained free lease from municipality in the very centre of Iași. His son, Cristian Stanciu, was promoted by his father to the party lists for the County Council. The Iași press has regularly reported on the controversial affairs of the Stanciu family.

Mehedinți County

27. Anca Petrescu was the architect who, after winning the favor of the Ceaușescu couple, designed the House of the People, for the building of which the historic centre of Bucharest was razed to the ground. Conscripts worked on the site in appalling conditions, leading to deaths and injuries in the race to meet the deadline demanded by the dictators, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, and by their acolyte Anca Petrescu.

Mureș County

28. Dumitru Pop moved from PNU to GRP. He was sentenced before and after 1989 for economic crimes. In the 1960s, he was director of IFET Toplița (Harghita), and was arrested for complicity in the theft of a large quantity of planks. He was placed under investigation in Bucharest, but later reappointed. He received a one year and six months sentence for setting up a chain of illegally constructed gas stations, without the agreement of the environmental authorities, some of which were dangerously close to railways, breaching safety regulations, yet escaped because of his parliamentary immunity, acquired in 2000. The case was moved to another court, and is now being heard in Brașov, while the Mureș court’s decision, which
sentenced him, was cancelled. The four gas stations are still operating. He owned
the Agrotransport firm, which was declared bankrupt. His wealth consists of 20 ha
pasture land, 2.5 ha forest land, 1.5 ha urban land, and he has businesses in his
son’s name as well. Dumitru Pop was the main initiator of a GRP move to sue the
Romanian state for the shooting of Nicolae Ceauşescu.

Neamţ County

29. **Dumitru Puzdrea** is one of the wealthiest GRP parliamentarians. In the mid 1990s,
he came under intense criticism when his firm, Universal Trade SRL, illegally built
an en gros warehouse above one of Bucharest’s main pipelines. Dumitru Puzdrea
paid scores of private bodyguards on several occasions to oppose the Bucharest town
dhall’s decision to demolish the building. Eventually he won the case the town hall
had lodged against him. He is one of the wealthiest parliamentarians. He owns
7,400 sqm of urban land, 2 flats, 2 villas and a country house, a Volkswagen and 2
Toyota RAV 4s, shares (ready to be cashed) of 800,000 euros, treasury certificates
worth 4.5 billion lei, current accounts of $380,000 and 250,000 euros, as well as
artwork and jewellery, with a value of over 10,000 euros.

Prahova County

30. **Marcu Tudor** was an army officer, who worked in the Communist military counter-
information according to press reports. He is the brother of GRP president Corneliu
Vadim Tudor. He was involved in the “Cigarette 1” scandal, the first major case of
cigarette smuggling which reached the courts, but after the investigation he was not
charged. His declared assets consist of two plots of urban land, acquired in 1993 and
2002 respectively, a 1993 Opel Vectra car, and two bank accounts with modest
sums.

31. **Adrian Mărăcineanu** is a shareholder in UZUC Ploieşti and Rocip Guard Ploieşti,
the second of which according to press reports is one of the private satellite firms
siphoning Ciprom SA, a state company involved in petrol and construction business.
At Rocip Guard, he is an associate with Traian Balaj, general manager of the state
firm Ciprom.

Suceava County

32. **George Pruteanu**, political opportunist, who switched three parties, historical Na-
tional Peasant Party, SDPR, and GRP, and in the past he has been a candidate in
Constanţa and Bistriţa districts. He was sentenced before 1989 for theft and non
payment of pension contributions, and was frequently unmasked in România Mare
(Greater Romania) magazine as a criminal, yet this did not stop him from joining
this party when he could no longer be included in the lists for SDPR.

33. **Ioan Bâncescu** entered Parliament on the SDP lists, from which he resigned in
2002, joining GRP. In the communist period, he held positions in the local struc-
tures of PCR (Romanian Communist Party), including inspector of the People’s
Council for the county. He was deputy prefect between 1991 and 1996, the period
in which many complained that the same land restitution was returned to two
different owners by his office on a nearly regular basis. Between 1996 and 2000, he
was director of Bankcoop’s Suceava office. When he became director, he owned a Dacia, and after the bank collapsed, he owned a Lancia.

34. **Gheorghe Acatrinei** was before 1990 party secretary and deputy mayor. His assets consist of 5 ha agricultural land, 4.5 ha pastureland, a 1,000 sqm plot of urban land, two flats, and three cars. He is a shareholder in Bucovina Tourism and Geostel Compres SRL, and holds titles and deposits in banks worth 13,000 euros. He is responsible for bringing Severin Tăciuc into the party, a man pursued in many criminal investigations for fiscal evasion, currently on a wanted persons list of Interpol.

Satu Mare County

35. **Văsălie Moiș** was a founder of the Vatra Românească Union, the first nationalist movement after 1989, then a deputy in two parliaments on SDPR lists, today being a deputy for GRP. According to press reports there are 23 law suits currently in progress against him (civil and criminal) among which one is for the manslaughter of a child and injury to two people in a road accident. He was a police officer before 1989, later becoming a lawyer. Along with Ilie Plătică Vidovici, he was the initiator and supporter of one of the most restrictive press law drafts, which would have prohibited journalists from photographing the residences and country houses of public officials. Văsălie Moiș has every reason to protect his goods from indiscreet eyes: according to his statement of assets and interests, he owns a flat, a residential house, a country house, a lawyer’s office, a Mercedes, and is co-owner of a knitwear factory in Negrești-Oaș. The Trade Registry has him on record as a personal shareholder in Romanian-American Insurance SA, a company which does not feature in his statement of interests for Parliament.

Teleorman County

36. **Florea Buga** was prior to 1989 a trade union activist for the party, responsible for the cultural section of Teleorman County Council of Trade Unions, and head of the political work sector of the Teleorman County branch of PCR (Romanian Communist Party). To his initial assets up to the beginning of the present legislature, which comprised two flats acquired between 1991 and 1997, a commercial space and an Oltcit car, he has now added a country house, with declared value of 160 million lei, built in 2001.

Tulcea County

37. **Nati Meir**, an Israeli-Romanian citizen, was sentenced at the beginning of the 1990s in Israel to 30 months in prison for claiming to be a lawyer. In November 2000, he again came to the attention of the Israeli police, for bringing Romanian workers to Israel illegally, declaring them to be tourists. In the last few years, he has organized recruitment and work placements for Romanians in Israel, through his firm, ORWALSAM trading SRL, of which he is sole associate and administrator. The work contracts signed by Meir’s firm do not specify conditions of recruitment, transport, work, accommodation, length of contract, or measures of protection and safety at work, consequently violating the rights and freedoms of Romanian citizens,
as set out by law. According to the Israeli daily Yedioth Aharonot at least 45 complaints have been made against Orwalsam by workers, who were charged fees of between $ 800 and $ 1,300 for a job, obtaining receipts for only $ 200-$ 250.

38. Dan Nicolae Rahâu was a member of SDP until April this year, after which he moved to GRP to stand for mayor of Constanța.

Timiș County

39. Petre Petrișor, a former magistrate, was dismissed from the presidency of Timiș Court in 1997 for favoring two businessmen, Zaker Iskandarani and Mujea Marcelini, who were condemned for smuggling and other crimes. Although he was acquitted in 2000 by the Supreme Court, the general prosecutor initiated a new trial against him for similar offences. In his time as a court president, he obtained social housing for his mother, later transformed into a luxurious villa for his personal use. When he was a magistrate, he built a country house, and acquired several cars (Mitsubishi Pajero, Mercedes). Prior to elections he was a member of the municipal assembly.

40. Octavian Mircea Purcel was General Manager of SC Mobitim SA, a firm taken over by the Cristescu brothers, two controversial local businessmen he was involved with. In 2003, he became a shareholder at SC Gero SRL Timișoara and SC Cortina SRL Timișoara. According to his statement of assets, he owns 2,800 sqm of urban land, and a 57 sqm flat, another of 120 sqm, as well as a 160 sqm country house, and a Mercedes car.

41. Valentin Dinescu was already at elections times a GRP senator and head of the UTC (Union of Communist Youth) in Timiș before the Revolution, after training at the county office of PCR (Romanian Communist Party). He was involved in the organization of the last visit by the Ceaușescu couple to Timișoara (14-15 September 1989). He is well known in Timișoara for his statement to a local paper in which he expressed regret at the ending of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s regime. (“I can say now that after 16 years that my greatest regret is that I can no longer greet comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu at the airport. If I should die tomorrow, I would do so with the great regret that I was never able to embrace comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu and to thank him for his unwavering efforts in the service of the Romanian people.”) He lived for several years in a flat in the historic centre of Timișoara, from which he was evicted because he had not paid his rent to the town hall. He owns 20% of a business, SA Carte Blue SA.

Vâlcea County

42. Viorel Dumitrescu was a GRP senator; during his parliamentary mandate, he was a GRP lawyer, defending Corneliu Vadim Tudor and Miron Cozma, leader of the miners’ riots of 1990, 1991 and 1999, although it was forbidden for MPs to be practicing lawyers, especially in controversial high profile cases.

43. Nicolae Pâtru was prior to 1990 the head of the Olănești food cooperative. He was awarded the title “Hero of Socialist Labour.” He was investigated by the criminal law authorities for the export of tens of tons of subsidized grain between 1994 and 1995, and the file was closed without charges being brought. Citing SRI (Romanian secret service) documents, the weekly Academia Cațavencu published in 2000 an
article revealing that the GRP senator Nicolae Pătru was an active participant in the 1999 miners’ assault on the government. As the owner of the Alpex SRL bakery, he gave the miners food, and allowed about 100 of them to sleep at the GRP headquarters in Vâlcea on their way to Bucharest. Senator Pătru signed in the name of GRP an appeal to local political leaders to support the miners who were marching on the capital. Currently, he is a shareholder of the Blazon SRL firm, and of the furniture factory Mobinartă Voiniceni.

44. **Dumitru Dragomir** was investigated for many crimes prior to 1989. In 1976, he was sentenced in Râmnicu Vâlcea to three months in prison for arranging gambling. Dumitru Dragomir was investigated and sentenced in 1990 to 7 months in prison, along with Marin Bărbuiescu, Nicolae Ceauşescu’s brother in law, under the “Victoria” file for using his office against the public interest. The facts in the file refer to the period 1987-9, when Dumitru Dragomir was president of the Victoria football team in Bucharest, which belonged to the Securitate. When he became president of the Professional Football League he caused an international scandal, which affected the image of Romanian football. In the middle of 1999, FIFA was notified by the Anti-Defamation League in New York about Dragomir’s anti-Semitic and xenophobic activities, since as well as being president of the LPF, he was also owner of the tabloid Personal Attack where various anti-Semitic and xenophobic materials were published. Dragomir was found guilty by FIFA, which gave him a warning. Following an investigation by the Prime Minister’s control authority, in 2002 an association contract was discovered between LPF Number One SRL and the former General Bucharest Water Authority, under which the use of all Bucharest lakes was granted to Dumitru Dragomir in exchange for only $ 5,000. Dumitru Dragomir won also fishing and leisure activities rights for Lake Mogoşoaia, under a 20 year concession. Furthermore, he gained control under almost identical terms of Bâneasa, Herăstrău, Floreasca lakes, the islands of Stâvilar, Bordei, and Pescăruş.

Vaslui County

45. **Vlad Hodgea**, formerly deputy for Iaşi, is now a candidate for Vaslui. Vlad Hodgea is the author of a violently anti-Semitic book The Nationalist made up of articles published earlier in România Mare and Politica, or in pamphlets presented by the author as “studies” which appeared under a pseudonym in a local scandal paper, Attack. The book violates criminal law because of its xenophobic message but Hodgea is protected by his status as a member of Parliament.

Bucharest

46. **Corneliu Vadim Tudor** is founder of the Greater Romania Party and of the magazine of the same name. Vadim Tudor was one of the most notorious propagandists of the Ceauşescu regime. He defended in writing a number of appalling acts of the regime, such as the demolition of the historic centre of Bucharest for the construction of the House of the People and the Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism. He complained to the Securitate and to Nicolae Ceauşescu personally about writers and cultural figures with whom he conflicted. In his articles in The Week magazine, controlled by the Securitate, he attacked under order Radio Free Europe and opponents of the communist regime. His magazine România Mare has contributed decisively to the
decline in the quality of public debate in Romania after 1989, by its use of aggressive and insulting language, particularly against national minorities and former dissidents. The magazine’s style has attacked hundreds of law suits, and Vadim Tudor has lost several civil actions launched by people he defamed, being obliged to pay damages. Among leaders praised by Vadim Tudor are Nicolae Ceauşescu, Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi. He has declared no assets, except a dwelling house, even though he lives in a villa in residential Cotroceni and currently makes use of several luxury cars, including a Mercedes. He has declared himself to be a member of several foreign academies, access to which is obtained simply by sending an application and paying a fee.

3. Justice and Truth Alliance (NLP-DP)

Bacău County

1. **Valeriu Gheorghe**, NLP. Around four years ago, his name was involved, alongside his wife, Rodica Gheorghe, in the contested privatisation of SC Agro Nova Râcâciuni. The director of the company has accused Valeriu Gheorghe of becoming a minority shareholder through political influence. Mr Gheorghe is also controversial for being close to Viorel Hrebenciuc, the influential SDP leader.

Brașov County

2. **Ion Dumitru Puchianu**, DP, received a criminal conviction before 1989. He has been involved in several controversial business deals. He entered DP in 1993, then moved to ApR and in 2000 returned to DP.

Constanța County

3. **Stelian Dătu**, DP, is a political opportunist. In 1992, he joined DP, where he remained until 1999, holding the post of president of DP’s Constanța branch and president of the local council. Following a scandal, which broke out in DP, he joined NLP, in which he did not stay long, migrating to HP, shortly afterwards becoming head of the county organization of the party, after which he returned to DP.

Galați County

4. **Paul Păcuraru**, NLP, senator, he is a shareholder in Eurocom, a mixed Romanian-French company, specializing in copiers. In 1997-2000, the senator’s firm bought unpaid bills from firms which Sidex owed money to, and recovered steel from Sidex in exchange. According to the Directorate General of Public Finances (DGFP) Galați, in 1999-2000 Eurocom sold hundreds of tons of steel originating from Sidex that the state company had trouble selling itself. This business represents a small proportion of total transactions of Sidex, but a significant part of Eurocom’s total transactions. Eurocom was implicated in the Galați part of the SAFI affair (another collapsed investment fund), although Paul Păcuraru was not involved in administering the fund.
[Mr Păcuraru disputed heavily this information and the text was modified at his request, but he was not dropped from the list. Sidex was siphoned seriously by many satellite firms prior to its acquisition by LNM. After his party won elections Mr Păcuraru lost his position as a vice president.]

Iași County

5. *Relu Fenechiu*, NLP, businessman, with estimated assets of 1 million euros, as owner of the Fene group. The Iași press has revealed several controversial business transactions involving this candidate. For example, at the beginning of 2000, two independent evaluations demonstrated that the Fene construction firm exceeded its budget by over 600 million lei for a contract awarded by the Child Protection Directorate for repair of the Budăi orphanage.

Sălaj County

6. *Viorel Stanca*, DP, a counter information officer prior to 1990, is one of the wealthiest businessmen in Sălaj, through the Vidalis group of companies, which have an estimated value of 15-20 million euros. The Vidalis group bought some assets of SC IAIFO Zalău, a company in voluntary liquidation.

Teleorman County

7. *Ion Basgan* entered NLP following the fusion of this party and NLP-Câmpianu. He is a member of the Grand National Masonic Lodge, and has a considerable wealth. He was accused of being a *Securitate* informer by a former work colleague, Sebastian Calotă, who had obtained his file from the CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Archives of the *Securitate*). His case was discussed at the CNSAS, where a majority, but not the unanimity of members judged that there was insufficient evidence to prove that Basgan had been an informer. Mr Basgan received a certificate stating that he had not been an informer, on the same day as Senator Corneliu Vadim Tudor.

Vaslui County

8. *Daniel Drăgan*, NLP, is a political opportunist. For 11 years was a member and candidate for mayor for the Greater Romania Party, and he moved to the Liberals.

Bucharest

9. *Valentin Iliescu*, DP, is a political opportunist, as he switched three parties: PNU, SDP and DP.

4. Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania (DAHR)

Covasna County

1. *Puskás Valentin-Zoltán*. Although a senator, he was also president of the Union of Traders’ Cooperatives of Covasna County, today called ATCOM-Covasna, owning
an 18% quota of the total social capital. He has a house in Sf. Gheorghe of around 200 sqm, a 50 sqm country house, an Audi A4 bought in 2003, and three plots of urban land, with a combined area of 2,300 sqm.

Harghita County

2. Verestoy Attila. In 1998, the IVO SRL company, belonging to Senator Verestoy Attila and his brother in law Ferenczy Karoly, bought the spirits factory of Miercurea Ciuc, which had rented out part of the alcohol manufacturing installations to some companies owned by Csibi Istvan, a gangster, in an auction by the State Property Authority. The Hungastro company, which also belonged to Senator Verestoy Attila and one of the eight companies which won a public bid for issuing food vouchers, was later investigated by the Competition Council and fined, along with the others, for breaching competition law. His wealth is estimated by Capital magazine to be $25 million.

Bihor County

3. Pete Stefan is a DAHR senator who was involved in food and agriculture businesses exactly in the period 1998-2000, when he was a secretary of state in the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1999, he set up Fixing SRL, which sold agricultural products, whose shareholders were Spirt Drojdie SA (in which he is a shareholder and administrator), himself personally as well as his accountant, who is currently under investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office, according to local press reports in Oradea. As well as owning a flat, he is also co-owner of a country house, a 1,000 sqm plot of land, a 2004 Skoda Octavia, declared bank deposits of $9,000, 54 million lei, and 40 hectares of agricultural land.
IV. Organizations

1. The Romanian Academic Society (SAR)

Petöfi Sandor 15, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
Tel./Fax: (+4021)222.18.68
Web: www.sar.org.ro
E-mail: office@sar.org.ro

Initiator and organizer of CCP

*The Romanian Academic Society* (SAR) was founded in 1995 as a Bucharest-based association of intellectuals and has since become a think tank, with the mission of advancing the ideas of liberty, democracy and sound government in our region. In our publications, public awareness campaigns and consultancy work, we promote the notion of government accountability through transparency, and the reform of the public sector through deregulation, the introduction of clear standards and the implementation of market-type mechanisms. At the regional level we cooperate with NGO’s from other countries advocating for conflict resolution of the “frozen conflicts” in the Balkan and Black Sea area.

*The goals of SAR* are to contribute to good governance and development through policy research and advocacy, to contribute to the European integration of Romania and the stability of the Balkan and Black Sea area through research, monitoring and advocacy, to enhance the contribution of independent experts to the process of policy design in Romania through public dialogue and evaluations of alternative policy proposals, as well as to contribute to the (re)building of the fields of applied social sciences, economics and public policy in Romania after fifty years of Communism.

In order to achieve these goals, SAR currently hosts *two research centers*:

- *The Center for Public Policy (CeRPP)*, running in policy research on topics of:
  - regional development, reform of the local government and fiscal federalism, taxation
and tax awareness of citizens, streamlining the central government, economic aspects of environmental policies, reform of the social policy, the informal economy in Romania. The Center publishes Working Papers, Crisis Papers and Public Policy series and several other position papers and policy briefs, which are disseminated among policy makers and opinion leaders. Currently 25 researchers as collaborators are associated with the Center, some of them civil servants or experts working in the government service.

- The Center for Political Communication Research, with important projects currently under way. SAR is the initiator and organizer of the Romanian Coalition for a Clean Parliament, a coalition made of 12 of the most important Romanian NGOs, which aimed to solve the lack of political information of the citizens by targeting millions of households in Romania with information on the corruption record of their candidates in legislative elections. SAR is currently developing the project European Debates, a continuation of the Alternative Ideas debate series, a project which consisted in organizing public debates prior to the November 2004 elections, where political parties came and discussed public policies with representatives of the civil society, in order to promote the professionalization of both the political parties and the electoral campaign in Romania.

Moreover, SAR is also publishing on a regular basis the Romanian Journal of Political Science (PolSci) - a political science quarterly. The latest issue on 2004 was dedicated to minorities and ethnic conflict. PolSci’s spring-summer issue will be published in May 2004 and will focus on the latest electoral changes in former Soviet Union area. PolSci is edited under the supervision of a consortium of deans of the Political Science departments from the main universities in Romania. The journal is peer-reviewed and resulted from the transformation of the Foreign Policy Review quarterly, published by SAR since 1996 (see the Web page for back issues).

2. The Group for Social Dialogue (GDS)

Calea Victoriei 120, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
Tel./Fax : (021) 3124841 ; 3141471
Web : gds.ong.ro
E-mail : gds@ong.ro

The Group for Social Dialogue constituted in January 1990 as a critical reflection instance of a historical stage marked by the violent decomposition of totalitarian communist state and the transition from a equalized society to a civil society.

Its members are prominent figures of Romanian cultural and public life, most of them were dissent of communist regime. GDS promotes the values of democracy, democratic state and the man’s fundamental freedoms and civil rights.

The new members are selected among the personalities that distinguished themselves by activities in the spirit of GDS’s values.
The Group for Social Dialogue actively involves in public and cultural life through the agency of 22 Review, organizing meetings, symposiums, round tables with both diverse and unitary subjects centered on social conflicts, legislative initiatives, the freedom of press and television, local and general elections.

GDS Library, The Internet Resources and Communications Center for Non-Governmental Organizations, The Video Dialogue Studio are carrying on under the auspices of The Group for Social Dialogue.

Starting with 1994 it is conferred the GDS Award for the promotion of civil society and democratic state values.

3. The Association of Political Science Students (APSS)

National School for Political Science and Administrative Studies
Str. Povernei 6-8, cam. 318, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
Tel./Fax. (021)212.52.86
E-mail: assp_snspa@yahoo.com

The Association of Political Science Students (APSS) in The National School for Political Science and Administrative Studies (NAPSAS), Bucharest is the professional organization under and post-graduate students in the The National School for Political Science and Administrative Studies, Bucharest. We act as a non-governmental youth organization.

APSS is founder of The Romanian Federation of Political Science Students, member of The National Students’ Organizations Alliance in Romania, member of The International Association of Political Science Students. It acted as the latter’s Executive Committee in 2002.

The Goals of APSS:
- APSS wishes to act in the direction of strengthening a democratic political culture;
- APSS wishes to promote the role and identity of the young political analyst;
- APSS wishes to get involved in the construction and functioning of the scientific community of political scientists in Romania;
- APSS presents itself as a dialogue link between different academic and political institutions.

4. Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania – Helsinki Committee (APADOR-CH)

Str. Nicolei Tonitza 8, sector 3, Bucharest 704012 Romania
Tel./Fax: (40) (21) 312.45.28; 312.37.11
Web: www.apador.org
E-mail: apador@dnt.ro
Established in 1990, APADOR-CH (Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania – the Helsinki Committee) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that strives to change both the legislation and the mentalities in the field of civil rights, stress being laid on individual freedom, the right to privacy, fair trial, access to information, etc., and on the rights of minorities. The strategy used by APADOR-CH consists in monitoring and establishing a dialogue with the authorities; the association is also a credible source of information for national and international non-governmental and governmental organizations. So far, the association has been funded exclusively by organizations and foundations from abroad.

Objectives of APADOR-CH:

- To campaign for the modification of laws with direct impact on civil rights, such as the Penal Code, the Penal Procedure Code, the Law on National Security and stemming from it, the Law on the Romanian Intelligence Service and the laws regulating all the other intelligence services and structures, the Law on National Archives, etc.;
- To promote new legislation in the field of free access to information and the protection of personal data, the non-profit sector, protection of the rights of minorities – ethnic, religious, sexual minorities included –, the rights of prisoners and persons in pre-trial detention;
- To provide assistance to victims of abuses perpetrated by police and by the penitentiary system, assessing objectively the cases and providing legal counselling and/or legal assistance in court;
- To raise the awareness of the general public on these issues.
5. Asociația Pro Democtratia (ADP)

Bd. Unirii nr. 45, bl. E3, sc. 3, et. 6, ap. 76, sector 3, Bucharest 030824 Romania
Tel.: 021 327.77.36; 327.77.57
Tel./Fax: 021 321.67.44
Web: www.aDP.ro
E-mail: aDP@aDP.ro

Mission. Asociația Pro Democracy (ADP) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit, non-party-affiliated civic organization whose mission is to strengthen democracy in Romania by stimulating civic participation. For this mission, our volunteer members (around 900 citizens) have activities all around the country and especially in those 24 cities and towns where our branches are located.

Areas of interest:
- Strengthening the relation between citizens and their elected representatives;
- Informing and educating voters;
- Monitoring the correctness of the electoral process;
- Stimulating citizens’ participation in the public decision making process;
- Determining the transparency of public institutions and the control of civic society over them;
- Protecting human rights.

ADP became well known for many people due to its efforts in terms of voter education and election monitoring process. The Association has recruited and trained domestic electoral observers for all the local, presidential and parliamentary elections
since 1992, organized the country’s first candidate forums, initiated meetings between politicians and groups of interests concerning draft laws. ADP has also led seminars on civic education and civic participation issues. For the elections in 1996 and 2000 in Romania, ADP recruited around 5,000 domestic observers. On those occasions, ADP did parallel vote tabulation whose results were announced before the official ones. At ADP initiative, the political parties and candidates for local and general elections in 2000 signed the Code of conduct for electoral campaign, a code that promoted the compliance with the rules of democratic politics.

Connected to the correctness of the electoral competition, the transparency of the political parties funding process has been explored by one of ADP’s projects “Transparency. Trust. Democracy.”

The Association’s extensive civic education programs include widespread publication and distribution of materials (by means of Civic Caravan), and training local organizations. The Association has also polled citizens on the popularity of MPs and produced the first directory of the Romanian Parliament. This publication, called the Blue Book of Democracy, contains data and contact information on the Members of the Parliament and the most important public institutions. The Blue Book of Democracy has already been published for three times (for the following legislations: 1992-1996, 1996-2000, and 2000-2004).

ADP is continuously involved in programs of civic education and participation, at both local and national level, taking up mostly actions that lead to community-oriented and socially oriented democratization. In this regard, one of the most important programs, “Supporting Participatory Democracy in Romania,” developed in partnership with Romanian-Dutch Foundation transForma, is aimed to increase the ability of the local public administration to involve citizens in public decision making process. In the first “pilot” year of the project, ADP trained approximately 20 local elected officials and public servants and has supervised 4 experiments of participatory democracy in four communities. After the pilot stage, the project was extended to 25 communities with similar activities: training for local administration representatives and technical assistance for local government regarding citizens’ involvement in taking public decisions and solving local problems.

6. Freedom House Romania

Bd. Ferdinand 125 Bucharest, Romania
Tel.: (+4021) 253.28.38
Fax: (+4021) 253.00.63; mobil: (+40722)205.549;
(+40740)089.253
E-mail: freedomhouse@freedomhouse.ro

Founded in 1941 by Eleanor Roosevelt and others, Freedom House is the oldest non-profit, non-governmental organization in the United States dedicated to promoting and defending democracy and freedom worldwide. Freedom House supports the global expansion of freedom through its advocacy activities, monitoring, and in-depth research on the state of freedom and direct support of democratic reformers throughout the world.
Freedom House is well known around the world for its reports in which liberty, freedom of the press and democracy are evaluated: Freedom in the World, Nations in Transit, Freedom of the Press.

Freedom House has headquarters in Washington DC and New York and in addition, operates offices in Bucharest, Almaty, Bishkek, Belgrade, Budapest, Kiev, Mexico City, Tashkent, Warsaw.

Freedom House Romania developed programs in two fields: mass media and public administration, more specific public communication.

Concerning mass media field, Freedom House has supported press independence by raising the journalistic standards and increasing its economical viability. Numerous national and local newspapers as well as TV stations benefited of these programs, i.e. US internships, study tours in Central Europe as well as targeted assistance.

Freedom House initiated the Romanian Audit Bureau of Circulation, meant to regulate the media and advertising market. Freedom House also coordinates the “JTI Scholarship for journalists” program and the “Young Journalist of the year contest”- a program in partnership with Edipresse AS.

7. Center for Independent Journalism (CJI)

Str. Bibescu Vodă 18, et. 2, ap. 4, 5, 6, sector 4, Bucharest 040152 Romania
Tel.: (021) 335.6225 ; 335.6225 ; 335.6298
Fax: (021) 335.6297
Web: www.cji.ro

The Center for Independent Journalism is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, offering courses and specialized training for journalists and media organizations. The Center organizes courses, seminars, debates, roundtables and professional assistance
focusing on media specific problems. CIJ is a project of the Independent Journalism Foundation, New York, which operates similar centers in Hungary and Vietnam.

CIJ opened in 1994. Since then, thousands of students have received opportunities in professional training at the Center. Throughout the year, the Center offers a variety of courses, ranging from the basics of journalism to specialized courses for print, radio and TV. These courses include news writing, interview techniques, writing skills, reporting (political, investigative, economic and environmental reporting), as well as courses in communications, new media, photojournalism and media legislation. Most of our trainers are journalists from the United States and Romania with many years of experience and excellent professional reputation.

The Center offers Romanian journalists from across the country the opportunity to meet international journalists who share their experience with their Romanian counterparts. Many foreign journalists, most of them Knight Fellows, have visited Romania in the last few years, providing specialized and individual training to numerous publications, radio and television stations. Trainers spend up to two weeks with each host organization, working with the journalists in Romania to find ways to improve the country’s media. Foreign trainers include media professionals working with The New York Times Group, ABC, CNN, NBC, NPR, Philadelphia Inquirer, Press Enterprises and others, as well as faculty of Columbia University in New York, University of Illinois and Penn State University.

The Center for Independent Journalism is active in improving legislation for the free access to information, protecting journalists from libel, institutional transparency and freedom of speech. In partnership with the Helsinki Committee in Romania and Article XIX (London), we run the Romanian “Democracy in practice” program, a free-speech project covering five South-Eastern European countries and funded by the European Commission. We also produced the Romanian Media White Paper with Stability Pact financing. The Romanian Media White Paper is a reference document to describe the Romanian media landscape from the viewpoints of legislation, economic independence and the relationship between journalists and the employers.

CIJ was a promoter of the first FOIA ever adopted in Romania and has been, ever since, involved in its active implementation and monitoring, as well as in training for journalists, public officials and NGO activists regarding FOIA use. CIJ actively used FOIA in order to monitor the distribution of the public money advertising, often used as tool to curb media criticism. This monitoring, conducted as a part of Economic Censorship Program, run together with Open Society Justice Initiative (New York), identified the legal gaps that allow for such discretionary used of public money and suggested ways for modifying the legal provisions and the practice in this respect.

8. Civic Alliance

Piata Amzei 13, Etaj 2, Bucharest 1 – 70174
C.P. 22-216
Tel.: (021)212.75.42; Tel./Fax: (021)212.75.41
Web: www.alian tacivica.ro
E-mail: aliantacivica@fx.ro
The Civic Alliance is an association with a civic character, militating for the consolidation of civil society and the rule of law. It is the largest of its kind in Romania. The Civic Alliance was started on November 6, 1990, through the cooperation of the main civic associations up to that date and as a result of the public adhesion of 216 personalities of the cultural, artistic, scientific and technical milieu in Romania.

The Civic Alliance today has branches and subsidiaries in Bucharest and in 27 districts of the country. The Civic Alliance Congress periodically establishes the strategy of this organization and selects its new leadership. The branch representatives and 27 members elected by vote by the Congress form the National Directory Council. They meet quarterly to analyze the activity of the Civic Alliance and of the National Coordination Committee, the latter being the executive leadership organism.

The main objectives of the Civic Alliance, as stated in our statutes, are the following:

- To mitigate for the realization of civil society and the rule of law;
- To defend fundamental human rights;
- To support the establishment of an atmosphere of tolerance and trust among citizens, in particular among different ethnic and religious groups;
- To fight for the knowing and spreading of the truth in the public life of the country;
- To organize and implement civic education programs;
- To mitigate for the integration of the country in the European Union;
- To act for the promotion of values and for the elimination of corruption from the country’s political life;
- To contribute to the reestablishment of ties between the Romanian diaspora and our country;
- To act in support of disadvantaged sectors of society.

9. Media Monitoring Agency

Ion Câmpineanu 20 A, bl. 18 A, sc. A, et. 2, ap. 8, intercom 08, sector 1, Bucharest
Tel./Fax : (021)315.23.13
Cell phone: 0788 491 119 ; 0721 200 459
E-mail : office@mma.ro
Web : www.mma.ro ; www.freeex.ro ; www.inforural.ro
Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) is a Romanian human rights advocacy NGO with media expertise, whose mission is to use communication as a tool for promoting political and civil rights. It was established in 1994, as a branch of “Academia Cațavencu,” a non-profit, cultural NGO supporting the development of a critical consciousness among Romanian citizens in order to confront political manipulation in post-communist Romania.

Major issues that we are currently addressing include promoting high media standards both by protecting the right to freedom of expression and access to information and by advocating for professionalism in the media; developing anti-discrimination campaigns and anti-corruption policies.

Mission. To promote the freedom and quality of communication for defending civil rights.

Structure. MMA has assembled a team of experienced people to produce updated national/international information and services, on a full-time basis.

MMA is structured around three inter-dependent units:

- **Research.** The research division offers a wide range of high-speed monitoring services specifically developed to meet the needs of those who don’t have the time to monitor and analyse all the relevant information they require, in an accurate and cost-effective manner.

- **Information & education.** In partnership with specialised institutions, MMA is organising training courses on media law matters for journalists, lawyers and judges. Participants are provided with a theoretical and practical information pack on legal matters.

Having the full support of qualified experts, MMA also edits ethical and legislative guides, annual reports on freedom of expression in Romania, and reports on monitoring: nationalism in the mass media; the presence of the Roma in the Romanian media; key political actors in the local media.

- **Direct action.** This special division has as its main objective the improvement of the legislative climate regarding human rights and the bridging of the gap between media, civil society and government representatives.

Whenever it comes to cases of freedom of speech and infringements of free access to information, MMA is ready to support advocacy campaigns, conferences, seminars, round tables, and press conferences. It also aims to increase media awareness of issues and subjects that are of concern to the public.
10. Open Society Foundation (OSF)

Str. Căderea Bastiliei, nr. 33, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
Tel.: (021)212.11.01; Fax: (021)212.10.32
Web: www.osf.ro/ro

Mission. The Open Society Foundation (OSF), a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization, upholds the values of freedom, democracy and rule of law, respect for human rights and for minorities, encourages minority opinions, and advocates for social responsibility and social justice, in pursuit of its mission to support the development of an open society in Romania.

Objectives. The primary goals of OSF’s programs are:
- To assist the emergence of democratic institutions;
- To advocate respect for human and minority rights;
- To encourage the pluralism of actors and ideas within the public sphere;
- To promote rule of law, and the reform of public policies and institutions;
- To support Romania’s integration in the European structures.

Programs. The Open Society Foundation runs the following programs:
- Research and statistics programs: the Public Opinion Barometer;
- Summer schools, scholarships and supplementary grants for undergraduate or post-graduate education;
- Funding Programs: East-East Program, which supports regional partnerships; the “Open Society Campaigns,” which support public debate and advocacy by non-state actors; OSF Fellows, funding NGOs that wish to recruit former OSF scholarship recipients, and supporting small-scale projects devised by the fellows themselves.

Affiliation. The Open Society Foundation (www.osf.ro) is a member of the following networks:
- SON (Soros Open Network – Romania) – www.son.ro
- Soros Foundations Network – www.soros.org
- Romanian Donors’ Forum – www.donorsforum.ro
- European Foundation Center – www.efc.be