



INFOPOLITIC

Romanian Politics

29 March

Multimedia Foundation for Local
Democracy



IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

1. **POLITICAL DYNAMICS.** The Popular Movement faces difficult challenges in attempting to become the right-wing alternative to the PDL
2. **JUSTICE.** The DNA has started 21 criminal investigations following the findings of the Prime Minister's Control Corps.
3. **CONSTITUTION.** The Government enlists the support of the Venice Commission in order to ensure a consensual amendment of the current constitution.
4. **JUDICIARY.** Prime Minister Victor Ponta will make the nominations for the Chief Prosecutor and DNA chief positions, following consultations with the President and the CSM



THE POPULAR MOVEMENT IS FACING DIFFICULT TIMES

While President Traian Basescu keeps presenting the Popular Movement **as an alternative to both the PDL and the USL**, it is important to notice that the messages of the incumbent president targeted his former party. **The Popular Movement is created as an „alternative” to the PDL, as a „true” opposition party to the USL majority.** Consequently, the president’s strategy is to ensure a transfer of electoral capital and legitimacy towards the new movement. While the critical rhetoric towards the PDL has diminished in intensity, this media silence can be interpreted as a period of time dedicated to the improving the organization of the nascent formation and to the creation of a block of political leaders and members willing to abandon the PDL in favor of the Popular Movement.

From a political perspective, the Popular Movement only targets the PDL’s voters. **It is, for the moment, an alternative not to the USL, but to the PDL, which highlights its connections to the President** (for the moment, the only public figures belonging to it are Traian Basescu’s official advisers).

There are at the same time several problems the Movement must overcome in order to become an effective political force. First and foremost, the President’s support offers only a partial advantage. While the president might be the most popular figure of the current parliamentary opposition, **his electoral support is not enough to deliver a political victory.** Secondly, the Movement lacks a local and regional presence. Unless it manages to build an organizational infrastructure (which looks increasingly difficult without the support of PDL members willing to abandon the party), the Movement faces difficult electoral times. **Moreover, while**



the President's advisors are not highly appreciated public figures, the local politicians of the PDL are unwilling to break up with their party, as abandoning it amounts to forfeiting their seats as mayors or local councilors.

THE DNA STARTED 21 NEW INQUIRIES AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONTROL CORPS INVESTIGATIONS

Following the results of the investigations led by the Prime Minister's Control Corps, the DNA started 21 new criminal inquiries and started criminal procedures against suspected felons in one of these cases. The Government noticed the DNA in regards to the illegal practices within the ANAF, as well as other irregularities within different state-owned companies, such as the CNAS, the Romanian Mail Company.

The last of this information advanced to the DNA **regards the 1 billion Euros damages discovered at the Hidroelectrica Company**. The report of the Control Corps attests that Hidroelectrica, under the signature of former PDL Minister Adriean Videanu and State Secretary Tudor Serban, lost hundreds of millions of Euros. Adriean Videanu is responsible for issuing and signing documents that established a selling price for energy well below the market values. It is important to notice that according to the legal provisions, the minister is not responsible for setting up the prices. It is because of such losses that the company started losing money and being brought to insolvency last year, **when the USL formed a new government. The insolvency procedure allowed the company to cancel these damaging contracts**, thus allowing the company to become profitable once more.



THE VENICE COMMISSION AGREES TO HELP THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT IN AMENDING THE ROMANIAN CONSTITUTION

Prime Minister Victor Ponta **made an official request, on behalf of the Romanian government for assistance in regards to the procedures concerning the amendment of the Romanian Constitution.** The international organization accepted the request and will assist the Government in drafting constitutional provisions that will observe the European standards.

The procedure concerning the amendment of the Constitution, **initiated by the USL Government, is proceeding along consensual lines.** The USL Government has set-up the Constitutional Forum, which brings together representatives of the civil society, whereas the Parliamentary Commission comprises representatives of all political parties. The project for the amendment of the current Constitution needs to be approved by the Legislature and subsequently by a popular referendum.

The Venice Commission's decision to assist the Romanian government counterbalances efficiently President Traian Basescu's intervention, who called for a boycott of the prospective referendum, provided the amendment project will not contain some of his political proposals concerning a reduced number of MPs and the disbandment of one of the two Chambers of Parliament.

PRIME MINISTER VICTOR PONTA WILL NOMINATE THE NEW DNA CHIEF AND THE NEW GENERAL PROSECUTOR



Following former Justice Minister Mona Pivniceru's nomination as Constitutional Court judge, **Prime Minister Victor Ponta took over as interim Justice Minister**. The Prime Minister will hold a series of meetings with President Traian Basescu and with the prosecutors within the Supreme Council of Magistracy (CSM) **in order to decide on the two prosecutors who will be nominated for the positions of General Prosecutor and DNA chief**.

Victor Ponta emphasized that he will start this procedure only after reaching an agreement with the other actors involved in this process, in order to ensure that neither the president, nor the CSM will block these appointments.

Victor Ponta also emphasized that new nominations are needed in order to overcome the current political and institutional stalemate and he declared himself confident that the prospective compromise will lead towards a more independent judiciary.