



INFOPOLITIC

Romanian Politics

9 September

Multimedia Foundation for Local
Democracy



IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

1. **FOREIGN POLICY.** Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, made a visit to the Republic of Moldova, on its Independence Day.
2. **ENERGY:** Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, attended the opening ceremony of the Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline.
3. **POLLS.** Victor Ponta poised to win the presidential elections.
4. **POLITICS.** Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, attended the meeting of the European social- democrat leaders.
5. **FOREIGN POLICY.** Victor Ponta: 65 years of political and diplomatic relations with China allow us to think about joint projects in agriculture, energy and infrastructure.
6. **EU.** Victor Ponta: The most important thing for Romania is to have an important European Commissioner position.
7. **ADMINISTRATION.** Victor Ponta: The local officials will have 45 days to choose their political affiliation.



PRIME MINISTER VICTOR PONTA, PSD PRESIDENT, MADE A VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ON ITS INDEPENDENCE DAY

In Chisinau, Victor Ponta visited the National Art Museum of Moldova, context in which it was announced the donation by the Romanian Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of one million euro to continue the restoration of the building.

"It is a special day for Moldova, Independence Day, but beyond this we must do things for culture, education and art. The restoration work needed a little support and this support comes from Romania wholeheartedly. (...) The support for culture on both sides of the Prut River is essential for the preservation of national identity. Any Romanian or Moldovan leu that we spend for culture is well invested", said Prime Minister Victor Ponta at the National Art Museum of the Republic of Moldova.

The Romanian delegation was then at the Municipal Library 'Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu', where the Romanian Prime Minister took part in the book donation consisting of 25,000 volumes for the library in Chisinau, and for many libraries and schools in the Republic of Moldova. "We hope to be as many, especially young people, but not just young people, to benefit from what we brought here. (...) Nothing can preserve national identity like a book. In Romania I donated blood, here I donate books. I think it is a happier choice", said Victor Ponta at the Municipal Library in Chisinau.

Subsequently, the Romanian PM and his Moldovan counterpart, accompanied by other members of the official delegations, visited a folklore art fair, where Victor Ponta discussed with a few craftsmen who were crafting ceramic or wooden objects.



The Head of the Executive in Bucharest was also in the Great National Assembly Square in Chisinau, **where a ceremony for handing the keys for the 15 Duster cars to the Moldovan Government by the Romanian Government was held.**

At the same time, Prime Minister Ponta promised the Ministers of Culture and Education of the Republic of Moldova that the Romanian Government will seek a financial solution to support the restoration of the Theater building in Cahul and, on the other hand, that the students and teachers from the Republic of Moldova will benefit from school buses soon from Romania.

The Romanian Government granted Chisinau 20 million euros to rebuild or upgrade more than 860 kindergartens.

PRIME MINISTER VICTOR PONTA, PSD PRESIDENT, ATTENDED THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE IASI-UNGHENI GAS PIPELINE

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, Moldovan Prime Minister Iurie Leanca and the European Commissioner for Energy Gunther Oettinger lit Wednesday, August 27, 2014, in the town of Zagarancea, Ungheni District, the inaugural flame of the Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline in the presence of official delegations of the two countries.

"Exactly one year ago I was here with Mr. Leancă, with Mr. Oettinger and we were finally starting the gas pipeline project. Some of you said they have heard of this gas pipeline 5 years ago and 10 years ago and 15 years ago, that you will also not do it. Now we did it and I want to thank Commissioner Oettinger because without the support of the European Commission Romania and Moldova alone wouldn't have been able to do it. I want to congratulate Iurie Leanca because you have a Prime Minister who every day, every hour says: What should be done for the people of Moldova? (...). That is a Prime Minister who wants the good for his country and we try together to do this. I think the



inauguration today gives a message to everyone and I want to be friends with everyone, but the message is clear, in order for **Moldova and Romania to be truly independent they need energy as they need all the other resources**. Together we can be truly independent and together we can be respected for that. And this is the message that we give today to Europe and to everybody else", said PM Victor Ponta in the speech at the inauguration of Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline.

The two PMs said at the end of the event that the project completion to Chisinau will be happening over the next two years. "What is important today is that it is for the first time in Moldova's history when it has not only one supplier. But further, in terms of technology, the Romanian Government and I think Transgaz will do the work, and also the Moldovan Government, through the EIB and EBRD grants. We work so that in two years Chisinau will not only have gas, but also have the needed quantity and pressure", said Prime Minister Victor Ponta.

PM Iurie Leanca and European Commissioner Gunther Oettinger noted in their speeches the important role played by the Romanian Prime Minister in achieving the Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline and stressed on the other hand that through this project Moldova takes another step towards the integration in the European Union and ensuring energy independence.

The Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline construction was started a year ago, **the total project cost being 26 million euros, of which 7 million euros were a grant from the EU**.

The gas pipeline with a total length of 43.2 km has a capacity of 1.5 billion cubic meters of gas, of which Romania will be initially delivered a volume of up to 50 million cubic meters per year. The next stage of the project is the construction of the Ungheni-Chisinau pipeline in the Republic of Moldova and of the Onesti-Lețcani gas pipeline, with a compression station in Romania.



VICTOR PONTA POISED TO WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

An INSCOP Research poll realized for the „Adevărul“ newspaper offers new data about the presidential race. The declared electoral turnout rises significantly – the number of people declaring they will certainly vote has increased from 48.6% two months ago, up to 55.7%. 14.7% of the voters declare they will probably not vote, compared to the 17.3% two months ago.

Among the electors who had declared they will certainly vote, **Victor Ponta (PSD-UNPR-PC Alliance) leads the polls, being credited with 41.1% of the votes.** He is followed by Klaus Iohannis (ACL – PNL/PDL) with 28.8%, Elena Udrea (PMP) at 8.1%, Călin Popescu Tăriceanu (PRL) 6.7%, Monica Macovei - independent (3.5%), Corneliu Vadim Tudor (PRM) with 3.2%, Dan Diaconescu (PPDD) at 3%, Kelemen Hunor (UDMR) 3%, Ioan Ghișe – independent (2.1%) and Szilagyi Zolt (PPMT) at 0.5%.

Among the voters who are undecided for the first round of the presidential elections, 19% have declared they will vote for Victor Ponta, whereas 15% prefer Klaus Iohannis. As far as the options for the second round of the elections are concerned, Victor Ponta is the favorite, regardless of his opponent: Victor Ponta (54%) vs. Klaus Iohannis (46%) – a difference of 8%; Victor Ponta (54,7%) vs. Călin Popescu Tăriceanu (45,3%), Victor Ponta (66,1%) vs. Elena Udrea (33,9%). Victor Ponta (66,8%) vs. Monica Macovei (33,2%).

PRIME MINISTER VICTOR PONTA, PSD PRESIDENT, ATTENDED THE MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL- DEMOCRAT LEADERS

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, attended Saturday, 30 August 2014, in Paris, at the invitation of French President,



Francois Hollande, at a meeting of European Social Democrat leaders, having on the agenda being the coordination of positions regarding the designation of the leadership of the European institutions, as well as an exchanged of views on recent developments in the eastern neighborhood, focusing on the situation in Ukraine.

Europe and Romania's interest is to support Ukraine, but at the same time, not to escalate the conflict, said Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who attended the meeting of European Social Democrat leaders in Paris, stating that any statements made in Bucharest about support and military interventions are strictly political.

'The interest of Europe and Romania is to support Ukraine, but at the same time, not to escalate the conflict, and any statements made in Bucharest about support and military intervention are strictly political statements, as long as they have never been discussed in Parliament or in CSAT or in any other institution. At the level of Heads of State and Government with whom I spoke there is a unanimous supporting position for Ukraine, a condemning position for the Russian Federation, but very cautious when it comes to military support", said Victor Ponta, in a press conference at Victoria Palace.

The Prime Minister reiterated that the Government condemns the Russian Federation's involvement in Ukraine, pointing out that the idea of a military intervention from Romania, Europe, NATO is a matter to be dealt with 'high precaution'.

"We discussed about the situation in Ukraine (at the meeting of the European social democrat leaders in Paris). **I reiterated the fact that the Romanian Government condemns the involvement of the Russian Federation, the support that the Russian Federation provides for the separatists in eastern Ukraine is obvious, and that Romania, together with the entire international community condemns this intervention, fully supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and we support all kinds of sanctions which are decided at European**



and international level. Equally we mentioned and in a way we have responded to some concerns raised by our European partners - we made it very clear that at this time the idea of a military intervention from Romania, Europe, NATO is a matter to be dealt with very high caution, (...) that we have to think ten times before speaking", said Victor Ponta.

VICTOR PONTA: 65 YEARS OF POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHINA ALLOW US TO THINK ABOUT JOINT PROJECTS IN AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The exceptional political relations between China and Romania, 65 years of diplomatic and political relations, allow us to consider major economic projects, especially in agriculture, energy and infrastructure, said Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, at the economic meeting attended by representatives of major Chinese companies and banks doing business or seeking to invest in Romania.

"I am in China for the second consecutive year. This time accompanied by some Ministers, members of the Romanian Government, because beyond the exceptional political relations between China and Romania we wanted and we want with your support to develop the economic relations between the two countries. Romania is the seventh most populous country of the 28 that are part of the EU, but also has a strategic position on the eastern border of the European Union, having the biggest harbor in the Black Sea, the harbor in Constanta, a harbor through which an important part of the trade relations with China can take place. As stated in the Bucharest meeting with Prime Minister Li Keqiang, **Romania aims to be the most important gateway into the European Union for trade between Europe and China**", said the Romanian Prime Minister.



Victor Ponta said that, in economic terms, 2013 was the year when Romania had the largest growth among the other EU countries.

"I know that a 3.5% increase is not impressive for China that every year plans at least twice, but the important thing is that this growth has relied also on the development of relations between Romania and China", he said.

The Romanian PM stressed that the main strategic directions of economic development and the areas where there may be joint projects with Chinese companies are agriculture, energy and transport.

"Firstly, Romania has a very important agricultural potential. Last year, with the Chinese Government, we started all necessary arrangements for the opening of the Chinese market for the Romanian agricultural products and the possibility of importing pork, live cattle meat and we put special emphasis on the development of organic agriculture, bio agriculture, where Romania already has an internationally recognized brand. We want to develop this relationship on agricultural project and we consider strategically attracting investments in the production and processing in Romania so that Romania is one of the suppliers of agricultural products of the highest quality for the Chinese market", said Victor Ponta.

The PSD President added that **Romania has set as strategic directions for internal development energy and infrastructure, and that the Chinese companies are important partners for Romania.**

"First of all energy. The biggest challenge, the most important goal for Romania and Europe and I believe that equally for China is to ensure energy independence, the ability to have enough energy at competitive prices. Romania is the country in Europe that has all kinds of energy resources", said Victor Ponta.



The Romanian Prime Minister pointed out as essential for Romania the development of infrastructure. "Last year, I talked in Bucharest with Prime Minister Li Keqiang about Romania's desire to develop together with companies in China a first draft for a fast rail track and, also involving Chinese companies in road infrastructure projects. **These projects must be developed in compliance with the existing procedures in the European Union and at European quality standards.** But I already know that Chinese companies have the proven ability to meet these standards and develop together with Romanian companies large infrastructure projects", said Victor Ponta.

The PSD President recalled in the end of his speech the project on the development of five technology parks in Romania. "The Minister of the Economy says six. I want to see the first five and then we make the sixth one", said Victor Ponta.

VICTOR PONTA: THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ROMANIA IS TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER POSITION

Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President, said that his priority is that Romania to take over an important European Commissioner position, his name following to be announced next week.

"For me, as Prime Minister, the most importantly is that Romania has a portfolio with a serious load and a portfolio that not only Romania, but also the entire region should benefit from development projects. (...) The first proposal I made was to keep the Agriculture position for Mr. Dacian Cioloş. Keeping the portfolio is highly unlikely. (...) Next week Mr. Juncker will announce his decision, I know it, but it is the duty of any Head of Government to respect the right of the President to announce the EC and the Commissioners' name", said PM Victor Ponta at the Government.



Also, Victor Ponta said that there are chances for a woman to represent Romania in the European Commission.

"When Mr. Juncker clearly announces the position for Romania, then we have the proposal. **I can confirm that we had a discussion, otherwise discussed at European level, to be able to propose a woman to be European Commissioner;** otherwise the Commission will not pass in Parliament if the principle of gender balance is not respected. Definitely it is a woman, because this, the negotiation we are having, helps us get an important portfolio, it is true", said Victor Ponta.

The PM said that as soon as the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker will make known his decision on the portfolio for our country, the person appointed to hold the office of European commissioner shall enter into hearings in the Romanian Parliament.

"As soon as Mr. Juncker announces his decision, I will proceed according to the Romanian law, i.e.: the person who will be designated for a particular portfolio will go through national procedures involving a hearing in the Parliament. **I am absolutely convinced that Mr. Basescu also knows well that I could not ask for a hearing for a person, as long as he or she has not been appointed** and does not have a portfolio. It would have been at least inappropriate, if not ridiculous, to do a hearing in the Parliament for Mr. Ciolos for Agriculture and not appointed as Commissioner on Agriculture", said Victor Ponta.

"If we really cannot take over the Agriculture portfolio for Mr. Ciolos, yes (we are still proposing a woman for the position of Commissioner) In the letter we sent, Romania's first choice is Agriculture for Mr. Cioloș. As a matter of fact Mr. Ciolos told me very clearly that the idea is to be Commissioner for Agriculture, not who knows what other area that he does not know (...). It is important that next week Romania to have a European commissioner with an important portfolio and **I think all the battles and domestic interests are less important than the**



contribution that Romania will have to the Commission policy in the next five years", concluded Victor Ponta.

VICTOR PONTA: THE LOCAL OFFICIALS WILL HAVE 45 DAYS TO CHOOSE THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATION

The Government will adopt the draft emergency ordinance allowing the elected local officials to opt within 45 days for the party they want to join without losing the office obtained in the election, said Prime Minister Victor Ponta, PSD President.

"Today we have also the emergency ordinance with the elected officials. Firstly, I believe that we need to unlock the activity of the local authorities and we also have to do a bit of justice. Not those who shout the loudest are the ones that are right. All the elected officials in Romania in 2012 were USL elected with Crin Antonescu and Victor Ponta beside them and today the PSL woke up with Blaga and Iohannis. So how long is the term: just like in their law, 45 days. Exactly 45 days as they were in the PDL-PNL law they may be independent, they can remain where they are or they can respect their voters", said the Prime Minister in the Government meeting.

Victor Ponta added that the most important aspect of the normative act is unlocking the activity of local authorities. "In addition we do a little bit of justice, because to run for the USL, Antonescu and Ponta next to you, and now to need to go to Blaga and Iohannis, is something that we do not think we can ask someone. They are not the slaves, the mayors, the slaves on Blaga and Iohannis' estate. They can be free and can serve the voters and nothing else", said the Prime Minister.

The Head of the Executive then addressed a request to the Deputy Prime Minister Liviu Dragnea, Minister for Development that after the Government meeting to present through a press briefing the final form of the adopted ordinance on political affiliation of local officials.

