FINAL REPORT
Romania

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

1 December 2024

AGORA ELECTION OBSERVATION

Agora Election Observation Mission to Romania

Final Report on Parliamentary Elections

1 December 2024

Agora Election Observation's methodology is rooted in the principles of non-formal education and learning by doing, providing young people with hands-on experience in professional election observation. The mission programme also includes visits to democratic institutions at the heart of the electoral process, helping observers understand how electoral theory, law, and procedure translate into practice, just as in the photo above, where the mission team is visiting the Romanian Parliament.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Agora Election Observation (AEO) is an independent, non-governmental, and non-profit organisation committed to promoting democracy and human rights in Europe. AEO places particular emphasis on incorporating a youth perspective in its work by training young people as international election observers. Through this engagement, the organisation aims to build youth capacity and assess youth participation in electoral processes, as voters, candidates, and civil society actors.

The AEO mission to Romania deployed for the 1 December 2024 parliamentary elections, consisted of an 8-member core team based in Bucharest and 18 observers of 12 nationalities who were deployed across the country. Prior to deployment, all mission members completed the OSCE/ODIHR e-learning course on election observation and conducted preparatory research on youth political participation in Romania. In the course of the mission, AEO observers met with a range of stakeholders, including electoral authorities, political party representatives, civil society organisations, and academics.

Observers arrived in Romania on 27 November and participated in a two-day briefing session held on 28–29 November. On Election Day, observers were deployed to eight electoral constituencies: Bucharest, Cluj, Iași, Timișoara, Constanța, Sibiu, Bacău, and Brașov; where they visited 122 polling stations to observe the opening, voting, closing, and counting procedures.

The AEO mission would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Permanent Electoral Authority, representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, and fellow international observers, as well as to local coordinators, for their cooperation and support. Special thanks are extended to our partner organisation, Commit Global, for providing Vote Monitor, a digital tool that enabled real-time data collection and reporting from polling stations[1], as well as a meeting space for the mission's operations. The AEO Mission to Romania is independent in its findings and conclusions.
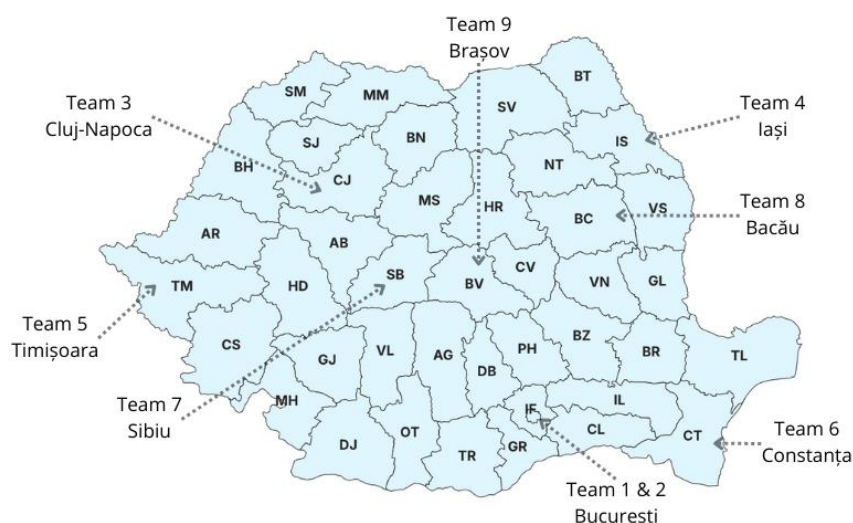
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parliamentary elections were held in Romania on 1 December 2024 in a politically dynamic and polarised environment, shaped by concurrent presidential elections, public dissatisfaction with mainstream political parties, and the increasing influence of social media in campaigning. The elections were administered in accordance with the legal framework, which provides the basis for democratic elections. Romania's bicameral Parliament, comprising the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, is elected through a proportional representation system, as regulated by Law No. 208/2015.

The elections were administered by a multi-tiered structure of election management bodies (EMBs), with the Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) and the Central Electoral Bureau (CEB) playing central roles. The PEA and the election administration more broadly are to be commended for their professional conduct and adherence to legal deadlines, which contributed to the overall credibility of the electoral process. The overlapping of the parliamentary and presidential elections introduced additional workload and administrative complexity, which was managed effectively by the election administration despite the increased demands.

Election Day was generally assessed positively by observers; however, procedural inconsistencies were noted, particularly during the vote counting. Moreover, accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities remained limited in over half of the polling stations visited.

The legal framework provides for passive voter registration, with the national population register serving as the basis for this process. Citizens could verify their registration online. Romanian citizens abroad are required to register actively to vote, and a notable decline in the number of mail-in voting requests has been reported. As of September, 19 million voters were registered, including over 4.4 million aged between 18 and 35.

Voter turnout reached 52.5%, a significant increase compared to previous parliamentary elections. Turnout among voters under 35 was estimated at 42%. Despite this, youth remained underrepresented among candidates and elected officials, with only two senators and a small number of deputies under the age of 35 elected. Structural barriers, such as the low prioritisation of youth concerns by political parties, continued to hinder meaningful youth participation. Youth unemployment and socio-economic challenges further limited engagement, with many young people expressing an intention to emigrate. Young voters often feel disconnected from mainstream political parties, whose platforms frequently fail to address concerns specific to their age group.

Social media, particularly TikTok, played a central role in campaigning and youth mobilisation. Parties such as AUR and the Party of Young People (POT) effectively used digital platforms to reach younger voters. However, concerns remain over the lack of oversight of online political advertising. Civil society interlocutors highlighted insufficient state-led voter education campaigns targeting young voters.

Seven political parties passed the 5% threshold to enter Parliament. The results confirmed a growing support for populist and anti-establishment parties, amid public discontent over inflation and economic uncertainty.

The legal framework allows for both domestic and international election

observation. A total of 73 domestic and 21 international missions were accredited. While observers were granted access to most stages of the electoral process on election day, access to other key stages, such as tabulation, recounts, and signature verification, was limited. Furthermore, the absence of a clear distinction between professional election observation missions and diplomatic or institutional delegations reduced the clarity of roles.

The 2024 parliamentary elections were competitive and professionally managed; however, key areas remain for improvement, particularly in enhancing transparency, strengthening inclusive participation, and ensuring meaningful youth engagement in political life.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 2024 Romanian parliamentary elections, held on December 1, took place in a politically charged and complex environment, shaped by the concurrent presidential election. The coincidence of these two major electoral processes posed unique challenges for the election administration authorities, especially as the Constitutional Court ordered a recount of the first-round presidential results. These results were later entirely annulled due to external interference in the electoral campaign, primarily through the use of social media, further increasing political tensions. In fact, both the parliamentary and presidential elections held in December 2024 highlighted the growing role of social media platforms, particularly TikTok, which has increasingly become a tool for political outsiders to gain visibility and influence,

reshaping traditional campaign dynamics. This sparked widespread debate about the integrity of Romania's electoral framework and underscored the need to strengthen mechanisms for overseeing political advertising and campaign financing on social media, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Romania's political landscape remains characterised by a plurality of parties and candidates competing for representation. According to the final result protocols, six independent candidates and 30 political parties and organisations representing national minorities registered for the Senate elections[2], while 52 independent candidates and 49 political parties and minority organisations registered for the elections to the Chamber of Deputies.[3]

The main political entities included the Social Democratic Party (PSD), which traditionally receives significant support from rural constituencies; the National Liberal Party (PNL), generally supported by center-right and pro-European segments of the electorate; and the Save Romania Union (USR), which appeals primarily to urban, younger, and reform-oriented voters. The Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) also increased its electoral support, utilising populist narratives and social media platforms to engage with certain groups of voters expressing discontent with the political establishment.

Additionally, since the previous parliamentary elections in 2020, several new political formations have emerged, including both newly established parties and entities originating from existing political movements. Among the parties participating in parliamentary elections for the first time

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[2]   See the final result protocol for the 2024 Senate election.

[3]   See the final result protocol for the 2024 Chamber of Deputies election.

were S.O.S. Romania (established in 2021), Force of the Right (a 2021 splinter from the PNL), the Romanian National Conservative Party (PNCR, established in 2023), and Renewing Romania's European Project (REPER, which split from USR in 2022).

Economic considerations, including inflation, income inequality, and rural-urban disparities, were among the factors influencing voter priorities. [4] The Social Democratic Party (PSD) emphasised proposals related to income growth and social welfare.[5] The National Liberal Party (PNL) focused on measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises and the middle class[6], while the Save Romania Union (USR) advocated for tax reductions, decreased public spending, and the simplification of administrative procedures.[7] [8]

Social media, in particular TikTok, played an increasingly prominent role in the electoral process, influencing voter engagement and campaign strategies. The Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), as well as several smaller parties, made extensive use of TikTok to reach younger voters through short, provocative video content, often circumventing traditional media channels. The platform also contributed to the visibility of the Party of Young People (POT), which positioned itself as youth-focused while supporting Calin Georgescou, the

winner of the first round of the annulled presidential elections, who publicly declared no campaign expenditures, a claim that was subsequently challenged.[9]

According to several AEO interlocutors, including representatives of youth organisations, civil society, and academia, political parties largely refrained from integrating specific reform-oriented policies addressing youth interests into their political and campaign programs. Instead, parties tended to rely on broader populist messaging, which appeared to resonate with economically disadvantaged segments of the electorate across age groups. Major political parties maintain youth wings, which, according to some interlocutors, provide opportunities for political engagement, networking, and gaining experience. Some young activists and party representatives noted that youth participation in party activities is motivated by a range of factors, including alignment with political ideologies and aspirations for future employment in public administration. Despite active youth involvement in party structures, the overall number of young candidates remained limited, and those nominated often faced difficulties in obtaining competitive positions on party lists. This, together with the limited prioritisation of youth-specific policies in political and campaign programs, contributes to persistent barriers to youth

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[4]   See HuffPost, 'Los partidos europeístas frenan el avance ultra en las elecciones de Rumanía', 2 December 2024.

[5]   See Digi24, 'Ciolacu a prezentat programul de guvernare PSD și se anunță un președinte incomod: „Uitați de terenurile confortabile de golf"', 29 October 2024.

[6]   See Caleaeuropeana, 'PNL launched its 2024-2028 government program. Nicolae Ciucă: The future of the Romanian economy, SMEs and the well-being of the middle class are on the ballot', 2 November 2024.

[7]   See USR, 'O Românie pentru toți, nu doar pentru unii', 2024.

[8]   See HotNews.ro, 'Cum poate România să relanseze economia: Viziunea economică a Elenei Lasconi și USR', 23 October 2024.

[9]   See Politico, 'Romania's presidential front-runner Georgescu benefited from Russia-style booster campaign, declassified docs say', 5 December 2024.

participation and representation in political life.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

A multi-tiered system of election management bodies (EMBs) is responsible for organising and overseeing elections in Romania. The structure comprises two central entities, the Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) and the Central Electoral Bureau (CEB), as well as intermediate-level constituency electoral bureaus and lower-level polling station electoral bureaus.

PEA is responsible for maintaining the electoral register, training polling officers, overseeing campaign finance regulations, coordinating logistics for elections, developing voter education programs, and evaluating previous elections to inform improvements in future ones. Its comprehensive mandate was implemented with professionalism, according to most interlocutors and the AEO mission's observation. The PEA is a permanent body that operates continuously across electoral cycles. It provides professional programs for young people; yet, according to its representatives, ensuring their long-term retention remains challenging due to limited financial resources.

The CEB is established specifically for each election and is composed of five judges of the High Court of Cassation and Justice; the president and vice-presidents of the PEA; up to 12 representatives of political parties, political alliances, or electoral alliances and one representative appointed by the parliamentary group of national minorities in the Chamber of Deputies. [10] The CEB

manages overall coordination during the electoral process, approves candidacies, resolves disputes, oversees tabulation and certification of results, and ensures compliance with electoral laws. Some AEO interlocutors from civil society perceived the CEB as generally not open enough to the public, which limits trust in the transparency of the electoral decision-making process.

In 2024, the parliamentary election took place between the two rounds of the presidential election, necessitating the establishment of two separate CEBs to manage the parallel electoral processes. The PEA President served as a member of both CEBs, and this occasionally complicated the work of the two CEBs during the overlapping phases of the two elections.

Constituency Electoral Bureaus (CEBs) operate at the county level, in the Municipality of Bucharest, and for the diaspora. They are composed of judges from local courts, representatives of contesting entities, and technical staff. CEBs are responsible for administering elections within their respective constituencies, overseeing polling stations, verifying election results from polling stations, and managing local-level electoral disputes and logistical arrangements.

Polling Station Electoral Bureaus (PSEBs) are responsible for managing individual polling stations. They are composed of a chairperson and a deputy chairperson, both appointed by the PEA, and polling staff nominated by political parties. Their functions include conducting polling operations and addressing procedural matters or incidents at the polling station level. PSEBs submit preliminary results to

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[10]   See Article 11 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

the CEBs for further verification and tabulation.

At the polling stations visited, AEO observers noted that approximately one-third of polling staff were aged 35 or younger, and in 15 % of cases, the chairperson was also under 35. Women comprised approximately two-thirds of the polling staff, including those serving as chairpersons.

VOTER REGISTRATION

In Romania, voter registration is passive. The national population register serves as the basis for automatic voter registration, with citizens included according to their official address. Voters can verify their registration status and assigned polling stations through an online portal managed by the PEA. The Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) is responsible for maintaining and updating the electoral register to reflect any changes in personal details. Positively, voters are assigned to polling stations based on either their residence or domicile address. Additionally, they may cast their ballot at any polling station within their constituency and be registered on the supplementary list at the chosen location.[11] Both provisions enhance the inclusiveness of the electoral process by facilitating participation for highly mobile groups, including young people, students, and workers.

Unlike residents in Romania, Romanian citizens living abroad are required to actively register to vote. They can do so either via an online portal provided by the PEA or in person at Romanian embassies or consulates. Voters abroad have the option to cast their ballots either in person at diplomatic missions or by mail. According to the PEA, there was a notable decline in the number of mail ballot requests from voters abroad in 2024.[12]

As of September 2024, the PEA reported a total of 19,002,912 registered voters residing in Romania and abroad. Of these, 18,011,923 had their domicile or residence within the country, and 4,466,709 (24.8%) were between the ages of 18 and 35.[13]

CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

According to the Romanian Constitution, the country is a democratic Republic with a system of separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislative branch is represented by a bicameral Parliament, consisting of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The electoral system for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is governed by Law No. 208/2015, with regular elections held every four years. Both the 331 members of the Chamber of Deputies and the 136 members of the Senate are elected via a closed party list within a proportional representation electoral system. Parliamentary elections are held in 43 multi-member constituencies

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[11]   See Article 42 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

[12]   See Romania-Insider, 'Almost 7,000 Romanians living abroad registered to vote by mail in upcoming elections', 18 October 2024.

[13]   See Permanent Electoral Authority Press release on the total number of citizens with the right to vote registered in the Electoral Register, 2024

that correspond to Romania's 41 counties, the Municipality of Bucharest, and the Romanian diaspora. It is worth noting that independent candidates are also allowed to stand for election alongside political parties in the parliamentary elections.

The minimum age requirement to run for the Chamber of Deputies is 23 years old, while for the Senate, a candidate must be at least 33 years old on the day of the election. In both cases, candidates must hold Romanian citizenship, have full legal capacity, and must not be under a court-imposed ban on exercising their political rights.

Political parties that want to run candidates in all constituencies for parliamentary elections must collect signatures from voters and submit them to the Central Electoral Bureau. They need signatures from at least 1% of all registered voters in the country. Parties can also choose to run candidates only in specific constituencies. In this case, they must collect signatures from at least 1% of voters who live in those constituencies and submit them to the local Constituency Electoral Bureaus. However, they need at least 1,000 signatures per constituency. The same rules apply to independent candidates who must also gather signatures from at least 1% of the voters registered in the constituency where they are running, with a minimum of 1,000 signatures.[14]

The requirement to collect supporting signatures serves as a gatekeeping mechanism to ensure that political parties and independent candidates have a demonstrated level of public support before being allowed to contest elections. However, it can create barriers, particularly for younger candidates. For younger candidates, collecting the required number of signatures often poses significant logistical and financial challenges. The process typically involves mobilising volunteers to gather signatures in public spaces or through door-to-door canvassing. This can be particularly challenging for candidates who lack established party machinery or a large network of supporters.

Political parties must meet a threshold of 5% of the national vote or secure at least 20% of the vote in four constituencies to gain representation in the national parliament. Alliances face higher thresholds depending on the number of member parties, starting at 8% for two-member alliances and increasing incrementally. Additionally, up to 18 seats in the Chamber of Deputies are reserved for ethnic minority groups that qualify by surpassing a lower threshold. This threshold is calculated as 5% of the average votes required to win a seat in the lower chamber, derived by dividing the total votes of parties, alliances, and independent candidates that met the threshold by the number of seats they obtained.

YOUTH IN ROMANIA

Romania has a young population of approximately 6 million people, accounting for around 30% of the total population. [15] The main legal framework for youth policy is set by the Youth Law (No. 350/2006), which defines individuals aged 14 to 35 as youth. However, since the minimum voting age in Romania is 18, this report focuses

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[14] See Article 54 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

[15] See Organization for Youth Education & Development, Laws Concerning Youth in Romania.

specifically on individuals aged 18 to 35, i.e., those eligible to vote and directly participate in political life, including as candidates.[16]

According to AEO interlocutors, no unreasonable legal restrictions are preventing young people, including those with disabilities or from marginalised groups, from exercising their political rights. Despite this, young individuals remain significantly underrepresented in decision-making processes. Following the 2024 parliamentary elections, only two senators[17] and a small number of deputies under the age of 35 were elected, underscoring the persistent challenges to youth political representation.

The 2024 Youth Study – "Opinions, Fears, and Aspirations of Young People in a Romania of Social Inequalities",[18] conducted by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, highlights some of the structural barriers young Romanians face. Youth unemployment remains around 20%, and many of those employed are in precarious jobs with low wages or work in fields unrelated to their qualifications. These economic conditions hinder young people's ability to afford independent housing, with about 65% of young adults living with their parents due to financial constraints. Reflecting widespread disillusionment, 45% of respondents reported low trust in political institutions, citing factors such as perceived corruption and lack of youth representation in policymaking.

A striking finding from the study is that 45% of Romanian youth expressed a desire to emigrate, seeking better education and employment opportunities abroad. This aligns with observations shared by many AEO interlocutors, including representatives of civil society and political parties, who noted that emigration to Western EU countries is a dominant trend among Romanian youth.

At the same time, there are signs of growing youth engagement and political awareness. The study found increased participation in civic education programs and EU-funded initiatives, which have contributed to improved understanding of policy impacts. Romania also has high internet penetration among young people (over 90%), enabling wide access to information and fostering digital activism. Social media has become a powerful tool for youth-driven advocacy, particularly on issues such as climate change. Over 70% of young respondents believe that green policies should be a national priority, and participation in environmental campaigns is reportedly increasing.

All AEO interlocutors agreed on key trends concerning youth political engagement. They observed that many young people abstain from elections and politics because they feel disconnected from political parties and their platforms, which often lack meaningful reform agendas that address the needs of young people. They also highlighted the lack of government investment in youth-targeted voter education, particularly in emphasising the importance of electoral participation and broader civic engagement. At the same time, some interlocutors acknowledged a rise in youth activism and political interest, evidenced by a higher-

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[16]   See European Commission, National Youth Law, 2024.

[17]   See List of 2024 Senators.

[18]   See Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Youth Study Romania 2024. Opinions, Fears, and Aspirations of Young People in a Romania of Social Inequalities, 2024.

than-usual youth turnout in the 2024 parliamentary elections.

The persistent underrepresentation of youth in political institutions highlights the urgent need for targeted measures to promote youth participation and ensure that the voices and priorities of younger generations are reflected in Romania's decision-making processes.

ELECTION DAY

Election Day was generally well-administered, and the election management bodies demonstrated a high level of professionalism.

Polling station staff began preparations for voting at 6 am on 1 December 2024. In the polling stations visited by AEO observers, the opening procedures proceeded smoothly without any significant issues. Polling stations opened on time in all of the observed cases.

The voting started at 7 am and ended at 9 pm. The voting process was conducted in a well-organised manner, and the atmosphere at polling stations, observed by the AEO observers, was calm and orderly. Although the parliamentary elections took place amid a delicate political landscape and the recount of the presidential results, the AEO observers did not report any incidents on Election Day and did not identify any instances of campaigning either near or inside the polling stations. Election material was present in all the polling stations visited. In general, voting procedures were followed, and the secrecy of the vote was respected. Polling staff were well-trained, having received training from both the PEA and political parties. They mentioned the educational materials received from the PEA

as a valuable resource. Nonetheless, polling station staff were not always familiar with the procedures for accommodating election observers, resulting in some degree of inconsistency in how they were received. At the same time, polling station staff were cooperative, and the AEO observers did not face significant restrictions during their observation.

The voting process for both chambers involves the use of standardised ballot papers listing all participating parties, alliances, and independent candidates. Voters mark only one preference with a stamp. Voters had some confusion when casting their ballots for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in the respective boxes due to the similarity of the design.

The AEO observers also noted some inconsistencies in the sealing of ballot boxes, as some ballot boxes were secured only with adhesive tape, while others were additionally stamped. In rare instances, ballot boxes were not sealed.

Accessibility of polling stations emerged as a recurring issue, as 52% of polling stations visited by the AEO observers were not independently accessible to voters with physical impairments. This was due to the fact that polling stations were either not located on the ground floor or had steps at the entrance of the building. While Romanian electoral legislation provides voters with physical disabilities the right to request a mobile ballot box, greater participation could be ensured by enhancing the physical accessibility of the polling stations. Moreover, AEO observers noted that voters with visual impairments often required assistance, as permitted by

Romanian electoral law, [19] mainly due to small ballot font sizes and inadequate lighting in some polling stations. Equipping polling stations with visual aids and supportive equipment can help visually impaired voters exercise their right to vote more independently.

Polling stations closed on time in all observed cases. The closing and counting process was assessed less positively than the opening and voting procedures by AEO observers, mainly due to the need to verify ballot papers printed on several pages slowed down the process. In fact, polling station staff had to carefully inspect each page of the ballot booklet to verify that only one stamp, indicating the voter's choice, was present. This causes some delays, or in some cases, the chairpersons did not show each page as outlined in the procedures. Furthermore, according to AEO interlocutors, the quality of the paper used for the ballot papers was insufficient, putting the validity of the ballots at risk due to the possibility of ink seeping through the pages.

In the polling stations visited, AEO observers noted that young people aged 35 or younger represented one third of commission members, and in 15% of the cases the chairperson was under 35. Women made up two-thirds of poll workers in general and

also as chairpersons at the polling stations observed.

ELECTION OBSERVATION

Romania allows both citizen and international observation. Citizen observers must be affiliated with a non-governmental organisation (NGO) whose mandate relates to democratic processes or electoral observation. To obtain accreditation, the NGO must submit a formal request to the Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) no later than 15 days before election day.[20] For the 2024 parliamentary elections, 73 citizen election observation missions were granted accreditation.[21]

Romania also welcomed international organisations, foreign governments, and electoral management bodies (EMBs) to observe the elections. However, the legal framework does not define a detailed accreditation procedure for international observers. [22] The law provides that the accreditation procedure, including the models of accreditation documents and observer badges, shall be established by a PEA decree. While the PEA decree lacked detailed provisions regarding international observer registration, such as submission deadlines, [23] the PEA was notably

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[19]   See Article 85 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

[20]   See Article 89 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority and Permanent Electoral Authority's Decision on the approval of the accreditation procedure, the models of accreditation documents and the models of

badges of accredited persons in the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2024.

[21]   See Permanent Electoral Authority, Associations and foundations, 2024.

[22]   See Article 89 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

[23]   See Permanent Electoral Authority's Decision on the approval of the accreditation procedure, the models of accreditation documents and the models of badges of

cooperative, responsive, and supportive throughout the accreditation process, facilitating the work of international observers. Moreover, there is currently no formal distinction between election observation missions and delegations visiting the country for purposes closer to diplomatic courtesy or institutional exchange, such as shadowing experiences by other election commissions. In total, 21 international entities were accredited to observe the 2024 parliamentary elections.[24]

Accreditation granted by the PEA enables domestic and international organisations to designate observers to all electoral bureaus at polling stations. The law explicitly permits observation of the opening, voting, and counting procedures on election day. [25] However, it remains unclear whether observation is permitted during other stages of the electoral process, such as the tabulation of results or sessions of election bodies.

Some domestic observers reported being denied access to key procedures. For instance, the Vot Corect Coalition stated it was not allowed to observe the signature verification process at the Central Electoral Bureau (BEC), as it was not conducted in public. [26] Similarly, domestic observers reported they were denied access to the recount of the first round of the presidential elections, which was ordered by the Constitutional Court and took place during the parliamentary electoral process.[27]

For the transparency and integrity of the electoral process, it is essential that not only the opening, voting, and counting procedures, but also all critical stages, including verification, tabulation, and recounts, be open to both domestic and international observers.

ELECTION RESULTS

A total of 9,455,072 citizens participated in the 2024 parliamentary elections, resulting in a voter turnout of 52.5%, with approximately 42% of citizens under the age of 35 casting their vote.[28] By comparison, the 2020 parliamentary elections saw a significantly lower turnout of 31.84%, including only around 25% participation among citizens under 35.[29]

The results signalled a sharp shift away from Romania's mainstream parties toward more populist, anti-establishment forces, whose messages resonated amid high inflation, rising living costs, and a sluggish economy.[30]

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accredited persons in the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2024.

[24] See Permanent Electoral Authority, International observers.

[25] See Article 90 of the Law No. 208 of 20 July 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organisation and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

[26] See Vot Corect Coalition's Raport preliminar de observare a alegerilor prezidenţiale din 24 Noiembrie, 2024

[27] See RFI, 'Romania recounts presidential ballots as parliamentary vote looms', 29 November 2024

[28] See 2024 Official Parliamentary Election Results.

[29] See European Commission, Overview on Youth participation in representative democracy, 2023.

[30] See Euronews, 'High turnout of 42% at 5pm in Romania's parliamentary elections', 01 December 2024.

Seven political parties surpassed the 5% electoral threshold required for representation in Parliament[31]:

Elections	Senate		Chamber of Deputies	
Name of Party or Organization	Number of votes	Percentage	Number of votes	Percentage
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	2065087	22,30	2030144	21,96
Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR)	1694705	18,30	1665143	18,01
National Liberal Party (PNL)	1322468	14,28	1219810	13,20
Save Romania Union (USR)	1134831	12,26	1146357	12,40
S.O.S. Romania (SOS)	718409	7,76	679967	7,36
Party of Young People (POT)	591927	6,39	596745	6,46
Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR)	590783	6,38	585397	6,33

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[31]　　See Central Electoral Bureau Press-release, 7 December 2024.

Recommendations

Based on its analysis and observations, AEO suggests the following recommendations to electoral stakeholders in Romania:

- *Promote youth representation within political parties by encouraging internal reforms, such as voluntary youth quotas or incentives for placing young candidates in electable list positions.*

- *Simplify and support the signature collection process for candidates and parties, particularly new entrants and younger candidates, to ensure equitable access to the electoral process.*

- *Expand youth-focused voter and civic education campaigns, including outreach in schools, universities, and online platforms, to foster informed and inclusive citizen participation.*

- *Improve the accessibility of polling stations for voters with physical and visual impairments by relocating sites to accessible venues and providing assistive materials.*

- *Provide clear access in the legislation to all stages of the electoral process for observation, and formalise the accreditation process for international observers, including timelines. Consider distinguishing between accredited election observers and diplomatic or institutional delegations to enhance clarity and the credibility of observation findings.*

- *Standardise ballot box sealing procedures through detailed and binding instructions to ensure consistent application of security measures across all polling stations.*

- *Enhance oversight mechanisms for online political advertising and campaigning, ensuring greater transparency and accountability, particularly on social media platforms.*

- *Provide consistent training and guidance for polling station staff on implementing key procedures, especially for closing and counting, to minimise procedural inconsistencies and strengthen integrity.*

Alliance for the Union of Romanians

the 2024 parliamentary elections

0 – 8 %   8 – 16 %   16 – 22 %   22 – 29 %   29 – 51 %
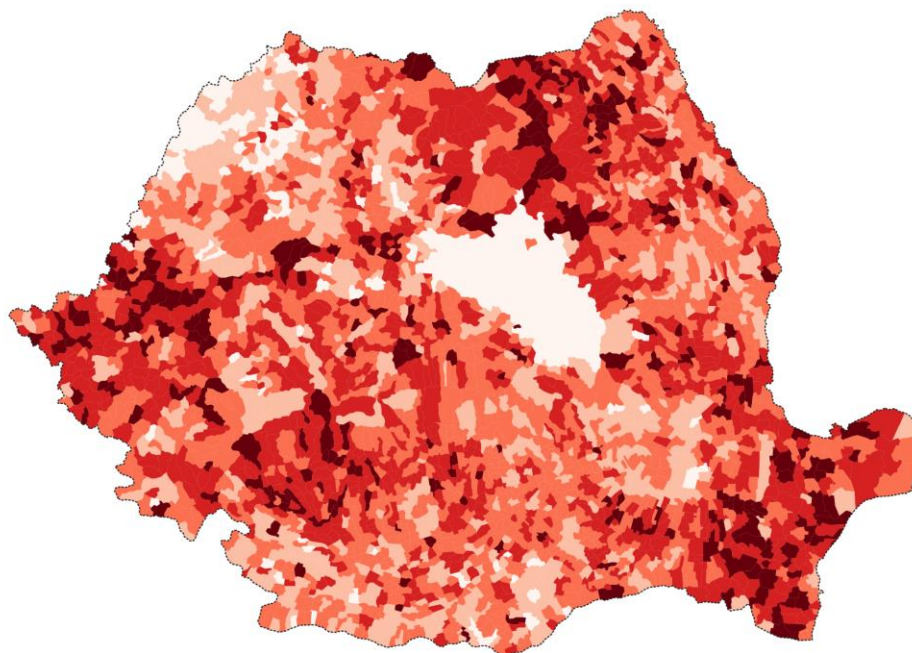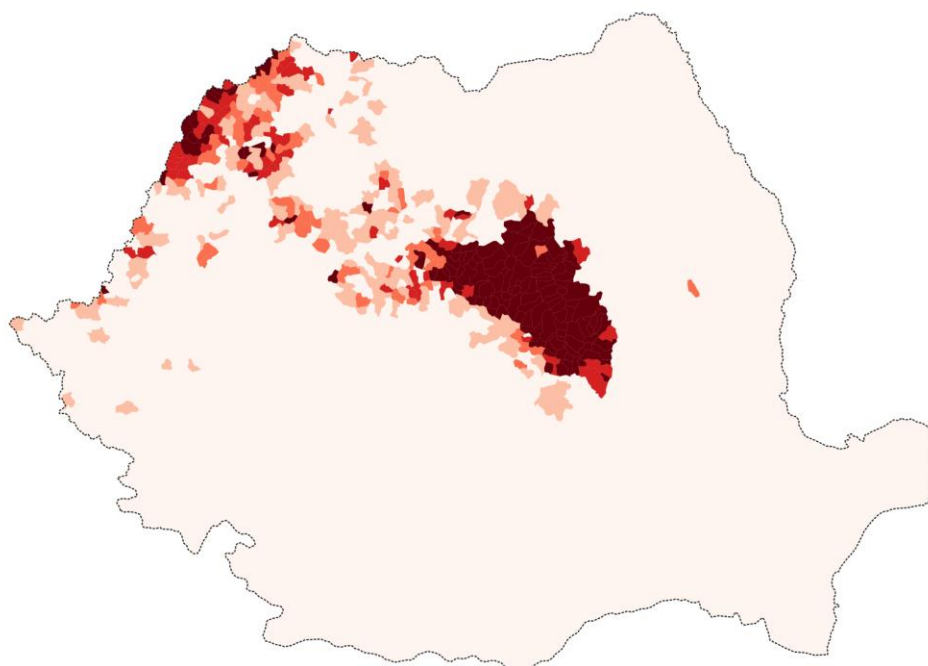

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

the 2024 parliamentary elections

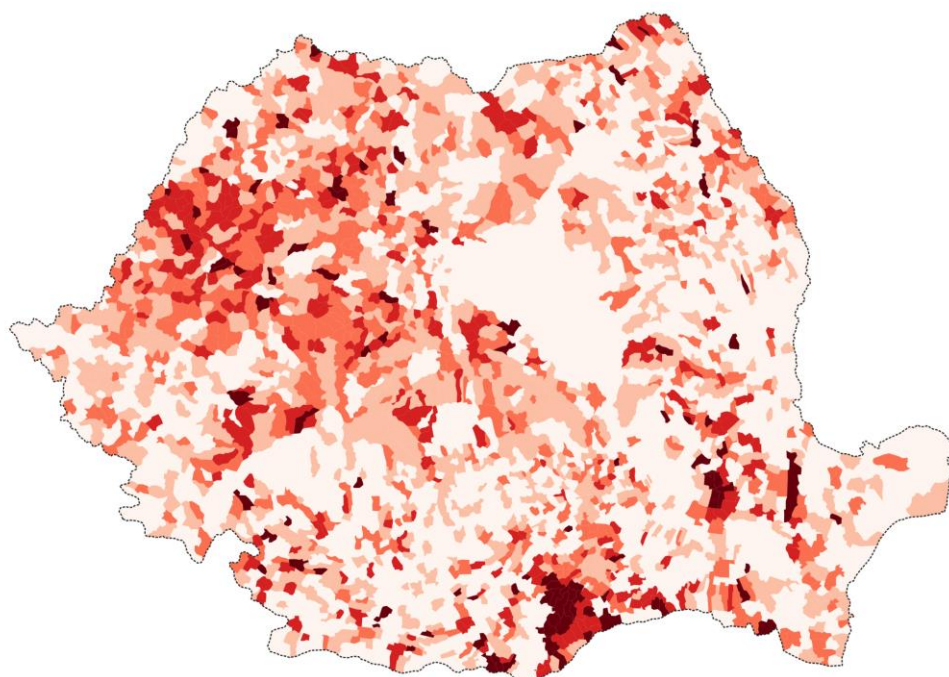0 – 9 %   9 – 31 %   31 – 55 %   55 – 80 %   80 – 98 %

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

National Liberal Party
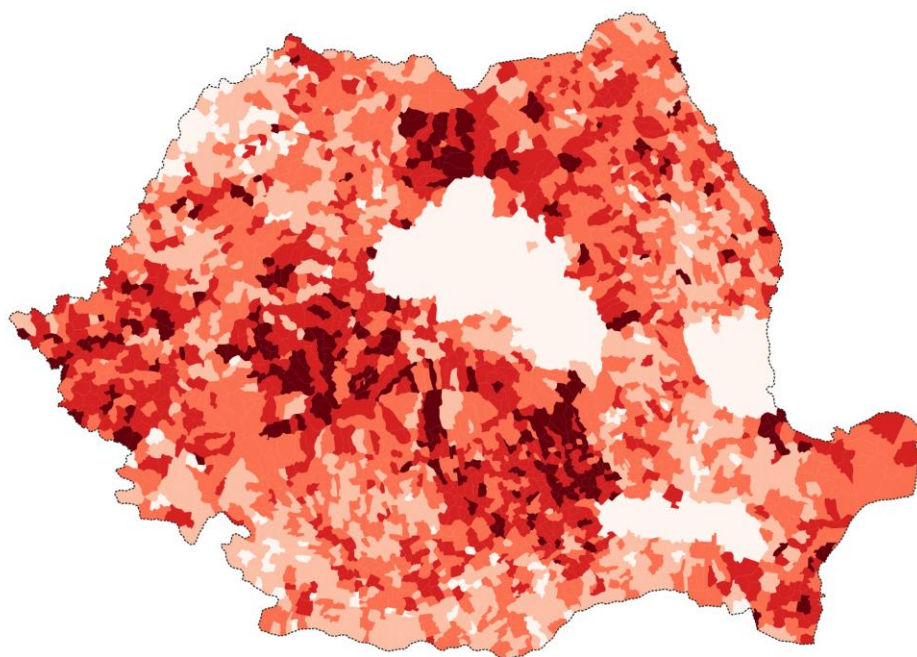
the 2024 parliamentary elections

0 – 10 %   10 – 20 %   20 – 32 %   32 – 48 %   48 – 91 %

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

Party of Young People

the 2024 parliamentary elections

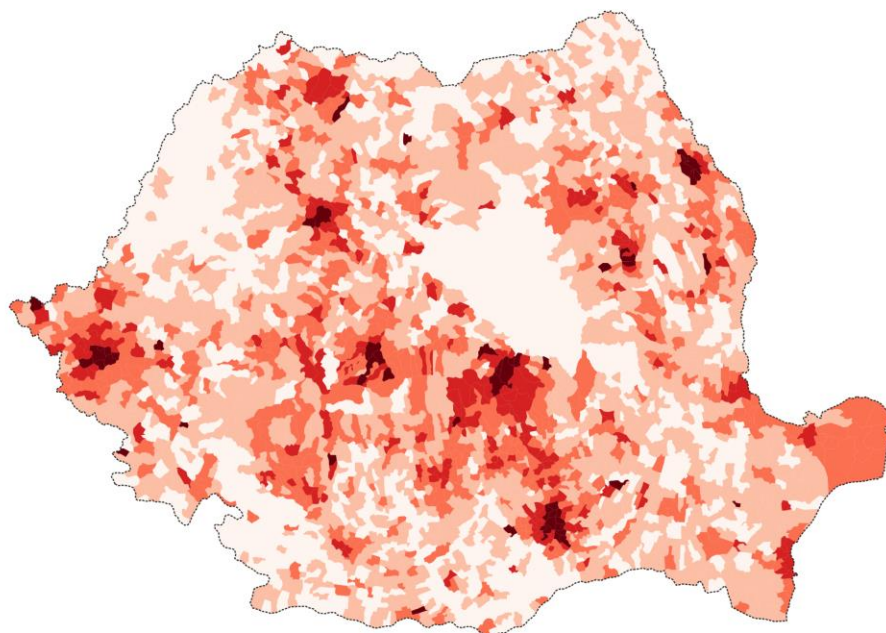0 – 2 %   2 – 5 %   5 – 7 %   7 – 10 %   10 – 21 %

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

Save Romania Union

the 2024 parliamentary elections

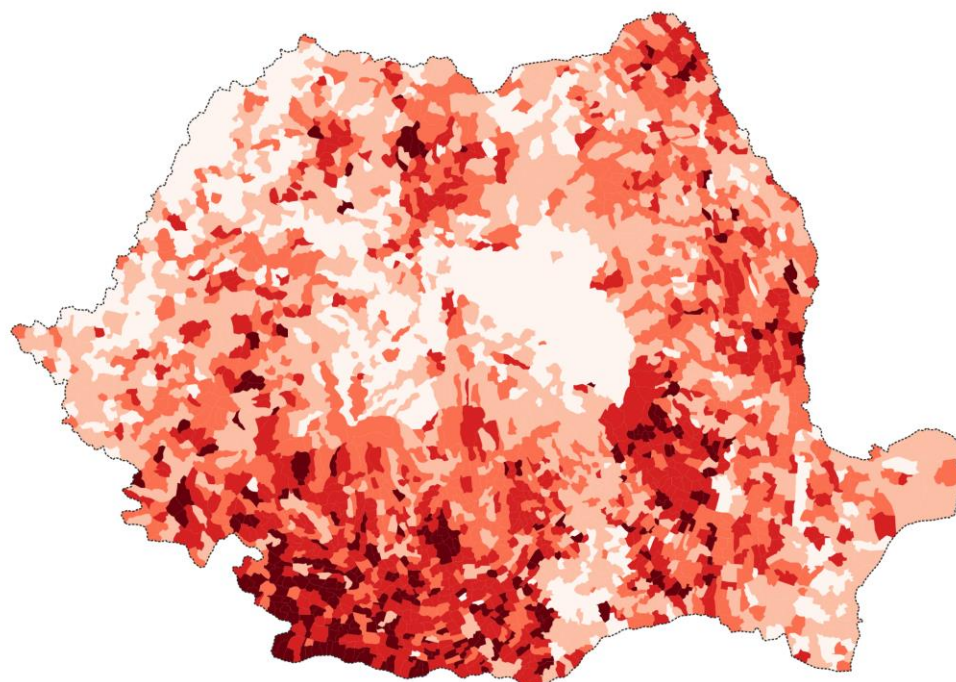0 – 4 %   4 – 7 %   7 – 11 %   11 – 18 %   18 – 34 %

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

Social Democratic Party

the 2024 parliamentary elections

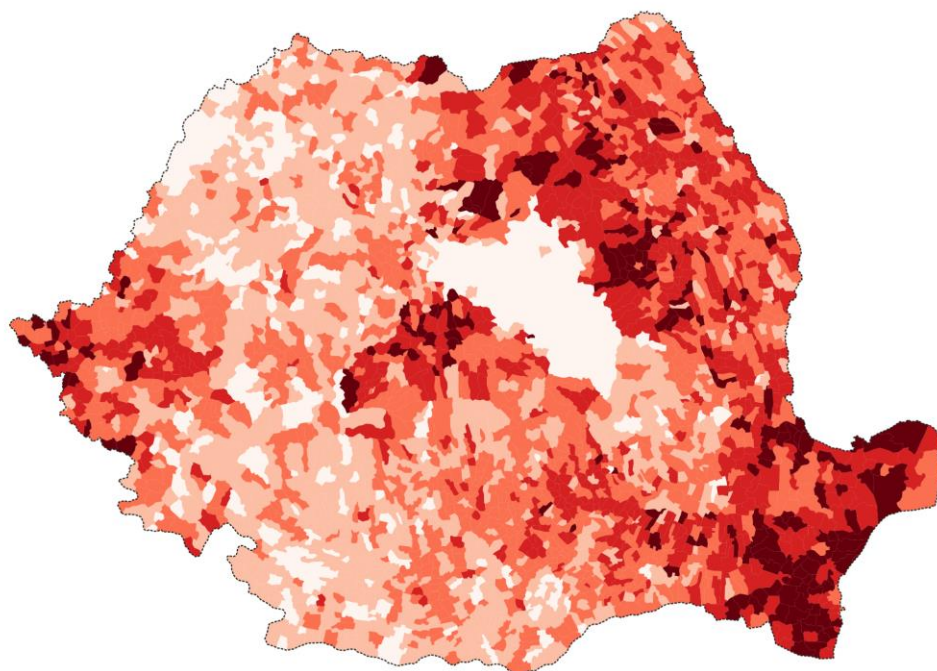0 – 13 %   13 – 24 %   24 – 36 %   36 – 50 %   50 – 85 %

Carto – Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

S.O.S. Romania

the 2024 parliamentary elections

0 – 3 %   3 – 6 %   6 – 9 %   9 – 13 %   13 – 22 %
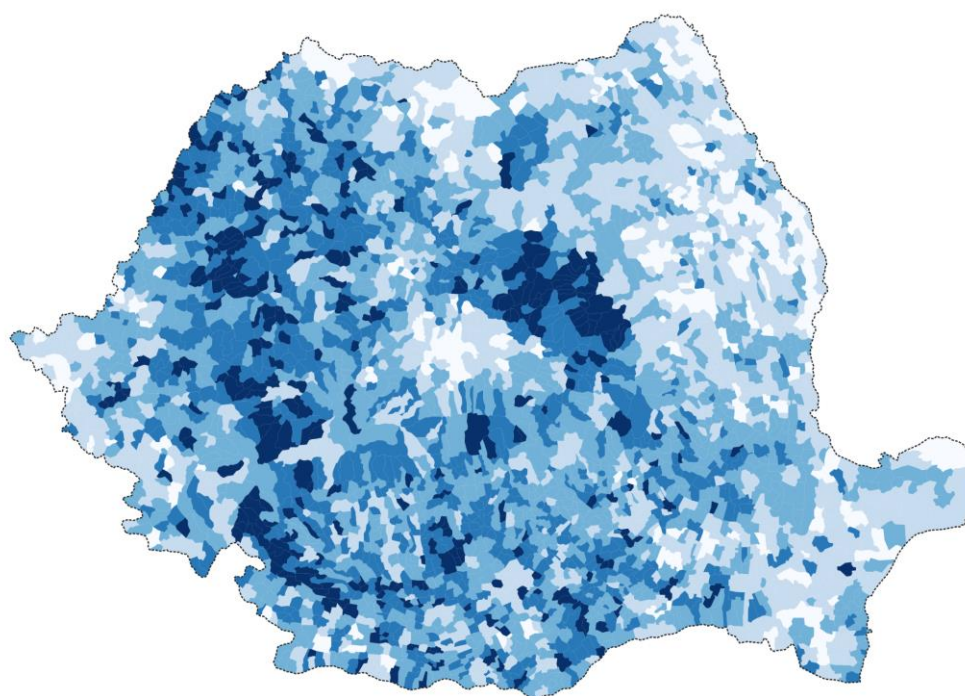

Carto − Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

Turnout

the 2024 parliamentary elections

11 – 36 %   36 – 44 %   44 – 51 %   51 – 58 %   58 – 79 %

Carto − Agora Election Observation/Daniel Kerekes

ANNEX 2. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Team Members of Agora Election Observation

Board Member - Rocco Giovani Dibiase, Italy
Board Member - Andreas Martin Speiser, Poland/Switzerland
Missions and Methodology - Mansiya Samambet, Kazakhstan
Missions and Methodology - Tom Breese, United Kingdom

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Data Manager - Daniel Kerekes, Slovakia

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Emma Maréchal, Belgium/Germany
Jaime Camino, Spain
Jana Büssing, Germany
Janica Becker, Germany
Jorge Caloto, Spain
Klara Leithäuser, Germany
Lisa Stulic, Sweden
Lucile Reusch, Germany
Lukas Herzog, Germany
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