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Election Fraud In Romania

By: Mara Nicole Chiriac



Election fraud is a severe issue that has plagued Romania's political system for decades.[1] The electoral process in Romania has been affected by a variety of fraudulent conduct, from suspicions of vote buying to cases of ballot stuffing.[2] This is a significant issue that must be addressed to safeguard the future of the democratic process in Romania and the integrity of its elections.

According to Burean, the effect of electoral fraud on the country's democratic system is a major worry.[3] It is crucial to note that fraud can have far-reaching implications and has the ability to damage the credibility of Romania's political institutions.[4] Election fraud can lower voter turnout, undermine public confidence in the electoral process, and eventually undermine public confidence in the legitimacy of the government.[5] Additionally, it has been argued that fraud might result in the election of politicians who do not accurately represent the choices of the people, hence lowering the quality of governance and public policy.[6] This might lead to policies that do not reflect the desires of the people, creating a divide between the government and the people. In addition, fraud can open the door to corruption and bribery, leading to a rise in patronage and the politicization of government.[7] These issues have the potential to severely undermine Romania's government's credibility and legitimacy and ultimately cause the collapse of its political system.

In Romania, election fraud has had a significant negative effect on democracy. In the Romanian Journal of Political Sciences, Racoviță claims that electoral fraud has been persistent in Romania for many years.[8] This has led to a decline in public confidence in the voting system and in the electoral process's legitimacy.[9] In addition, election fraud has exacerbated political divisiveness in the country, as parties seek any advantage to win elections.[10] The democratic process has become less successful as a result, since parties now prioritize short-term gains above long-term fixes.[11] Due to the public's perception that the voting process is faulty and unreliable, the frequency of fraud has also resulted in a decline in voter

turnout.[12] In the end, election fraud in Romania has had a huge impact on democracy and a detrimental impact on the way the democratic system functions.[13]

Pop-Eleches conducted a study that looked at how election fraud affected Romania's democratic system.[14] Pop-Eleches discovered that the democratic system in Romania suffered significantly from the prevalence of electoral fraud.[15] In particular, the study discovered that officials of the former communist regime were more likely to engage in electoral fraud, which had a disruptive effect on the democratic system.[16] It was also revealed that the media participated in the rigged elections and contributed to the rise to power of the former communist authorities.[17] The majority of Romanians lacked confidence in the electoral process, and that this lack of confidence had a long-term impact on the growth of democracy in the nation.[18] Pop-Eleches came to the conclusion that election fraud had a detrimental impact on Romania's democratic system and was a significant impediment to the growth of democracy in the nation.[19] The study's conclusions show how crucial it is to stop election fraud if democratic regimes are to remain stable.[20]

More recently, President Klaus Iohannis was elected to a second term in the 2020 presidential election.[21] The Social Democratic Party (PSD), the opposing party, asserted that massive electoral fraud, such as vote buying and voter list manipulation, tainted the results.[22] The PSD has filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court challenging the results of the election.[23] The court is currently reviewing the case and has not yet issued a ruling.[24]

Even though Romania's electoral system has significantly improved in recent years, the prevalence of election fraud remains a cause for concern. Even with the implementation of new fraud prevention measures, fraudulent acts might still take place. It is crucial to make sure that everyone involved in organizing elections is aware of the risks posed by fraud and has put the appropriate safeguards in place to stop it.

Mara Nicole Chiriac is a Staff Editor at CICLR.

[1] L. Dragnea riscă să nu intre în Parlament din cauza condamnării pentru fraudă electorală [L. Dragnea risks not entering the Parliament because of the conviction for electoral fraud], Digi 24 Hd (Dec. 17, 2016), <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/politica/dragnea-risca-sa-nu-intre-in-parlament-din-cauza-condamnarii-pentru-frauda-electoral-a-634248> [<https://perma.cc/AWM2-EQ42>].

[2] *Id.*

[3] Ronald King with Paul Sum, Romania under Basescu : aspirations, achievements, and frustrations during his first presidential term (2011).

[4] *Id.*

[5] *Id.*

[6] Digi 24 Hd, *supra* note 1.

[7] *Id.*

[8] Mihaela Racoviță, *Europeanization and Effective Democracy in Romania and Bulgaria*, 11 Roma. J. Pol. Sci. 28 (2011).

[9] *Id.*

[10] *Id.*

[11] *Id.*

[12] Digi 24 Hd, *supra* note 1.

[13] Racoviță, *supra* note 8.

[14] Grigore Pop-Eleches, *Throwing Out The Bums: Protest Voting and Unorthodox Parties after Communism*, 62 World Pol. 221 (2010).

[15] *Id.*

[16] *Id.*

[17] *Id.*

[18] *Id.*

[19] *Id.*

[20] Pop-Eleches, *supra* note 14.

[21] Mirel Bran, *Le Monde: În România, guvernul este tot mai slăbit în urma acuzațiilor de plagiat / Ministrul de interne Lucian Bode este al patrulea membru al cabinetului acuzat de fraudă academică / În 2021 și 2022, alți doi miniștri au fost forțați să demisioneze în urma unor dezvăluiri de același tip* [*Le Monde: În România, guvernul este tot mai slăbit în urma acuzațiilor de plagiat / Ministrul de interne Lucian Bode este al patrulea membru al cabinetului acuzat de fraudă academică / În 2021 și 2022, alți doi miniștri au fost forțați să demisioneze în urma unor dezvăluiri de același tip*], G4 Media.Ro (Jan. 23, 2023), <https://www.g4media.ro/le-monde-in-romania-guvernul-este-tot-mai-slabit-in-urma-acuzatiilor-de-plagiat-ministrul-de-interne-lucian-bode-este-al-patrulea-membru-al-cabinetului-acuzat-de-frauda-academica-in-2021-s.html>

[<https://perma.cc/GY2W-QBPP>]

[22] *Id.*

[23] *Id.*

[24] *Id.*