

The EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVE

Issue 25 | Winter 2023 | £ 14.90



Romanian Conservative Wave

An Interview with Senator Claudiu Târziu

Claudiu Târziu is a Romanian senator and president of the National Council of the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) party. A staunch conservative, he has been a journalist, editor, and publisher. He is also the chairman of a recently founded think tank, the Mihai Eminescu Institute for Conservative Political Studies in Bucharest.



Can you tell us about the institute? Why was Mihai Eminescu's name chosen? What does the institute seek to achieve?

The idea of an institute of conservative studies was inspired by the 2019 founding of the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), but actual steps were taken only after the 2020 parliamentary elections. Its official founder is actually the AUR party.

There are several reasons for choosing its name. Firstly, Mihai Eminescu is the spiritual father of Romanian conservatism. Although he is known as the Romanian national poet, Eminescu was also an important conservative thinker, a very good journalist, and political analyst of his times—not only a wonderful man of culture, but also an active and involved citizen.

We have also chosen Eminescu to emphasise the importance of culture, in its broadest sense, to our destiny and to our political action.

We live in an era in which it is very clear that the political struggles and the great ideological rifts originate in and are fueled by culture and values. The clash between globalism and sovereignty, between the defenders of life and the promoters of a culture of death, is just one

political manifestation of the cultural war that has been going on in Europe since the French Revolution.

Even if the political battle seems like a race for votes, at a much deeper level it is a competition for people's minds and hearts, and this struggle is essentially a cultural one.

Our institute's main role is to encourage the formation, manifestation, and dissemination of conservative political thought. What we call 'conservatism,' 'sovereignty,' or the 'national right' needs clearly defined concepts, articulated policies, and programmes to be promoted in the public arena. We want to make this institute a laboratory of ideas and policies, a political school, but also a platform for international collaboration with other conservative organisations around the world and especially in Europe.

The Mihai Eminescu Institute recently organised an international conservative conference in Bucharest under the theme, "That Europe We Believe In." It was attended by important political leaders,



Senator Claudiu Târziu speaking in parliament. All photographs courtesy of the Mihai Eminescu Institute for Conservative Political Studies in Bucharest.

parliamentarians, and intellectuals from across Europe. What were the outcomes of this conference?

“That Europe We Believe In” conference was a success beyond our expectations, both in terms of participation and public feedback. We think of it not as a singular moment in time, but as an endeavour that we want to cultivate for years and decades to come. The contemporary European conservative vision has been consistently taking shape for several years now, and one of the key moments in its shaping was when the Paris statement, also entitled “A Europe We Can Believe In” was released in 2017. This statement helped inspire our conference.

The conference is part of a continent-wide effort by conservative forces to find ways of working together to offer European countries a different development model than the EU. More particularly, we want to show that there is a conservative, sovereigntist trend in Romania, which is becoming more powerful and wants to be part of the new conservative wave. We hope to work with our European partners—indeed, we need to. Our struggle against globalism has no chance if it is waged only by isolated nation states. It is essential to fight this dangerous ideology at the international level by creating coalitions with sovereigntist conservatives everywhere.

What is next in terms of international relations? Are you collaborating with other institutes or think tanks in Europe or elsewhere around the world?

Building bridges and ties with other conservative think tanks is one of our most important objectives. We are in contact with many intellectuals and traditionalist thinkers around the world. We are fully aware of the importance of establishing close relations with people who share our vision, and we will do our best to keep them as close as possible.

We will begin publishing a quarterly magazine starting next spring. It will be a substantial publication, full of articles, interviews, and translations by prominent authors. We will also publish books on various conservative themes by Romanian and foreign authors. We plan to organize different events, from public debates to political-training courses.

We are also developing an academy for those who want to have a career in politics. There is a huge need for professionalism among AUR party members and supporters. But we also hope that some of your readers will consider applying.

As you can see, we do not lack plans and enthusiasm. Our main priority is to bring together people that share our beliefs and, of course, to attract sources of funding.

Your new institute was founded by the AUR party, of which you were co-president along with George Simion. And today you are the president of the National Leadership Council of the party. What values guide your party's political actions and how do you explain its extraordinary success in the elections?

Our values are the key to our success. We have placed family, faith, patriotism, and freedom at the centre of our political vision. Some of these values have been mentioned by other political parties, but these parties' claims lacked authenticity—and authenticity is precisely what defines us.

Lack of financial resources and a boycott by the mainstream media forced us to operate on the grass roots, going door-to-door, and on social media where access is still unrestricted.

Our unsophisticated and direct way of communicating convinced Romanian people that we are genuine and sincere, and that we are not part of the entrenched political system.

As for the 2020 elections, many people said that their outcome was a miracle performed by Saint Nicholas (whose feast day is the same day as election day: December 6). That's how I perceived it too. Our entrance into Romanian Parliament was a divine sign, a sign that the regeneration of Romanian society is absolutely necessary. It was the beginning of a conservative revolution, as I have said many times since election night.



You are also the leader of the AUR parliamentary group in the Romanian Senate. What were your party's main activities and legislative initiatives?

In the last two years, we have submitted more than 150 legislative proposals. We have focused on increasing the birth rate, providing financial support to families with children, reforming the electoral system, prohibiting discrimination based on vaccination status, informing patients about the side effects of COVID vaccination, cancelling the abusive sanctions dictated during the pandemic crisis, establishing a state bank to support the agricultural sector, banning the sale of national strategic companies, preserving Romanian traditions, banning the consumption of insects and bugs, increasing children's allowances and scholarships, and much more.

After these two years on the parliamentary front, we learned that the current majority votes against all our projects. The reason is very simple: if a legislative proposal is initiated by the AUR, it must be rejected. This attitude is a symptom of the desperation and fear of the two leading parties—the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL). The fear is that Romanians will vote against them in the upcoming elections and that they will lose power in favour of the AUR.

Today, Romania is governed by the PSD, the PNL, and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ). Together they hold a comfortable majority in parliament. Unfortunately, most measures pursued by the globalist Left—from the so-called 'green transition' to the Marxist transformation of education—are fully accepted by this parliamentary majority. What is the AUR doing as an opposition party?

We oppose them strongly both in parliament and in the street, when it is necessary, and we propose alternatives. Even if our initiatives are blocked or rejected, the Romanian people are seeing a different vision, a different approach, different political behaviour. We are aware of the pressing problems; we have solutions; and we are determined to put them into practice. This makes us very confident for 2024, the most

important election year for Romania (all four rounds of elections will be held in 2024).

Prior to the 2020 elections, we had a huge handicap compared to the big parties: a lack of fame and a lack of access to traditional media. In 2024, the situation will be different. Even though we will probably still be boycotted by a large part of Romanian media, people are now aware of us and our vision. The media's boycott and their hate campaign will actually increase our chances. When others rally against you, it means that you are strong and a potential threat.

The AUR was the only political party that fully opposed those unconstitutional and unacceptable abuses made by the government during the medical crisis. Due to our actions and protests, the so-called green certificate at work was not imposed in Romania. We were the only true resistance, and we revealed the lies and schemes of those who tried to force us to vaccinate against our own will.

The governing coalition between the social democrats and the liberals, joined by the Hungarian minority's organization, RMDSZ, shows us that the only thing that matters to them is their appetite for power and access to the public budget. This alliance now holds all the levers of power: the presidency, the government, almost all the county councils. However, it has not been able to prevent a serious deterioration in living standards, nor has it been able to articulate a clear direction of development for our country. Their decisions are a disaster for all of us.

What is the AUR's vision for the future of Romania? And to what extent can your activities be harmonised with those of other conservative and sovereigntist movements in Europe?

There is life after, or outside, Brussels. I am not referring to a kind of exit, but to the fact that different policies than those promoted by the globalist elites can ensure a country's development.

We have the examples of Poland and Hungary, countries led by conservatives which have produced development and an increase in welfare for their citizens using a completely different paradigm than those proposed by the European Commission or the IMF.



Poland is the most important example for us and a source of inspiration. We are also closely watching Italy's right-wing government led by Giorgia Meloni. It is essential to know what our partners are doing and how we can fit into the whole conservative movement so that we can multiply the effects of our political actions.

As for Romania, we start from this: over 80% of our fellow citizens believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction. This feeling is far too widespread to be classified as a misperception of reality. People understand that something is not working properly, that the current government's policies will not bring prosperity or welfare. This recognition is so widespread that more than four million working Romanians have left the country in the last 15 years.

We want to change Romania's course, but we also want to remain part of the EU and NATO. Our foreign policy is not significantly different from the status quo; it is the policy we propose at home that represents a radical paradigm shift. Our schools must once again become places where true education can occur, not neo-Marxist indoctrination. Energy and food sovereignty will be priorities for us. It is a direction that will not only ensure real development but will also create new jobs. Currently, the banking system, dominated by large foreign banks, operates as a profit-extraction system, with minimal contributions to the national economy. We will introduce all the necessary measures to increase the share of domestic financial capital in the banking system, to promote investment banks

ABOVE:
Diogo Pacheco de Amorim, Portuguese MP for Porto (Deputado da Assembleia da República); Ricardo Regalla Dias Pinto, director of international relations, public relations, and protocol of Portugal's CHEGA! party; André Ventura, CHEGA! president; and Claudiu Târziu, Romanian senator and president of the National Council of the AUR party.

in the national economy, which will help local entrepreneurs develop their businesses and export their products.

On a social level, we will promote policies aimed at reducing huge social inequalities that still exist today. We have a team of experts that is working on our political programme for Romania.

You were previously a journalist and president of the Rost Association. What is that organization and what does it mean for Romanian conservatives?

I joined the Romanian local media in 1992, exactly three decades ago. I was less than twenty years old. In the following years, I worked and headed editorial offices in regional and national newspapers. In 2002, I founded the Rost Association in Bucharest, which I have been running since 2005. I also created the *Rost* magazine, which was printed for ten years and which still exists exclusively online.

Rost is a non-governmental, cultural-educational organization whose mission is to contribute to the spiritual, social, and cultural revival of Romanians everywhere. For twenty years now, we have been promoting our values and tradition, our national identity, the reunification of Romania and Moldova and so on.

Rost has always been a platform where the most reputable conservative intellectuals can express their beliefs. It is like a house with open doors to anyone who wants to preserve a conservative way of life and thinking. Even though the magazine no longer appears in print, it remains one of the main landmarks of conservative publishing in this part of Europe.

Several years ago, you supported the referendum to amend the Romanian Constitution to define marriage as the union between a man and a woman. Why did that referendum fail and what has changed since then?

That referendum failed for many reasons. On the one hand, there were differences of opinion among those who campaigned for it, and on the other hand, a large part of Romanian society did not understand how high the stakes were.

There was a terrible propaganda campaign against our initiative by globalist NGOs, a large part of the mainstream media, and most of the political class. The opposition has been fierce and it has shown us, once again, how unscrupulous the neo-Marxists are. A great deal of resources were mobilised to fight the referendum and demonize its promoters.

The low turnout led to its invalidation, even though more than 91% of citizens who voted were in favour of our initiative. More than 3.5 million Romanians wanted marriage to be defined in the constitution as the union between a man and a woman, which is extremely important, even today.

This failure, due to a vast disinformation and boycott campaign, was a victory for the radical Left, who afterwards intensified its efforts to defile concepts such as family, education, and nation. The positive side is that Romanians have become more aware of what is happening, of the intentions behind the various so-called progressive initiatives, which are in fact diabolical and nihilistic. The fact is that 3.5 million Romanians understood what was going on despite propagandistic manipulation, and they remained faithful to their values.

A broad alliance in Romanian society, called the Coalition for the Family, initiated this proposal to change the constitution. I was one of the founders and leaders of this coalition, which succeeded to gather more than three million signatures to organise the referendum at the national level.

The referendum had positive effects. One of them is that the conservative movement behind the Coalition for the Family now has parliamentary political representation through the AUR. ■

Dragoş Moldoveanu is a Romanian publicist and translator. He has translated into Romanian *The Conservative Movement* by Paul Gottfried and *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art* by Roger Kimball, and is the author of a short biography on Cesare Borgia. He currently serves as a parliamentary advisor and is a member of the board of the Mihai Eminescu Institute for Conservative Political Studies in Bucharest.