



Romania - difficult transition.

Claudiu Crăciun

A brief history

1989 – a social revolution.

1989 - 1990 - a new Constitution, repression of pro-democracy groups.

1990 - 1996 - domination by a Social -democratic party; bureaucratic, authoritarian and personalised.

1996 - 2000 - coalition government of the democratic opposition, unstable governments , economic reforms.

2000 - 2004 - social democrats returning, stable government, Euro - atlantic integration as grand narrative, preparing Romania for EU accession.

2004 - 2008 - Center-right coalition government, EU accession, growth of the economy.

2008 - 2012 - First grand coalition and then center right government, severe austerity measures (2010-2011), street protests.

2012 onward - center - left coalition and a center - right president elected in 2014.

Society

- Human Development Index (HDI) - 1990 - 0.706 to 2012 - 0.786 (similar with Ukraine and the Russian Federation);
- second lowest ranking in EU in social justice, close to Greece - EU average - 50.6, Romania - 3.69, Greece - 3,57 (SIM-Europe, 2014).
- lowest level of child well-being among 29 developed countries (UNICEF, 2013).
- People at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion- 41,9% , (Eurostat, 2012).

Modernization vs. de-modernization: Decline in social services, growing inequality, sustained migration, aging population.

Economy

- dependent neo-liberalism (Ban 2014).
- assembly line type of industry- almost 90% of the industrial exports produced by foreign companies.
- Competitiveness: the low price of labour, some infrastructure, low R&D.
- diverse but vulnerable to external shocks economy (e.g. banking system, a large share being owned by Austrian and Greek banks).

Politics

- low trust in democratic institutions - political parties below 15%, Parliament around 20%; high trust in hierarchical institutions - Church, Army above 60%.
- widespread corruption and clientelism - neopatrimonial features.
- politicized and weak public administration.
- ailing local democracy

EU

- Romanians- Europhiles to reluctant Europeans (see Heinrich Boll Dossier on Europe-Romania).
- Euroscepticism is rather weak and diffuse, not base on identity politics (religion and nationality) but political and economic concerns (the structure of the economy, asymmetry of power with the EU core, exploitation of natural resources).
- EU - rule of law, too narrow focus and with little leverage to have structural influence; not enough stimulus for growth.