

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce a Romanian politician and conspiracy theorist, Călin Georgescu (@calin_georgescu). He's best-known for his pro-Kremlin and conspiratorial views, running for president of Romania, and doing it by only campaigning on TikTok.

1/25



Georgescu has a doctorate in pedology (a branch of soil science), and held various positions in Romania's environment ministry during the 90s.

Between 1999-2012, he was a representative for Romania on the national committee of the United Nations Environment Program.

Who is Calin Georgescu?

Born in Bucharest in 1962, Georgescu holds a doctorate in pedology, a branch of soil science, and held different positions in Romania's environment ministry in the 1990s, according to his website. Between 1999 and 2012, he was a representative for Romania on the national committee of the United Nations Environment Program.

Once a member of Romania's far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, Georgescu left the party in 2022 after a period of infighting and being accused by colleagues of being pro-Russian and critical of NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance to which Romania belongs.

He supports the Romanian Orthodox Church and has sparked controversy in the past for describing Romanian fascist and nationalist leaders from the 1930s and 1940s as national heroes.

According to <u>local media</u>, he has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin as "a man who loves his country" and called Ukraine "an invented state," but he claims not to be pro-Russian. He is married with three sons.

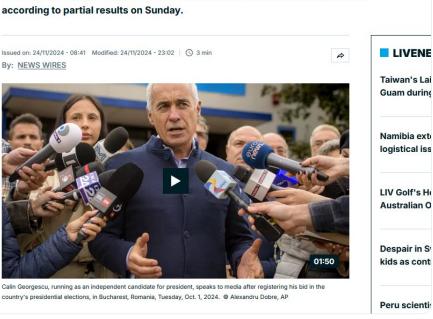
He was proposed as Romania's prime minister in 2011, 2012 and 2016 by Romanian farright parties, but he rose to international infamy in 2024, when he ran for president of Romania independently and obtained the most votes (22,95%) out of all candidates in the first round.



Far-right candidate takes shock lead in Romania presidential poll

FUROPE

Putin-praising candidate Calin Georgescu appears to be on track to make it to the final round of the presidential elections in Romania. Georgescu is leading with 22 percent, followed closely by center-left Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu at 20.6 percent, according to partial results on Sunday.



A far-right populist took the lead in <u>Romania</u>'s presidential election Sunday, electoral data showed, and will likely face leftist Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu in a runoff in two weeks, an outcome that rocked the country's political landscape.

Calin Georgescu, who ran independently, led the polls with around 22% of the vote, while Ciolacu of the Social Democratic Party, or PSD, trailed at 20.6%. Elena Lasconi of the Save Romania Union party, or USR, stood at about 17.4%, and George Simion, the leader of the <u>far-right</u> Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, took 14.3%.

After polls closed at 9 pm local time (1900GMT), 9.4 million people — about 52.4% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to the Central Election Bureau.

This was totally unexpected, as he outperformed most surveys, shocking Romania's political establishment. Romanian political consultant Cristian Andrei stated that Georgescu's popularity appears to be a "large protest or revolt against the establishment."

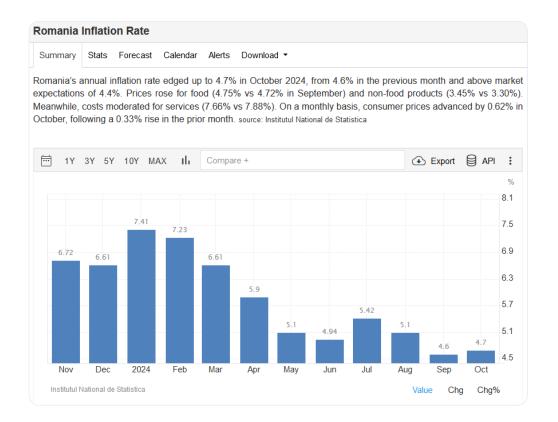
4/25

Cristian Andrei, a political consultant based in Bucharest, told The Associated Press that Georgescu's unexpected poll performance appears to be a "large protest or revolt against the establishment."

"The mainstream political parties have lost the connection with regular Romanians," he said. "You don't have strong candidates or strong leaders ... there are weak candidates, weak leaders, and the parties in general are pretty much disconnected."

Like in many other Western countries, Romania's large budget deficit, relatively high inflation, and economic challenges may have pushed mainstream candidates towards populist rhetoric, offering quick and easy solutions for complex, global problems.





Georgescu's policies are typical for a populist candidate - supporting Romanian farmers, reducing dependency on imports, and ramping up energy and food production. But his massive success can be accounted to one important factor - his campaign on TikTok.

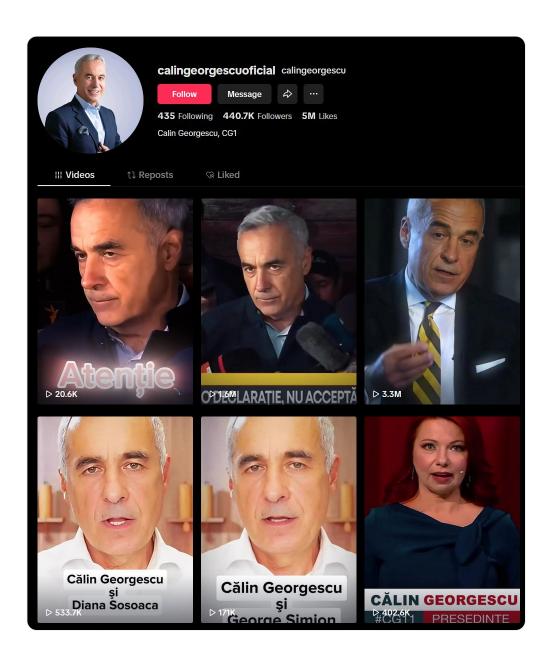
6/25

Where does Georgescu stand?

His positions include supporting Romanian farmers, reducing import dependence, and ramping up local energy and food production. He also wants to establish a "sovereign" distribution model allegedly based on participatory democracy in which "Truth, Freedom and Sovereignty are the axes of values" in Romania's development.

On foreign policy, NATO and European Union member Romania will respect its obligations, he states on his website, but only "to the extent that they will respect theirs" toward Romania. He also says Romania must play "a more consistent role" in international affairs.

Călin is extremely popular on TikTok - his first account had accumulated 1,7 million likes before it was deleted, and his current official account has 440 000 followers & +5 million likes. It is also clear that these numbers have been manipulated and are by no means organic.



TikTok, which has 9 million users in Romania, says it has eliminated 66.000 fake accounts, 10 million fake followers, 7 million fake likes in September and October

After taking a closer look, Georgescu appears to be a regular vatnik conspiracy theorist. His previous pro-Russian statements were so extreme, that some even considered him a representative of Kremlin's interests in Romania. As is tradition, he's also a harsh critic...



...of EU and NATO, even calling the ballistic missile defense system based in Deveselu, a Romanian NATO base, a "shame of diplomacy". He's also claimed that NATO wouldn't protect its members in case of a Russian invasion.

9/25

Georgescu, a sustainable development consultant who has worked for several UN bodies, has called Nato's ballistic missile defence shield over Romania a "shame of diplomacy" and said the alliance would not protect its members from Russian attack.

He's also praised Vladimir Putin as "a man who loves his country" and stated that Romania should abide by "Russian wisdom". He has referred to Ukraine as "an invented state". Of course, he's said he's not "pro-Russian" but merely wants to "engage in a dialogue" with them.

10/25

With 99.98% of votes counted, Călin Georgescu, an independent who has praised Vladimir Putin as "a man who loves his country", was on 22.9%, with the reformist Elena Lasconi, of the Save Romania Union (USR), second on 19.17%.

While he has not explicitly admitted that he supports Russia, he said in an interview that Romania ought to abide by "Russian wisdom".

In a 2022 interview, Georgescu called Russian President Vladimir Putin one of the few true leaders in the world.

Georgescu is challenging Romania's pro-Ukraine position, emphasising engaging with, rather than challenging, Russia.

"Security comes from dialogue, not confrontation, when you are elegant and civilized," he told Romanian private broadcaster Digi24 this month. "Do you think Zelenskiy is an elegant guy, a patriot?"

"There is no reason for us to talk about war all the time, we must be concerned with peace, without peace we can't build anything."

He used to be a member of the nationalist conservative Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) party, but left the group after he was accused of being pro-Kremlin and too critical of NATO. Previously, Georgescu had invited the Russian fascist Aleksandr Dugin...

11/25

Once a member of Romania's far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, Georgescu left the party in 2022 after a period of infighting and being accused by colleagues of being pro-Russian and critical of NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance to which Romania belongs.

...to visit Romania. Recently, Dugin praised Călin during an interview, claiming that "Călin Georgescu is an outstanding politician, he is useful for us. He cannot be called pro-Russian, but he is similar to Orban."





As was mentioned, Călin is also a raging conspiracy theorist. He doesn't believe in the moon landing, claims that carbonated drinks contain nanochips which "enter you like into a laptop", and says that climate change is "a global scam" that has "nothing to do with reality". 13/25

Home » News » What Callin Georgescu said about carbonated juices: "The plastic merchandise was handed over, everything that means nanochips, and it enters you like a laptop"

What Callin Georgescu said about carbonated juices: "The plastic merchandise was handed over, everything that means nanochips, and it enters you like a laptop"



And there's more:he claims that the Pyramids in Egypt are powerful energy centers that haven't been activated yet. He's also said that while working for the UN, he took part in "some very serious discussions" with other, non-human species. And of course there's the classics...14/25

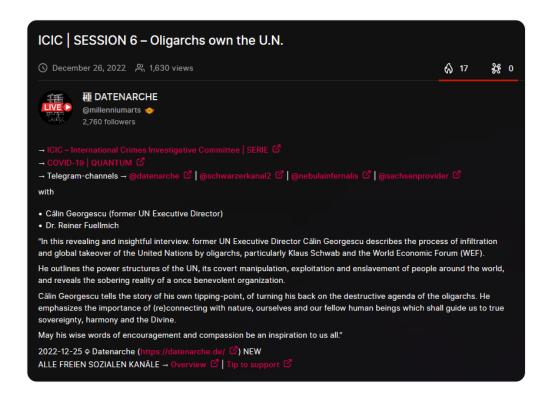
"I see the Egyptian pyramids that have not yet been used for what they were created (every powerful energy centers). Exactly. So I see the Egyptian pyramids and they haven't been used yet. Today, if you place one in front of the pyramids, he says they are not."

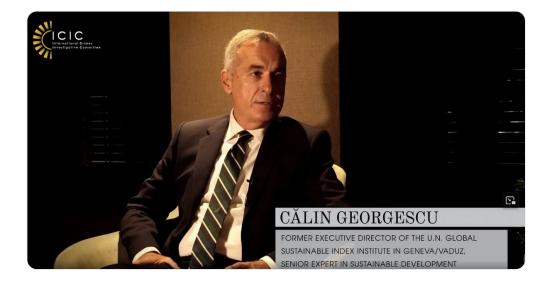
"You can't do things more complex when society annihilates you first of all through food, which is not food." Get into the device, what? The nanotechnology in the so-called foods that actually get in you and it's very simple energetic to be able to connect, like I said, it gets into a computer. That's why you don't have her mind anymore "

"I met at the UN with a non-human being."

"We had a few direct opportunities, including some very serious discussions, in a few negotiations, together with a team we was leading from the UN and what I could tell you is that I met another species. No way a human species. It seems a little bizarre and is absolutely equal to what I think of one and others, but I'm telling you that we're talking about another species."

...such as promoting the idea of a "New World Order" planned by the World Economic Forum and its founder, Klaus Schwab. Georgescu claims that Schwab and his oligarch allies are trying to turn the UN into the World Oligarch System.





Incidentally, Georgescu's team kept all this information hidden during the first round of the elections, and even his Wikipedia page both in English and in Romanian seemed quite presentable (until GeorgescuFan1488 came along!) right before the elections.

16/25

```
• (cur | prev) 0 02:01, 25 November 2024 Friendlyepicguy (talk | contribs) m . . (11,523 bytes) (-16) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) 0 02:00, 25 November 2024 Friendlyepicguy (talk | contribs) m . . (11,539 bytes) (-24) . . (Tag: Reverted)
                             02:00, 25 November 2024 GeorgescuFan1488 (talk | contribs) m... (11,563 bytes) (+14)... (Tags: Reverted, possible vandalism)

    (cur | prev) ○

                             02:00, 25 November 2024 Friendlyepicguy (talk | contribs) m . . (11,549 bytes) (+4) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) O
                             02:00, 25 November 2024 GeorgescuFan1488 (talk | contribs) m... (11,545 bytes) (+124) ... (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) O
• (cur | prev) O
                             01:59, 25 November 2024 Friendlyepicguy (talk | contribs) m. . . (11,421 bytes) (+1) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) O 01:59, 25 November 2024 2800:e2:880:67f:1c9b:df84:ddc2:a70d (talk) ... (11,420 bytes) (-97) ... (Fixed and eliminated some comments) (Tags: Reverted, Mobile edit, Mobile 
   web edit)
• (cur | prev) O 01:58, 25 November 2024 GeorgescuFan1488 (talk | contribs) m . . (11,517 bytes) (+187) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) O
                             01:57, 25 November 2024 GeorgescuFan1488 (talk | contribs) m . . (11,330 bytes) (-4) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur | prev) O 01:55, 25 November 2024 Friendlyepicguy (talk | contribs) m . . (11,334 bytes) (-64) . . (Tag: Reverted)
• (cur I prev) ()
                             01:53, 25 November 2024 GeorgescuFan1488 (talk | contribs) m ... (11.398 bytes) (+97) ... (Tag: Reverted)
                             00:51, 25 November 2024 Borgenland (talk | contribs) . . (11,301 bytes) (+488) . . (→Career: expand)
• (cur | prev) O
                             00:47, 25 November 2024 Borgenland (talk | contribs) . . (10.813 bytes) (+518) . . (→Career: 2024)
• (cur | prev) O
• (cur | prev) O
                             00:11, 25 November 2024 ARandomName123 (talk | contribs) . . (10,295 bytes) (+35) . . (Added {{BLP sources}} tag) (Tag: Twinkle)
• (cur | prev) O
                             23:34, 24 November 2024 ClueBot NG (talk | contribs) m ... (10,260 bytes) (-51) ... (Reverting possible vandalism by 109.166.129.158 to version by Toffeenix. Report False
   Positive? Thanks, ClueBot NG. (0) (Bot)) (Tag: Rollback)
• (cur | prev) O 23:34, 24 November 2024 109.166.129.158 (talk) . . (10,311 bytes) (+51) . . (Tags: Reverted, shouting, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)
• (cur | prev) O 23:11, 24 November 2024 Toffeenix (talk | contribs) ... (10,260 bytes) (-14,273) .. (bold edit - removed external links section as i cannot understand why it is here and what it
  achieves)
• (cur | prev) O 21:40, 24 November 2024 89.136.131.66 (talk) . . (24,533 bytes) (-24) . . (Tags: Menual revert, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)
• (cur | prev) O 21:34, 24 November 2024 195.180.37.220 (talk) ... (24,557 bytes) (+24) ... (Tags: Reverted, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)
                             21:24, 24 November 2024 217.129.165.138 (talk) . . (24,533 bytes) (+42) . . (Tags: Visual edit, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)
• (cur | prev) O

    (cur | prev) 
    21:23, 24 November 2024 217.129.165.138 (talk) . . (24,491 bytes) (+385) . . (Tags: possible unreferenced addition to BLP, Visual edit, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)

• (cur | prev) O
                             22:13, 18 November 2024 LaffyTaffer (talk | contribs) ... (24,106 bytes) (+2) .. (Reverted 1 edit by 2003;F3:1F35;8F00:791A:DFE:6D6F;FBB9 (talk): Unsourced) (Tags:
• (cur | prev) O
                             22:09, 18 November 2024 2003:f3:1f35:8f00:791a:dfe:6d6f:fbb9 (talk) ... (24,104 bytes) (-2) ... (Tags: Reverted, possible BLP issue or vandalism, Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)
• (cur | prev) O
                             10:34, 23 October 2024 Georgecatalinj (talk | contribs) m ... (24,106 bytes) (+3) ... (Update with information from the Romanian Wikipedia page)

    (cur | prev) O
    20:45, 9 October 2024 82.79.237.9 (talk) ... (24,103 bytes) (+31) ... (Tags: Mobile edit, Mobile web edit)

• (cur | prev) O 07:25, 11 July 2024 Denisarona (talk | contribs) m . . (24,072 bytes) (+2) .
• (cur | prev) ○ 07:24, 11 July 2024 Denisarona (talk | contribs) m . . (24,070 bytes) (+3) . . (→Career)
                             07:23, 11 July 2024 Denisarona (talk | contribs) . . (24.067 bytes) (+33) . . (update)
• (cur I prev) O
• (cur | prev) O 05:42, 9 January 2024 RJFJR (talk | contribs) . . (24,034 bytes) (-37) . . (remove {{BLP no footnotes|date=April 2018}})
```

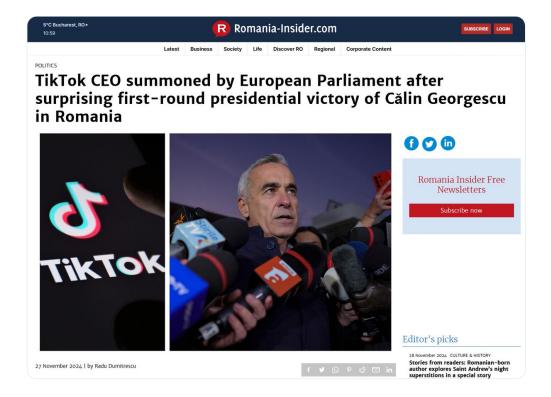
Romanian law states that all candidates have to declare the funds they've used for their campaign. Călin declared absolutely nothing (and still clings to that), despite his paid political ads on TikTok amounting to several million dollars.



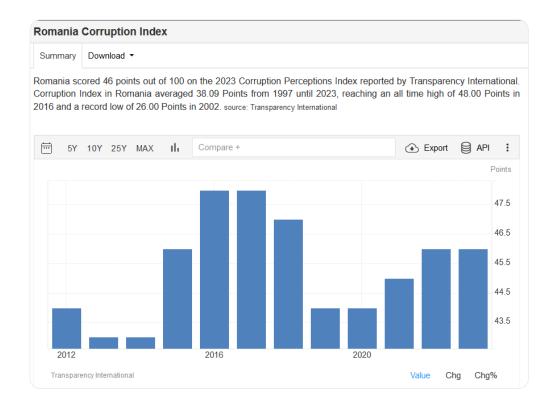
Hayer's appeal comes only two days after Georgescu's <u>shock victory</u>. He had no party backing and polls had failed to pick up on his popularity — though researchers are now zeroing on <u>a major TikTok campaign</u> he led in the days leading up to the election.

"We believed that Tiktok was misused and was led to be misused by him and an army of fake accounts that were used for his purpose," said Bogdan Manolea, executive director of the Romanian campaign group, Association for Technology and Internet.

Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu on Tuesday said funding for Georgescu's campaign on TikTok needed to be reviewed. "It's a system, I don't know how legal it is, I understood how the system was used. The source of financing, in my opinion, is to be followed, 'follow the money."



Romanian war correspondent and political consultant @RaduHossu accounted Georgescu's success to several factors, including "the decades-long failure of the state education system coupled with the moral bankruptcy of the political class in recent years."



- The Romanian media ecosystem has developed its own alternative news networks and channels that spread anti-EU and anti-Western narratives, combined with apocalyptic news, conspiracies, pro-Kremlin narratives, fascist content, Dacian mythology, etc. Many times, they copy false narratives from US and UK alternative and frince media.
- For at least 5-7 years, there has been a growing 'sovereigntist' movement (bridging nationalism and populism) that is the main drive behind disinformation, pushing mostly anti-Western narratives. The movement includes journalists and media outlets, social media influencers, politicians, and other public figures, such as religious and cultural personalities. Religion and ethnic minorities-related sensitivities are often instrumentalised to fuel anti-EU and anti-Western sentiments.
- Romania does not have a strong cultural, historical, or economic relation to Russia. There is no relevant Russian minority, Romanians do not speak Russian, there are no Russian radio or TV stations. However, a growing Russian influence has been noticeable in the last few years. The Kremlin's intentions are not to make Russia liked or admired in Romania (because of historic wounds) but to create hostility towards the West. In Romania, Russian disinformation is efficient as it takes over autonomous narratives, being camouflaged by proxies and mobilising old communist ties and feelings of nostalgia for a period long gone. Besides, it gets spread by political parties and movements, NGOs, think tanks, religious figures, former and current journalists, influencers, and cultural personalities.
- Resilience against disinformation is very low: Romania is second to last in the EU countries on media literacy and 29th out of 38 countries examined on trust in media. A 2022 report concluded that "Romanians have internalised global conspiracist narratives (...) and erroneous information have prevailed over arguments presented by the scientific community or by authorities". Moreover, the media lacks independence, and the political parties use their public subsidies for media coverage, hence, weakening media freedom. In this sense, an RFS report highlights that "media funding mechanisms are often opaque or even corrupt. While the largest media companies manage to be self-sufficient, most depend on external funding sources, including subsidies. Diverting public funds to the media, in a non-transparent manner, is a widespread political practice, distorting both the market and the watchdog function of the media".
- Romanian authorities have so far failed to tackle disinformation systematically. although there is some interest, e.g., the 2020 National
 Defence Strategy included disinformation, but actions have yet to materialise so far. This lack of action helps internal actors to capitalise
 on disinformation for their political gain, using the anti-Western agenda to climb to power.

According to him, social frustration coupled with a lack of understanding of the national and international context (lack of education), combined with a massively manipulated social media campaign have led to the creation of this political product:



Until now, Romania has staunchly supported Ukraine, even allowing its neighbour to use the Romanian port of Constanta on the Black Sea to export its grain. Romania is also a home to the largest American military base in Europe. The country has also signed...



TRIES - REPORTS PROGRAMMES - OUR STORY CLIENT PORTFOLIO MORE - Q

OPINION

Why Romania should be the logistics hub for Ukraine's reconstruction

September 24, 2024 | @ 4 Min Read | Radu Magdin





Radu Magdin Strategic Communications Analyst



Share This!

Romania's politicians should not waste the opportunity to become a pivotal player in Ukraine's reconstruction.

In the context of the Ukrainian conflict, the international community is increasingly focused on the complex task of reconstruction. This monumental effort requires a sophisticated and efficient logistics network to transport aid, materials, and in no small part personnel.

Amidst this critical need, Romania has the potential to emerge as a vital logistics hub, playing a crucial role in supporting Ukrainian reconstruction efforts based on its inherent logistical advantages.

As a member of NATO and the European Union, Romania benefits from both organisations' resources and support structures.



Two Apache attack helicopters belonging to the US land forces from 101st American Airborne Division in action during a demonstrative exercise held at Mihail Kogalniceanu NATO air-base near Constanta city, Romania, March 31, 2023. Photo: EPA-EFE/ Robert Ghement

...a strategic partnership agreement with Ukraine. But if Georgescu wins, we may see a dramatic change in these policies, and we've already seen similar political successes based on populist rhetoric in Hungary, Austria and Slovakia. These elections should be seen as...



s COP29 War in Ukraine US elections Newsletters Podcasts Poll of Polls Policy news Events

NEWS > DEFENSE

Hungary flirts with Putin and snubs NATO meeting

NATO diplomats based in Budapest wanted to chat with Hungary about its ambiguous policy toward the Atlantic alliance, but were ignored.

☑ SHARE

POLITICOPRO

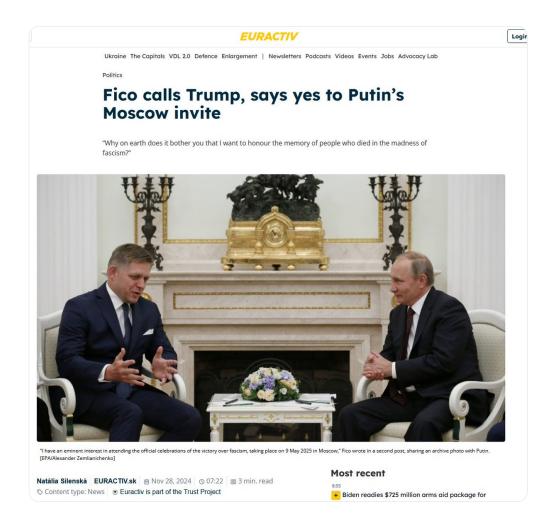
Free article usually reserved for subscribers



Hungary has been blocking EU efforts to refund countries for arms shipments to Ukraine. | Alexander Nemenov/AFP via Getty Images

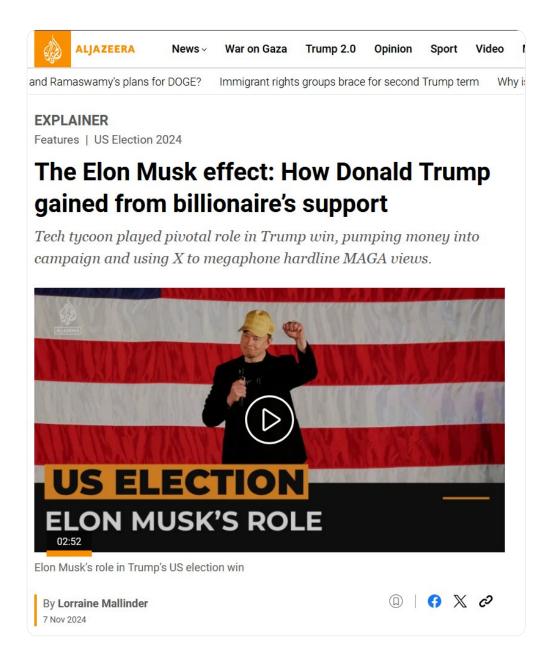
OCTOBER 30, 2024 6:21 PM CET BY STUART LAU





...yet another "canary in the coal mine" warning of how much of a powerful tool social media can be in politics. We already saw this with Elon buying Twitter & turning it into his personal

MAGA megaphone, and now Team Georgescu won the first round basically with TikTok.





Georgescu's opponent, @ElenaLasconi, a journalist-turned-mayor, is also relatively unknown. She and the party supporting her have little to no political background & she's been criticized for her lack of experience in foreign policy. She's staunchly pro-NATO & pro-Ukraine.



To complicate things even more, the Constitutional Court is now likely demanding a recount of the votes, which would probably eliminate Elena Lasconi, who barely managed to get to the second round by a thin margin, from the race.

24/25

BREAKING The Constitutional Court requested the recounting of the votes and postponed for Friday the decisions on the validation of the round 1 and the request for annulment of the result / The difference between Elena Lasconi and Marcel Ciolacu was 2,740 votes

ARTICLES • ARTICLES 28 NOVEMBER 2024 • ALEXANDRU MIHĂESCU • 88,018 VIEWS • 34 COMMENTS



Photo: Ilona Andrei / G4Media

The second round of the presidential election between Călin Georgescu and Elena Lasconi will be held on 8 Dec 2024.

Sources: @RaduHossu, @Daractenus (do give them a follow!)

25/25

My book titled "Vatnik Soup - The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation" has been published, you can order it here:

https://kleart.eu/webshop/p/vatnik-soup

Or if you prefer Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Vatnik-Soup-Ultimate-Russian-Disinformation/dp/8792750400

•••