



By: TA | AP Brief

Romanian lawmakers back a minority government



Romanian lawmakers sought Tuesday to end a monthslong political impasse by voting for a minority government led by an independent diplomat, who now faces the challenge of securing support in a fragmented Parliament while tackling a large budget deficit.

Prime Minister **Luca Niculescu** won 280 votes for his proposed Cabinet in the parliamentary vote, with 58 voting against.

“It is an important moment for Romania,” Niculescu told lawmakers after the vote. “We are coming out of six months of crisis, we are getting down to work immediately.”

“Starting this evening, we will organize the first government meeting. The priorities are known. Romania cannot wait any longer.”

The vote comes after a difficult period for Romania, a member of NATO and the European Union located along the eastern flank of both organizations.

Romania had one of the highest budget deficits in the European Union last year, and the previous prime minister, Ilie Bolojan, was ousted in a May vote of no confidence over his strict **austerity measures**, which included tax hikes, public-sector wage and pension freezes and cuts to state spending.

Niculescu secured a deal with several political parties to support his Cabinet for at least six months while a longer-term political deal is negotiated.

At the swearing-in ceremony at Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest, President Nicusor Dan congratulated Niculescu for securing enough votes for parliamentary approval.

“This implies that he possesses certain skills which he will need to exercise, and exercise to the full, in the period ahead,” Dan said.

“The challenges will likely be greater than they have been so far, but I am confident that he will succeed in finding the right balance in his discussions, particularly with Parliament.”

Short break in the political battle

Cristian Andrei, a Bucharest-based political consultant, told The Associated Press that “today’s vote is only a short break in the political battle in a fragmented parliament.”

“The optimism this Cabinet is trying to project is very difficult to achieve with a very tight budget and limited financial resources. This will put extra pressure on this Cabinet from society to either deliver or go full mode populist,” he said.

When the previous coalition came to power in 2025, Bolojan was sworn in with the aim of ending one of Romania’s worst **political crises** in its post-Communist history and reducing a massive budget deficit.

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President Dan nominated 55-year-old Niculescu, a diplomat and former journalist, to be prime minister on Oct. 5, his fourth such nomination after three previous nominees failed to form a government.

Tuesday’s vote comes weeks after lawmakers **rejected a Cabinet** proposed by Dan’s third pick, Siegfried Muresan, which prolonged the crisis and raised the chance of early elections at a time of regional security concerns linked to Russia’s war in neighboring Ukraine.

Romania has also faced a long period of instability after the annulment of a presidential election in December 2024 due to allegations of Russian interference.