

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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**Date:** 11/23/2015

**GAIN Report Number:** RO1514

## Romania

**Post:** Bucharest

### **New Minister of Agriculture appointed in Romania**

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

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**Report Highlights:**

This week the Romanian Parliament voted for a new Government, following the recent resignation of the Prime-Minister after massive protests over the failure of the government to adequately respond to a nightclub fire. Mr. Achim Irimescu, nominated to be Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge on EU legislation and EU structures earned through his position at the Romanian Permanent Mission to European Union in Brussels. Farmers are hopeful that undergoing projects will be continued and further developed.

## **General Information:**

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Prime-Minister Victor Ponta submitted his resignation after massive protests over poor responses by the government to a nightclub fire that killed and injured a large number of young club goers. The Romanian President designated Mr. Dacian Ciolos, EU Commissioner for Agriculture during 2010-2014, as Prime-Minister. Following the positive vote expressed for the new Government members on November 17<sup>th</sup> by the Romanian Parliament, Mr. Achim Irimescu became Minister of Agriculture.

Born in 1958, Mr. Irimescu graduated from the Faculty of Machinery Technology Manufacturing, Polytechnic University Bucharest and later earned a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the Academy of Economic Studies. Mr. Irimescu worked within the Scientific Research Institute for agricultural machinery and equipment (1986-1990) and as Senior Adviser within the Ministry of Agriculture from 1990 to 1998. Since 1998, Mr. Irimescu has served at the Romanian Permanent Mission to the European Union, as Minister-Counsellor, Head of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development Department, except for May 2012 to February 2014, when he held the position of Secretary of State at the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture.

While Secretary of State, Mr. Irimescu, in cooperation with the Food Safety and Veterinary Authority, worked to open new markets for Romanian agricultural products in China (pork meat) and the Middle East (sheep). Other on-going projects that emerged during his appointment include the creation of a Mutual Fund in Agriculture and a new strategy to promote Romanian food products overseas.

According to the new government program released by the Prime-Minister, future priorities for agriculture will be the efficient implementation of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Fishery by simplifying the process of EU funds accession, improved rural community development through an enhanced role for local action groups, increased support for agricultural producer organizations through strengthened extension and consulting services, increased efficiency of the agri-food sector, and restructuring of the fruit sector to boost competitiveness.

First reactions to the appointment by farmers' representatives brought praise for the good collaboration they had with Minister Irimescu in the past, and hopes were expressed that the on-going projects will continue in the Ministry of Agriculture and that the new Minister will successfully build a constructive dialogue with farmers' leaders. Farmers want immediate focus on reducing "red-tape", the land cadaster system, improvement in irrigation infrastructure, increased compensation for crop losses, and early EU payments.