

Provisional programme

Romania Government Roundtable

South-east Europe's next leap forward

March 30th 2026 | Romanian Athenaeum

March 31st and April 1st 2026 | JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel

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Economist Impact Events
for south-east Europe

Romania Government Roundtable **South-east Europe's next leap forward**

The ongoing war in Ukraine, a ceasefire in the Middle East, unpredictable geopolitical upheavals, and key global issues such as the climate crisis and technological transition, among others, shape a landscape of major challenges. Countries in the east and south-east of the continent are mostly affected by geopolitical instability, while the European Union strives to strengthen its unity, security, and resilience, as well as to manage the new reality in US-EU relations. Among these countries, Romania has set new targets for the economy, foreign investment, defence, technology, innovation, energy security and infrastructure. All these topics will be discussed –among others– during the Romania Government Roundtable.

Monday, March 30th 2026

Venue: Romanian Athenaeum

18:00	Arrival of guests – welcome cocktail
19:00	Welcome remarks by the <i>Economist's</i> chairs * Joan Hoey , editor of the Democracy Index and Europe consultant, Economist Intelligence * Alasdair Ross , editor, global affairs, economics, strategy, risk, <i>The Economist</i>
19:15	Official inauguration H.E. Nicușor Dan , president of Romania
19:30	Official opening session Economic stability and growth for Europe: moving forward Monetary policy in Europe and the US is called upon to balance between different kinds of challenges arising from the geopolitical turmoil, even at the core of the transatlantic relationship. This session will outline the international environment shaping the operation of businesses and the purchasing power of workers, with an emphasis on the economies of south-east Europe. How do central banks navigate the global uncertainty? <i>The Economist</i> in dialogue with: Guests of honour and keynote speakers: * Mugur Isărescu , governor, National Bank of Romania * Yannis Stournaras , governor, Bank of Greece * Daron Acemoglu , Institute professor of economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Nobel laureate in Economic Sciences (2024)
20:15	Europe's Single Market Roadmap to 2028 A focus on finance - energy - innovation <i>The Economist</i> in dialogue with: * Enrico Letta , EU rapporteur on the future of the single market, president, Jacques Delors Institute, former prime minister of Italy
20:45	Cocktail reception

*** Confirmed participation**

Tuesday, March 31st 2026

Venue: JW Marriott Bucharest Hotel

08:00	Registration
08:45	<i>The Economist's</i> outlook on European political and economic landscape amidst ongoing geopolitical upheavals * Joan Hoey , editor of the Democracy Index and Europe consultant, Economist Intelligence * Alasdair Ross , editor, global affairs, economics, strategy, risk, <i>The Economist</i>
09:00	A vision for peace, stability, equitable growth, and social cohesion on Europe's eastern frontier This session will discuss how Europe can safeguard security and enhance stability, growth and cohesion. How do countries on Europe's eastern "frontier" in particular view the EU's defence and security strategy? What is the impact of the broader geopolitical context and how will Moldova move forward towards EU accession? * Ilie Bolojan , prime minister of Romania (acceptance in principle) Alexandru Munteanu , prime minister of Moldova * Edi Rama , prime minister of Albania
09:35	The vision for a stronger Europe in 2026 This session will examine the main challenges for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction and how they relate to Europe's collective strength and resilience. Does the West have the political will and the resources needed to achieve this goal? How can international institutions and private investors contribute? How could this process define the sovereignty and prosperity of the Ukrainian people? What role should frontline EU member states such as Poland play to ensure European unity and security? Guest of Honour and keynote speaker: * Roxana Mînzatu , executive vice-president for social rights and skills, quality jobs and preparedness, European Commission
09:50	Geopolitical developments and strategic priorities in a shifting regional order * Ahmet Davutoğlu , former prime minister of Turkey * Dimitris Avramopoulos , former European Commissioner for migration, former minister of foreign affairs of Greece
10:15	Forging Europe's future security architecture This session will evaluate the priorities and objectives in the field of defence and security for Europe in response to the Russian aggression, as well as the progress of ReArm Europe plan and Romania's role within this context. Tarja Jaakkola , assistant secretary general, defence industry, innovation and armaments, NATO Radu-Dinel Miruță , minister of national defence, Government of Romania Lazăr Comănescu , secretary general, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) In dialogue with business leaders: * Stephen O'Bryan , corporate vice president and international president, Northrop Grumman Corporation
10:45	Networking break

* **Confirmed participation**

11:15

Building energy corridors in south-east Europe and Romania's strategic role in Europe's energy security

Romania is a key player in the European energy market, both in terms of energy production and distribution and in terms of energy geopolitics – given its proximity to the Russo-Ukrainian front and the Black Sea-Caucasus-Caspian energy corridors. What are the policy priorities and the most important projects for the energy sector in the region?

Bogdan-Gruia Ivan, minister of energy, Government of Romania

* **Stavros Papastavrou**, minister of energy, Government of Greece

* **Dorin Junghietu**, minister of energy, Moldova

* **Kristian Ruby**, secretary general, Eurelectric

In dialogue with business leaders:

* **Paolo Scaroni**, energy geopolitics expert, chairman, ENEL

* **Dan Stratan**, chief executive and founder, RCI holding, Romania

Ștefăniță Munteanu, chairman of the board, Transelectrica

Kiril Georgiev, chief executive, ESO Bulgaria

12:15

The role of AI in grid investment within the context of energy transition

The session explores how artificial intelligence accelerates energy transition by enabling new technological capabilities and innovative services in the power grid sector.

George Niculescu, president, ANRE

Plamen Mladenovski, president, EWRC Bulgaria

In dialogue with business leaders:

* **Alessio Menegazzo**, chief executive and country manager, PPC Group, Romania

* **Oana Ijdelea**, managing partner, Ijdelea & Associates

Nicholas Richard, chief executive, ENGIE Romania

Volker Raffel, general manager, E.ON Romania

Ondrej Safar, country manager, Evryo

Robert Denda, chief executive, Westenergie

13:15

Networking lunch

14:15

Nuclear power in the age of climate crisis: risks and realities

More than 30 countries use nuclear energy, and around 10% of the world's electricity comes from nuclear power. Nuclear energy is recognised by many scientists and international organisations as a potential solution for addressing climate change, but this view is not universally accepted. This session will mainly focus on the main arguments regarding the promotion of nuclear energy as an essential part of the solution to the climate crisis.

The Economist in dialogue with:

* **Oliver Stone**, Academy award-winning film director, screenwriter, and producer (acceptance in principle)

14:45

Reshaping the energy landscape through technological breakthrough

The session will discuss how emerging technologies in energy innovation can unlock new opportunities and benefits for businesses and citizens

- * **Robert Hanea**, founder, chairman and chief executive, Therme Group
- Teofil Muresan**, founder, chairman and chief executive, E-INFRA
- * **Tomas Pleskac**, deputy chief executive for new energy, CEZ Group

15:15

Natural gas corridors and exploration: The potential of the Black Sea

The session examines the critical role of the Black Sea in terms of natural gas transportation and exploration, especially within the context of geopolitical changes in the broader region.

- * **Sebastian Burduja**, honorary councillor of the prime minister of Romania, former minister of energy of Romania
- * **Geoffrey Pyatt**, former US assistant secretary of energy, former US ambassador to Ukraine

In dialogue with:

- Christina Verchere**, chief executive, OMV Petrom
- Razvan Popescu**, chief executive, Romgaz
- * **Mark Beacom**, chief executive, Black Sea Oil and Gas
- Cem Erdem**, chairman of the board of directors and general manager, TPAO

16:00

Connecting regions, communities and nations – promoting resilience and prosperity

This session will explore the momentum for infrastructure and transport sectors, both from a business and a socio-political perspective. It will also examine the current prospects for the Three Seas Initiative.

- * **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, commissioner for sustainable transport and tourism, European Commission

Ciprian-Constantin Șerban, minister of transport and infrastructure, Government of Romania

Dariusz Klimczak, minister of infrastructure, Government of Poland

Vladimir Bolea, deputy prime minister, minister of infrastructure and regional development, Government of Moldova

In dialogue with business leaders:

Name to be advised, DP World

- * **Manolis Sigalas**, president, Europe, Hill International

Adnan Çebi, chairman and chief executive, Makyol

Cristian Erbasu, chief executive, Erbasu Constructions, president of federation of employers of construction companies

Representative, CBRE

17:00

Romania-Moldova: Strategic partnerships in the region

Economic ties between Romania and Moldova are constantly growing contributing to the economic development of the region and supporting Moldova's EU accession process.

- * **Cristian Busoi**, former MEP, former president ITRE Committee, European Parliament

Additional speakers' names to be advised

17:15

End of day's sessions

Wednesday, April 1st 2026

Venue: JW Marriott Bucharest Hotel

08:30	Registration
09:00	Welcome remarks by the Economist chairs Joan Hoey and Alasdair Ross
09:15	Opening Keynote address Guest of Honour and keynote speaker: * Oana Gheorghiu , vice prime minister, Government of Romania
09:30	The outlook for Europe's financial landscape How does geopolitical instability affect the economic and financial landscape in Europe? What is the significance of the Bulgaria's adoption of the euro? Kyriakos Pierrakakis , president, Eurogroup, minister of economy and finance, Government of Greece Alexandru Nazare , minister of finance, Government of Romania In dialogue with business leaders: * Ömer Tetik , chief executive, Banca Transilvania
10:15	The role of financial markets and institutional investors in Romania's prosperity Financial markets and institutional investors are crucial to Romania's economic resilience. This session will discuss how to leverage long-term capital, boost investor confidence, and finance strategic priorities. * Alexandru Petrescu , president, Romanian Financial Supervisory Authority (ASF) Verena Ross , chair, European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) In dialogue with business leaders: Bogdan-Alexandru Drăgoi , chairman and chief executive, Lion Capital
10:45	Technological transition and enhancement of international co-operation The session will examine the societal and economic challenges for technological transformation as well as its role in fostering international co-operation. It will also examine how the technological transition is evolving in Europe, and in particular in the countries of south-east Europe. What can other countries in the region learn from Romania's performance in technological innovation? Irineu Darău , minister of economy, digitalisation, entrepreneurship and tourism, Government of Romania Damir Habijan , minister for justice, public administration and digital transformation, Government of Croatia Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl , director-general, DIGITALEUROPE Mariya Gabriel , former commissioner for innovation, research, culture, education and youth, European Commission In dialogue with business leaders: * Iwona Sikora , senior vice-president and general manager, Europe & South Africa, Iron Mountain Julien Ducarroz , chief executive, Orange Romania Representative, SAP
11:30	Networking break

* **Confirmed participation**

12:00 Investments for a more competitive and cohesive Europe – The role of the financial institutions
The session will examine the role of financial institutions in supporting investments that increase competitiveness and cohesion across Europe, while playing a transformative role for the society. Is the financial sector today well-placed in order to foster equitable growth?

- * **Dragoş-Nicolae Pîslaru**, minister of investments and European projects, Government of Romania
- * **Bogdan Chiriţoiu**, chairman, National Competition Authority, chair of the board of directors, Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)
- Anca Dragu**, governor, National Bank of Moldova

In dialogue with:

Bogdan Neacsu, chief executive, CEC Bank

Raluca Nicolescu, chief executive, BID Romania

Patric Gresko, head of mandate origination and institutional relationship management, European Investment Fund (EIF)

Representative, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK)

12:45 The business and investment landscape of south-east Europe: enhancing innovation and adaptability
Is there currently strong momentum for investment, partnerships, and business development in the CESEE region? How crucial is adaptability for businesses in today's unpredictable economic environment? And what role do European funds play in supporting investment in the region?

- * **Corina Creţu**, consul general of Romania in Thessaloniki, former EU commissioner

- * **Harry Theoharis**, deputy minister of foreign affairs, Government of Greece

- * **Egemen Bağış**, former minister for European Affairs, Government of Turkey

- * **Beata Javorcik**, chief economist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

In dialogue with business leaders:

Sergiu Cristian Manea, chief executive, Banca Comercială Romana (BCR)

13:30 Health care systems amidst demographic, social and economic challenges
Investment in health care is considered a key factor for resilience in our times. Public health care systems in south-east Europe face significant challenges. What policies can enhance the health care systems' accessibility, efficiency and quality?

- * **Alexandru-Florin Rogobete**, minister of health, Government of Romania

- Adonis Georgiades**, minister of health, Government of Greece

In dialogue with business leaders:

- * **Fady Chreih**, chief executive, Regina Maria

- Mehmet Burak Vardan**, chairman of the board, CCN Holding

Representative, Groupama

Representative, CCN Hospitals

14:30 Networking luncheon

15:30 End of conference

Last updated: January 27th, 2026. This agenda is registered to Hazlis & Rivas, the official and exclusive representative of The Economist Impact Events for Greece, Cyprus, Malta and south-east Europe. Speakers mentioned herein are in the process of being invited and confirmations shall appear with an asterisk (*). No part may be reproduced without authorisation from the organiser.

