

## THE RESULTS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ROMANIA (11TH DECEMBER 2016)

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*Abstract: This scientific endeavour aims to analyse several aspects concerning the results of the last Romanian Parliamentary elections, which took place on Sunday, 11th December 2016. A major difference from the last two parliamentary elections (2008 and 2012), was the return, as in 2004, of list based elections, as well as the introduction of postal voting for Romanian citizens abroad. Despite this, voter turnout was low (39.80% out of 18,403,044 voters). Only six parties managed to meet the requirements to gain seats in the Romanian Parliament. Out of total of 465 de mandates, SDP was the party with most votes, thus being represented by 154 elected officials (45.48%) in the Chamber of Deputies and 67 (45.68%) for Senate, followed by NLP with 69 (20.04%) and 30 (20.42%), SRU with 30 (8.87%) and 13 (8.92%), DUHR with 21 (6.18%) and 9 (6.24%), LDA with 20 (5.62%) and 9 (6.00%), and PMP with 18 deputies (5.34%) and 8 senators (5.65%), plus a number of 17 deputies representing other national minorities.*

*Keywords: parliamentary groups, deputies, senators, Social Democratic Party*

### 1. Introduction

As regards to parliamentary elections, this paper takes its cue from the methodology developed by Gr. Pop, as well as from a series of papers and studies such as those written by Boamfă, 2008, 2013; Pop, 2006, 2010, 2013; Tofan, 2013, 2015, 2016. Therefore, we find it useful to provide an in-depth analysis of the results of the Romanian parliamentary elections (Chamber of Deputies and Senate), which, according to Government's Decision nr. 634/2016, took place on 11th December 2016. We emphasize the fact that these elections marked the return to *party lists ballot* (similar to 2004), thus discard the uninominal vote used at the last two elections (2008 and 2012). The latter form of vote was deemed unsuitable, due to an unjustified increase of elected officials compared to Romania's population (20,121,641 people, in 2011). Another major change involved the introduction of *postal voting* for Romanian voters abroad.

This study is solely based on official statistical data, provided freely by the Central Electoral Bureau, sections „*Statistics*” and „*Results*”<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of admittance into the Parliament of Romania, the Electoral Law kept the 5% threshold of the total number of valid votes at national level or 20% of the total number of valid votes cast in at least four electoral precincts for all electoral competitors. For the *Chamber of Deputies*, in 2016, this meant 352,369 votes obtained by all categories of organisations registered in the Party Nomenclature, while in the Senate's case, the threshold was 352,648 votes.

The total number of voters in the *Electoral Registry* was 18,403,044 people, out of which 17,883,087 on permanent electoral lists, 451,402 on auxiliary lists, 59,666 voters who used the special mobile voting station and 8,889 on postal voting electoral lists. Voter turnout reached

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<sup>1</sup><http://parlamentare2016.bec.ro>, created for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies Elections, 11th December 2016.

39.80% (7,323,368 voters), less when compared to the 2004 (58.5%) and 2012 (41.72%) elections, but slightly higher than in 2008 (39.26%).

92.96% (6,808,325) voted on permanent electoral lists, 6.15% (451,110) on auxiliary lists, 0.81% (59,342) with the help of mobile voting boxes, while 0.06% (4,591) used postal voting. Furthermore, one must point out the higher turnout rates in urban areas compared to villages, as well as the differences between counties in vote attendance.

## **2. Elections for Chamber of Deputies**

Out of the total number of voters present (7,323,368), the valid votes for the Chamber of Deputies reached 7,047,384, while 213,916 were null and 60,700 blank.

After analysing the data presented in table 1, one might notice that, at national level, only six parties gained parliamentary seats: *Social Democrat Party* (45.48%), *National Liberal Party* (20.05%), *Save Romania Union* (8.87%), *Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania* (6.19%), *Liberal and Democratic Alliance* (5.63%) and *The People's Movement Party* (5.34%). There were 17 seats of different *national minority representatives* (1.33%), while the *other situations category* (7.11%) contains parties, independent candidates and some national minorities which did not reach the electoral threshold.

Therefore, the Chamber of Deputies is comprised of 329 MPs, out of which 312 (94.83%) are members of six political parties, while 17 seats (5.17%) are dedicated to national minorities. Most seats were won by SDP representatives, 154 (45.48%), followed by NLP, 69 (20.05%), SRU, 30 (8.87%), DUHR, 21 (6.19%), LDA, 20 (5.63%), PMP, 18 (5.34%) and 17 for national minorities.

### **2.1. Deputy distribution per political party at county and historical region levels**

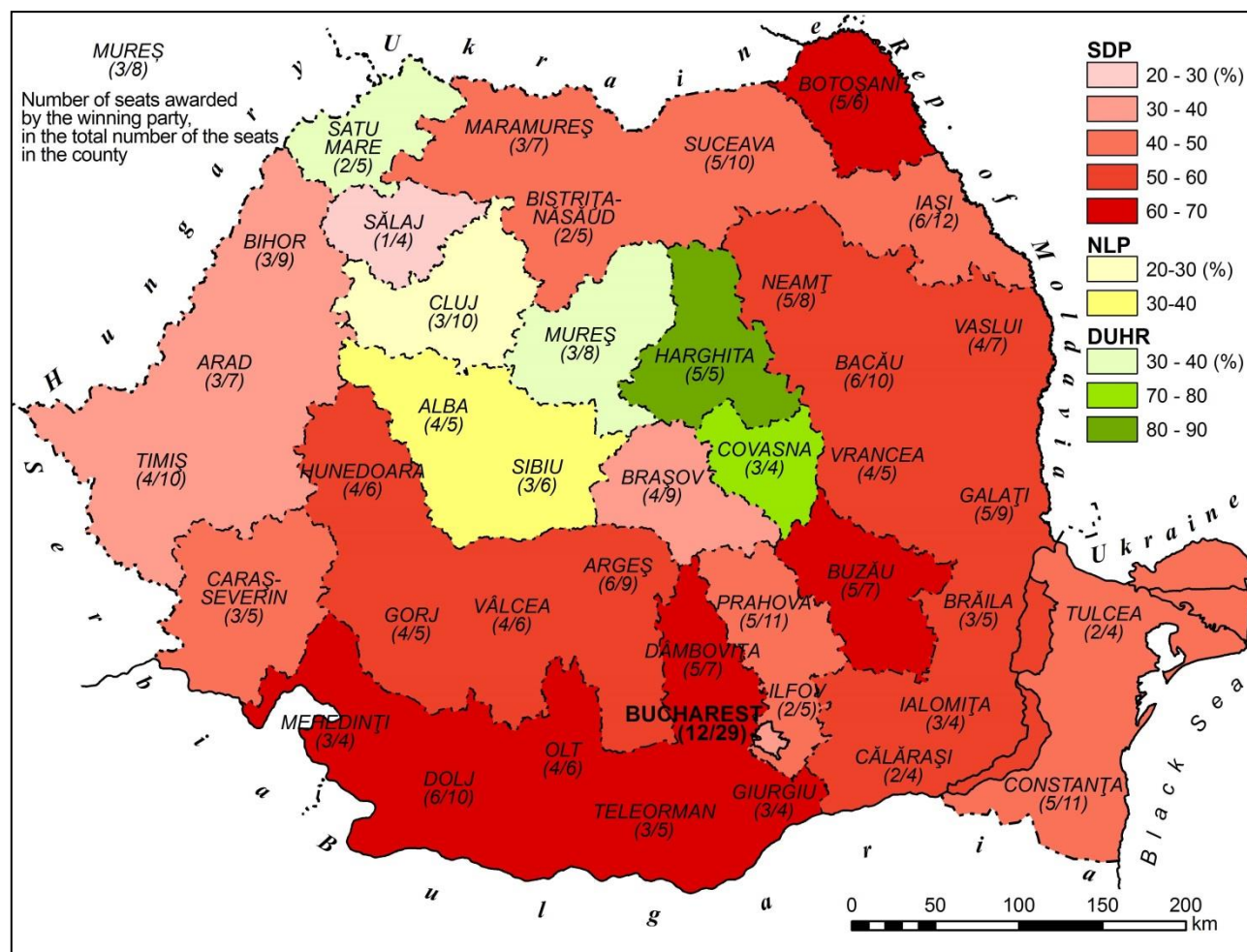
The spatial distribution of deputies in the counties of Romania is directly proportional to their demographic size (Pop, 2008, 2013). Thus, there was a total of 308 deputies for the 41 counties and the Municipality of București, plus 17 mandates awarded to national minorities, as well as for deputy mandates for the Romanian diaspora, which leads to a total of 329 *elect officials in the Chamber of Deputies*.

Concerning the percentual representativeness of parties in the Chamber of Deputies, the winner was SDP, with 3,204,864 votes (45.48%), thus gaining a total of 154 seats (131 relegated during the first stage, while the remaining 23 in the second). *The Social Democratic Party* has the largest number of deputies in București, 12 to be more exact (41.38% of the total of 29 seats), followed by the counties of Argeș (6 out of 9), Bacău (6 out of 10), Dolj (6 out of 10) and Iași (6 out of 12). Most administrative units (26) have between 3-5 *deputies*: Botoșani (5 out of 6), Buzău (5 out of 7), Constanța (5 out of 11), Dâmbovița (5 out of 7), Galați (5 out of 9), Neamț (5 out of 8), Prahova (5 out of 11) and Suceava (5 out of 10), then Brașov (4 out of 9), Gorj (4 out of 5), Hunedoara (4 out of 6), Olt (4 out of 6), Timiș (4 out of 10), Vaslui (4 out of 7), Vâlcea (4 out of 6) și Vrancea (4 out of 5), respectiv Arad (3 out of 7), Bihor (3 out of 9), Brăila (3 out of 5), Caraș-Severin (3 out of 5), Cluj (3 out of 5), Giurgiu (3 out of 4), Ialomița (3 out of 4), Maramureș (3 out of 7), Mehedinți (3 out of 4) and Teleorman (3 out of 5). The lower category, *1-2 deputies*, comprises nine other counties: Bistrița-Năsăud (2 out of 5), Călărași (2 out of 4), Ilfov (2 out of 5), Mureș (2 out of 8), Satu Mare (2 out of 5), Sibiu (2 out of 6) and Tulcea (2 out

of 4), and one mandate each in Alba (1 out of 5) and Sălaj (1 out of 4). SDP does not have deputies in the counties of județele Covasna and Harghita, since DUHR won almost all the seats available.

**Fig. 1.** Deputy distribution per political parties at 11th December 2016 elections in Romania.

The second most presented party is NLP, gaining 1,412,377 votes (20.05%), thus having 68 mandates (45 in the first stage and 23 during redistribution). Most are found in the counties of Alba (4 deputy mandates out of 5) and Suceava (4 out of 10). These are followed by 2-3 *deputies*, in counties such as Bihor (3 out of 9), Cluj (3 out of 10), Iași (3 out of 12), Prahova (3 out of 11), Sibiu (3 out of 6), Timiș (3 out of 10) and Municipiul București (3 out of 29), Arad (2 out of 7), Bacău (2 out of 10), Brașov (2 out of 9), Brăila (2 out of 5), Constanța (2 out of 11),



Dolj (2 out of 10), Ilfov (2 out of 5), Neamț (2 out of 8) and Tulcea (2 out of 4). Single mandates we obtained in 21 counties: Argeș, Bistrița-Năsăud, Botoșani, Buzău, Caraș-Severin, Călărași, Dâmbovița, Galați, Gorj, Hunedoara, Ialomița, Maramureș, Mehedinti, Mureș, Olt, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Teleorman, Vaslui, Vâlcea, and Vrancea. No seats awarded in Covasna, Giurgiu și Harghita.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that the NLP gained a majority of votes in just three counties: Alba (37.08%, 44,921 votes out of a total of 121,148 valid votes), Cluj (27.63%, 66,001 out of 238,867 votes), and Sibiu (39.52%, 53,398 out of 135,090 valid votes).

SRU, one of the newest political parties, holds the number three spot, with 8.87% (625,154 votes), reaching 30 mandates, with 15 assigned in each stages. Most deputy seats are in the City of București (8 out of 29), and Cluj (2 out of 10 mandates). In 19 other counties, as well as abroad, SRU won one mandate each, while in the remaining 21 counties failed to gain enough traction to win any seats.

The next political organisation which once again managed to cross the 5% threshold is the DUHR (6.19%, 435,969 votes). At county level, its 21 mandates (16 during the first stage), are distributed as follows: Harghita (5 mandates out of 5), Covasna (3 out of 4), Mureș (3 out of 8), Satu Mare (2 out of 5), Bihor (2 out of 9), and one mandate in each of the following counties: Arad, Brașov, Cluj, Constanța, Maramureș, and Sălaj. One must emphasize that DUHR obtained a majority of votes in four counties: Harghita (84.82%, 99,375 votes out of a total of 117,154), Covasna (73.93%, 50,135 votes out of 67,808), Satu Mare (39.89%, 42,957 votes out of 107,686), and Mureș (38.61%, 68,564 votes out of 177 566).

Another recently established party (on 19th June 2015), through the merging of the *Liberal Reformist Party* with the *Conservative Party*, and which met the threshold, is LDA. It obtained total of 396,386 votes (5.63%), and 20 mandates, most during the redistribution stage (17). Four deputy are in București, while in 16 counties the party won one mandate for each.

The last party to cross the required threshold was PMP, (5.34%, 376,891 votes), its 16 mandates being awarded after redistribution. In the City of București, the party won two deputy seats, and one seat in each of 14 counties.

In conclusion, besides these 308 deputies, distributed among Romania's counties, the Chamber of Deputies also contains four more mandates for the diaspora, one for NLP, *Voicu Mihai-Alexandru*, 25.93% (28254 votes out of 108943 valid votes), one for SRU - *Costescu Manuel*, 28.87% (31461). During redistribution, PMP won two more mandates, *Codreanu Constantin* and *Coliu Doru-Petrișor* (23.18%, 25 254 votes).

There are also 17 MPs that belong to *national minorities* (except Hungarians), which obtained a number votes greater than de 10% out of the electoral coefficient (dividing the total number of valid votes at national level by the total number of mandates). According to the total number of valid votes, in descending order, the situation is as follows:

1. "Pro-Europa" Gypsy Party, *Daniel Vasile*, 13126 votes;
2. The German Democratic Forum of Romania, *Ovidiu-Victor Ganț*, 12375 votes;
3. The Slovak and Czech Democratic Union of Romania, *Ecaterina-Maria Orban*, 6 545 votes;
4. The Community of Russian Lipovans of Romania, *Miron Ignat*, 6160 votes;
5. The Hellenic Union of Romania, *Dragoș-Gabriel Zisopol*, 5817 votes;
6. The Turkish Democratic Union of Romania, *Iusein Ibram*, 5536 votes;
7. The Macedonian Association of Romania, *Mariana-Venera Popescu*, 5513 votes;
8. The Serbian Union of Romania, *Slavoliub Adnagi*, 5468 votes;
9. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania, *Silviu Vexler*, 5069 votes;
10. The Armenian Union of Romania, *Varujan Pambuccian*, 4868 votes;
11. Albanian Association League of Romania, *Bogdan-Alin Stoica*, 4640 votes;
12. The Bulgarian Union of Banat-Romania, *Petronela Mihaela Csokany*, 4542 votes;
13. The Croatian Union of Romania, *Giureci-Slobodan Ghera*, 3532 votes;
14. The Italian Association of Romania –RO.AS.IT, *Andi-Gabriel Grosaru*, 3486 votes;



15. The Polish Union of Romania, *Victoria Longher*, 3355 votes;
16. The Ruthenian Cultural Union of Romania, *Iulius Marian Firaczak*, 2824 votes;
17. The Ukrainian Union of Romania, *Nicolae-Miroslav Petrețchi*, 1172 votes.

The distribution of the 308 deputies among *the historical provinces and the City of București*, is as follows: - SDP has the highest number of deputies in Moldova (40), NLP in Transilvania (16), DUHR in Transilvania (14), SRU in București (8), PMP in Transilvania(4), while LDA has an equal number of mandates (4) in Moldova, Muntenia and București.

### **3. Parliamentary Elections for Senate**

In regards to the Senate, out of total of 7,323,368 voters, the total number of valid votes was 7,052,966, while 205,973 were void and 63,046 blank. The newly elected Senate is comprised of six parliamentary groups: SDP (45.68%), NLP (20.43%), SRU (8.93%), DUHR (6.24%), LDA (6.0%) and PMP (5.65%), or 136 senator seats, distributed as follows: 67 (49.26%) for SDP, 30 (22.05%) for NLP, 13 (9.55%) for SRU, 9 (6.61%) for DUHR, 9 (6.61%) for LDA and 8 (5.88%) for PMP.

#### **3.1. Senator distribution at county and historical province level**

Out of the 136 senator mandates, 134 are distributed among the 41 counties and the City of București, the remaining two representing the Romanian diaspora (*Badea Viorel-Riceard*, NPL, 26.09%, 28,453 votes and *Mihail Radu-Mihai*, SRU, 29.19%, 31,831 votes).

Returning to senator distribution at county level, one might observe that most mandates were won by SDP (67), over 70% of them distributed during the first stage. The City of București, taking into account its geodemographic position and importance, has the highest number of senators (5 out of 13), and it is followed by four counties: Argeș (3/4), Constanța (3/5), Dolj (3/4) and Iași (3/5), 35 counties - *1-2 senators*, the only counties where this party has no representatives are Covasna and Harghita.

The second largest group in the Romanian Senate is NLP, with 29 mandates, 18 having been attributed through redistribution. In București the above mentioned party has two mandates, in 27 counties one per county, but none in 14 (Bistrița-Năsăud, Brăila, Buzău, Covasna, Giurgiu, Gorj, Harghita, Ialomița, Maramureș, Mehedinți, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Tulcea, and Vaslui).

The third largest body is SRU, with 12 senators (3 mandates won during the first distribution stage and 9 in the second), four in București and one in each of the following counties: Arad, Brașov, Cluj, Constanța, Galați, Iași, Prahova, and Timiș.

There are nine senators from the DUHR, from those counties with the largest Hungarian populations. First, Harghita (2 senators, 85.30% out of a total of 116,484 votes), Mureș (2 out of 4 senators), Bihor (2/4), Cluj (1/4), Covasna (1/2), and Satu Mare (1/2).

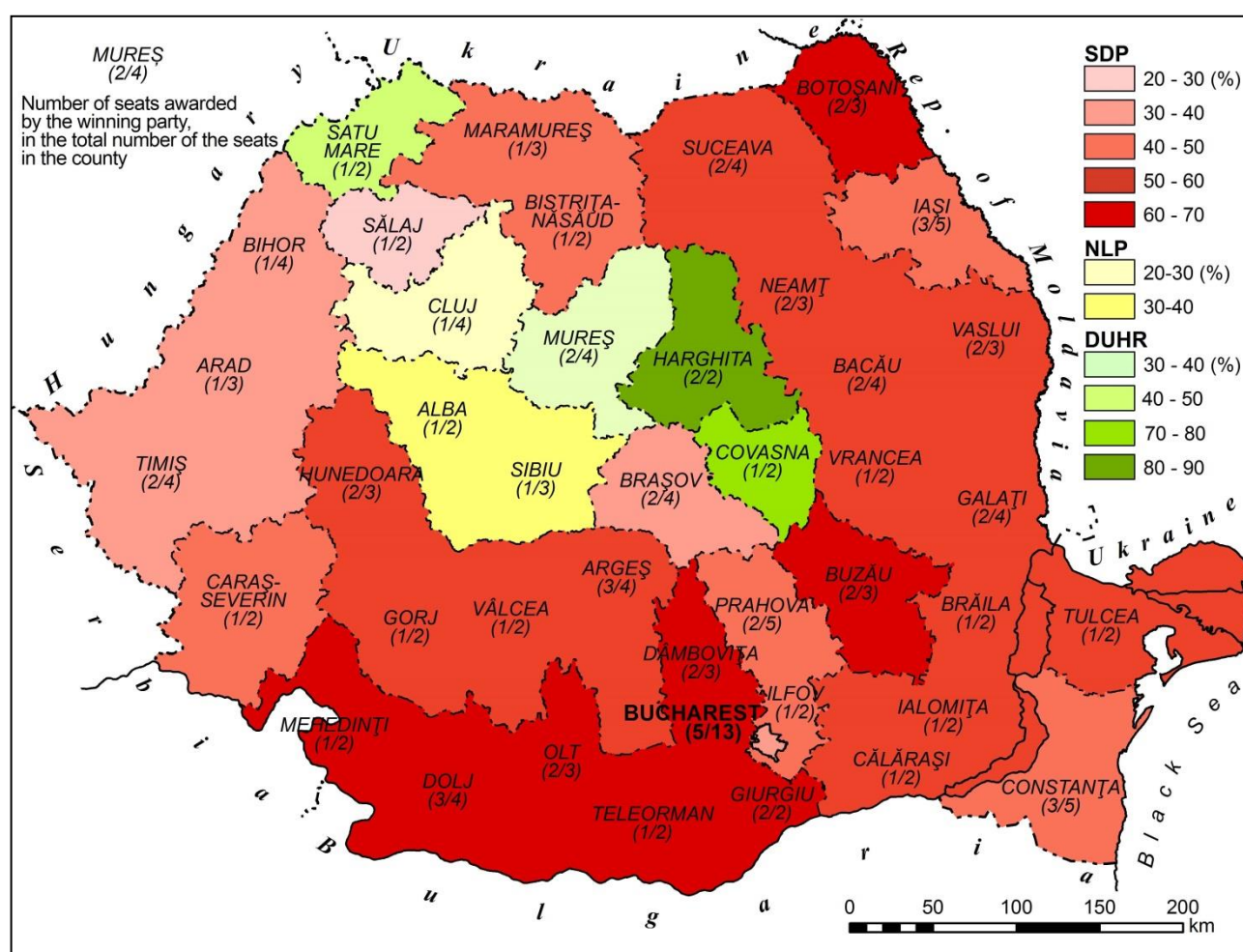
The same number of seats (9) was won by LDA, most mandates, with the exception of the one from București, having been awarded after redistribution (Bacău, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brăila, Gorj, Mehedinți, Prahova, Suceava, Vaslui). Also after the process of redistribution, PMP won 7 mandates in Buzău, Covasna, Ialomița, Maramureș (two), Sălaj, and Tulcea, with the exception of București, which was one during the first stage, by the former Romanian president, *Traian Băsescu*.

At historical province level, the distribution of the 134 senators, based on their political affiliation, is as follows: SDP is mostly represented in Moldova and Muntenia (with 16 mandates each), NLP in Moldova (7), DUHR in Transilvania (6), SRU in București (4), PMP with two in each of the following provinces - Maramureș, Transilvania și Muntenia, while LDA in Moldova (3).

## 5. Conclusions

To have a better perspective on the assembly of the Romanian Parliament during the 2016-2020 legislature, certain aspects must be emphasized:

- the number of voters for the two houses of Parliament, according to data from the *Electoral Authority*, was 18,403,044 people, situation which is highly irregular as the total population of Romania was 20,121,641 at the last census (2011);



**Fig. 2.** Senator distribution per political parties at 11th December 2016 elections in Romania.

- taking into account the prior mentioned facts, voter turnout was lower (39.80%) than the one registered on 9th December 2012 (41.72%), also pointing out that there has been a reversal of participation between rural and urban;

- the lowest voter turnout was registered in the county of Caraș-Severin (27.25%), while four southern counties, the so-called SDP bastion, Mehedinți, Dolj, Olt (46.58%, highest) and Teleorman, had the highest turnouts;

- out of the total number of participants (7,323,368 voters), the valid votes for the *Chamber of Deputies* reached 7,047,384, distributed as follows - *SDP* (45.48%), *NLP* (20.05%), *SRU* (8.87%), *DUHR* (6.19%), *ALDE* (5.63%) and *PMP* (5.34%), while for the *Senate*, the total number of valid votes was 7,052,966, the distribution being 45.68%, 20.43%, 8.93%, 6.24%, 6.0%, and 5.65% (same order);

- The Parliament of Romania is comprised of 465 elect officials (329 deputies and 136 senators); in the Chamber of Deputies, 154 are SDP representatives (46.80%), 69 (20.97%) NLP, 30 (9.11%) SRU, 21 (6.38%) DUHR, 20 (6.08%) LDA and 18 (5.47%) PMP, plus 17 mandates (5.16%) for other national minorities, while in the Senate, 67 are SDP (49.26%), 30 NLP (22.05%), 13 SRU (9.55%), 9 DUHR (6.61%), 9 LDA (6.61%) and 8 PMP (5.88%);

- these elections were definitely won by the SDP, who obtained a vote majority (both for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) in 34 counties, with the exception of Alba, Cluj, and Sibiu, where the NLP managed to top SDP, and Covasna, Harghita, Mureș, and Satu Mare, where the electoral race was won by the DUHR; one must emphasize that for the first time in 12 years, the Romanian population of Harghita will have no representatives in Parliament, due to the low voter turnout of Romanians and vote division among the populace;

- abroad, SRU managed to attain the highest number of votes (31,461 for the Chamber of Deputies and 31,831 for the Senate), which lead to double seats in Parliament (one for deputy and one for senator); the NLP won two mandates as well, due to strong support from Romanians in Italy and Spain, while the PMP won two deputy seats with the help votes from the Republic of Moldova.

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