

Politician from NATO ally Romania calls for sending troops to Ukraine

Romania remains a **reliable partner for Ukraine and NATO**, but the country's domestic challenges may shape its long-term trajectory, warns former economy minister and member of parliament from the USR (Uniunea Salvați România) Claudiu Năsui in an interview with *Euromaidan Press*.

Romanian politicians points out that while Romania's president guarantees pro-European and pro-Ukrainian policies for the next five years, the real risks lie in the **economic crisis, inflation, and public discontent**. And these, he argues, feed Russian narratives that falsely link poverty with support for Ukraine—narratives actively exploited by pro-Russian forces.

Mr. Năsui calling for **greater support for Ukraine**, even including sending Romanian troops or intercepting Russian drones violating Romanian airspace, a stance that sets him apart from the mainstream Romanian political class.

He underscores that Ukraine's battlefield-tested drone industry is now "the most advanced in the world" and that Romania must integrate with it to modernize its own defense sector. The conversation with *Euromaidan Press* also highlights **Romania's role in Ukraine's EU integration, post-war reconstruction, and defense cooperation**, including joint drone production and private-sector driven military innovation.

Discussing regional dynamics, Mr. Năsui acknowledges the **challenge of Transnistria – the occupied territory in the neighbour Republic of Moldova**, the presence of Russian troops, and energy vulnerabilities, but stresses Romania's efforts to help Moldova achieve independence from Russian energy. Mr. Năsui also criticizes both Bucharest and Brussels for allowing **sanction-dodging via third countries, for example Kyrgyzstan** and urges stronger enforcement for sanctions' regime violation.

Romania's political stability amid economic crisis

Euromaidan Press: Romania has faced domestic political challenges recently, including mass protests in Bucharest. How stable is Romania's commitment to supporting Ukraine, given these internal pressures?

Claudiu Năsui: Let me reassure you on one essential point. Regardless of how solid or fragile the current coalition may be, foreign relations, foreign policy, and the military fall under the prerogative of the president. The president holds significant power, and right now we have a staunchly pro-European, pro-Ukrainian president. This means that for the next five years—unless something truly unforeseen occurs—things will remain stable in this regard. Romania is a reliable partner.

The real challenges Romania faces are internal and primarily economic, and they are long-term. So, while I am confident Romania will remain pro-European and pro-Ukrainian, the risk comes with the next parliamentary elections in three years. If we want to secure

victory for these ideas and this course of action, then we must address our economic problems now.

Otherwise, the risk becomes very real that in three years' time, the political outcome could shift. I know three years may sound far away, and many people think: "If it's only a problem in three years, why care now?" But if you only start caring then, it will already be too late.

Euromaidan Press: Romania currently has the EU's highest inflation rate. How are economic pressures affecting public support for Ukraine aid?

Claudiu Năsui: People are not just poor—we have always been relatively poor—but now they are getting poorer. Things are getting worse, not better. We now have the highest inflation rate in the entire European Union. Prices are sky-high, and people are struggling enormously to make ends meet. So when you have such an economic climate and, at the same time, a government that is pro-NATO, the risk is that people start making a false connection between the two.

Pro-Russian voices in Romania exploit: "You are poorer because they are helping Ukraine." And that narrative is exactly what pro-Russian voices in Romania exploit.

But let me be clear: the assistance Romania has provided to Ukraine is actually far too little compared to what it should have been. In my opinion, we have contributed very modestly, when in fact I believe we should be doing much more. Even if Romania had not given a single cent to Ukraine, we would still be facing the same deep structural economic issues.

The real problem is that people start to assimilate one with the other: the government is pro-NATO, life is getting harder, therefore the two must be connected. And that, I believe, is the real danger.

Call for military deployment breaks with party line

Euromaidan Press: You've called for sending Romanian troops to Ukraine, breaking with your own party's position. Why do you believe Romania should deploy forces?

Claudiu Năsui: This is one of the areas where I actually disagree with the official Romanian position. The official position — which is also the stance of my party publicly — is that we will not send troops to Ukraine. We will not put boots on the ground and we will not participate in any peacekeeping mission on Ukrainian soil. I profoundly disagree with that.

I think Romania should send troops. I believe we should help Ukraine far more than we have up to now. It is a vital Romanian interest not to have Russia on our border.

The fact that you bordered Russia rather than us was, frankly, luck — bad luck for you and fortunate for us. We should not rely on luck. Because we were lucky, we owe it to ourselves and to the region to help you succeed, so that the Russian border does not move closer to Romania.

We should consider sending troops. And we should not let small acts of aggression go unanswered. A few days ago there was a Russian drone that entered Romanian airspace, flew for a significant time, and was then escorted back. I believe we should have shot it

down. Turkey did something similar in the past — they intercepted and brought down an intruding aircraft — and they were right to do so. This is how a sovereign nation with a functioning military responds.

Euromaidan Press: That's an unusual position for a Romanian politician.

Claudiu Năsui: I know. But I believe it is crucial—not only to help a neighbor, not only to help Ukraine, but above all for Romania's own security. **It is in Romania's fundamental interest for Ukraine to win this war.**

Ukraine's defense industry superiority

Euromaidan Press: You've praised Ukraine's drone capabilities. How should NATO allies learn from Ukraine's defense innovations?

Claudiu Năsui: One of the first things I noticed happening very quickly in Ukraine after the war began was the opening of the defense sector to private capital, essentially a kind of privatization of the military industry. In Romania, most of our defense industry is still state-owned, and frankly, it performs very poorly. The part that works well is the private sector. So I believe we should learn a great deal from Ukraine.

Right now, I think it was General Cavoli who said that **Ukraine probably has the most advanced drone industry in the world**. And that is because Ukraine has hands-on, real battlefield experience. It's not just about having years of research into a microchip—it's about developing systems that are manufactured, deployed, and battle-tested, with constant feedback loops and rapid error correction. Ukraine has this ecosystem, and that is invaluable.

I believe Romania should become even more integrated with Ukraine's defense sector and replicate the same approach. After all, our potential enemies are the same. Romania is not going to start a war with Bulgaria or Hungary. Our defense mission is focused squarely on Russia—both on land and in the Black Sea.

In the Black Sea, Ukraine has done remarkable work. Without even having large naval vessels, you managed to sink the Moskva and several other Russian ships, effectively keeping the rest of the Russian fleet at bay. You created a large interdiction zone where Russian ships simply cannot operate without risk of attack.

Sanctions evasion through third countries

Euromaidan Press: How effective have EU sanctions against Russia been, and what enforcement gaps do you see?

Claudiu Năsui: This is another area where I have been extremely critical — not only of Romania's government but also of the European Union. **Dodging sanctions is extremely easy. Just look at Romania's exports and imports with Kyrgyzstan.**

Before the war, before February 2022, trade between Romania and Kyrgyzstan was virtually zero. We had almost no exchanges at all. After the war began and sanctions were introduced, suddenly that trade exploded. How is that possible? **It is sanction dodging — and it's so clear and so obvious.**

Yes, I have been very critical of our government for allowing this to happen. We are not doing enough, we don't have the necessary safeguards, and we are not treating this war with the seriousness it requires.

Euromaidan Press: Are there political interests behind maintaining ties with Russia?

Claudiu Năsui: Yes, my answer would be yes. If you look at Social Democratic politicians in Romania, many still have links either to the former Communist Party — which was deeply intertwined with Russia — or to economic interests connected with authoritarian regimes.

Even before, there was another Social Democratic prime minister who wanted to build a second nuclear facility at Cernavodă with Chinese companies, essentially tying Romania closer to China. This illustrates the mindset: there are still many Russian-leaning or authoritarian-leaning figures within the Social Democratic Party.

Regional security and Transnistria challenge

Euromaidan Press: How should NATO address Russian troops stationed in Transnistria, Moldova?

Claudiu Năsui: Both Ukraine and Moldova face the same fundamental challenge: **the presence of Russian troops on their territory**. That situation cannot remain unresolved. It will have to be addressed after the war.

True integration—whether into the European Union or broader regional frameworks—cannot be achieved while you still have Russian military forces stationed in places like Transnistria. You cannot have genuinely stable borders or secure economic development if a Russian army is entrenched at your frontier.

This is why, two or three years ago, we completed the interconnection of Moldova's energy grid with Romania's. **Now, Romania is the main energy provider to Moldova, which means Moldova is no longer dependent on Russia for electricity supply.** Gas is still a more complicated issue, but energy independence has been achieved, and that is crucial.

Euromaidan Press: How should Ukraine approach its difficult relationship with Hungary?

Claudiu Năsui: I'm not sure you actually can — and I'll tell you why. I met Péter Szijjártó when I was Minister, and I also met Viktor Orbán. There's a saying: **you can't convince somebody of something if they have an active interest in not being convinced.** Hungary is dependent on energy imports from Russia.

