

“Germany greatly appreciates that Romania can always be counted on, pursues its interest in a constructive manner, and is always part of the solution, not part of the problem”

H.E. Peer Gebauer



Interviews@EIR Series
Bucharest, October 2024

The diplomatic relations between Germany and Romania date back to 1880, following the formal recognition of Romania's independence at the Congress of Berlin. A particular aspect of this relationship is related to the German minority in Romania, which over the centuries has brought a significant contribution to the cultural and socio-economic development of our country. Can you please tell us **which is the status of the German-Romanian bilateral relations nowadays and in which areas could we expect further positive developments?**

German-Romanian relations are closer and more important than ever before. Indeed, our two peoples have been connected for many centuries through the German minority here in the country. This minority has contributed to building modern-day Romania. **The positive image Germany enjoys in this country is certainly also a result of this contribution** and of the minority's loyalty towards Romania. Today, this cultural bridge is complemented by a growing Romanian community in Germany.

Nowadays, our two countries are also closely linked politically and economically. Germany is the biggest trade partner for Romania and the largest foreign investor in the country. **More than 10.000 German companies have created more than 250.000 jobs.** German businesses put a strong emphasis on local content, technology transfer and dual education, thereby making the economic cooperation beneficial for both sides.

Our political cooperation is more relevant and more intense than ever. As EU partners and NATO allies, Germany and Romania share the same values and typically join forces to reach common goals. **Germany greatly appreciates that Romania can always be counted on, pursues its interest in a constructive manner, and is always part of the solution, not part of the problem.** Romania's role as an international actor has become even more relevant, given the current geopolitical situation with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. **Security in the Black Sea Region as well as the Republic of Moldova's stability are of utmost importance.** Romania is a key actor in both fields. Against this background, it is no surprise that **the political visits between our two countries have intensified in a very impressive way during the last three years.**

Of course, there are a number of areas for further broadening our cooperation. In the economic area, **I see great potential for intensifying our relations in the field of energy**, as Romania has every chance to develop into a European energy hub. The same is true for the defence industry: As it is crucial to scale up our European defence capacities, **there are many great opportunities for Romanian and German companies to engage in collaboration and joint ventures in the field of military and defence goods.**

Romania and Germany have proved to be like-minded Member States in the European Union, often sharing a common vision on priorities and policies. **Can you give us some examples related to this close cooperation and share some insights on how Germany and Romania are seeking to advance the European project together?**

Indeed, a strong European Union is a goal shared by both Germany and Romania. We both believe in the advantage of joining forces. We acknowledge the fact that **in today's world, acting individually as a European nation will typically be not as efficient as a joint European approach.** We highly value the fact that Romania, in this regard, never misuses veto possibilities. Romania, as it is the case for Germany, understands that finding common ground in a Union of 27 Member States requires the readiness to contribute to compromise. In return, **Romania deserves and has our full support when it comes to its own interests, e.g., its long deserved full integration into the Schengen area.**

Romania and Germany often act in sync and support one another's initiatives. **Romania, for example, is part of the group of "friends of qualified majority voting", an initiative aimed at making the EU more apt to take decisions and to avoid blockages.** Both our countries are also very supportive of an ambitious enlargement policy, as we both believe in **the geostrategic importance of leaving no voids on the map.** In this context, we work hand in hand also in supporting the Republic of Moldova, for example through **the Moldovan partnership platform established together with France.** Recently, the area of European security and defence policy has moved to the top of our agenda and we work on broadening our cooperation also in this field.

Considering the first National Security Strategy adopted by Germany in 2023, and the mention that „German foreign and security policy is value-based and interest-driven”, **can you please share with our audience your country’s security priorities in this volatile Euro-Atlantic context?**

We live in times of many, often complex, security challenges and threats. Russia’s illegal and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine is not only aimed at conquering part of another sovereign nation’s territory. **It is the explicit goal of Russia to turn back the clock, to re-install a Soviet-Union-style area of influence over Central and Eastern Europe.** The right of countries like Romania to freely and independently decide to be part of an alliance such as NATO is therefore directly challenged. Russia has already started numerous hybrid attacks on us, e.g., through spreading fake news to destabilise our societies or through cyber-attacks. In addition to that, other international actors also run measures directly addressed against our values and interests.

In this geopolitical environment, it is necessary to streamline and broaden our ability to defend ourselves, which is exactly what our new National Security Strategy is aiming at. The strategy is based on a comprehensive security approach: **We have to protect and defend ourselves not only against potential military attacks, but also against hybrid threats, such as the spread of fake-news, cyber-attacks or damage to our critical infrastructure.**

In this regard, the strategy promotes an integrated approach, focusing on a better coordination and cooperation between the various security stakeholders on the international, national, regional and local levels. It aims in particular at building up our defence capabilities, e.g., through meeting the NATO target of spending at least two percent of our GDP on defence. In addition to that, it sets the course for strengthening our resilience, for example by **de-risking and diversifying supply chains**, and by better protecting critical infrastructure and combatting the spread of fake news. Promoting **sustainability is also defined as a key goal**, as it is acknowledged that **security threats are often the result of negative effects of climate change.**

“We remain committed to the transatlantic alliance as a key security provider for Europe and to the EU as a crucial actor to secure and protect our freedom, our welfare and our interests.”

Germany will remain focused on closely cooperating with our international partners and allies, including Romania, in order to protect and defend ourselves. Our strength is our unity. **We remain committed to the transatlantic alliance as a key security provider for Europe and to the EU as a crucial actor to secure and protect our freedom, our welfare and our interests.**

H.E. Peer Gebauer

German Ambassador to Romania (since August 24th, 2021)

Peer Gebauer started his diplomatic career in 2000. He served at the German Embassies in **Tel Aviv** as Consul (2002-2005), in **Tokyo** as First Secretary (2005-2007), and in **Bangkok** as Deputy Head of Mission (2014-2017).

In the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, he was a desk officer in the **European Affairs Department** (2001-2002) and, between 2007 and 2014, held numerous positions in the **Department for Human Resources and Organization.**

In 2017, he joined the Federal Chancellery as Senior Director for **Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America.** In 2019, he became a Deputy Foreign Policy Advisor to the Federal Chancellor, focusing on **Global Issues, Sub-Saharan Africa, Development Policy and Migration.**

He studied Law at the University of Tübingen, where he also worked as research associate to Prof. Dr. Eduard Picker. During his mandatory military service, he served in the Franco-German Brigade in Böblingen. He is married and has two children.