

Bucharest Elections 2025: Ciprian Ciucu, the new General Mayor

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Bucharest elections: results and their implications

Mayor General's Political Program

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Ciprian Ciucu, Bucharest's 17th General Mayor.

Ciprian Ciucu (PNL) won the 7 December Bucharest mayoral election, becoming the 17th General Mayor of the Capital City with **36.16% of the vote**. He leaves behind a term and a half as Mayor of District 6 to take over a city shaped in recent years by former mayor and now President of Romania, Nicușor Dan. Ciucu brings to the role a political science background, experience in public policy consulting, and a long-standing involvement in both civic and governmental spheres.

His professional path spans academia, NGOs, and public administration, including early work at the Presidential Administration, a period leading the National Agency for Civil Servants, and his successful tenure in District 6 (elected with over 70% in 2024). Ciucu has also been active in public debate as a columnist for several national publications and has held leadership roles within PNL, including serving as first vice-president since November 2024.

Ciucu takes office at a challenging moment, with **only two and a half years to deliver on a complex agenda**, in a city facing aging infrastructure, housing pressures, and a demanding multi-level governance environment. Still, with support in the General Council from PNL and USR (and, when negotiations allow, from PSD), he is expected to secure the political footing needed to **at least lay the groundwork for reforms** that could meaningfully improve the city and the lives of its residents.

Anca Alexandrescu, the surprise of the race. PSD and USR emerge as the major losers.

The results behind Ciucu revealed a string of unexpected outcomes. Journalist **Anca Alexandrescu**, known for her support of pro-Russian figure Călin Georgescu and backed by the far-right AUR, secured a surprising second place with **21.94%** of the vote. She was followed closely by **District 4 mayor Daniel Băluță (PSD) with 20.51%**. **USR's candidate, Cătălin Drulă, obtained 13.9%**, while **Ana Ciceală of SENS** delivered an unexpectedly strong performance for a small platform, **reaching 5.85%**. None of the remaining candidates passed 1%, including POT's George Burcea, who ended at 0.20%.

Ciucu's victory was clearly driven by **the consolidation of the entire centre-right electorate** (PNL, Force of the Right, and a significant segment of USR voters). Many USR supporters appear to have reverted to the long-familiar logic of the **"useful vote"**, prioritizing blocking a far-right win over backing their own party's candidate. Alexandrescu's strong showing was nonetheless a worrying signal for pro-democratic parties: after months of upward momentum for AUR, her ability to overtake both the PSD and USR candidates shows the continued rise of Romania's "sovereigntist" far right. It also reflects public fatigue with PSD and USR leadership after repeated electoral defeats, in contrast to

PNL, which recently renewed its leadership. Daniel Băluță's loss was driven more by his party than by his own performance. Polls showed he was within striking distance of winning, and he likely could have succeeded had he run as an independent instead of carrying PSD's baggage.

This frustration is underscored by the choices made by the parties themselves. PSD replaced Marcel Ciolacu with Sorin Grindeanu, one of its most controversial figures, associated in public memory with the 2017 GEO 13 attempt to weaken judicial independence. Meanwhile, USR's decision to run Cătălin Drulă, a Timiș deputy and a former party leader widely seen by its own base as part of the "old leadership" that accelerated the party's decline, proved costly. Drulă's poor result signals a clear message from USR's electorate: without genuine internal reform and credible leadership, the party risks losing its ability to counterbalance Romania's increasingly assertive far right. And the same applies to PSD.

What Ciucu's victory means for the Governing Coalition.

PNL emerges as the clear winner of these elections, especially Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan. Ciucu's victory in such a key city strengthens PNL's legitimacy and negotiating power within the governing coalition (PSD, PNL, USR, UDMR), while **also benefiting USR by securing their continued role in government** despite PSD's dissatisfaction.

This outcome also makes it **unlikely that PSD will support the December 15 no-confidence motion** to dismiss the government and remove USR from power, a move they might have pursued had Daniel Băluță won, leveraging the party's position to pressure the coalition.

The key question now is whether Ilie Bolojan can fully capitalize on this advantage, both within the coalition and inside PNL, where some members remain wary of his reformist approach and opposition to alliances with PSD-style politics. And we shall see if this win, also backed by former liberal and current President of the Force of the Right Party, Ludovic Orban, could mean the latter's return to PNL.

Mayor General's Political Program

Bucharest faces the need for tangible results rather than empty promises. **Ciprian Ciucu's political program** focuses on transforming the Romanian capital into a modern, well-administered European city. His agenda emphasizes sustainable urban development, improved infrastructure, public safety, environmental protection, health services, and efficient governance. The overarching goal is to create a city where investments are visible, public services function according to rules rather than interests, and citizens can feel pride in their surroundings.

Urban Planning: The General Urban Plan and the Central Zonal Urban Plan.

Ciprian Ciucu emphasizes that the current General Urban Plan (PUG) of Bucharest is severely outdated, having not been fully revised in over 25 years. His plan is to **update the PUG comprehensively** to create a coherent, long-term framework for the city's development. This includes protecting already established areas, such as the historic and cultural center, communist-era residential neighborhoods, green spaces, and monuments, while providing clear guidelines for new construction, infrastructure projects, and mixed-use development. Ciucu aims to ensure that the PUG works hand-in-hand with the dedicated Zonal Urban Plan (PUZ) for the central axis (Piața Unirii - Piața Victoriei), allowing the city to develop in a **planned, structured, and phased manner**, rather than through fragmented PUZs or ad hoc approvals. The updated PUG will serve as the legal and strategic backbone for urban regeneration, supporting balanced growth, pedestrianization, green spaces, cultural and commercial hubs, and integration with public transportation. Essentially, Ciucu's vision is to **modernize the city's planning tools**, end decades of administrative delays, and ensure that urban development follows clear, enforceable rules rather than improvisation.

Bucharest, a City-Park concept.

The new General Mayor's **"city-park" initiative** seeks to transform Bucharest's dense urban neighborhoods into **small, functional green oases**. The approach includes planting trees, perennials, and creating landscaped public spaces equipped with simple, modern seating, while maintaining environmental friendliness. Beyond greenery, the program addresses practical infrastructure: reorganizing traffic patterns, improving street lighting, introducing residential parking solutions, and installing modern waste collection systems both underground and aboveground.

Urban Space and Advertising Rules

A key component of Ciprian Ciucu's vision is the **strict regulation of public space** to ensure that Bucharest does not become visually chaotic.

He proposes a **modern, European-standard framework for street advertising, signage, and public displays**, controlling dimensions, placement, illumination, and color schemes. This would gradually remove improvised panels, torn banners, dangling wires, and visually aggressive advertising that currently overwhelms the urban landscape. The initiative balances discipline with **support for businesses, providing guidance and reasonable compliance timelines**, ultimately creating a cohesive, civil, and visually appealing city environment that respects the identity and architectural heritage of Bucharest.

Seismic Risk reduction

Bucharest is one of Europe's cities most exposed to seismic risk, and Ciucu's program prioritizes **long-term, structured mitigation**. His plan proposes **a three-phase approach**, beginning with consolidation of essential public buildings such as schools, hospitals, and administrative offices, followed by high-risk residential buildings, and concluding with transforming consolidated areas into hubs for further urban regeneration. Measures include establishing a dedicated fund, relocating residents safely during works, leveraging public-private partnerships, and integrating consolidation projects with wider infrastructure improvements.

Bucharest, a Safer City

Public safety underpins Ciprian Ciucu's vision of a modern Bucharest. He emphasizes **the transformation of the Local Police into a professional, citizen-focused institution** capable of rapid and effective interventions. The program includes **active enforcement against illegal parking, unauthorized street commerce, and urban neglect**, alongside **comprehensive traffic safety initiatives** inspired by the Vision Zero framework. Proposed measures involve raised pedestrian crossings, speed-reduction zones, installation of surveillance cameras, and educational campaigns for both children and drivers.

District Heating Modernization

The city's central heating system is one of the largest in the world, yet it requires urgent modernization to reduce failures, improve efficiency, and lower environmental impact. Ciucu proposes long-term investments including **the rehabilitation of over 100 km of primary networks, replacement of aging pipes, installation of automated monitoring and control systems (SCADA), and optimization of energy production through cogeneration and renewable sources**. Modernizing heating plants and integrating alternative energy options such as solar thermal systems and geothermal energy will enhance sustainability, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and improve service predictability.

Bucharest's "Green Belt"

The new General Mayor advocates for **a strategic Green Belt around Bucharest**, creating **a continuous network of parks, urban forests, ecological corridors, and protected green spaces**. The project addresses both environmental and social priorities, reducing air pollution,

mitigating urban heat islands, and improving residents' access to natural spaces. By connecting green zones between sectors and restoring underutilized urban areas, the Green Belt will enhance quality of life, promote biodiversity, and foster a healthier urban climate. It is envisioned as a long-term metropolitan strategy, providing tangible ecological and recreational benefits while guiding the city toward sustainable development.

Healthcare System Improvements

Ciucu highlights **the critical need to modernize Bucharest's public hospitals and healthcare infrastructure**. Many existing facilities are outdated, lack safety certifications, and require significant reconstruction to meet modern standards. His program prioritizes rebuilding or upgrading hospitals to reduce infection risks, improve patient care, and provide safe working conditions for medical staff. Additionally, Ciucu emphasizes the importance of **addressing air pollution, promoting policies that reduce respiratory and cardiovascular risks, and ensuring that healthcare services are accessible**, efficient, and integrated into a broader strategy for a healthier urban environment.

Velo Masterplan

The Velo Masterplan focuses on **making walking and cycling safe, convenient, and attractive alternatives to motorized transport for short and medium distances**. Ciucu aims to implement a citywide network of high-quality, segregated bike lanes connecting residential areas with workplaces, schools, commercial centers, and transit hubs. Secure bike parking and last-mile solutions will support integration with public transport, encouraging sustainable mobility. The program reflects a broader commitment to multimodal transport planning, promoting environmental sustainability, reducing congestion, and improving urban livability through accessible, safe, and interconnected transport options.

Administrative Reform and 2024 Referendum Implementation

Finally, Ciprian Ciucu stresses the **need to clarify governance responsibilities between City Hall and sector administration** to ensure accountability and efficiency. Building on **the 2024 referendum**, he proposes **a phased reform** that reorganizes municipal functions, eliminates overlapping competencies, and improves administrative capacity. Expert studies and international guidance, including from the World Bank, will inform this process, ensuring reforms are strategic, evidence-based, and implementable. The goal is to create a clear, streamlined, and transparent municipal structure that maximizes the impact of public funds, improves service delivery, and restores citizen trust in local government.