

US politics & policy**Donald Trump's ambassador to Greece causes stir in Romania**

Kimberly Guilfoyle told embassy dinner in Athens 'we can do that to any country', in reference to Romanian government's fall



Kimberly Guilfoyle travelled to Romania in March shortly before the government in Bucharest collapsed © Hannah Beier/Bloomberg

Marton Dunai in Budapest and **Eleni Varvitsioti** in Athens

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Donald Trump's ambassador to Greece has caused a political stir in Romania after suggesting the US could bring down governments, in remarks that appeared to refer to events in Bucharest earlier this year.

Kimberly Guilfoyle, a former fiancée of Donald Trump Jr who was appointed to the post last year, was reported by the Wall Street Journal to have alluded to the impending collapse of the Romanian government during an exchange with Greek energy minister Stavros Papastavrou. "We can do that to any country we want. We can do that here," she said, according to the WSJ, to which Papastavrou retorted that the US could not replace Greece's democratically elected government.

Guilfoyle spoke about Romania in those terms on March 18 during an official dinner at the US embassy in Athens attended by more than a dozen people including politicians, embassy staff and military personnel, a person familiar with the matter told the FT.

Romania's government collapsed in May when the Social Democrats pulled out of the ruling coalition and voted with the far-right opposition to topple Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan.

The US embassies in Athens and Bucharest declined to comment.

A US state department spokesperson said Washington “values its strategic partnership with Romania, which remains strong across our shared priorities, including energy security and defence burden shifting”.

The Greek government said: “There was never any question of a threat against the Greek government . . . nor would such a thing ever be tolerated.” It added that relations with the US were “closer and more stable than ever”.



Senior Romanian Social Democrats Sorin Grindeanu, left, and Bogdan Ivan met the US ambassador in March; in May the party pulled out of Romania's governing coalition © Imago/Lucian Alecu/Reuters Connect

Guilfoyle travelled to Bucharest after the Athens dinner and met members of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in late March, including its chair Sorin Grindeanu and then energy minister Bogdan Ivan. It is unclear whether the ambassador advised them to pull out of the governing coalition.

The meeting between Guilfoyle and the Romanian Social Democrats “appeared conspiratorial” and should be subject to a review, said centre-right EU lawmaker Siegfried Mureşan, who is seeking the Romanian parliament’s support to become prime minister on Wednesday. “The matter is extremely serious,” he told the FT.

“Obviously Mr Grindeanu and his colleagues from the PSD need to tell us what they did, what they discussed and what goals they pursued at those meetings,” Mureşan said.

The centre-right lost its parliamentary majority when the PSD quit the government, with subsequent attempts to appoint a successor to Bolojan failing.

Siegfried Mureşan is seeking the Romanian parliament’s support to become prime minister in a vote on Wednesday © Robert Gement/EPA/Shutterstock

If Mureșan is voted down on Wednesday, President Nicușor Dan can ask the Social Democrats to form a government or call snap elections, though he has previously said he wants to avoid them because Romania can ill-afford further political instability.

The turmoil has cost Romania billions in lost EU funds, while major rating agencies say its sovereign debt is on the brink of “junk” status — below investment grade. S&P is due to announce its latest rating decision on Friday.

Guilfoyle was in Bucharest in March to promote a gas corridor from Greece via Bulgaria and Romania, the so-called Vertical Corridor, towards Ukraine. She also pushed for Romania to purchase significant quantities of US liquefied natural gas, according to two people familiar with the discussions.

While centre-right Bolojan was supportive of the gas corridor project, he declined to buy a lot more LNG from the US as Romania has significant resources of its own, according to the people.

Bolojan told the FT his government was in talks with the US to develop the Vertical Corridor and connect its gas network with neighbouring countries. But he stressed he held no official talks with Guilfoyle and signed no agreement on LNG purchases. “Any positions expressed by other stakeholders do not represent the official position of the Romanian government,” he said.

The PSD disagreed with Bolojan on the issue of buying more American LNG, which was one of the reasons why they eventually pulled out of the government coalition, the people added.

Grindeanu rejected accusations of collusion with the US.

“Ilie Bolojan was not overthrown by the Americans, nor by the Loch Ness monster, nor by Bigfoot, but by . . . Romanians who said that he was governing poorly,” he said on Monday.

But he added that the centre-right’s alleged anti-American stance proved “that we urgently need a government that will put the relationship with the US back on track”.

Romania has tried to get back into favour with the Trump administration, which singled it out as undemocratic in 2025 after Bucharest annulled a presidential election over alleged Russian meddling.

Dan, who was elected president last year over pro-Maga nationalist George Simion, said he wanted a stable government capable of restoring prosperity.

Ivan, the former energy minister, said the outgoing government was peddling “conspiracies” and accused his former coalition partners of lying.

“They are desperate because they are losing power, they are hallucinating,” he said. “They are desperate when they see that [Mureşan] has no chance of getting through.”

In an increasingly acrimonious political environment, worsened by the US meddling allegations, the prospects of a coalition majority forming around Mureşan were slim, said independent strategist Radu Magdin of Bucharest-based consultancy Smartlink.

The two largest parties are the Social Democrats and the far-right AUR, both of which cultivate Trump and voted together to bring down the Bolojan government in May. “In Romania the trend seems to be turning,” Magdin said, for a “formal or informal team-up” between the centre left and the far right.

Additional reporting by Amy Mackinnon in Washington

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