

[www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro)

contact [ at ] [riseproject.ro](mailto:riseproject.ro)

[www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo](https://www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo)

# 2012



ANNUAL REPORT



## About RISE Project

RISE PROJECT was established in January 2012 by a group of Romanian investigative journalists, visual artists and programmers.

RISE PROJECT is an investigative journalism not-for-profit organization that uses advanced investigative techniques and technology to generate high quality investigative reporting.

At RISE PROJECT we generate investigative stories and visual databases. We educate other journalists and the public at large in researching complex corporate structures used by organized crime and corrupt officials.

RISE PROJECT is affiliated to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project / OCCRP ([www.occrp.org](http://www.occrp.org)), the Investigative Dashboard /ID ([www.investigativedashboard.org](http://www.investigativedashboard.org)) and the Global Investigative Journalism Network ([www.gijn.org](http://www.gijn.org)).

### AIM

To investigate organized crime and corruption in Romania and the region.

### HOW WE WORK

We follow the money across borders. We combine footwork with advanced investigative techniques and with data analysis to access hard to get records. We investigate the hidden connections between organized crime, politics and business and we visualize them.

### ACROSS BORDERS

We follow and expose organized crime networks across national boundaries. In 2012, our investigations took us from Romania to the Czech Republic, Moldova, Iceland, Turkey, Egypt, Sweden, West Africa and other countries.



## Members

RISE PROJECT members are experienced investigative journalists and researchers. Many have gained international recognition and prestigious awards such as "The Daniel Pearl Global Investigative Journalism Award", "The Global Shining Light Award" and several Investigative Reporters and Editors Awards (IRE).

Paul Radu

Mihai Munteanu

Daniel Bojin

Romana Puiulet

Cristi Ciuperca

Andrei Ciurcanu

Laura Ranca

Daniel Befu

Mihai Pogan

Matt Sarnecki

Raluca Dan

Ionut Stanescu

# Financial Information

Most of the investigative work for RISE PROJECT is done on voluntary, no pay, basis. RISE members use their skills and donate their time to produce some of the finest investigative reporting.

In September 2012 RISE PROJECT received a \$5150 grant from the Embassy of the United States of America in Romania to produce a "Follow the Money" Handbook for Romania and Moldova. The handbook will assist investigative journalists in tracking down the money across borders and in mastering advanced investigative reporting techniques. It includes thorough guidelines and tutorials on how to dig for company records in Romania and Moldova and will be launched at the end of February 2013.

RISE PROJECT is also a partner in the Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS) project financed by the International Press Institute (IPI) and Google Inc. The project duration is 12 months: June 2012 - June 2013, and the total budget is 71,100 Euro. RISE PROJECT receives 21,600 Euro for the research, coordination and communication activities within the project. The other project partners are Journalism Development Network (JDN) and Quickdata. Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS) will provide a free online tool for journalists to visualize their investigations without the need of any technical or design skills. The VIS online platform will be launched in July 2013.





The most viewed visualization

# Nicu Gheara 1.311 times

a Romanian conducting illegal business  
in collaboration with a director of FC Barcelona



The most accessed article

# The Affairs of the Church

about the financial connections between  
prominent Church officials and organized crime

## Website Traffic

Our Website - [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro) - is also a complex and constantly expanding visual database where we index people, companies, connections and related documents.



27.93%  
Returning Visitor

72.07%  
New Visitor



# 57,993

Unique Visitors



# 00:02:43

Avg. Visit Duration



# 2.47

Pages / Visit

## Social Networks

[www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo](http://www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo)



# 3,375

Likes



# 1,138,376

Friends of fans

# Media Presence

In 2012, our investigations and visualizations were referred and republished by over 300 international and national media outlets - on-line, print, TV, radio.

## International



The Ukrainina Week



ORF (Austrian public service broadcaster)



Reuters



Adevarul de Moldova



National



hotnews.ro



jurnalul.ro



romanialibera.ro



adevarul.ro



wall-street.ro



paginademia.ro



Antena 3



TVR News



2012

// Investigations



In 2012,  
in 15 Investigations  
we wrote 61 stories

in which we indexed

231 Persons  
348 Companies  
&  
46 Lawsuits

Between them we generated

1286 connections,

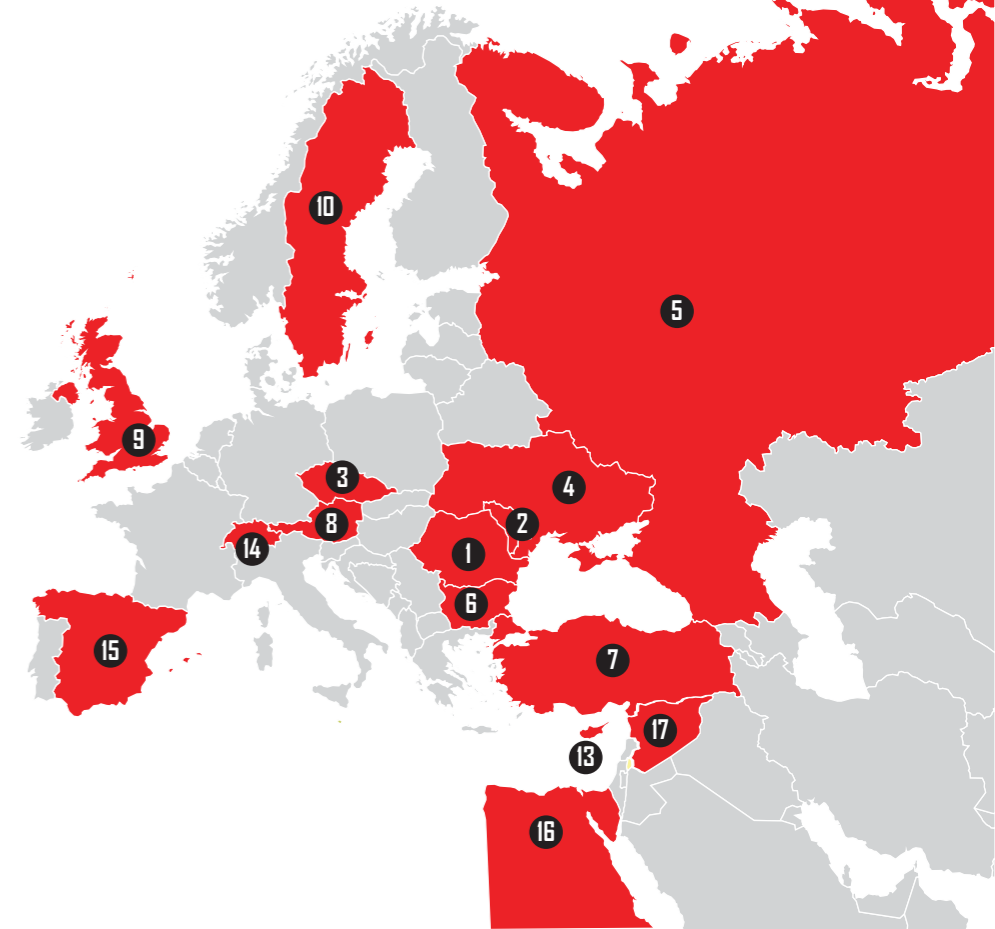
which we represented on our website  
through infographics and visualizations

At RISE PROJECT we make use of databases from all over the world, of the latest technology and of cross-border investigative reporting networks to produce investigations that uncover regional and global organized crime and corruption.

For example, in 2012 we cooperated with journalists in Iceland and Sweden to document the connections between a fugitive Romanian stockbroker, a multinational company and a minister in the Romanian government - in "The Ericsson Affair".

Between February and December 2012 we produced 15 major investigative series (e.g. "The Ericsson Affair", "The Market Sultans", "Hidden Interests in the Media" etc.) containing a total of 61 Stories.

We covered people, companies, law suits and connections at a local and at a cross-border level involving many countries: Romania, Moldova, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria, United Kingdom, Sweden, Iceland, Panama, Cyprus, Switzerland, Spain, Egypt, Siria etc.



## Covered countries

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1 Romania        | 10 Sweden      |
| 2 Moldova        | 11 Iceland     |
| 3 Czech Republic | 12 Panama      |
| 4 Ukraine        | 13 Cyprus      |
| 5 Russia         | 14 Switzerland |
| 6 Bulgaria       | 15 Spain       |
| 7 Turkey         | 16 Egypt       |
| 8 Austria        | 17 Siria       |
| 9 United Kingdom |                |



# Highlights

In 2012, we exposed major national and international cases of organized crime and corruption with serious social, economic and political impact:



worked on large tax evasion cases involving cross-border import-export structures

## The Market Sultans



identified secret businesses and assets of high-rank Romanian politicians

## The Businesses of the People in Power and in the Opposition

revealed financial connections between prominent Church officials and organized crime

## The Affairs of the Church



traced Egypt's public money hidden in Romania and abroad by Hosni Mubarak and his associates and that of Syria's dictator Bashar Al Assad

## Charged with Money Laundering, Mubarak's Affiliates Build a Shopping Mall Outside Bucharest

## Bashar's Clan Has Businesses in Romania

untangled networks of hidden money transactions between large international corporations and public authorities in Romania

## Dan Nica - the Romanian Minister Involved in the Ericsson Case

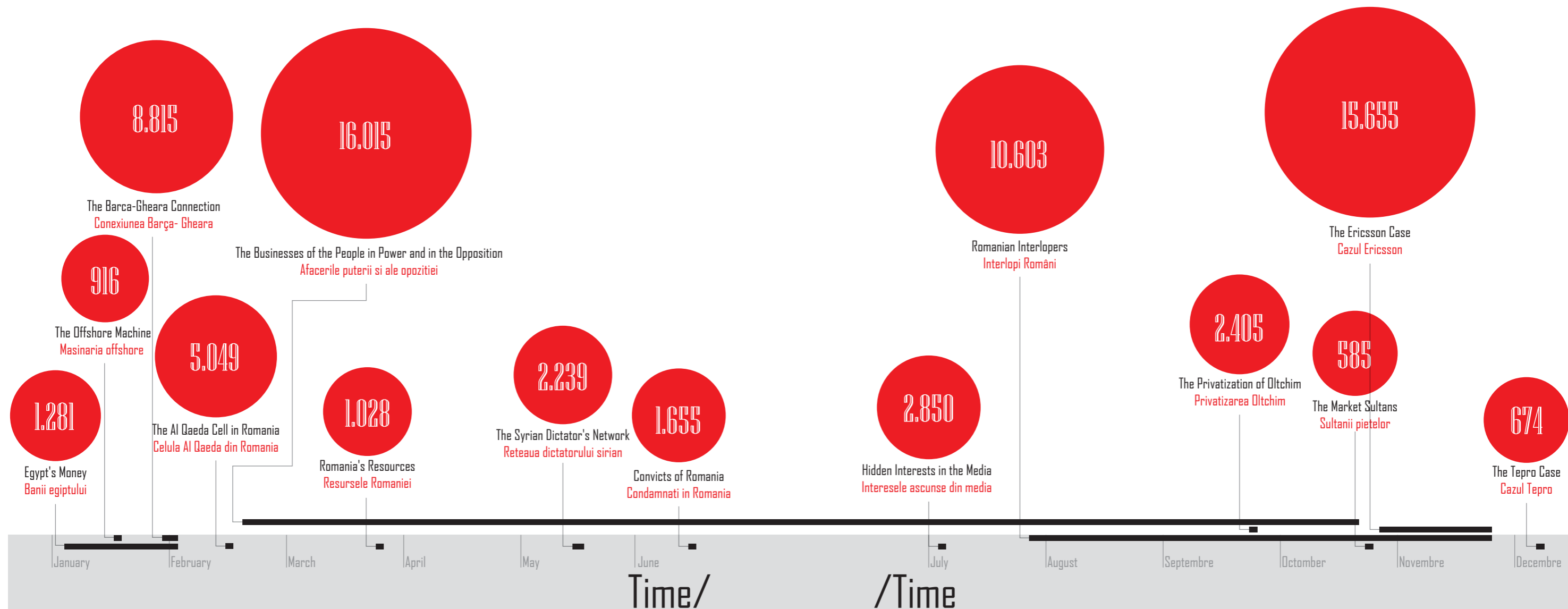


prevented and uncovered possible fraud in Romania and Moldova

## The Bingo Fraud Exported to Moldova



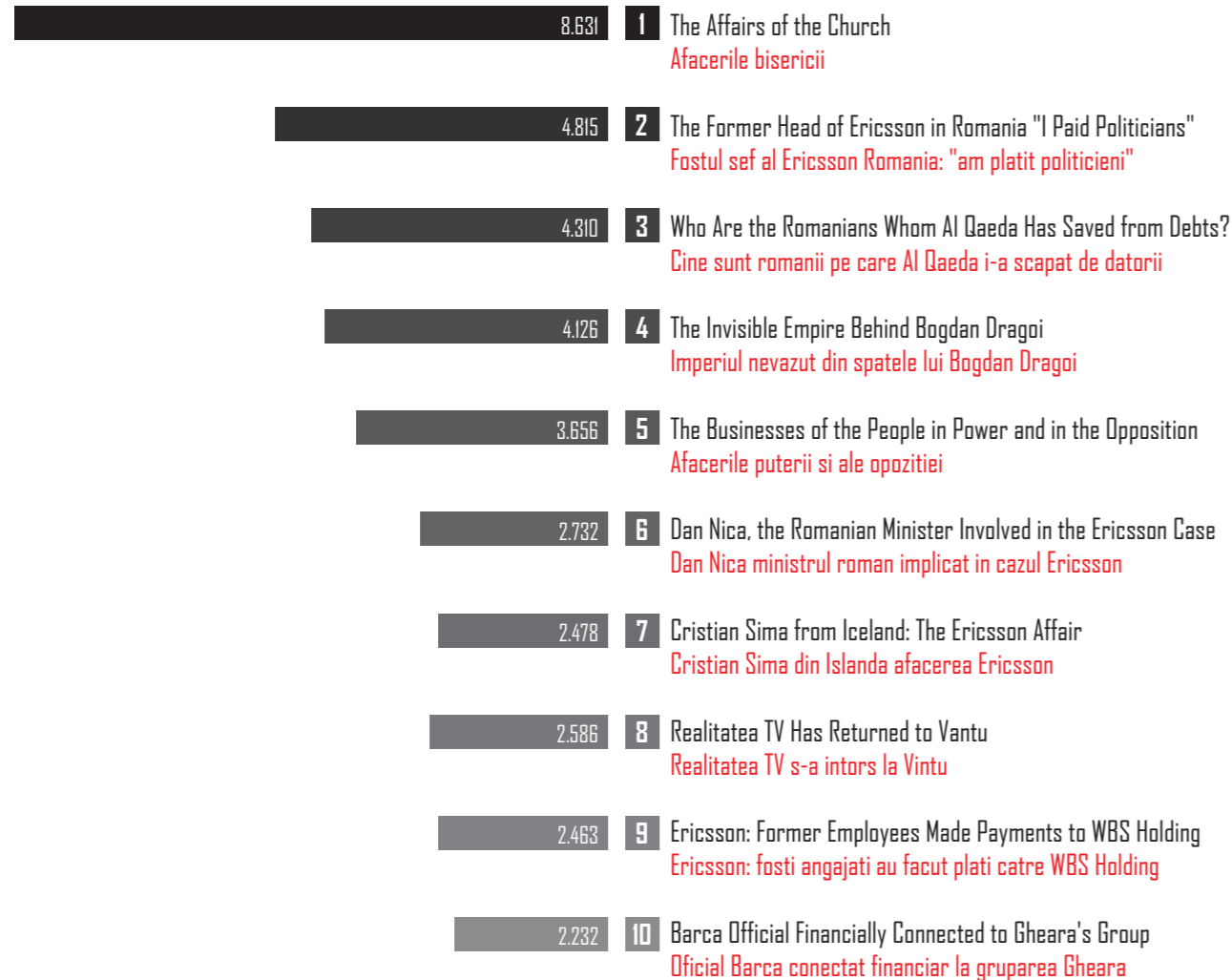
# Unique visitors per investigations in 2012





## Unique visits

Top 10 articles



## Average time spent on page

Top 10 articles





2012

// Connections

# 1286 connections

BETWEEN



RISE PROJECT is all about connections and our website is a visualization of these connections. With every new investigation we index and visualize all the entities (people, companies, lawsuits) and connections emerging in our research. To these we attach documents, photos and video material generating an ever-expanding database. Whenever a new entity is added, it connects to already existing data on our website making the investigative story more thorough and explanatory.



# 32,820

Pageviews



# 00:01:19

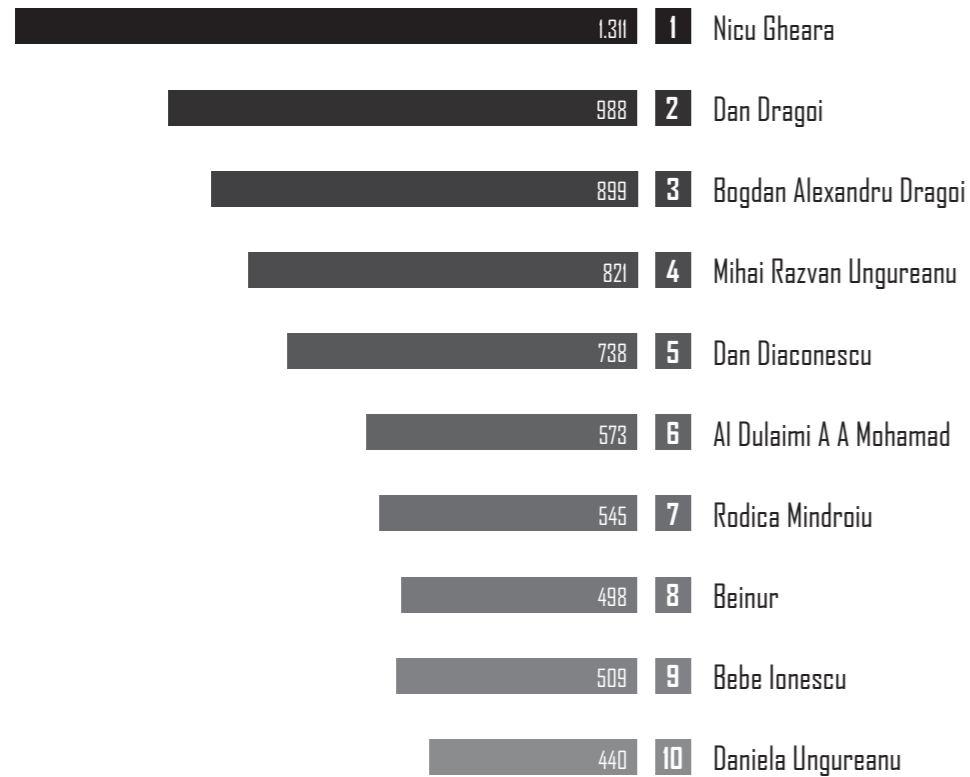
Avg. Time on Page





## Top 10 persons

by unique views



## Top 10 companies

by unique views



## Top 10 court cases

by unique views





# 2012

// Blog

Our blog features video tutorials, stories behind our investigations and information about our ongoing projects. Our tutorials present both the public and other investigative journalists with advanced techniques to research complex company ownership in databases in Panama, Switzerland, UK or Czech Republic.

We are also introducing our viewers to the strategies we used in investigating our stories or to the instruments that we are developing such as a new visualization tool for investigative -journalists - the Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS).



3

Video-Tutorials



12

Posts



9,300

Pageviews



2012

//Projects

RISE PROJECT is not only about investigative techniques. We collaborate with programmers, designers, activists and researchers to enhance journalism education, develop tools and contribute to data and information transparency. We keep the pace with new technologies, new data sources and ever-changing information by focusing on three key areas in investigative journalism: Education, Innovation and Research.



## Education

### "Follow the Money" Handbook

We are editing a handbook to help investigative journalists follow the money across borders and master the techniques of data journalism. The handbook includes thorough guidelines and tutorials on how to dig for company records in Romania and Moldova and will be launched in February 2013. The project is funded by the Embassy of the United States of America in Romania. In 2013 we are planning to prepare new handbooks focused on other Eastern European countries.



## Innovation

### Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS)

In June 2012 we started to develop a free online tool for journalists to visualize their investigations without the need of any technical or design skills. One of the winners of the "2012 News Innovation Contest" launched by the International Press Institute (IPI) and sponsored by Google Inc., Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS) will provide investigative journalists with exportable, customizable, dynamic, html5 visualization templates. The project is aimed at journalists who investigate organized crime and corruption and who follow money across borders. VIS will provide a website with several categories of professionally designed visualization templates matching different types of investigations and related data. VIS is a common project of RISE Project, the Journalism Development Network and Quickdata. The VIS online platform will be launched in July 2013.



## Research

### Media Ownership Project

We are researching and indexing ownership data for the major TV, radio, print and on-line media in Romania. This research is part of a regional Media Ownership Project covering all the Eastern European countries. The data will be indexed and visualized online in early 2013. The project is coordinated by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and funded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and National Endowment for Democracy (NED).



For 2013 we are planning to extend the activities of RISE PROJECT in three areas:

- 1 Training courses for investigative journalists
- 2 Video-Tutorials on how to follow the money across borders
- 3 Audio-video materials to accompany our investigative stories

# 2013

