



# 2018-2019

## REPORT

[www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro)  
[contact@riseproject.ro](mailto:contact@riseproject.ro)  
[facebook.com/RiseProjectRo](https://facebook.com/RiseProjectRo)

# ABOUT

**RISE Project** is an investigative journalism not-for-profit organization that uses advanced data research techniques and technology to generate reliable, hard hitting, investigative reporting.

It was established in January 2012 by a group of Romanian investigative reporters, visual artists and programmers.

We produce investigative stories, databases as well as research and visualization tools.

We educate other journalists and the public at large in researching complex corporate structures used by organized crime and corrupt officials to hide stolen public money.

And this is what we do.

# THE TEAM

We are experienced investigative journalists and researchers. Some are freelancers, others are also affiliated with local or international media outlets.

Paul Radu

Mihai Munteanu

Daniel Bojin

Romana Puiulet

Agnes Nicolaescu

Cristi Ciuperca

Andrei Ciurcanu

Laura Ranca

Mihai Pogan

Matt Sarnecki

Ionut Stanescu

Sergiu Brega

Mihai Pogan

Victor Ilie

Roxana Jipa

Ana Poenariu

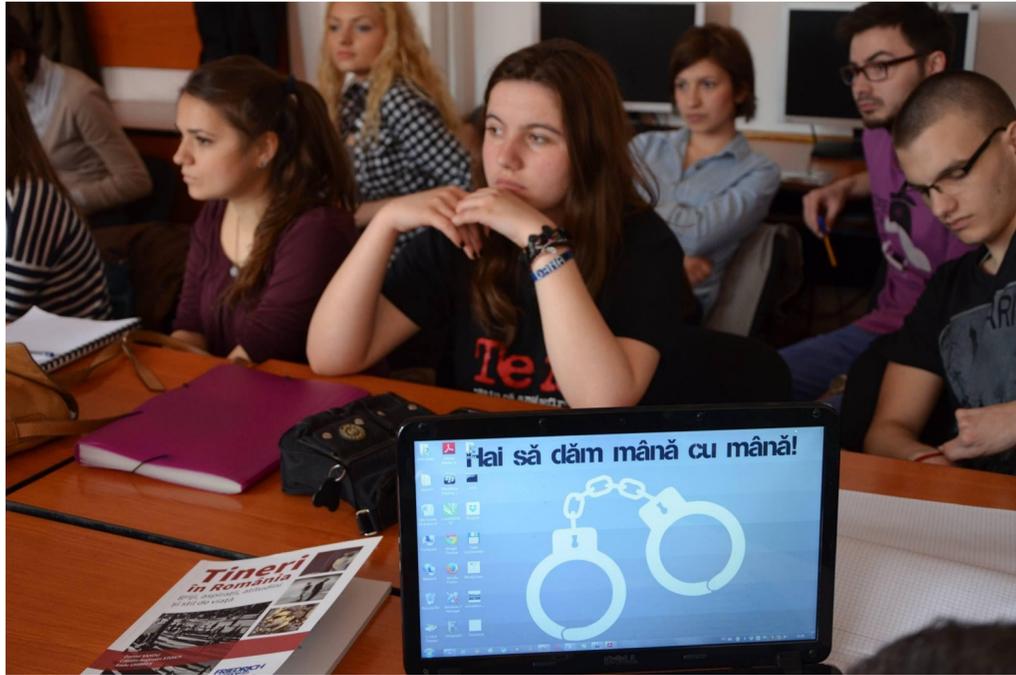
Attila Biro

Elena Dumitru

Alina Moscalu

Iurie Sanduta





## 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 2018 and 2019, our investigations took us from Romania to Brazil, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Ukraine, Bulgaria or other places.





# Dig for the facts

We help journalists anywhere to trace people, companies and assets across the globe.

**RISE Project** members are founders of the OCCRP and of the **Investigative Dashboard** ([www.investigativedashboard.org](http://www.investigativedashboard.org)).

This tool is developed together with Google Ideas to help investigators track down the money and hidden assets of criminals and corrupt politicians.

## Ask our researchers

Journalists can rely on the assistance of the research team to take their stories cross-border.

[Send a research request](#)

## Search for leads

Search millions of documents and datasets, from public sources, leaks and investigations.

[Search our document archive](#)

## Map your investigation

Create visual investigative scenarios that map the people and companies in your story.

[Visualise networks](#)

RISE PROJECT is a member of the **Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project/OCCRP** and of the Global Investigative Journalism Network.

RISE Project, OCCRP and Quickdata also created Visual Investigative Scenarios ([vis.occrp.org](http://vis.occrp.org)), a tool to visualize business and crime networks.



# AWARDS

## SuperScrierea Anului

SuperScrieri Awards, 2018

## First Prize, Video Category

SuperScrieri Awards, 2019

## Ion Rațiu Prize for Journalism, 2018

## Global Shining Light Awards

2019 for “The Azerbaijani Laundromat”  
RISE Project collaborated with OCCRP  
and numerous international outlets



# OVERVIEW

64 investigative articles published

Over 100 field trips  
And over 130 interviews

Over 3000 official documents analyzed.

We covered Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Spain, Hungary, Gambia.

Over 150 students and young journalists participated to our workshops.

Over 2 million unique visitors on our website

And our work was featured on all major mainstream media outlets.



## CEMENT'S DIRTY BUSINESS

INVESTIGAȚII RISEBLOG CONEXIUNI RISEVIDEO DESPRE NOI DONEAZĂ CAUTĂ ENGLISH



### INVESTIGAȚII



#### Clanurile de pe strada Vacanței

Trei grupări organizate din partidul de guvernământ s-au întâlnit pe strada Vacanței, numărul 1, ca să mănânce fonduri



#### Cele 4 milioane de euro ale lui Codrin Ștefănescu

În timp ce se războiește, de fațadă, cu mirajul „Statului Paralel”, Codrin Ștefănescu se



#### Bani din promisiuni

Ca să obțină terenuri publice în România, un parlamentar maghiar a promis investiții masive, de zeci de milioane de



#### VÂNĂTORUL ROȘU

Le-am numărat prada în arhiva #TeleormanLeaks. Înainte să se vâneze reciproc în partid, baronii



#### CONȚINUTUL

Când vin mascații la Tel Drum, nu rămân multe variante: Golești computerul, transferi pe hard, iei tableta lui șefului articolului de la

TRAFIC DE VIAȚĂ ȘI MOARTE



### Institutul de Boli Inventate

AFACERILE PUTERII SI ALE OPOZITIEI



### Secretele din Casa Grande

AFACERILE PUTERII SI ALE OPOZITIEI



### Adevărul despre Dan Barna

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RISE has worked solely with external grants from international and national entities, thus being able to maintain a complete independence.

Our national source of revenue are the donations from our readers, either through PayPal or our bank account and sponsorship from private companies.

Also, some of our readers were very kind to redirect 2% of their income tax toward RISE Project.

**We thank them once again for their support.**



## 2018

**Total budget: 216.992 €** (equivalent, all currencies were converted to Euro at the average rate for 2018):

- Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme - 19.642 €
- Open Society Foundation - 45.484 €
- International Press Institute- 38,001 €
- Private donations- 92,957 €
- OCCRP- 20,710 €
- Award Friends for Friends Foundation- 198€

## 2019

**Total budget: 227,134 €** (equivalent, all currencies were converted to Euro at the average rate for 2019):

- Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme- 26,822 €
- Private donations- 116,839 €
- OCCRP- 61,292 €
- United States Embassy in Romania- 18,230 €
- Fondul pentru Democratie- 3,951 €

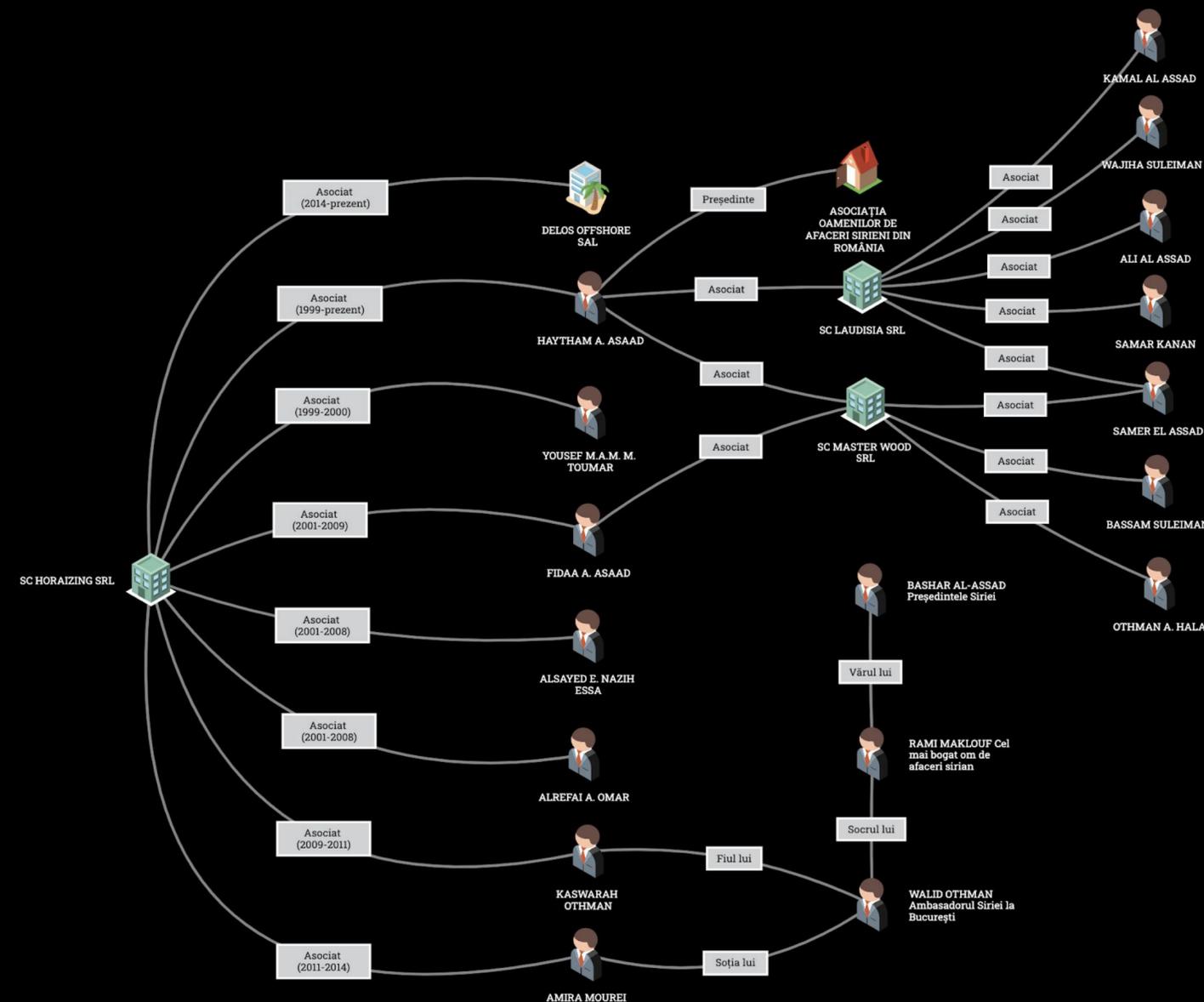
# Mapping and Visualizing Cross-Border Crime

The project began in September 2014 and ended in August 2018 and is a collaboration between RISE Project Romania, Journalism Development Network and the Basel Institute on Governance in Switzerland.

The total amount spent by RISE Project and its partners was **732,900 €**, money received from the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme. For this project, RISE had a matching grant from Open Society Foundation - total value of **69.355 €**.

Under this project, RISE produced a total of 279 investigative stories, published on [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro) accompanied by 158 infographics. The number of documentaries, teasers and short videos was 50.

For these outcomes, we studied more than 8.000 official documents, individuals, properties, for people involved in corruption and criminal activities were documented and archived for the People of Interest platform.



# Investigative Reporting Workshop and Educational Video Tutorials

**Grant Period: November 2016- December 2018**

**Donor: Open Society Foundation**

This grant has enabled RISE Project to conduct a series of training workshops to educate journalism students in advanced investigative reporting techniques, to create collaborative grounds between journalism, programming, law school, and art students.

With a total of **107 participants** during **seven workshops** in five of the biggest Romanian academic centers - **Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Constanța and Craiova** - the series of workshops held throughout 2016-2018 enabled us to reach the core of the next generation of journalists and auxiliary domains such as programming, arts and civic studies. The „hands-on” approach in which we conducted the workshops allowed us to see and monitor results in real time.



Our second central axis in these projects, the video tutorials published on [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro) and also on our YouTube channel (RISE Romania), acted as a perfect fit with the workshops. In total, we produced 16 tutorials during the span of the project. We chose their subject based both on our experience in investigative journalism but also based on the feedback and requests from the participants at the workshops.

# "FOLLOW THE MONEY" – SKILL SHARING WORKSHOP FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS

Period: February- December 2019

Donor: US Embassy in Romania

The main goal of the project was to organize two workshops in Constanța and Bucharest with the aim to teach journalists and students investigative reporting techniques and tools needed in media investigations related to misuse of public funds, widespread corruption or money laundering.



Our initial target group was composed of 40 journalists, but due to increased level of interest we had 57 participants.

The secondary goal of the project was to showcase good practice models and procedures for successful anti-corruption investigations. We achieved this goal with our trainers and by using hands-on working sessions.



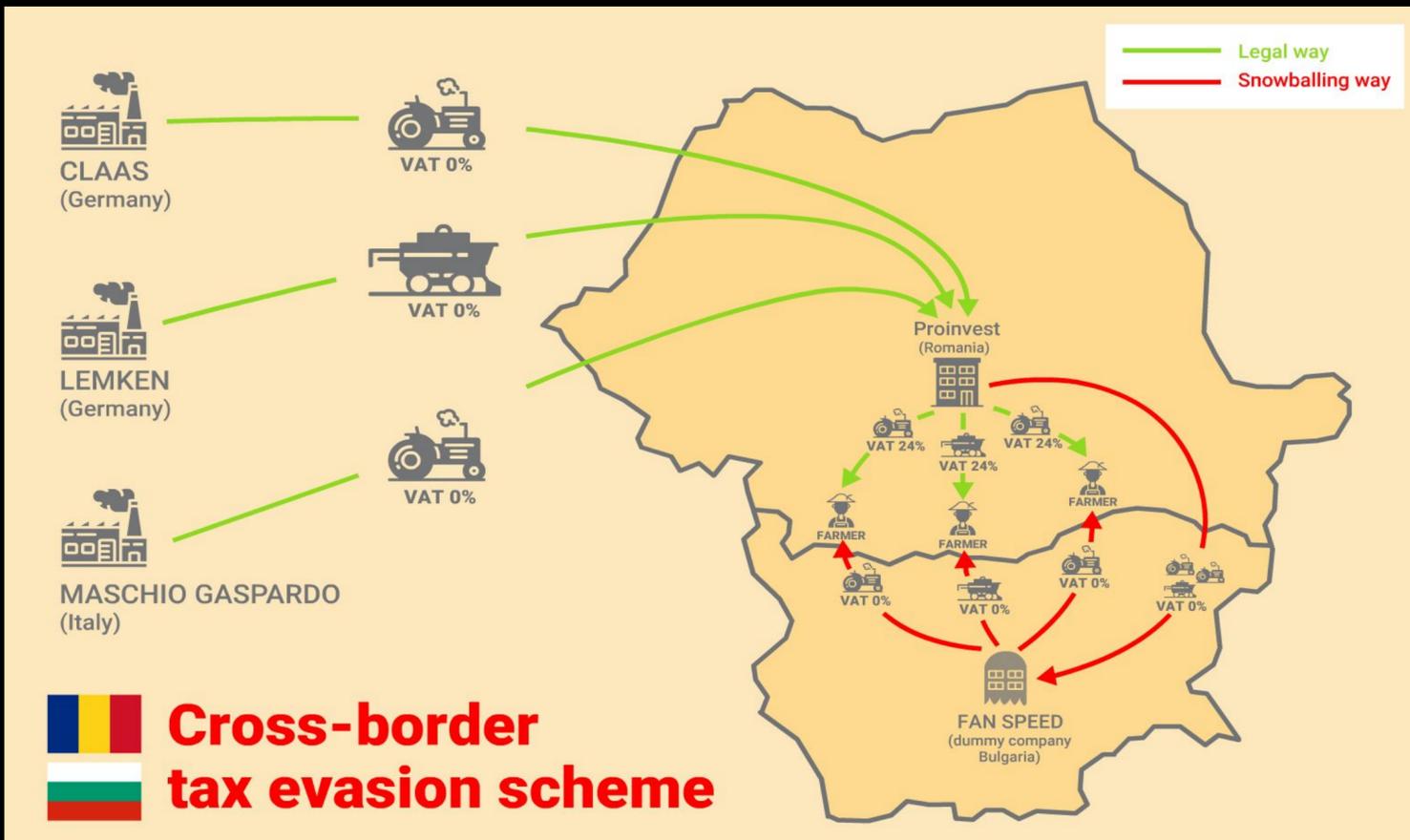
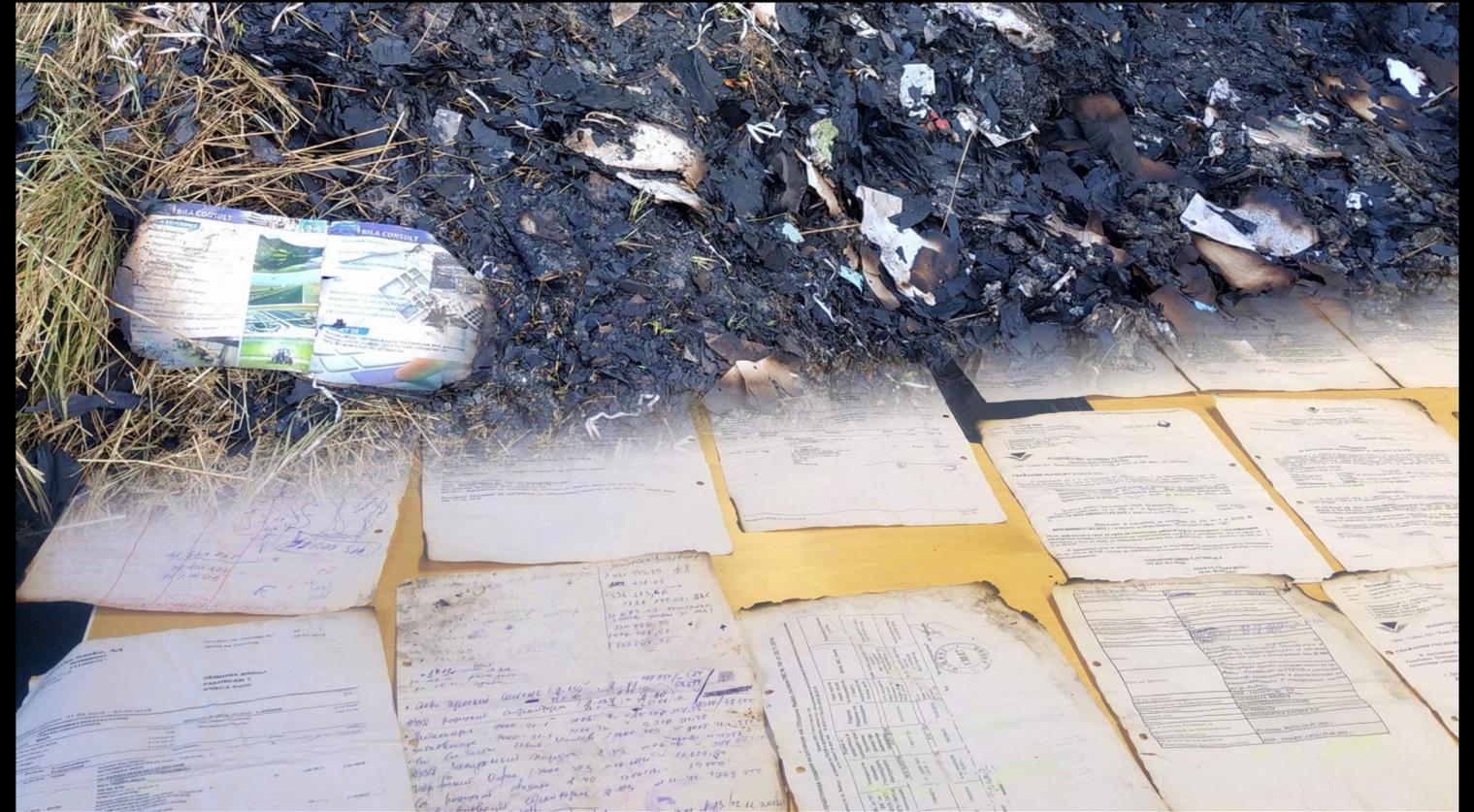
# Misuse of EU Funds In Romania and Bulgaria

Period: 2018

Donor: Investigative Journalism for Europe (IJ4EU) Fund

Together with our partner Bivol.bg we have published 12 stories creating a transnational team that is investigating the misuse of EU funds.

We uncovered and exposed a vast network of corrupt individuals that defrauded EU funds in Bulgaria and we have also created a database that shows how the Romanian government is hiding EU irregularities.



During this project, Dimitar Stoyanov (Bivol.bg), Attila Biro (RISE Project) and an accompanying third person were detained in the outskirts of the village of Egalnitsa near the western town of Radomir on September 13, 2018. Biro and Stoyanov were handcuffed as they tried to save from destruction documents related to the spending of European funds.



STĂPÂNII PLAJELOR:

# STĂPÂNII PLAJELOR – CLUBURILE CORUPȚIEI

18.12  
2019

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STĂPÂNII  
PLAJELOR:

In 2019, we started a new project with the financial support offered by **Fondul pentru Democrație**.

“**Stăpânii plajelor**” (The beach lords) maps the owners of the seaside lands and exposes connections between organized crime groups, politicians and corruption. It is an ongoing project.

The first story published exposes how Radu Mazare's friends - the former mayor of Constanta convicted for corruption - became owners of the Mamaia beach. Later on, party clubs were built there.

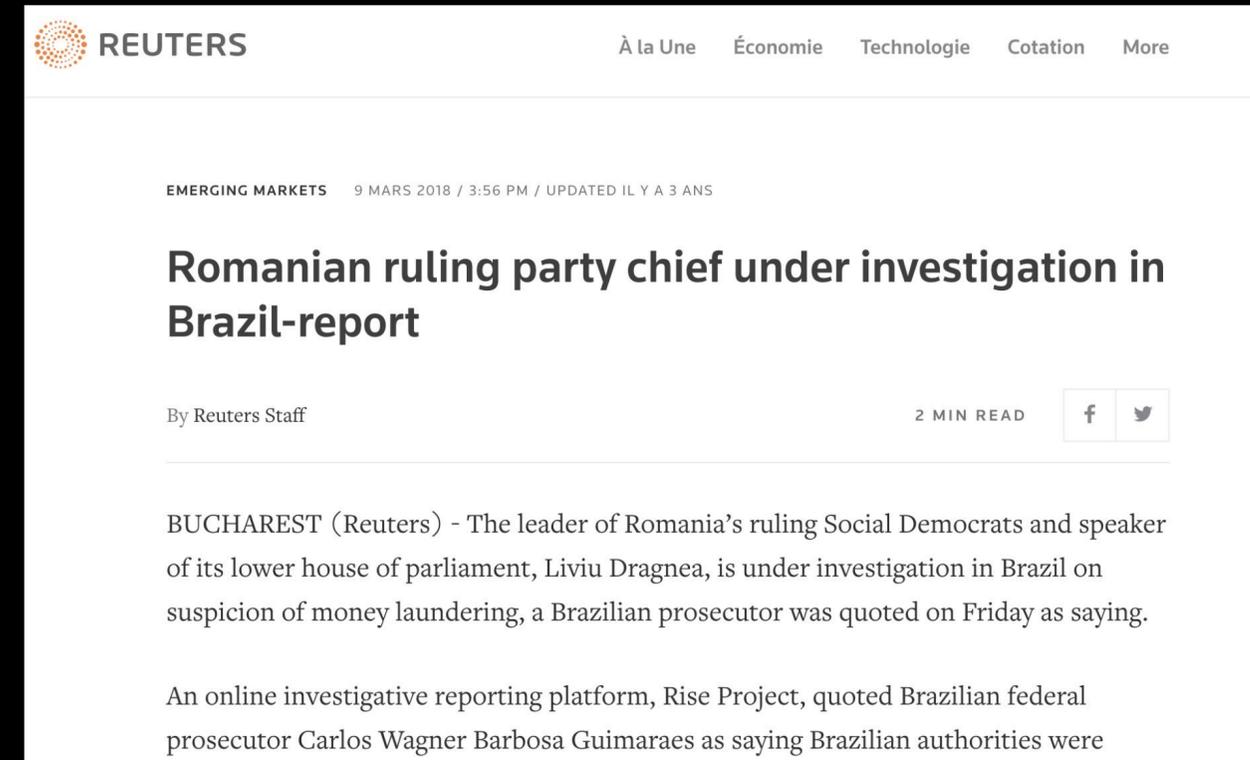


# MEDIA PRESENCE

Our work was cited or republished in several international and national media outlets between 2018 and 2019.

**NATIONAL:** Digi24 Television, PRO TV, Hotnews.ro, Mediafax.ro, Radio Europa Libera, Adevarul, Europa FM, Ziare.com, Libertatea, G4 Media, Republica.ro, Playtch.ro, Antena 3, Wall-street.ro, Biziday.ro, B1 TV, Romania TV and others

**INTERNATIONAL:** Reuters, Euronews, Radio Free Europe, Kiev Post, Pravda, StopFake.org, Politico.eu, Associated Press, The Atlantic, EU Observer and others.



REUTERS

À la Une Économie Technologie Cotation More

EMERGING MARKETS 9 MARS 2018 / 3:56 PM / UPDATED IL Y A 3 ANS

## Romanian ruling party chief under investigation in Brazil-report

By Reuters Staff 2 MIN READ  

BUCHAREST (Reuters) - The leader of Romania's ruling Social Democrats and speaker of its lower house of parliament, Liviu Dragnea, is under investigation in Brazil on suspicion of money laundering, a Brazilian prosecutor was quoted on Friday as saying.

An online investigative reporting platform, Rise Project, quoted Brazilian federal prosecutor Carlos Wagner Barbosa Guimaraes as saying Brazilian authorities were

euobserver.com > justice

## Romania 'using EU data protection law to ... - EUobserver

Nov 9, 2018 — The reporters, working for the **Rise project**, were on Thursday (9 November) ordered to reveal their sources or face a massive fine under the ...

euobserver.com > justice

## Romania data chief defends forcing press to ... - EUobserver

Nov 14, 2018 — **Rise Project** journalist Elena Dumitru told **EUobserver** in a phone call they will not reveal any sources. "We are completely open and transparent ...

cpj.org > tags > europeancommission

## European Commission Archives - Committee to Protect ...

**EUobserver** reporter Eszter Zalan on covering the EU amid coronavirus, ... In response to a **Rise Project** report alleging corruption, based on documents ...

www.euronews.com > News > World

## Romanians march for justice | Euronews

Feb 2, 2018 — ... of Romania's most high-profile whistle-blowers and heads the **Rise Project's** team of investigative journalists and award-winning researchers.

www.euronews.com > News > World

## Insight into Romanian corruption networks | Euronews

Feb 2, 2018 — **Euronews** reporter Hans von der Brellie met Biro in the Bucharest based office of the **Rise project**. PSD party leader Dragnea is a corrupt ...

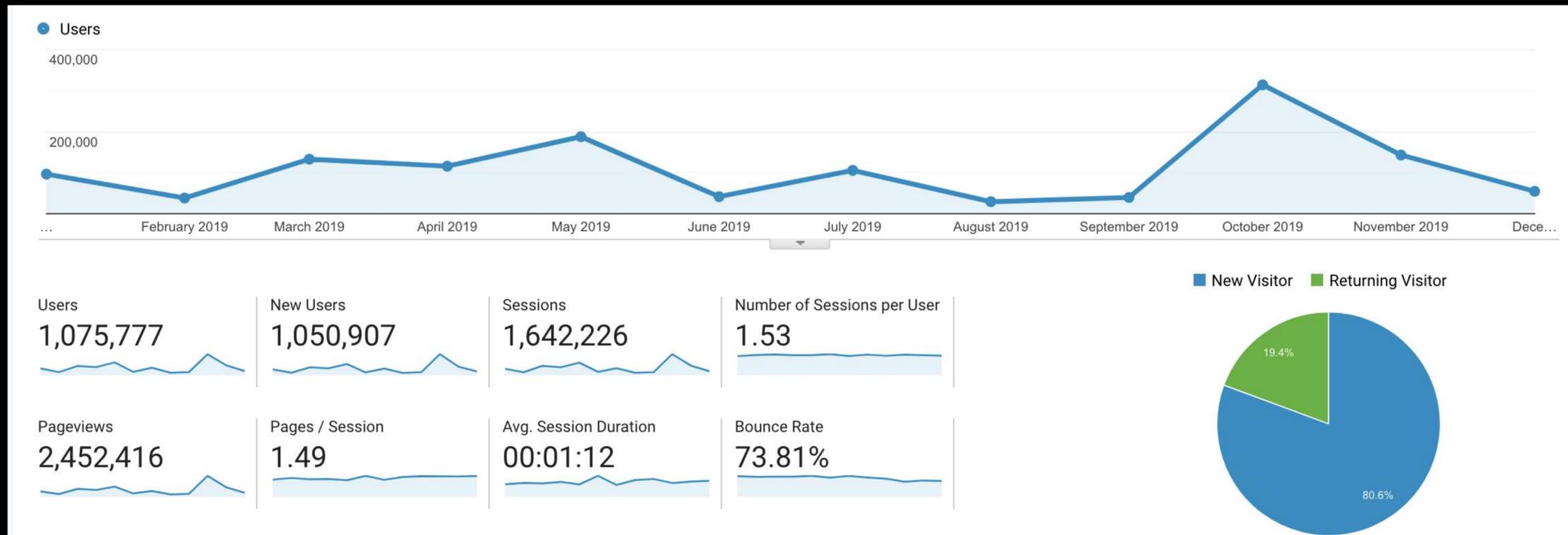
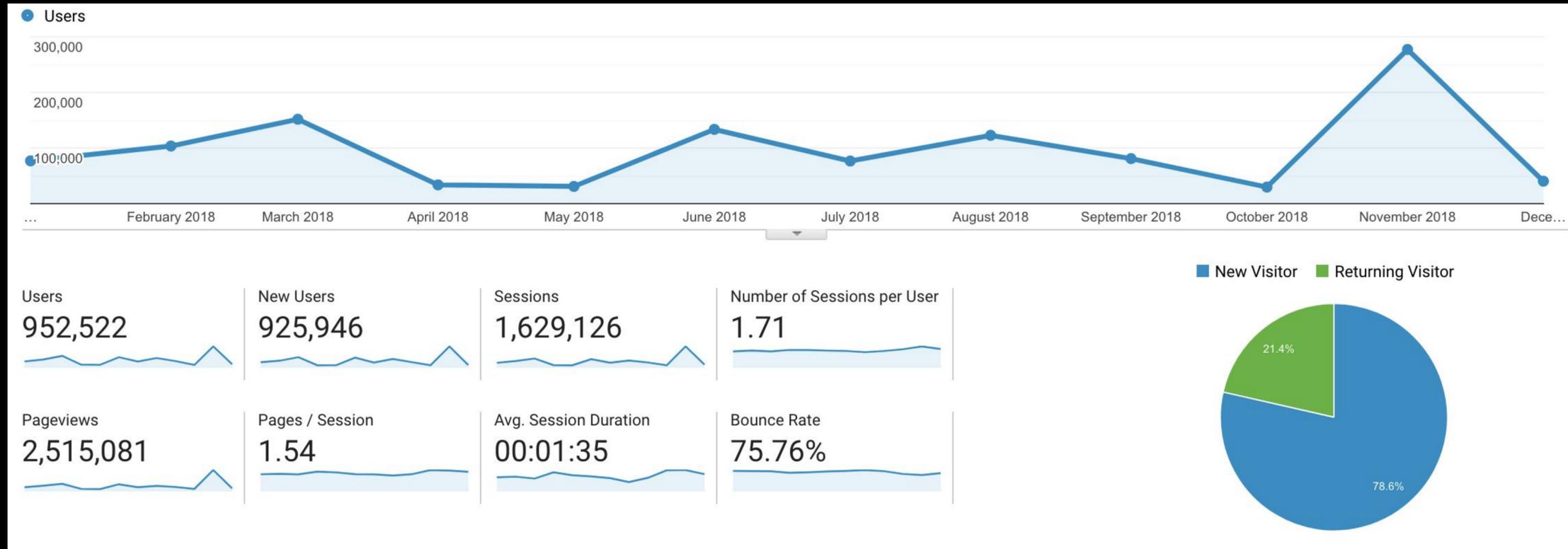
www.euronews.com > News > World

## Romania suitcase mystery: journalists 'under ... - Euronews

Nov 12, 2018 — The Bucharest-based **Rise Project** claims a suitcase full of ... this time, Paul Radu, an investigative journalist at **Rise Project**, told **Euronews**.



# Website Traffic



# SOCIAL MEDIA 2018-2019

- **201 Facebook posts** that received a total of 6.128.472 likes and 3.079 negative reactions
- **18 short videos** produced by us were posted on Facebook and accumulated a total of 5.171.900 views



RISE Project

Published by Sergiu Nicolae Brega ·  
March 30, 2018 ·

## Nucile lui Dragnea

🌴🌴🌴 Banii dumneavoastră au cumpărat cocotieri în Brazilia.

L...

See More

👍👎👤 15K

1.7K Comments 3.6M Views



Like



Comment



Share



## Up Next

We currently don't have any more videos for you