



UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI  
BABEȘ-BOLYAI TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM  
BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITÄT  
BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY  
TRADITIO ET EXCELLENTIA

Tradiție și Excelență prin  
Cultură - Știință - Inovație din 1581

# Romania at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, 1999-2024**

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, Bucharest, The Romanian Academy

Scientific Partner:

- Smithsonian Institution

Scientific Collaborator:

- University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest

In the memory of  
**Professor Eliot Sorel**  
George Washington University, US



# Preface

Redacted by HE Jim Rosapepe, former US Ambassador to Romania

Romanian President Emil Constantinescu told me the night in 1999 when the war in Kosovo started that, for the first time in the 20th century, Romania would stay on the same side of a war the end as it had at the beginning. That had not been Romania's pattern in World War I or World War II.

When and where did he tell me that? At a gathering in Bucharest to raise funds for Romania to participate in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. And he was right: Romania's steadfast support for NATO's action led UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to lead Romania into the European Union and U.S. President George W. Bush to support Romania's entry into NATO.

Was the timing of President Constantinescu's comment to me a coincidence? Of course. But a dramatic example of how cultural diplomacy, military action, and political diplomacy are synergistic, not antithetical.

Cultural diplomacy is indispensable.

People are people. We're not just nations. We're not just military powers. We're not just consumers and producers. We're people.

That's why Romania's participation in the 1999 Smithsonian Institution Folklife festival was so important.

Since the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu's Communism in 1989, Romanians yearned to join NATO and become allies of the United States and Europe. The biggest obstacles in the West were concerns that Romanians didn't share our values — and, as importantly, that we didn't feel we knew them very well.

As I was preparing for my confirmation hearing to become ambassador, my friend Ron Asmus, who was U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, and one of a handful of U.S. champions of expanding NATO, warned me of what he saw as one of Romania's biggest challenges: that to too many Americans, Bucharest just didn't feel like a NATO capital. I was stunned, because Bucharest had been the Paris of the East before World War Two. And France was the founder of NATO! But people making American policy in the late 20th century had barely been alive before World War II. If they'd noticed Romania at all, it was all about Ceausescu, Communism, overbuilt industries and grim shortages. Not a great brand for NATO's next member. On reflection, I thought Ron's point was both shallow (if someone wants to be your friend, say yes!) — and insightful (All of us don't know who and what we don't know.)

Dr. Eliot Sorel understood all this and had a big idea: Celebrate Romanian culture on the Washington Mall at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. As soon as I was nominated to be U.S. ambassador to Romania, Eliot came to see me and pitch his idea. What Eliot understood was that Romania has lots in common with United States — particularly religion but also music, food, and drink, the universal



lubricants. They and we just needed to promote them. That was the folklife festival.

The folklife festival, launched in 1967, already had been attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors for decades. Each summer it spotlights cultures of foreign countries as well as states.

All we needed were Romanian partners — and money. The Romanian Cultural Foundation, led by Augustin Buzura, was on board to get the Romanian partners. And the money? Radu Florescu, the American scion of centuries of Romanian leaders and then the CEO of one of the biggest Romanian communications firms, went into action.

The result? OMG.

Craftsmen and dancers from Maramures and all over Romania descended on the Mall. Romanian delicacies like sarmale melted into American mouths. The first church on the Washington mall in American history.

I wasn't surprised that curators of the festival insisted on moving a real Maramures wooden church to Washington. The architecture is iconic — and breathtaking: thousands of delicate shingles covering sides and spires that stretch toward heaven. Part of what made it so exciting was that the embassy was able to issue visas for Romanian woodworkers to come to Washington to reassemble the church. (This was before Nine-Eleven triggered a crackdown on visa policies.). After the festival, the church was disassembled and transported to Chicago, and is now the home of a Greek Catholic congregation there .

Among the Romanians who understood the opportunity all this presented was Foreign Minister Andrei Plesu. Of course he did! He was one of a handful of Romania's top intellectuals — and an art historian to boot. He is an expert on angels in art, a specialty which helped him sidestep confrontations with Communist officials over religion or philosophy. (There were plenty of other confrontations.) Plesu came to Washington for the festival and tied it into meetings with the state department on NATO. No kidding!

With about a million visitors every summer, the festival is the World Series of folk culture in the United States. And in 1999, Romania was in the playoffs, along with South Africa and New Hampshire. Why does that make a difference? Because the governor of New Hampshire in 1999 was Jeanne Shaheen, now a member the US Senate Foreign Relations committee and the cosponsor, with Utah Senator Mitt Romney, of the Black Sea Security Act. I first met Senator Shaheen at the Folklife Festival. As Romanians constantly remind us, it's all about connections.

Would Romania have gotten into NATO if it hadn't been part of the Smithsonian festival in 1999? Yes. The fundamentals of their sprint to democracy were strong enough. Did the festival on the mall make that easier for Americans? Absolutely! As I like to say on any issue: 'We can do it the easy way or the hard way; I prefer the easy way. But we're going to do it.' Eliot Sorel's vision of Romania's participation in the Smithsonian Folklife festival in 1999 helped make it the easy way.

# About the event

The „*Romania at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration - 1999-2024*” event, organized by Romanian Academy and Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB), will take place in the Aula Magna of the Romanian Academy (Academia Română), Tuesday, July 2, 2024. The event will include (July 1, 2024) an anniversary concert, at the Romanian Athenaeum (Ateneul Român), presenting compositions of George Enescu and George Gershwin.

Romania’s historic participation to this prestigious international cultural event was initiated in the summer of 1997 by Professor Eliot Sorel, George Washington University, in collaboration with President Emil Constantinescu, Academician Augustin Buzura, President of the Romanian Cultural Institute, and Richard Kurin, the Director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and it was supported by the Romanian Government (e.g., the Romania Ambassador in U.S. Mircea Geoană), by the U.S. Government (e.g., the U.S. Ambassadors in Romania Alfred Moses and James Rosapepe), the International Council of Romania at the Smithsonian, and the generosity of many sponsors of this historic initiative (please see in the appendix the thanking letters from the President Emil Constantinescu and from Dr. Richard Kurin addressed to one of the key organizers, professor Eliot Sorel, and two pictures from the 1999 event).

The current event celebrates the cultural presence of Romania in U.S.A. – marked after the Anti-communist Revolution of 1989 by the 1999 cultural event of the Smithsonian Institution –, and it aims to define new steps in developing this cultural presence, starting also from several strategic points established at the Smithsonian Institution’s 1999 event.

The invited guests are from both Romania and U.S.A., including representative academic, cultural and political actors related to the topic (e.g., presidents, ministers, ambassadors), from then and from today. The host of the event is professor Ioan-Aurel Pop, the president of the Romanian Academy, and the event is moderated by the university professors Daniel David (Romanian Academy & UBB), Eliot Sorel (George Washington University, USA), & Mircea Dumitru (Romanian Academy).

# Program

**Program Co-Chairs:** Professors Daniel David, Eliot Sorel and Mircea Dumitru  
The Romanian Academy, Aula Magna, Bucharest, Romania

## July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024

**Concert:**  
19:00–20:00 h  
Romanian Athenaeum  
George Enescu, *Romanian Rhapsody*  
George Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*  
Doctors Symphonic Orchestra  
By invitation only

## July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024

### Program Romanian Academy – Aula Magna

**Welcome:**  
9.00–9.15 h  
Acad. Ioan-Aurel Pop, President of the Romanian Academy

**Introduction:**  
9.15–9.30 h  
Professor Daniel David, Rector of Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB) & member of Romanian Academy  
Professor Eliot Sorel, George Washington University, US  
Acad. Mircea Dumitru, Vicepresident of the Romanian Academy

**Greetings:**  
9:30–9:55 h  
Romanian Presidency  
HE Kathleen A. Kavalec, Ambassador, US Embassy to Romania  
Mr. Liviu Jicman, President of the Romania Cultural Institute

**Panel I**  
10:00–11:15 h  
***Culture: Intrinsic Value and Value Added for Strategic Partnerships***  
The Hon. Emil Constantinescu, former President of Romania  
Dr. Richard Kurin, Ambassador-at-Large, Smithsonian Institution  
HE Mircea Geoană, NATO Deputy Secretary General (former Romanian Ambassador to US)  
HE Alfred Moses, former US Ambassador to Romania  
HE Simona-Mirela Miculescu, Ambassador to UNESCO, President of the UNESCO General Conference

*Coffee break:*  
11:15–11:30 h

**Panel II**  
11:30–13:00 h  
***Partnerships: Education, Science and Innovation, Energy***  
HE Ligia Deca, Minister of Education  
HE Bogdan Ivan, Minister of Research, Innovation & Digitalization  
HE Sebastian Burduja, Minister of Energy (former Minister of Research and Innovation)

**(Buffet) Lunch:**  
13.00–13.45 h  
At the Academy

**Panel III**  
14:00–15:00 h  
***Reflections and Synthesis***  
Professor Daniel David  
Professor Eliot Sorel  
Acad. Daniel Daianu  
Acad. Mircea Dumitru

**Ceremonial dinner**  
19:30–21:30 h  
Vatra Restaurant  
by invitation only

**Outcomes:**  
New strategic partnerships, new projects, Audio-visual recordings, Published monograph (digital and hard copy), Media interviews

**Promotion:**  
Alexandru Serban, Serban & Musneci Associates

# Speakers (as they appear in the Program)



Acad. **Ioan-Aurel Pop**  
President of the Romanian Academy



Professor **Daniel David**  
Rector of Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB)  
& member of Romanian Academy



Professor **Eliot Sorel**  
George Washington University, US



Acad. **Mircea Dumitru**  
Vicepresident of the Romanian Academy



Dr. **Diana Loreta Păun**  
Presidential Adviser – Romanian Presidency



HE **Kathleen A. Kavalec**  
Ambassador, US Embassy to Romania



Mr. **Liviu Jicman**  
President of the Romania Cultural Institute



The Hon. **Emil Constantinescu**  
former President of Romania



Dr. **Richard Kurin**  
Ambassador-at-Large  
Smithsonian Institution



HE **Mircea Geoană**  
NATO Deputy Secretary General  
(former Romanian Ambassador to US)



HE **Alfred Moses**  
former US Ambassador to Romania



HE **Simona-Mirela Miculescu**  
Ambassador to UNESCO  
President of the UNESCO General Conference



HE **Ligia Deca**  
Minister of Education



HE **Bogdan Ivan**  
Minister of Research,  
Innovation and Digitalization



HE **Sebastian Burduja**  
Minister of Energy  
(Former Minister of Research,  
Innovation and Digitalization)



Acad. **Daniel Daianu**  
Romanian Academy



## Short bios (of the guests from abroad and of the former President of Romania as they appear in the Program)

### Eliot Sorel

Eliot Sorel, MD, DLFAPA is an innovative global health leader, health systems performance expert, practicing physician, and Clinical Professor of Global Health, Health Policy & Management and of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at the George Washington University.



Dr. Sorel is:

- A subject matter expert on World Health Organization (WHO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH Fogarty International Center), National Institute of Mental Health, (NIMH), World Bank Group (WBG), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) projects.
- Founding editor in chief, Global Mental Health and Psychiatry Review.
- Co-founder, Africa Global Mental Health Institute.
- Lead physician teaching Global Mental Health, the Milken Institute School of Public Health (The George Washington University).
- Originator, the innovative TOTAL Health model, a primary care, mental health, and public health integrated/ collaborative template, presented (by invitation) at the WBG/WHO joint Health and Development meeting and Mental Health Innovators Fair (Washington, D.C.: April 2016).
- President, 1st International Perinatal TOTAL Health Congress (June 2018).
- Co-chair, Scientific Committee, Social Determinants of Health/Mental Health & Access to Care World Congress (October 2019). [www.wasp2019bucharest.org](http://www.wasp2019bucharest.org).
- Principal investigator, clinical public health research project on Depression & Comorbidity in Primary Care in China, India, Iran, Romania published in the International Medical Journal and presented at the Health and Development WBG/WHO joint meeting and Mental Health Innovators' Fair (Washington, DC: April 2016).
- Lead author of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Position Statement, "Healthcare, Inclusive of Mental Healthcare, Is a Human Right," APA policy since December, 2017.
- Lead author, APA position statement on Integrated Care (2016).
- Published scholar, including, among others,
  - 21st Century Global Mental Health;
  - COVID-19 Vaccines, Accelerated Innovations, and 21st Century Social Contract Challenges accessible at [www.worldsocpsychiatry.org](http://www.worldsocpsychiatry.org); and
  - OECD's Making Mental Health Count project (subject matter expert), [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).
- Initiator, APA Chester Pierce Human Rights Award endowment completed, Autumn 2021 and launched at the APA Annual Scientific Meeting (New Orleans, Louisiana, May 2022).
- Initiator and Co-author, WPA Bucharest Statement on Integrated Care & Collaborative Care (2015).

- Co-signatory, Amici Curiae Brief of Public Health Experts, American Public Health Association, and American Academy of Nursing, in California, et al., v Texas, No. 19-840 and 19-1019, U.S. Supreme Court, in support of the Affordable Care Act (May 2020).
- Recipient of honors and awards, including
- Rehabilitation International Centennial Award for global mental health leadership (Beijing, China: May 2023);
- APA Assembly Ronald A. Shellow Award (Spring 2021);
- Pioneer and Leader in Public Health honoree, GWU Milken Institute School of Public Health (December 2019);
- Mental Health Champion Award, Universal Health and Mental Health for All Conference (Malta, European Union: December, 2018);
- Excellence Prize presented by the Government of Romania (Washington, D.C.: October, 2018);
- Doctor Honoris Causa Carol Davila Medical University (Bucharest, Romania: October 2009) and by the Politehnica University of Bucharest, Romania (Bucharest, Romania: June 2014);
- Star of Romania Order of Commander, decorated by the President of Romania (January 2004);
- Commendation by the United States Congress (Congressional Record Autumn 2002) for Resilience

## Kathleen A. Kavalec

Kathleen A. Kavalec was sworn in as Ambassador to Romania on December 20, 2022. Previously, Ambassador Kavalec served as the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2019-2022. Prior to that, she was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) at the Department of State.



A career U.S. diplomat, Ambassador Kavalec has held a variety of diplomatic assignments, including Director for Russian Affairs, Deputy Permanent Delegate and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the UNESCO in Paris, Deputy Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia, and Director of Conflict Prevention in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Her overseas assignments have included service as the Political Counselor in Ukraine, two tours in Russia covering political issues, as well as tours in Romania and Brazil. In Romania, she served as Cultural Attache between 2005 and 2008. She is the recipient of numerous State Department awards, as well as a Presidential Rank Award.

Ambassador Kavalec holds an A.B. in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master's in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. Her foreign languages include Romanian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. She is married and has three children.

*Information source: <https://ro.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/our-ambassador/>*

## Liviu Jicman

Liviu Sebastian Jicman is President of the Romanian Cultural Institute since 2021, the leading cultural diplomacy institution for promoting Romanian culture internationally. Additionally, since 2024, he is also President of European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).



Born in 1981 in Bucharest, he graduated in 2004 from the Faculty of Economic Studies in Foreign Languages – German Language Section – within the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. Subsequently, he graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Bucharest.

In the past 12 years, he has worked exclusively in the field of culture. Prior to his current position at the Romanian Cultural Institute, he was the general director of the Cotroceni National Museum for 5 years and vice president of the Romanian Cultural Institute for 3 years. He worked within the Ministry of Culture (and later within the Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony) as the minister's chief of staff, and later as minister's advisor. As a representative of the Ministry of Culture or the Romanian Cultural Institute, he was a member of the National Cultural Fund Administration Board (AFCN), an advisory body on the evaluation, selection, and financing of cultural projects. Until 2012, he worked as PR consultant at the "Masca" Theater in Bucharest and held various roles at central public administration level.

He received several scholarships, including one from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation through its on-site program. Additionally, he participated in the "ACYPL – American Council for Young Political Leaders" program, which was organized by the U.S. Department of State in collaboration with the Foundation for Pluralism (February 2006, USA). Furthermore, he served as the coordinator of the Alexandru Paleologu conference program, which was conducted in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

## Emil Constantinescu

President of the Institute for Advanced Studies  
in Levant Culture and Civilization

President of Romania 1996 – 2000



Professor of Geology, scientist, civic activist and political leader. After the fall of the communist dictatorship in 1989, he was elected Rector (Chancellor) of the University of Bucharest and President of the Romanian Democratic Convention. During his presidential mandate (1996–2000), Romania embarked upon a substantial package of reforms in the economy, justice system and public administration. President Constantinescu opened the crucial path for Romania's Euro-Atlantic integration, and for reconciliation and peace in Eastern Europe. Upon the end of his presidential term, he resumed his academic career.

President of the Berlin Academy for Cultural Diplomacy and of the Scientific Council of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Levant Culture and Civilization,

Professor Emil Constantinescu has contributed to the theoretical definition of "cultural diplomacy", as well as to the creation of a global culture of peace through education, having presented the Levant Initiative for Global Peace before some of the world's most important international organisations and conferences.

For his contribution to the democratic reforms in Romania, to the enforcement of the rule of law and the institution of world peace, Professor Emil Constantinescu has received numerous international distinctions, among them the Aristide Calvani Prize for Peace, Democracy and Human Development – Paris, 1997; the European Statesman of the Year, East West Institute – New York, 1998; the European Prize of the Coudenhove-Kalergi Foundation, for his role as a principal actor of building European stability in Central and Eastern Europe – Vienna, 1998; the American Bar Association Prize for exceptional achievements in promoting the rule of law – Atlanta, 1999; the Ambroise Vollard Prize for the education of professional and moral elites – Madrid, 2011; the Gusi Peace Prize, the most important prize awarded in Asia – Manila, 2013; the Lifetime Achievement Award – Berlin, 2013, International Human Rights Award 2022 – Pakistan.

Since 1996, Emil Constantinescu has been an Emeritus Professor and Honorary President of the Senate of the University of Bucharest.

Doctor ès Sciences, Duke University, USA

Chairman, National Council of University Rectors, 1992–1996

Rector (Chancellor), University of Bucharest, 1992–1996

European Universities Association (CRE) Steering Committee, 1992–1998

International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), 1994–1996

President, Academy of Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, 2011–2017

Member of the Board of Trustees of the World Academy of Art and Science, since 2011

Member of the Board of Trustees of the World University Consortium, since 2013

Member of the Board of Trustees of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt, since 2015

Doctor Honoris Causa: École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France; University of Liège, Belgium; Polytechnion University, Athens, Greece; University of Montreal, Canada; University of New Delhi, India; University of Beijing, China; Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey; "St Ivan Rilski" University, Sofia, Bulgaria; University of Maribor, Slovenia; Free University of Chişinău, Republic of Moldova; Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand; Eurasian University, Astana, Kazakhstan; "St Kliment Ohridski" University, Sofia, Bulgaria.

## Richard Kurin

Richard Kurin began his Smithsonian career working on America's Bicentennial celebration in 1976. He is currently Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador-at-Large, focused on strategic and special initiatives, institutional representation, and philanthropic support. He previously served for more than a decade as Under Secretary overseeing all of the Smithsonian's national museums, scientific research centers and educational programs. He has played major roles in the development and/or transformation of most of the museums. He continues to oversee the Smithsonian's Cultural





Rescue Initiative, review content for the Smithsonian Channel, write for Smithsonian magazine, and conduct his own research.

Earlier in his Smithsonian career, for almost two decades Kurin served as the Director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, producing the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival—a presentation of living cultural tradition and creativity held on the National Mall in Washington every summer, and guiding the highly acclaimed, Grammy award-winning Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. He also produced major events for the opening of national museums and memorials, for presidential inaugurations and for the Olympics. He worked closely with the Black Family Reunion from its inception and continues decades-long collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and with Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart.

Kurin founded the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative after Haiti's 2010 earthquake and has worked to save cultural heritage endangered by natural disasters and human conflict. In the U.S. he co-chairs the Heritage Emergency National Task Force—a Smithsonian / FEMA- led partnership with national, state and local organizations that respond to cultural resource damage in natural disasters. Internationally, he worked with UNESCO to help develop the 2003 Convention to safeguard living cultural heritage that has been ratified by 180 countries. He works closely with the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security and with local partners in Iraq, Syria, Mali, Afghanistan and currently Ukraine and Sudan to safeguard heritage, identify looted art, and document cultural war crimes. He has served as Smithsonian liaison to the White House Historical Association and the U.S. President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities, and as a member of the U.S. Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee, the Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage, and the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO. He is a founding board member of ALIPH—the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage.

An anthropologist and former Fulbright fellow with a PhD from the University of Chicago, Kurin has carried out years of field research in India and Pakistan, authored seven books including *The Smithsonian's History of America in 101 Objects*, taught at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, given invited presentations at Harvard, Yale, Oxford, the MET, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum at Davos, for Congress, and at the Supreme Court. He has produced two series with The Great Courses, one for public television. Honored by many organizations, Kurin is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Arsht-Rockefeller Resilience Center.

## Mircea Geoană

Mircea Geoană became NATO Deputy Secretary General in October 2019, after a distinguished domestic and international career. Mr Geoană is the first Deputy Secretary General from Romania, and the first from any of



the countries that joined the Alliance after the end of the Cold War.

Mircea Geoană was born in Romania on 14 July 1958. He studied at the Polytechnic University in Bucharest, the Faculty of Law of the University of Bucharest, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris, and he holds a PhD from the Economic Studies Academy of Bucharest. Mr Geoană has served as a diplomat and a politician, and in 2009 was his party's candidate to be President of Romania.

1991-1995: Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania

1993-1995: Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1996-2000: Romanian Ambassador to the United States.

2000-2004: Minister of Foreign Affairs

2001: President in Office of OSCE

2004-2016: Senator

2004-2008: Chair of the Senate Foreign Policy Committee

2005-2010: President of the Social Democratic Party

2008-2011: President of the Romanian Senate

2012-2014: High Representative of the Romanian Government for Strategic Economic Projects and Public Diplomacy

2012-2014: Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Romania's accession to the Schengen Area

Mr Geoană is a strong advocate of transatlantic integration and has held a number of international positions, including OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in 2001 and personal representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Georgia in 2005. He is President and founder of the Aspen Institute Romania and has published extensively on domestic and international affairs.

In 2000, he was made a Commander of the National Order, The Star of Romania. He has also been awarded the French Legion d'Honneur and the Italian Stella della Solidarieta. He is fluent in English, French, Spanish and Italian.

*Information source: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/who\\_is\\_who\\_167942.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/who_is_who_167942.htm)*

## Alfred H. Moses

Alfred H. Moses graduated from public high school in Baltimore, Maryland, received his BA from Dartmouth College in 1951 and received his law degree in 1956 from Georgetown University Law School.



In the fall of 1952 Moses enlisted in the US Navy and emerged three years later as a full lieutenant on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, DC, where he made his home for the next 70 years.

Upon graduation from law school, Moses joined Washington's leading law firm, Covington & Burling. His great passion is litigation and other forms of advocacy.

He figuratively arm wrestled with Romania's Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu to allow Romania's Jews to emigrate to Israel. This diplomatic success led to President Clinton appointing him in the Fall of 1994 as the American ambassador to Romania. His service as Ambassador was recognized by the post-Communist Romanian Government with the Marc Cruc Medal, its highest distinction. He was the first American to be so honored. President Clinton subsequently appointed him Special Presidential Envoy for the Cyprus Conflict between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. Secretary of State Madeline Albright said of Moses' efforts "The process you set in motion clearly represents the best hope for a comprehensive settlement."

During the Carter Administration Moses served as Special Counsel to the President in the Billygate Hearings. President Carter later told Moses that his legal skills and good judgment had saved him the Democratic Party's Presidential candidacy in 1980. He was also special advisor to President Carter on Jewish affairs.

Moses was elected to four successive terms as National President of the American Jewish Committee and served for 19 years as Chair of U.N. Watch in Geneva, Switzerland. He has served as a trustee/director of numerous charitable and educational institutions and received three honorary doctorates from universities in the United States and Europe.

The most newsworthy of Moses' public accomplishments may have been his 2023 purchase at public auction of the Sassoon Codex for \$38.1 million. The Codex is the oldest, extant nearly complete Hebrew Bible. It sold for the highest price ever paid for a single book. The Codex is now owned by and on public display at ANU, the Museum of the Jewish People, in Tel Aviv, Israel.

In addition to family biographies and a history of the family hat business, Moses wrote Bucharest Diary: Romania's Journey From Darkness to Light, published in 2018 by Brookings Institution Press, as well as numerous writings in journals and newspapers around the world, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, Di Welt and the International Herald Tribune.

## **Simona-Mirela Miculescu**

Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary

Permanent Delegate of Romania to UNESCO

President of the UNESCO General Conference



Amb. Simona-Mirela Miculescu has been holding her current position since 2021. During her 33 years of diplomatic career, she served as Spokesperson for the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senior Media Advisor to the Minister, Director of the Press Department, Press Secretary of the Romanian Embassy in Washington D.C., Senior Public Information Officer at the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Foreign Policy Adviser to the President of Romania, Senior Adviser for Public Outreach to the Government of Iraq, Ambassador extraordinary and

plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Romania to the UN, as well as Representative of the UN Secretary General and Director of the UN Office in Belgrade.

She is the first woman in Romania to be granted the diplomatic rank of ambassador.

Amb. Miculescu is currently serving also as the President of the 42nd Session of the UNESCO General Conference (2023-2025), first Romanian ever to lead a governing body of this organization.



# Appendix

The thanking letters from the President Emil Constantinescu and from Dr. Richard Kurin addressed to one of the key organizers, professor Eliot Sorel

ROMÂNIA



PREȘEDINTE

Prof.Dr. Eliot Sorel  
School of Medicine and Health Science  
The George Washington University  
2021 K. Street N.W, Suite 206  
Washington D.C. 20006  
USA

București, 4 decembrie 1997

Stimate domnule profesor Sorel,

Voiam de mult să vă scriu câteva rânduri pentru a vă spune cât de mult mă impresionează atașamentul și elocința cu care susțineți, pretutindeni și în orice împrejurare, cauza României. Cunosc prea bine prestigiul imens de care vă bucurați în lumea științifică și universitară americană și, implicit, impactul pe care opiniile și sugestiile dumneavoastră le pot avea asupra unor personalități de seamă din domeniul politic, academic, cultural. Faptul că, în toate demersurile pe care le inițiați, puneți în joc, cu atâta generozitate, bunul dumneavoastră nume sporește șansele țării noastre de a stârni interesul celor de peste ocean.

Cu atât mai mult m-am bucurat când am aflat, din întâlnirile pe care le-am avut direct sau prin consilierii mei, precum și din relatările elogioase ale domnului acad. Buzura că sunteți hotărât să vă implicați cu toată autoritatea dumneavoastră morală și intelectuală în generosul program de organizare a Festivalului de tradiții și cultură românească inițiat de prestigiosul Institut Smithsonian din Washington pentru perioada iunie-iulie 1999. Este într-adevăr un program de mare anvergură, cu consecințe mediatice majore pentru imaginea României și a poporului român în Statele Unite și în întreaga lume.

Vă rog să primiți, stimate domnule profesor, expresia sentimentelor mele de gratitudine și prețuire. Si pentru că anul se apropie de sfârșit, vă urez din toată inima *Sărbători fericite* și un *An Nou* cu pace, belșug și multe bucurii.

Emil Constantinescu

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Emil Constantinescu'.

PREȘEDINTELE ROMÂNIEI





Smithsonian  
*Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage*

Smithsonian Folklife Festival  
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings  
Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections  
Cultural Research and Education  
Cultural Heritage Policy

October 4, 1999

Dr. Eliot Sorel  
10000 Falls Road  
Suite 204  
Potomac, MD 20854

Dear Eliot,

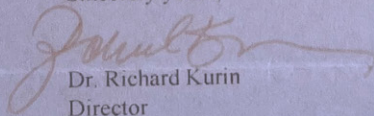
Let me offer this belated letter of thanks to you for your role in bringing Romania to the National Mall of the United States for the 1999 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. You provided a great service to the people of two nations--the United States and Romania--by first proposing and then helping to build a gateway between them.

As you know, the program was a wonderful and thorough success. More than one million people visited the Festival. Media coverage in the United States was extensive, including for example, features on CNN, NBC's Today show, in the Washington Post, etc. The "buzz" around Washington was that the Romania program was one of the finest we've had at the Festival. Visitor surveys confirmed that some 93% felt they learned important information about Romania and had a much better sense of its people and cultures. Many were deeply impressed with the beautifully hand-crafted Romanian church constructed on our National Mall between the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument. As you know, sales of Romanian handicrafts, music, books, and food were strong and hopefully helped open new markets for Romanian producers. Ancillary events emphasizing Romanian technology, wines, tourism, and acquainting political, cultural, and business leaders with Romania contributed to a strong impression of the country. Important also was the ability of the program at the Festival to reunite many Romanian Americans with their ancestral home.

For me, what was most striking was the humanity of the Romanian artists, musicians and craftspeople as they met, embraced and instructed American audiences. Americans saw and understood this humanity and were very taken by it. I think such images will stay with many of those one million visitors and the millions more exposed to the program through the media.

Again, I thank you for your role in first suggesting the idea, the way in which you framed the Festival's possible "healing" function, and for the perseverance you exhibited in developing structures for fund raising, broad institutional participation, and cross-cultural collaboration. I personally appreciated your focussed attention to the project, your constant and continual involvement, and your great ability to mediate legitimate disagreements between parties in a most professional, diplomatic, and sensitive manner.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Richard Kurin  
Director





Group photo: Romania  
at the Smithsonian  
project launch,  
June 1999

© Christiane E. Sorel



Romania at  
the Smithsonian  
Folklife Festival,  
USA, 1999

© Eliot Sorel

# A brief summary of the event

## **Authors:**

Psych. Daniel David, PhD, UBB rector and corresponding member  
of the Romanian Academy

Professor Eliot Sorel, PhD, George Washington University, SUA

The Romanian Academy and Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB), in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, hosted the event “Romania at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 25th Anniversary Celebration – 1999-2024”. UBB’s involvement, in partnership with the Romanian Academy, highlights the Romanian university with the largest number of alumni in the US and the Romanian university with the strongest American ties in terms of partnerships, programmes and academic projects.

In 1999, Romania was set on the path towards NATO. American support was essential and needed. But at that time Romania was not a country known well in the US. As we recall from that period (DD and ES), Romania was perceived in the US as a former communist country (“Ceauşescu’s”), with poverty, AIDS problems and institutionalized children. The more positive points were the association with Nadia (Comăneşi) and perhaps, tourist-wise, the Dracula association.

The Smithsonian Institution is a flagship cultural institution in the US “...the world’s largest museum, education, and research complex” ([www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu)). It holds the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival ([festival.si.edu](http://festival.si.edu)), which celebrates the cultural traditions of countries around the world. The festival thus provided a very good opportunity for Romania to share its cultural richness with the Americans ([festival.si.edu/past-program/1999/gateways-to-romania](http://festival.si.edu/past-program/1999/gateways-to-romania)).

Romanian state authorities – including the then President Emil Constantinescu – and the Romanian Cultural Foundation, through academician Augustin Buzura, worked very hard to promote Romania on the National Mall in Washington DC, USA. The US ambassadors to Romania and the Smithsonian Institution (i.e. Richard Kurin) also contributed to this effort. Professor Eliot Sorel of George Washington University was the one who initiated this historic and unprecedented project. In the early 1990s, the Romanian Ambassador to Washington, Mihai Botez, was instrumental in establishing a bond of friendship between the then academician Augustin Buzura and professor Eliot Sorel, which served as a catalyst for their close collaboration towards the making of this event.

It was a major event, attracting over 1,000,000 visitors and bringing Romania to the attention of over 40,000,000 Americans via American media channels. Last but not least, we felt that the traditional aspect reactivated and/or stimulated the Romanian diaspora and their interest in Romania, with many rediscovering



contexts from their childhood/youth or that of their parents/grandparents.

After 25 years, we believe Romania finds itself in a comparable moment. We are entering the final phase of lifting visas for the US and Romania must be fully prepared for this, as the US also has a clear understanding of our domestic plans. From our point of view – ES: a Romanian and American citizen and DD: a Romanian who spent more time in the US than in Romania between 1998–2004 and then travelled back to this country almost every year – after joining NATO, Romania's image has significantly changed and the country has increasingly gained a cultural and educational visibility in the US. The visa waiver will inevitably lead to the introduction of another key factor, the social-economic one.

The event organised in the Romanian Academy Hall by the Romanian Academy and UBB, together with the Smithsonian Institution, with the involvement of other relevant actors (i.e. the Romanian presidency, the government, through the participation of three relevant ministries, the Romanian Cultural Institute, the US Embassy in Romania, the Romanian Ambassador to UNESCO), including educational actors (i.e. The University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest), played a role in:

Honoring and gaining a better understanding of the event organised at the Smithsonian Institution 25 years ago, including its legacy. Following the opening remarks by academicians Ioan-Aurel Pop (who underlined the contribution of academician Augustin Buzura) and Mircea Dumitru (who underlined the contribution of professor Eliot Sorel), professors Eliot Sorel (who emphasized the historical importance of valuing and learning from the event organised 25 years ago and the story of the Maramureș church transported to the USA from Maramureș) and Daniel David (who emphasized the importance of planning for the future while building on the event organised 25 years ago), we had the "What it was like" panel discussion. This section featured those involved at the time: Emil Constantinescu (President of Romania between 1996–2000), Alfred Moses (US Ambassador to Romania), Richard Kurin (Smithsonian Institution) and Mircea Geoană (Romania's Ambassador to the US at the time). Kathleen Kavalec (US Ambassador to Romania), Simona Miculescu (Romania's Ambassador to UNESCO) and Liviu Jicman (President of the Romanian Cultural Institute) also spoke prior to the session. All of them concluded that the event organised 25 years ago brought Romania closer to the US on a cultural level, leaving behind the post-communist image, which was also instrumental in Romania's acceptance into NATO.

Planning to further boost the cultural-educational profile and stimulate a renewed and positive socio-economic profile. In this session, the Minister of Education, Ligia Deca, outlined the planned educational cooperation between Romania and the USA and, more specifically, with the Smithsonian Institution. The Minister of Research, Bogdan Ivan, outlined the cooperation schemes in the field

National Science Foundation. The Energy Minister, Sebastian Burduja, outlined the plans for a strategic partnership with the US in the energy area, both traditional and nuclear energy, and explained how this economic partnership also has social and defence implications for the country.

Lastly, joining academicians Mircea Dumitru and Daniel Dăianu, we reviewed the presentations and formulated a few tentative conclusions and possible future implications. Professor Sorel asserted that this event should set the stage for new projects in the future, which will further strengthen the US-Romania partnership, with the participation of the diaspora. Mircea Dumitru pointed out that the 'Fulbright program' ([fulbright.ro](http://fulbright.ro)) is a successful instrument of the US-Romania partnership, which should be preserved and developed. Daniel Dăianu gave a contextualization of the US-Romania partnership in the framework of the risks-opportunities facing capitalism and democracy. Daniel David revisited the history of Romania's presence in the American collective consciousness after the 1989 Revolution and argued that we need to adequately develop a new socio-economic dimension in the new American and international democratic context, which will reinforce the existing cultural-educational profile (which we need to develop in turn), in order to positively highlight the profile of Romanians in the American space and to prevent past mistakes made during EU accession (e.g. by failing to address certain negative aspects we often prejudiced the image of Romanians in the EU space). In this setting, students, media representatives and representatives of the socio-economic environment were able to submit questions. The conclusions are likely to be further elaborated by each participant and a summary report will be disseminated to all involved.

In our opinion the event was a success! Not only did we honour an event that played its role in Romania's course towards NATO, but we also grasped its importance and learned something from it to serve us for the present and for the future. We must ensure that, when lifting visas for the USA, Romania avoids making some of the mistakes it made in the EU, and instead builds on and develops the positive image and cultural-educational profile it already has in the USA and fosters an effective and dignified social and economic profile for all the people who will be able to benefit from this opportunity (avoiding the factors that initially gave us a negative image in the EU). Based on the ministers' presentations, there are grounds for optimism, but things will have to be implemented operationally very soon following the elections and the appointment of the new officials.

The program in the Romanian Academy Hall was preceded by a concert at the Romanian Athenaeum, where the "Dr. Emil Nichifor" Doctors' Orchestra (OMEN) performed compositions by George Enescu (Romanian Rhapsody) and George Gershwin (Rhapsody in Blue), both composers emblematic of their countries.

**Scan the QR code below for the following informations  
included at the end of the article:**

Details about the background, detailed program and event  
Bucharest 2024 event booklet  
The Romanian Athenaeum program  
The Romanian Academy program  
Photos from the Bucharest event  
Media coverage (selection)



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# Romania at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, USA, 1999

