

Former Romanian ruling party leader barred from entering US

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Liviu Dragnea was imprisoned in May over a corruption case.



Liviu Dragnea in Bucharest in 2016 | Daniel Mihailescu/AFP via Getty Images

Liviu Dragnea, the former leader of the governing Social Democrat Party (PSD), will not be allowed to enter the United States because of his involvement in “significant corruption,” the U.S. State Department [said on Thursday](#).

The [most powerful Romanian politician](#) in recent years, Dragnea [was imprisoned in May](#) for three and a half years over a case involving fake jobs for party workers.

“Today’s action sends a strong signal that the United States is committed to fighting corruption and supporting the rule of law in Romania,” the State Department said in its statement.

As PSD leader, Dragnea sought favor from the administration of President Donald Trump by paying U.S. lobbyists to help him meet Trump before his inauguration. He also wanted to move the Romanian Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a move meant to mirror Trump’s, which would break with EU policy.

Last year, as the U.S. Embassy in Romania condemned moves by the governing party to change judicial laws – supported by Dragnea — that were seen as weakening the fight against corruption, Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani sent a letter to Romania’s president taking Dragnea’s side in the debate. Giuliani [told POLITICO](#) at the time that he was paid to do it.

Dragnea’s two children are also barred from entering the U.S. as a result of their father’s involvement in corruption, the State Department said.

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