

# Memorandum on the abuses in the Romanian arrest warrant procedure of Alexander Adamescu

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*By Eeva Heikkila*

## **Executive summary**

Alexander Adamescu is a German national who was born on 6 May 1978 in Bucharest. He is the son of Dan Adamescu, a prominent German businessman of Romanian birth. Alexander Adamescu is accused by Romania's National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) of consenting to bribery based on the declarations of a sole prosecution witness. Romanian courts issued two national arrest warrants against Alexander Adamescu: a first warrant on 4 May 2016 which was cancelled on 19 May and a second arrest warrant that was issued on the very same day, 19 May 2016 and then converted into a European Arrest Warrant on 6 June 2016. Alexander Adamescu was arrested in London on 13 June and faces extradition to Romania.

Alexander Adamescu's two arrest warrants were issued in gross violations of key tenets of Romanian and international law:

- The DNA did not charge Alexander Adamescu in June 2014 when the case was brought to trial against his father, but reactivated the file only in September 2015 after Alexander Adamescu engaged lawyers who sued Romania.
- Despite an almost two-year long inactivity, Chief-prosecutor Laura Kovesi suddenly announced the DNA's intention to arrest Alexander Adamescu on live TV on 25

March 2016 calling him a fugitive and a threat to to public order in the DNA's submissions. Kovesi also declared that her agency knew where he was, but then on the same day wrote to the court to demand that the arrest warrant procedure be speeded up since his whereabouts were not known.

- For the first arrest warrant hearing on 4 May, Alexander Adamescu was summoned via e-mail addresses that were not his and by calling phone numbers that were admittedly incorrect.
- In his judgement issued on 4 May, Judge Malaliu copied and pasted the DNA report, grounding his decision to arrest Alexander Adamescu on the DNA reasoning that he must be guilty for the offences for which he was charged.
- After Judge Nita made it known that she intended to cancel the first arrest warrant on procedural grounds, a second judge, Judge Matei, was immediately assigned to re-judge the arrest warrant without the safeguard of random allocation as guaranteed by Romanian procedural law and before Judge Nita's judgement had been published.
- The hearing was scheduled for 1.30 pm on 19 May 2016. The paper was printed at 1pm but pre-dated by a court agent to have been filled out at 11 am. 57-60 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ Telephone 020 7993 7600 Facsimile 020 7993 7700 DX: 34 Chancery Lane E-Mail: info@gclaw.co.uk Website: http://www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk 3
- Alexander Adamescu was summoned at 1pm on the court door to appear in half an hour in front of the court.
- The hearing began at 2.40 pm and closed at between 3.10-3.20 pm. At 3.40 pm, the Court sent a fax of the arrest order to the Municipal Police of Bucharest. Judge Matei had no more than half an hour to read the case file containing thousands of pages, deliberate on the arguments of the parties, write down his sentence and

have it sent to the Bucharest Police.

- Judge Matei's sentence was immediately leaked to the media by the Romanian authorities. At 5.06 pm Alexander Adamescu's new arrest warrant appeared on a news website.
- Alexander Adamescu's appeal on the second arrest warrant was rejected on 25 May 2016 by Judge Ghena on the grounds that a more lenient measure would determine a strong negative reaction among the public opinion.

Alexander Adamescu's arrest warrant was issued with a blatant disregard for due process and the rule of law. First, the DNA invented the image of a dangerous fugitive at large who's so obviously guilty that his arrest was needed to protect the public from his person. Then the Courts in Romania unconditionally, and in full, accepted this account of the DNA, without even trying to give the semblance of granting him a fair trial.

The haste with which the Court of Appeals, on 19 May 2016 turned the matters around would appear to show that the whole purpose of the exercise was to arrest Alexander Adamescu no matter what. In an unprecedented series of breaches of his fundamental rights, he was denied an independent judge, not summoned to trial, and handed a decision that was implemented so rapidly that it could only have been taken before his trial had started. The immediate leaking of his arrest warrant to the Romanian media showed that Alexander Adamescu was not allowed to be a free man even if this meant dispensing with the law altogether.

Alexander Adamescu's case is totemic of the vast gulf between Romania's rhetoric on its progress towards becoming a liberal democracy committed to an independent judiciary and the stark reality faced by its citizens. It is emblematic for the true nature of some of Romania's praised anticorruption cases which provide cover for the oppression of dissenting voices, political score settling, economic raids and outright

character assassinations. For there to be real change, both the international community and those with the power to enact the urgently needed judicial reforms in Romania must finally take heed of this.

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