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Pakistan-Romania Relations: Paving the Way for Strategic Collaboration and Mutual Growth



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Published on 13th December 2024

Introduction

The existing and historical relations between Pakistan and Romania are friendly and cooperative, based on friendly cooperation.

The bilateral relations, diplomatic relations between the two nations started from 1967, where Romania was one among the first



nations to recognize Pakistan. Thus, the course of dependent on the decades where several realms cooperate with each other such as in trade, education and culture, defense, etc. They have considered possibilities of cooperation in the field of economy the volume of trade has continually increase but at the same time the potential for further development of commercial relations remains rather limited. There are fields including agriculture, energy, and technologies where the two countries can develop their cooperation in the field of foreign trade. Pakistan needs to enhance cultural relations with the Romanians and this is also one of the priorities of the two countries. Being a culturally diverse country, Pakistan has brought their culture over to Romania through special functions, exhibitions and scholarly seminars. In the same way art, music and literature of Romania have also got their soft developing the relation between the people of these two countries. The strategic



cooperation of both Pakistan and Romania in the defense sector has been generally limited to training and technical partnership. Both countries have shown desire to have these relations deepened with the aim of promoting peace and stability in the region. Both of these countries have been very much involved in recent years in working towards the improvement of their relations and this has been previously translated into more carefully defined commercial dealings, exchanges between cultures, and academic relations. Thus, drawing on common interests and past relations, Pakistan and Romania, are to strengthen cooperation in the future and achieve a success result.

Pakistan-Romania Diplomatic Ties: A History of Friendship

Pakistan and Romania have been appreciating diplomatic relations since 1964 when Pakistan opened the embassy in Bucharest. Despite the Cold War alignments in which Pakistan leaned towards the United States and more while Romania was part of the Soviet-led Warsaw Treaty, the two countries had good relations. There has been a development of both economic and cultural cooperation once the Cold War was over, and Romania became an independent country from communist rule. The Romanian embassy was established in Islamabad on March 6 in the year 1992. Over the next decades, Pakistan and Romania have reached to sign several bilateral treaties and agreements to enhance economic, technical, and cultural cooperation. These include areas such as trade, education, culture, sports, and science and technology among others. Pakistan received emergency food aid, water, tents, and other necessities from Romania after the 2005 earthquake that claimed the lives of 76000 people. There is a small current volume of bi-lateral commerce which though is



gradually growing not as significant if compared to their ventures with the other countries. Rice, textiles, leather products, surgical goods, and sports equipment are the main export items from Pakistan to Romania while chemicals, machinery, transport equipment's and building materials are the other way around. However, both sides are eager to expand the range of products imported/exported into the other's country. Romania has invited investment in IT, agricultural, energy, tourism, and infrastructure sectors. In the same vein, over the years parliamentary Friendship Groups to encourage inter-parliamentary cooperation have also been formed. In turn, Pakistan and Romania share friendly relations in all spheres of life including cultural relations. A few years ago, performing artists from Pakistan also toured Romania as part of cultural exchange programs. They also resumed archeological explorations in Pakistan respectively. As the two countries celebrate more than half a century of diplomatic partnership, Pakistan and Romania are eager to turn their formally friendly but not particularly close partnership into an economically and culturally fruitful one.

Pakistan-Romania Economic Ties

Pakistan and Romania countries have shared diplomatic relations since 1964 with deprived economic interactions in between. This is because bilateral trade in goods reached only \$189 million in 2021. However, there have been attempts in recent years to enhance economic cooperation, which may include spheres of mutual concern. The most important exported goods by Romania to Pakistan are chemicals, machinery, cereals, iron & steel articles. The major imported products are rice, leather products, textile products, and

apparel. Pakistan secured the Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in 2016

which means that exports from Pakistan with several products can enter into EU without any tariffs. It provides possibilities to enhance exports to Romania in the areas of textiles, which is a



competitive export sector for Pakistan. The Romanian firms have taken an interest in the emergent sector of oil and gas in Pakistan. The substantial new find of oil and gas especially in the south region and offshore resources have encouraged Romanian technical service providers to enter the region. There is hope in areas such as the collaboration in the technology used in seismic surveying. There are also some synergies that could be exploited in sectors such as agriculture, engineering, information technology, defense production, and so on, where both industries are operative. The existing technology exchange and cooperation could be further enhanced in another field of bilateral cooperation the technical and scientific cooperation based on new technologies. However, this potential would require visionary leadership and continuity in policy approaches in both territories to make the scenario a reality on the real substantial partnerships. As a result, there are numerous chances for the middle power like Romania to advance its interests with Pakistan. If the current political will is maintained in both camps, there is



great potential for Pakistan and Romania to forge a qualitative and multi-faceted economic partnership that would go beyond trade and investment, industrial collaborations, knowledge and ideas creation, and beyond. Our bilateral trade two years ago for instance stood at US\$ 46 million. As we have seen in the bilateral relations of both countries based on SBP stats the trade turnover for last one and half year, July 2022 to February 2023 was above US\$ 250 million. Pursuit of further gains goes on in the same manner by both parties. Though Pakistan may offer to supply more to Romania, we, a nation of 220 million plus, provide a vast consumer base for the Romanian goods.

In 2024 Pakistan and Romania worked on to enhance the economic cooperation by new partnerships which are focused on increasing the bilateral trade between the two countries. A recent step in this regard was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Embassy of Romania in Pakistan and the Pakistan Romania Business Council in this document gives a framework for increasing the volume of exports between the two nations and increasing cooperation in different sectors of the economy. These initiatives are to foster the growth of the mutual trade by defining investment priorities, particularly in the sectors appealing to competitive advantages of both parties. Romania has advanced manufacturing and High tech industries, hence the knowledge it has to offer while Pakistan has the potential of exporting agro products, textile and other goods that are already in demand in Romania. Both governments are eager to strengthen the cooperation following this MOU with expectations that the volume of cooperation and the economy will grow stronger in the coming years.



Pakistan-Romania Military Ties

For several decades, the bilateral relationship of defense and military cooperation between Pakistan and Romania has gradually strengthened and bloomed into a strategic partnership. They are involved in military cooperation in aspects such as training collaboration, military exercise, cooperation in the manufacture of products, high political-military interchange, etc. Landmark Agreements Pakistan and Romania have diplomatic relations after Romania achieved a state that was recognized in 1947. But defense cooperation became active only in the 1970s and the 1980s. The first significant defense pact was signed in the year 1977 with the defense accords laid down that there would be exchange in knowledge and training of the defenders of both nations. Additional cooperation accords signed in 1992 and 2002 strengthened the defense industry cooperation in sectors including production of armaments. They laid the framework for military cooperation between the countries of destination. Training and Exercises Training is one of the major aspects of Pakistan-Romania defense cooperation. Bucharest is home to several military academies through which the Romanian military engages Pakistan defense officials for assorted specialized courses as well as leadership training sessions. Some pilots and technicians of the Romanian Air Force have also been trained in Pakistan. There are also operational readiness exercises and personnel tactical exercises between the two militaries aside from their duty in training. In 2018, the Pakistan Navy and the Romanian Navy held a joint



exercise to boost naval cooperation toward promoting security in sea-borne traffic. Promoting capacity building through the sale of equipment and weapons Pakistan's military has benefited from defense equipment supplied by Romania in the past years of this century. In the early part of this decade, the Pakistan Air Force bought Romanian IAR-330 helicopters to bolster the utility and transport fleet. The two countries have yet to be said to have agreed on deals for several types of Sniper rifles, arms production technology, and all manner of munitions. The acquisition of Romanian expertise in defense production also serves Pakistan to surmount the indigenous defense production drive. Combating Terrorism and Cyber Threats .Two more issues that are of prime importance to both nations include terrorism and the cyber security prospect. The things learned from counter-terrorism training in Pakistan have been useful in assisting Romanian officials. Both nations wish to engage in cooperation regarding threats such as radicalization, recruiting terrorism, and critical infrastructure concerns. Several analysts have assumed that the two countries' rising strategic partnership will have a focus on shared interests like the protection of cyberspace, sharing of intelligence, and crime fighting. Military officers on both sides also still actively pursue the desire for deepening military cooperation in other areas including military-technological cooperation and research and development of new technologies.

In the recent years Romania has provided assistance to Pakistan naval modernization plan, as construction and commission of Offshore Patrol Vessel PNS Hunain. Manufactured at the DAMEN Naval Shipyard, Romania, the PNS Hunain sailed to Pakistan for the first



time in August 2024. Admiral Felix of the Romanian Sailors also paid a courtesy visit on the ship, the camaraderie between the two navies. This addition to Pakistan is a part of a bigger cooperation established where Romania assists Pakistan to strengthen maritime security forces, comprised of advanced equipment and vessels equipped with sophisticated weaponry and sensors to defend the Arabian Sea and Pakistan's economic assets in the region.

Bridging Cultural Borders: The Connection between People of Pakistan and Romania

Culturally, Pakistan and Romania have a relation and both the counts remember the poets and philosophers Allama Iqbal and Mihai Eminescu Iqbal is also known as the 'Shair-e-Mashriqi Islam' or the 'Spiritual Father of Pakistan' Iqbal was not only an eminent poet but also a philosopher who widely spoke for 'Shoresh', 'Khudi', and freedom. People of different cultures and language speak, dream and write through his Bang-e-Dra (The Call of the Marching Bell) was one of the most important literatures of South Asian. His emphasis of the self and freedom can be well correlated with the concepts Local culture & Identity, which are also seen in Eminescu work. Empere stands as a symbol of Romania's literature and is therefore attributed to have influenced the Romanian literatures significantly. Its opus, characterized by a lyrical and philosophical content, is mostly inspired by nature, love in particular, as well as the literature and the heritage of Romania. His Luceafărul opera which is described as invoking Romanians' soul upholds the same driving force that denies human hope and desire for immortality a place in humanity's



paradise. Iqbal and Eminescu's poems are related through the cultural aspect with the themes of nationalism and philosophical angles of the concept of individualism and collectivism, which form the basis of the musical. The values left behind by their contributions act as a connector for rich mutual culture between the Pakistan and Romania where respect for the other's culture is encouraged. People in both countries sometime organize literary carnivals and cultural festivals honoring their works, which fosters culture relations and diplomacy. As a result of such cultural activities as poetry recitals, literary conferences, and scholarly exchanges, both Pakistan and Romania still remember these literary icons enabling the two countries cultivate a strong bond in line with their common practicing of intellectual as well as cultural values.

Pakistan and Romania are two distinct countries in terms of geography, language, religion, and time. However, they share common cultural elements such as hospitality, politeness, and the importance of family and community. In Pakistan, welcoming guests is a norm, while in Romania, kindness and respect are valued. Both societies emphasize the importance of unity and compactness in families, which can be seen across ethnic groups. Both countries have their own customs and traditions, reflected in ornaments, songs, dances, holidays, and food. Pakistani pottery and weaving designs are similar to those found in Romania, with yoga and embroidery being common themes. Old-fashioned songs in Romania include violin music, songs and dances, Pakistan Qawwalis, group dances, Bongo Drums, Kilts, and Scottish. Despite differing main religions, spirit is a strong component in the lives of Pakistanis and Romanians. Both religions share a common desire for charity and morality, reflecting the inherent human desire to achieve faith in all nations.

Pakistan and Romania share common cultural elements, such as hospitality, hospitality, and faith, which can be traced back to their shared values and traditions. By identifying these patterns, it is possible for societies to attain meaning through a common source of culture and identity in other Western and non-Western societies worldwide.

The Pakistan-Romania Friendship Association

The Pakistan-Romania Friendship Association (PRFA) is a distinguished initiative committed to fostering and enhancing the bond between Pakistan and Romania. Guided by the Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan as its Chief Patron, the organization



operates through two key entities the Executive Committee, which manages activities and plans, and the Advisory Council, which offers expertise on shared issues and policies. PRFA actively promotes cultural ties through art exhibitions, music, and heritage festivals, creating platforms that celebrate the rich traditions of both nations. It facilitates educational exchange programs, including scholarships and academic collaborations, to nurture intellectual partnerships. The Association also works to strengthen media ties by hosting interactive sessions with journalists and fostering collaboration between media outlets in both countries. In the realm of tourism, PRFA organizes events and campaigns to showcase



the natural and cultural landmarks of Pakistan and Romania, encouraging mutual exploration. The sports domain is not overlooked, with the Association facilitating friendly matches, tournaments, and sports diplomacy. Economically, PRFA serves as a pivotal link by hosting business forums, trade delegations, and networking events to explore opportunities in trade, investment, and innovation. The Association also advocates for strong diplomatic ties by organizing high-level conferences, seminars, and forums to discuss shared goals and challenges. Through talent shows, cultural performances, and creative collaborations, PRFA strives to unite the people of Pakistan and Romania, fostering an appreciation of diversity while building mutual respect and understanding.

The organizational structure of the Pakistan-Romania Friendship Association comprises two key bodies: the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council, operating in parallel and interacting closely to fulfill its goals. Executive Committee comprising Chairman Zaildar Ahsan Shah, President General Hafiz Masroor Senior Vice President Amjad Kamal Butt ,Vice President of Media Tehzeen Akhtar ,Vice President of Sports Tayyab Chatha ,Vice President of Tourism Sheikh Fayaz,Vice President of Culture Farah Rani, Vice President of Business Khalid Rehman Secretary General Ali Kamal Butt. Advisory Council includes Senator Rana Mehmood Ul Hasan PPP, Senator Palwasha Khan PPP, Noreen Ibrahim Former MNA PTI, Sh Ansar Aziz (Former Mayor PMLN), Zia Ullah Shah MPA / Parliamentary Secretary Government of Punjab, Gen Khalid Jaffery, Amb Sarwar Naqvi Amb Aslam Rizvi, Amb Fauzia Nasreen, Pir Mujtaba Gul Badahah (Pir of Mohrra Sharif), Zaildar Zaheer Shah (Landlord of Taxila), Awais Ali Khokhar (CEO House of Elaan), Col



Khalid Taimor (Executive Director PRCCSF), Abdullah Gul, Dr Saleem Mazhar (DG National Language Promotion Department), Sitara Ayaz (Former Senator/ Secretary General International Parliamentary Congress) with the help of Advisory Council, Executive Committee efforts and concern of the Romanian Embassy, the association has reached remarkable accomplishments. The locally made contributions have enhanced the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Romania while setting the ground for future development .Pakistan and Romania and the current progress toward the relationship is going in the right direction.

Strengthening Ties for a Prosperous Future: Celebrating Romanian Armed Forces

Day with Pakistan

On October 25, 2024, the Embassy of Romania in Pakistan hosted a reception to celebrate the Day of the Romanian Armed Forces, marking a proud tradition in Romania. The event, held at Islamabad's Marriott Hotel, brought together dignitaries, diplomats, military officials, and civil society representatives to celebrate Romanian heritage and international cooperation. The Acting Ambassador, Mr. Eduard Robert Preda, shared the history of Romania's Armed Forces Day, highlighting its importance as a reminder of the sacrifices made by Romanian soldiers during World War II and the value placed on freedom and independence. Preda praised the modernization efforts that have brought Romania's military to NATO standards, reinforcing the country's role as a key player in regional and global security. He also highlighted the flourishing military partnership between Romania and Pakistan, with the Pakistan Navy soon welcoming its fourth patrol vessel from



Romania's Damen Shipyard Galati, enhancing Pakistan's maritime security capabilities. Romania looks forward to participating in IDEAS 2024 and AMAN 2025 in Pakistan, facilitating invaluable exchanges of defense expertise and fostering collaboration in maritime security. A documentary screened at the event showcased the strength, professionalism, and modernization of Romania's Armed Forces, garnering admiration from the audience. A ceremonial cake-cutting followed, symbolizing unity and shared values before an elaborate dinner was served. The culinary offerings included a unique blend of Romanian specialties, creating an exceptional dining experience that resonated with all attendees. The evening concluded with a specially curated dinner featuring a range of Romanian delicacies, offering guests a rich cultural experience. The event was attended by high-ranking Pakistan's high-ranking defense officials, including Major General Amir Ishfaq Kayani, Rear Admiral Amir from the Ministry of Defense, AVM Air Vice Marshal Kashif, Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Support), Major General Munir Ud Din, DG Foreign Military Cooperation from JS Headquarters, Major General Kashif Zameer, Chief of Logistics Branch, GHQ, and Rear Admiral Shafqat Hussain from the Pakistan Navy. Representing the Pakistan-Romania Association, Chairman Zaildar Ahsan Shah, along with Vice Presidents Khalid Rehman, Tayyab Chattha, Sheikh Fayaz, and Fararani, extended heartfelt congratulations, expressing their strong commitment to fostering enduring ties between the two nations. The celebration of Romania's Armed Forces Day in Islamabad underscored the deepening military and diplomatic cooperation between Romania and Pakistan, highlighting a shared commitment to international peace, stability, and mutual respect. The event left an indelible mark on attendees, signifying Romania's



lasting contributions to NATO's goals and its enduring bond with Pakistan in building a peaceful future.

Romania Marks National Day with a Vision for Strengthened Security and Partnership with Pakistan

On December 12, 2024 Islamabad, Pakistan Romania reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening regional security and bilateral cooperation with Pakistan during a grand reception celebrating Romania's National Day, the 106th anniversary of the Great Union of 1918. The event, hosted by Ambassador-Designate Mr. Dan Stoenescu and Mrs. Stoenescu at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad on December 11, brought together dignitaries, diplomats, and prominent members of Pakistani society. (Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs), Mr. Tariq Fatemi, honored the occasion as Chief Guest, accompanied by his spouse, Member of the National Assembly Zahra Wadood Fatemi. The evening also witnessed the participation of European Union Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka, along with envoys from Austria, France, Germany, and other European, African, and Asian nations. Representatives from Pakistan's civil and military leadership, business community, and media were also in attendance.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Stoenescu reflected on the significance of December 1, 1918, a day that symbolizes Romania's national unity and resilience. He emphasized, "As we mark one hundred and six years since the realization of our Great Union, we honor



the strength and determination that have shaped our nation and continue to guide us through challenges, with a firm belief in a united and prosperous future.”

Addressing the ongoing geopolitical crisis in Eastern Europe, Ambassador Stoenescu reiterated Romania’s unwavering support for Ukraine amidst Russian aggression. “Romania stands as a cornerstone of Europe’s security, providing steadfast support for Ukraine and ensuring stability in the Black Sea region and NATO’s Eastern Flank. He further highlighted Romania’s active role within NATO and the European Union, describing the country as part of “the strongest collective security alliance” and “a visionary union of sovereign states.” Romania remains deeply committed to EU expansion, particularly the integration of Ukraine and Moldova, and to fostering stability in the Western Balkans.

Ambassador Stoenescu underscored the enduring partnership between Romania and Pakistan, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations in 2024. “Pakistan represents a vital partner for Romania in South Asia, and our bilateral ties have consistently flourished, reflecting our shared vision to collaborate on areas of mutual interest. He emphasized the importance of deepening political dialogue and advancing cooperation within the EU-Pakistan framework and multilateral platforms like the United Nations.

The event celebrated the shared values and aspirations of Romania and Pakistan, fostering goodwill and dialogue. Guests were treated to a vibrant cultural experience, showcasing the spirit of Romania’s National Day and its historical significance. As the evening



concluded, the message was clear Romania remains a steadfast ally in promoting regional security and democracy, while its relationship with Pakistan continues to grow as a cornerstone of collaboration in South Asia.

Mr. Tariq Fatemi (Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs), the Chief Guest at the event, emphasized the strength of Pakistan-Romania relations. In his remarks, he stated, “The bond between Pakistan and Romania is built on mutual respect and shared aspirations for peace and progress. Our collaboration, whether in defense, diplomacy, or development, reflects a deep and enduring partnership. Romania’s contributions and steadfast support are truly commendable, and Pakistan remains committed to further enhancing this invaluable relationship.

Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah, praised the robust trajectory of Pakistan-Romania relations. He remarked, Pakistan and Romania are on a remarkable path of collaboration, driven by shared values and mutual respect. Together, we are working to deepen ties across diverse sectors, from trade and education to cultural exchange, fostering a partnership that benefits both nations and strengthens our regional and global presence.

Conclusion

Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Romania are expanding in different fields. Their economic, military, political diplomacy and cultural relation are now going on very well, meaning both nations are determined to cooperate for the interest of each nation. Both countries are engaged in concrete actions to increase their bilateral cooperation to



demonstrate the desire of both partners to actively expand cooperation areas and deepen existing cooperation. Pakistan and Romanian Ministers have discussed issues regarding increasing bilateral economic relations in terms of trade and investments. For the purpose of this proposal both countries agree that there is room for development in fields such as agriculture, energy and technology. They are usually pushing to enhance and develop the bilateral trade relationships, and foster cooperation among the business people in their countries. On the military front the relationship is friendly and there is cooperation that exists between the two countries. According to the source, they both support training programs and Technical Cooperation, meaning they work towards the stability of the region. These efforts show a great concern of these two countries towards defense cooperation. Politically and diplomatically, the two countries Pakistan and Romania are in compliance with each other's perspectives. They provide backup to each other at the international level and cooperate with each other in undertaking global agenda including climate change, security in the regions, as well as development. High level visits and talks show the significance both states attach to their friendship as well as bilateral cooperation. Cultural cooperation also continues to put another colorful aspect to their relationship. Students from Pakistan, currently in Romania, and cultural programs and fests that present Romanian and Pakistani art, music, and customs supplement the bond. Thus, such exchanges shape the necessary conditions for the analysis of the relationship's essence and the formation of sustainable cooperation. Both countries are optimistic that through increased collaboration they will achieve further progress and more and more people in both countries would be issued with tangible results. As the two countries move closer to



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each other, it is for the purpose of friendship adding on the aspect of the vision that the two have for the future. Both countries are optimistic that through increased collaboration they will achieve further progress and more and more people in both countries would be issued with tangible results. As the two countries move closer to each other, it is for the purpose of friendship adding on the aspect of the vision that the two have for the future.