

Microsoft licences: Romania's probe of state officials

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA: Romanian prosecutors carried out 56 searches this week in a vast investigation into money laundering and bribery linked to Microsoft software licences that involved millions of Euros, the anti-corruption prosecutor's office said.



Former Communications Minister in the Romanian government is accused of soliciting bribes from companies supplying Microsoft's software, widely used by government departments in Romania. Image: [GDS](#)

"The searches targeted the offices of companies and foundations as well as private homes in Bucharest and in Ilfov county," it said in a statement.

Prosecutors are investigating the alleged involvement of nine former government ministers in the purchase of contracts to license Microsoft software.

The government agreed to buy the Microsoft systems in 2004. At the time, Fujitsu Siemens Computers was the sole distributor for the software.

"Of the €42.3m paid by the government, about \$20m was paid in commissions requested by suspects in the case, both those working for ministries and those in private companies," the prosecutors said.

According to media reports, the former Communications Minister Gabriel Sandu was the focus of some of the searches.

Sandu is suspected of receiving €3m and asking for an additional \$1.8m in bribes to ensure he chose a particular

company to supply Microsoft's products.

The homes of several business executives were also reportedly raided, including the former head of Fujitsu Siemens in Romania, Claudiu Florica, and a property belonging to the former head of Romania's foreign secret services, Catalin Harnagea.

Prosecutors also searched a property linked to the former tennis player Dinu Pescariu.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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