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DNA: Liviu Dragnea, sent to court in a new case - influence peddling related to his US visit

Former Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Liviu Dragnea has been sent to court by prosecutors of the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) in a new case, in which he is accused of influence peddling and use of influence or authority in connection with his presence at the inauguration ceremony of President Donald Trump at the beginning of 2017.

According to a DNA release sent to AGERPRES, the DNA prosecutors ordered the prosecution of Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea, currently under arrest, at the time of the deeds the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and chairman of a political party, for influence peddling and use of influence or authority by a person holding a leadership position in a party, for the purpose of obtaining for himself or another undue benefits, but also of other three businessmen, for the crimes of buying influence and complicity to buying influence.

In the same case, Gheorghe Dimitrescu was also brought to justice, at the time of the deed having been Florin Iordache's parliamentary adviser but also Romania's former consul in Bonn, for buying influence.

Anticorruption prosecutors note in the indictment that, between January 2017 and May 2017, Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea allegedly received undue benefits from one of the businessmen for himself and the party, consisting of ensuring access to the events within the US President's inauguration ceremony from January 17 to 21, 2017, held in Washington DC (USA), based on a benefit package worth 250,000 dollars, access obtained through an American politician and businessman, vice president of the Presidential Inaugural Committee, and ensuring with the help of the other two businessmen, lobbying and political consulting services worth 30,000 dollars for his party.

"The money was allegedly paid in May 2017 by an offshore company based in the British Virgin Islands and bank accounts in Cyprus (controlled by the Romanian businessman with the help of the other two businessmen)," the DNA said.

The investigators also say that Dragnea allegedly accepted from the same businessman the promise of undue patrimonial benefits consisting of the participation, between May and June 2017, in two meetings (not materialized) with senior US officials.

"In this context, the defendant Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea allegedly trafficked, in favor of the Romanian businessman, the real influence he had towards the Prime Minister and other members of the Romanian Government, promising that he would determine them to ensure the business interests, especially in the military and intelligence field, that the respective individual had in Romania", the release reads.

Also, according to the prosecutors, between May and October 2017, Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea allegedly used his authority and influence deriving from the quality of chairman of a political party towards Gheorghe Dimitrescu, as well as towards two other people, for the purpose to obtain, in the same period of time, undue benefits for himself and for the party, in violation of the provisions of Law 334/2006 on the financing of political parties, consisting of lobbying services worth 100,000 dollars (of which 45,000 euros was allegedly paid by Gheorghe Dimitrescu). The respective services were allegedly provided by an American lobbying company, in order to establish some visits for Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea with senior American officials.

"In exchange for the benefits received from Gheorghe Dimitrescu, between June and July 2017, the defendant Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea allegedly trafficked in his favor the real influence he had over the Minister of Foreign

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Affairs, promising to determine the high dignitary to appoint the former to the position of Romania's Consul General in Bonn, which happened", the DNA says.

According to the DNA, in this case precautionary measures were ordered on several real estates belonging to Nicolae-Liviu Dragnea.

The case was sent to the Bucharest Court with a proposal to maintain the precautionary measures ordered in the case.