

Snap | 13 January 2025

ROMANIA

# National Bank of Romania preview: On hold for now

We expect policymakers to keep the key rate at 6.50% at the 15 January meeting, given persistent inflationary risks. While economic growth concerns are not to be taken lightly, we think the Bank will need to see its risk heatmap turning less red before proceeding again with its cautious easing cycle



The Romanian National Bank will announce its latest policy rate decision this week

## Prudence needed in the short run

With heightened risks on the horizon for both inflation and economic activity, policymakers are likely to adopt a wait-and-see approach before more certainty on the macro front emerges. We anticipate a relatively neutral press release, underlining the uncertainties surrounding the adoption of the 2025 budget law, the unclear outlook for energy prices and the volatile external context.

There are multiple factors at play, most with upside inflationary impact or risks, which we think the Bank is also paying great attention to: last year's drought continuing to leave its mark on food inflation, a less stimulative but still uncertain fiscal policy, higher fuel excise duty starting 1 January, rising oil prices, and robust consumer demand. Further down the line, there are

## THINK economic and financial analysis

important uncertainties regarding the energy price caps and/or the removal of the basic food items commercial mark-up. There will also be uncertainties regarding this year's increased tax burden, particularly to the extent companies can pass it through into prices.

Tackling the inflationary impact stemming from all these demand and supply factors will likely require an extended episode of caution from policymakers, especially when they happen simultaneously or at close intervals.

That said, there are risks for growth as well, which normally should soften many of the inflationary pressures. Last year's projected weak GDP outturn (0.7% our estimate), well below Romania's potential, cannot be taken lightly. While a weak internal demand was clearly not among the causes – but rather the poor performance of the supply side in preventing the benefits of strong activity from dissipating externally – the potential for further lacklustre growth performances is likely also requiring policymakers' attention.

Overall, it is likely that inflation concerns will dominate growth concerns for the time being. Ultimately, internal demand has been in good shape and is unlikely to drastically fade too soon. Supply-side issues, which are not quite under the NBR's umbrella, will likely continue to be a drag on growth unless major structural improvements in the economy occur. However, there is not much the Bank can do about the latter.

Overall, we now expect only 50bp of rate cuts in 2025, scheduled for the second half of the year, taking the key rate to 6.0%. We believe the Bank will wait for more clarity on the inflation and fiscal outlook before continuing its cautious easing cycle.

### Author

#### **Stefan Posea**

Economist, Romania

[tiberiu-stefan.posea@ing.com](mailto:tiberiu-stefan.posea@ing.com)

#### **Valentin Tataru**

Chief Economist, Romania

[valentin.tataru@ing.com](mailto:valentin.tataru@ing.com)

## Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared by the Economic and Financial Analysis Division of ING Bank N.V. ("ING") solely for information purposes without regard to any particular user's investment objectives, financial situation, or means. *ING forms part of ING Group (being for this purpose ING Group N.V. and its subsidiary and affiliated companies)*. The information in the publication is not an investment recommendation and it is not investment, legal or tax advice or an offer or solicitation to purchase or sell any financial instrument. Reasonable care has been taken to ensure that this publication is not untrue or misleading when published, but ING does not represent that it is accurate or complete. ING does not accept any liability for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from any use of this publication. Unless otherwise stated, any views, forecasts, or estimates are solely those of the author(s), as of the date of the publication and are subject to change without notice.

The distribution of this publication may be restricted by law or regulation in different jurisdictions and persons into whose possession this publication comes should inform themselves about, and observe, such restrictions.

Copyright and database rights protection exists in this report and it may not be reproduced, distributed or published by any person for any purpose without the prior express consent of ING. All rights are reserved. ING Bank N.V. is authorised by the Dutch Central Bank and supervised by the European Central Bank (ECB), the Dutch Central Bank (DNB) and the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM). ING Bank N.V. is incorporated in the Netherlands (Trade Register no. 33031431 Amsterdam). In the United Kingdom this information is approved and/or communicated by ING Bank N.V., London Branch. ING Bank N.V., London Branch is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and is subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. ING Bank N.V., London branch is registered in England (Registration number BR000341) at 8-10 Moorgate, London EC2 6DA. For US Investors: Any person wishing to discuss this report or effect transactions in any security discussed herein should contact ING Financial Markets LLC, which is a member of the NYSE, FINRA and SIPC and part of ING, and which has accepted responsibility for the distribution of this report in the United States under applicable requirements.

Additional information is available on request. For more information about ING Group, please visit [www.ing.com](http://www.ing.com).