Politicization at the Top: The Impact of Government Reshuffles on State and General Secretaries in Romania (2010-2025)

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between government changes (including full cabinet turnovers and ministerial reshuffles) and the turnover of two senior political-administrative posts at ministerial level in Romania — State Secretary and General Secretary — over the period 2010–2025. Using a newly compiled panel of almost 500 appointments of state secretaries and 800 appointments of secretaries general, we calculated replacement frequency and replacement rate (%) per government change. The results show a markedly elevated replacement rate: a large majority of State and General Secretaries are replaced in connection with government change or ministerial reshuffles, indicating high functional politicization at the top of ministries and limited continuity of senior political-administrative personnel. We also aimed to analyze the influence of government composition and party-political ideology on the percentage of replacements among state secretaries and general secretaries. The analysis highlights important variation across ministries: ministerial portfolios with larger budgets and greater political influence exhibit higher turnover. The paper concludes that Romania's ministerial senior posts experience systematic replacement tied to political turnover, with implications for policy continuity, institutional memory, and administrative professionalism.