



COUNTRY IN PERSPECTIVE

ROMANIA



*Peleş Castle, Sinaia
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COUNTRY IN PERSPECTIVE | ROMANIA



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*Panoramic view of Brasov
Flickr / Sorin Mutu*

Chapter 1 | Romania in Perspective

Geography

Introduction

Romania is located on the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. Ukraine borders Romania to the north and east. Sandwiched between Ukraine and Romania on the eastern border is Moldova. Romania is bounded on the south by Bulgaria and by Serbia on the southwest. On the northwestern border sits Hungary. Romania also has a small coastal border in the southeast on the Black Sea.^{1, 2} Roughly one-third of Romania is covered by the Carpathian Mountains, which run in a north-south direction before veering westward near the center of the nation. The Romanian tablelands, including the Transylvanian Plateau, are surrounded by the Carpathians and cover roughly another third of the nation. The final third of the country is covered with plains and

the marshlands of the great Danube Delta region. This area covers most of the western and southern section of the county.^{3, 4}

This nation of roughly 19 million people is rich in resources. Forests cover roughly 29% of the land.⁵ Significant, albeit declining, oil reserves lie in the foothills of the southern and eastern ranges of the Carpathian Mountains and along the Black Sea coast. The Transylvanian Plateau in the center of the country has large deposits of natural gas.^{6, 7, 8} Romania also has other significant mineral resources including coal, iron, and manganese.⁹

Romania's geography provides significant challenges. Its location on the Vrancea fault near the junction of three tectonic plates makes the country one of the most earthquake prone regions in Europe.^{10, 11} Each year dozens of earthquakes strike the region. In 1977 the capital, Bucharest, was devastated by one of the worst earthquakes in the nation's history. Floods and landslides also cause considerable damage each year.¹²

Geographical Divisions

Romania can be divided into three geographic regions of approximately equal size: mountains (31%), hills (33%), and plains (36%).^{13, 14} The Carpathian Mountains extend approximately 967 km (600 mi) across Romania and can be subdivided into the eastern, southern, and western ranges.¹⁵ The eastern range extends south from Romania's border with Ukraine to the Prahova Valley. The highest peaks in this range rise to approximately 2,303 m (7,556 ft). On the western fringe of this range are the volcanic Oaş and Harghita ranges.^{16, 17} The southern range, known as the Transylvanian Alps, is bordered by the Prahova River Valley on the east and the Timiș and Cerna river valleys on the west. The peaks in this range are the highest in the Carpathian Range. The two tallest peaks are Mount Moldoveanu at 2,544 m (8,346 ft) and Negoiu at 2,535 m (8,317 ft).^{18, 19} The western range extends between the Danube and Someș rivers. The Iron Gates, a narrow channel that funnels the Danube River, lies in this range.^{20, 21}



*Bucegi Mountains, Carpatians
Flickr / Sorin Mutu*

Tablelands cover another third of Romania. The largest of these is the Transylvanian Plateau, which sits in the center of the country surrounded by the Carpathian



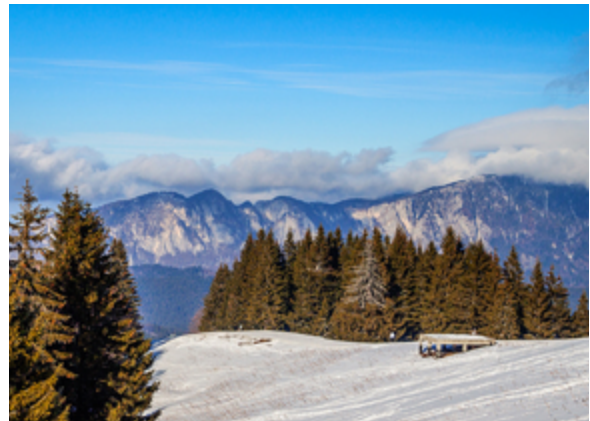
*Transfagarasan highway
Flickr / Tamás Mészáros*

Mountains.^{22, 23, 24} In the Transylvanian Basin, elevations average about 350 m (1,148 ft). Moving eastward toward the Moldavian Plateau, elevations rise to around 500-600 m (1,640-1,969 ft). Toward the southeast lies the Dobruja Tableland with the lowest elevations (250-467 m/820-1,532 ft).^{25, 26} The rich soils of the tablelands support significant agriculture. Brown coal and natural gas reserves are also found in the tablelands.^{27, 28}

Romania's sprawling plains cover the rest of nation. The plains are located mainly in the west and southwest. The Walachian Plain covers most of southern Romania. This region is the nation's most important agricultural center.^{29, 30} The Danube floodplain, in the southeast, is in this area. The swampy marshlands of the delta region are an important wetlands reserve for wildlife and plants. The delta is also a major fishing center.^{31, 32}

Climate

Romania's location gives it a variable climate that transitions between the harsh extremes of the interior continent and the more temperate coastal regions. Romania has four distinct seasons. Spring is relatively short. Autumn, when the weather is generally warm and dry, lasts from September to late November. Summers are generally warm but winters can get cold with snow blanketing some areas between December and mid-March.



*Snow on Mount Postavarul
Flickr / Sorin Mutu*

The greatest temperature variations occur in the eastern and southern regions. The mildest weather occurs in the southeast.^{33, 34} Temperatures in the south average about 11°C (52°F). Temperatures cool down as one moves north, averaging around 8°C (46°F). Elevation can drastically affect temperatures. The mercury can soar as high as 45°C (113°F) in the Bărăgan region. In the Braşov Depression, temperatures can dip as low as -38°C (-36°F). Around the capital of Bucharest, temperatures average around 22°C (72°F) in July, dropping to around -3°C (27°F) in January, the coldest month.^{35, 36, 37}

Precipitation throughout the country is variable. In general, average rainfall is around 64 cm (25 in), although in Transylvania and the Carpathian Mountains precipitation is much higher. In those regions, rainfall averages between 102 cm (40 in) and 140 cm (55 in).^{38, 39, 40} The driest region of the country is in Dobruja, where less than 38 cm (15 in) of precipitation falls each year.

Rivers

Danube

The most important river in Romania is the Danube, which forms part of the nation's borders with Bulgaria and Serbia.^{41, 42} In Romania, the river flows across the Carpathian Mountains through a narrow pass called the Iron Gate as it courses its way to the Black Sea. Between the Iron Gate and the Black Sea port city of Constanța, the river carries significant numbers of passengers and commercial traffic.^{43, 44} Below the Iron Gate, the river slows and continues its southward flow until it reaches the city of Galați, where it veers sharply eastward. Near the Romanian city of Tulcea, about 80 km (50 mi) inland from the Black Sea, the river splits into three sections as it starts to spread out into its delta.^{45, 46}



Danube river
Flickr / Tom plunkett

Major Tributaries

Nearly all the other rivers in the country are tributaries of the Danube. The most significant are the Ialomița, Mureș, Olt, Prut, Siret, and Someș.⁴⁷ The Ialomița River flows from Mount Omu in the Transylvanian Alps in the central part of the country and continues south and east for 400 km (250 mi) before joining the Lower Danube west of the city of Hîrșova. Upstream, the runoff from the mountains creates a rapid flow.⁴⁸ The Mureș River rises in the Giurgeu Mountains in the Eastern Carpathian Mountains. The river courses westward between the Transylvanian Alps and the Bihor Mountains on its way toward Hungary, where it joins the Tisa River. The river is navigable by small boats below Deva.⁴⁹ The Olt River rises near the headwaters of the Mureș River in the east central region of Romania. The river generally flows in a southwesterly direction before turning south, where it empties into the Danube near the city of



Olt river at Râmnicu Vâlcea
Flickr / Iraul06

Turnu Măgurele. The river crosses the Transylvanian Alps at Turnu Roșu Pass, the most significant breach in the range. Small boats can navigate the river along its lower course below Slatina.⁵⁰

The Someș River, in northwestern Romania, is one of the most important in the Transylvanian Alps. The river has two headstreams. The Great Someș rises in the Rodnei Mountains and flows southwest. The Little Someș, which rises in the Apuseni

Mountains, flows northeast. These two headstreams meet at the town of Dej where they zigzag northwest before emptying into the Tisa River in Hungary.⁵¹ The Siret River, with its headwaters in the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine, is one of the major rivers in the Moldavian region in eastern Romania. The river flows southward into Romania before emptying into the Danube.^{52, 53}

Romania’s rivers can be a source for hydroelectric power, but they are underutilized. Most of the dams and power generating plants are located along the Danube River. Some sections of the Olt and Someș rivers are being developed.⁵⁴

Major Cities

City	Population ⁵⁵
Bucharest	1,877,155
Iași	318,012
Cluj-Napoca	316,748
Timișoara	315,053
Constanța	303,399

Bucharest

Bucharest, Romania’s capital and largest city, is the national center of government and commerce.^{56, 57} According to legend, the city was founded by a shepherd named Bucur. The city remained a nameless settlement until 1459 when the Walachian ruler, Vlad III, built his Bucharest fortress. The city then grew rapidly, becoming the

main economic center of Walachia and its capital in 1659.^{58, 59, 60} Between 1821 and 1859, the city was the site of several popular uprisings. With the unification of the principalities of Walachia and Moldavia, Bucharest became the capital of the Romanian state in 1862. It became the capital of modern-day Romania when Transylvania joined the union.^{61, 62} Between 1916 and 1918, Germans occupied Bucharest and Romania's government was transferred to the city of Iași.^{63, 64} When Bucharest became the capital again at the end of World War I, the city once again became the most important city in the nation.⁶⁵



*Palace of Parliament, Bucharest
Flickr / p.fabian*

In 1977, much of Bucharest was devastated by one of the worst earthquakes in Romanian history, which killed more than 1,500 people and leveled nearly three dozen buildings.⁶⁶ Following the earthquake, the nation's ruler, Nicolae Ceaușescu, began major reconstruction projects, including the construction of the massive House of the People, now known as the Palace of Parliament. Ceaușescu razed more than 10,000 hectares (25,000 acres) of the city center to make room for the new palace and to widen the city's grand boulevard.^{67, 68} In December 1989, violence wracked the city during a revolution that toppled Ceaușescu.^{69, 70} In June of the following year, deadly protests against the government once again plagued the city.^{71, 72}

Today Bucharest is home to several institutions of higher education, art and science academies, and research institutes. It is also the site of several important industries including machine tools, agricultural machinery, and automotive equipment.^{73, 74}

Iași

The city of Iași, located in the northeastern section of Moldavia, is one of Romania's most beautiful cities. It is a regional cultural city with major universities, theaters, and orchestras. Iași is well known as the burial place of St. Paraschiva and as the town where Romania's most famous poet, Mihai Eminescu, once lived and worked.^{75, 76, 77}

The region of Iași has been inhabited since the seventh century. In the late 14th century, it was a fortified customs post on an important trade route in the Prut Valley. The Prince of Moldavia moved to the city in the middle of the fifteenth century, and it



Independence Square, Iași
Wikimedia / Argenna

served as the Moldavian capital from 1564 to 1859.^{78, 79} The city fell to the Ottoman Turks in the early sixteenth century. As Ottoman power waned in the nineteenth century, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza took control and united the principalities of Moldavia and Walachia in 1859.^{80, 81} The city flourished in the latter half of the 1800s, becoming a center of intellectual and cultural life. It served as the temporary capital of Romania between 1916 and 1918 when German troops occupied the national capital of Bucharest.^{82, 83}

Cluj-Napoca

Cluj-Napoca, the historic capital of Transylvania, is located in northwestern Romania.⁸⁴ The city has a distinctly Hungarian flavor, a legacy of its years under Hungarian rule.^{85, 86} In the late 12th century, the city was known as Cluj. It became the capital of the principality of Transylvania in the 16th century and remained so until the principality was incorporated into Romania. Napoca was added to the city's name in 1974 by President Ceaușescu.^{87, 88} During the communist years, Cluj-Napoca industrialized rapidly and became Transylvania's largest city. The city's factories produce ceramics, chemicals, leather goods, and textiles. Cluj-Napoca retains a strong coffeehouse culture and has internet cafes and nightclubs. The city is also home to a major university, several technical and professional institutes, a fine arts institute, and the Gheorghe Dima Conservatory.^{89, 90, 91}



National Theater, Cluj-Napoca
Wikimedia / ES Vic

Timișoara

Timișoara, also referred to as the City of Flowers, is located in western Romania along the Bega River. The city dates back to 1212, and by the 14th century it had become a fortress city.^{92, 93, 94} Sacked by Tatars in the 13th century, the city was rebuilt



Metropolitan Cathedral, Timișoara
Wikimedia / Gratiela Ciortuz

and later became the residence of Charles I of Hungary. The Turks seized control of the city in 1552; it remained under Turkish control until the Austrians seized power in 1716.⁹⁵ For the next 200 years, the city was ruled by the Austrian Empire.^{96, 97} During Austrian rule, Timișoara was populated mostly by Swabian Germans. In 1920, the city was ceded to Romania under the terms of the Treaty of Trianon.⁹⁸ In December 1989, antigovernment demonstrations that swept the city sparked the national revolution that overthrew Nicolae Ceaușescu.^{99, 100} Today, the influences of the many groups that ruled the city is evident in its cosmopolitan flair. Timișoara, a major cultural center, is home to the University of Timișoara and has a state theater, an opera, an orchestra, and a ballet company. The city remains a major commercial and industrial center.^{101, 102}

Constanța

The city of Constanța in southeastern Romania on the Black Sea is the nation's principal port city. A canal connects the city to the Danube River, which has heavy import and export activity.¹⁰³ According to legend, the city traces its origins back nearly 2,500 years when Tomis, as it was then known, was established by Jason and the Argonauts after finding the Golden Fleece.^{104, 105} Constanța became part of the Roman Empire in the first century BCE. The city had an unsettled history. Between the sixth and 15th centuries it was invaded by Goths, Huns, Avars, and other tribes. In 1878, the city again became part of Romania. The contemporary city, in addition to being a favorite Black Sea resort, is also a major cultural and arts center. Its archeological museum houses one of the most important collections of artifacts in the nation.¹⁰⁶ Shipbuilding and fishing are among its major industries.¹⁰⁷



National History Museum in Constanța
Wikimedia / Alexandru Pănoiu

Environmental Concerns



*Oil industry in Constanța
Flickr / Michele Solmi*

Erosion is a major concern in Romania. Poor farming techniques, including infrequent crop rotation, heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers, have severely degraded the soil and fueled erosion throughout the country.^{108, 109} Other contributing factors include drought, wind, and floods.¹¹⁰ In some cases, the land has degraded so significantly that parts of the country, particularly in southern Romania, are threatened by desertification.^{111, 112} Climate change, which has sparked more flooding, is also a major factor. Romania's coastal beaches have been eroding for decades. In some areas the shoreline has retreated up to 300 m (984 ft) within four decades.¹¹³

Romania faces serious challenges related to air and water pollution. Many of the nation's factories and production facilities burn fossil fuels that generate high levels of carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide, which contribute to acid rain.¹¹⁴ Asbestos fibers can also be found in the air. They come mainly from windblown soil contaminated by hazardous waste sites where the material was improperly stored. Inhalation of these particles has increased lung problems and even led to deaths among Romanians.¹¹⁵ Romania's poor air quality prompted worries among the European Commission, which has demanded Romania take action to improve its air quality.^{116, 117} The nation's factories also generate runoff that flows into the Danube River system, rendering the water unpotable and threatening many of the regions' ecosystems.¹¹⁸ Waste management issues are another main contributor to the deterioration of water quality, especially in the Danube River. Only 17% of towns with more than 2,000 residents are connected to sewage systems. In rural areas, that number drops to about 4%.¹¹⁹

Natural Hazards

Romania sits in a seismically active region and experiences roughly 30 earthquakes a year with magnitudes over 3.0 on the Richter scale. Many of these earthquakes are centered near the capital of Bucharest, sometimes referred to as the earthquake capital of Europe.^{120, 121, 122} In 1977, a tremor measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale struck near the capital, killing more than 1,500 people and leveling more than 30 buildings.¹²³ In 2014 a 5.6 quake, whose effects were felt as far away as Bucharest and parts of Ukraine, struck the Vrancea region.^{124, 125} In 2015, roughly 12 quakes with magnitudes between 4.1 and 5.5 struck the country. All were centered in the east central region of the nation.¹²⁶



*Landslides causing flooding
Flickr / Thomas Hackl*

Floods are a common occurrence in Romania, which is one of the most flood prone European countries.^{127, 128} Each year nearly USD 400 million in damage is caused by floods.¹²⁹ In May 2012, one of the worst floods in Romanian history forced large evacuations of people.¹³⁰ In 2014, deadly floods brought on by heavy rains occurred in southern Romania along the Gilort River, leaving one person dead and forcing residents from their homes.^{131, 132} Floods plagued the nation between April and August of 2015. Heavy rains produced floods in 31 areas of northwestern Romania, killing one person and damaging hundreds of homes.¹³³ Besides torrential rains that swell rivers to overflowing their banks, floods are the result of poor sewage in cities, melting snow, deteriorating dams along major rivers, and heavy deforestation.^{134, 135, 136}

Landslides pose a major risk to Romania, particularly in the Carpathian Mountain region. Landslides are caused by both floods and earthquakes. The number of slides has increased in recent years, partially resulting from heavier than normal precipitation due to climate change.^{137, 138}

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Chapter 1 | Geography

Assessment

1. Approximately one-half of Romania is covered by mountains.
2. Romania is one of the most earthquake prone regions in Europe.
3. The greatest temperature variations in Romania occur in the mountainous northern regions.
4. The Danube River forms part of Romania's southern border.
5. Desertification is a serious environmental threat in Romania.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. True



*Bran Castle, Home of Vlad III Dracula Built in 1212
Wikimedia / Dobrezezar*

Chapter 2 | Romania in Perspective

History

Introduction

Archeological data suggest that people have inhabited the region of present-day Romania since as early as 100,000 BCE. Around 5500 BCE, Indo-Europeans began to move into the region but were displaced by the Thracian tribes of northern Greece. Contemporary Romanians trace their origins to one of these groups, the Getae, who lived north of the Danube River.^{1, 2, 3}

The Romans conquered the region in the second century CE, but their rule was short-lived. The Huns dominated the region in the fifth century, only to be displaced by the Avars in the sixth century and the Slavs in the seventh century. The Magyars, a

Hungarian group, came in the tenth century and were firmly in control by the 1400s. The first Romanian principalities, Walachia and Moldavia, formed in the 1300s.^{4, 5, 6}

In the 1600s, the Turks came to the region and quickly took over Transylvania. The Romanian principalities held off the Turks until the seventeenth century and remained under Ottoman rule until the eighteenth century. The Habsburgs from Austria defeated the Turks in Transylvania near the end of the seventeenth century, but the Ottomans remained in control of Walachia and Moldavia. In 1859, the two principalities united to form the state of Romania but did not become independent from Turkey until 1862. In 1881, Romania became a kingdom under the rule of Carol I. Transylvania became part of the Kingdom of Romania in 1918 after Romania defeated Hungary.^{7, 8, 9}

Romania came under Soviet control in 1948. For the next 10 years, Romania toed the Soviet line, but Romanian nationalism grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In 1965, Nicolae Ceaușescu became the Romanian president. Ceaușescu's rule was barbaric and, in 1989, he was driven from power in a popular revolution. Ceaușescu and his wife were captured after fleeing the capital, Bucharest, and summarily executed.^{10, 11, 12} Following Ceaușescu's demise, Romania began to establish better relations with the West. The country transitioned to a market economy and encouraged private enterprise. Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the EU three years later.^{13, 14, 15}

Ancient Romania



Dacian king Decebal
Wikimedia / Ion Popescu-Băjenaru

Between 2200 and 1200 BCE, Thraco-Getian tribes moved into the region. These settled agriculturalists lived primarily along the coastal regions of the Aegean Sea. In the sixth and seventh centuries BCE, the Greeks established a series of port settlements along the Black Sea coast and began trading with the Getians. In the third and second centuries BCE, the Romans expanded into the region. Their arrival united the Geto-Dacian tribes who opposed the Romans. The Roman leader Julius Caesar, was so concerned about the Geto-Dacian union that he planned to march against them but was assassinated before he could mount his campaign. That same year, the leader of the tribal confederation, Burebista, was assassinated and the tribal union dissolved.^{16, 17, 18}

In the first century CE (87-106), the Getian ruler Decebalus reunited the tribes and established a new Getian state. Rome's Emperor Trajan, determined to destroy the Getians, marched into the region and defeated Decebalus and his forces. The two sides signed a peace treaty, but within a few years the Getians violated the treaty. In 105, Trajan again led his troops against the Getians, leaving the state in ruins. Under Roman rule, the former Getian state became known as the province of Dacia.^{19, 20, 21}

Rome ruled Dacia for about 200 years. During this time, the barbarians moved into the region. In 271, Rome's emperor decided it was too costly to defend the province. He ordered the army out of Dacia, leaving its fate to the new invaders. For the next 800 years, Visigoths, Huns, Ostrogoths, Slavs, Hungarians, and others all took turns ruling the territory.^{22, 23, 24}

The Magyars and the Tatars

Near the end of the ninth century, the Magyars from Hungary settled in the Carpathian Basin. They brought Roman Catholicism and began converting the indigenous people of the Transylvania region. In 1000, the pope crowned Stephen I the king of Hungary, a land that now included Transylvania.^{25, 26} The Transylvanians, including ethnic Romanians, at first resisted Catholicism, preferring to retain their Orthodox Christianity.

The Magyars invited many foreigners to help settle the area. To reinforce their loyalty, the king of Hungary granted the settlers land and commercial privileges, with the caveat that only Catholics could become members of the nobility. Under this feudal system, most Transylvanians became landless peasants. By the 1200s, the Hungarian grip on the region was slipping. The Tatars swept into the region, crushing the Magyars. This only worsened the conditions of the Transylvanian peasants, many of whom were slain by the Tatars. Those who survived were forced to pay even more to their landlords, and more land was seized from the serfs.^{27, 28} In 1242, the Tatars withdrew. The Hungarians once again called on foreigners to come and live in the region. Transylvania became increasingly autonomous. By 1288, the noblemen had their own assembly, or Diet. As the nobles continued to act without restraint from the king, the situation among the serfs worsened. Many Romanian peasants decided to



*King St. Stephen's modern sculpture, Budapest
Wikimedia / Sveter*

leave Transylvania. The Romanians fled east and south of the Carpathian Mountains, establishing the states of Walachia and Moldavia. These states were ruled by boyars (landowning nobility) whose revenue source depended on payments from the peasants who rented the land.^{29, 30}

The New Principalities

The newly established principalities of Walachia and Moldavia continued to strengthen in the 1300s even as Hungary asserted its sovereignty over both principalities. Although the prince of Walachia acknowledged Hungary's sovereignty, the head of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Constantinople established an ecclesiastical seat in Walachia. This recognition by the Church helped Walachia free itself from Hungarian rule in 1380.^{31, 32}



Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia
Wikimedia / Anonimu

While Walachia and Moldavia remained relatively isolated and primitive, the situation in Transylvania was quite different. Following the Tatar retreat, the principality prospered. Science and technology, along with the arts, flourished. Craftsmen began to form guilds, and money came into common use, replacing the old system of barter. At the same time, however, the serfs began to chafe under the increasingly stringent obligations placed on them by the nobles. In 1437, the serfs rose up but were put down by a union of Magyar, German, and Szekler nobles. As a result, only these three nationalities were recognized and granted political rights in the territory. Other nationalities in the principality were tolerated, including the Romanians who continued to suffer under increasingly oppressive feudal rule.^{33, 34}

The Ottoman Turks

In the 1400s, the Ottoman Turks ventured into the Balkans where they were met by Serb and Walachian troops. After defeating the Serb-Walachian forces, Turkish forces advanced on Walachia and, in 1417, Prince Mircea surrendered to the Sultan. The Turks allowed Walachia to remain a principality but forced it to surrender some of its territory and pay tribute. Over the next four decades, Walachia experienced political intrigues and a succession of corrupt and inept princes, which seriously weakened the

principality. Vlad Tepes, also known as Vlad the Impaler, ascended to the Walachian throne in 1456. He infuriated the Turks by refusing to pay tribute. In 1462, the Turkish sultan invaded Walachia, driving Vlad into exile.^{35, 36}

This left only Moldavia as the final hope to defeat the Turks. Moldavia's Prince Stephen the Great raised a 55,000-man peasant army, which soundly defeated the Turks in 1471. Stephen knew that while he had won the battle, the Turks were far from defeated. Stephen wanted to strengthen his hand against the Turks, but his request to the pope for an alliance went unheeded. The Turks returned and razed the Moldavian capital in 1485.^{37, 38, 39}

The Turks continued to advance against the Hungarians, ultimately defeating them in 1541. They allowed the Hungarians to rule Transylvania, which was forced to pay an annual tribute. Native princes, most of whom were Hungarians, continued to rule the Transylvanian principality. Transylvania continued to exclude Romanians from political power. In addition, the princes strove to keep the Transylvanian Romanians separated from their ethnic kin in Moldavia and Walachia, even forbidding Eastern Orthodox priests from entering Transylvania through Walachia.⁴⁰

Michael the Brave, a Walachian prince, emerged on the scene toward the end of the sixteenth century. Michael aligned himself with the Hungarian nobles, and by 1600 conquered Moldavia, marking the first time in history that a Romanian prince ruled over all of Romania. Although Michael's rule was short-lived, as was the unification of Romania, a sense of national identity began to emerge among the Romanian people.^{41, 42}



*Michael the Brave defeating the Turks in Târgoviște, Oct. 1595
Wikimedia / Theodor de Bry*

The Habsburgs

In 1688, Transylvania renounced Ottoman rule and accepted the protection of the Austrian Habsburgs. In 1699, Austria officially took direct control and annexed Transylvania. As they had been for years, the Romanians remain segregated from the Transylvanian nobility. Most Romanians were serfs with few freedoms or rights. The serfs, already under the obligation to pay their landlords, the Orthodox Church also exacted tithes from the Romanian faithful further pressing them into poverty.⁴³

The Austrians were largely Catholic and they tried to bring Catholicism to the largely Protestant and Orthodox population of Transylvania. The Austrians pressured the Transylvanian Orthodox clergy to join the Uniate Church, which although not entirely Catholic, did accept the primacy of the pope. Although promised equal rights as Catholic priests, those rights never fully materialized.⁴⁴

The Romanians continued to agitate for greater equality, but their pleadings fell on deaf ears. The nobility had little interest in opening up educational and other opportunities for the Romanians, whom they regarded as inferior.⁴⁵

When the Austrian Emperor Joseph II ascended to the throne in 1790, he began a series of reforms designed to improve the position of the Romanian serfs. These reforms emboldened the Transylvanian serfs to rebel in 1784. Although Austrian forces crushed the revolution in 1785, the Transylvanians continued to work for greater rights.^{46, 47} Following the uprising, Joseph emancipated the serfs, annulled Transylvania's constitution, and made German the official language, thus setting in motion a series of nationalist efforts.⁴⁸

In 1791, two Romanian bishops petitioned the Austrian emperor for civil and political rights for Romanians. The emperor restored Transylvania as an Austrian territory and ordered the Transylvanian legislature (Diet) to take up the petition. The Diet, while granting the right to practice the Orthodox faith, denied requests for civil and political rights.⁴⁹ Things remained relatively quiet until 1847, when the Transylvanian Diet made Magyar (Hungarian) the official language, which fueled protests by the Romanians.⁵⁰



Portrait of Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor
Wikimedia Commons

Revolution and the Rise of Russian Influence

In 1848, Transylvania and Hungary united into a single political entity, which sparked massive opposition by the Romanians. War broke out between Hungarians and Austrians in 1848. The Romanians sided with the Austrians in the belief their loyalty would be repaid with greater political rights. In 1849, the Austrian emperor appealed to Russia for aid in defeating the Hungarians. With the help of the Russian troops, Austria defeated the Hungarians. Austria assumed direct and repressive rule, granted full citizenship to the Romanians and freed the serfs, most of whom were Romanians. The dire economic circumstances after the revolution, however, spurred many Romanians to leave for Walachia and Moldavia.⁵¹

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Russia was extending its influence in Europe to include the principalities of Walachia and Moldavia. The Russian czar, Peter the Great, attempted to seize Moldavia in 1711, but Turkish forces foiled the attempt. This move prompted the Turks to place Greek princes, known as Phanariots, on the throne of the two principalities, thus bringing Walachia and Moldavia more securely under Turkish control. Corrupt princes, however, wreaked havoc and brought the principalities to the brink of starvation.⁵²



Empress Catherine the Great (1729-1796)
Wikimedia / Fyodor Rokotov

As Turkish influence waned, Russia gained more power and briefly occupied Walachia and Moldavia in 1739 and again in 1769. The Russian empress, Catherine the Great, returned the principalities to the Turks in 1774. Angered by this action, the Austrians annexed the territories, which prompted the Russians to invade in 1787. A stalemate resulted in several agreements between the Turks and the Russians, who agreed that the Phanariot princes could rule but that the Russians must approve the selection of the princes.^{53, 54}

The Turks abolished the Phanariot rule following the War of Greek Independence and restored the Romanian princes. In 1829, the principalities became Russian protectorates.^{55, 56} Moldavia and Walachia actively campaigned for their unification in 1856.

The move was rejected by an international conference in Paris in 1858, but in 1859 the Romanians elected Alexandru Ioan Cuza governor of both provinces, which effectively put both regions under his control. After Cuza's ratification by the Ottomans, the united principalities officially became Romania.^{57, 58, 59}

Independent Romania



War of 1878, Romanian army entering in Dobrogea
Wikimedia / Henryk Dembitzky

Bessarabia. The rest of Europe soon followed suit. In 1881, Romania's parliament proclaimed Romania a kingdom and crowned Charles king.^{62, 63, 64}

Charles retained his distrust of Russia and in 1883 signed a secret alliance with Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy, thus making Romania part of the Central Powers. The alliance, however, did not ease tensions with Austria-Hungary, which continued its efforts to Magyarize the Romanian majority in Transylvania. Romanians in Transylvania chafed under the yoke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and by 1900 cries for unification of all Romanians in Transylvania, the Kingdom of Romania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina grew louder.^{65, 66}

Wars broke out in the Balkan states over the next years as several nations declared their independence from the Ottomans. In 1913, Romania invaded Bulgaria and seized control of the southern area of Dobruja.^{67, 68}

Conflict in the Balkans continued and, in 1914, erupted into an international war pitting the Central Powers against the Allies (Russia, Britain, and France). With the outbreak of World War I, Romania hoped to remain neutral, but political realities made this an impossibility.^{69, 70, 71} King Ferdinand succeeded King Carol in 1914. Ferdinand's wife, Marie, was the granddaughter of both Russia's czar Alexander II and Britain's Queen Victoria and so, in 1916, Romania abandoned the Central Powers and entered the war on the side of the Allies.^{72, 73}



Carol I King of Romania (1839-1914)
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As the tide of war turned against the Central Powers, Transylvania's National Party declared its right to self-determination. The movement to unify Transylvania with Romania began. Similar movements emerged in Bessarabia and Bukovina. By 1 December 1918, Romanian troops occupied most of Transylvania, and later that month a resolution calling for the unification of all Romanians passed.^{74, 75}

Greater Romania (1918–44)



Carol II King of Romania in 1938
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As a result of treaties signed at the end of World War I, Romania more than doubled its territory, which now included Transylvania, Dobruja, Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and part of the Banat.^{76, 77} For several years, Romania struggled to adopt a new constitution and enact land reforms. The real challenge, however, came from the battle for power between rival political factions. The nation's new constitution granted greater civil liberties to the population, including citizenship for Jews, male suffrage, and equal political rights.^{78, 79, 80}

In 1930, King Ferdinand's son, Carol II, ascended to the throne. His rule was plagued by severe economic depression. As the economy collapsed around him, Carol II attempted to consolidate power. Many Romanians lost confidence in their government, giving rise to a number of extremist parties. One such party was the fascist Iron Guard that advocated nationalism, Orthodox spirituality, and anti-Semitism. The Iron Guard staged violent protest movements in Bucharest, and in 1933 Guard members assassinated Ion Duca, the Romanian prime minister.^{81, 82, 83}

Following Duca's death, the Iron Guard continued their battle in the streets. When the railroad workers went on strike, the government's response was quick and brutal. In 1937, the monarchy-backed National Liberal Party was ousted. King Carol gave control of the government to an extremist right-wing coalition that quickly barred Jews from civil service, from the purchase of property, and even from some professions.^{84, 85} The King suspended the parliament, abolished the constitution, and assumed dictatorial powers, imposed censorship and tightened police surveillance. Soon, the king got tired of the Iron Guard and arrested several Iron Guard leaders.^{86, 87}

In 1940, General Ion Antonescu forced the king to abdicate. Antonescu, along with the Iron Guard, established an authoritarian government. The alliance was short-lived, however, and in January 1941 open war broke out between the general and the guard. Antonescu prevailed and continued to rule as a military dictator for the next three and a half years. Democratic opposition leader, Iuliu Maniu, and King Michael overthrew Antonescu in August 1944. A week later, Russian troops occupied the capital.^{88, 89, 90}

Romania (1944–85)

After the war ended, democrats and communists vied for power. When the first elections were held in 1946, the communists and their associates won 80% of the popular vote, although many regard those results as fraudulent.⁹¹ By 1947, the democratic institutions and liberal economy were gone. The communists quickly eliminated all opposition and forced King Michael to abdicate. On 30 December 1947, they officially proclaimed the formation of the Romanian People's Republic. Over the coming years, Romania would become increasingly isolated from the West and fall under the influence of the Soviet Union.^{92, 93}



Romanian general Ion Antonescu next to Iron Guard leader Horia Sima in 1940
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Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej,
A Romanian communist leader, 1947-1965
Wikimedia / Communism in Romania Photo

By 1948, the Romanian People's Republic had adopted a Stalinist constitution and nationalized Romania's banks and most of the industrial, mining, transportation, and insurance companies. By 1951, 90% of Romania's industries were controlled by the state. Over the next years, the government implemented a series of 5-year plans designed to industrialize the country and collectivize the nation's agricultural sector.^{94, 95}

Following Stalin's death in 1956, Romanian leader, Gheorghiu-Dej, charted a more independent course for Romania. He slowed the rate of industrialization, increased the production of consumer goods, raised wages, and closed the country's largest labor camp.⁹⁶ Wary of the anti-Stalin attitudes emerging in Russia,

Gheorghiu-Dej's relations with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev became strained. In 1964, the Romanian Communist Party proclaimed its independence from Moscow.^{97, 98}

When Gheorghiu-Dej died in 1965, Nicolae Ceaușescu became head of the Romanian Communist Party. Ceaușescu was even more aggressive in his efforts to become independent from the Soviet Union. He actively sought economic relations with the West and denounced the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Moscow, aware of Ceaușescu's disdain for Western values and institutions, seemed to pay little attention to his actions.^{99, 100}

At the same time, Ceaușescu began to consolidate power. He overhauled the military and security forces, and put many of his allies into positions of power. His wife, Elena, became a Politburo member in 1973. In 1984, Ceaușescu became the Romanian president.¹⁰¹

Revolution and Freedom (1989–2000)

By the late 1980s, Romania was a virtual police state.^{102, 103} The people were in desperate straits, and dissatisfaction with Ceaușescu soon boiled over into revolution. On 19 December 1989, Ceaușescu ordered his security forces to fire on protesters in Transylvania. Demonstrations then spread to the capital of Bucharest. The army abandoned Ceaușescu on 22 December and joined the protesters. Ceaușescu and his wife were captured as they tried to escape from Bucharest. On Christmas Day, they were tried and convicted of mass crimes against the people and executed.^{104, 105, 106, 107} The Communist Party withered with Ceaușescu's death.^{108, 109}



Nicolae Ceaușescu, A Romanian communist leader
Wikimedia / Romanian Communism Online Photo Collection

The National Salvation Front (NSF), a quickly formed alliance of anti-Ceaușescu groups, handily won the elections in 1990. Ion Iliescu was named president in June and reelected in 1992. Iliescu was much more open to the West. He introduced a market-based economy and encouraged private enterprise. Disagreements within the NSF fractured the party. Iliescu's supporters broke away and formed the Democratic National Salvation Front (DNSF). A new constitution was ratified in 1991, establishing Romania as a democratic republic and bringing the promise of political stability.^{110, 111}

Romania's economy struggled. Iliescu's reforms led to staggering inflation rates of around 300%, rising prices, and widespread unemployment. As claims of corruption mounted and the standard of living of ordinary Romanians deteriorated, Iliescu lost the presidency in 1996. The new center-right president, Emil Constantinescu, headed a coalition government.^{112, 113, 114} Efforts to revive the economy were only marginally successful. Between 1996 and 2000, the economy shrank by 15%.^{115, 116} Angered by economic problems, voters returned power to Iliescu and the Social Democratic Party in 2000.^{117, 118}

Romania in the 21st Century

Romania continued forging stronger relations with the West. Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007.^{119, 120} In 2004, the newly elected president, Traian Basescu, tackled problems of endemic corruption.¹²¹ Romania's oligarchs were unhappy with Basescu's efforts and, in 2007, launched a campaign to remove him. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) asked the courts to impeach Basescu, but the court refused. In response, parliament voted to suspend the president, pending an impeachment referendum.^{122, 123} The referendum for impeachment failed. Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu and his government refused to step down.¹²⁴



Romania joined the European Union in 2007 and signed the Treaty of Lisbon
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The political infighting continued. In 2014, Basescu's brother was arrested for allegedly taking a bribe from a criminal who was hoping to reduce his prison sentence. Although the president claimed he was not involved, Prime Minister Victor Ponta called on the president to step down. Basescu refused.¹²⁵

Ponta, a member of the Social Democratic Party, hoped to replace Basescu as president in 2014.¹²⁶ In a stunning upset, Ponta was defeated by Klaus Iohannis, an ethnic German from Transylvania.^{127, 128} Immediately following the election, Iohannis and Ponta appeared to have reconciled.¹²⁹ The good will did not last long. In September 2015, Ponta was indicted on corruption and President Iohannis called on Ponta to resign.^{130, 131} A week after Ponta's trial began, he survived a no-confidence vote by a large margin.¹³² A fire in a Bucharest nightclub that killed at least 46 people helped

seal Ponta's fate. After the fire, more than 20,000 demonstrators took to the streets to protest corruption and government malpractice; these demonstrations forced the resignations of Ponta and his government on 4 November.^{133, 134, 135} The president quickly named former EU commissioner Dacian Ciolos as the new prime minister.¹³⁶ On 15 November, Ciolos named his new government, which continued in office until the elections in December 2016.¹³⁷



Romanian Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu
Wikimedia / AGERPRES

In January 2017, the former communication minister, Sorin Grindeanu, took office as the new prime minister, and paved the way to a new left-leaning coalition government led by the center-left Social Democratic Party (PSD), who was ousted in November 2015, after the fire in the Bucharest nightclub.^{138, 139} One month into the new government, an estimated 500,000 Romanians took to the streets to protest the government's new anti-corruption decree that planned to decriminalize some corruption offenses.

These were the largest demonstrations Romania has seen since the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1989.¹⁴⁰ In response to the protests, the prime minister withdrew the anti-corruption decree in February. Among those who were going to benefit from the new decree was the president of the Social Democratic Party and de facto leader of Romania, Liviu Dragnea.¹⁴¹

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Chapter 2 | History

Assessment

1. Romanians trace their origins to the Roman people who settled in the area around the first century C.E.
2. Transylvania came under Austrian rule near the end of the 17th century.
3. Throughout most of its history, the majority of Romanians were Catholic.
4. Russians first ruled parts of Romania in 1829.
5. Following World War I, Romania lost about half of its territory.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. True; 4. True; 5. False



*A Vendor selling Traditional Crafts at Piața Universității, Bucharest
Flickr / Mitchell Stern*

Chapter 3 | Romania in Perspective

Economy

Introduction

Following the 1989 revolution, Romania began a transition from communism to a market-driven economy. In 2007 Romania joined the European Union (EU), a move that helped facilitate its modernization.^{1, 2} The transition was made more difficult because of deteriorating and obsolete factories and an inefficient manufacturing system that was unattractive to foreign investors.^{3, 4} In the 1990s, the mining, transport, communications, and heavy industry sectors remained under government control and insulated from market conditions.⁵ Although the economy started to show signs of growth and a nascent middle class, there are still significant problems, including corruption, which slows down growth and development. Exports drive Romania's economic growth,

accounting for approximately 70% of revenues.^{6, 7} In spite of recent progress and growth, however, the economy remains fragile and subject to vulnerabilities including an aging workforce, weak domestic demand, and tax evasions.⁸

Agriculture

Agriculture, although underdeveloped, continues to play a major role in the economy.^{9, 10} There are more than 5 million farmers in Romania.¹¹ Agriculture accounts for roughly 12% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and employs 28% of the labor force.^{12, 13, 14} The main crops are wheat, corn, barley, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, potatoes, and grapes.^{15, 16} Although Romania exports agricultural products, the nation does not produce enough food to meet domestic demand. Romania is a net food importer, relying on imports to supply 70% of its food needs. The farms are often small, averaging about 2 hectares (4.9 acres).¹⁷ Farm productivity is typically low. Many farms are subsistence operations that provide for the needs of the family but contribute nothing to the general economy. Farms often lack modern technology and farming methods are outmoded.^{18, 19}



*Tractor plowing the field in the spring
Flickr / Paul Istoan*



*Illegal logging
Flickr / gorgeoux*

Romania's fishing subsector continues to decline. High costs following the transition to a market-based economy made it financially prohibitive to maintain the nation's fishing fleets. Since 1995 production has generally dropped.^{20, 21} Only 13% of the nation's fish come from marine fishing operations. The remainder come from fish farms (57%) or inland fishing sources (30%) such as lakes and rivers. Roughly 11,000 persons, excluding those who work in fish processing industries, are employed in this subsector, the majority of whom (46%) are subsistence fishers.^{22, 23}

Forests cover roughly 29% of Romania's land area. Virtually all forestland (96%) is state owned. Most of the trees are broadleaf species, such as beech and oak, as well

as other hardwoods and conifers such as the Norway spruce.^{24, 25} Illegal logging is a serious problem that costs the nation billions of dollars. Some officials regard illegal logging as a national security threat and have ordered an investigation. Others are considering the imposition of a temporary ban on the export of timber products.^{26, 27} The bulk of Romania's wood (53%) is used to make furniture. The wood manufacturing industry employs about 11% of the labor force.²⁸

Manufacturing and Industry



Arcelor-Mittal Steel Works
Wikimedia / HelmiStoDromo

Romania's manufacturing and industrial centers are located mainly in Arad, Bucharest, Hunedoara, Iași, Oradea, Reșița, and Timișoara.^{29, 30} Romania's industrial sector accounts for roughly 36% of GDP and employs 28% of the labor force. Main industries include electric machinery and equipment, textiles and footwear, light machinery, auto assembly, mining, timber, construction materials, metallurgy, chemicals, food processing, and petroleum refining.³¹ The manufacturing sector has

been a relative success story in Romania. Industrial production increased in 2013 and 2014, and grew an estimated 6.1%.^{32, 33} In September 2015, the industry grew a modest 3.5% over the same period in 2014.³⁴ One of the most dynamic sectors is automotive manufacturing.³⁵ Other growth areas include machine tools, electrical products, and mining equipment.³⁶

One challenge facing manufacturing is the shortage of skilled workers. Although the number of graduates in mathematics, science, and technology is higher than the EU average, many skilled Romanians are leaving the country, contributing to a brain drain that has the potential to stall economic growth in this sector.^{37, 38}

Energy and Natural Resources

Romania has moderate reserves of oil and natural gas and the fourth-largest crude oil reserves in Europe.^{39, 40} In addition, the country has an estimated 51 trillion cubic feet of shale gas reserves. Although these reserves offer a potential energy bonanza for the nation, recovering the gas has run into obstacles because of opposition to hydraulic fracturing.^{41, 42} Romania has nine crude oil refineries, representing one of the largest refining capacities in Eastern Europe.⁴³ Although oil and gas manufacturing grew by an

impressive 21% in 2014, refining capacity has dropped in recent years.^{44, 45} OMV Petrom, southeastern Europe's largest oil and gas producer, controls 40% of Romania's gas and oil supply.^{46, 47}

Romania is the sixth-largest coal producer in Europe. Most of the coal is mined in the Oltenia Basin. The coal is mostly lignite and virtually all is consumed domestically, accounting for 22% of energy consumption. The nation's main coal-consuming power plants are the Turceni, Rovinari, and Mintia-Deva plants.⁴⁸



*Coal power plant
Wikimedia / Tudorcfr90*

Romania is a net electricity exporter.⁴⁹ Approximately 30% of its electricity is generated through hydroelectricity, 20% comes from the nation's 2 nuclear reactors, and the remainder comes from fossil fuels.^{50, 51} Plans are under way to construct 2 additional nuclear energy plants, which will increase electrical production from nuclear energy to 40% by 2020.⁵²



*Romania, the largest gold deposit in continental Europe
Wikimedia Commons*

In addition to fossil fuels, Romania has major deposits of metals such as iron, manganese, lead, chrome, nickel, zinc, copper, gold, silver, aluminum, and titanium.⁵³ Iron is found mostly in the regions of Transylvania, Banat, and Dobruja. Manganese deposits are located in northern Transylvania and Banat. Chrome and nickel deposits are near the Iron Gate region along the Danube River. Silver and gold deposits are concentrated mainly in the Apuseni Mountains.⁵⁴

Trade and Investment

Although Romania has an export-driven economy, it has carried a negative balance of trade since 1996. The situation has improved since 2008, when the deficit dropped to a record level, but the imbalance remains. Most of Romania's trade (70%) is with its EU partners.⁵⁵ Its largest export partners include Germany (20%), Italy (12%), France (7%), Hungary (5%), Turkey (5%), and the United Kingdom (4%). Major exports include machinery and transport equipment, raw materials, metals, and textiles.^{56, 57} Imports include machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, fuels and minerals, metals, and textiles. Major import partners include Germany (19%), Italy (11%), Hungary (8%), France (6%), and Poland (5%).^{58, 59}



*Shipyard in Constanța
Wikimedia / Acaro*

Romania attracts significant amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI). Prior to the global financial crisis, large amounts of foreign dollars flowed into the nation: nearly 14 billion euros in 2008. The numbers declined beginning in 2009 and have failed to return to their 2008 levels.^{60, 61} Most FDI dollars come from other EU members, particularly France, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany.^{62, 63} Most of those dollars (74%) are destined for the services sector (43%), followed by manufacturing (31%). Significantly smaller amounts find their way to gas and electricity (9%), mining (6%), and construction (4%).⁶⁴

Several conditions could discourage future investment. In the World Bank's "Doing Business 2015" index, Romania ranks 48th, the lowest among all the EU nations. Red tape, corruption, difficulty in obtaining permits, and the lack of reliable electricity are among the top problems contributing to the low ranking.^{65, 66}

Tourism

Tourism is one of the most promising sectors in Romania. The nation not only has a wealth of natural beauty and historical architecture, but also one-third of the natural springs in Europe.⁶⁷ The top tourist destinations are Black Sea resort spas, which are internationally renowned for curing problems related to arthritis, rheumatism, and internal and nervous disorders.⁶⁸ Romania has 70 natural spas, which are said to relieve a variety of disorders and illnesses.⁶⁹ Tourists are also attracted to Romania's medieval towns, painted monasteries, and ancient Roman ruins, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.⁷⁰



*Peleş Castle
Wikimedia / Gabi Jguma*

Banking and Finance



*National Bank of Romania, Bucharest
Wikimedia / Diego Delso*

Romania's official currency is the Romanian New Leu (currency code: RON).⁷¹ In March 2017, USD 1 traded for approximately RON 4.29.⁷² Prior to 2005, the official unit of currency was the Romanian Leu (currency code: ROL). In 2005, in preparation for joining the EU, the government established the new currency by slashing four zeros from the old ROL in order to bring it more in line with other European currencies.⁷³ Romania plans to adopt the euro as its national currency in January 2019.⁷⁵

The National Bank of Romania (NBR), headquartered in Bucharest, is the nation's central bank. It functions as an independent entity, and its main role is to ensure price stability. The NBR is also charged with issuing currency, setting exchange rates, and managing the national reserves. The NBR became part of the European System of Central Banks with the nation's accession to the EU in 2007.⁷⁶

Romania's banking sector is stable.^{77, 78} The banks performed well on the most recent stress tests.⁷⁹ Romania's banking sector is composed mainly of credit banks. According

to a June 2015 report, Romania has approximately 40 credit institutions, of which 31 are Romanian and 9 are foreign owned.⁸⁰ Thirty-four of those institutions have foreign capital and account for roughly 90% of banking sector assets.⁸¹ The nation's 5 largest banks hold approximately 55% of total assets.⁸²

Standard of Living



Apartment complex in Bucharest
Flickr / lisa

Although the standard of living in Romania has risen over the last 20 years, the country has one of the lowest standards of living in the EU.^{83, 84, 85} Nevertheless, according to the Human Development Index, Romania is a High Development country, ranking 54th out of 187 countries.⁸⁶ Life expectancy is nearly 75 years (71.5 for men and 78.6 for women), which places the nation 109th in the world and on a par with Saudi Arabia and the Gaza Strip.⁸⁷ Healthcare access has improved but remains available mainly to

the wealthy. Half of poor people do not seek medical care when they are ill because of high costs.⁸⁸

Poverty rates in Romania are among the highest in the EU. According to official statistics, 40% of Romanians are at risk of poverty.⁸⁹ The situation is particularly acute in the rural areas. Nearly 45% of Romanians live in rural areas, and 70% of the rural population lives in poverty. The gap in the standard of living between rural and urban dwellers is one of the largest in the world.⁹⁰ Among the Roma population, 80% have incomes below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold.⁹¹

Romania's monthly minimum wage in January 2017 equaled RON 1,250 (about 275 Euro). The Romania's low wages leave little disposable income for much of the population.^{92, 93}

Approximately one-third of household income is spent on housing expenses.⁹⁴ In 2014 roughly 60% of Romanians lived in detached houses, but the quality of housing in Romania is often low. In 2012, 37% of Romanian homes did not have an indoor flush toilet and 34% lacked an indoor bath or shower.⁹⁵ The average size of a dwelling is about 49 sq m (527 sq ft) and the average household has roughly 3 persons.^{96, 97} Approximately 52% of homes in the nation are considered overcrowded.⁹⁸

Employment Trends

Unemployment hovered around 7% for several years.⁹⁹ In January 2017, adjusted unemployment rate decreased to 5.4%, the lowest unemployment rate since 2008. This number, however, may underestimate the number of Romanians out of work.^{100, 101} The labor market in Romania is characterized by low levels of employment and high inactivity rates. Because of demographic changes, the working age population is shrinking.^{102, 103, 104}



Workers moving a statue from Piata University, Buchares
Flickr / Paul Istoan

In spite of projected economic growth, Romania is expected to see only limited job growth through 2025. The sectors most likely to experience growth are the business, services, distribution, and transport. Most of the new jobs will be in the low-skills category, although there will be some growth opportunities in higher-paying higher-skilled jobs. An estimated 47% of job opportunities will occur among skilled workers in agricultural, forestry, and fisheries. The overall skill level of the labor force is expected to increase, with an estimated 39% of Romanians falling into the high-skill category.¹⁰⁵

Outlook



Carturesti Carousel Library, Bucharest
Wikimedia / Mihai Petre

Romania's transition to a market economy has helped the economy grow.¹⁰⁶ The outlook for economic growth in the short term is favorable. Growth is anticipated to be strong in 2017.¹⁰⁷ Other estimates are less optimistic but suggest that growth will be around 3-3.5%.^{108, 109, 110} Nevertheless, there are challenges on the horizon that could slow growth. Uncertainty in the Eurozone and a reduced demand for Romanian exports could block growth. A continuation of national political instability could also dampen economic performance. Continuing problems with corruption and issues related to foreign investment could reduce the much needed influx of foreign capital to modernize the oil and gas sectors and manufacturing sector.^{111, 112, 113}

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Romania in Perspective

Chapter 3 | Economy

Assessment

1. Romania has one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union.
2. Agriculture no longer plays a significant role in the Romanian economy.
3. Romania has no significant reserves of oil or natural gas.
4. Foreign banks are prohibited from operating in the nation.
5. Romania has one of the lowest standards of living in the European Union.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. True



University Square, Bucharest
Flickr / Carpathianland

Chapter 4 | Romania in Perspective

Society

Introduction

More than eight in ten Romanian citizens are ethnic Romanian.¹ Around 90% of Romanians are followers of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The German and Hungarian ethnic groups are overwhelmingly Catholic.² Roughly 55% of the population lives in urban cities, and nearly 45% live in the countryside where traditional Romanian culture thrives.^{3, 4}

Romanians have a strong Latin flair, which perhaps reflects their Roman roots.⁵ Romanians are a passionate people whose emotions can overflow in both positive and negative ways.⁶ They are creative and fun-loving.^{7, 8} Romanian society is collectivist,

and long-term relationships are valued over more individualist needs. Loyalty and commitment to one's group are core values that can override social rules and regulations. Romanians are very family oriented.^{9, 10} Romanians generally try to avoid uncertainty. This suggests that they prefer relatively rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of different views.¹¹ Many Romanians are superstitious and believe in the evil eye (doechi), and their superstitions are frequently in play.¹² Visitors are likely to notice that Romanians are a warm and hospitable people, quick to welcome strangers, particularly foreigners, into their social circles.^{13, 14}

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Romania is a relatively homogenous country. Ethnic Romanians account for approximately 83% of the population. Another 6% are Hungarian. Smaller population groups include the Roma (3%), Ukrainians (0.3%), and Germans (0.2%).¹⁵

Most ethnic Hungarians live in northwestern Romania. They are subdivided into two main groups: the Magyars and the Szeklers. Historically, Hungarians were nobles, granted land and title by the Hungarian king.¹⁶ The Germans live mostly in Transylvania. They, too, can be subdivided into two main groups: the Saxons and the Swabians. The Saxons arrived in the 12th century by invitation of the Hungarian kings to help defend the region against invading Tatars and Turks. The king granted the Saxons complete administrative authority of the Sachsenboden region, which helped them establish their superior position in the region.¹⁷ The Swabians came to Romania in the 1700s and are concentrated in the Banat region.¹⁸



*Young Brasov
Flickr / Charles Roffey*

The Roma (Gypsy) population are Romania's second-largest ethnic minority who were brought to the region as slaves of the Ottoman Turks.^{19, 20} Their official numbers, however, are difficult to assess. Although they officially constitute 3% of the population, some estimates suggest that number may be as high as 10%.^{21, 22} The Roma face significant discrimination and have high levels of poverty and unemployment.^{23, 24} Many Roma remain nomadic, but others live in settled communities. The Roma remain segregated from the rest of Romanian society. Many children do not attend school, and the Roma participate little in political and national affairs. Levels of unemployment and poverty are high^{25, 26}



Roma women
Flickr / Nienke Nijp

Romania's ethnic homogenization policy under President Ceaușescu changed the ethnic makeup of the country.²⁷ One of the ethnic Germans, Klaus Iohannis, is the current president of the country.^{28, 29} Although Hungarians generally resisted emigrating, thousands of Hungarian refugees did cross into Hungary during the 1980s.³⁰

Twenty-three languages are spoken throughout Romania.³¹ Romanian is the official language and the native language of approximately 85% of the population. Other languages spoken include Hungarian (6%) and Romany (1%). Several other languages are spoken by relatively small numbers of the population.³²

Religion

Romania is a secular country with constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion. No religious group receives government funding, though some may get limited tax benefits.³³ In spite of its secularism, Romania has been identified as the sixth most religious nation in the world, and the church is Romania's most trusted institution.^{34, 35} The Eastern Orthodox Church (82%) is the largest religious group and includes the Romanian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox denominations.^{36, 37} Roughly 6% of the population is Protestant and 4% Catholic. There are small numbers of other religious groups, including Muslims.³⁸ The Catholic population consists largely of the Hungarian Magyars, the Roma, and the Swabian Germans. The Protestant population consists of the German Saxons (most of whom are Lutheran) and the Calvinist Szeklers.³⁹



Orthodox Unification Cathedral of Alba Iulia
Flickr / Richard Mortel

The Romanian Orthodox Church, a branch of the Eastern Orthodox Church, has the largest number of followers.⁴⁰ During the years of Ottoman rule and Hungarian rule, the Church played a major role in fostering a sense of national identity.⁴¹ During the



Romanian Orthodox church, Vânători-Neamț
Wikimedia / Dickelbers

years of communist rule in Romania, the Orthodox Church cooperated closely with the government. This allowed the Church to maintain its existence and remain active. After the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu and the end of communism, the Orthodox Church experienced a revival.^{42, 43} The Romanian Orthodox Church is closely aligned with the current government. As a result, it often receives special benefits. The Church is also the most trusted institution in the country.⁴⁴ Today the Church is building new church buildings, some of which are being paid for with government funds.^{45, 46}

Religion plays an important part in the daily lives of many Romanians.⁴⁷ Because many Romanians believe it is in bad taste to flaunt one's religion publicly, many religious practices are carried out in the home. Faithful Orthodox Christians pray twice a day, once in the morning and again at night. Many make the sign of the cross when passing a church building.⁴⁸ Romanians often decorate the eastern wall of their homes with saints, icons, and other religious symbols.⁴⁹

Cuisine

Romanian cuisine reflects Romania's Turkish, Hungarian, Slavic, and Greek influences.^{50, 51} The main meal of the day is typically served midday and includes several courses. The first course is often soup made with meat, noodles, or vegetables. A favorite soup is *ciorbă de burtă*, a soup made from tripe and flavored with garlic.⁵² *Borș*, a thick cabbage soup made with bran, is a traditional favorite.⁵³ *Ciorba* is another favorite soup made with lamb, mushrooms, and leeks or any other meat or vegetable.⁵⁴ Many of the soups are served with hot peppers on the side, to be nibbled along with a spoonful of broth.⁵⁵



Ciorbă de cartofi, potato soup
Wikimedia / Paulnasca

The main course often includes grilled beef (*mitite*) or pork stew with garlic and onions (*tocana*). *Mămăligă*, a classic Romanian side dish, consists of cornmeal

often stuffed in cabbage, vine leaves, or poached eggs.⁵⁶ *Mămăligă* is often served with gravy or stew or sometimes on its own alone, topped with sour cream.⁵⁷ Another popular choice is sarmale, the unofficial national dish. Sarmale is made with meat wrapped in vine or cabbage leaves.^{58, 59} *Salad variations include salată roșii* (tomato salad) or *salată castraveți* (cucumber salad).⁶⁰



Mămăligă with a spoonful of sour cream and sarmale
Wikimedia / Stiopa

Romanian desserts often consist of ice cream, cakes or other pastries, and pies known as placinte. Baclava, a nut-filled puff-pastry drizzled with honey, is popular. A nationally popular dessert is the fried cream-cheese or curd-cheese stuffed donut called papansi.^{61, 62}

Traditional Dress



Traditional dresses of Transylvania
Wikimedia / Tare Gheorghe

Traditional Romanian clothing has remained essentially unchanged for centuries. The basic garment worn by men and women is the chemise, or cămasă, a shirt made from hemp, wool, or linen. In the past, the chemise extended to the ankles for women and was often worn with a dark-colored skirt with red vertical stripes. On top, women wore blouses decorated with beautiful and delicate embroidered designs. Women traditionally covered their heads with a scarf decorated with floral patterns. Women often wore an apron over the chemise. The style of the apron showed regional variations. In Transylvania and southwestern Romania, women wore two aprons, one in the front and one in the back. In the east and southeast, the apron was a single piece of cloth tied at the waist.^{63, 64}

Typical male attire consisted of a long-sleeved white shirt (cămasă) and white pants, a cylindrical hat, a belt, and a waistcoat or overcoat. The shirts usually buttoned down the middle of the front and were worn untucked over leggings or trousers. Waistcoats or vests were usually worn open. Regional differences were reflected in the length of

the garments, the shape of the hat, and the style of embroidery which adorned the coats.⁶⁵ In the years after the communist era, leather peasant sandals (opinci) were still relatively common in poorer areas, but they are rarely worn today.^{66, 67}

Gender Issues

Although the status of women in Romania has improved since the 1960s, a number of challenges remain.⁶⁸ According to the Social Institutions and Gender Index, Romania ranks low in gender equality.⁶⁹ Among European Union countries, Romania ranks lowest in gender equality.⁷⁰ Traditional gender-role stereotypes prevail. Women are expected to take the major responsibility for the household and child rearing. These attitudes have created barriers for women wishing to enter the labor force, especially in occupations typically considered to be reserved for men.^{71, 72, 73} Women are also frequent victims of domestic violence. According to recent studies: 22% of women report having experienced domestic abuse sometime in their lives.⁷⁴



Traditional cămasă
Wikimedia / Asybaris01

Arts

Literature

Romania's earliest literary works, traced to the fifteenth century, were based on religious texts. In the late 1600s, the Romanian monastery in Snagov became a regional center of literary activity. In the seventeenth century, works shifted primarily from religion to historical pieces.⁷⁵ In the 1700s, stories of social oppression and decadence of the ruling Ottomans dominated Romanian literature. One of the most significant works of the time is the Minei (Lives of Saints). Lyric poetry was also popular at this time, especially in the form of love songs.⁷⁶ Vasile Alecsandri, whose work included old Romanian folklore, was one of Romania's most accomplished poets of the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁷



Interior view of the Snagov monastery
Wikimedia / Ferran Cornellà

⁷⁸ His contemporary Mihail Eminescu was broadly influenced by Hindu and German thought, which he melded into his Romanian roots. Eminescu elevated poetry in the nation and became one of Romania's most notable poets.^{79, 80}



Ion Luca Caragiale
Wikimedia Commons

Playwright Ion Luca Caragiale is widely credited with creating Romanian social comedy. His satirical works criticized contemporary Romanian life and provided vivid descriptions of daily life and attitudes of the early twentieth century.^{81, 82} Following World War I, the novel began to replace poetry as the major literary form. Subjects included daily life and the plight of peasants. One well-known work of the time is *Pădurea spînzuraților* (*The Forest of the Hanged*), written by Liviu Rebreanu and published in 1922. The story tells of a soldier forced to turn against his own people. He flees but is captured and hanged as a deserter. The story is supposedly based on Rebreanu's brother's life during World War I.⁸³

Between 1918 and 1940, the leading and most important novelist was Mihail Sadoveanu, whose works told the story of peasants and village life.⁸⁴ The 1950s and 1960s saw a proliferation of literary works by writers such as Marin Preda. In the 1960s and 1970s, Romanian writers concentrated on personal freedoms under communism.

After 1989, metaphorical poetry and surrealist novels became influential. Famous writers of this period include Mircea Dinescu, Matei Vișniec, and Mircea Cărtărescu.^{85, 86, 87} Political essayists such as Adrian Marino, Andrei Pleșu, and Horia-Roman Patapievici also emerged as important figures.⁸⁸

Visual Arts

Romanian paintings date to ancient times when artists' designs were used to decorate pottery. In the 1400s, Romanian artists began decorating their churches and monasteries with frescoes. In the sixteenth century, painters in Romania began covering religious buildings, both inside and out, with frescoes depicting biblical scenes. The region of Bukovina was the center of this movement, and many of the original buildings still survive. After World War II, Romanian paintings reflected the socialist realism portraying workers and communist leaders. All artists were forced

to join a union. Work was heavily censored and the use of abstract shapes was prohibited.⁸⁹ Romania's most famous sculptor, Constantin Brancusi, went to France to avoid government restrictions on his work. Brancusi molded wood and brightly colored metal into geometric forms.⁹⁰

Romania is known for its folk art and crafts, including handwoven rugs, handmade lace, and wooden furniture. Woodworking remains a strong tradition. Romanians decorate their homes with elaborately carved fences, wooden gates, or other trim work. Some of the designs are carved to ward off evil spirits. Other traditional works include painting religious icons, decorating eggs, and weaving baskets.^{91, 92} Weaving is the most common craft in the country. Distinctive family patterns are often handed down through the generations. Many homes still have a loom, and women weave rugs, wall hangings, and clothing. Many of these are adorned with intricately embroidered designs.⁹³



"The Kiss" by Constantin Brâncuși, 1907-08
Wikimedia Commons

Music



Modern cobza
Wikimedia / Andersjallen

Romanians love music and on any given evening there may be some kind of concert. Typical folk instruments include the cobza (a stringed instrument resembling a lute), the tambal (a hammered dulcimer), and the flaut (flute).^{94, 95} Romanian folk music also incorporated bagpipes, the alphorn, and nai (panpipes).^{96, 97} Much of the earliest lyrical music consisted of ballads and bardic verse telling epic tales.⁹⁸ Georges Enesco, the famous violinist, is Romania's most well-known classical musician.

Enesco wrote a series of rhapsodies based on traditional Romanian folk music. Every three years, Bucharest holds a festival honoring Enesco.⁹⁹ Other classical musicians have achieved international recognition, including pianist and conductor Dinu Lipatti and opera singer Angela Gheorghiu.^{100, 101} In the 1960s, Gheorge Zamfir achieved international acclaim for his works on the panflute.¹⁰²

Sports and Recreation

Romania has numerous outdoor recreational opportunities. Many Romanians like rock climbing, hiking, skiing, or snowboarding, especially in the Carpathian Mountains. Black Sea resorts provide the opportunity for swimming, sailing, and other water sports.¹⁰³

Romania's most popular sport is soccer, and fans flood to the many soccer stadia throughout the country to watch local leagues compete. More than 100,000 players in 3,000 soccer clubs participate in the sport.^{104, 105} The Romanian national team has played in seven World Cups, most recently in 1998.^{106, 107} In addition, the team has made numerous appearances in the European Football Championships.^{108, 109} Tennis was popularized in Romania by Ilie Nastase, who received international acclaim in the 1970s. Nastase won seven major championships, including two singles trophies. Approximately 16,000 Romanians in 130 clubs play tennis.^{110, 111}



Soccer game
Flickr / Groundhopping Merseburg



Nadia Comăneci, Olympian
Wikimedia / Comitetul Olimpic si Sportiv Roman

Romania has also achieved international acclaim for its Olympic prowess. Romania has won 72 Olympic medals in gymnastics, 25 of which have been gold.¹¹² Nadia Comaneci became the first gymnast in history to earn perfect scores for her routines at the 1976 Summer Olympics. Bela Karolyi, the famous gymnastic coach who led Romania's women to two gold medals, defected to the United States, where he now coaches U.S. Olympians. Among the other sports in which the Romanians won medals are wrestling and weight lifting.^{113, 114}

Romania's traditional national sport is oină, which has been proposed for inclusion on the UNESCO Intangible Heritage list. The sport, similar to baseball, has been played in Romania for more than 700 years. The game was introduced in the late 1300s by the Walachian ruler, Vladislav I.^{115, 116}

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Assessment

1. Romania is an ethnically diverse nation.
2. Religion is an important element of daily life in Romania.
3. Romanian cuisine has been mostly influenced by Russia's culinary traditions.
4. Romania ranks low in gender equality.
5. Romania's traditional national sport, oină, is similar to baseball.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. True



Romanian Revolution of December 1989
Wikimedia / Denoel Paris and other photographers

Chapter 5 | Romania in Perspective

Security

Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s, Romania was the most pro-Western country in the region. But in the 1980s, U.S.-Romanian relations deteriorated because of human rights abuses in Romania and Romania became increasingly isolated from the West. Following the revolution in 1989, Romania once again turned toward Western alliances to counterbalance Russian influence and gain greater security.^{1, 2, 3} In 2004, Romania became a NATO member and in 2007, it became a member of the European Union (EU).^{4, 5}

In November 2014, Klaus Iohannis was the surprise victor in the Romanian presidential elections.⁶ Iohannis is an ethnic German who is likely to make some policy shifts.⁷ Iohannis' priority appeared to be domestic rather than foreign policy issues.^{8, 9} He has expressed an intent to continue Romania's current foreign policy, including strengthening relations with the EU and building a strategic partnership with the United States.¹⁰ Iohannis has been particularly interested in strengthening relations with Germany. Romania's shift toward Germany, however, is unlikely to weaken its cooperation with the United States in the area of security relations. The U.S. military presence in Romania is larger than in other countries in the Balkan region.¹¹ Romania is deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, a nation with which it shares borders to the north and east. Although Romania currently supports the sanctions imposed against Russia, Iohannis has avoided much of the criticism aimed at Moscow.^{12, 13} Building stronger economic ties is also a key component of Iohannis' foreign policy agenda.¹⁴ As part of these efforts, Romania is actively forging stronger relations with China and the Gulf states, with a special focus on bilateral economic relations.^{15, 16, 17}

Relations with the United States

Romania has been one of the most ardent supporters of the United States in southeastern Europe.¹⁸ In 2011, the two countries signed the "Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century Between the United States of America and Romania," focusing on political-military relationships, law enforcement cooperation, energy security, and economic issues.¹⁹ Romania consented to the deployment of a U.S. missile defense system in Deveselu, intended to watch for incoming ballistic missiles fired at NATO countries.²⁰ Romania also granted the U.S. access to a M.K. Air Base, to be used by the United States for operational support of U.S. forces in the Black Sea theater.²¹ Historically, the two nations' intelligence services have enjoyed close cooperation.^{22, 23} The United States maintains a strong military presence in Romania, which includes U.S. warships operating in the Black Sea.²⁴



*21st TSC EOD techs helping Romania Armed Forces
Flickr / Herald Post*

Neither country is a Top-5 trading partner with the other, but the two countries do conduct trade. Trade statistics show that by the middle of 2016, Romania exported to

the U.S. goods valued at USD 956 million, and imported from the U.S. goods valued at USD 376 million.²⁵

Several U.S. corporations operate in Romania in the energy, manufacturing, information technology, telecommunications, services, and consumer products sectors.²⁶

Relations with Neighbors

Bulgaria



*Bulgaria-Romania border crossing over the Danube river
Wikimedia / TheFlyingDutchman*

Romania's relations with Bulgaria have historically been tenuous. As both nations prepared to join the EU, competition expanded. After both countries became EU member nations diplomatic cooperation increased and relations warmed.^{27, 28} In 2013 the foreign ministers of both countries met to discuss a variety of issues of mutual concern.²⁹ In April 2015, the two nations signed a protocol of intent to increase bilateral ties through increased tourism.³⁰

As a further sign of warming relations, the two presidents met in 2015 with a promise to deepen their ties and strengthen bilateral relations.³¹ Although Bulgaria is not a Top-5 trading partner with Romania, Romania is Bulgaria's third-largest trading partner inside the EU.

There are 10 official border crossing points between Bulgaria and Romania.³² Much of the remaining portion of their joint 470-km (292-mi) border is relatively porous. Drugs, particularly heroin, are trafficked across the border on their way to Western Europe and other destinations.^{33, 34} Cross-border human trafficking is also a problem. Romanian girls and women are trafficked across the border into Bulgaria, where they are forced to enter the sex trade.³⁵ Most recently, the immigrant crisis from the Middle East has affected border relations. Migrants are illegally transported between Romania and Bulgaria by criminal gangs and smugglers. The two countries recently signed an agreement to improve border control.^{36, 37}

Hungary

Romanian-Hungarian political history is based on complicated relations. In the 1970s and 1980s, historical hostilities continued to manifest themselves and relations were tense. Many of the tensions stemmed from Romania's large Hungarian minority.^{38, 39} In 2010 relations worsened with the election of a right-wing president in Hungary. One of the Hungarian president's first moves was to pass legislation making it easier for ethnic Hungarians in other countries, including Romania, to obtain Hungarian citizenship.



*Hungary-Romania border crossing
Flickr / Royston Rascals*

Relations declined further when WikiLeaks documents, which contained derogatory statements made by Romania's president about the Hungarian prime minister, were made public.⁴⁰ Tensions flared again in 2015 when Romania criticized Hungary's prime minister, claiming that he supported the creation of an autonomous region in Romania that is populated mostly by ethnic Hungarians.⁴¹ In spite of these tensions, Hungarian officials have publicly stated that they are committed to normalizing relations with Romania and 52% of Hungarian surveyed about attitudes toward Romania stated that they would like to see improvement in their country's relations with Romania.^{42, 43}

The migrant crisis in Europe has also fanned tensions between Romania and Hungary. In September 2015, Hungary announced a plan to build a fence on part of its border with Romania to stem the flow of immigrants who illegally enter the country from Romania.^{44, 45}

In spite of political disputes, the two nations have robust trade relations.⁴⁶ Hungary is Romania's third-largest import and fourth-largest export partner.⁴⁷ Romania is Hungary's third-largest export partner.⁴⁸ In 2015, trade between the two nations reached 7.3 billion euros. Romania's economy minister noted that trade between the two countries could rise to 10 billion euros per year.^{49, 50} A new section of a highway connecting Romania with Hungary was completed in 2015, providing the first direct link between the two countries.⁵¹

Moldova



Moldova-Romania border crossing
Wikimedia / Pudelek

Moldova and Romania have a long-shared history since Moldova was once a province of Romania. Relations with Moldova have been a central feature of Romanian foreign policy.^{52, 53} When Moldova declared independence in 1991, Romania was the first state to recognize it on the same day. During the first half of the 1990s, the prospect of reunification was raised, even though it was not taken too seriously by the Romanian political leadership.⁵⁴

In 2000, the two nations signed a treaty respecting each other's sovereignty. Romania's entrance to the EU in 2007 led to deterioration in relations as hundreds of thousands of Moldovans applied for Romanian citizenship.⁵⁵ As with Hungary, many bilateral tensions involve concerns over ethnic groups. Approximately two-thirds of Moldovans are Romanian speakers and the question of national identity is never far from the surface. There are fears that Romania could annex nearly one-quarter of Moldova's population if it fully extends Romanian citizenship to Moldovans. Although the immediate crisis appears to have passed, it has not been resolved. The problem has the potential to destabilize regional relations and remains a cause for concern among EU nations.⁵⁶ The Romanian president, Klaus Iohannis, has made comments indicating that he has no interest in reunifying Moldova and Romania.⁵⁷

Although Russia was Moldova's largest trade partner for many years, today Romania is Moldova's largest import-export trading partner.⁵⁸ However, Russian capital still controls about 70% of Moldova's banking sector and the head of Moldova's largest bank lives in Russia.⁵⁹

Romania is also a destination country for people trafficked from Moldova.⁶⁰ In addition, the smuggling of goods such as cigarettes remains problematic. The Moldovans and Romanians cooperate on issues of border security to reduce illegal cross-border trade.^{61, 62}

Serbia

Relations with Serbia have generally been warm. The two countries have signed 119 bilateral agreements on a series of issues.⁶³ Romania has sponsored Serbia's accession to the EU. When Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, Romania was one of the few EU member states to refuse to recognize the declaration, further cementing strong relations with Serbia.^{64, 65} The countries are also energy partners and jointly manage the Djerdap hydroelectric power plant system on the Danube River.⁶⁶ Romania is Serbia's fifth-largest export partner.⁶⁷ In 2013, Serbian exports to Romania reached USD 854 million. Romania has a small amount of investment in Serbia.⁶⁸ The only contentious issue between Romania and Serbia concerns the position of ethnic Romanians in Serbia.⁶⁹

In 2016, the Interior Minister of Romania increased security measures on the border with Serbia to prevent migrants from crossing illegally into Romania and creating a migration route between Serbia and Hungary.⁷⁰

Ukraine



Ukraine-Romania border crossing
Wikimedia / Mws.richter

Relations with Ukraine were cool in the 1990s and early 2000s, but have improved since the beginning of the current crisis with Russia.^{71, 72, 73} In 2009, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) resolved an outstanding territorial dispute over the continental shelf and entitlement to Serpent Island. The ICJ awarded 80% of the disputed territory to Romania, fueling Ukraine's fears that Romania harbored territorial aspirations in the region.^{74, 75}

Those fears eased somewhat when the two countries signed military cooperation agreements following Russia's annexation of the Crimea. Since then, Romania has supported the Ukrainian government and accepted a U.S.⁷⁶ request to station additional troops at the Black Sea air base of Mihail Kogălniceanu.^{77, 78} Romania and Ukraine also cooperate on military affairs within NATO's Maritime Group BLACKSEAFOR.^{79, 80}

Trade between the two nations is underdeveloped. Only 1% of Romania's imports originate from Ukraine, and only 2% of its exports go to Ukraine. In 2014, however, trade

increased 27%.⁸¹ Illegal trade is problematic along the border regions. Cigarettes are illegally smuggled across the border from Ukraine into Romania and other countries, creating illicit trade worth more than USD 2 billion annually.^{82, 83}

Police



Romanian border police
Wikimedia / Johnnyjohnny1919

The Romanian National Police (Poliției Române) is the nation's main civilian law enforcement authority. Under the Ceaușescu government, the National Police was a paramilitary state security force. The Romanian National Police has been reorganized and now reports to the Ministry of the Interior. The police has also demilitarized and closely resembles other European police forces. They are a civil law enforcement force.^{84, 85} The public regards the police as one of the most

corrupt institutions in the nation. Although progress has been made, corruption in the police force has been and remains a serious challenge.^{86, 87} Police have admitted that they sometimes do not investigate charges or collect evidence against powerful and corrupt Romanian businessmen. Police and judges have occasionally been convicted of taking bribes.^{88, 89}

Romania's intelligence service (Serviciul Român de Informații) is charged with managing national security. The force operates mainly within the nation, but it also operates outside Romania in cooperation with other agencies to deal with cross-border threats. The force has no prosecution authority but does monitor all threats to national security, including terrorism.⁹⁰

The National Gendarmerie (Jandarmeria Română) is a paramilitary police force. Like the National Police, the Gendarmerie reports to the Ministry of the Interior. It is mainly charged with crowd control, counterterrorism operations, assistance following natural disasters, and patrolling the mountainous regions of the nation. The force also provides security for installations such as nuclear power plants, embassies, and courts.^{91, 92}

The Poliția Comunitară is a force of local police officers that enforces local laws. This group reports to mayors and councils. When needed, the Poliția Comunitară assists the National Police and Gendarmerie in the maintenance of national order.^{93, 94}

Romania maintains a Border Police force (Poliției de Frontieră) charged with patrolling and protecting Romania's land borders and the Black Sea coast. Formerly regarded as highly unprofessional and corrupt, the force has improved significantly in recent years, particularly since Romania joined the EU.^{95, 96}

Military

Romania has an active military with 73,350-75,000 active duty personnel supported by 80,000 additional reserve troops.^{97, 98} The forces are divided into three branches: the army, air force, and navy.⁹⁹ The military's capability has been significantly degraded following deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and ongoing budget problems.¹⁰⁰ Much of the military equipment is obsolete or in disrepair. Romania is actively modernizing and increasing procurement, but a lack of funds has forced the postponement of some programs.^{101, 102} In 2007 Romania ended its military draft and all military service is now voluntary in peacetime. In times of war, military service is compulsory.¹⁰³ To enlist in the services, applicants must be at least 18 years old. Initial enlistments in all branches of the service are 5 years and reenlistment periods are 3 years in length.¹⁰⁴



*Romanian soldiers during training
Wikimedia / Catalin Ovrei*

Romanian Army



*Romanian Land Forces on a Patrol mission in Afghanistan
Wikimedia / Tico189*

The largest of the forces is the Romanian Army, which has roughly 55,000 active duty soldiers and an additional 15,000 reserves.¹⁰⁵ Romania's land forces are further divided into several other units including the infantry, artillery, and mountain infantry.¹⁰⁶ Combat readiness and force sustainment are problematic. About 150 Romanian troops are available and able to deploy on short notice. Other soldiers are available for deployment as part of the NATO Response Forces (NRF).

These Romanian troops come from the 2nd Mountain Infantry Brigade and the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade.¹⁰⁷ Army units in the eastern section of the country are the most poorly supplied and the least combat ready. Professionalism in the army is enhanced by training with NATO forces. Officers and NCOs attend training in the United States and other NATO countries.¹⁰⁸

Romanian Air Force



Romanian F-16 at Fetesti Air Base
Wikimedia / VictorCozmei

The Romanian Air Force has a troop strength of approximately 9,700 with a reserve force of 2,500.¹⁰⁹ The Air Force capability is severely compromised by a lack of combat aircraft.¹¹⁰ It has only 111 fixed wing craft: 16 fighter/interceptor planes, and 16 fixed wing attack aircraft.¹¹¹ Adaptability and sustainment are problematic. To date, the Air Force has shown an inability to adapt to change, largely due to economic shortfalls. Low pay and poor incentives make it difficult to recruit and retain

highly skilled pilots and mechanics. Young Romanians generally hold a negative view of military service. The officer corps consists largely of ethnic Romanians, although all ethnic groups are allowed to serve. Morale in the Air Force, although generally good, has been declining in recent years. Several factors have negatively affected morale, including a 25% cut in officer pay and deteriorating levels of professionalism.¹¹²

Romanian Navy

The Romanian Navy has roughly 7,000 active duty sailors and marines and 2,500 reserves.¹¹³ As is the case in the other branches of the armed forces, budget cuts have reduced the effectiveness of the naval forces.¹¹⁴ The Navy has a total of 48 vessels including 3 frigates, 7 corvettes, 25 coastal defense craft, and 5 mine warfare ships.¹¹⁵ ¹¹⁶ General readiness is low, although the frigates are generally manned and regularly



'Ion C. Brătianu' (F-46) of the Mihail Kogălniceanu river patrol
Wikimedia / Ștefan Ciocan

maintained. Morale is usually high, especially in Marine Battalion 307, a separate light infantry command unit. Low pay and a negative view of military service have made it hard to recruit and maintain qualified and skilled personnel. Levels of professionalism in the naval forces are high and widely acknowledged by others, including NATO.¹¹⁷

Issues Affecting Stability

Romania is rated as facing moderate political risk because of several factors.^{118, 119, 120} One of the most destabilizing risks is political corruption. Romania has one of the highest levels of corruption in Europe.¹²¹ The nation has implemented a major anticorruption campaign that has extended to all levels of government. Many prominent figures and high-ranking political officials have been implicated, including the prime minister.^{122, 123, 124} Although the country's National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) has investigated thousands of cases, resulting in 1,138 individuals being sent to prison, it has not been enough to cool public outrage.¹²⁵ In 2015, one protest brought thousands of demonstrators to the streets of Bucharest and forced the resignation of the Prime Minister, Victor Ponta.¹²⁶



February 2017 Romanian protests
Wikimedia / Babu

During the first week of February 2017, Romania experienced the largest mass protests since 1989 over an executive order that was proposed by the new governing coalition, headed by the newly elected Prime Minister, Sorin Grindeanu. The decree would have stopped some investigations of corruption; freed officials imprisoned for corruption and weakened penalties for corruption. The decree was criticized by the president of the EU commission. The embassies of the U.S., Canada, and Germany also responded to the decree unfavorably.¹²⁷ On 8 February 2017, the government survived a no confidence vote, and, eventually, withdrew the decree and sent it to parliament for approval.¹²⁸

Another issue is the rise of crime and organized criminal units in Romania. Organized criminals are involved in drug smuggling, cybercrime, human trafficking, financial crime, and counterfeiting. Smuggling and counterfeiting pose a particular risk to economic recovery and growth.¹²⁹ Economic concerns have the potential to spark large public demonstrations, as has occurred in the past.^{130, 131, 132}

Outlook

Romania is Europe's second poorest nation. Its economic future seems somewhat uncertain, due to the mass exit of Romanians from their country. Romania's population has decreased by 4.5% between 2011 and 2015 (2.5 million people have left the country). Only Syria surpasses the migration rate of Romania. The brain drain is creating a severe talent shortage for employers who cannot fill positions that require highly skilled workers.



*The session room of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania
Wikimedia / DAPP*

Two key weaknesses that affect the economy are government instability and corruption. The country's inability to curb corruption keeps foreign investments at bay and hinders the government ability to invest in long term projects. The large protests over the controversial anticorruption decree might further deprive the country of much needed investments.

However, the economic landscape is showing some encouraging signs, with 4.7% growth rate in the last quarter of 2016, and a prediction of 3.7% expansion in 2017. Low unemployment (6.8%) and strong industrial activity contribute to the current economic growth.¹³³

Tax reform policies and wage raises helped increase consumption and fueled GDP growth. Policy reforms packages that can attract skilled Romanians back to Romania would contribute to the economic recovery.¹³⁴

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Romania in Perspective

Chapter 5 | Security

Assessment

1. The priority of the recently elected Romanian president appears to be domestic issues.
2. Romania has been a reluctant supporter of U.S. military efforts and presence in the Balkan region.
3. Romania has long enjoyed warm relations with Bulgaria.
4. Romania is a significant trading partner with Moldova.
5. Romania's national police force is highly professional and one of the country's most respected institutions.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False

Romania in Perspective

Further Readings and Resources

Books

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Romania in Perspective

Final Assessment

1. Romania is one of the most flood-prone nations in Europe.
2. Romania has only one city with a population that exceeds a million.
3. Most of Romania's rivers are dammed to provide the nation with hydroelectric power.
4. Romania's highest mountains are in the western Carpathians.
5. Other than its rivers and lakes, Romania has few natural resources.
6. The three regions of Romania first united in 1881 when it became the Kingdom of Romania.
7. In World War I, Romania fought on the side of the Allied Powers.
8. Romanian president, Nicolae Ceaușescu, was an avid Stalinist closely aligned with the Soviet Union.
9. Romania is a member of NATO.

10. The Iron Guard was an extremist left-wing movement that fought to strengthen communism in Romania after the end of World War II.
11. Romania's fishing subsector is growing.
12. Slightly more than one-quarter of Romanians are employed in the industrial sector.
13. Romania has an export-driven economy that has led to a positive trade balance.
14. Approximately 70% of rural Romanians live in poverty.
15. The majority of Romanians live in apartments, most of which were built during the Soviet era.
16. Romanians are a reclusive people who are suspicious of strangers.
17. Catholicism is the national religion of Romania.
18. The traditional male clothing in Romania was white.
19. Romanian folk arts include woodworking and weaving.
20. Romania's most popular sport is gymnastics.

21. As part of his foreign policy agenda, President Iohannis is focusing on building stronger economic ties.
22. Relations with Serbia have generally been unfriendly.
23. Concerns over the Hungarian minority in Romania has caused frequent problems with Hungary and complicated political relations.
24. One of the greatest risks to political stability in Romania is corruption.
25. Romania's armed forces are highly modernized and well equipped.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. False; 6. False; 7. True; 8. False; 9. True; 10. False; 11. False; 12. True; 13. False; 14. True; 15. False; 16. False; 17. False; 18. True; 19. True; 20. False; 21. True; 22. False; 23. True; 24. True; 25. False;