

About Romania

Romania ([Romanian](#): *România*, [IPA](#): [ro.mɨˈni.a]) is a country in Southeastern [Europe](#) sited in a historic region that dates back to [antiquity](#). It shares border with [Hungary](#) and [Serbia](#) to the west, [Ukraine](#) and the [Republic of Moldova](#) to the northeast, and [Bulgaria](#) to the south. Romania has a stretch of sea coast along the [Black Sea](#). It is located roughly in the lower basin of the [Danube](#) and almost all of the [Danube Delta](#) is located within its territory.

Romania is a [parliamentary unitary state](#). As a nation-state, the country was formed by the merging of [Moldavia](#) and [Wallachia](#) in 1859 and it gained recognition of its [independence](#) in [1878](#). Later, in 1918, they were joined by [Transylvania](#), [Bukovina](#) and [Bessarabia](#). At the end of [World War II](#), parts of its territories (roughly the present day [Moldova](#)) were occupied by [USSR](#) and Romania became a member of [Warsaw Pact](#). With the fall of the [Iron Curtain](#) in [1989](#), Romania started a series of political and economic reforms that peaked with Romania joining the [European Union](#).

Romania has been a member of the [European Union](#) since [January 1, 2007](#), and has the [ninth largest territory](#) in the EU and with 22 million people ^[1] it has the [7th largest population](#) among the EU member states. Its capital and largest city is [Bucharest](#) ([Romanian](#): *București* /ˈbu.kuˈreft/ (help·info)), [the sixth largest city in the EU](#) with almost 2 million people. In 2007, [Sibiu](#), a large city in Transylvania, was chosen as [European Capital of Culture](#).^[2] Romania joined [NATO](#) on [March 29, 2004](#), and is also a member of the [Latin Union](#), of the [Francophonie](#) and of [OSCE](#).

Etymology

Main article: [Etymology of Romania](#)

The name of *Romania* (*România*) comes from *Român* (Romanian) which is a derivative of the word *Romanus* ("**Roman**") from **Latin**. The fact that Romanians call themselves a derivative of *Romanus* (**Romanian**: *Român/Rumân*) is mentioned as early as the 16th century by many authors among whom were **Italian** Humanists travelling in **Transylvania**, **Moldavia** and **Wallachia**.^[3] ^[4] ^[5] ^[6] The oldest surviving document written in the **Romanian language** is a 1521 letter (known as "**Neacșu's Letter**"^[7] from **Câmpulung**) which notifies the mayor of **Brașov** about the imminent attack of the **Ottoman Turks**. This document is also notable for having the first occurrence of "Rumanian" in a Romanian written text, **Wallachia** being here named The Rumanian Land - *Țeara Rumânească* (*Țeara* (Latin *Terra* = land). In the following centuries, Romanian documents use interchangeably two spelling forms: *Român* and *Rumân*.^[8] Socio-linguistic evolutions in the late 17th century lead to a process of semantic differentiation: the form "*rumân*", presumably usual among lower classes, got the meaning of "bondsman", while the form "*român*" kept an ethno-linguistic meaning.^[9] After the abolition of serfdom in 1746, the form "rumân" gradually disappears and the spelling definitively stabilises to the form "*român*", "*românesc*".^[10] The name "**România**" as common homeland of all Romanians is documented in the early 19th century.^[11]

History

Main article: [History of Romania](#)



Outline of the [Dacian](#) Kingdom at its greatest extent

Prehistory and Antiquity

Main articles: [Prehistoric Romania](#) and [Dacia](#), and [Roman Dacia](#)

In 2002, the oldest modern human ([Homo sapiens sapiens](#)) remains in Europe were discovered in the "Cave With Bones" (*Peștera cu Oase*) near [Anina](#) in present day Romania.^[12] The remains (the lower jaw) are approximately 42,000 years old and have been nicknamed "[John of Anina](#)" (*Ion din Anina*). As Europe's oldest remains of [Homo sapiens](#), they may represent the first such people to have entered the continent.^[13] The remains are especially interesting because they present a mixture of archaic, early modern human and Neanderthal morphological features.^{[14] [15] [16] [17]}



[Dacian wars](#) depicted on [Trajan's column](#)

The earliest written evidence of people living in the territory of the present-day Romania comes from [Herodotus](#) in 513 BC.^[18] In one of his books, he writes that the tribal confederation of the [Getae](#) were defeated by the [Persian](#) Emperor [Darius the Great](#) during his campaign against the [Scythians](#).^[19]

[Dacians](#) (Lat. *Daci*, Gr. *Dákai*) are a branch of [Thracians](#) that inhabited [Dacia](#) (corresponding to modern Romania and [Moldova](#)) and parts of [Moesia](#) (mostly in northern [Bulgaria](#)) in southeastern [Europe](#)). The Dacian kingdom reached its maximum expansion during King [Burebista](#). The region came under the scrutiny of [Rome](#) when the Roman province, bordering along the Danube, [Moesia](#), was attacked by the Dacians in 87 AD during Emperor [Domitian's](#) reign. The Dacians were eventually defeated by the [Roman](#)

[Empire](#) under Emperor [Trajan](#) in [two campaigns](#) stretching from 101 AD to 106 AD,^[20] and the core of their kingdom was turned into the [Roman province](#) of [Dacia](#).



Roman Dacia

Because the province was rich in ores, and especially silver and gold,^[21] the Romans heavily colonized the province,^[22] brought with them the [Vulgar Latin](#) and started a period of intense [romanization](#) (giving birth to proto-[Romanian](#)).^[23]^[24] But in the 3rd century AD, with the invasions of migratory populations such as [Goths](#), the [Roman Empire](#) was forced to pull out of [Dacia](#) in 270 AD, thus making it the first province to be abandoned.^[25]^[26]

Middle Ages

Main articles: [Romania in the Early Middle Ages](#) and [Romania in the Middle Ages](#)

In either 271 or 275 the Roman army and administration left Dacia, which was invaded by the [Goths](#)^[27]. The Goths lived with the local people until the 4th century, when another nomadic people, the [Huns](#), arrived.^[28] The [Gepids](#)^[29]^[30] and the [Avars](#) and their Slavic subjects^[31] ruled [Transylvania](#) until the 8th century. It was then invaded by [Bulgarians](#)^[32], thereafter being incorporated into the [First Bulgarian Empire](#) (marking the end of Romania's dark age) where it remained a part until the 11th century. The [Pechenegs](#),^[33] the [Cumans](#)^[34] and [Uzes](#) were also mentioned by historic chronicles on the territory of Romania, until the founding of the Romanian principalities of [Wallachia](#) by [Basarab I](#) around 1310 in the [High Middle Ages](#),^[35] and [Moldavia](#) by [Dragoș](#) around 1352.^[36]



The city of [Sighisoara](#) first attested in the 12th century, is nowadays famous for its Medieval Festival

Several competing theories have been generated to explain the [origin of modern Romanians](#). Linguistic and geo-historical analyses tend to indicate that [Romanians](#) have

coalesced as a major ethnic group both South and North of the [Danube](#).^[37] For further discussion, see [Origin of Romanians](#).

In the [Middle Ages](#), Romanians lived in three distinct principalities: [Wallachia](#) ([Romanian](#): *Țara Românească* - "Romanian Land"), [Moldavia](#) ([Romanian](#): *Moldova*) and [Transylvania](#). Transylvania was part of the [Kingdom of Hungary](#) from the 10-11th century until the 16th century,^[38] when it became the independent [Principality of Transylvania](#)^[39] until 1711.^[40]



[Bran Castle](#) built in 1212, is commonly known as **Dracula's Castle** and is situated in the centre of present-day Romania. In addition to its unique [architecture](#), the [castle](#) is famous because of persistent myths that it was once the home of [Vlad III Dracula](#).

Independent [Wallachia](#) has been on the border of the [Ottoman Empire](#) since the 14th century and slowly fell under the [suzerainty](#) of the [Ottoman Empire](#) during 15th. One famous ruler in this period was [Vlad III the Impaler](#) (also known as [Vlad Dracula](#) or *Vlad Țepeș*, [IPA](#): [ˈtsepeʃ]), [Prince](#) of [Wallachia](#) in 1448, 1456–62, and 1476.^[41] ^[42] In the [English](#)-speaking world, Vlad is best known for the legends of the exceedingly cruel punishments he imposed during his reign and for serving as the primary inspiration for the [vampire main character](#) in [Bram Stoker's](#) popular *[Dracula \(1897\)](#)* novel. As king, he maintained an independent policy in relation to the [Ottoman Empire](#), and in Romania he is viewed by many as a prince with a deep sense of justice^[43] and a defender of both Wallachia and European [Christianity](#) against [Ottoman expansionism](#).



[Voroneț Monastery](#) built in 1488 by [Stephen III of Moldavia](#) ([Stephen the Great](#)) after his victory at the [Battle of Vaslui](#).

The principality of [Moldavia](#) reached its most glorious period under the rule of [Stephen the Great](#) between 1457 and 1504.^[44] His rule of 47 years was unusually long, especially at that time - only [13 rulers](#) were recorded to have ruled for at least 50 years until the end of 15th century. He was a very successful military leader (winning 47 battles and losing only 2^[45]), and after each victory, he raised a church, managing to build 48 churches or monasteries,^[46] some of them with unique and very interesting painting styles. For more information see [Painted churches of northern Moldavia](#) listed in [UNESCO's](#) list of [World Heritage Sites](#). Stephen's most prestigious victory was over the [Ottoman Empire](#) in 1475 at the [Battle of Vaslui](#) for which he raised the [Voroneț Monastery](#). For this victory, [Pope](#)

[Sixtus IV](#) deemed him *verus christianae fidei athleta* (*true Champion of Christian Faith*). However, after his death, [Moldavia](#) would also come under the [suzerainty](#) of the [Ottoman Empire](#) in the 16th century.

[Michael the Brave](#) (Romanian: Mihai Viteazul) was the [Prince of Wallachia](#) (1593-1601), of [Transylvania](#) (1599-1600), and of [Moldavia](#) (1600). Briefly, during his reign the three principalities largely inhabited by Romanians were for the first time united under a single rule.^[47] After his death, as vassal tributary states, [Moldova](#) and [Wallachia](#) had complete internal autonomy and an external independence, which was finally lost in the 18th century.



Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania at the end of the XVIIth century

Independence and Kingdom

Main articles: [Early Modern Romania](#), [National awakening of Romania](#), [Romanian War of Independence](#), and [Kingdom of Romania](#)

During the period of [Austro-Hungarian](#) rule in [Transylvania](#), and [Ottoman](#) suzerainty over [Wallachia](#) and [Moldavia](#), most [Romanians](#) were in the situation of being [second-class citizens](#) (or even non-citizens)^[48] in a territory where they were forming the majority of the population.^[49] ^[50] In some Transylvanian cities, such as [Braşov](#) (at that time the [Transylvanian Saxon](#) citadel of Kronstadt), Romanians were [not even allowed](#) to reside within the city walls.^[51]

After the failed [1848 Revolution](#), the [Great Powers](#) did not support the Romanians' expressed desire to officially unite in a single state, forcing Romania to proceed alone against the Turks. The electors in both [Moldavia](#) and [Wallachia](#) chose in 1859 the same person – [Alexandru Ioan Cuza](#) – as [prince](#) (*Domnitor* in [Romanian](#)).^[52] Thus, Romania was created as a personal union, albeit a Romania that did not include Transylvania, where Romanian nationalism inevitably ran up against Hungarian nationalism. For some time yet, Austria-Hungary, especially under the [Dual Monarchy](#) of 1867, would keep the Hungarians firmly in control, even in parts of Transylvania where Romanians constituted a local majority.



The [Palace of Culture](#) in [Iași](#) was built in 1925 and hosts several museums

Via a 1866 *coup d'etat*, [Cuza](#) was exiled and replaced by Prince Karl of [Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen](#), who became known as [Prince Carol of Romania](#). During the [Russo-Turkish War](#), Romania fought on the Russian side;^[53] in the 1878 [Treaty of Berlin](#),^[54] Romania was recognized as an [independent](#) state by the [Great Powers](#).^[55] In return, Romania ceded three southern districts of [Bessarabia](#) to [Russia](#) and acquired [Dobruja](#). In 1881, the [principality](#) was raised to a [kingdom](#) and Prince Carol became [King Carol I](#).

The 1878-1914 period was one of [stability and progress](#) for Romania. During the [Second Balkan War](#), Romania joined [Greece](#), [Serbia](#), [Montenegro](#) and [Turkey](#) against [Bulgaria](#). In the peace [Treaty of Bucharest \(1913\)](#) Romania gained [Southern Dobrudja](#) - the [Quadrilateral](#) (the Durostor and Caliacra counties).^[56]



[Peleş Castle](#), retreat of Romanian monarchs

World Wars and Greater Romania

Main articles: [Romanian Campaign \(World War I\)](#), [Greater Romania](#), and [Romania during World War II](#)

In August 1914, when [World War I](#) broke out, Romania declared [neutrality](#). Two years later, under the pressure of Allies (especially [France](#) desperate to open a new front), on August 14/27 1916 it joined the Allies, for which they were promised support for the accomplishment of national unity, Romania declared war on [Austria-Hungary](#).^[57]

The [Romanian military campaign](#) ended in disaster for Romania as the [Central Powers](#) conquered two-thirds of the country and captured or killed the majority of its [army](#) within four months. Nevertheless, [Moldova](#) remained in Romanian hands after the invading forces were stopped in 1917 and since by the war's end, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire had collapsed, [Bessarabia](#), [Bukovina](#) and [Transylvania](#) were allowed to unite with the [Kingdom of Romania](#) in 1918. By the 1920 [Treaty of Trianon](#), [Hungary](#) renounced in

favour of Romania all the claims of the [Austro-Hungarian Monarchy](#) over [Transylvania](#). The union of [Bucovina](#) and [Bessarabia](#) with Romania was ratified in 1920 by the [Treaty of Versailles](#).

The Romanian expression [România Mare](#) (literal translation "Great Romania", but more commonly rendered "Greater Romania") generally refers to the Romanian state in the years between the First and Second World Wars and, by extension, to the territory Romania covered at the time (see the map). Romania achieved at that time its greatest territorial extent, managing to unite all the historic Romanian lands.



Romanian territory during the 20th century: purple indicates the Old Kingdom before 1913, orange indicates Greater Romania areas that joined or were annexed after the [Second Balkan War](#) and [WWI](#) but were lost after [WWII](#), and rose indicates areas that joined Romania after WWI and remained so after WWII.

During the Second World War, Romania tried again to remain neutral but in 1940, it received a [Soviet ultimatum](#) in which it agreed to cede [Northern Bukovina](#) and Bessarabia to the [Soviet Union](#). This, in combination with other factors, prompted the government to join the [Axis](#). Thereafter, southern [Dobruja](#) was awarded to Bulgaria, while Hungary received [Northern Transylvania](#) as result of an [Axis](#) arbitration. The authoritarian [King Carol II abdicated](#) in 1940, succeeded by the [National Legionary State](#), in which power was shared by [Ion Antonescu](#) and the [Iron Guard](#). Within months, Antonescu had crushed the [Iron Guard](#), and the subsequent year Romania entered the war on the side of the [Axis powers](#). During the war, Romania was by far the most important source of oil for [Nazi Germany](#), which attracted multiple bombing raids by the [Allies](#). By means of the [Axis invasion of the Soviet Union](#), Romania recovered Bessarabia and northern Bukovina from the Soviet Russia, under the leadership of general [Ion Antonescu](#). The Antonescu regime played a role in the [Holocaust](#), following to a lesser extent the [Nazi](#) policy of oppression and massacre of the [Jews](#), and [Romans](#), primarily in the Eastern territories Romania recovered or occupied from the Soviet Union ([Transnistria](#)) and in [Moldavia](#).

In August 1944, Antonescu was toppled and arrested by King [Michael I of Romania](#). Romania changed sides and joined the [Allies](#), but its role in the defeat of [Nazi Germany](#) was not recognized by the [Paris Peace Conference](#) of 1947. With the [Red Army](#) forces still stationed in the country and exerting *de facto* control, [Communists](#) and their allied parties claimed 80% of the vote, through a combination of vote manipulation,^[58] elimination and forced mergers of competing parties, establishing themselves as the dominant force.

Communist Romania

(1947-1989)

Main article: [Communist Romania](#)

In 1947, [King Michael I](#) was forced by the Communists to abdicate and leave the country, Romania was proclaimed a [republic](#), and remained under direct military and economic control of the [USSR](#) until the late 1950s. During this period, Romania's resources were drained by the "[SovRom](#)" agreements: mixed Soviet-Romanian companies established to mask the looting of Romania by the Soviet Union.^{[59][60][61]} A large number of people were arbitrarily imprisoned for political, economic or unknown reasons:^[62] detainees in prisons or camps, deported, persons under house arrest, and administrative detainees. Political prisoners were also detained as psychiatric patients, estimations vary, from 60,000,^[63] to 80,000.^[64] There were hundreds of thousands of abuses, deaths and incidents of torture against a large range of people, from political opponents to ordinary citizens.^[65] Political prisoners were freed in a series of amnesties between 1962 and 1964. In total, it is estimated that up to two million people have lost their lives directly because of the regime.^{[66][67]}

After the negotiated retreat of Soviet troops, in 1958, Romania started to pursue independent policies, including the condemnation of the Soviet-led 1968 invasion of [Czechoslovakia](#) (Romania was the only [Warsaw Pact](#) country not to take part in the invasion), the continuation of diplomatic relations with [Israel](#) after the [Six-Day War](#) of 1967 (again, the only [Warsaw Pact](#) country to do so), the establishment of economic (1963) and diplomatic (1967) relations with the [Federal Republic of Germany](#), and so forth. Also, close ties with the [Arab](#) countries (and the [PLO](#)) allowed Romania to play a key role in the [Israel-Egypt](#) and Israel-PLO peace processes (intermediated the visit of [Sadat](#) in Israel^[68]). A short-lived period of relative economic well-being and openness followed in the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. As Romania's foreign debt sharply increased between 1977 and 1981 (from 3 to 10 billion US dollars),^[69] the influence of international financial organisations such as the [IMF](#) or the [World Bank](#) grew, conflicting with [Nicolae Ceaușescu](#)'s [autarchic](#) policies. Ceaușescu eventually initiated a project of total reimbursement of the foreign debt (completed in 1989, shortly before his overthrow). To achieve this goal, he imposed policies that impoverished Romanians and exhausted the Romanian economy. He profoundly deepened Romania's [police state](#) and imposed a [cult of personality](#) which led to his overthrow and death in the bloody [Romanian Revolution of 1989](#).

Present Romania

(after 1989)

Main article: [Romania since 1989](#)

After the fall of Ceaușescu, the [National Salvation Front](#) (FSN), led by [Ion Iliescu](#), restored civil order and took partial democratic measures. Several major political parties of the pre-war era, such as the [National Christian Democrat Peasant's Party \(PNȚCD\)](#), the [National Liberal Party \(PNL\)](#) and the [Romanian Social Democrat Party \(PSDR\)](#) were resurrected. After several major political rallies (especially in January), in April 1990, a sit-in protest contesting the results of the recently held parliamentary elections began in the [University Square, Bucharest](#). The protesters accused the FSN of being made up of former Communists and members of the [Securitate](#). The protesters did not recognize the results of the election, which they deemed undemocratic, and were asking for the exclusion from the political life of the former high-ranking Communist Party members. The protest rapidly grew to become an ongoing mass demonstration (known as the [Golaniad](#)). The peaceful demonstrations degenerated into violence. After the police failed to bring the demonstrators to order, [Ion Iliescu](#) called on the "men of good will" to come and defend the Bucharest and State institutions. Coal miners of the [Jiu Valley](#) answered the call and arrived in Bucharest on June 14. Their violent intervention is remembered as the [June 1990 Mineriad](#).

The subsequent disintegration of the FSN produced several political parties including the Romanian Democrat Social Party (PDSR, later [Social Democratic Party](#), PSD), the [Democratic Party](#) (PD) and the ApR ([Alliance for Romania](#)). The PDSR party governed Romania from 1990 until 1996 through several coalitions and governments with Ion Iliescu as head of state. Since then there have been three democratic changes of government: in 1996, the democratic-liberal opposition and its leader [Emil Constantinescu](#) acceded to power; in 2000 the Social Democrats returned to power, with [Iliescu](#) once again president; and in 2004 [Traian Băsescu](#) was elected president, with an electoral coalition called [Justice and Truth Alliance](#) (DA). The government was formed by a larger coalition which also includes the [Conservative Party](#) and the [ethnic Hungarian party](#). Post-Cold War Romania developed closer ties with [Western Europe](#), eventually joining [NATO](#) in 2004. The country applied in June 1993 for membership in the [European Union](#) (EU). It became an Associated State of the EU in 1995, an Acceding Country in 2004, and a member on [January 1, 2007](#).

Geography

Main article: [Geography of Romania](#)



Topographic map of Romania.

With a surface area of 238,391 km², Romania is the largest country in [southeastern Europe](#) and the twelfth-largest in Europe. A large part of Romania's border with [Serbia](#) and [Bulgaria](#) is formed by the [Danube](#). The [Danube](#) is joined by the [Prut River](#), which forms the border with the [Republic of Moldova](#). The Danube flows into the [Black Sea](#) on Romanian territory, forming the [Danube Delta](#), the largest delta in Europe, which is currently a biosphere reserve and World Heritage-listed site due to its biodiversity. Other important rivers are the [Siret](#), running north-south through [Moldavia](#), the [Olt](#), running from the oriental Carpathian Mountains to [Oltenia](#), and the [Mureș](#), running through [Transylvania](#) from East to West.

Romania's terrain is distributed roughly equally between mountainous, hilly and lowland territories. The [Carpathian Mountains](#) dominate the center of Romania, with fourteen of its mountain ranges reaching above the altitude of 2,000 meters. The highest mountain in Romania is [Moldoveanu Peak](#) (2544 m). In south-central Romania, the Carpathians sweeten into hills, towards the [Bărăgan Plains](#). Romania's geographical diversity has led to an accompanying diversity of flora and fauna.



[Lake Bucura](#) in the [Retezat Mountains](#)

Environment

Main article: [Protected areas of Romania](#)

A high percentage of natural ecosystems (47% of the land area of the country) is covered with natural and semi-natural ecosystems. Since almost half of all forests in Romania (13% of the country) have been managed for watershed conservation rather than production, Romania has one of the largest areas of undisturbed forest in Europe. The integrity of Romanian forest ecosystems is indicated by the presence of the full range of European forest fauna, including 60% and 40% of all European brown bears and wolves, respectively.^[70] There are also almost 400 unique species of mammals (of which Carpathian [chamois](#) are best known), birds, reptiles and amphibians in Romania.^[71]

There are almost 10,000 km² (almost 5% of the total area) of protected areas in Romania.^[72] Of these, [Danube Delta Reserve Biosphere](#) is the largest and least damaged wetland complex in Europe, covering a total area of 5800 km².^[73] The significance of the biodiversity of the Danube Delta has been internationally recognised. It was declared a Biosphere Reserve in September 1990, a Ramsar site in May 1991, and over 50% of its area was placed on the [World Heritage List](#) in December 1991. Within its boundaries is one of the most extensive [reed bed](#) systems in Europe. Besides the delta, there are two more biosphera reserves: [Retezat National Park](#) and [Rodna National Park](#).

Climate



Typical landscape in the [Danube Delta](#)
Main article: [Climate of Romania](#)

Owing to its distance from the open sea, Romania has a moderate [continental climate](#). Summers are generally very warm to hot, with summer (June to August) average maxima in Bucharest being around 28 °C,^[74] with temperatures over 35 °C fairly common in the lower-lying areas of the country. Minima in Bucharest and other lower-lying areas are around 16 °C, but at higher altitudes both maxima and minima decline considerably. On the Romanian seaside the climate is slightly warmer (in annual average) and also less prone to extreme phenomena like summer heatwaves and winter severe cold spells. Winters are cold, with average maxima even in lower-lying areas being no more than 2 °C (36 °F) and below -15 °C (5 °F) in the highest mountains, where some areas of [permafrost](#) occur on the highest peaks.

Precipitations are average over 750 mm per year only on the highest western mountains - much of it falling as [snow](#) which allows for an extensive skiing industry. In the south-central parts of the country (around Bucharest) the level of precipitation drops to around 600 mm,^[75] while in the Danube Delta, rainfall levels are very low, and average only around 370 mm.

Demographics

Main article: [Demographics of Romania](#)

According to the 2002 census, Romania has a population of 22,680,974 and, similarly to other countries in the region, is expected to gently decline in the coming years as a result of [sub-replacement fertility rates](#). [Romanians](#) make up 89.5% of the population. The largest [ethnic minorities](#) are [Hungarians](#), who make up 6.6% of the population and [Roma](#), or Gypsies, who make up 2% of the population. By the official census 535,250 [Roma](#) live in Romania.^{[76][77]} Hungarians, who are a sizeable minority in [Transylvania](#), constitute a majority in the counties of [Harghita](#) and [Covasna](#). [Ukrainians](#), [Germans](#), [Lipovans](#), [Turks](#), [Tatars](#), [Serbs](#), [Slovaks](#), [Bulgarians](#), [Croats](#), [Greeks](#), [Russians](#), [Jews](#), [Czechs](#), [Poles](#), [Italians](#), [Armenians](#), as well as other ethnic groups, account for the remaining 1.4% of the population.^[78] The population density of the country as a whole has doubled since 1900 although, in contrast to other [central European](#) states, there is still considerable room for further growth. The overall density figures, however, conceal considerable regional variation. Population densities are naturally highest in the towns, with the plains (up to altitudes of some 700 ft) having the next highest density, especially in areas with intensive agriculture or a traditionally high birth rate (e.g., northern [Moldavia](#) and the “contact” zone with the [Subcarpathians](#)); areas at altitudes of 700 to 2,000 feet (600 m), rich in mineral resources, [orchards](#), [vineyards](#), and [pastures](#), support the lowest densities. The number of Romanians and individuals with ancestors born in Romania living abroad is estimated at around 12 million.

The official language of Romania is [Romanian](#), an [Eastern Romance language](#) related to [Italian](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Catalan](#). Romanian is spoken as a first language by 91% of the population, with [Hungarian](#) and [Romani](#) being the most important minority languages, spoken by 6.7% and 1.1% of the population, respectively.^[78] Until the 1990s, there was also a substantial number of German-speaking [Transylvanian Saxons](#), even though many have since emigrated to Germany, leaving only 45,000 native German speakers in Romania. In localities where a given ethnic minority makes up more than 20% of the population, that minority's language can be used in the public administration and justice system, while native-language education and signage is also provided. [English](#) and [French](#) are the main foreign languages taught in schools. English is spoken by 5 million Romanians, French is spoken by 4-5 million, and German, Italian and Spanish are each spoken by 1-2 million people.^[79] Historically, French was the predominant foreign language spoken in Romania, even though English has since superseded it. Consequently, Romanian English-speakers tend to be younger than Romanian French-speakers. Romania is, however, a full member of [La Francophonie](#), and hosted the Francophonie Summit in 2006. German has been taught predominantly in Transylvania, due to traditions tracing back to the Austro-Hungarian rule in this province.



[Timișoara Orthodox Cathedral](#)

Religion



[Putna Monastery](#), the burial site of [Stephen the Great](#) is now a famous pilgrimage place

Main articles: [Religion in Romania](#) and [Romanian Orthodox Church](#)

Romania is a [secular state](#), thus having no [national religion](#). The dominant religious body is the [Romanian Orthodox Church](#); its members make up 86.7% of the population according to the 2002 census. Other important religions include [Roman Catholicism](#) (4.7%), [Protestantism](#) (3.7%), [Pentecostal](#) denominations (1.5%) and the [Romanian Greek-Catholic Church](#) (0.9%).^[78] Romania also has a historically significant [Muslim](#) minority concentrated in [Dobrogea](#), who are mostly of Turkish ethnicity and number 67,500 people.^[80] Based on the 2002 census data, there are also 6,179 [Jews](#), 23,105 people who are of no religion and/or [atheist](#), and 11,734 who refused to answer. On December 27, 2006, a new Law on Religion was approved under which religious denominations can only receive official registration if they have at least 20,000 members, or about 0.1 percent of Romania's total population.^[81]

Largest cities

Main article: [List of cities in Romania](#)

[Bucharest](#) is the capital and the largest city in Romania. At the census in 2002, its population was over 1.9 million.^[82] The [metropolitan area](#) of [Bucharest](#) has a population of about 2.2 million. There are several plans the further increase its metropolitan area to about 20 times the area of the [city proper](#).^{[83][84]}

There are 4 more cities in Romania, with a population of around 310,000 that are also present in [EU top 100 most populous cities](#). These are: [Cluj-Napoca](#), [Timișoara](#), [Constanța](#)

and [Iași](#). Other cities with a population of at least 200,000 people are [Craiova](#), [Galati](#), [Brașov](#), [Ploiești](#), [Brăila](#) and [Oradea](#). There are 25 cities with a population of at least 100,000. Until now, several of the largest cities have a [metropolitan area](#): [Constanta](#) (550,000 people), [Brașov](#), [Iași](#) (both with around 400,000) and [Oradea](#) (260,000) and several others are planned: [Timișoara](#) (400,000), [Cluj-Napoca](#) (400,000), [Galati-Braila](#) (600,000), [Craiova](#) (370,000), [Bacau](#) and [Ploiești](#).^[85]

Education



[University of Bucharest](#)

Main article: [Romanian Educational System](#)

Since the [Romanian Revolution of 1989](#), the Romanian education system has been in a continuous process of [reformation](#) that has been both praised and criticised. According to the Law on Education adopted in 1995, the Educational System is regulated by the [Ministry of Education and Research](#). Each level has its own form of organization and is subject to different legislations. [Kindergarten](#) is optional between 3 and 6 years old. [Schooling](#) starts at age 7 (sometimes 6), and is compulsory until the 10th grade (which usually corresponds to the age of 17 or 16). [Primary](#) and [secondary](#) education are divided in 12 or 13 grades. [Higher education](#) is aligned onto the [European higher education area](#).

Aside from the official schooling system, and the recently-added private equivalents, there exists a semi-legal, informal, fully [private tutoring](#) system (*meditații*). Tutoring is mostly used during [secondary](#) as a preparation for the various examinations, which are notoriously difficult. Tutoring is wide-spread, and it can be considered a part of the Education System. It has subsisted and even prospered during the Communist regime.

In 2004, some 4.4 million of the population was enrolled in school. Out of these, 650,000 in kindergarde, 3.11 million (14% of population) in primary and secondary level, and 650,000 (3% of population) in tertiary level (universities).^[86] In the same year, the adult literacy rate was 97,3% (45th worldwide), while the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools was 75% (52nd worldwide).^[87] The results of the [PISA](#) assesment study in schools for the year 2000 placed Romania on the 34th rank out of 42 participant countries with a general weighted score of 432 representing 85% of the mean [OECD](#) score.^[88] According to the [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#), in 2006 no Romanian university was included in the first 500 top universities world wide.^[89] Using similar methodology to these rankings, it was reported that the best placed Romanian university, [Bucharest University](#), attained the half score of the last university in the world top 500.^[90]

Economy

Main article: [Economy of Romania](#)

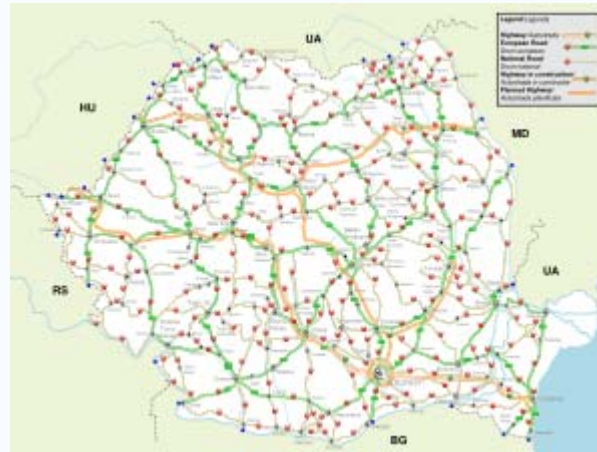


[Tower Center International](#) in Bucharest is the tallest building in Romania

With a [GDP per capita \(PPP\)](#) of \$10,661^[91] estimated for 2007, Romania is considered an upper-middle income economy^[92] and has been part of the [European Union](#) since [January 1, 2007](#). After the [Communist regime](#) was [overthrown in late 1989](#), the country experienced a decade of economic instability and decline, led in part by an obsolete industrial base and a lack of structural reform. From 2000 onwards, however, the Romanian economy was transformed into one of relative [macroeconomic](#) stability, characterised by high growth, low [unemployment](#) and declining [inflation](#). In 2006, according to the [Romanian Statistics Office](#), GDP growth in real terms was recorded at 7.7%, one of the highest rates in Europe.^[93] Unemployment in Romania was at 3.9% in September 2007^[94] which is very low compared to other middle-sized or large European countries such as [Poland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#) and [Spain](#). Foreign debt is also comparatively low, at 20.3% of GDP.^[95] Exports have increased substantially in the past few years, with a 25% year-on-year rise in exports in the first quarter of 2006. Romania's main exports are clothing and textiles, industrial machinery, electrical and electronic equipment, metallurgic products, raw materials, cars, military equipment, software, pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, and agricultural products (fruits, vegetables, and flowers). Trade is mostly centred on the member states of the European Union, with [Germany](#) and [Italy](#) being the country's single largest trading partners. The country, however, maintains a large trade deficit, importing 37% more goods than it exports.

After a series of privatisations and reforms in the late 1990s and early 2000s, government intervention in the Romanian economy is somewhat lower than in other European economies.^[96] In 2005, the government replaced Romania's [progressive tax](#) system with a [flat tax](#) of 16% for both personal income and corporate profit, resulting in the country having the lowest fiscal burden in the European Union,^[97] a factor which has contributed to the growth of the private sector. The economy is predominantly based on services, which account for 55% of GDP, even though industry and agriculture also have significant contributions, making up 35% and 10% of GDP, respectively. Additionally, 32% of the Romanian population is employed in agriculture and primary production, one of the highest rates in Europe.^[95] Since 2000, Romania has attracted increasing amounts of foreign investment, becoming the single largest investment destination in Southeastern and Central Europe. [Foreign direct investment](#) was valued at €8.3 billion in 2006.^[98] According to a 2006 [World Bank](#) report, Romania currently ranks 49th out of 175 economies in the ease of doing business, scoring higher than other countries in the region such as [Hungary](#), [Poland](#) and the [Czech Republic](#).^[99] Additionally, the same study judged it to be the world's second-fastest economic reformer in 2006.^[100] The average gross wage per month in Romania is

1411 lei as of September 2007,^[101] equating to €403.3 (US\$597.3) based on international exchange rates, and \$1001.1 based on purchasing power parity.^[102] The percentage of computers connected to the internet in the country reaches almost 70% and more than 50% have broadband connections reaching a 4 Mbit/s (megabits per sec) average. From this aspect, Romania is the 10th country in the world with a bigger percentage of people connected to the internet than the USA.^[103]



[Romania's Road Network](#)

Transportation

Main article: [Transport in Romania](#)

Due to its location, Romania is a major crossroad for international economic exchange in [Europe](#). However, because of insufficient investment, maintenance and repair, the transport infrastructure does not meet the current needs of a [market economy](#) and lags behind [Western Europe](#). Nevertheless, these conditions are rapidly improving and catching up with the standards of [Trans-European transport networks](#). Several projects have been started with funding from grants from [ISPA](#) and several loans from [International Financial Institutions](#) ([World Bank](#), [IMF](#), etc.) guaranteed by the state, to upgrade the [main road corridors](#). Also, the Government is actively pursuing new external financing or public-private partnerships to further upgrade the main roads, and especially the country's [motorway network](#).

[World Bank](#) estimates that the railway network in Romania comprised in 2004 22,298 km of track, which would make it the fourth largest railroad network in Europe.^[104] The [railway transport](#) experienced a dramatic fall in freight and passenger volumes from the peak volumes recorded in 1989 mainly due to the decline in GDP and competition from road transport. In 2004, the railways carried 8.64 billion passenger-km in 99 million passenger journeys, and 73 million metric tones, or 17 billion ton-km of freight.^[105] The combined total transportation by rail constituted around 45% of all passenger and freight movement in the country.

[Bucharest](#) is the only city in Romania which has an [underground](#) railway system. The [Bucharest Metro](#) was only opened in 1979. Now is one of the most accessed systems of the [Bucharest public transport network](#) with an average ridership of 600,000^[106] passengers during the workweek.

Tourism

Main article: [Tourism in Romania](#)



The official logo of **Romania**, used to promote the tourist attractions in the country

Tourism focuses on the country's natural landscapes and its rich history and is a significant contributor to the Romania's economy. In 2006, the domestic and international [tourism](#) generated about 4.8% of gross domestic product and 5.8% of the total jobs (about half a million jobs).^[107] Following commerce, tourism is the second largest component of the services sector. Tourism is one of the most dynamic and fastest developing sectors of the economy of Romania and characterized by a huge potential for development. According to the [World Travel and Tourism Council](#) Romania is the fourth fastest growing country in the world in terms of travel and tourism total demand with a yearly potential growth of 8% from 2007-2016.^[108] Number of tourists grew from 4.8 million in 2002 to 6.6 million in 2004. Similarly, the revenues grew from 400 million in 2002 to 607 in 2004.^[109] In 2006, Romania registered 20 million overnight stays by international tourists, an all-time record,^[110] but the number for 2007 is expected to increase even more.^[111] Tourism in Romania attracted €400 million in investments in 2005.^[112]



[Mamaia](#), at the [Black Sea](#) shore

Over the last years, Romania has emerged as a popular tourist destination for many Europeans (more than 60% of the foreign visitors were from EU countries^[113]), thus attempting to compete with [Bulgaria](#), [Greece](#), [Italy](#) and [Spain](#). Romania destinations such as [Mangalia](#), [Saturn](#), [Venus](#), [Neptun](#), [Olimp](#), [Constanta](#) and [Mamaia](#) (sometimes called the [Romanian Riviera](#)) and are among the most popular attraction during summer. During winter the skiing resorts along the [Valea Prahovei](#) and [Poiana Braşov](#) are booming with visitors. Several cities in [Transylvania](#), such as: [Sibiu](#), [Braşov](#), [Sighişoara](#), [Cluj-Napoca](#) and several others have become important touristic attractions for foreign tourists. Attractions include medieval their [medieval castles](#). Rural tourism with its folklore and traditions has become a major part for the authorities in order to promote such sites as [Bran](#) with its [Dracula's Castle](#), the [Painted churches of Northern Moldavia](#), the [Wooden churches of Maramureş](#) and the [Merry Cemetery](#) in [Maramureş County](#). Natural attractions include: [Danube Delta](#), [Iron Gates](#) ([Danube Gorge](#)), [Scărişoara Cave](#) and several other caves in the [Apuseni Mountains](#).



Medieval city of [Sibiu](#), [European Capital of Culture in 2007](#)

Culture

Main articles: [Culture of Romania](#), [Folklore of Romania](#), and [Romanian cuisine](#)

The **culture of Romania** is rich and varied. Like Romanians themselves, it is fundamentally defined as the meeting point of three regions: [Central Europe](#), [Eastern Europe](#), and the [Balkans](#), but cannot be truly included in any of them. The Romanian identity formed on a substratum of mixed [Roman](#) and quite possibly [Dacian](#) elements (although the latter is controversial), with many other influences. During late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the major influences came from the [Slavic peoples](#) who migrated and settled in nearby [Bulgaria](#), [Serbia](#), [Ukraine](#) and eventually [Russia](#); from medieval [Greeks](#) and the [Byzantine Empire](#); from a long domination by the [Ottoman Empire](#); from the [Hungarians](#); and from the [Germans](#) living in Transylvania. Modern Romanian culture emerged and developed over roughly the last 250 years under a strong influence from [Western culture](#), particularly [French](#) and [German](#) culture.

Arts

Main articles: [Literature of Romania](#), [Music of Romania](#), and [List of Romanian Artists](#)



[Mihai Eminescu](#), [national poet](#) of Romania and [Moldova](#)

The older classics of Romanian literature remain very little known outside Romania. [Mihai Eminescu](#), a famous 19th century Romanian poet is still very much loved in Romania (especially his [poems](#)), along with several other classics like [George Coșbuc](#) and [Ioan Slavici](#). [The revolutionary year 1848](#) had its echoes in the Romanian principalities and in Transylvania, and a new elite from the middle of the 19th century emerged from the revolutions: [Mihail Kogălniceanu](#) (writer, politician and the first prime minister of

Romania), [Vasile Alecsandri](#) (politician, playwright and poet), [Andrei Mureșanu](#) (publicist and the writer of the current [Romanian National Anthem](#)) and [Nicolae Bălcescu](#) (historian, writer and revolutionary). Other classic Romanian writers whose works are still widely read in their native country are playwright [Ion Luca Caragiale](#) (the [National Theatre Bucharest](#) is officially named in his honor) and [Ion Creangă](#) (best known for his children's stories).

In the period between the two world wars, authors like [Tudor Arghezi](#), [Lucian Blaga](#) or [Ion Barbu](#) made efforts to synchronize Romanian literature with the European literature of the time. [Gellu Naum](#) was the leader of the [surrealist](#) movement in Romania. In the Communist era, valuable writers like [Nichita Stănescu](#), [Marin Sorescu](#) or [Marin Preda](#) managed to escape censorship, broke with "[socialist realism](#)" and were the leaders of a small "Renaissance" in Romanian literature.



Brancusi's [Endless Column](#) in [Targu Jiu](#)

Romanian literature has recently gained some renown outside the borders of Romania (mostly through translations into German, French and English). Some modern Romanian authors became increasingly popular in Germany, France and Italy, especially [Eugen Ionescu](#), [Mircea Eliade](#), [Emil Cioran](#), [Constantin Noica](#), [Tristan Tzara](#) and [Mircea Cărtărescu](#). Other literary figures who enjoy broad acclaim outside of the country include poet [Paul Celan](#) and Nobel laureate [Elie Wiesel](#), both survivors of the Holocaust.

Probably the best known Romanian musician [George Enescu](#), a 20th century [composer](#), [violinist](#), [pianist](#), [conductor](#), teacher, and one of the greatest performers of his time. [George Enescu Festival](#), an annual classical music festival held in Bucharest, is named after him. Other Romanian musicians are [Ciprian Porumbescu](#), a 19th century composer, [Gheorghe Zamfir](#), a virtuoso of the [pan flute](#) that is reported to have sold over 120 million albums worldwide ^{[114][115]}, and the folk artist [Tudor Gheorghe](#).

[Constantin Brâncuși](#) is an internationally renowned Romanian [sculptor](#), whose sculptures blend simplicity and sophistication that led the way for [modernist](#) sculptors. As a testimony to his skill, one of his pieces, "[Bird in Space](#)", was sold in an auction for \$27.5 million in 2005, a record for any sculpture. ^{[116] [117] [118]}



[Hunyadi Castle](#), 1419, with its impressive size and architectural beauty sets it among the most precious monuments of medieval art. It was the home of one of the greatest [Hungarian kings](#), [Matthias Corvinus](#) (reigned from 1458-1490), son of the Romanian [Iancu de Hunedoara](#).

Monuments

See also: [List of castles in Romania](#), [List of religious buildings in Romania](#), and [UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Romania](#)

The [UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites](#) includes Romanian sites such as the [Saxon villages with fortified churches in Transylvania](#), the [Painted churches of northern Moldavia](#) with their fine exterior and interior frescoes, the [Wooden Churches of Maramures](#) unique examples that combine Gothic style with traditional timber construction, the citadel of [Sighișoara](#) and the [Dacian Fortresses of the Orăștie Mountains](#). Also, in 2007, the city of [Sibiu](#) famous for its [Brukenthal National Museum](#) is the [European Capital of Culture](#) alongside the city of [Luxembourg](#).

Science and technology

Main article: [Science and technology in Romania](#)



[Traian Vuia 1](#), world's [first fully self-propelled aircraft](#) flew in March 1906.

On [May 14, 1981](#) Romania became the [11th country](#) in the world to have an astronaut in space. That astronaut, [Dumitru Prunariu](#) is today's president of [Romanian Space Agency](#). On [March 18, 1906](#) [Traian Vuia](#) became the first person to have flown a self-propelling, heavier-than-air aircraft - he is also only the second person to have taken off with a powered airplane.^[119] His flight was performed in [Montesson](#) near [Paris](#) and was about 12 meters long.^[120] [Henri Coandă](#) was another Romanian inventor and pioneer of aviation. He

built the world's first jet powered aircraft, the [Coanda-1910](#),^[121] and brought it at the Second [International Aeronautical Exhibition](#) in [Paris](#) around October [1910](#).



[Coanda-1910](#), world's first jet-propelled aircraft built by [Henri Coanda](#)

[George Emil Palade](#) is a Romanian cell biologist who won the [Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine](#) in 1974^[122] for his study of internal organization of such cell structures as [mitochondria](#), [chloroplasts](#), the [Golgi apparatus](#), and for the discovery of the [ribosomes](#).^[123] He also won the [National Medal of Science](#) in 1986.

At the beginning of the 2000s, there was a boom in Romania in the number of [computer programmers](#). Romania is reported to be among the countries with the highest number of computer programmers in the world.^[124] Some examples of successful software include RAV (Romanian AntiVirus) which was bought in 2003 by [Microsoft](#) for use in their development of [Windows Defender](#),^[125] or [BitDefender](#) which is considered the number one antivirus software and internet security software at TopTenReviews.^[126]

Government

Politics

Main article: [Politics of Romania](#)



The [Palace of the Parliament](#), the seat of Romania's bicameral parliament. Built in 1984, it is the largest building in Europe and the the world's second [largest administrative building](#) by surface area of its floors, just behind [the Pentagon](#)^[127] and 10% larger by volume than the [Great Pyramid of Giza](#).^[128]

Romania is a [semi-presidential](#) democratic republic where executive functions are shared between the [president](#) and the [prime minister](#). The president is elected by popular vote, and resides at [Cotroceni Palace](#). Since the constitutional amendment of 2003, the president's term is five years (previously it was four). The [Romanian Government](#), which is based at [Victoria Palace](#), is headed by a [prime minister](#), who appoints the other members of his or her cabinet and who is nearly always the head of the party or coalition that holds a majority in the parliament. If, however, none of the parties hold 50% + 1 of the total seats in parliament, the president will appoint the prime minister. Before beginning its term, the government is subject to a parliamentary vote of approval.

The legislative branch of the government, collectively known as the [Parliament](#) (*Parlamentul României*), consists of [two chambers](#) – the [Senate](#) (*Senat*), which has 137 members, and the [Chamber of Deputies](#) (*Camera Deputaților*), which has 332 members. The members of both chambers are elected every four years under a system of [party-list proportional representation](#).

The justice system is independent of the other branches of government, and is made up of a hierarchical system of courts culminating in the [High Court of Cassation and Justice](#), which is the supreme court of Romania. There are also courts of appeal, county courts and local courts. The Romanian judicial system is strongly influenced by the [French model](#), considering that it is based on [civil law](#) and is [inquisitorial](#) in nature. The [Constitutional Court](#) (*Curtea Constituțională*) is responsible for judging the compliance of laws and other state regulations to the [Romanian Constitution](#), which is the fundamental law of the country. The constitution, which was introduced in 1991, can only be amended by a public referendum; the last amendment was in 2003. The Romanian Constitutional Court structure is based on the [Constitutional Council of France](#), being made up of nine judges who serve nine-year, non-renewable terms. Following the 2003 constitutional amendment, the court's decisions cannot be overruled by any majority of the parliament.

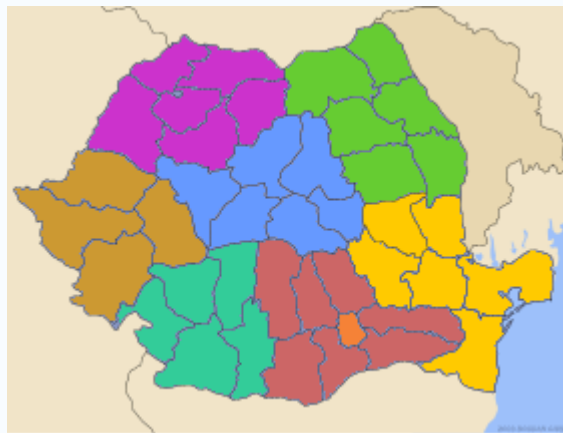
The country's entry into the [European Union](#) in 2007 has been a significant influence on its domestic policy. As part of the process, Romania has instituted reforms including [judicial reform](#), increased judicial cooperation with other member states, and measures to combat corruption. In 2006 Brussels report, Romania along with [Bulgaria](#) were described as the two most corrupt countries in the EU.^[129]

Counties

Main article: [Administrative divisions of Romania](#)

Romania is divided into forty-one [counties](#) (*județe*), as well as the municipality of [Bucharest](#) (București), which is its own administrative unit. Each county is administered by a county council (*consiliu județean*), responsible for local affairs, as well as a prefect, who is appointed by the central government but cannot be a member of any political party.

Alongside the county structure, Romania is also divided into four [NUTS-1](#) level divisions (Romanian:*Macroregiunea*) and eight [development regions](#) corresponding to [NUTS-2](#) divisions in the European Union.^[130] These divisions have no administrative capacity and are instead used for co-ordinating regional development projects and statistical purposes. The NUTS-3 level divisions reflect Romania's administrative-territorial structure, and correspond to the 41 [counties](#) and the [Bucharest](#) municipality.



 Map of the [8 development regions](#). The 41 local administrative units are also highlighted.

- Macroregiunea 1:
 - [Nord-Vest](#) (6 counties)
 - [Centru](#) (6 counties)
- Macroregiunea 2:
 - [Nord-Est](#) (6 counties)
 - [Sud-Est](#) (6 counties)
- Macroregiunea 3:
 - [Sud-Muntenia](#) (7 counties)
 - [București-Ilfov](#) (1 county and Bucharest)
- Macroregiunea 4:
 - [Sud-Vest Oltenia](#) (5 counties)
 - [Vest](#) (4 counties)

The country is further subdivided into 2686 [communes](#), which are rural localities, and 265 [towns](#). Communes and towns have their own local councils and are headed by a mayor (*primar*). Out of these, 103 of the larger and more urbanised towns have the status of [municipality](#), which gives them greater administrative power over local affairs.

Foreign relations

Main article: [Foreign relations of Romania](#)

Since December 1989, Romania has pursued a policy of strengthening relations with the West in general, more specifically with the [United States](#) and the [European Union](#). It joined the [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation](#) (NATO) on [March 29, 2004](#), the [European Union](#) (EU) on [January 1, 2007](#) and the [International Monetary Fund](#) and the [World Bank](#) in 1972, and is a member of the [World Trade Organization](#).

The current government has stated its goal of strengthening ties with and helping other [Eastern European](#) countries (in particular [Moldova](#), [Ukraine](#) and [Georgia](#)) with the process of integration with the West. Romania has also made clear over the past 10 years that it supports NATO and EU membership for the democratic former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe and the [Caucasus](#). In December 2005, President [Traian Băsescu](#) and U.S. [Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice](#) signed an agreement that would allow a U.S. military presence at several Romanian facilities primarily in the eastern part of the country.

Romania also declared its public support for [Turkey](#), [Croatia](#) and [Moldova](#) joining the European Union. Romania shares a privileged economic relation with Turkey. Romania has developed strong relations with [Hungary](#), with the latter playing a key role in supporting Romania's bid to join the EU.

Relations with [Moldova](#) are *rather special*, considering that the two countries share the same language, and a fairly common historical background. Signs in the early 1990s that Romania and Moldova might unite after both countries achieved emancipation from communist rule quickly faded when a pro-Russian government was formed in Moldova. Romania remains interested in Moldovan affairs, but the two countries have been unable even to reach agreement on a basic bilateral treaty; Romania is insistent (against determined Moldovan resistance) that such a treaty would have to refer to Romania and Moldova's 'special relationship'. *For more information see [Movement for unification of Romania and Moldova](#).*

Sports

Main article: [Sport in Romania](#)

In the [1976 Summer Olympics](#), the gymnast [Nadia Comăneci](#) became the first gymnast ever to score a perfect "ten". She also won three gold medals, one silver and one bronze, all at the age of fifteen.^[131] Her success continued in the [1980 Summer Olympics](#), where she was awarded two gold medals and two silver medals.

[Football \(soccer\)](#) is popular in Romania, the most internationally known player being [Gheorghe Hagi](#), who played for [Steaua București](#) (Romania), [Real Madrid](#), [FC Barcelona](#) (Spain) and [Galatasaray](#) (Turkey), among others. In 1986, the Romanian soccer club Steaua București became the first Eastern European club ever, and only one of the two (the other being [Red Star Belgrade](#)) to win the prestigious [European Champions Cup](#) title. In 1989, it played the final again, but lost to [AC Milan](#). Other important Romanian football clubs are [Dinamo București](#), [Rapid București](#), [FC Progresul București](#), [FCU Politehnica Timișoara](#), [FC Universitatea Craiova](#), [CFR 1907 Cluj-Napoca](#), [FC Oțelul Galați](#), [Sportul Studentesc](#), [FC Farul Constanța](#), etc. [Romanian National Football Team](#) has taken part 7 times in the [Football World Cup](#), and it had a very successful period through the 1990s, reaching the quarter-finals in the [1994 World Cup](#) in [USA](#), when the "Golden Generation" was at its best.

[Ilie Năstase](#), the tennis player, is another internationally known Romanian sports star. He won several [Grand Slam](#) titles and dozens of other tournaments and was the first player to be ranked as [number 1](#) by [ATP](#) from 1973 to 1974; he also was a successful doubles player. Romania has also reached the [Davis Cup](#) finals three times. [Virginia Ruzici](#) was a successful tennis player in the 1970s.

Though maybe not the force they once were, the Romanian [national rugby team](#) has [so far competed at every Rugby World Cup](#).

Maybe slightly surprising for a country of its size, Romania has been one of the most successful countries in the history of [Summer Olympic Games](#) ([15th overall](#)) with a total of 283 medals won throughout the years, 82 of which of gold medal.^[132]

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