

OFFICIAL NAME: Romania

CAPITAL: Bucharest

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 237,500 Sq Km (91,699 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 23,034,200



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Romania is located on the Balkan Peninsula in South East Europe. It is bound by the Black Sea and Moldova to the east, Bulgaria to the south, Serbia & Montenegro and Hungary to the west as well as the Ukraine to the north and northeast. The Carpathian Mountains form the heart of the country and are divided into three ranges. (1.) The East Carpathians, (2.) the South Carpathians and (3.) the West Carpathians. There are rich arable plains in the south which include the Baragan Plains to the east and Oltenian Plains to the west. The principal rivers are the Danube, Tisza, Mures, Prut, Siret and Olt Rivers. In addition, around 3,500 glacial ponds, lakes and coastal lagoons are also found throughout the country. Major Cities (pop. est.); Bucharest 2,066,700, Constanta 349,000, Iasi 337,600, Timisoara 325,400, Galati 324,200, Brasov 324,100 (1993). Land Use; forested 29%, pastures 21%, agricultural-cultivated 43%, other 7% (1993).

CLIMATE: Romania has a continental climate characterized by cold snowy winters and warm summers. In the Carpathian Mountains the summers are cooler and wetter. The prevailing winds are from the north to northeast and are hot and dry during summer while in winter they are cold and severe. Average annual precipitation is 637 mm (25 inches) while average temperature ranges in Bucharest are from -2 degrees Celsius (28 degrees Fahrenheit) in winter to 21 degrees Celsius (70 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Romanians who account for 88% of the population and are of mixed Roman, Thracian, Slavonic and Celtic origins. The remainder are of small ethnic minority groups which include Gypsies, Magyars, Germans, Ukrainians, Tartars, Jews, Croats, Russians, Bulgarians and Serbs.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 98 persons per sq km (254 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 54.4% urban, 45.6% rural (1992). Sex Distribution; 49.1% male, 50.9% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 66.5 years male, 72.4 years female (1989). Age Breakdown; 24% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 21% 30 to 44, 18% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1989). Birth Rate; 13.6 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 10.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 2.9 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 26.9 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 70% of the population Romanian Orthodox while 5% are Roman Catholic, 10% are Protestant and another 10% are Greek Catholic. There is also a Muslim minority which accounts for around 1% of the population.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Romanian which is spoken by most of the population while Hungarian and German are also widely understood.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: primary education 55.6%, secondary 39.8%, higher 4.6% (1977). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 95.8% (1983).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1947 King Michael was forced to abdicate and Romania was officially declared the People's Republic. From 1948 to 1952 the socialist government embarked on a nationalization program and collectivized agriculture. In June 1952 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was appointed Prime Minister and in Oct. 1955 became the party's First Secretary. In 1958 Gheorghiu-Dej negotiated the withdrawal of Soviet troops and asserted the nation's control over its own affairs. In Mar. 1961 Gheorghiu-Dej was elected President and died in Mar. 1965, following which Nicolae Ceausescu was appointed First Secretary and Chivu Stoica was elected President. In Dec. 1967 Ceausescu was elected President and continued Gheorghiu-Dej's policies of control over the country's own affairs. In Aug. 1968 when the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia, Pres. Ceausescu condemned the invasion. In 1969 US Pres. Richard Nixon visited Romania which was the first visit by an American president to a communist country since 1945. In 1977 an earthquake caused around 1,500 deaths and widespread property damage. In Nov. 1987 workers' protests broke out and in 1988 Pres. Ceausescu announced a policy of systemization which resulted in the demolition of 7,000 rural villages and the forced relocation of the inhabitants to agro-industrial centers. In Nov. 1989 Ceausescu was re-elected as leader and on Dec. 17, 1989 security police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against repression, killing dozens. Within days the protests had escalated and reached the capital which resulted in the security police again opening fire on the demonstrators, killing dozens more. On Dec. 22 some 150,000 demonstrators and army units, in protest to the death of the Defense Minister who refused to obey the President's order to shoot the protesters, stormed the Party Headquarters. On Dec. 25, 1989 Pres. Ceausescu and his wife were subsequently tried by a Military Tribunal and executed by a firing squad. On Dec. 26, 1989 Ion Iliescu was appointed interim President and legalized political parties as well as dissolved the security police. After elections in May 1990 interim Pres. Iliescu was elected President and inaugurated on June 20, 1990. On Feb. 14, 1991 land reform legislation was passed by the Parliament allowing citizens to reclaim up to 24 acres (10 hectares) of land nationalized by the state. On April 5, 1991 Pres. Iliescu signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR following a visit there. On April 11, 1991 the IMF approved a standby loan facility of US \$1 billion. In July 1991 the government passed legislation on the privatization of state enterprises while the government continued to

withdraw state subsidies that led to increasing prices for essential services and basic foodstuffs. In Sept. 1991 some 8,000 miners stormed the Party Headquarters which resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Petre Roman who was replaced by Theodor Stolojan. Upon Prime Minister Stolojan's appointment he introduced a six month freeze on price increases and announced plans to deal with the growing food and energy shortages. On Nov. 2, 1991 the government announced that 5,000 troops would be drafted to help harvest the wheat and corn crops. In Dec. 1991 a new constitution was approved by referendum which guaranteed human rights and a free market economy. In 1992 the government implemented an IMF recommended plan to reduce state subsidies on consumer goods. On April 25, 1992 the deposed King Michael was allowed to visit his country following a 45 year absence and drew several hundred thousand people to an Easter mass he attended. In June 1992 Romania signed an agreement with the IMF that required the government to restrict the monthly inflation rate to 1.5% and to continue with its rapid economic reforms. In Sept. 1992 presidential and parliamentary elections resulted in Pres. Iliescu being re-elected and on Nov. 3, 1992 Pres. Iliescu requested Nicolae Vacaroiu to form a Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN) dominated coalition government. Also in 1992 allegations that Romania had breached the UN's trade sanctions against the former Yugoslavia (Serbia) resulted in US and British customs inspectors arriving in the country to check on Romania's compliance. In 1993 the government's land reform program remained slow with 30% of nationalized land still remaining under state control while a pyramid investment scheme, known as Caritas, attracted up to 50% of the population's savings with some 4 million people investing their money. On Feb. 1, 1993 Romania signed an association agreement with the EC that resulted in most of Romania's tariffs and quotas on industrial exports to the EC being abolished. On July 1, 1993 a Valued Added Tax (VAT) was introduced by the government to bring the country's fiscal policies in line with the EC. The introduction of the VAT and the government's decision to abolish its price freezes resulted in basic food items increasing by 80% and further fueled wage increase demands. In Aug. 1993 miners demanding higher wages went on strike seriously affecting the coal mining and railway industries, although the government refused to give into their demands. On Sept. 28, 1993 Romania was admitted to the Council of Europe and on Oct. 21, 1993 the US granted Romania "most-favored-nation" trade status. Also during 1993 there were several racial attacks on Gypsies and Hungarians (Magyars) during the year with three Gypsies being hung by Romanians following a fatal knife attack on a Romanian villager as well as 13 houses being burnt to the ground in retaliation.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Leu (plural; Lei) divided into 100 Bani.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$24,810,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$2,326,000,000 (1993). Imports; Lei 5,087,390,000,000 (1993). Exports; Lei 3,775,942,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$197,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD -411,100,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 10,771,300 or 47.4% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 8.6% (1992).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the former USSR, Germany, the USA and France.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Cereals, Coal, Copper, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Grapes, Gold, Iron Ore, Lignite, Livestock, Oil and Natural Gas, Potatoes, Salt, Silver, Sugar, Timber, Uranium.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Chemicals, Coke, Fertilizers, Food Processing, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Mining, Motor Vehicles, Ship Building, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Clothing, Food Stuffs, Machinery, Petroleum Products, Transport Equipment.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 11,083 km (6,887 mi) (1990), passenger-km 33,506,000,000 (20,820,000,000 passenger-mi) (1987), cargo ton-km 78,074,000,000 (53,473,000,000 short ton-mi) (1987). Roads; length 72,816 km (45,246 mi) (1990). Vehicles; cars 1,218,128 (1990), trucks and buses 236,791 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 483 (1990), deadweight tonnage 6,089,091 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,646,000,000 (1,023,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 14,489,000 (9,924,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 76 with a total circulation of 7,500,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 4,640,000 (1993). Television; receivers 4,580,000 (1993). Telephones; units 2,623,700 (1993).

MILITARY: 217,400 (1995) total active duty personnel with 59.2% army, 8.7% navy and 24.8% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.5% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).