Background

Romania is situated in Southeastern Europe. Its neighbors to the east and north are Moldova and Ukraine. Hungary is its western neighbor. To the southwest, lies Serbia. Bulgaria is its neighbor to the south.

Romania has a population of about 22 million inhabitants. The population’s race composition is as follows: Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 6.6%, Roma 2.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, German 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, Turkish 0.2%, other 0.4%. Religious affiliation tends to follow ethnic lines, with most ethnic Romanians identifying with the Romanian Orthodox Church: 87%. Other religious affiliations include: Protestant 6.8%, Catholic 5.6%, other 0.4%, and unaffiliated 0.2% (CIA The World Factbook, 2003).

The capital of Romania is Bucharest (Bucuresti) and the official language is Romanian, which has same Latin origin as Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The most frequently used foreign languages in Romania are English and French, although in some parts of Transylvania German is also spoken.

The country has a high literacy rate of 98.4% (CIA The World Factbook, 2003). Romanian leu (lion) is the country’s currency and 8.3 percent (as of 2002) is its unemployment rate.

Romania covers 237,500 square kilometers filled with a diverse climate of vegetation and topography. Romania is one third mountains, one third hilly plateaus and one third, fertile fields. Natural resources: petroleum (reserves declining), timber, natural gas, coal, iron ore, salt, arable land, and hydropower.

The climate is temperate and continental, with four seasons. A long and at times severe winter (December-March), a hot summer (April-July), and a prolonged autumn (August-November) are the principal seasons, with a rapid transition from spring to summer (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs).

Hot Issues: European Union (EU) accession, corruption, international adoptions, and democratization.

History

The territory of Romania has been inhabited since the Paleolithic. The ancestors of the Romanian people are the Dacians, fierce warriors subdued by the Romans under Trajan in two extremely difficult campaigns at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. However, the relatively brief Roman occupation (165 years) left a lasting legacy: the Latin language, which survived the numerous subsequent invasions of migratory peoples. By the 10th century, small Romanian states emerged, and their consolidation led to the formation of the principalities of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania. From the 10th century the Magyars spread into Transylvania and by
the 13th century the region became an autonomous principality under the Hungarian crown. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries Wallachia and Moldavia offered strong resistance to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. During this struggle the prince of Wallachia, Vlad Tepes, became a hero and later was associated with the Dracula myth. In 1600, the three Romanian states were briefly united under Mihai Viteazul, prince of Wallachia. Unity lasted only one year, after which he was defeated by a joint Habsburg-Transylvanian force, and then captured and beheaded. Transylvania came under Habsburg rule, while Turkish suzerainty continued in Wallachia and Moldavia until well into the 19th century. In 1775 the northern part of Moldavia, Bucovina, was annexed by Austria-Hungary. This was followed in 1812 by the loss of its eastern territory, Bessarabia, to Russia. After the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, Ottoman domination over the principalities finally came to an end.

After 1848, Transylvania fell under the direct rule of Austria-Hungary from Budapest, and ruthless Magyarisation followed. In 1859, Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected to the thrones of Moldavia and Wallachia, creating a national state, which was named Romania in 1862. Romania was declared a kingdom in 1881, with Carol I as king. He died at the start of WWI and was succeeded by his nephew Ferdinand I who, in 1916, entered the war on the side of the Triple Entente. His objective was to liberate Transylvania from Austria-Hungary. In 1918, Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transylvania became part of Romania.

Carol II, who had succeeded his father Ferdinand I to the throne, declared a royal dictatorship in 1938, and all political parties were dissolved. In 1940 the USSR occupied Bessarabia, and Romania was forced to cede northern Transylvania to Hungary by order of Germany and Italy. General Marshall Ion Antonescu forced Carol to abdicate in favor of his 19-year-old son Michael, and then imposed a fascist dictatorship with himself as conducator (leader). In 1941 he joined Hitler's anti-Soviet war. In 1944, with the Soviet Union approaching Romania's border, Romania switched sides.

The Soviet-engineered return of Transylvania to Romania helped the Moscow-backed communists win the 1946 elections. A year later King Michael was forced to abdicate and a Romanian People's Republic was proclaimed. In the late 1950s Romania began to distance itself from Moscow, pursuing an independent foreign policy under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1952-65) and Nicolae Ceausescu (1965-89). Ceausescu condemned Soviet 'intervention' in Czechoslovakia in 1968, earning him praise and economic aid from the West. The Securitate (secret police) kept the populace in check, recruiting a vast network of informers.

The advent of Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s meant that the United States no longer needed Romania, and withdrew its 'most favored nation' status. Ceausescu decided to export Romania's food to pay off the country's mounting debt. While Ceausescu and his wife, Elena (his first deputy prime minister), lived in luxury, his people struggled to feed themselves, as bread, eggs, flour, oil, salt, sugar, beef and potatoes were rationed; by the mid-1980s meat was unobtainable. Popular discontent with the regime grew as living standards declined, repression increased, and ever-greater demands were made against a demoralized workforce. In November 1987, anti-Ceausescu riots took place in the city of Brasov. In December 1989, after Romanians had seen communist governments toppled throughout Eastern Europe, an uprising in the western city of Timisoara quickly spread to Bucharest, leading to the fall of Ceausescu and his execution.
on Christmas Day. Ceausescu was replaced by Ion Iliescu, a former high-ranking communist, and questions soon arose as to what had really happened. The transition was hampered by the fact that Romania’s communist regime had been so brutal and consequently that it had been far more difficult for an organized dissident movement to develop, as in other countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland or Hungary. Lower ranking members of the communist hierarchy were far more easily able to take control, using the apparatus of the old regime to manipulate popular support and exclude their rivals. Economic control also remained largely in the hands of those who held positions of influence under the former regime.

It is now believed that members of the National Salvation Front, which took over government of Romania after Ceausescu's death, had been plotting his overthrow for months before and that the December 1989 demonstrations forced them to act earlier. Iliescu and the National Salvation Front were reelected in 1992, but rampant inflation, unemployment, and allegations of government corruption, meant that in 1996 Iliescu was voted out in favor of Emil Constantinescu, leader of the reform-minded Democratic Convention of Romania. A dramatic about-face in December 2000 saw voters reinstate Iliescu as their president. Romanians probably considered Iliescu the lesser of two evils - his opponent was extremist Corneliu Vadim Tudor of the far-right Greater Romania Party. One of the most contested issues in recent Romanian history has been the status of the country's sizeable Hungarian minority population (Lonely Planet World Guide).

Cultural dimensions / idiosyncrasies

Romania's rich cultural traditions have been nourished by many sources, some of which predate the Roman occupation. The traditional folk arts, including dance, music, woodcarving, ceramics, weaving and embroidery of costumes and household decorations still flourish in many parts of the country. Despite strong Austrian, German, and especially French influence, many of Romania's great artists, such as the painter Nicolae Grigorescu, the poet Mihai Eminescu, the composer George Enescu, and the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, drew their inspiration from Romanian folk traditions. Romania is the only country with a Romance language that does not have a Roman Catholic background. The country's many Orthodox monasteries, as well as the Transylvanian Catholic and Evangelical Churches, some of which date back to the 13th century, are repositories of artistic treasures. The famous painted monasteries of Bukovina make an important contribution to European architecture. Romanian literature draws heavily on the country's rich folkloric heritage coupled with its turbulent history as an occupied country inhabited by a persecuted people. In the 15th century an oral epic folk literature emerged, and writings in the Romanian language took shape around 1420. Modern literature emerged in the 19th century. Romania's best-known writer internationally is playwright Eugene Ionesco (1912-94), an exponent of the 'Theatre of the Absurd'. Literature became a tool of the communist party from 1947 onwards. Since 1990 many works have been published attesting to the horrors of the communist period. Folk music and dancing have long been popular in Romania. Couples dance in a circle, a semicircle or a line (Lonely Planet World Guide). Sports are extremely important in Romania. Soccer is the most popular sport and the most participated in, followed by gymnastics.

Poetry and theater play an important role in contemporary Romanian life. Classic Romanian plays, such as those of Ion Luca Caragiale, as well as works by modern or avant-garde
Romanian and international playwrights, find sophisticated and enthusiastic audiences in the many theaters of the capital and of the smaller cities (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs).

According to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, Romania tends to be a culture that has a low uncertainty avoidance ranking, which indicates that “the society accepts more rapidly change and takes more and greater risks”, and is less rule-oriented. It also has a short-term orientation, as long-term traditions and commitments are not impediments to changes. Other indicators are: high power distance index reflecting presence of inequality of power and health within society and deference to authority figures, low individualism which expresses the collectivistic nature of society with close tights between individuals, and high masculinity pointing out a high degree of gender differentiation.

**Romanian Links**

The following are Romanian Websites that provide information on government, history, culture, tourism and economy:

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry: [www.ccir.ro](http://www.ccir.ro) (offers an English version)
- Discover Romania: [www.ici.ro/romania](http://www.ici.ro/romania) - overview of Romania (in English)
- Government of Romania: [www.guv.ro](http://www.guv.ro) (offers English / French versions)
- Ministry of Public Finance: [www.mfinante.ro](http://www.mfinante.ro) (offers an English version)
- Presidency of Romania: [www.presidency.ro](http://www.presidency.ro) (offers an English / French version)
- Romania Factbook 2004: [www.factbook.ro](http://www.factbook.ro) - includes geographical, demographical, economic, political, and market profiles (in English)
- Romanian Travel Guide: [www.infotourism.ro](http://www.infotourism.ro) (offers an English version)
- Seven Evenings: [www.sapteseri.ro](http://www.sapteseri.ro) - guide to events, parties, theater plays, movies show times, clubs, concerts, and other cultural events in Bucharest.
- Tourism in Romania: [www.turism.ro](http://www.turism.ro) - destinations and attractions (offers an English version)

**Public Relations**

Times are changing in the public relations industry in Central and Eastern Europe, and especially in Romania. The public relations sector is finally evolving. It has taken years for the industry to fully establish itself, as it struggles to educate potential clients, the media and general public about what public relations actually is and mostly about what it can do. “In Romania, the public relations services are sought after more and more as the experienced consumer becomes less and less receptive to the classic advertising approach,” said Silvia Bucur, Director of Prais Communications -a Romanian public relations agency.

For several years, public relations was considered a snobbish extravagance. Soon it turned out, that without it, it is not possible to stand out in the market and be competitive. Therefore, as the economy was developing and there were more and more new market opportunities, the interest in and demand for such services increased. It has only been in the last four or five years that public relations has really taken off. 2000-2003 was a boom period, both
as volume of activities and companies that request public relations services. Twelve years ago there was only one public relations agency, in Bucharest. Now there are over 20, a couple of them located in other cities of Romania.

For most, the biggest hurdle is actually getting across the message about what public relations can do for the company. Multinational companies were the first to introduce public relations in Romania at the beginning of the 1990s. They adapted their experience in the West to the Romanian environment and remain the main forces behind the demand for public relations services. Local companies, however, have a very short-term profit-oriented agenda and prefer advertising, which pays off immediately, to public relations. The public relations sector here has not reached the level of overall acceptance and recognition that it would merit. That is partly due to malpractices and the overall confusion of the interrelated topics of marketing, advertising and public relations. Although there is an equivalent for the term public relations in Romanian, at the beginning the term was confused with relations with the public, which stands for the customer service/information desk. It seems that today managers understand what public relations is, but not as much what it does.

Just in the past few years there has been a shift in the role of public relations, away from media relations and towards consultancy and a more sophisticated range of services. Clients now realize that they can organize a news conference themselves with a fax machine. They want more background, market analysis and long-term results. In addition, many companies describe the purpose of public relations as mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. This indicates that the two-way model of communication is being used to some extent by Romanian public relations practitioners. That improvement can be attributed to the influence of multinationals here. This is both on the client side and the public relations side, where a couple of locally owned firms have links with agencies abroad, such as BDR & Associates, affiliated to the Hill & Knowlton international network. But, for the most part, the press agentry/publicity model is prevalent as indicated by the most requested public relations service: product launches and the creation of a positive image for a product after which the image is maintained by advertising. Also in high demand are: the organization of festivals, concerts, opening ceremonies, press conferences, and workshops. Interpersonal communications still plays a very important role. As evolving public relations tools, social programs and internal communications provide many advantages to companies in terms of relationship building. First, through the process of social investment, the company has an opportunity to establish goodwill relations with its employees and the community through supporting them to develop and solve their own problems. About 100 companies (from the banking, consumer products and services, pharmaceutics and technology fields) have developed such social programs. Crisis communications is another public relations service that has seen an increase in demand.

“As the market is maturing, the demand for public relations services will grow. It is a field with great potential, as long Romania will continue to develop and make progress,” said Catalina Stan, CEO and President of BDR & Associates. The first public relations agencies were established in the years immediately following the fall of communism in 1989, by journalists who came in contact with companies and organizations (mostly international) that needed this type of service. Perfect Limited’s claim to fame is that of being the first public relations agency by name. Established in 1993 and based on the one-man-show model by a former Associated
Press journalist, the agency’s first client was no other than Michael Jackson, then on a tour in Romania. The middle of the 1990s was another important phase in the evolution of the public relations field. Revenues for advertising agencies, most of them affiliated to international networks, began to stagnate after an initial period of tremendous growth. Foreign investment levels were languishing behind that of other Central European countries and market opportunities were not that great. Advertising agencies realized that the only way to increase revenues was to diversify their services and so they developed their own in-house public relations departments. Today, there are public relations agencies, public relations departments within companies and advertising agencies, offices and specialists within government institutions/structures. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also employ public relations specialists. Romanian public relations agencies create and sell services that target a wide range of businesses and markets.

It seems that paying off journalists to write stories about a particular company is not a common practice anymore. In the past, journalists were paid to publish favorable information about companies or products. Today, it appears that clients (and especially multinationals) do not want paid articles anymore because of the pressure of the media they are afraid they will become vulnerable. If the client wants to pay for an article it will contact the journalist directly. The main issue now is the focus of publications on generating ad revenue and not necessarily providing valuable information to their readers. Many publishers do not want to write negative editorial about their advertisers or to provide positive coverage of their competitors.

Romania is a very regionalized country, yet most companies and public relations agencies are located in Bucharest, the economic, political and cultural center of the country. This concentration of resources causes remote areas to often feel neglected by decision-makers. Therefore, an event at local level can often have far more impact than one with a national audience in mind. Even local press conferences can be useful gestures. Projecting an image of ultra-modernity in the countryside doesn't necessarily work. “Particularly outside the big towns, Romanians are quite conservative. That can have practical implications too: religious fasts and events are taken quite seriously in some areas, so events geared to consumption must be carefully timed”, says Crenguta Rosu of Romanian public relations agency DC Communications.

A study conducted by Judy VanSlyke Turk in 1993 regarding the public relations field in Romania asserted: “Most practitioners have no training, formal or informal, in public relations. Their college degrees are in engineering or economics or philology. They could not have studied public relations in college even if they had wanted to, for the first recognized college-level course in public relations was not taught in Romania until 1993 at the University of Bucharest” (p. 346). Today, public relations is one of the “hottest” area of study. A career in public relations is desired because: it is a relatively new field and “it sounds good”, there is demand and financial stability, creativity is strongly encouraged and there is opportunity to work with diverse people on multiple projects. Much of the change so far is student driven. Internships, particularly with media organizations, government offices and non-profits (generally lumped together under the term “non-governmental organizations”) are becoming common. Individual students are joining the student arm of the Confederation of European Public Relations (CERP), taking advantage of its frequent conferences and summer training programs. And teams of students compete annually in “Olimpiadele Communicarii” – a contest where teams of students develop public relations campaigns for real-life clients.
The demand for public relations is also growing in university-based programs. In 1993, for the first time in Romania, the public University of Bucharest offered a Public Relations course at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies. This was a milestone in the development of public relations practice in the country and was followed by a couple of other state and private universities, which also began including public relations courses in their undergraduate programs. Now, there are several public and private universities offering undergraduate degrees in public relations, as well as graduate level degrees in communications. The introduction of education and certificate training programs for public relations and the expectation for entry-level practitioners to have relevant training is in an important development for the profession.

There are several institutions trying to represent the public relations practitioners and promote public relations in Romania: The Romanian Public Relations Association (ARRP), The Club of the Romanian Public Relations Agencies, and the Forum for International Communications. There is no requirement for public relations practitioners to belong to any of these associations. Thus, anyone – regarding of education, experience, or understanding of ethics – is able to use the title public relations consultant and profit from it. The Romanian Public Relations Association was established in 1995 with the goals “to promote the professionalism of the public relations activities in Romania through establishing professional standards, through encouraging and institutionalizing the social communication process, through consolidating the trust of the public in public relations and through increasing the training opportunities for public relations practitioners.” So far, the main achievement of ARRP, and not a small one either, was the recognition of public relations as an official profession. The Forum for International Communications has been created “to develop international links and co-operations and will seek to promote a better understanding of professional communicating on the international level and to initiate exchange processes between Romania and countries in the world in the field of professional communications.” The Forum has been the promoter of the first Romanian Public Relations Awards, which took place in 2003. There seems to be no established code of ethics with detailed ethical guidelines for public relations practices, although practitioners have expressed a need for one. Right now each agency or department establishes its own internal code of ethics. Despite the expressed need for a code of ethics, some practitioners consider the best mechanism for regulating the agencies to be the market: the market will sanction the perpetrator and the agency looses its reputation.

The main issues faced by the industry at the moment are auto censure on behalf of the practitioners – they will go with the client’s strategy instead of theirs just to make the client happy -, the budget restrictions (in many cases much smaller for public relations than advertising), and the lack of a direct reporting relationship to top management within an organization.

The main area of growth will represent the local mid-size and small companies that begin to realize their need for public relations. Also, the increasing number of students and specialized university programs will bring the theoretical base to the profession, which will mend well with the practical base of the current practitioners.
Public Relations and Advertising Links:

List of public relations agencies in Romania:  
www.info-romania.ro/htm_Ro/w%20PublicRelations.htm

List of advertising agencies members of the Romanian Association of Advertising Agencies:  

Online magazine of marketing and communications (Romanian language only):  
www.markmedia.ro

Media

Overview

The years passed since the fall of communism in December 1989 brought about a revolution in the Romanian media similar with the profound process of change experienced by the entire society. Following the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime more than 2,000 publications sprang up. Economic realities forced many to cease functioning after a short time. Still, the press was free. This was a strange experience for most journalists who were conditioned to look to official authorities for instructions (Starck Kenneth, Romania's struggling press).

Few publications made any attempt to be factual or objective, preferring instead opinions, commentaries and polemics. After a relatively short period marked by a rapid and chaotic increase in the number of titles and circulation (1990-1992), followed turmoil times. First, newspapers, which in general were too taken with politics and opinion, lost a large part of their readership.

Then came the time of the sensationalist press, and the audiovisual boom. To be sure, press freedom sprang from the ruins of totalitarianism into a difficult environment, including shortages of paper, capital, modern equipment and trained personnel. At the same time, the Romanian press has been searching for its own appropriate social role in the framework of a market economy. At present this role falls somewhere between the philosophies of a libertarian (laissez-faire) press and a socially responsible press (Starck Kenneth, Romania's struggling press).

Intense competitive pressures pervade the market system. On the one hand, the press strives to inform the public and build national cohesion. On the other hand, the press functions in a highly competitive atmosphere in search of public support.

At the start of 2004 the Big Bang is not over yet. New TV and radio stations keep appearing, and the number of print titles is still too high for the market. Sensationalism and slanted reporting are still rampant. Editors themselves acknowledge the difficulty of balancing professional journalistic performance with the twin economic needs of attracting readers and advertisers. More and more media observers and, increasingly, media insiders, have been drawing the attention toward media corruption. The Romanian media industry reflects the Romanian society at large, and corruption is a significant feature.
As advertising or sales cannot ensure profitability for many media institutions, they do not actually function as lucrative entities, but rather as means of influence for political and economic groups. As such, those who control the media do not have a real interest in promoting professional journalists and journalism, since journalists who are not well trained and don't have high ethical and professional standards can be more easily manipulated to serve their interests.

However, competition, the entrance of international companies on the market (although rather timid yet), and the fact that journalism schools started to produce professionals, has been meaning better journalism and better media. The difference between tabloid and quality papers has become clearer (although not really clear yet), and TV and radio stations have been offering better and more diverse programming.

The main developments in the Romanian media, that seem to go on in the future as well, are an inclination from both print and audiovisual media toward entertainment-oriented material, rather then quality information (that is also expensive to produce); and the increasing success of specialized media, such as women's and men's magazines, computer publications, music or news television. (Alex Ulmanu, The Romanian media landscape - The European Journalism Center).

**Regulation**

Since 1990 there has been an ongoing debate over the possibility of a media law in Romania. Up to now, the Parliament has not adopted one, although there have been several projects concerning this issue. The journalists themselves were most opposed to a press law, arguing that it would only limit the freedom of the press and the public's right to information.

The government has proposed stiff penalties, for example up to seven years in prison, for journalists libeling or defaming public officials. Similar penalties would await journalists charged with violating laws pertaining to state secrets. These efforts so far have faltered following protests from various groups, including the Romanian Helsinki Committee and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The audiovisual field is regulated by the Audiovisual Law adopted in 1992, with the National Broadcasting (or Audiovisual) Council established in 1990 as the sole supervisor of the Romanian TV and radio stations. The NBC has 11 members appointed by the parliament, government and president. It issues and withdraws broadcasting licenses, issues rules or regulations, and monitors the stations to see if these rules are respected. However, it does not have legislative initiative, meaning it cannot propose laws to the parliament.

The functioning of the Romanian public television and radio is also regulated by the law concerning the establishment and functioning of the Romanian Radio Society and of the Romanian Television Society (1994).

Polls commissioned by the Soros Foundation for an Open Society indicate that television is the "principal source of information regarding the national political life" for 60 percent of the public. Radio claims about 20 per cent; newspapers, only 9 percent. This is significant when one
considers that state-controlled television takes a purely non-critical stance toward the presidency and the government in power (Starck Kenneth, Romania’s struggling press).

The right to information is recognized by the Romanian Constitution and since the end of 2001 by the Access to Information Law that obligates government institutions to make public any information of public interest.

Self-regulation is virtually non-existent in Romania. There is no deontological or ethical code known or recognized by the whole profession. Even though organizations such as the National Press Club claim to have drawn such a code, most journalists are simply not aware of it. There is no Council of Honor recognized by the whole media to judge departs from ethics. In the audiovisual, the National Broadcasting Council has the role of monitoring and sanctioning the broadcasters for breaking ethical and professional norms.

The Written Press

The Romanian press reached a peak in terms of quantity in 1996, with 1855 published titles, from which 106 dailies and 1781 other periodicals. That was up from only 36 dailies and 459 other periodicals in 1989, and 100 daily newspapers and 1094 other periodically published publications in 1994. In 1998, though, numbers went down: 1550 titles, from which 95 dailies and 1455 other types of periodicals. (figures from the 1999 Romanian Statistical Yearbook, published by the National Commission for Statistics -- now the National Institute for Statistics).

The Romanian press landscape appears to be overcrowded. But in spite of the inflation of titles, and the fact Romania has over 22 million inhabitants, circulation figures are not as impressive. There are over 20 dailies being published in Bucharest, most of them calling themselves national newspapers. However, only three or four can claim print runs and circulation over the 100,000 threshold. The most successful, Adevarul, prints and sells around 150,000 copies a day; Evenimentul Zilei has a daily circulation of about 115,000 copies, approximately the same as Libertatea.

Other important central general interest dailies are Romania libera, National, Ziua, Jurnalul national, printing 50,000-100,000 copies a day. Other newspapers, like Curierul National, Cronica Romana, Cotidianul or Realitatea, have smaller print runs and circulation.

There are also several specialised newspapers. The most important are finance and business newspapers Ziarul Financiar (circulation: around 15,000 copies) and Bursa (no audited circulation figures available), and sports dailies ProSport (daily circulation: 70,000-80,000 copies) and Gazeta Sporturilor (25,000-30,000 copies).

In the last several years, local newspapers have increased their quality and readership. Newspapers published in the major cities have a local or regional circulation. Their daily circulation varies between 2-3,000 and 30-40,000 copies (major cities in Romania each have several hundred thousand inhabitants, without reaching half a million, while Bucharest has over two million people). Cities like Timisoara, Iasi, Cluj, Brasov, Galati, Constanta, Craiova, Sibiu have two to five dailies, but usually only one, or, in few cases, two titles in each city.

Romania does not have any afternoon or evening newspapers. Mainly because of distribution problems, all Romanian daily newspapers are morning newspapers. It would be too difficult, given the present infrastructure, to produce and sell afternoon or evening newspapers.

A separation of the Romanian daily newspapers by the Western model, in popular (tabloid) and quality papers is hard to be made, although there are some clear examples of tabloid press. By format and content, *Libertatea* is clearly a tabloid. *National*, even though it is printed in broadsheet format, can also be considered popular, as well as, to some extent, *Evenimentul Zilei* -- although the latter displays a combination of sensationalism and quality information. Targeting mostly business-oriented people, *Ziarul Financiar* is the most clear-cut example of Western-like quality information newspapers, while *Adevarul* and *Curentul* are also aiming at being considered quality press.

The number of national weeklies decreased since 1992. Political debate and information weeklies have disappeared or have been converted into entertainment magazines. Among the few that remained are satirical weekly *Academia Catavencu* (weekly circulation: 55-60,000 copies), actually a very influential magazine focused on political and social news and commentary with a humorous twist; business weekly *Capital* (weekly circulation: around 40-50,000 copies); and *Formula As* (no certified circulation figures available, but the magazine claims over 200,000 copies sold weekly). The latter combines useful information on health care and domestic issues such as kitchen recipes, with feature on various issues, political editorials and stories on Romanian and international artists.

However, some of the most successful weeklies are the weekend supplements of important national dailies. *Evenimentul de Weekend* (*Evenimentul Zilei*) and *Libertatea Week-end* (*Libertatea*), sold together with the main paper, print 200-250,000 copies a week. TV guides are also among the best sellers.

In the last several years, the market for monthly-specialised magazines has undergone serious development. There are several successful women's magazines (*Unica, Cosmopolitan, Elle, Avantaje, Burda, Lumea Femeilor* etc.), men's and adult magazines (*FHM, Playboy, Penthouse, Hustler* etc.), youth magazines (*Bravo, 20ani, Popcorn, Super* etc.), auto magazines (*AutoMotor&Sport, Auto Show, Auto Mondial* etc.), publishing from several dozen thousands to over 100,000 copies per month. (Alex Ulmanu, The Romanian media landscape - The European Journalism Center). For a comprehensive list of dailies and other Romanian publications and links to their Web pages, you can go to: www.ziare.go.ro.

**The Audiovisual media**

The audiovisual is the media field that developed the most after 1989. During the years of communism, the regime had suppressed one of the two public channels, and had reduced the national broadcast to two, then three ours every weekday.
At present, public television broadcasts through two national channels: *Romania 1*, a general interest channel, and *TVR2*, with a focus on cultural and educative programs, and two international satellite channels: *TVR International* and *TVR Cultural*. There are also several regional channels belonging to the public television, with *TVR Timisoara*, *TVR Cluj* and *TVR Iasi* the most prominent.

The public television has come under criticism due to its hybrid nature -- it is financed from a tax called *mandatory Radio and TV subscription*, as well as money from the centralized budget, and through advertising. It has also been subject to criticism for political bias, as its status makes it easy to be controlled by the political power.

There are several important private competitors for the public television at national level, the most important being *ProTV*, *Antena 1* and *Prima TV*. The first two have more viewers in the cities than the public television. Other stations broadcasting nationally via satellite are *Tele7abc*, *Acasa TV*, *Atomic TV* (music station), *OTV* and *Realitatea TV*. There are over 100 local private TV stations functioning at present all over Romania. Many have formed local networks or affiliated with big Bucharest-based stations like *ProTV*, *Antena1*, *Tele7abc* and *Antena 1*. Big international names such as *HBO*, *Hallmark*, *Fox Kids*, *Discovery*, *National Geographic*, *Animal Planet* and *Eurosport*, distributed via cable, have programmes translated into Romanian via text or voice.

In 2001 the National Broadcasting Council reported 2,093,121 households, or almost 27 percent off the total number of households, subscribed to cable television. According to the Cable Communications Associations, quoted by *AdMaker*, however, the number of subscribers is over 3.3 million. This makes Romania the fifth country in Europe by number of cable subscribers. In Bucharest and other big cities, the percent of households hooked to cable TV can reach 80-90 percent. At one point, there were 700 cable distributors. Many of them merged or were taken over by bigger players. Big cable TV companies have also started offering other services, such as cable Internet access and telephony services, upon the end of the Romtelecom monopoly in 2003. Romanian subscribers to cable TV get 18 to 40 Romanian, European and American stations.

The public radio has four national channels (News, Culture, Youth and Music), an international channel and ten local or regional channels broadcasting their own programs. The first private radio stations appeared in 1990, in Bucharest. They were FM stations broadcasting mainly music and hourly news bulletins. At present there are over 150 private local FM stations, the most important networks being established by *Radio Contact*, *Radio ProFM* and *Radio Uniplus*. FM stations are usually music stations with short news bulletins and few other shows. In 1999, the first licence has been issued for a regional private station. The tender was won by Europe Developpement International, a member of the Lagardere Group, which in May 2000 established *Europa FM*, broadcasting news and music all across Romania through a comprehensive network of FM frequencies. However, there are no AM private stations as yet (Alex Ulmanu, *The Romanian media landscape* - *The European Journalism Center*).

**News agencies**
The most important news agency at the moment is *Mediafax*, a private organisation established 1991 as the starting point of the MediaPro group. Most media outlets subscribe to one or more of its services, including general interest and specialised news, photo services, and business information for companies. *Rompres* is Romania's state-run agency. Before 1990, it was known as Agerpres. By its status, Rompres is the official agency of the Romanian government. Its political affiliation with the government has caused much criticism, and its rather low quality coverage has lost it much of its clients. However, at present Rompres claims 90 media institutions (newspapers, radio and TV stations) subscribe to its services. The agency also broadcasts news in Hungarian for the Hungarian-language media in Romania. Most central and local administration are Rompres subscribers. Other, smaller, news agencies are Rador (a department within the public radio), AM Press and AR Press (Alex Ulmanu, The *Romanian media landscape* - The European Journalism Center).

**Media Developments:**

One of the tendencies visible in the past several years has been media concentration. There are several big players on the media market. MediaPro is the biggest, comprising the ProTV and Acasa networks, the Mediafax news agency, the Radio ProFM network, Apropo.ro, ProSport, Ziarul Financiar, Playboy Romania, the Buftea film studios, other print titles and media companies. However, due to obscure financial practices and the bad advertising market, the company has been experiencing difficulties, visible in the worsening of TV and radio programmes, lay-offs and limited activity. MediaPro remains, however, one of the most important media groups in Romania.

The Swiss group Ringier holds several titles, including the tabloid Libertatea, one of the biggest national newspapers Evenimentul Zilei, the financial weekly Capital and several other specialised magazines. Another big player is Intact, owner of the Antena 1 TV network, as well as Romantic FM, the Jurnalul National daily and other titles. Its owner is a well-known businessman and party founder, who can afford to pay for the losses of his media empire with money gained in other businesses (Alex Ulmanu, The *Romanian media landscape* - The European Journalism Center).

**Newspapers (Websites)**

- [www.ziare.go.ro](http://www.ziare.go.ro) - online catalogue of all the Romanian newspapers and their websites
- [www.reviste.ro](http://www.reviste.ro) - online catalogue of all the Romanian magazines and their websites

**Adevarul**: [www.adevarulonline.ro](http://www.adevarulonline.ro) - national newspaper
**Capital**: [www.capital.ro](http://www.capital.ro) - financial and business newspaper
**Cotidianul**: [www.cotidianul.ro](http://www.cotidianul.ro) - national newspaper
**Evenimentul Zilei**: [www.evz.ro](http://www.evz.ro) - national newspaper
**Gazeta Sporturilor**: [www.gazetasporturilor.ro](http://www.gazetasporturilor.ro) - sport newspaper
**Jurnalul National**: [www.jurnalul.ro](http://www.jurnalul.ro) - national newspaper
**Prosport**: [www.prosport.ro](http://www.prosport.ro) - sport newspaper
**Ziarul de Iasi**: [www.ziaruldeiasi.ro](http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro) - local newspaper
The Political Structure

According to the Constitution adopted in 1991 and amended by referendum on October 18-19, 2003, Romania is a parliamentary republic with a bicameral Parliament. The two-chamber Parliament (the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate), elected for a four-year term, is the people's supreme representative body and the sole law-making authority. The president is elected by universal vote for two four-year terms at the most. The Government, validated by Parliament, provides general management of public administration.

There are numerous parties taking part in the Romanian political life; over 100 political parties are currently registered, but only the important ones are represented in Parliament. The ethnic minorities also have such a representation. Democratic rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution. The national flag is red, yellow and blue. Romania's national holiday is December 1, the day when the national unitary state was founded in 1918. Romania's territory is divided into 40 districts administered by prefects, plus the capital city, Bucharest. The mayors of municipalities, towns and villages are subordinated to the district administration.

Economy

Romania has made a slow and painful transition towards a market economy since its revolution in 1989. This transition was made more difficult by the legacy of the communist regime: centralization, a high degree of bureaucracy, and lack of experience in partial reform measures undertaken in other Central European economies during the 1980s. The starting point for the transition process in Romania was, in many respects, more difficult than in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Pre-transition policies emphasized self-reliance, which resulted in excessive focus on heavy industry and large infrastructure projects. During the 1980s, the rapid repayment of the US$11 billion foreign debt (20 to 30 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP)) imposed severe strains on the population, with deep cuts in imports and a widening of the technological gap. Towards the end of the 1980s the Romanian economy was on the verge of collapse. The successive governments that ruled the country between December 1989 and November 2000 avoided serious economic reforms, fearing "shock therapy" and its anticipated social costs. Reform packages to establish clear restructuring and privatization procedures, eliminate subsidies, establish a more efficient banking system, introduce a modern tax system, and encourage foreign investment all failed, largely due to lack of commitment and follow-through. Lenient government attitudes toward the accumulation of debts by state-owned enterprises, coupled with inefficient bankruptcy procedures, indirectly subsidized unprofitable behavior, while good corporate governance was undermined by vested interests (Romania, Country Commercial Guide 2003).

This strategy failed to produce sustainable gains in either economic or social conditions. Poverty increased sharply, with the share of the population living below the national poverty line doubling in the second half of the 1990s, from 20 to 41 percent by 1999. After three years of real GDP decline, the Romanian economy began to grow in 2000, boosted by the start of EU
accession discussions in Helsinki at the end of 1999. In 2000 the country recorded its first year of real GDP growth at 1.8 percent. In 2001, supported by strong export performance (over 20 percent growth in 2000 and a further 12 percent in 2001) and a gradual increase in aggregate consumption and investment, Romania began to show tangible progress on the path of reform and restructuring *(The World Bank Group, Country Brief 2001).* The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector is probably the most dynamic component of Romania's economy, and one that is receiving priority attention from the government. Over the last ten years, the sector has experienced impressive development, offering Romania the latest technologies in most sub-sectors. This will enable the country to make the transition to 3G communications at a fast pace.

At the end of 2001, Romania became the first country to deploy CDMA 2000 in Europe and the first in the world to build a high-speed (153 kbs) mobile digital 450 MHz network using the CDMA technology. The rapid growth of the ICT sector will be also sustained by the strength of Romania's large pool of highly skilled labor in engineering and electronics manufacturing, as well as by its high number of software developers.

Although the services sector has undergone rapid change since 1990, it remains far below western standards. As the Romanian economy develops, and especially in view of the changes that will be brought about by the information society, the following services are expected to register the fastest growth: banking, insurance, accounting, auditing, legal and financial consulting, advertising and media development. The development of the tourist industry will generate an increase in the market for hotel and restaurant services and leisure activities. Several large western companies specializing in consulting, legal services, accounting, auditing, and advertising already offer their services in Romania *(Romania, Country Commercial Guide 2003).*

Potential problems that should be considered are:

- Legislation changes frequently. Commercial and fiscal legislation is sometimes unclear, reflecting a certain legal confusion existing in Romania;
- Relationships with local municipal administration and other authorities are not always easy. Much still depends on the personality of public officials;
- International accounting standards and procedures are in an early stage of implementation;
- The level of exposure to western business practices is generally low. For this reason, providing solid training for employees is important.

*(Romania, Country Commercial Guide 2003 - Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center)*

The average net wage in April 2003 stood at about 130 Euros. Romanians have average savings of around 188 Euros. It should be noted that wages and savings in Bucharest are about three times the national average. A recent survey by the German market research company, GfK, indicates that nearly half of the population is barely self-sufficient. It was also indicated that 10% of the population make purchases equal in value to those made by 50% of the population.
Banks (Websites)

National Bank of Romania: http://www.bnro.ro
Alpha Bank Romania: http://www.alphabank.ro
Banc Post: http://www.bancpost.ro
Carpathica Commercial Bank, Sibiu: http://www.carpathica.ro
HVB Bank Romania: http://www.baca.ro
Raiffeisen - Agricola Bank: http://www.banca-agricola.ro
RoBank Commercial Bank: http://www.robank.ro
Romanian Bank - Banca Romaneasca: http://www.brom.ro
Romanian Bank for Development - Societe Generale: http://www.brd.ro
Romanian Commercial Bank - Banca Comerciala Romana (BCR): http://www.bcr.ro
Romanian Savings Bank - Casa de Economii si Consemnatiuni (CEC): http://www.rsb.ro
Transilvania Bank: http://www.btrl.ro

Other financial and economic links

Bucharest Stock Exchange: http://www.bvb.ro (English version)
Major Companies of Romania: www.major-companies.ro (English version)
Romanian Commodities Exchange: www.brm.ro/engleza.htm (English version)

Business in Romania

Like other countries in the region, Romania has worked to create a legal framework consistent with a market economy and investment promotion. Gradually it is moving to strengthen tax administration, enhance transparency and create legal means to reach expeditious resolution of contract disputes. In spite of progress, the unpredictability of the legal framework continues to undermine investor confidence. It is, therefore, recommended that any prospective investor consult appropriate legal counsel to get the most up-to-date information. Successful foreign companies tend to share a common approach to investing in Romania. Firstly, they establish themselves in Romania so that they are able to analyze the local situation and develop the most effective corporate strategy. Secondly, they come with a strategy that communicates long-term commitment to the Romanian market and government. This often paves the way for successful negotiations with economic ministries, the Privatization Authority, labor unions, and local partners. Investments that involve the government of Romania, either through sovereign guarantees or by the involvement of entities such as the Privatization Authority, are generally more complicated than greenfield investments or joint ventures with private Romanian companies. Large deals involving the government of Romania frequently become stymied by vested political and economic interests and bogged down by indecision within governmental ministries. Greater success has been encountered with less complex deals involving small to medium-sized private and state enterprises (Romania Country Commercial Guide Fy 2001).
Romanians are sociable and love to talk, so mobile phones are a must for doing business in the city. People are extremely friendly and a surprising number speak excellent English, although the older generation may prefer French or German. However, Bucharest natives are also extremely formal, in the old European sense, and business visitors should respect this tradition, making appointments for meetings well in advance. Punctuality is important and suits are expected. Although their partners are expected to be punctual, Romanians have a relaxed attitude towards time keeping. Meetings often start late and run over the allocated time. On greeting it is customary to shake hands and business cards are often exchanged. Business lunches may take two hours, with wine or beer the most popular tipple. Work colleagues may socialize together in the evening at a local bar, although this tends to take place more among those working in multinational companies. It is relatively uncommon for Romanians to invite foreign businesspeople to their homes. Should this occur, gifts such as flowers, chocolates or high quality Scotch will always be appreciated. Summertime is not good for doing business as many companies go into hibernation. Easter and Christmas are also difficult, as companies and shops close down for an indefinite period. Normal business hours are 0900-1700 (Tiscali Travel Guides Bucharest).

Business News (in English)

Business Review: [www.businessromania.com](http://www.businessromania.com) - a comprehensive English-language business website offering news features from various industries such as banking & finance, media & marketing, telecommunication, real estate, and investments.

Nine O’Clock: [www.nineoclock.ro](http://www.nineoclock.ro) - daily Romanian newspaper covering national and international news, business, sports, culture, weather, and more.

Bucharest Business Week: [www.bbw.ro](http://www.bbw.ro) - weekly business newspaper in English.

Invest Romania: [www.investromania.ro](http://www.investromania.ro) - business news in English.

Think Tanks

eRomania Gateway: [www.ro-gateway.org](http://www.ro-gateway.org)
eRomania Gateway (eRG) is a not-for-profit organization promoting and supporting e-development in Romania. Established in November 2001, the association is an open partnership between the public sector (represented by the Romanian Government as a founding member and under the umbrella of the Romanian Presidency), the business community and civil society organizations.

Idee: [www.идеe.ro](http://www.идеe.ro)
Idee is a knowledge institute, a think tank providing vision, tools, representation and management for establishing consensus on public choices.

Romanian Academic Society: [www.sar.org.ro](http://www.sar.org.ro)
The mission of the Romanian Academic Society is to enhance the contribution of independent experts to the process of policy design in Romania, through public dialogue and evaluations of alternative policy proposals and to contribute to the rebuilding of the fields of applied social sciences, economics and public policy in Romania after fifty years of Communism.

Romania Think Tank: [www.thinktankromania.ro](http://www.thinktankromania.ro)
The mission of the Romania Think Tank (RTT) is to improve the Romanian public’s understanding of the fundamental institutions of a free society, with particular reference to the role of the free market as well as a functioning and active civil society in solving the country’s economic and social problems.

Works cited/consulted


