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Romania

Europe

Geography

Area 238,391 sq km. Balkan state on the lower Danube River, a mix of mountains, hills and plains.

	Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	21,190,154	-0.41%	89/sq km
2020	20,379,656	-0.40%	86/sq km
2030	19,488,596	-0.48%	82/sq km

Capital Bucharest 1,934,433. **Urbanites** 54.6%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 15%. **Life expectancy** 72.5 yrs.

Peoples

Romanian 86.5%. A Latin people descended from Romans settled in Dacia.

Hungarian 6.6%. Primarily found in Transylvania.

Romani (Gypsy) 3.8%. This percent reflects a population of 800,000; actual numbers could be over 2 million.

Slav 1.4%. 9 peoples.

Turkic 0.8%. Rumelian Turks 0.7%.

Other 0.9%.

Literacy 97.3%. **Official language** Romanian.

All languages 23. **Indigenous languages** 15.

Languages with Scriptures 8Bi 4NT 5por 2w.i.p.

Economy

A land rich in agriculture, minerals and oil, but became more industrialized during Communism. Foreign investment is increasing as economic restructuring accelerates; Romania hopes to adopt the Euro by 2014. Romania now struggles with employment issues, especially in the service sector, since many people of working age emigrate to work elsewhere in Europe and increasing numbers of rural people abandon their farms.

HDI Rank 63rd/182. **Public debt** 14.7% of GDP. **Income/person** \$9,310 (20% of USA).

Politics

An independent country from 1859, followed by a Communist coup in 1947 with Russian support. Suffered under one of the Communist bloc's most oppressive and cruel regimes. The Revolution of 1989-90 overthrew that regime and introduced a parliamentary government. Economic and political gradualism characterized the 1990s, but the 21st Century sees positive progress with 2007 entry into the EU. A high-profile, anti-corruption campaign smoothed Romania's EU acceptance, but corruption and political power struggles continue to impede progress. Anti-minority nationalism persists against Hungarians and Gypsies.

Religion

Oppressive persecution was commonplace under Communism. Now, Romania is officially a secular state, but is dominated by the Orthodox Church, which replaced the government as the primary vehicle of religious discrimination. A 2006 law made it much more difficult to register denominations or charities and could be used to limit proselytism.

Religion	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	96.96	20,545,973	-0.2%
Non-religious	2.39	506,445	-8.7%
Muslim	0.58	122,903	-1.1%
Other	0.04	8,476	5.5%
Jewish	0.03	6,357	-0.4%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	24	6.64	1,406,000	0.3%
Independent	21	0.82	173,000	2.0%
Anglican	1	<0.01	<1,000	1.3%
Catholic	2	5.28	1,118,000	-0.9%
Orthodox	9	87.14	18,464,000	-0.4%
Marginal	3	0.80	169,000	0.8%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		-3.72	-789,000	0.0%

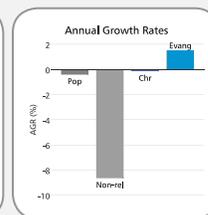
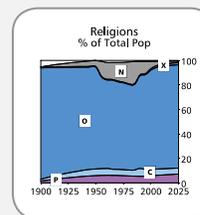
Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Romanian Orthodox	O	12,400	12,629,371	18,060,000
Roman Catholic	C	1,080	676,619	940,500
Reformed Ch of Rom	P	890	451,299	695,000
Pente Apos Ch of God	P	2,700	210,180	351,000
The Lord's Army	O	300	150,000	300,000
Greek Catholic	C	60	106,587	178,000
Romanian Bapt Union	P	1,770	67,714	118,500
Seventh-day Adventist	P	582	72,143	101,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	550	41,905	88,000
Unitarian Chs in Rom	M	172	15,600	78,000
Gypsy Evang Movement	I	483	29,000	58,000
Christian Brethren	P	870	22,550	45,100
Ukrainian Orthodox	O	23	30,075	40,000
Other denominations[41]		1,750	172,516	278,877
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>				-789,000
Total Christians[60]		23,630	14,675,559	20,542,977

The Romanian government officially recognizes 19 denominations; many more groups function as associations, a recognized but lesser status.

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	5.4	1,149,647	2.3%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	2.9	620,168	2.7%
Pentecostals	2.1	438,527	2.9%

Missionaries from Romania

P,I,A 230 international (130 long-term) in more than 12 agencies, to about 50 countries: many in India, China, Turkey, Peru, Romania, Moldova, Albania and Mozambique.



Answers to Prayer

- 1** Romania has a large and growing evangelical population, Europe's fourth largest. This is despite an overall decline in population. In fact, evangelicals are the only growing major religious group. Romania is considered one of the more spiritually receptive European nations.

2 A **sustained church planting movement** has existed since the fall of Communism. There are nearly 6,000 evangelical congregations in Romania, a number that is steadily increasing. There is also a long-term strategy to see churches planted in every remaining unreached town and village.

Challenges for Prayer

1 A **legacy of brokenness endures** from the days of Ceausescu's regime, a moral vacuum being filled with every kind of social evil. Substance abuse, prostitution, pornography, human trafficking and challenges to child welfare are widespread. Romania has one of the highest abortion rates in the world, with three or more abortions for every child born. Poverty is still common, with widespread unemployment and economic instability, caused to a large degree by rampant and entrenched corruption. Divisions in government reduce its effectiveness; major strides forward are needed in its legal, education and health care systems as well as police and local administrations. Pray for leadership that has the wisdom to chart the right path and the integrity to implement the right policies.

2 **Romania is one of the world's most Christian nations by percentage**, yet this is hard to perceive in society. A worldview shaped by atheistic Communism persists. Nominalism, legalism, hypocrisy and slander of other denominations are problems in all confessions, and such antagonism does not glorify Christ nor edify the Church. Folk religious practices and the occult permeate beyond rural superstitions even into the practice of some clergy. Very little practical ministry is being done to address community needs; the Church neglects many poor people. Pray for a breakthrough of love, holiness, discipleship and prayer in all denominations.

3 **The Orthodox Church dominates** society with 87% of the population affiliated. Cultural pressure to remain Orthodox, however nominal, persists. For many, this affiliation is inherited rather than reflective of a deeply held personal faith. Some Orthodox priests frequently oppose, sometimes violently, evangelical outreach. Yet within this ancient confession there is life and potential for great good. Pray for renewal from within and for the Holy Spirit to awaken those whose faith lies dead or dormant.

4 **The Lord's Army is a remarkable renewal movement** within the Orthodox Church with about 300,000 converted affiliates and many more sympathizers. Severely persecuted in the past, it is more accepted today. There are two expressions of one movement – one a branch of Orthodoxy, and the other a more independent movement linked to the Evangelical Alliance. Pray that these believers may act as leaven in the wider Orthodox Church with its large nominal membership. Pray also that the Lord's Army might inspire and foster similar movements in other Orthodox nations.

5 **Many challenges face the Church.** Since the fall of Communism, the Church has grown numerically and even matured, but there remains a long way to go.

a) **Lack of unity** is a major problem among denominations and within congregations. There is almost no cooperative work, concerted prayer or unified public voice. Ethnic divisions exist even within the Church, with the Hungarian and Romani minorities rarely enjoying fellowship with the Romanian majority.

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b) **Blind adherence to tradition** creates a Christian ghetto out of touch with the wider society. It becomes increasingly difficult to connect to non-Christians and young people in particular. Pray that churches find a balance between genuine holiness and cultural relevance.

c) **Materialism imported from the West** has a toxic effect on spirituality.

i *The deep spirituality of long-suffering churches is damaged.* Materialism is now a prevalent attitude, especially among the younger generation who aspire to a Western lifestyle at the cost of spiritual vitality.

ii *An unhealthy dependence on outside money* was created as a result of generous but ill-advised material assistance. This stunts the local church in many ways, it introduces potential divisions locally and it introduces difficulty in ministry partnerships as well as dangers of manipulation and questionable motives.

6 Leadership development in churches is a great need. The average pastor supervises multiple churches. Most new churches lack a pastor, and many pastors lack training. Active congregations with effective programmes will emerge from well-trained leaders.

a) **Bible schools and seminaries** have been launched by many denominations, many focused on pastoral training and leadership development. Yet these places of learning are not enough to fill the needs of the churches. Pray that the schools might be able to train increasing numbers of students who are biblically astute, spiritually on fire and ready to lead.

b) **Entrust** (formerly BEE - Bible Education by Extension) was pioneered in Romania and spread to many Communist Bloc countries. Pray for the hundreds of evangelical leaders studying part-time in BEE and other TEE courses. Now, an advanced course is also part of the programme.

7 Church planting is still a vital ministry. Over 100 new churches are planted each year, but many more are needed. A consortium of mission agencies works across evangelical denominational boundaries to facilitate reaching the 19 cities and 9,500 villages (43% of all villages) without a single evangelical church. Many more congregations are still needed in the cities. There is notable resistance to non-Orthodox expressions of Christianity in most villages, and rising costs and rapid cultural change make for urban challenges. Pray for this vision to become a widespread movement, owned by the national church and effective at planting churches in every city, town and village.

8 Foreign missionary deployment was rapid and profuse in the immediate post-Communist years. Amid much that was good and worthwhile, some workers went in with little tact and less wisdom, causing almost as much harm as help. There is still a great need for expatriate missions in training, church planting and meeting the many social needs. Pray that expatriate Christians called to serve may show sensitivity, humility, true partnership and an ability to learn from, and work alongside, Romanian Christians. Many Western (and Korean, African and Latin American) groups now work in partnership with Romanian agencies and churches. Among the largest sending agencies are ReachGlobal(RG), IMB, GEM, ABWE, OCI, AoG. Increasingly, ministries started by expats are being handed over to national direction and leadership.

9 The younger generation is a poignant image of the brokenness of Romania. Yet young people, especially in urban areas, are the segment of the population most responsive to the gospel. There are several significant prayer needs:

a) **Stories of the hundreds of thousands of orphans** and abandoned children in the 1990s broke the hearts of many. While this is still a great need, churches and missions do an increasingly good job caring for these young people. Working among them are the Baptists, Samaritans Purse, SGA, WVI and many other expatriate and national agencies. EU policies helped limit the unscrupulous use of adoption as a means of profit for some, but these actions also make it difficult for those doing effective ministry with orphaned and at-risk children.

b) **The relevance of Christianity to youth** is a challenge – this is more an issue of church culture and tradition than openness. Churched youth are often dedicated and effective in ministry. Unfortunately, most church programmes are not attractive to unbelieving young people. Pray for effective programmes and pastors who are willing and able to mobilize the youth into ministry, an area of ministry surprisingly lacking until now.

c) **Students and their discipleship.** CCCI, OSCER/IFES, Romanian Missionary Society (RMS), YFC, CEF, and the SdA all actively work with children and young people. Christian camps (RMS, Life 2 Romania) are a very fruitful ministry.

10 Romanians as a mission force are a new and quickly expanding dynamic. At least ten indigenous sending agencies have emerged since 2000, and training programmes are multiplying. Members of Partners in Mission, most notably OC, were instrumental in shaping these changes. Romanians can easily access fields that Westerners cannot, and agencies are interested in Romanians serving with them. Limiting factors are the lack of financial support/sponsorship and the lagging missions vision in many churches. Pray for the removal of every barrier to the full flowering of an indigenous missions movement.

11 The Romanian diaspora in Europe can be regarded as both crisis and opportunity. Looking for a better life, between 10 and 20% of Romanians have left the country since 1990, a trend accelerated by EU entry in 2007. Combined with urbanization, this damages social structures and many families and churches. The exodus of the younger generation and



the brain-drain of intellectuals and professionals will have a serious effect on the nation as will the trend of parents leaving their children with grandparents while they move abroad. But, on the positive side, many dynamic evangelical churches have been planted throughout Western Europe as a result. Pray that these churches might reach out beyond Romanians to the spiritually needy nations that host them. Pray also for more Romanian Christians to stay or to return in order to build up and transform their own nation.

12 **Evangelical churches are not evenly spread** throughout the nation. Pray for the following:

- a) **The southeast regions.** On average, the 15 counties in the northwest have many times more evangelicals than the 27 counties in the southeast. There are 7,000 villages in the southeast without an evangelical church. Pray that believers might be burdened for these less-reached areas and bring the light of the gospel to them.
- b) **Ethnic groups** that are less evangelical include Hungarians, Russians/Lipovens and Serbs – all a significantly lower proportion than ethnic Romanians.
- c) **The Muslim community** is not large, but it is in need of Christian witness. Most are Turks, Tatar or immigrants. Very little is done to reach them, although there have been some commendable initiatives in recent years.
- d) **The Romani (Gypsy) community**, notoriously difficult to count, but numbering between 500,000 and 2.5 million. Although they are proportionately more evangelical than majority Romanians, they remain a needy people. They suffer discrimination and isolation, with much lower standards of living, education, health care and employment. Government programmes raise these standards and integrate them into society, but deep-seated prejudice must be overcome. Hundreds of thousands flee Romania only to meet harsh treatment in other European countries. But they are also the most spiritually responsive ethnicity to the gospel. Increasingly, Christian Romani now have bold vision to reach their own people.

13 **Christian media ministries.**

- a) **Literature.** Pray for the Christian publishing houses and for the distribution networks to establish a viable, indigenously funded literature ministry. Pray that more locally written material might become available. Few pastors have a theological library. Pray that the recent inter-confessional NT will be a blessing and a useful tool for all Bible-minded Christians.
- b) **Broadcasting.** Radio ministry continues to develop despite difficulties with permission and licences. It is a powerful tool in Romania. RMS and **HCJB** collaborate with the EA on the Voice of the Gospel radio network, which includes eight FM stations, all uplinked to satellite. Pray for both local commercial Christian stations and transmissions from abroad. Alfa Omega TV and Credo are interdenominational stations available on cable, satellite and the Internet with immense potential impact in evangelism, discipleship and promoting Christian values.