TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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ROMANIA

Country name	Romania
State title	Romania
Name of citizen	Romanian
Official language	Romanian
Country name in official language	România
State title in official language	România
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	RO/ROU
Capital in official language	Bucureşti
English conventional name of capital	Bucharest

Introduction

Romania is a country in south-eastern Europe, sharing borders with Bulgaria to the south, Ukraine to the north, Hungary to the west, Serbia to the southwest, Moldova to the east, and the Black Sea to the southeast. Its area is 238,000 km^2, almost identical to Ghana and Laos. The population has been falling since 1990; on 1st July 2020 the legally resident population was 22,142,000, down 0.1% as against 1st July, 2019.[1]

Geographical Names Policy

Official Romanian place names are those in Romanian, the country's official language. Romanian is written in Roman script (the Romanian alphabet contains the 26 standard letters of the Roman alphabet plus 5 modified characters – see below for details). Names should be taken from official Romanian sources and all diacritics, hyphens and capitalisation should be retained.

Names should ideally be taken from sources produced following the 1993 spelling reform, whereby some words and names previously spelt with î were changed to be spelt with â. Spellings taken from older sources may need to be changed. For further guidance see the 'Script and diacritics' section of this document or contact PCGN.

Place names in minority languages may be found locally, and some minorities have recognised status at the local level, but these are not official place names and should not be used on UK products unless specifically required, in which case guidance should be sought from PCGN.

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[1] https://insse.ro/cms/en/content/permanent-resident-population-romania-1st-july-2020

Romania's geoportal is a useful source (though as noted below the spelling reform may not have been reflected in all cases). The Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS) database is also a useful source.

Country name

In Romanian, the spelling **România** has been used since the 1860s, apart from 1953 to 1964 when **Romînia** was the official form.

In English the spelling has been somewhat varied: in 1926 PCGN determined a preference for *Romania* but the spellings *Rumania* and *Roumania* were also both quite widespread through the first half of the 20th century. Supported by Romania's preference for the spelling *Romania* to be used in English-language contexts, this form was formalised for British official use in 1970. **Romania** is now the standard spelling in English and should be used in all English-language contexts, unless exactly quoting an old source.

Language and toponymic background

The Romanian language

Romanian is the official language of Romania and Moldova. Romanian is one of the Romance languages, i.e. it is descended primarily from Latin. In vocabulary and grammar it most closely resembles French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian.

However, there are aspects of vocabulary (including several geographical terms), grammar and pronunciation which are not of Latin origin, but instead originate from the non-Romance languages of Romania's numerous rulers or inhabitants over the past two thousand years and more, including Hungarian, Turkish, German, Greek and Slavic languages (e.g. Bulgarian and Russian).

The imposition of the Communist regime after World War 2 resulted in some villages, roads etc. being renamed after important Communists e.g. Brașov was renamed Orașul Stalin in 1950, reverting in 1960. This renaming very rarely affected natural features. Most such changes have been reversed since the overthrow of Ceaușescu in December 1989.

Script and diacritics

All the following rules and guidelines apply to the Romanian language only. Different rules apply to minority names in Hungarian etc. (and see more in Place names in other languages, below).

Prior to 1860, Romanian was normally written in a version of the Cyrillic alphabet. Since 1860, only Roman script has been used in Romania. Romanian uses all 26 letters of the Roman alphabet, but the letters k, q, w and y are only used in obvious borrowings from other languages and are unlikely to be found in place names. Additionally, five letters with diacritics are used in Romanian:

Upper case	Unicode character	Lower case	Unicode character
Ă	0102	ă	0103
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ș	0218	ș	0219
Ț	021A	ț	021B

Notes:

Â â and **Î î**

A and **I** can both use a circumflex accent (**Â** and **Î**): these letters are pronounced in exactly the same way as each other (both represent the sound /ɨ/). Their written usage has been changed several times since 1860. Between 1953 and 1993 the letter **â** was not used at all except (after 1964) in the country name *România* and associated adjectives (*român*, *românească*, *românești* etc.). In all other words, **î** was used instead.

Since a spelling reform in 1993, both letters are in use. **Î** is found at the beginning or the end of a word; **â** is found word-medially. Unfortunately, the best large-scale map series available of Romania dates from the 1990s and the change from **î** to **â** has not been made on some sheets. These maps were used as a source for the GEOnet Names Server (GNS) database so this is also sometimes out of date. The Romanian GeoPortal may also not always be consistent.

These changes do not always apply to personal names. People whose names include **î** may retain this spelling.

Table: Examples of the vowels **â** and **î**.

Old (pre-1993)	New (post-1993)
Cîmpulung	*Câmpulung* [name of a populated place]
pîrîu	*pârâu* [meaning 'stream']
Sfînt	*Sfânt* [meaning 'saint']
Tîrgoviște	*Târgoviște* [name of an administrative seat]
vîrf	*vârf* [meaning 'peak']

Ș ș and Ț ț

Romanian can be easily distinguished from any other national European language by its use of **s** and **t** with sub-comma (*virguliță* in Romanian). This symbol should not be a cedilla, although this is often encountered where suitable fonts are not available (see table on page 2 for the correct Unicode encodings for these characters).

Capitalisation and hyphenation

Words should be capitalised and hyphenated as they appear in reliable Romanian sources.

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Administrative structure

The first-order administrative (ADM1) division of Romania is the *județ* (plural: *județe*), usually translated as "county". There are 41 of these, plus the municipality of Bucharest (Municipiul București). The division of Romania into *județe* has existed since 1859, except for the period 1950 to 1968. The most recent change was in 1997, when Ilfov was created. Most *județe* are named after rivers or chief towns. The word *județ* followed by a toponym becomes definite as *județul*. A map of the administrative structure of Romania can be found here:

https://insse.ro/cms/files/Publicatii_2020/84.Repere_economice_si_sociale_Statistica_teritoriala/repere_economice_si_sociale_regionale_2020_statistica_teritoriala_cd_rom.pdf .

ADM1 county / municipality	ISO 3166-2 code	PPLA county seat	Location of county seat	Notes
Alba	RO-AB	Alba Iulia	46° 04' 00"N 23° 35' 00"E	
Arad	RO-AR	Arad	46° 11' 00"N 21° 19' 00"E	
Argeș	RO-AG	Pitești	44° 51' 00"N 24° 52' 00"E	
Bacău	RO-BC	Bacău	46° 34' 00"N 26° 54' 00"E	
Bihor	RO-BH	Oradea	47° 04' 00"N 21° 56' 00"E	
Bistrița-Năsăud	RO-BN	Bistrița	47° 08' 00"N 24° 29' 00"E	
Botoșani	RO-BT	Botoșani	47° 45' 00"N 26° 40' 00"E	
Brașov	RO-BV	Brașov	45° 38' 00"N 25° 35' 00"E	Named Orașul Stalin between 1950 and 1960
Brăila	RO-BR	Brăila	45° 16' 00"N 27° 59' 00"E	
București (Municipiul)	RO-B	București	44° 26' 00"N 26° 06' 00"E	
Buzău	RO-BZ	Buzău	45° 09' 00"N 26° 50' 00"E	
Caraș-Severin	RO-CS	Reșița	45° 18' 03"N 21° 53' 21"E	
Călărași	RO-CL	Călărași	44° 12' 00"N 27° 20' 00"E	
Cluj	RO-CJ	Cluj-Napoca	46° 46' 00"N 23° 36' 00"E	
Constanța	RO-CT	Constanța	44° 11' 00"N 28° 39' 00"E	

ADM1 county / municipality	ISO 3166-2 code	PPLA county seat	Location of county seat	Notes
Covasna	RO-CV	Sfântu Gheorghe	45° 52' 00"N 25° 47' 00"E	Former spelling: Sfîntu Gheorghe. Hungarian names: Kovászna / Szentgyörgy (Hungarians formed 74% of the county's population in 2011).
Dâmbovița	RO-DB	Târgoviște	44° 56' 00"N 25° 27' 00"E	Former spellings: Dîmbovița / Tîrgoviște
Dolj	RO-DJ	Craiova	44° 19' 00"N 23° 48' 00"E	
Galați	RO-GL	Galați	45° 27' 00"N 28° 03' 00"E	
Giurgiu	RO-GR	Giurgiu	43° 53' 00"N 25° 58' 00"E	
Gorj	RO-GJ	Târgu Jiu	45° 03' 00"N 23° 17' 00"E	Former spelling: Tîrgu Jiu
Harghita	RO-HR	Miercurea Ciuc	46° 21' 00"N 25° 48' 00"E	Hungarian names: Hargita & Csíkszereda (Hungarians formed 85% of the county's population in 2011).
Hunedoara	RO-HD	Deva	45° 45' 00"N 22° 54' 00"E	
Ialomița	RO-IL	Slobozia	44° 34' 00"N 27° 22' 00"E	
Iași	RO-IS	Iași	47° 10' 00"N 27° 36' 00"E	
Ilfov	RO-IF	București	44° 26' 00"N 26° 06' 00"E	
Maramureș	RO-MM	Baia Mare	47° 40' 00"N 23° 35' 00"E	
Mehedinți	RO-MH	Drobeta-Turnu Severin	44° 37' 55"N 22° 39' 22"E	
Mureș	RO-MS	Târgu Mureș	46° 33' 00"N 24° 34' 00"E	Former spelling: Tîrgu Mureș
Neamț	RO-NT	Piatra Neamț	46° 55' 00"N 26° 20' 00"E	
Olt	RO-OT	Slatina	44° 26' 00"N 24° 22' 00"E	
Prahova	RO-PH	Ploiești	44° 57' 00"N 26° 01' 00"E	
Satu Mare	RO-SM	Satu Mare	47° 48' 00"N 22° 53' 00"E	

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ADM1 county / municipality	ISO 3166-2 code	PPLA county seat	Location of county seat	Notes
Sălaj	RO-SJ	Zalău	47° 12' 00"N 23° 03' 00"E	
Sibiu	RO-SB	Sibiu	45° 48' 00"N 24° 09' 00"E	
Suceava	RO-SV	Suceava	47° 38' 00"N 26° 15' 00"E	
Teleorman	RO-TR	Alexandria	43° 59' 00"N 25° 20' 00"E	
Timiș	RO-TM	Timișoara	45° 44' 58"N 21° 13' 38"E	
Tulcea	RO-TL	Tulcea	45° 10' 00"N 28° 48' 00"E	
Vaslui	RO-VS	Vaslui	46° 38' 00"N 27° 44' 00"E	
Vâlcea	RO-VL	Râmnicu Vâlcea	45° 06' 00"N 24° 22' 00"E	Former spelling: Rîmnicu Vîlcea
Vrancea	RO-VN	Focșani	45° 42' 00"N 27° 11' 00"E	

Place names in other languages

Since 1991, minority languages have been granted a degree of legal, official status in areas where minorities constitute over 20% of the population. This extends to the use of place names and primarily affects areas of Transylvania with a Hungarian-speaking population. Some Hungarian sources provide a Hungarian name for every village, river and mountain in the pre-1918 Hungarian regions, including areas that have or had very few Hungarian inhabitants. Hungarian and other names may be encountered in many sources (including road signs) but should not be added on a map as alternative names without further guidance from PCGN. It is interesting to note that some of the place names used in the Romanian language are based on the Hungarian names for these features, e.g. Timișoara (Hungarian: Temesvár – vár meaning 'castle').

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Other Significant Features

PCGN Recommended Name[2]	Romanian Name	Conventional Name (if applicable)	Other Names	Location	Feature Type
Black Sea	Marea Neagră	Black Sea	Cherno More (*bul*), Chernoye More (*rus*), Chorne more (*ukr*) Karadeniz (*tur*) შავი ზღვა (*Shavi Zghva*) (*geo*)	43° 00' 00"N 35° 00' 00"E	Sea (littoral states: Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine)
Dunărea / Danube	Dunărea	Danube	Donau (*deu*), Duna (*hun*), Dunaj (*slk*), Dunav (*ser*, *bul*), Dunai (*ukr*)	45° 20' 00"N 29° 40' 00"E	River
Mureș	Mureș	-	Maros (*hun*)	46° 15' 04"N 20° 11' 47"E	River
Olt	Olt	-		43° 43' 00"N 24° 51' 00"E	River
Prut	Prut	-		45° 28' 08"N 28° 12' 27"E	River
Carpaţii Meridionali (Transylvanian Alps)	Carpaţii Meridionali	Transylvanian Alps	Southern Carpathians	45° 30' 00"N 24° 15' 00"E	Mountain range
Podişul Transilvaniei (Transylvanian Basin)	Podişul Transilvaniei	Transylvanian Basin	Transylvanian Plateau	46° 30' 00"N 24° 30' 00"E	Plateau
Munţii Carpaţi / Carpathian Mountains	Munţii Carpaţi	Munţii Carpaţi	Karpaty (*ces*, *slk*, *pol*, *ukr*), Kárpátok (*hun*), Karpati (*ser*), Karpaten (*deu*), Carpathians	47° 00' 00"N 25° 30' 00"E	Mountain range

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[2] PCGN may recommend transnational feature names (e.g. rivers and mountain ranges) be shown with their conventional English name and/or the relevant local form according to the product. Specific guidance is available on request.

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PCGN Recommended Name[2]	Romanian Name	Conventional Name (if applicable)	Other Names	Location	Feature Type
Negoiu	Negoiu	-	Vârful Negoiu, Negoj-csúcs, Negoiu Peak	45° 35' 00"N 24° 34' 00"E	Mountain
Moldoveanu	Moldoveanu	-	Vârful Moldoveanu, Moldavian Peak, Moldoveanu Peak	45° 36' 00"N 24° 44' 00"E	Mountain

Sources and useful references

- BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17776265
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html
- FCDO Travel Advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/romania
- Romanian Geoportal: https://geoportal.ancpi.ro/portal/home/
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/
- Changes of Romanian place names during the communist era, Ion Nicolae http://humangeographies.org.ro/articles/11/5NICOLAE.pdf in *Post-communist Romania: Geographical Perspectives, edited by Duncan Light and David Phinnemore, Liverpool Hope Press, 2000, pp. 1-6*
- Historical dictionary of Romania by Kurt Treptow and Marcel Popa. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham Maryland & London. 1996.
- https://www.pinterest.com/pin/457256168396433362/ (Map of Romanian dialects)
- http://www.istro-romanian.com/history/history-language.htm (Text and map of Romanian dialects)
- http://www.lowlands-l.net/anniversary/romana-info.php (Text and map of Romanian dialects)
- Romania National Statistics Institute: https://insse.ro/cms/en
- Romanian Toponymic Guidelines for Maps and Other Editors: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/15th-gegn-docs/15th_gegn_WP20.pdf ; https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/17th-gegn-docs/17th_gegn_WP79-e-f.pdf

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