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ROMANIA



r o m a n i a
a nation-state
anciently founded
between the East and the West
a synthesis culture
a society undergoing modernization
a society undergoing harmonization
a society in the United Europe



The name. Romania originates from the Latin *romanus*. The oldest indication appeared in the Song of the Nibelungs, in the person of Ramunch, Duke of Wallachia. At the beginning of the 16th century, Italian travelers sent by Vatican to the Romanian countries (Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania) reported that “the Wallachians call themselves Romanians in their own language”. Dimitrie Cantemir, Ruler of Moldavia and a well-known scholar, described the three principalities of Romanian language as “the Romanian countries”. The official acknowledgment and usage of the term dates back in the second half of the 19th century, firstly with regard to the Principalities and then the Kingdom of Romania.



ROMANIA

place and habitancy fundamentals

Present day's Romania is an almost round-shaped country, literally expressing, by its very essence, a degree of integration and coagulation which go beyond any historical division and arguments; the integration process was supported by the unity of language and culture, in light of the harmonies this new and unitary culture the Romanians have long dreamt of showing. The Romanian principalities existed as individual entities, without ever losing their statehood, and thus the modern state in its actual form has a long and subtle historical background of avoiding its own dissolution. There are different ways in which we can see modern Romania and the level of its being adequate: it has the right size and location in Europe, at the intersection of parallel 45 with the meridian 25 Eastern longitude, at mid-distance between the borders of Europe; in size-terms, it is the ninth European country with its 238,391 sq km and 20 million inhabitants, at a density of 84.4 people/sq km. Its relief forms are also adequate, the country being spread around the Carpathian arc with peaks and plateaus 2,500 m high, with abrupt hills and slow foothill areas going down to rich plains around large rivers, the low delta, the lakes and swamps; the mountains, the hills and the plains spread proportionally and quite symmetrically, taking about one third of the entire country area. The climate is also appropriate, all four seasons being well defined by a temperature gap of 60 Celsius degrees; a healthy variation between the dry and the wet seasons of the year, a rich water source springing in a circle from the mountains to the plains; the overall matches and balances nurture a richly varied flora and fauna; the population, until recently, mostly rural, sedentary and connected to the place of birth has created such varied and exceptionally consistent cultures; the Romanian brilliant poet and philosopher, Lucian Blaga, used words of simplicity and warmth in his description: life in these places has its own harmonic rhythms, it is a waving motion, it is a warm animation based on the isomorphism between the forms of this country's soil, life and vibration in the souls of its inhabitants. The people were attracted to modernity by the idealistic and romantic intellectuals who believed in the pre-determination of destinies, believed in the symbiosis of values generously brought in by the European Illuminism with the overall culture of the Romanian countries; the transformations to synchronize with the European Western values started before 1848 and became stronger and unstoppable afterwards. The modern state was born around the year 1859 when the same ruler, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was elected both in Wallachia and Moldavia, the new formation being recognized as independent, however remaining a tax-payer to the Ottoman Empire. Full recognition as an independent and sovereign state was made after the Independence War in 1877, during the ruler Carol I of Hohenzollern. In 1918, after two years of neutrality and two years of war, as a Triple Entente participant, the result was that Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia united with Romania, forming Great Romania with an expanse of 295,641 sq km, the biggest ever. In 1923, The Romanian Kingdom adopts the most advanced form of Constitution, following the Belgian model. On the eve of World War II (1940) Great Romania, under the pressure of Nazi Germany, had to give up territories to Hungary (the North-Eastern part of Transylvania), Bulgaria (the Quadrilateral) and the Soviet Union (Bessarabia, Hertza and North Bukovina). After the abolishment of Antonescu's regime on the 23rd of August 1944, and turning against the Axis Powers, Romania joined the Allied Powers (England, the United States, France and the Soviet Union) and recovered the Northern part of Transylvania, the action being acknowledged by the Paris Peace Treaty signed on the 10th of February 1947; in the same historical period Romania, under the Soviet occupation at that time, abolished the monarchy, King Michael left the country and the Popular Romanian Republic was instated; the new Constitution brought about significant social changes, the state took the enterprises under its ownership, and a terror regime under the Stalin authorities saw its beginning; the complicated process of coming out from the Stalin regime was initiated by the communist dictator Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and continued by Nicolae Ceausescu, the nationalist dictator; in 1968, the Soviets' and other allies' intervention in Czechoslovakia called for a declaration of independence, the political reorientation of Romania and a great international popularity of Nicolae Ceausescu; despite the great national energies unleashed at the time, the socialist order kept its firm position and became extremely oppressive under Ceausescu's personality cult. After the Communist regime was abolished in 1989 and after the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991, a new Constitution was adopted in respect of the private property, the separation of state powers, the guarantee of parliamentary democracy and human rights; Romania has become a semi-presidential republic with a bi-cameral Parliament, made up of the Senate and the Chamber of deputies; following some changes, the Parliament is elected every four years by a scrutiny vote, complying with the proportionality principle, while the president is elected for a 5-year term by direct vote. After a decade of economic instability, the shifting of power favored the adoption of some liberal measures (such as the single tax law in 2005, still valid) leading to a significant economic growth, the accession to NATO, the integration in the European Union in 2007, opening of markets and exports, the accommodation of laws. Romania leaves behind the late economic crisis at great costs and sacrifices, recording a significant economic growth rate in recent years; still far from covering the distance to model European Western countries, Romania gathers its strength to overcome the after-war historic handicap, the mindset drawbacks and the action barriers imposed by the global politics context. *It is a country which believes in its own destiny.*

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ROMANIA

place and habitancy

the mountains, sub-mountains and transhumance

The unity of culture and language and its long-term resilience represent the huge advantage of this quite unique place. Beginning with the 13th century (after the fierce migratory invasions) the populations of Romanian culture and language lastly settled around the Romanian Carpathians.



Beginning with the 13th century (after the fierce migratory invasions) the populations of Romanian culture and language lastly settled around the Romanian Carpathians, on the outer hilly ring and on the Transylvanian plateau, the area encompassed by the mountains. We could see the habitats on the hills, gathered in the mountain regions and spread down to the plain areas depending on the conditions of those harsh times. It was also the Carpathian ring which determined the settlement of Romanian principalities, as state forms: the Wallachians in the South formed Wallachia, those in the West and North created the Principality of Transylvania, and Moldavia was settled in the East, after Dragoș crossed the mountains. The plains and the mountain ridges were grazing and hunting places, often the mountain tops bearing small specific activity settlements which were improvised representations of the downhill villages; they were also very appropriate as hideouts in case of danger (following the old tradition, the last event of this kind took place in the 50' when the anti-Stalin regime partisans took refuge in the mountains). The forested mountains and sub-mountains together with the plains and the long valleys in between hills are the benchmarks of the Romanian culture which is defined by its millennia-long civilization of woodworking and cattle breeding and its rich natural resources. The symbiosis of culture and nature led to an astonishing demographic growth in Transylvania between the 16th and the 17th centuries and later on in Wallachia and Moldavia. A Hungarian manuscript from those times noticed, not without surprise, that the Romanians breed ceaselessly because of the milk they drink, even as babies. This demographic growth gave more force to transhumance, a movement of livestock to the plains in the autumn so as to pass the winter in lower and warmer regions where the pastures were still green; in late spring, the herds were moved back to the grazing lands in the mountains. Once the safety of those economic journeys increased, the shepherds started to create small settling places through out the low hills or green forested plains and, in time, they gathered in the newly created villages under the name of highlanders. The mountain and high hill villages had a culture which measured the time by the tempo of labor, with strong rules, with the celebration of seasons and ages by specific holidays, abiding by a strict religious calendar, with feasts, burial traditions and church ceremonies. The shepherds in these regions had a more serene, contemplative, geometrical and philosophical view of life than the people in lower lands. This harsh, severe culture of the mountain and sub-mountain village shaped the mindset of free Romanians, often organized in communities, such as it was in the Land of Vrancea. From the North to the South and from the West to the East, the village cultures were very different and made unique groups, known as lands (of Lăpuș, Făgăraș, Vrancea, Maramureș, Herța...) where the same language with a prevailing Latin heritage was spoken, the people were Christian Orthodox, many Transylvanians keeping their religion and just formally calling themselves Catholics, subjects of the Pope. The German and Hungarian villages were sedentary cultures, made up of cattle breeders, farmers and merchants who lived in fortified villages and boroughs, following their own rules and principles and keeping good relationships with the Romanian majority population. In these villages and boroughs the crafts started to flourish, people created their own implements, they became apt in metalworking and diversified their skills further on. Salt was extracted from deep new and old mines present all over the place in the sub-mountain areas, in the historical regions, except Dobruja; many Romanians dug for gold in the Oaș Land rivers, others looked for deposits following the traces of old Romans, others dug for coal and others worked in marble and granite mines. As years passed, lands were deforested to create more space for agriculture, crafts became more in the focus and small urban communities became stronger, giving a new aspect to these high lands. The sub-mountain borders of the principalities were inhabited by villagers who kept the borders safe, the passages had fortresses and strongholds, with soldiers and tax collectors, the towns became stronger at commercial crossroad points. The ring mountain (almost 1000 km long) with the sub-mountains and hills are the reasons due to which the principalities remained separate and distinct and the people and their trades had that specific coverage in the last millennium. The unity of culture and language and its long-term resilience represent the huge advantage of this quite unique place.

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