



Romania

General Information



Population

19 051 804 (World Bank 2024)

19 036 031 (STAT RO 2024)



Immigration

655 579 (UN Immigration Stock 2024)

288 011 (STAT RO 2024)



Emigration

4 583 819 (UN Emigration Stock 2024)

229 180 (STAT RO 2024)



Working-age population

12 250 927 (World Bank 2024)

8 304 300 (STAT RO 2024)



Unemployment rate

5.4 % (World Bank 2024)

5.5 % (STAT RO 2024)



GDP

382 564 217 988.9 current prices USD (World Bank 2024)

518 092 900 000 current prices RON (STAT RO 2024)



Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

192 949 (UNHCR 2025)

260 (Eurostat 2024)

Asylum Seekers

114 (UNHCR 2025)

2 265 (Eurostat 2024)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2025)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Years of Residency

8 years of residence required (GLOBALCIT 2024)



Territory

238 391 km² (CIA World Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Line Ministries

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity

Agencies

General Inspectorate for Immigration

Department for Romanians Abroad (Romanian Government)

National Employment Agency

Romanian Border Police

National Statistical Council (NSC)

National Institute of Statistics (statistical database)

Key Policy Documents

2021-2024 National Strategy on Immigration

Law 122/2006 on asylum in Romania

Government Emergency Ordinance no. 35 of May 17, 2023 for the modification and completion of normative acts regarding the field of foreigners and asylum in Romania

Government Emergency Ordinance no. 96 of 28 June 2024, on the provision of humanitarian support and assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from the area of the armed conflict in Ukraine (RO)

Government Emergency Ordinance no. 1178 of September 25, 2024 establishing the amount, conditions and mechanism for granting lump sums according to Government Emergency Ordinance No. 96/2024 on the provision of support and humanitarian assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from the area of the armed conflict in Ukraine (RO)

Government Decision No. 505 of May 16, 2024, amending and supplementing certain normative acts regarding the content of the residence permit for beneficiaries of temporary protection

Order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity No. 1,938 of July 30, 2024 on the approval of the Procedure for the employment of Ukrainian citizens coming from the armed conflict zone in Ukraine (RO)

Relevant Publications

Migration Observatory Selected Publications 2023-24

Exploring the Potential of Digitalisation in Migration Management in the Prague Process Region

Digitalisation and labour migration: the use of modern technology, challenges and opportunities

How will migration to Europe look in the Future?

Intra-corporate Transferees (ICTs): The benefits for the EU and the opportunity cost

Romania Extended Migration Profile 2010

Romania, traditionally a country of emigration, has recently experienced a shift in its migration dynamics. In 2023-2024 the [population grew](#) slightly for the first time in three decades, driven mainly by the inflow of people displaced from Ukraine. This trend began to reverse in 2025, when the population fell to [19,036,031](#) in January. Despite this decline, net migration remained positive in 2024, with immigrants outnumbering emigrants by [58,800](#). However, this inflow was insufficient to counterbalance persistent natural decrease. Romania's demographic outlook therefore continues to be shaped by long-standing structural challenges, including population ageing and a shrinking labour force. In 2024, the working-age population reached [8.3 million](#) (up 0.4% from 2022), and the employment rate rose modestly to [63.8%](#), an increase of 0.8% compared with 2023.

Emigration of Romanian citizens has continued to rise gradually. Over the past 10-15 years, more than [2 million](#) Romanians – close to 20% of the labour force – have left the country, many on a long-term or permanent basis. According to UN DESA, [4.58 million](#) Romanians lived abroad in 2024, with the largest communities in Germany (968,697), Italy (880,402) and the United Kingdom (713,578). In 2024 alone, [229,180](#) people emigrated from Romania, a 13.9% increase compared with 2022 ([201,076](#)).

High-skilled emigration remains a major challenge. Emigration rates for medical personnel were already high in 2020 – 28.5% of [doctors](#) (25,499) and 24% of [nurses](#) (46,882) – and have continued to increase. Romanian nurses are particularly numerous in Italy, Germany and Hungary, while significant numbers of Romanian doctors work in France, Germany and Hungary. Romania is also unique in the EU for its strong “[e-migration](#)” trend: it is the only EU Member State among the world's top 20 sources of [software developers](#) on major English-language freelancing platforms, with many professionals working for foreign employers remotely without physically leaving the country.

In 2022, nearly [36,000](#) Romanian students were enrolled in universities abroad. Europe remains their top choice, with [60% of 2025](#) applications targeting European institutions, especially in the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy, followed by the UK and the US. Most students [do not intend to return](#) after graduation, contributing to Romania's brain drain.

In 2024, the number of returning Romanian citizens reached [28,431](#), nearly twice as few as in 2022. Given Romania's shrinking working-age population and declining youth cohorts, encouraging return migration has become increasingly important. However, current [diaspora policies](#) focus mainly on cultural identity and social support, with no comprehensive strategy to promote productive return or strengthen economic engagement. Remittances remain a notable contribution to Romania's economy – historically around [3% of GDP](#) – though their share declined to [2.5% in 2024](#).

According to UN DESA, Romania's immigrant stock reached [655,579](#) people in 2024, with the largest groups coming from Ukraine (27.8%), Italy (13.4%), Spain (13%), Moldova (12.3%) and Türkiye (0.8%). In the same year, [288,011](#) people immigrated to Romania – only slightly fewer than in [2023](#). In 2024, Romania issued over [57,000](#) first-time residence permits to non-EU nationals, the highest number since 2015. Of them, [51,511](#) were valid for more than 12 months. Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh were the top three nationalities among these newcomers. Most newcomers arrived for work: labour migrants accounted for 80.6% of all long-term permits (41,501), followed by family reunification (9.5%) and education (7%). Additional short-term permits were granted to around [1,800](#) international students and 2,600 temporary and seasonal workers. By the end of 2024, the number of [valid residence permits](#) for non-EU nationals rose to 156,940, up from 115,558 in 2022. Nepali citizens held the largest share (17.8%), followed by Sri Lankans (10.5%) and Turkish nationals (9.1%). Nepal also showed the fastest growth among the top nationalities, with 17,662 more valid permits than in 2022.

Labour migration to Romania has expanded rapidly in recent years, driven by strong employer demand, low entry barriers, and rising annual quotas. Employment authorisation requests climbed from [29,000 in 2020](#) to over 130,000 in 2024, with the [100,000-permit quota](#) fully used each year since 2022 – although only about one-third of issued authorisations translated into [actual arrivals](#). The number of non-EU nationals holding valid full-time contracts doubled from 54,000 in 2021 to nearly 140,000 in 2024, concentrated in low-skilled sectors; EU Blue Card holders remain below 1%. In 2025, non-EU workers were most represented in [production \(29,141\)](#), [construction \(28,538\)](#), [trade \(20,008\)](#), [HoReCa \(18,844\)](#), and [administrative/support services \(12,189\)](#). Nepal, Sri Lanka, Türkiye and India remained the main source countries, together accounting for over [60%](#) of for agricultural, construction, cleaning, and cargo-handling workers. In 2020, Romania introduced [special provisions](#) exempting Moldovan, Serbian and Ukrainian citizens from the requirement to obtain work authorisation, enabling faster labour market entry and supporting sectors with acute labour shortages such as agriculture, construction, and services. This policy has broadened employers' access to workers across a wide skill range, from IT specialists to textile workers and engineers. Despite identified [154 shortage occupations](#) in 2023 – the fourth highest number in the EU – Romania continued to face persistent labour market mismatches, partly due to weak vacancy data and uneven workforce distribution.

[International students](#) form an important share of Romania's higher education system, accounting for 5-6% of roughly half a million students. Their numbers have grown steadily: in 2023-24, Romania hosted around 38,000 international students, 38% more compared with 2016-17. This rise reflects affordable tuition and the availability of programmes taught in foreign languages. Most non-EU students come from Moldova, Serbia, Israel, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Jordan, alongside sizeable cohorts from France, Italy, Germany, Greece, and Hungary. Almost half study biological and biomedical sciences, with medical programmes particularly popular.

Beyond regular migration channels, Romania has also seen increasing irregular movements. In 2024, authorities [refused entry to 10,160](#) migrants at the border, up 42% from 2023. Moldovan nationals accounted for the majority of refusals (5,950 or 58.6%), while refusals of Ukrainians tripled to 1,475 and those of Russians halved to 220. The number of [non-EU nationals found to be illegally present](#) also remained high at [32,550](#), driven mainly by rising detections of Ukrainians (15,025) and Moldovans (12,830). Meanwhile, return orders fell by [46.2% to 3,895](#), of which only [1,045](#) resulted in actual returns.

[First-time asylum applications](#) dropped sharply by [77% in 2024 to 2,265](#), reflecting [reduced pressure](#) along the Western Balkans

route, stronger border controls, and shifts in transit patterns. Most applicants came from Syria (700), Nepal (200), and Iraq (200). Nationals of the West Bank and Gaza saw the largest increase (65), while Bangladeshi applications fell the most (-2,700). Of 2,220 decisions issued in 2024, 34% were positive. Since February 2022, Romania has hosted one of Europe's largest Ukrainian refugee populations. More than 3 million displaced persons from Ukraine have transited the country, and around 195,550 remained as of October 2025. Following the introduction of temporary protection measures, over 162,000 temporary protection permits have been issued or renewed, granting beneficiaries access to the labour market without a work permit. Romania has committed to [extending temporary protection](#) until March 2027.

In recent years, Romania has continued to face persistent challenges in [combating trafficking in human beings](#). Sexual exploitation remains the most prevalent form, followed by forced labour. While primarily a country of origin, Romania also acts as a transit and destination country. In 2024, authorities identified around 600 victims, slightly fewer than in previous years, while investigations increased compared with 2023. Convictions remained broadly stable, with over 160 cases recorded annually. Children accounted for nearly half of all identified victims, highlighting sustained vulnerabilities among minors and marginalized groups. Despite legislative amendments and strengthened penalties adopted in 2024, gaps persist in victim identification, protection, and support.

Romania continued to update its migration and asylum framework. In [March 2024](#), amendments to the [legal regime governing foreigners](#) simplified procedures for obtaining and extending residence permits for work, study, and family reunification, while introducing revised conditions for employing foreign nationals, particularly in high-demand sectors such as IT and healthcare. The [EU Blue Card Directive](#) was also transposed in 2024, extending permit validity to up to three years, broadening eligibility based on professional experience, and easing family reunification and contract requirements. Reforms also extended to asylum and return. [Amendments to the Asylum Act in 2024](#) aimed to improve coherence and align national legislation with evolving EU standards. In [March 2025](#), the EUAA and Romania initiated the 2025-2026 Operational Plan, focussing on enhancing reception capacities and asylum procedures. The plan includes reception support, to improve the quality assurance of reception and address gaps identified.

Institutional and operational integration at the EU level advanced further with Romania's phased accession to the Schengen Area. In [January 2025](#), Romania became full member of the Schengen Area after the checks on persons at the internal land borders were lifted, although [internal air and sea border controls](#) were already lifted since 31 March 2024. On the same date, Romania obtained full access to the [Visa Information System](#) and began issuing Schengen visas. Romania became the first EU Member State to [finalise and submit](#) its National Plan for implementing the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, approved by government memorandum in January 2025.

Romania became an OECD accession candidate in [2022](#). The roadmap for the country's accession process was formally adopted at the OECD Council at Ministerial level in June 2022. Romania remains an active participant in key regional migration dialogues, including the Prague Process and the Budapest Process.

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