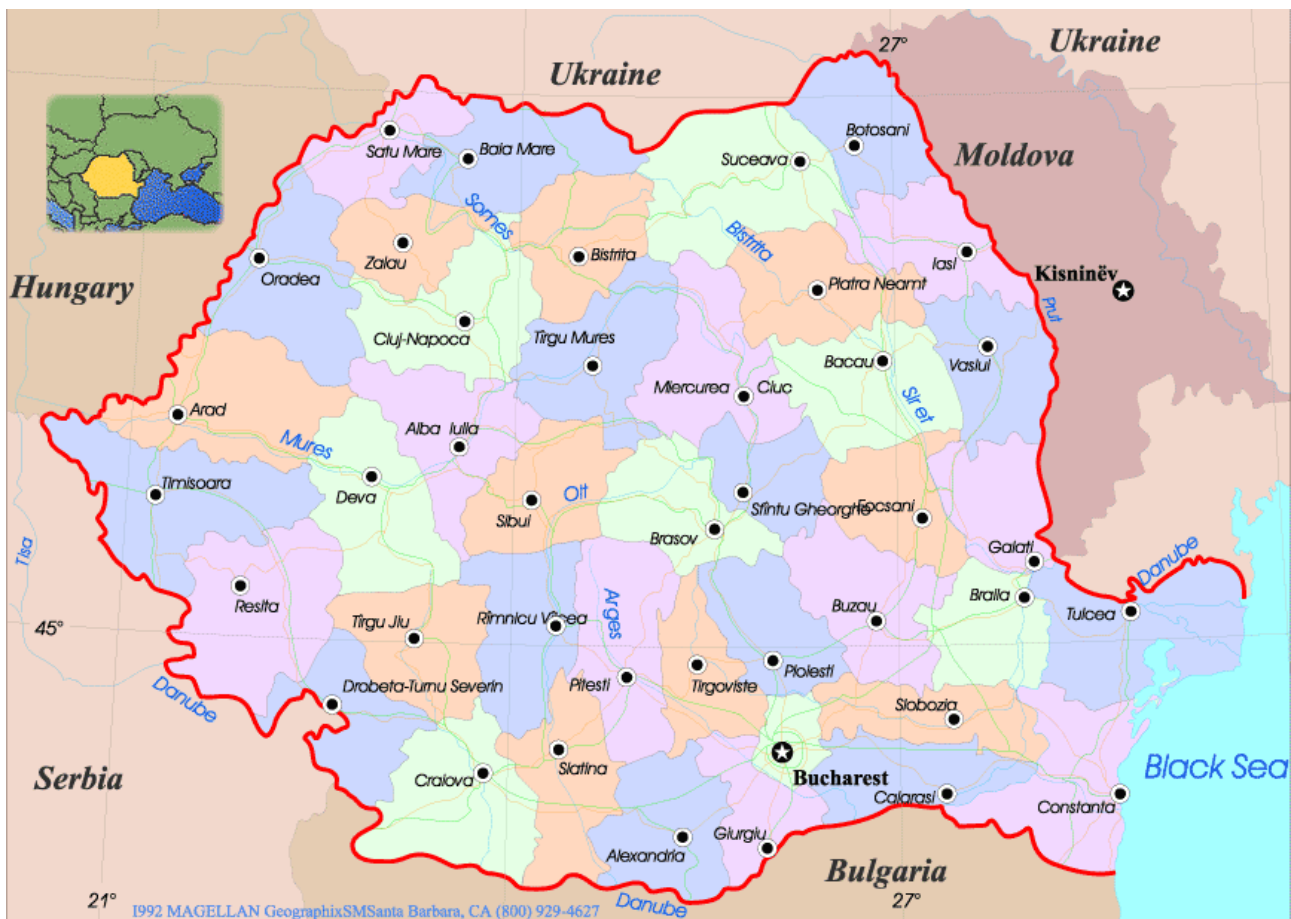


**ROMANIA**



Horse-drawn carts jostle for space against fast cars whose drivers are talking money on mobile phones; farm workers watch *Baywatch* courtesy of satellite dishes standing in the rear yard of their medieval farmhouse. Romania is clawing itself forward, slowly and surely sloughing off the **remnants of the Ceausescu era**. The **transition** is not easy, and for some it's downright painful. In the middle of the picturesque scenery and the headlong rush to development where the money is fast and the suits Armani, parts of the country are being left out. But in **1996** a neo-communist government was voted out and replaced by one talking about genuine reform, so the country is not without hope.

Romania has **majestic castles, medieval towns**, great hiking and wildlife, and the cheap skiing of much of the "undiscovered" former Eastern Bloc. And the Romanians, despite being among Europe's poorest people, generally haven't cottoned on to the scams and ploys so common elsewhere to separate travellers from their money. You'll be floored at how *different* Romania is, but you'll almost certainly see signs that it's chasing the dreams of the rest of the West.

Soviet occupation following **World War II** led to the formation of a Communist "peoples' republic" in **1947** and the abdication of the king. The decades-long rule of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his Securitate police state became increasingly oppressive and draconian through the **1980s**. Ceausescu was overthrown and executed in late **1989**. Former communists dominated the government until **1996**, when they were swept from power by a fractious coalition of centre-right parties. Currently, the **Party of Social Democracy** forms a minority government, which governs with the support of the opposition **Democratic Union of Hungarians** in Romania. Much economic restructuring remains to be carried out before Romania can achieve its hope of joining the EU.

# Romania - Facts and Figures

**Area:** 237,500 sq km (91,700 sq mi)

**Population:** 22.5 million

**Capital city:** Bucharest (pop 2 million)

**People:** Romanians (90%), Hungarians (7%), Roma (Gypsies) (2%), Germans, Ukrainians

**Language:** Romanian, Hungarian (in Transylvania)

**Religion:** Romanian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Traian Băsescu

**Prime Minister:** Emil Boc

**GDP:** US\$90 billion

**GDP per head:** US\$4000

**Monetary unit:** 1 new leu = 100 bani

**Annual growth:** -8%

**Inflation:** 40%

**Major industries:** Agriculture, manufacturing

**Major trading partners:** EU (esp. Germany, Italy, France), USA, Turkey

**Member of EU:** yes

**Eurozone participant:** no

**Member of the Schengen area:** no

## Romanian Cities

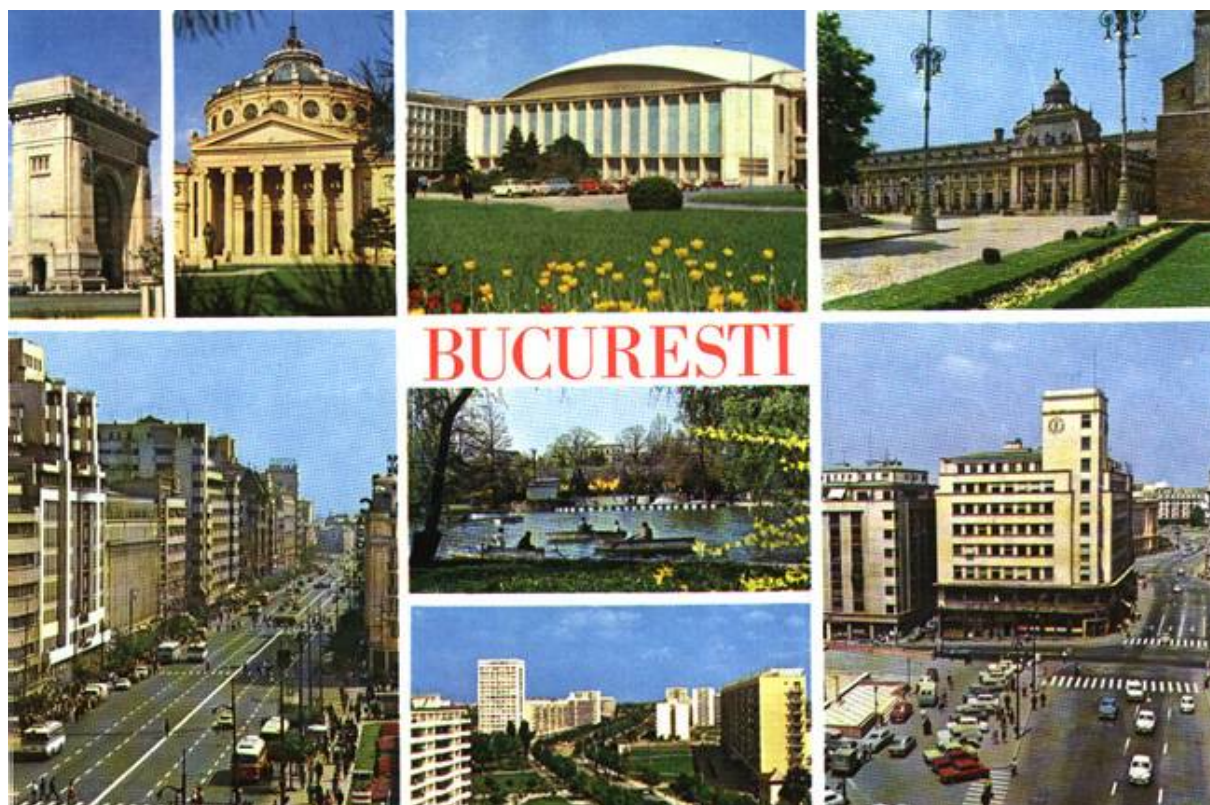
# Bucharest



**Bucharest** is a political administrative, economic and cultural centre; with material vestiges from Palaeolithic Age and documentary attestation from **1459**, September 20. Bucharest, the

most important urban centre of Romania (with a population six times larger than that of the second largest town Iasi), is not only a **tourist spot** of prime importance but also a gateway and starting point for tourist destinations across the country. The larger parks and lakes which lend a distinct note to this "garden city" are joined by **points of attraction** in its immediate proximity:

- the **Snagov forest** and lake (including the renowned monastery lying on the isle in the midst of the lake, where ruling Prince Vlad the Impaler is thought to have been buried),
- **Mogosoia** - with the Palace of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu,
- the **Pustnicu Forest**, the picturesque monasteries of **Cernica** and **Pasarea**, the **Baneasa Woods** (with the largest zoological garden of Romania being located there), the **Caldarusani Lake** and Monastery (which was founded by ruling Prince Matei Basarab).



The open-air **Village Museum** (the second most important in Europe after the one in Stockholm), the **Romanian Peasant Museum**, the **Museum of National History** or the 16th-17th churches in Bucharest should not be missed by any tourist. Lovers of contemporary art can admire and even buy at the art galleries in the centre of the city paintings by contemporary artists who have already made a name for themselves, or by young talents.

Romania's capital, the nation's centre of cultural and economic life, was founded more than 500 years ago. During the **1930s** its tree-lined boulevards and "fin de siecle" architecture gave it the nickname "Little Paris". There is even an Arc de Triomphe on the impressive Soseaua Kisseleff which is longer than the Champs Elysees and has ranges of trees which flower beautifully in spring.

Despite the massive reconstruction of the **1980s**, Bucharest remains a Garden City, leafy and pleasant, with cafes open on sidewalks in summer, and with boats on its lakes and rivers.

### Exploring the City

Finding your way is easy in Bucharest. The **underground network** offers a standard fare and covers most of the city. Major boulevards run North-South from the **Arcul de Triumf** (Triumphal Arch) down to the **Centrul Civic**, (Civic Center) crossed by others going East-

West. **Calea Victoriei** - a continuation of Soseaua Kisseleff - is the place where the city's inhabitants prefer taking strolls on summer evenings and where you will find majestic public buildings like the **National History Museum** and the main Post Office, whereas close to its Southern end there is the lovely **Parcul Cismigiu** (Cismigiu Park). **Bulevardul** (Boulevard) **Magheru** is parallel to **Calea Victoriei** and it hosts tourist and airline offices, cinemas and hotels.



**Oradea** is one of the most beautiful cities of Eastern Europe. It is the entrance gate to Romania, on the Western border, and the capital of **Bihor County**. Located on the hills between Crisana Plain and the foot of the Western Carpathians, on the banks of the **Crisul Repede River**, the town blends nostalgic imprints of the past, magic of nature and wind of change all together.

Oradea has kept the spirit of the belle epoque even today. This feeling is rendered by the architectural **Secession style** that gives a special elegance to the town, still preserving the atmosphere of the turn of the last century. The town also suggests a long lasting spirit of a community that, for centuries, has been placed at the crossroads of trade routes, at the junction of civilizations, circumscribed to both the Western and the Eastern Worlds.

Nowadays the community of Oradea reveals its awareness about the historical heritage that shaped the development of the town and helped with valuing the transitory interests of the political forces in both Central and South-Eastern Europe. It also displays a good example of cohabitation of different **ethnic groups**, each of them contributing to the development of a stimulating friendly environment, appropriate for personal achievements.

The location of the town, on the banks of the river Crisul Repede and at the junction of the Western Plain and the lowest hill range of the Apuseni Mountains on the one hand, and on the trade route that linked Western, Central and South-Eastern Europe to the Far East, on the other hand, helped Oradea to become an important political, economic, religious and cultural centre. Since prehistoric times, this region has been inhabited by people always ready to make contacts with the groups passing through, or settling in Oradea.

## Romanian Government

### President



#### Traian Băsescu

*Er sagt von sich, daß er lieber mit den Leuten auf der Straße rede als an seinem Schreibtisch zu sitzen. Seine Gegner werfen ihm vor, es fehle ihm an Stil und Noblesse, die für das Amt des rumänischen Präsidenten unerlässlich seien.*

Der **Bukarester Bürgermeister** und frühere **Hochsekapitän** setzte sich gegen den sozialdemokratischen Ministerpräsidenten Adrian Nastase bei der Präsidentenstichwahl am 12. Dezember 2004 durch. Es sei der „Wille des rumänischen Volkes“, der ihn zu diesem Sieg geführt habe, kommentierte Băsescu seinen überraschenden Triumph.

**The winner of the Romanian presidential poll, 53-year-old Traian Băsescu, campaigned on a tough anti-corruption platform and has a reputation for being outspoken and down-to-earth.**

Born near Romania's main sea port of **Constanta**, Mr. Băsescu pursued a career as a sailor and commanded the biggest ship in the Romanian fleet for six years. He was a rank-and-file communist party member.

After the bloody **1989** Romanian revolution which toppled communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Mr Băsescu got involved in politics and served as transport minister in the **1990s**.

In **2000** he became the mayor of Romania's capital, **Bucharest**, where he embarked on a programme of rapid renovation in the decaying city. His can-do image is reflected in a record of improvements for Bucharest, some of them achieved in unorthodox ways.

He led a crackdown on stray dogs and urban eyesores. "I am elected by the people of Bucharest, not the dogs," he said, scornfully dismissing the complaints of Western animal rights activists.

When the government blocked his plans for a new overpass and better central heating for the city, he went over their heads and asked citizens to sign a petition, shaming the officials into caving in.

### **Orange power**

He is one of the few Romanian politicians bold enough to speak up for gay rights - an issue his opponents tried to use against him in the run-up to the election.

Mr. Băsescu's campaign had echoes of that of Viktor Yushchenko - the opposition presidential candidate in neighbouring Ukraine, who brought thousands of people onto the streets to protest against alleged election abuses. As in Ukraine, the Romanian opposition made orange their main colour and the Ukrainian "Tak!" ("Yes") became the Romanian "Da!" as their main slogan.

Although the ruling the ex-communist Social Democratic Party (PSD) took Romania into NATO and prepared the ground for the country to join the EU in 2007, Mr. Băsescu is seen as a more pro-Western candidate. Unlike his opponents, whom he accuses of widespread corruption, Mr. Băsescu is not associated with the old communist regime. His victory is likely to be applauded in most Western capitals.

He has long been seen as the main challenger to the dominant PSD.

In seiner **Neujahrsrede 2005** sagte der neu gewählte Präsident:

"Mein Wunsch ist, dass Rumänien ein erfolgreiches Land wird, ein Rumänien in dem jedes Kind, jede Frau, jeder Mann besser leben wird, ein Rumänien in dem wir alle einig und kräftig sein werden" sagte in seiner Botschaft der neue Präsident Rumäniens Traian Băsescu. Er hat sich als ein kräftiger Präsident charakterisiert, der imstande ist, die 22 Millionen Bürger Rumäniens, sowie die weiteren 6 Millionen Rumänen, die sich überall in der Welt befinden, zu vertreten. "Wir sind eine kräftige und stolze Nation, die respektiert werden muss." so Băsescu. Er fügte hinzu, die Rumänen werden in den nächsten Jahren Geschichte schreiben, in dem sie in den exklusiven Klub der EU Länder eintreten werden. Der Präsident sagte weiter, durch die Aufnahme in die Gemeinschaftsstrukturen wird den Rumänen keine Gunst geschenkt, weil es unser Recht ist, Teil des modernen Europas, Teil des zivilisierten Europas zu sein." Băsescu beendete seine Botschaft mit dem schon gut bekannten Wunsch, der ihm in der Wahlkampagne Erfolg gebracht hat: "Leben Sie besser!". Die Neujahrsbotschaft war untypisch, sowohl wegen der Wortkargheit als auch wegen des unkonventionellen Rahmens in dem sie an die Rumänen gerichtet wurde. Băsescu wollte draußen auf dem Universitätsplatz, im Zentrum Bukarests, wo tausende Rumänen feierten, frei sprechen. In den letzten 15 Jahren hatten die Expräsidenten Ion Iliescu und Emil

Constantinescu ihre Reden auf Band aufgenommen. Diese wurden simultan um Mitternacht von allen Radio- und Fernsehsendern ausgestrahlt. Băsescu aber wollte etwas Anderes. Er wollte frei am Mikrofon auf der Bühne sprechen. Am Ende hat der neue Staatspräsident eine Champagnerflasche geöffnet und einen Schluck getrunken. Danach hat er die Flasche den Zuschauern zugeworfen, Geste die typisch für die Formel 1 Sieger ist.

## Prime Minister

### Emil Boc

(born September 6, **1966**) is the Prime Minister of Romania. In June **2004**, he was elected to become the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, the largest city in Transylvania.

Boc is also president of the Democratic Liberal Party, the party of President Traian Băsescu and was nominated by the latter on December 15 as the Prime Minister candidate to be validated by the Romanian Parliament. This happened on 22 of December **2008**, when his cabinet was granted the vote for confidence of the Parliament.

Emil was born to Ioan and Ana Boc, in the village of Răchițele, Cluj County; his siblings, Ioan, Gheorghe, Traian and Dorina, are older than him. He and his wife Oana, a university lecturer whom he married in July **1994**, have two daughters, Cezara and Patricia.



A video clip of Boc falling off of a stage during the taping of a talk show appeared on Ebaumsworld and other humor sites in the mid-2000s, though he was rarely identified as the victim.

Boc's entrance in mainstream Romanian politics was in **2003**, when he was elected executive president of the Democratic Party, being proposed by Traian Băsescu. His original job was to handle Democratic Party's identity, so it would not be confused with the National Liberal Party.

He assumed the position of mayor after the **2004** victory against the far right nationalist Gheorghe Funar, who had been mayor of Cluj-Napoca for twelve years. In the 2004 election, Funar lost out in the first round to both Boc and Social Democratic Party candidate Ion Rus; Boc went on to defeat Rus in a run-off election. In the 2008 election, Boc took 76.2% of the vote, avoiding the need for a second round

Following the **2008** legislative elections, the Democratic Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party joined forces to form the government. Băsescu intended to name Theodor Stolojan as Prime Minister, but following Stolojan's withdrawal, Boc was named to be the head of the government. He has from December 22, **2008**, served as Romanian Prime Minister.

# Romanian Literature

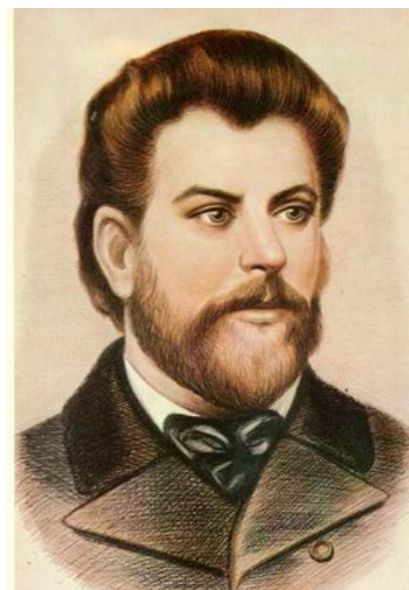
Ion Creanga

(1839-1889)

"I was born on March 1, **1837** in Humulesti village, Neamt county, from Romanian parents: Stefan of Petrea the shoemaker and his wife Smaranda ..."

The date written by Creanga's hand in *Fragment de biografie* (Biography Fragment) and accepted by many literary historians is contested by other researchers, which affirm that the writer was born, on June 10 **1839**, according to the only authentic document: a register of new-borns from Humulesti, discovered and published by Gh. Ungureanu, archivist from Iasi.

In the peasant house in Humulesti, from where the ruin of Neamt Castle can be seen, Stefan and Smaranda raised 8 children: Ion, Zahei, Maria, Ecaterina, Ileana, Teodor, Vasile and Petre. The youngest three died very early. Ecaterina died in 1893, and Zahei, Maria and Ileana will live until 1919.



- 1846-1853** Smart and nasty, as he described himself later on in *Amintiri din copilărie* (*Memories from childhood*), Nica attended the church school, Vasile of Iloaiei being his teacher. Lessons were held in a little chamber made by the peasants at the stimulus of the vicar Ion Humulescu. Later, his mother Smaranda sent him to live with her father David Creanga, who took Nica, together with his younger son Dumitru, to Brosteni, to go to school there.
- 1853-1854** Creanga began attending the Princely school, his teacher was the priest Isaia Teodorescu (the hero of *Popa Duhu*). He was entered into the school registers as Stefanescu Ion.
- 1854, autumn** His mother Smaranda wanted him to become a priest. In the "The Catechist school" in Falticeni he is registered as Ion Creanga, a name kept for the rest of his life.
- 1855-1858** The school from Falticeni was closed and Ion became a student of the Theological seminary "Veniamin Costachi" in Socola.
- 1859** His father died, far away from Humulesti, on the Facauti estate. Creanga married Ileana, the daughter of the priest Ioan Grigoriu from the church "40 de Sfinti" from Iasi. On December 26 he was ordained deacon at the "Sfânta Treime" church. His son Constantin is born in 1860.
- 1864-1865** He was a very good student at the Vasilian preparative school. In June 1865 he became a teacher, with graduation certificate. He is 28 years old, is married, and has a son, His mother Smaranda died of epilepsy (he also suffered from this illness).
- 1859-1872** For 12 years was deacon in several churches in Iasi. In October 1872 his wife left him and he was excluded from church service. Only in **1993**, 122 years later, a reparatory decision was made post-mortem: Creanga was re-included in the list of deacons of the church.
- 1864-1889** Creanga worked as a teacher, being an excellent educator. He published 4

school manuals, written together with other teachers.

- 1873** After a long law suit Creanga gets custody of his son Constantin, now 12 years old. They moved to Ticau suburb and from now on he lived with Tinca Vartic, who ran the household for him and his son. He never married her.
- 1875** He met **Mihail Eminescu**, then school reviser in Iasi and Vaslui. The poet discovered Creanga's unprecedented talent of story teller. They became close friends. Eminescu convinced Creanga to write and introduced him to his friends in the Junimea literary club. When Eminescu left for Bucharest in 1877, he had brought Creanga on his way as a writer.
- 1875-1883** With the help of Eminescu, who read and corrected his manuscripts, Creanga composed his brilliant literary works, which have since charmed generations of Romanian readers. In 1883 both Creanga and Eminescu got sick and could not write much from this time onwards.
- 1883-1889** His epilepsy crisis bring him six years of suffering. He went to Slanic Moldova for treatment.
- 1889, June 15** Creanga learned from the newspapers, that "brother Mihai" had died Bucharest. At the beginning of August Veronica Micle, Eminescu's beloved friend, poisoned herself at Varatec Monastery.
- 1889, December 31** Creanga died on Dec. 31 and was buried in Eternitatea cemetery on January 2, 1890.



For many people outside Romania knowledge of Romanian poets and culture is limited. Mihai **Eminescu** is considered one of the most renowned poets of his time and his influence extended after his death. His existential approach gave eloquence to his verse and provided a framework for future poets. His exploration of Romanian folklore underlined the essence of Romanian nationality and has been transformed over the decades to enhance the development of Romanian culture. A year in celebration of the life of Eminescu is merely testimony to the influence he had and still holds.

The year 2000 has been crowned a year in memory of the Eminescu. A national figurehead, his poetry has been passed down through generations to epitomise the essence of Romanian consciousness.

Born in **1850** in Botoşani (he spent part of his childhood in Ipoteşti, where his museum is), Mihai Eminescu has been regarded as one of the great European poets, comparable to Byron or Lermontov, although he already died at the age of 39.

His early life saw him gain a job as an actor and prompter with Iorgu Caragiale's **theatre group**, which enabled him to travel the length and breadth of Romania. With his father's assistance he was also able to attend lectures in **Vienna** on philosophy, history, law, political economy and Roman philology.

His initial employment at the theatre encouraged the creativity and romanticism in his own character and shortly afterwards he made his literary debut in *Familia*, a review based in Oradea.

His career developed quickly after his enrolment at the University of **Berlin** in **1872**. He first became director of the Central Library in Iaşi and was then invited to **Bucharest** to work for a leading newspaper of the era, *Timpul* (the *Times*).



During this period his work was published in several highly acclaimed journals such as *Convorbiri Literare*, where many of his love poems appeared. However, in **1883** he published *Luceafărul* (*The Evening Star*) which was to provide a model for Romanian poets in the twentieth century and which established the future direction of Eminescu's own poetry. Eminescu had a two-pronged approach to his writing.

- On one level he would mould himself towards the individual such as Shakespeare, concentrating on personal emotions.
- On the second level he would explore Romanian folklore examining existential perceptions such as time, emotion, space, beauty, idealism and realism, myth and sentiment, the spirit and the soul, love and hatred.

Eminescu would consider these often unexplainable phenomena in the wider context of the universe in which he found a complex system of obsessions and relations. *Luceafărul* combined the complexities of the universe with those of immediate surroundings, combining myth with realities.

It is through this latter approach that Eminescu has come to epitomise one expression of the Romanian identity. Today, many Romanians consider Eminescu to be the “**National Poet**” of Romania and an integral component of Romanian culture, just as Shakespeare or Byron offer an association with national identity in other cultures. Therefore, although Eminescu concentrated on the essence of being Romanian, his system of existential perceptions can be transferred into a universal context. As the “National Poet” he is considered quintessential for the self-definition of Romanian national identity in a society where regional identity often supersedes that of national identity.

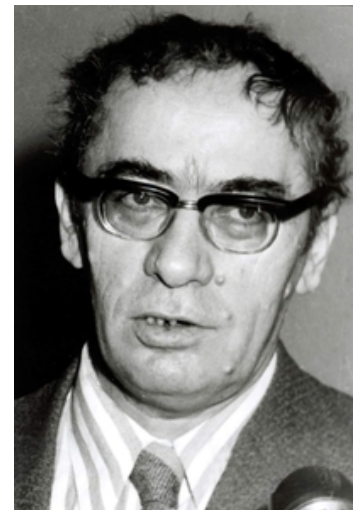
## Marin Preda

(1927-1980)

The talented novelist, Preda was born in **1927** in Teleorman county, at **Silistea-Gumesti**, in the family of Tudor Calarasu. He finished the first 7 classes in this village, next he became a student at the Normal School of Abrud, next to Cristuru-Odorhei and later in Bucharest.

After having graduated from school, he became a clerk at the Institute for Statistics, then a press corrector in Timpul, where he wrote his first short story *Pârlitu* in **1942**. Encouraged by a first success, he published some more prose, and drew the attention of Eugen Lovinescu at the Sburatorul literary club.

In **1948** he published *Întâlnirea din pamânturi*. The young novelist paid tribute to the socialist reality, as the majority of the writers at the time of the "proletarian dictatorship".



His first masterpiece was *Morometii* (1955-1967), which was also transformed into a movie. He also wrote the novels: *Risipitorii*, *Intrusul*, *Marele singuratic*, *Delirul*, and his second masterpiece *Cel mai iubit dintre pamânteni* (1980), after which he was found dead, in his study in the Mogosoia Palace. He died in a suspect way, in **1980**, leaving many legends related to his passing away, taking into account that he was known for his cold attitude towards the authorities.

## World Heritage Sites in Romania

# The Wooden Churches of Maramures

Region of Maramures, Districts of Bârsana, Budesti, Desesti, Ieud, Sisesti, Poienile Izei, Târgu-Lapus

**Inscribed:** 1999

### **Justification for Inscription:**

*Criterion (iv):* The **Maramures wooden churches** are outstanding examples of vernacular religious wooden architecture resulting from the interchange of Orthodox religious traditions with Gothic influences in a specific vernacular interpretation of timber construction traditions, showing a high level of artistic maturity and craft skills.

### **Brief description:**

The Maramures wooden churches represent a selection of **eight** outstanding examples of different architectural solutions from different periods and areas. They provide a vivid picture of the **variety of design** and craftsmanship expressed by narrow but high timber constructions with their characteristic tall, slim clock towers at the western end of the building, single or double roofed and covered by shingles. As such, they are a particular vernacular expression of the cultural landscape of that mountainous area of northern Romania.



Maramures is a **remote region** in the extreme **north of the country**. Due to the relative isolation of their land, the people of Maramures developed a particularly strong community, with unique personality and traditions. Men are amazingly skilful wood carvers, and you shouldn't be surprised that all the old houses and churches are entirely made of wood. The most respected man in the village is the one who has the biggest and most elaborately carved front gate. The women, on the other hand, weave woollen clothes and blankets, in red-white-black patterns and the traditional outfit is still proudly worn every day. But both men and women have a wit and humour that travelled way beyond their land. They are famous for the merry way they write on their tombstones. Here is an example from the cemetery of Sapanta:

Here lies my mother-in-law.  
Had she lived another year,  
I would have lied here.

Maramures is an intriguing place, where you can be amazed by the mingling of modern and old habits, such as wearing traditional handmade clothes and shoes, but washing them with Tide.

# Monastery of Horezu

Inscribed: 1993

## Brief description:

Founded in **1690** by Prince Constantine Brâncoveanu, the monastery of Horezu, in **Wallachia**, is a masterpiece of "Brancovan" style, known for its architectural purity and balance, the richness of its sculpted detail, its treatment of religious compositions, its votive portraits and its painted decorative works. The school of mural and icon painting established at the monastery of Horezu in the **18th century** was very well-known throughout the Balkan region.

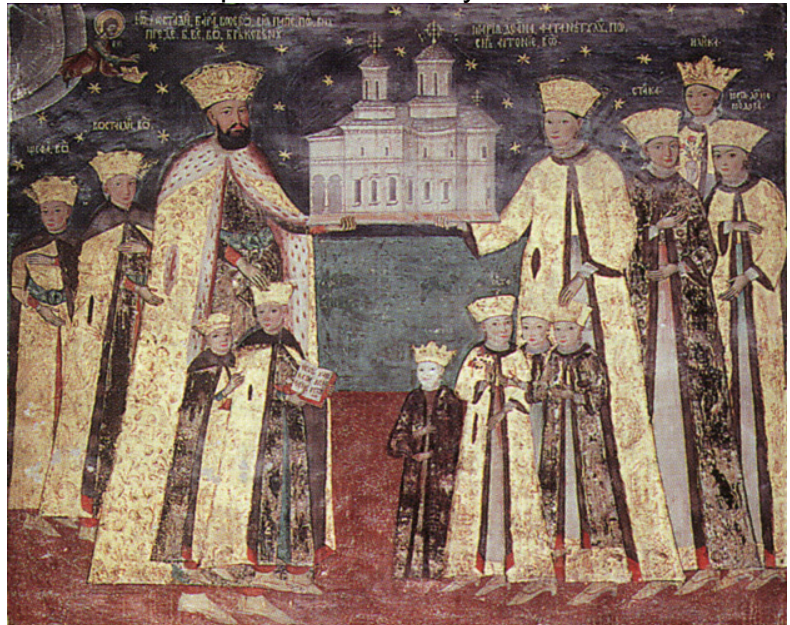
The artisans that designed the monastery, as well as the workers who built it, had much talent and skill.

The harmony of the proportions, the composition, the unity of style of the whole ensemble, the painting as well as the decorative motifs carved in stone prove the oneness and value of the brâncovenesc style. Today, Hurez Monastery is considered as the most representative monument of the 17th century in Wallachia's architecture.



Placed at the bottom of the mountains, in the heart of the forests, Hurez Monastery was built also as a shield against the attacks from the Western part of the country.

From its building, Hurez Monastery was witness of many events, suffering also many deteriorations. During the Russian-Austro-Turkish war of **1787** the lead roof of the big tower, the icons and windows, the furniture of the board houses and cells were destroyed. During the revolutionary movement of **1821** of Tudor Vladimirescu, Hurez was used as a fortification with provisions. The many repairs and modifications of the **18th** and **19th centuries** have altered the originality of the façades and of the interior architecture.



At the end of the 17th century, a real painting and sculpture school was established in Hurez Monastery, which influenced the arts in Wallachia for quite a long time. The leader of the painter's team was Constantinos who, together with the Romanian artisans, made the paintings of Hurez. In the paintings the specific features of the Brâncovenesc epoch are evident: realistic portraits, expressing even human feelings – as e.g. in the founder's portrait.



During the resting hours in their cells the monks translated "*Flower of Gifts*", which later turned up at Snagov. As a great culture lover, Brâncoveanu had put together a big library since he was a young man. In 1860 Al. Odobescu, researching the archives and the libraries of some monasteries found the texts at Hurez.

# Historic Centre of Sighisoara

Region of Mures

Inscribed :1999

## Justification for Inscription:

*Criterion (iii):* Sighisoara is an outstanding testimony to the culture of the **Transylvanian Saxons**, a culture that is coming to a close after 850 years and will continue to exist only through its architectural and urban monuments.

*Criterion (v):* Sighisoara is an outstanding example of a **small fortified city** in the border region between the Latin-oriented culture of central Europe and the Byzantine-Orthodox culture of south-eastern Europe. The apparently unstoppable process of emigration by the Saxons, the social stratum which had formed and upheld the cultural traditions of the region, threatens the survival of their architectural heritage as well.



## Brief description:

Founded by German craftsmen and merchants, known as the **Saxons of Transylvania**, the historic centre of Sighisoara has



preserved in an exemplary way the features of a small, **fortified, medieval town**, which played an important strategic and commercial role at the edges of central Europe for several centuries.

Called by those who have visited it "**Pearl of Transylvania**", "a wonderful and charming town", Sighisoara represents through its architecture and environment a unique occasion to discover an authentic medieval atmosphere, an incredible journey in time impossible to achieve anywhere else in

Europe. The picturesque **walled citadel** of Sighisoara was built in the **13th century** by **German immigrants** and has retained its unique "Saxon" heritage into modern times. Considered to be the most beautiful and complete medieval architectural ensemble in Romania and "the most beautiful inhabited citadel throughout Europe" the museum town Sighisoara offers the modern visitor the rare chance of a retrospect into a medieval atmosphere of the past centuries. In the **1990s** more and more foreign tourists are discovering Sighisoara, which is conveniently situated on the main railway line between Budapest and Bucharest. The town fathers are trying to find ways to attract funds for the restoration of Sighisoara's unique architectural heritage, while at the same time providing up-to-date facilities which will persuade visitors to linger and enjoy the atmosphere of this beautiful, historic town.

## Romanian Economy

Romania's modern economic development dates to the opening of maritime trade routes to western Europe in the early **19th century**. After independence in **1878**, exploitation of the cereal lands, forests, and oil fields was complemented by a policy of encouraging industry, but, in spite of considerable success, Romania still had a predominantly **agrarian economy** at the end of **World War II**.

In **1948** the **Communist government** came into power and took control of nearly all aspects of the economy. Through a series of five-year plans, the Communists transformed Romania into an **industrial nation**. The communist regime concentrated on the expansion of industry, with priority given to the heavy industries of metallurgy, chemicals, and engineering. Industrialization was assisted by a flood of cheap labour from rural areas, where collectivization and discriminatory price-fixing meant that farmers not only lost their own holdings but secured only modest returns as farmworkers. It also benefited from close economic integration with the Soviet Union, which secured markets for manufactured goods while supplying raw materials and fuels at relatively low cost.

The economy grew considerably during the first part of the Communist period, but by the **1980s** it had slid into decline, and shortages of consumer goods and degradation of the environment had become widespread. One of the poorest countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania began the transition from communism in **1989** with a largely obsolete industrial base and a pattern of output unsuited to the country's needs.

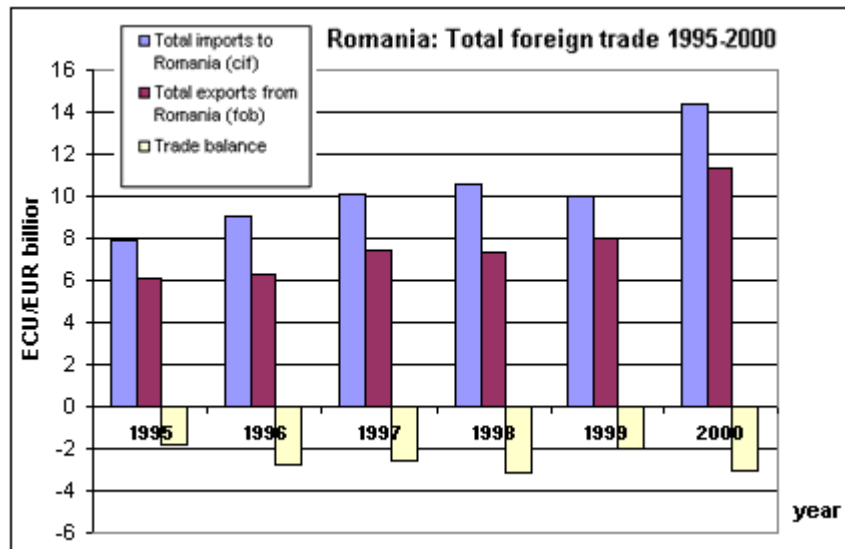
After the Communist government had been overthrown, the Romanian economy virtually collapsed. Although dominated by former Communists, the new government began taking steps to reform the economy in the early **1990s**. These steps included devaluing the national currency, removing government subsidies on most consumer goods, and converting some state-owned companies to private ownership.

Over the past decade economic restructuring has lagged behind most other countries in the region. The EU ranks Romania last among enlargement candidates, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (**EBRD**) rates Romania's transition progress the region's worst. The country emerged in **2000** from a punishing three-year recession thanks to strong demand in EU export markets.

A new government elected in November 2000 promises to promote economic reform. Bucharest hopes to receive financial and technical assistance from international financial institutions and Western governments; negotiations over a new **IMF** standby agreement began early in **2001**. Covering the period October 2001 to March 2003, it provides a key opportunity for vigorous privatization, regulatory reform, deficit reduction, and the curbing of inflation. The government in the past has not been able to fully implement IMF agreements; its degree of success in this case will affect prospects for joining the EU.

The development of **foreign trade** in Romania is illustrated in the following figure. In 2000, exports totalled €11.4 billion while imports amounted to €14.4 billion. Compared with the

previous year's performance, Romanian levels of trade grew considerably in 2000 (exports: 41.1%; imports: 43.7%). This surge in trade is all the more remarkable when one considers the fact that Romanian exports fell by 5.2% in 1999 and the growth in imports had historically been slow.



Resources:

- <http://www.geographicguide.net/europe/maps-europe/romania.htm>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen\\_Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen_Agreement)
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurozone>
- <http://whc.unesco.org>
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country\\_profiles/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/)
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traian\\_B%C4%83sescu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traian_B%C4%83sescu)
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucharest>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oradea>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emil\\_Boc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emil_Boc)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion\\_Creang%C4%83](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion_Creang%C4%83)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mihai\\_Eminescu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mihai_Eminescu)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marin\\_Preda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marin_Preda)

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