



## OUTCAN Guide | Life in Bucharest, Romania

### LOCATION

**Country:** Romania

**Town:** Bucharest (Capital city)

**Base:** Multi-National Division Southeast (MND-SE)

**Other info to Consider:**

Family (non-dependants) can visit and stay 90 days **without visa** (non-Schengen Area).

### POPULATION

**Size:** Urban area - 2.4 million.

**Ethnicity:** Romanian (89%), Hungarian, Ukrainian, Germans, Romani (derogatory term - Gypsies)

### LANGUAGE(S)

**Official language:** Romanian (some Russian, Bulgarian and Hungarian)

**Prevalence of French or English speaking:** Very limited. Some establishments will have an English-speaking employee; however, English is not spoken freely and commonly. French as second language sometimes.

### COST OF LIVING

**Exchange rate to consider:** Lei (RON) 1CDN = 3.43 RON (Feb 2024), rent, cars are charged in Euros.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:**

- Very hot in the summer (as high as 40C). Mild winters with occasional frost.

**Laws and Culture:**

- There is zero tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol. Penalties are severe. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines and jail sentences, and your driver's license may be confiscated immediately.
- It is illegal to refuse a breathalyzer test.
- Winter tires are mandatory during winter months.
- A motorway vignette (locally known as a rovinietta) is required to travel outside major cities. You may purchase these at border points, post offices and large gas stations.
- Romanian authorities consider a child born to a Romanian parent as a Romanian citizen. This is true even if the child was born in Canada and has a Canadian passport.

- If you are a Canadian citizen, but also a citizen of Romania, our ability to offer you consular services may be limited while you're there.
- There are harsh penalties for engaging in sexual acts with a minor. The age of consent in Romania is 18.
- Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect jail sentences of up to 15 years and heavy fines.

#### **Safety and Security:**

- You must carry an international driving permit.
- Petty crime, such as pickpocketing and purse snatching, occasionally occurs, particularly on public transport and in bars and night clubs.
- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Terrorist attacks have occurred in a number of European cities. There is a potential for other violent incidents.
- Credit card and ATM fraud is a concern, particularly in areas frequented by tourists.
- Internet scams originating in Spain are common.

#### **Level of isolation:**

- There are 4-6 Canadian family posted to this location.
- May feel very isolated due to the language barrier.

#### **HOUSING**

- Houses are generally very large.
- House insurance is mandatory (with earthquake coverage).
- It is imperative that members do not secure any type of housing without obtaining prior approval from CFSU(E) Housing Officer.

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

**Are there employment opportunities for spouses?** Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment on the economy is not a realistic option.

- Limited, language barrier.
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.

**Op Tempo:** The op tempo will vary greatly depending on position. TD is possible.

#### **HEALTH CARE**

**Access:** The standard of health care in Romania is well below western standards and represents a medium health hazard.

- Public hospitals practice minimal infection control discipline and whenever possible these hospitals should be avoided.
- Private hospitals do have a higher standard of health care which is considered adequate.
- It is highly recommended that members requiring non-emergency surgery or procedures be sent to Germany for medical treatment.
- English services are available, French is very limited.
- Not all clinics will have English speaking staff, most hospitals do.
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.

- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP. [PSHCP Member Portal \(pshcp-msh.ca\)](http://pshcp-msh.ca)

**Special needs:**

- Depending on language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It may be a wait before finding an appropriate match and at times may not be possible based on availability of English/French speaking providers or resources.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and / or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

**Consideration for pregnancy / birth:** Health care for pregnancy and birth is available on the economy, private care.

**Dental:** Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay up front, and you can then claim your expenses.

## SCHOOLING

- Schooling is typically the American International School of Bucharest (IB) for grades JK-12, V (IB) for grades JK-8, British School of Bucharest for grades JK-8, V for grades JK-8.
- British curriculum is only deemed compatible up to gr 8; access to British curriculum beyond gr 8 requires WG B approval.

**Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:**

- The Curriculum varies depending on choice of school.
- None of them offers Canadian history or geography at the elementary level.

**Resources for special need children:**

- Access to Special needs services is depending on the choice of school, language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and school prior to any commitments.
- For an approved list of schools, please contact Children's Education Management at:
  - [CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca](mailto:CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca)
  - [Children's Education Management - Canada.ca](http://Children's Education Management - Canada.ca)
  - [Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca](http://Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca)

## CHILDCARE

- Local childcare is available, no guarantee that staff will be English or French-speaking.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Things to Consider:**

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- You should carry an international driving permit.
- Romania has one of the highest rates of road-traffic deaths in Europe.
- Registering and licensing a vehicle is a long and arduous process (months).

**Public Transport:**

- Good public transportation throughout the city.

**RESOURCES AND AMENITIES****Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?**

- No physical centre. Families in Bucharest are supported by the Remote Team:  
[MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com)

**Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:**

- Not at post, MFS(E) Social Workers, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for members are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in Casteau, Belgium (SHAPE).

**Communications: (e.g. Quality of Internet connection):** Good services

**ACTIVITIES****Access to sports or other leisure activities:**

- Plenty of recreational activities and venues are available in this area for the whole family.

**Availability of playgrounds:** Yes, many.

**RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER**

**Are common law relationships recognized?** No.

**Are same sex couples recognized?** No.

**Medications that are illegal in the country:**

- Use without a prescription of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances is illegal. Cannabis is illegal.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- European Commission Country Reports (2023)  
[https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports\\_en](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports_en)
- Canadian Travel Advisories  
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from the US)  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/romania>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)  
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/romania>

**For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below**

- MFS(E) Social Worker: [MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com)
- CAF Social Worker: [GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca)
- MFS(E) Team: [MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com)
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, [MFS.Europe@cfmws.com](mailto:MFS.Europe@cfmws.com)