



City of Bucharest

Intercultural Profile

1. Background¹

Bucharest is the capital and largest city, as well as the cultural, industrial, and financial centre of Romania. According to the 2011 census, 1,883,425 inhabitants live within the city limits, a decrease from the 2002 census. Taking account of the satellite towns around the urban area, the proposed metropolitan area of Bucharest would have a population of 2.27 million people. However, according to unofficial data given by Wikipedia, the population is more than 3 million (raising a point that will be reiterated throughout this report that statistics are not universally reliable in Romania). Notwithstanding, Bucharest is the 6th largest city in the European Union by population within city limits, after London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, and Paris.

Bucharest accounts for around 23% of the country's GDP and about one-quarter of its industrial production, while being inhabited by only 10% of the country's population. In 2010, at purchasing power parity, Bucharest had a per-capita GDP of EUR 14,300, or 45% that of the European Union average and more than twice the Romanian average. Bucharest's economy is mainly focused on industry and services, with a significant IT services sector. It houses 186,000 companies, and numerous companies have set up headquarters in Bucharest, attracted by the highly skilled labour force and low operating costs. The list includes multinationals such as Microsoft, IBM, P&G, HP, Oracle, Wipro, and S&T.

In terms of higher education, Bucharest is the largest Romanian academic centre and one of the most important locales in Eastern Europe, with 16 public and 18 private institutes and over 300,00 students.

Bucharest has the highest cost of living indicators in Romania, but these are still lower than for its peer central and eastern European cities. The net average salary in December 2011 was EUR 550 (an 8.53% increase since 2010), the highest for all Romanian cities. The crime rate is low in Bucharest, with the exception of petty street crime and high-level institutional corruption.

2. National Context of Diversity and Migration

It is necessary to appreciate the contemporary position of Bucharest within the broader context of historic diversity, different political regimes and national trends in both emigration and immigration.

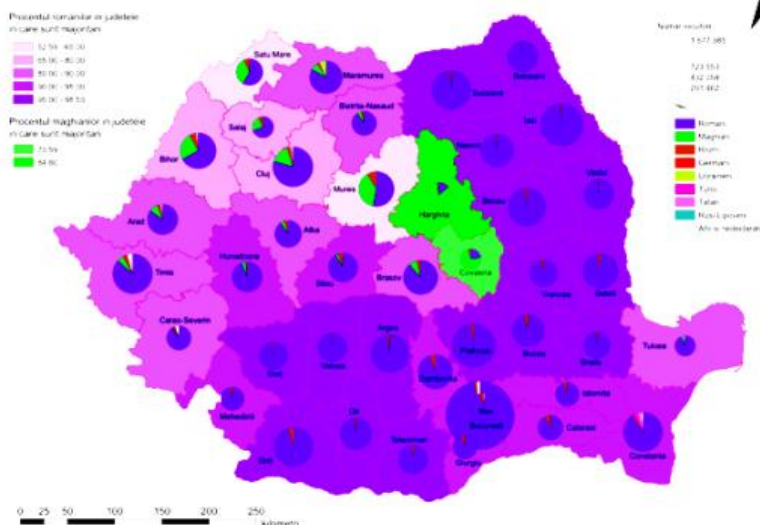
Historic diversity and national minorities

Like many parts of eastern and central Europe, Romania has a complex legacy of historic diversity. Whilst several episodes of involuntary and voluntary 'ethnic cleansing' during the 20th century have rather homogenised the picture, there remain significant historic ethnic minority groups living throughout country.

By far the largest is the Hungarian speaking minority in central and northeast Romania, and second in size is the Roma population, which is more evenly distributed and, significantly for the purposes of this report, is well represented in Bucharest.

¹ This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 5 and 6 November 2015, comprising Irena Guidikova, Marcel Larose and Phil Wood.

Figure 1 Romanian counties by ethnicity, 2011



The extent to which national minorities are enabled to express themselves politically, socially and culturally varies from one national jurisdiction to another, as does the extent to which this is proving responsive to modern developments such as EU membership and the arrival of global immigration.

It is now 20 years since the Council of Europe adopted the *Framework-Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and Romania ratified it, and there is a widespread opinion that over that time it has done

more than most countries to stay true to the spirit and practice of the Convention. In its most recent published Opinion upon Romania (adopted on 21 March 2012), the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention stated that “Romania has continued its efforts to protect national minorities. A number of positive steps have been taken”². More recently at a conference held in Cluj in April 2015 Gianni Buquicchio, the president of the CoE’s Venice Commission praised the Romanian national minority model, saying that in his experience, “the Romanian authorities pay close attention to respecting the Convention and other applicable norms”.³

The model of diversity promoted by Romania appears to be based on both preserving and affirming the essence of individual identity – be it ethnical, linguistic, cultural or religious – and the need for defining and integrating a tolerant space, based on inter-ethnic dialogue, mutual understanding and respect. National minority organisations in Romania have a special status which puts them somewhere between an NGO and a political party.⁴ This offers strong guarantees of access to political representation, either directly to the Romanian Parliament, or via the Council of National Minorities, a structure with consultative status for the Government. In particular this offers advantages in the field of education whereby, for example, on the request of parents, children may be given schooling in minority language and history.

Romania’s national minority policies have a twofold purpose: that of protecting the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the majority and minorities and also peaceful coexistence among minorities themselves. Therefore, attention is focused not only on the need to promote and protect the specific identity of those who are part of national minorities, but also on the need to integrate both them, and the majority, into society.

Nevertheless, as outlined below, the historic discrimination against, and disadvantages of, the Roma community persists in Romania. Only recently (2014), the fourth report on Romania of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) confirmed that “stigmatizing statements against Roma

² http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_3rd_OP_Romania_en.pdf

³ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/31862#null>

⁴ Rus, Călin (2006). Multicultural versus intercultural approach towards minority rights: An analysis based on the Romanian case. In: Rugg, François, Rudolf Poledna, and Călin Rus. *Interculturalism and discrimination in Romania: policies, practices, identities and representations*. Vol. 8. LIT Verlag Münster.

are common in political discourse.”⁵ This can go to the highest level with Teodor Baconschi who in 2010 was Minister of Foreign Affairs, publicly stating that: “We have some natural, physiological problems of criminality within some of the Romanian communities, especially among Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity.” However, more relevant to the present day may be the pronouncement of President Klaus Iohannis on the National Day of Commemorating the Holocaust in Romania. He warned against the temptations of populism and racism being revived against the background of the current refugee crisis, and he underlined that the European states have the duty to reject them.⁶

The Roma community

According to the last census taken in 2002, the official number of Roma in Romania was 535,140 persons, representing almost 2.5% of the population. There is, however, a widespread consensus that this figure does not reflect the real number of Roma. It is generally assumed that there is a considerable discrepancy between the number of those who self-identify as Roma in the census and the number of those who are externally identified as belonging to this group. And there is general agreement that the number of those who according to external criteria are considered Roma is several times higher than the figure provided by the census. Thus an estimate of 1.8 million Romanian Roma is considered to be more realistic for today, making Romania the European country with the largest Romani population, and it makes Roma the third largest ethnic group in the country.⁷

The majority of Roma settlements can be found in the north-east of the country (ie outside the pre-1918 borders) but there is also a substantial community living in Bucharest, particularly the Ferentari, what is area in city district 5. The population of the Ferentari neighborhood is around 120,000, 80% of which is part of the Roma minority.

Most of the Roma have marginal social positions in terms of both incomes and living conditions. In the mid-2000s 66% of Romani households had incomes below the poverty threshold, while the country average was 20%. The differences between the Romani and non-Romani communities in terms of quality of housing and living conditions are also significant. Romani households, compared with non-Romani ones, have significantly lower access to various public utilities (see Table 1). The differences in living conditions between Roma and non-Roma are more prominent in rural than in urban areas. The gap between the Roma and the non-Roma is significant in terms of access to work and public services. According to a UNDP report (capturing the situation from the mid- 2000s) 44% of the Roma, compared to 28% of the non-Roma, were unemployed.⁸ Even if succeeding to connect with the world of labour, the Roma have far less chance to be formally employed than the non-Roma: the relative ratio of those working casually is four times higher in the case of the Romani than in the case of the non-Romani population (Fleck & Rughiniş 2008, 133–135).

⁵ <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/romania/ROM-CbC-IV-2014-019-ENG.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.agerpres.ro/english/2015/10/08/president-iohannis-on-romanian-holocaust-day-we-must-reject-temptations-of-populism-racism-16-07-15>

⁷ Horváth, I. (2012) “Two Decades of Educational Policies for the Roma: Lessons and Dilemmas” from *Romania. Formal and Informal Education for Roma*. Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana

⁸ Ivanov, A., Collins, M., Grosu, C., Kling, J., Milcher, S., O’Higgins, N., Slay, B. Zhelyazkova, A., 2006. At risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe. Bratislava, United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

	Roma	Non-Roma
Not connected to electricity	13%	2%
Obtaining water for domestic consumption from a public source outside the household	47%	8%
Not connected to a collector sewer system	86%	4%
Condition of roads connecting the household with the rest of the locality	64% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)	42% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)
Public transportation	50% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)	34% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)
Street illumination	55% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)	23% (totally unsatisfactory or non-existing)
Access to shops, markets for buying goods for daily use	25% (highly difficult or totally inexistent)	13% (highly difficult or totally inexistent)
Access to school	22% (highly difficult or totally inexistent)	11% (highly difficult or totally inexistent)

Figure 2 Variables highlighting the difference of living conditions between Roma and non-Roma in Romania (persons included in Roma sub-sample based on self-identification)⁹

Aspects of migration before and during Communism

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Romania was predominantly a country of emigration. A combination of complex factors contributed to this, including the aftermaths of both World Wars when large numbers of Germans, Hungarians and Jews left, or were forcibly removed. As a backdrop to this was a steady flow of economic out-migration, particularly to the United States. With the imposition of Communism in 1947 however, there ensued a more restrictive regime on movement. Its purpose was not to prevent all forms of emigration, but rather to control outflows by restricting exit possibilities while allowing certain (potentially troublesome) ethnic minority groups to leave. By limiting departures, authorities hoped to reduce the number of asylum applications made by Romanians abroad; it was feared that asylum-seeking by a large number of Romanians would discredit the regime and threaten its legitimacy as a functioning political system, in the eyes of both foreign governments and remaining citizens. One outcome was to make Romania's population more ethnically homogenous than it had previously been.¹⁰

The inflow of foreign migrants was also rather limited during the Communist era, as any alien – especially those from countries deemed unfriendly – was considered by the authorities to be a potential threat. Visiting foreign citizens were monitored closely, even in the case when these foreigners visited their friends and family members; Romanians had the legal responsibility to report to the authorities any non-Romanian citizen they hosted in their homes. There were some exceptions to this suspicious attitude toward aliens: foreign students, especially from the Middle East and African countries, were well represented at Romanian universities from the 1970s onwards. At its peak, the annual stock of foreign students rose to 16,900, representing 7-8% of all students registered at Romanian universities in 1981.¹¹ These students paid

⁹ Horvath (2012) op cit

¹⁰ Horvath, I. (2014). *Focus migration: Romania*. Hamburg Institute for International Economics http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/uploads/tx_wilpubdb/CP_09_Romania.pdf

¹¹ Lazaroiu, Sebastian (2003) "Sharing experience: migration trends in selected applicant countries and lessons learned from the new countries of immigration in the EU and Austria", Vol. IV – *Romania, More out than in at the crossroads between Europe and the Balkans*; http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-k/gde/04/IOM_IV_RO.pdf

thousands of dollars for their studies and therefore provided a significant amount of hard currency to the state universities. Their studies were based on the bilateral agreements called 'Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation' between Romania (characterized by Ceausescu's political involvement in the Third World) and other developing countries. For example, from 1973 to 1985, thirteen such treaties were signed with 10 African countries.¹²

Population mobility since 1989

Over the last two and a half decades, the population in Romania has registered a continuous and dramatic decline from 23 million in 1990, to 21.4 million in 2008, to around 20 million inhabitants in 2011; and it is forecast that by 2050 it will have fallen to only 16 million. Changes in the demographic structure by age groups and gender, combined with the decrease in the fertility rate have led to a continuous process of population ageing. Furthermore, the decrease has been exacerbated by emigration, particularly of young and active people. It is this context that we should think about contemporary immigration to Romania.

Borders became more permeable after the fall of the Ceausescu regime in 1989 and we see two major groups of migrants legally entering Romania. Firstly: voluntary migrants such as businessmen, economic migrants, the family members of already-settled immigrants, students. Then, at the start of Romania's application to join the European Union, a second group of voluntary migrants were Third Country Nationals (TCN) who arrived in Romania on working visas. However, there was also a growing trend for forced migrants to enter Romania (often in transit), such as asylum seekers and refugees and people with subsidiary or temporary protection.

However, this must be understood alongside the phenomenon of emigration from Romania. At the end of 2014, Romania represented the main source country of migrants within the European Union (EU), with an estimated total of more than three million Romanians having left home to work or to study abroad. So whilst Romania remains a net emigration country it is slowly also emerging as a destination country for immigrants, being the host country for about 100,000 currently.

Whilst migration in and out of Romania constitutes a rather recent phenomenon, it has become of utmost importance and it has deeply influenced and transformed Romanian society in many aspects, from individual and community experiences to the perceptions of the general public and the actions of the political class. One scholar has gone so far as to say that migration to, from and back to Romania has becoming the defining characteristic of the country at the moment: "By moving to work abroad, returning to the home country and immigrating into Romania, we can see how the major social and economic processes are being defined. Migration represents 'a total social phenomenon' which offers the way 'to read' the problems and opportunities, history, present and future that characterize Romanian society"¹³.

Although the share of immigrants in the total population of Romania accounts for only 0.5%, it is generally expected that this will continue to rise in the coming decades because of the labour market needs related to an population ageing, and Eurostat predicts that, from 2008 to 2060, Romania will register a net migration ratio of 1.8 per cent. The Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII) says that in 2014, the total number of immigrants in Romania was of 98,586, out of which 57,471 were TCN with 41,115 coming from the EU/EEA. It is worth noting that since Romania became a member of the EU (2007), the number of TCNs increased by 38% up to 2014, the main five countries of origin being Moldova – 9,838; Turkey – 8816; China – 7359; Syria – 4136; and USA – 2010. As regards EU citizens in Romania, they come principally from: Italy - 11,369; Germany – 5,255; France – 4,378; Hungary – 3,171; and Greece – 2,134.

¹² Hamberger, A. (2010). *Immigration and the integration of immigrants in Romania*. Migrationonline. cz, 7.

¹³ Sandu, D., (2010). *Social Worlds of Romanian Emigration Abroad*. Iași: Polirom.

Voluntary/economic migrants in Romania

At the beginning of the 1990s, Romania had a relatively modest level of immigration. Entrepreneurs, especially from Turkey, the Middle East (Syria, Jordan) and China were the largest group of immigrants during this time. These foreign business communities played an important role in the economy; but despite their contribution to the Romanian economy and to its society, the establishment of foreign businesses in Romania is regulated by strict measures. In order to avoid visa abuses that could lead to transit migration, the legislation relating to foreign investments has changed dramatically since the beginning of the 1990s, especially with regard to the minimum amount of investment that these immigrants are obliged to provide – compare 10.000 USD in 1990 to 50.000 EUR in 2003 (HWWI, 2007:4).

Until 2005, the prevalent motivation for immigration was commercial activities, and then during the brief economic boom (2006-2008) labour immigration had an ascending trend. Meanwhile immigration for study purposes has represented a constant feature of the immigration phenomenon in Romania, being a direct result of national policies that encourage foreigners to come and study in Romania and of the scholarships and special places in the national educational system offered for ethnic Romanians abroad¹⁴. More than half of the migrants are young (up to 35 years old), around 60% are men, and they have settled predominantly in urban areas. During the years, the immigrants had settled predominantly in cities where they find more economic, education and labour market opportunities as well as their established ethnic communities and social networks. In fact almost half of all migrants in Romania are concentrated around the capital city, in the region Bucharest-Ilfov.¹⁵

Immigration from the Republic of Moldova

One peculiarity of the Romanian situation is the relationship with its neighbour, and co-linguistic cousin, the former Soviet republic of Moldova. Starting in the second half of the 1990s, immigration from the Moldova increased significantly. Building on historical ties the 1991 Romanian Citizenship Law practically defined the migration of Moldovan citizens as a form of repatriation, stipulating that the descendants of former Romanian citizens can “reacquire Romanian citizenship by request even if they have another citizenship and they do not settle their domicile in Romania” (Moldova having been part of Romania between 1918 and 1940). It is estimated that, as a consequence of this law alone, more than 250,000 Moldovan citizens might have received Romanian citizenship during the 1990s. In these circumstances, the numbers might under-represent Moldovan immigration to Romania, since many Moldovans have moved to Romania as Romanian citizens (and therefore might not appear in the statistics as part of the immigrant population).

In the context of its accession to the EU, Romania introduced mandatory visas for Moldovan citizens, and this has resulted in an exceptional increase in the number of applications by Moldovan citizens for Romanian citizenship. A study in 2007 estimated that 500,000 Moldovan citizens (with accompanying children, approximately 800,000 persons) had applied for Romanian citizenship up to that point, and there were predictions that this figure might increase to 1.8 million by the end of that year. This was extraordinary, considering that the Republic of Moldova only has about million inhabitants.¹⁶

Calculating how many Moldovans there currently are in Romania involves a high degree of guesswork. Official Romanian estimates from 2014 suggest a very approximate total of 30,000 Moldovan passport-holders across the border in Romania.¹⁷

¹⁴ Alexe, I., Păunescu, B., Ciubotariu, B., Ghiță, E., Ulrich, L., Tarnovschi, D., (2011). *Study on the immigration phenomenon in Romania*. SEA - Practical Application of Science Volume III, Issue 1 (7) / 2015 75 The aliens' integration into the Romanian society. Bucharest: Soros Foundation.

¹⁵ Alexe, A. I. (2015). *Immigrants' labour market integration in Romania*. Migration, 3(1), 7.

¹⁶ Iordachi, C. (2003): “Citizenship and National Identity in Romania: A Historical Overview.” Regio Yearbook 2003: 3-34

¹⁷ Andrew MacDowall (2015) *Moldovans in Romania – the ties that bind*. Central European Financial Observer 02-26-15

Refuge and Asylum in Romania

In 1991 Romania ratified the UN Convention (1951) and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967). The asylum system in Romania underwent modifications in 1996 and 2000, before being harmonised with EU standards in 2006. The number of asylum applications has fluctuated from year to year, with 15,605 applications being received between 1991 and the end of 2006. The number of persons applying for asylum in Romania each year has decreased considerably, from 1,150 asylum requests registered in 2002 to 380 applications in 2006. This trend is in line with a Europe-wide decrease of the number of asylum applications and may be attributed to the relatively low rate of acceptance of claims in Romania, which may discourage applications.

However the number of asylum applications might increase with the ongoing refugee crisis, and EU regulations which assign responsibility for asylum applications to the state where an applicant first entered EU territory. The Romanian authorities are already prepared for such a change; the National Office for Refugees (the Romanian governmental unit in charge of the implementation of asylum policy) has established new transit and accommodation centres for asylum applicants. Compared to other Eastern European countries such as Poland, Slovakia or Hungary, Romania's recognition rate is quite high.

As of December 2014, Romania had about 2,200 refugees, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. Romania was originally one of four eastern European countries to oppose a European Union resettlement plan for 120,000 asylum-seekers. Later however President Klaus Iohannis clarified matters saying that Romania could cope with the extra migrants it has been asked to take, and merely disagreed with mandatory quotas.

The instance of so-called refugees "sur place" merits special mention as it applies to many of the foreign students from African countries and the Middle East who were enrolled at Romanian universities during the communist regime and immediately after its dissolution. A person becomes a refugee "sur place" due to circumstances arising in his or her country of origin during his or her absence (Amnesty International, 2010). Many foreign students from the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon studying in Romania became "refugees sur place", especially during 1997-1998 as a result of the civil war in the Republic of the Congo.

Researchers found that most refugees from the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon expressed their belief that it was easy for them to learn the Romanian language due to the Latin/Romantic origin of both Romanian and French (spoken in Congo and Cameroon)¹⁸. The social integration of refugees is framed by two elements: friends and marriage. The majority of the interviewed refugees stated that their Romanian friends outnumbered friends from the African community, because over time a large proportion of African refugees have left Romania for countries like Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and other countries. In terms of the population spread of refugees, 80% of all refugees reside in Bucharest. This may be because they studied in Bucharest for several years, and because the biggest economic opportunities are found there. When it comes to marriage, most of the male African refugees I interviewed were married to Romanian women. Only a small number of the refugees were married to persons from their own community.

In order to obtain citizenship refugees must submit to a rigorous exam before a specialised committee. The conditions for receiving Romanian citizenship are the following: the applicant must be over 18 years of age; must prove 8 years of continuous residence in Romania; must attest loyalty to the Romanian state through their behaviour, actions and attitude (i.e. they must not be linked to any hostile activities against the Romanian state); must have legal means to support a decent existence; must not have been convicted in their country of origin or in Romania; must know the Romania language and be aware of aspects of Romanian culture and civilization; must know the Romanian constitution and the national anthem.

¹⁸ Hamberger *op cit*

3. National Policy on Migration and Integration

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA. 167 policy indicators have been developed to create a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in society. The index is a tool to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in all the countries analysed. The project informs and engages key policy actors about how to use indicators to improve integration governance and policy effectiveness.

According to MIPEX, Romania has an overall score of 45 which places it 23rd out of 38 countries in terms of favourability. In detail it produces the following outcomes in Figure 3 below. In summary, newcomers to Romania benefit from halfway favourable policies that create slightly more obstacles than opportunities for non-EU immigrants to quickly and fully participate in society. The balance between opportunities and obstacles is more favourable in Romania than in most of the rest of Central/Eastern Europe.

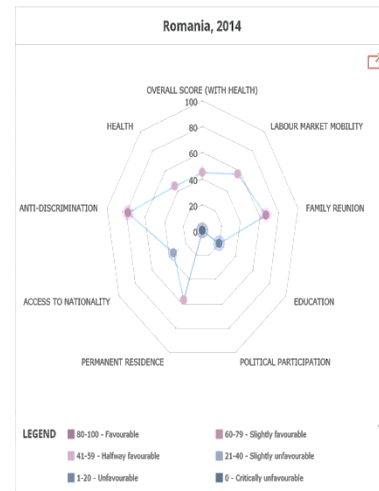


Figure 3 MIPEX 2014, Romania

Romania's integration strategies provide basic opportunities for integration that still need to reach all types of immigrants in need. Thanks to EU law, most non-EU newcomers can access the labour market and training, reunite with family and secure EU long-term residence, though some gaps persist in these areas. Going above-average for the region, Romanian authorities and civil society are taking steps to provide free language training and basic information on jobs, training, schooling for children and healthcare. With the right resources and support Romania's strong anti-discrimination laws can also be used to guarantee equal treatment for non-EU citizens when practices go against the law.

The major obstacles to integration in Romania are common problems in the region. When seeking or renewing permits, immigrants who meet all the legal requirements still face wide administrative discretion, despite EU law. Support for Romania's few immigrant pupils is weak and largely limited to learning the Romanian language. Its integration strategies are missing political participation and a clear path to citizenship for ordinary immigrants and Romanian-born or -educated children. Romania is the most restrictive in denying all political rights to its small number of non-EU citizens, despite above-average majorities of Romanian citizens being in favour of immigrants' rights and contributions.

The *National Strategy on Immigration for 2011–2014* became a key policy paper, it being the first Romanian attempt to transpose the major integration policies established at European level. The institution responsible for adapting and monitoring the Strategy is *Grupul de coordonare a implementării Strategiei naționale privind imigrația* a consultative body that is comprised exclusively of representatives of state authorities.¹⁹

This has been superseded by the *National Strategy on Immigration for 2015–2018* which goes into even greater detail about the Romanian government's commitments and plans. It gets off to a promising start by making the statement that:

¹⁹ Bogdan Ghenea (2014) *Consultative bodies for immigrants. Case study: Romania*. Romanian National Council for Refugees, July 2014

"Migration is a process to be managed rather than a problem to be solved."

It then lays out the following Strategic objectives and Targets:

1. Promotion of legal migration for the benefit of all parties: the Romanian society, immigrants and their home states

Specific objectives:

- *Facilitating access of citizens of third countries to find responsible employment (creating the legal framework for attracting and maintenance of employment according to needs identified)*
- *Better access of third-country nationals to higher educational institutions for fields and professions identified as deficient*
- *Facilitating admission and residence of third-country nationals for development / doing business in Romania in line with the National economic interest*
- *Providing better information to citizens of third countries on the possibilities and conditions for legal immigration*

2. Strengthening the legality of stay of third states Romania and proper implementation measures and removal of restrictive measures

Specific objectives:

- *Permanent information on the risks of illegal migration and undeclared work and the sanctions and restrictive measures that may be applied*
- *Streamlining the legality of third-country nationals to reside and work Romania*
- *Strengthening cooperation with the competent Romanian authorities to combat illegal immigration and undeclared citizens of third countries*
- *The measures to return illegal immigrants to EU standards European*

3. Improving the national asylum system in order to ensure efficiency and compliance with legal standards applicable nationally, in Europe and internationally.

Specific objectives:

- *Continue to ensure access to asylum procedures*
- *Processing of asylum applications effectively and according to applicable legal standards national, European and international*
- *Effective combating of abuses of the asylum procedure*
- *Providing a dignified standard of living for asylum seekers under national legal standards, applicable European and international*
- *Ensuring compatibility and interoperability with the asylum systems of other Member States and strengthening and improving the quality of asylum procedures and measures for integration of people from third countries*
- *Unified and coherent managing of illegal immigrant influxes generated by political, social, economic or military crises and efficient management of Romania's participation mechanisms for intra and extra-EU relocation*

4. Romania's active participation in efforts of the international community and the European Union Member States to identify durable solutions for persons in need of international protection and social integration of third-country nationals

Specific objectives

- *Social integration of people who were granted a form of protection and those with legal residence*
- *Incorporating aspects of integration in all other relevant policy areas*
- *Creating an environment that facilitates the integration of third-country nationals*
- *The commitment of Romania as a place of refugee resettlement*
- *Continue the work of the Emergency Relocation Center, Timisoara under the Agreement between the Romanian Government and the UNHCR High Commissioner and IOM.*

Perhaps of particular interest in the context of Intercultural Cities are two specific commitments under objective 4.3 to:

- Promotion of intercultural dialogue and contacts at all levels of society through multicultural organizing activities;
- Creating a positive image in public opinion in Romania on immigration and integration of third-country nationals by running information and awareness campaigns.

References are also made to:

“..strengthening the capacity of local authorities to ensure sustainable assistance to relocated people and adapting services institutions with responsibilities in accepting and integrating persons in need.”

“Supporting staff in administrative units, Counties and Bucharest to manage crisis; and strengthening institutional cooperation mechanisms to give operational support in crisis situations under the coordination of local authorities”.

“Since the most effective integration is accomplished by local communities, local authorities and the devolved departments have an important role and duty to provide specialized services such as access to housing, education, social and medical assistance, and access to the labour market. In this respect, the institutions competent in the field, through participative management, will contribute to creating opportunities - including amending the legal framework - in order to ensure social integration.”

At the same conference in Cluj in April 2015 referenced above, Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu commented that: “Romania has managed to create a genuine intercultural model of interaction between the majority and the minorities. It’s a model that capitalizes on cultural diversity, a model that, obviously, needs to be further improved, but which, from many points of view, is based on higher standards regarding the protection of national minorities than the European ones.”

He added that: “only interculturalism is able to determine genuine progress in society. Interculturalism implies the existence of a single common social, economic, political, and cultural space that both the majority and them minority belong to, on an equal footing and with equal legitimacy.”

In the opinion of the ICC Team, this could well be the most explicit and positive statement in support of interculturalism ever made by a government minister anywhere in Europe.

5. Local Diversity and Policy Context

Bucharest has a unique status in Romanian administration, since it is the only municipality that is not part of a county. The City Government is headed by a General Mayor. The General Council is made up of 55 elected councillors.

Responsibility for coordinating the city’s membership of Intercultural Cities lies in the Directorate of Foreign Affairs and Protocol and its Director Catalin Grosu.

The city is divided into six administrative sectors (sectoare), each of which has their own 27-seat council, town hall and mayor. The main city hall is responsible for the water system, transport, and the main boulevards, whilst sectorial town halls manage the contact between individuals and local government, secondary streets, parks, schools and cleaning services. The six sectors are numbered from one to six and are disposed radially so that each one has under its administration an area of the city centre. They are numbered clockwise and are further divided into districts.

Bucharest’s sectorial councils, the general council, and the mayors, are elected every four years by popular vote. Additionally, Bucharest has a prefect, who is appointed by central government, who is not allowed to be a member of a political party, and whose role is to represent the national government at local level.

Figure 8 (source: www.pmb.ro)

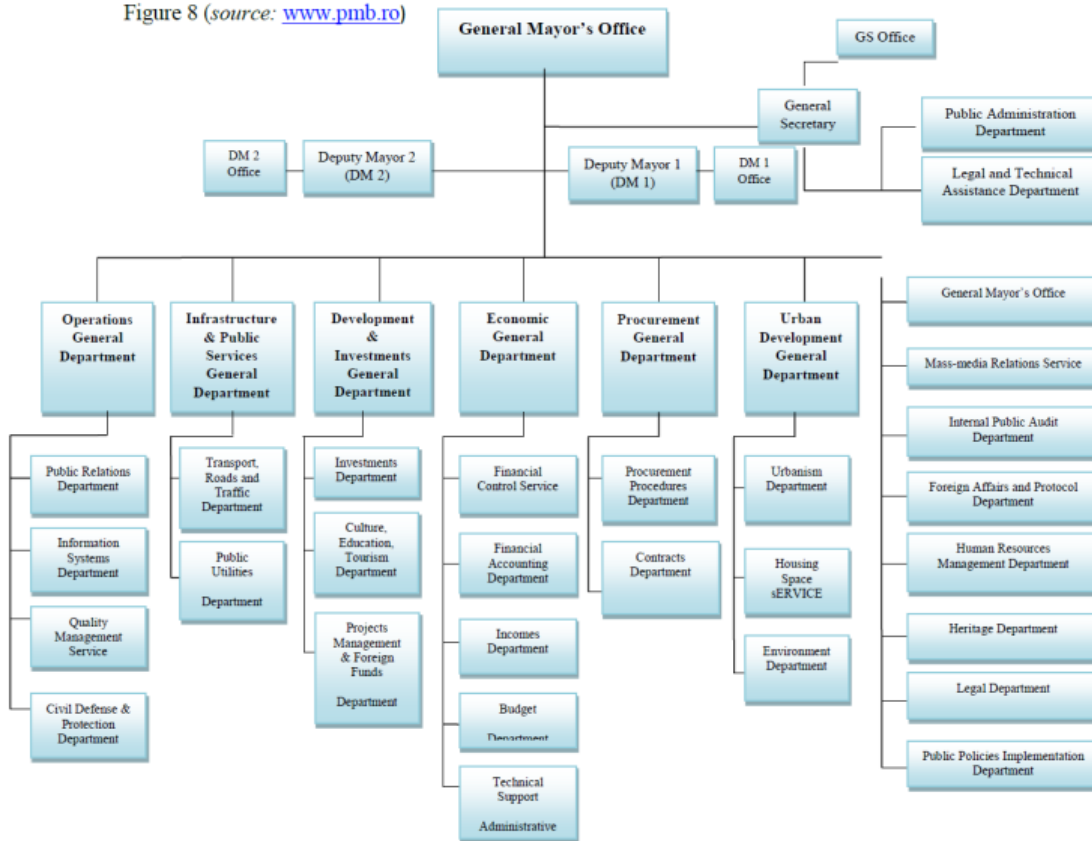


Figure 4 Organigram of the City Government

The Municipality of Bucharest, along with the surrounding Ilfov county, forms the Bucharest development region, which is equivalent to NUTS-II regions in the European Union and is used by the European Union and the Romanian Government for statistical analysis and regional development.

Bucharest has its own municipal police force. Bucharest's crime rate is rather low in comparison to other Eastern European capital cities. A significant problem in the city remains institutional corruption, which is seen as the most important justice-and-law related problem in the city.

Bucharest proper had a population of 1,931,838, according to 2007 official estimates. Adding the satellite towns around the urban area, the metropolitan area of Bucharest had a population of 2.6 million people. Bucharest is the sixth largest city in the European Union by population within city limits.

Bucharest's population experienced two phases of rapid growth, the first in the late 19th century, and the second during the Communist period, when a massive urbanization campaign was launched and many people migrated from rural areas. Ceaușescu's ban on abortion and contraception meant that natural increase was also significant.

Approximately 97 % of the population of Bucharest are ethnic Romanians, with the second largest ethnic group being the Roma, which make up 1.4 % of the population. Other significant ethnic groups are Hungarians (0.3 %), Jews (0.1 %), Turks (0.1 %) and Germans (0.1 %). Some other inhabitants of Bucharest are of Greek, Armenian, Lipovan and Italian descent.

The official language is Romanian whilst English and French are the main foreign languages taught in schools. In terms of religion, 96.1 % of the population are Romanian Orthodox, 1.2 % are Roman Catholic, 0.5 % are

Muslim and 0.4 % are Eastern Rite-Catholic. Despite this, only 24 % of the population, of any religion, attend a place of worship once a week or more.

During its completion of the ICC Index questionnaire, the city administration indicated that thus far it has not adopted any policies specific to cultural diversity or intercultural integration.

4. Education and Training

According to the findings of the Intercultural Cities Index, Bucharest achieves its highest single for the topic of education. The analysis shows that Bucharest's education policy achievement rate (65%) which is almost the same as the average for all cities in the Index (66%).

In most local primary schools almost all pupils are coming from the same ethnic background and the ethnic background of teachers in schools often reflects the composition of the city's population. Most schools are making strong efforts to involve parents from ethnic minority/migrant background in school life. The city reports that local schools often carry out intercultural projects as, for example, cultural exchanges.

Following many years, both before the 1989 revolution and subsequently, Romania has sought to promote its universities to foreign students and has been successful in recruiting from around the world. It has been particularly popular with students from China, Vietnam, the Arab World and sub-Saharan Africa. Students generally consider they get a good education cheaply and Bucharest also has relatively low costs of living and is considered hospitable. However, by the same token low wages in the education sector make it very hard to recruit high quality foreign professors and lecturers.

Catalina Ioana Donciu of the organisation Alma Mater informed us that the University system allows for the integration of foreigners with no discrimination. All courses begin with a full year of learning Romanian language though some courses are delivered in English, and every department is responsible for ensuring they have the resources to teach in English. Students are encouraged to take part in social volunteering and to contribute to debates on public policy in the city. Problems arise, however, after graduation when they try to access the labour market. Romanian law states that they must leave the country after graduation and then reapply for entry to the country. Also Romanian employers are required to exhaust the availability of local candidates before offering a job to a foreigner.

5. Employment and Business

Economic and employment development appears to be the most effective platform upon which to found a conversation and policy development process around Interculturality in Bucharest. This can perhaps be explained by the recent history of Romania since the revolution. On the one hand, the opening of borders and the profound differential in living standards between Romania and the West has led up to 3 million Romanians to seek work opportunities outside the country. Many of these have taken skills and abilities which Romania could barely afford to lose, creating shortages in the domestic labour market. So whilst Romania has not yet experienced large-scale immigration there is a consciousness that if and when it does this should be managed with a view to addressing some of these shortfalls.

Perhaps another factor is that the pre-revolutionary education-led immigration has now produced a generation of highly-educated and well-integrated citizens, many of whom are now active and mature entrepreneurs with successful businesses, which may have created a positive role model for diversity as a source of business and employment development particularly in Bucharest.

More recently, Bucharest has been a participant member of the 'Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration' (DELI) project which was sponsored by ICC. In introducing the findings of this project, now

complete, the former project manager Soriana Constantinescu was keen to emphasise that its main achievement had been to point the legal and administrative barriers which may hold back Bucharest from translating its principled enthusiasm for migrant entrepreneurship into practical action and benefits. Most businesses still remain ill-informed about the potential of foreign employees whilst banks and credit agencies have done little to recognise immigrant entrepreneurs. She called for a raft of initiatives ranging from strong laws against employment discrimination; a more nuanced approach to necessary anti-money laundering to ensure that they do not thoughtlessly penalise all migrant entrepreneurs who are seeking credit or to make investments in Bucharest. She called for action from various quarters: financial services agencies should review their procedures and start designing more bespoke products to meet the needs of minority businesses; they themselves should form a stronger alliance to raise their profile and lobby for more recognition; and the mayor and other politicians should campaign to outlaw discrimination in the labour market.

A successful businessman of Indian origin Yogish Argawal, spoke of his inspiration coming from Steve Jobs, a successful immigrant who thrived in the open economy of the US. His dream was that Romania would also create such a climate so that many others would follow in Yogish's footsteps. He had started in 1999 with only 5 staff and now he employed 320 people in one of Romania's top pharma companies. There had been times when the difficulties in the Romanian system almost pushed him into relocating elsewhere but the qualities of the people persuaded him to stay.

Constantin Rotaru of the Romanian Banking Association accepted there were too many legal restrictions holding back minority business. But he assured us that his industry recognised both the problem and the opportunities and were trying to make improvements. Already 80% of investment in the Romanian economy came from overseas but he recognised a need to encourage foreigners who were based in the country.

The President of the International Association for Human Rights said one of the challenges for migrants seeking to work or start a business in Romania is that they are not informed of their rights. Also foreign students, especially from Syria and Iraq have many problems accessing banks in order to be able to pay their bills and the same problem exists for refugees who have legal status. It was announced that on this day in the Ministry of Labour had convened a high level meeting about the labour integration for migrants.

Another serious issue uncovered by the DELI project was that Bucharest has a shortage of accommodation. This is particularly difficult for foreign students and those who might wish to stay and invest talents in the local economy after they graduate. There is concern that Romania is wasting much of this talent because it is not able to take advantage of it by offering support at key stages in the careers of foreign residents.

Ali Mohammed Touati of the Social Reminder NGO talked of how he teaches Romanian to foreigners and in the process helps to identify job opportunities. But he has big problems with the legality of hiring foreigners and it costs more than hiring locals. His wife is a pharmacist in very big company but it only employs two ethnic minority staff because of these barriers. The employers are alarmed by the excessive amounts of paperwork and more tax and insurance that is generated.

EDP Renewable is a typical example of a multinational company which is looking to grow in Romania, creating jobs both for locals and expatriate foreigners. Spokesperson Claudiu Moscu told us that diversity is central to the company's code of ethics but much of his time is spent aligning this principle with the practical complexities of doing business in Romania. He thinks there is a desperate need to reduce the burden of bureaucracy, for example he has a colleague who spends a day a month simply gathering together the paperwork in order to ensure he can continue living in Romania. In general it is left to employers to help their own foreigners. EDP for example employs specialist staff to assist expatriates with accessing public systems, banking, acquiring language, and finding friends. Some foreign employees do not have their

qualifications recognised in Romania so they are legally unable to work. Companies cannot bear to see this waste of talent so sometimes employ such people as consultants to oversee local staff.

EDP also pays big fees to lawyers to give advice to expats. Mr Moscu thinks it would be better and less wasteful if Romania were to provide a special agency which he and other companies could buy into for such services. He also worries that because most expats rely so heavily upon their employers, they tend to stick together and have little incentive to mix with the resident population. EDP cooperates with NGOs so their staff can do social and voluntary activity outside their enclave, but this is an exception. He thinks everyone would they benefit from the establishment of ex-pat/migrant reception and welcoming centre in Bucharest.

Whilst conditions may be gradually improving for higher-skilled foreign workers in Romania, there are reports of difficulties elsewhere in the labour market. According to an official survey completed in October 2010 by the National Block of Trade Unions (Blocul National Sindical, BNS) and the NGO ARCA - The Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA - Forumul Român pentru Refugiați și Migranți) there is an alarming lack of awareness amongst immigrants regarding their political and civil rights. They are not at all or insufficient familiar with their human rights as labour migrants in Romania, they do not know precisely their responsibilities either and they are not familiar with the risks which they might encounter in the Romanian job market. They do not know which (inter)national institutions to resort to in case they need any kind of aid or information, and the majority do not speak either Romanian or any common international language.²⁰

Therefore, they are easily exposed to the double abuses of intermediary companies arranging jobs in Romania, who often take considerable fees (7,000 – 10,000 Euros per emigrant) in order to find a job for migrants in Romania and to negotiate and complete all the bureaucratic paperwork for the hiring procedure. Moreover, quite often the jobs and work conditions promised and guaranteed by these intermediary companies do not overlap with the reality the labour migrants in Romania are facing. The harsh reality of the job market awaits the migrants upon their arrival in Romania: lower wages than guaranteed by the intermediary companies, more working hours, (much) poorer working and living conditions, insignificant or no medical insurance.

Secondly, labour migrants are also exposed to the abuses of their Romanian employers, who take advantage of the fact that immigrants are not informed about their labour rights and that they most often do not speak Romanian. Migrants have reported verbal abuses, unpaid or underpaid extra working hours, lack of medical insurance, therefore no medical aid in case of work accidents or disease, degrading working and living conditions and insignificant or no work protection at all. Moreover, Romanian employers have often overlooked and not reported work accidents.²¹

6. Governance and democratic participation

As already discussed above, national minorities in Romania benefit from a well-structured system that ensures consultation and fair representation at national level. This consists not only of parliamentary representation, but also of National Minorities Council, a structure with consultative role, officially recognised by Romanian Government and supported by the Department for Interethnic Relations and General Secretariat of the Government of Romania. Each national minority has three representatives in the National Minorities Council, appointed by the organisation with the largest number of votes in parliamentary election.

However the situation not so positive for TCNs in Romania. As already discussed above, the MIPEX programme has noted that an estimated 48,453 non-EU adults (most of them residents of Bucharest) are

²⁰ <http://www.migrationeducation.org/37.1.html?&rid=191&cHash=d3c03baacc1e3ae8f169144ea33a86ab>

²¹ Șerban, Toader, in *Migrant in Romania*, 2010, no. 7, available at: <http://www.migrant.ro/file/pagesleft/264migrantinromanianr7ptweb.pdf>

disenfranchised without the local right to vote. Romania is the only country in MIPEx scoring 0 on political participation. Non-EU citizens are excluded from democratic life, as political participation is still missing from Romania's integration strategy, with no action taken in recent years. Granting basic political liberties, consultation and support for immigrant leaders may demonstrate that immigrants are a benefit and not a threat to society.

Romanian Law 194/2002 confirms that non-EU citizens cannot set up their own political association or join political parties. Immigrants are not structurally consulted to inform and improve the policies that affect them daily, and there has been no action since 2010, despite mention of possible consultative bodies in the 2010 Action Plan to implement the National Migration Strategy.

Finally, new communities cannot obtain State funds to organise politically, except through occasional European Integration Fund projects.

7. Language

Collaboration between civil society and the Ministry of Education resulted in an increasing capacity of the education system to address the needs of migrants. A key element is represented by the Romanian language courses that migrants are entitled to receive for free, according to the law. For this purpose, a complex set of resources has been developed, including textbooks, multimedia and online resources, a group of teachers has been trained and evaluation procedures have been set-up.

Romanian language and cultural orientation courses are organised in 10 cities in Romania for adults and children. The courses have been designed to allow the learning of basic Romanian without reference to another language. Its content focuses on practical daily needs and not on abstract grammar. Resources to learn are available on the website www.vorbitiromaneste.ro. These resources include a textbook, with exercises and annexes, audio lessons and multimedia lessons with interactive exercises.

8. Public space, neighbourhoods and ethnic mixing

In a major study of the urban planning and development of Bucharest, its author concludes that over the last 20 years the capital has slipped into a state of vulnerability due to the weak capacity of the administration to manage city's uncontrolled expansion, and to maintain the viability of peripheral areas due to the fact that urbanization is captive to manipulation by real estate and private enterprise. Despite the existence of some projects and plans of development promoted at different moments, the author highlights the incapacity of the authorities to create and promote an overall urban vision. Transition seems to have become a permanent state for Bucharest, as it struggles through an apparently perpetual phase of reconstruction. He dubs it a city of an ephemeral urbanism.²²

The book even emphasises the role of particular fires, earthquakes or conflicts in triggering the city into particular phases or directions of development. There is a deep irony here, for as the ICC Team was making its tour of Bucharest, the city was in the grip of serious political demonstrations arising originally from a fatal fire at a local night club, which ultimately led to the fall of the national government and the local sector mayor.²³

Throughout Bucharest's history there has been a well known discrepancy between the northern neighbourhoods of Bucharest which became increasingly wealthy, whilst the southern neighbourhoods of Ferentari and Rahova became poorer and more disadvantaged. Studies of the post-communist development

²² Rufat, Samuel (2011) *Post-socialist Transition and Urban Vulnerability in Bucharest*. Bucharest: University Publishing House.

²³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34720183>

of Bucharest suggest that the process of segregation has greatly accelerated, driven particularly by the ability of wealthier groups to acquire prime areas of real estate and to create citadels and gated communities, whilst less fortunate districts have fallen further behind.²⁴

The issue in question for this report is how the city as described will be able to deal with a growing influx of population from many different parts of the world with different cultures and approaches to urban living. This is not a straight-forward question. In general it is the highly-ordered and regulated societies of Europe that tend to score highly in the ICC Index. On the other hand, highly-regulated cities can sometimes prove to be unfriendly and inflexible in the face of people with different customs and practice and that 'transitional' entities such as Bucharest is portrayed, may provide niches in which newcomer communities can find a better chance of achieving intercultural integration.

A recent study has looked at the growth of new global communities in Bucharest.²⁵ It finds that the majority are located in the centre of the city, but also in the centre of residential zones, and act as nuclei that relocate globalising fluxes inside the urban through commercial activities discharged in the big vegetable markets and in supermarkets. They add specific culinary elements to Bucharest's cultural landscape, but also a new and original style of buildings and signage. The Chinese Dragon, the green of Islam, the Indian orange, or the Lebanon cedar are only a few of the symbols now visible; plus words like tavern, pub, pizza, paprika, shaorma, croissant, hot dog, or hamburger have already entered the Romanian vocabulary. The Islamic veil, or elements of the traditional Indian or Japanese garment are quite commonly seen, no longer surprising anyone.

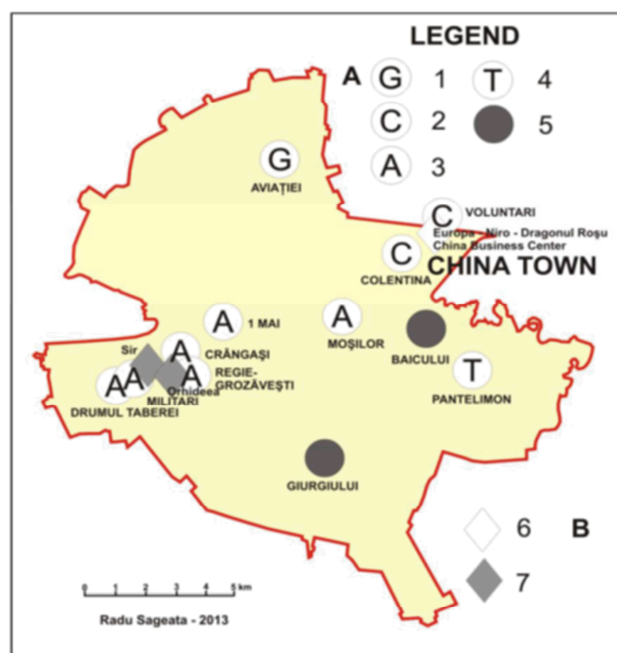


Fig. 4 New ethnic minorities in Bucharest

A. Agglomerations of: 1. Greeks, 2. Chinese, 3. Arabs, 4. Turks, 5. Africans (residents from Somalia, Nigeria, Eritrea etc.); B. Investments in commercial and hotel units: 6. Chinese, 7. Arabs.

²⁴ Mionel, V., & Mionel, O. (2012). *Changing The Paradigm Of Living In Bucharest: The Economic Segregation Of The Urban Privileged*. Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management, 7(4), 35-52.

²⁵ Sageata, Radu (2015) *Globalisation and New Ethnic Minorities in Romania*. Researchgate https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sageata_Radu/publication/281965191_GLOBALISATION_AND_NEW_ETHNIC_MINORITIES_IN_ROMANIA/links/5602867d08aeaf867fb6b745.pdf

Most foreigners in Bucharest live now in Sector 2, mainly in the Colentina residential zone. The commercial activities run by Chinese within the Dragonul Roșu, Europa and Niro complexes have proved very profitable, rapidly developing over the past few years. This location has boosted demand for Chinese goods in the Romanian market, so a “China Town Romania” is planned, with Chinese capital, aimed at enlarging the Colentina-Voluntari perimeter commercial area. This six year project includes a China Business Centre and a residential complex (“China Towers”) formed of 12 blocks with 600 flats. The heterogeneous ethnic picture of Sector 2 is completed with the presence of Turks in Pantelimon residential district.

Having initially come to study here, the Arabs settled in the Grozăvești-Regie student campus area, and started many businesses, restaurants, in particular, based on their native traditions and cuisine. Being better off, the Greeks chose to live in the northern zone of the Capital. On the other hand, Africans, originating mostly from Somalia, Nigeria and Eritrea, are inhabiting the poorer districts in the south of Bucharest (Giurgiului Avenue) and Baicului area, in the east. Most of them lived, or still do, in special centres. The foreign personnel from embassies, diplomatic missions, or economic representations complete Bucharest’s cosmopolitan ethnic landscape, creating a demand for foreign libraries, schools, and cultural centres.

The study speculates that if the Romanian government maintains its relatively unrestrictive stand toward TCN migrants these tendencies will continue apace in Bucharest, establishing the city more generally as a gateway to the European Union.

As part of its membership of ICC the city will need to get to grips with this rapidly developing situation, particularly to ensure that that it does not drive further segregating tendencies and that there is a productive and harmonious integration of the diverse cultural and economic forces.

9. Conflict and mediation

The participation of migrants in democratic life and their active involvement in public debates regarding policies that have a direct impact upon them, are essential factors in the integration process. An important facilitator of this is the presence of skilled and professional mediators whether employed by the public sector or NGOs. Such professionals can smooth the initial process of welcoming a newcomer to the country and the city, and then offer specialist advice regarding key institutions or public services. Mediators also have a vital role to play in anticipating or moderating potential conflict situations.

Presently Bucharest does not provide mediation services within its public services nor is it providing mediation in specialised institutions such as hospitals, police, youth clubs and retirement homes, nor the public administration.

However there are professional services available in the NGO sector. Originally the Intercultural Institute in the city of Timisoara started to develop a consultancy mechanism among migrants, public institutions and civil society in 2009. This mechanism was developed for three years and a new component was added in 2011: a national Network of Intercultural Mediators. It started with a group of intercultural mediators, from five cities in Romania, including Bucharest. Their role has been to facilitate communication between migrant communities and the rest of society (including the institutions). These are migrants who have been actively involved in the consultancy mechanisms over several years, who are able to identify problems of migrant communities and include them in the discussion agenda with relevant actors. The idea of developing a Network of Intercultural Mediators emerged at the same time with the idea of developing a federation of organisations of migrants in Romania. The role of this structure is to act as the main voice of all migrants’ groups in Romania and to facilitate their participation in the process of policy development in the field of migration. So far, over 100 local seminars and 7 national conferences have been organised in 5 cities:

Timisoara, Cluj, Iasi, Constanta and Bucharest. More than 1000 people have attended these events (migrants, public institutions representatives, members of civil society organisations).

10. Policing and Public Safety

The ICC Team had the interesting opportunity of a lengthy and extensive exchange with the senior management team of Municipal Police Service on their policy towards immigrants and refugees.

According to the leadership the constables with regular street duties form the basis of a good relationship and understanding between migrants and society. Because Bucharest is a significant transit zone for refugees on their way to destinations in Western Europe (with large numbers of footloose young men and fewer settled households), much of the Police effort is aimed at anticipation and containment of potential conflict. The Police also recognize the concern among the public about terrorism since 9/11 and see it as their task to minimise these tensions as much as possible. The Police also distribute flyers explaining how conflicts can be avoided, especially between locals and Arabic speaking groups. There had been a special mentioning of tensions between Turks and Kurds, who sometimes find themselves in confrontation

They claim to sometimes provide transport for refugees in need and offer a safe environment when circumstances require it. However the overall impression remained that the Police in relation to migrants employ an implicit prioritization of conflict management first, followed by intervention and then - as a last resort - extraction.

It was notable for our visit to coincide with a period of local and national political tension, including mass demonstrations on the streets, as described above. In these circumstances it was remarkable that the Police afforded the ICC Team the time and access to its senior management. The Team also noted that, despite the high levels of political tension underlying the demonstrations, the manner of the police on the streets of Bucharest seemed to be one of calm good humour. Our impression was that both Romanians and immigrants seem to find the Romanian Police relaxed and not naturally biased against foreigners and refugees. To our knowledge, the general opinion about the Bucharest Police is that they are approachable and helpful and, if this is correct this should be seen as a particularly important and very valuable quality of to be cherished and built upon.

The challenge is how to make this quality of the Bucharest Police more overt and visible for society. When asked how the Police maintain structural contacts with minority communities, their response was that this topic could not be further discussed due to operational reasons. This is a fully understandable position insofar as it relates to informants. But there have been very successful experiments in other countries with so-called 'free-to-speak' public meetings between Police force representatives and members of migrant societies. These periodic public gatherings are designed to promote and establish firm mutual understanding between the Police and migrant communities particularly because migrants often find themselves in positions vulnerable to exploitation, crime or racist action and, should they become victims, the barrier to Police help often proves to be too high. The other idea behind such an approach is that migrants or refugees who feel secure in the hands of a government agency will be much more approachable when social problems arise and the possibility of early intervention in social stress is a situation from which the whole community benefits in terms of peace and stability.

Such a public 'free-to speak' platform needs a very careful preparation but, once operational, may prove to be an indispensable instrument for the promotion of open communication and of the notion of peace and inclusiveness in a hectic and diffuse urban society.

11. The Media#

This topic was not featured during the ICC Team visit. However, the team is aware of the existence of the magazine *Migrant in Romania*, which has been in publication for several years.²⁶ It is available in the Romanian, Arabic and English language versions and is published quarterly in Romanian and yearly in a foreign language. As can be seen below, the Magazine is prepared to tackle serious issues of policy.

This publication is a special issue of
Migrant in Romania
magazine, edited by

Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (coordinator)
in partnership with the League for the Defense of Human Rights - CLJ,
the Civic Research Centre - Cluj-Napoca and
the Association for Rights Protection and Social Integration - Bucharest

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Migrant in Romania

Events and opportunities

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This publication is available online at www.migrant.ro. Printed copies can be ordered at the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, www.intercultural.ro

Multiculturalism is dead, long-live interculturalism!

This publication reflects a part of the commitment of the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, and of its partners in advocating for an intercultural approach in public policies and at the level of the civil society.

Over the past years political leaders across Europe acknowledged that, particularly in addressing the issues of diversity and coexistence between different cultural groups generated by migration, multiculturalism is not an effective policy that what is multiculturalism? And if it is not effective, what are the alternatives?

Indeed, when it comes to addressing issues related to cultural diversity, the terms "multicultural" and "intercultural", as well as their derivatives, are often mentioned. Both can be used in a descriptive or in a normative way.

We can acknowledge that our societies are culturally diverse, that different cultural groups exist, that sometimes there are tendencies of increasing cultural diversity, and we describe society as "multicultural". We can also use the term "intercultural" in a descriptive way, emphasizing that, in modern societies, interactions between members of different cultural groups are frequent and even unavoidable, that contact with people having a different cultural background is part of our daily lives.

If we take a normative perspective, referring to a vision about society, to what we believe society should be like, the terms "multicultural" and "interculturalism" are more and more commonly used.

The model below proposes a way to distinguish between these concepts. It is a 3-dimensional model built around two key issues confronting groups living in culturally diverse societies: maintenance and development of specific cultural identities of each group and changes, interactions and cooperation between the groups within the wider society.

According to the interculturalist approach, it is possible and desirable that public policies support members of various groups in affirming publicly and to developing their cultural identities, while also providing a framework for members of different groups to interact, negotiate and cooperate in finding the best solutions to common interest issues, based on democratic principles. This allows for "the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect" (as requested by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Intercultural Expressions). But, at the same time, creates the conditions for people who wish to, to participate in the cultural life of their specific communities. We could call such a situation an "intercultural society". Thus, in our view, the right alternative to multiculturalism is interculturalism, not inclusionism or assimilationism.

The work done in the framework of the project Migrant in Intercultural Romania is grounded in this choice and aims at contributing to making Romania an intercultural society. This includes by addressing mostly the need to build the capacity of migrants in Romania to participate in local and national democratic processes, as well as the need to open up public institutions, public policies and local civil society to consultation and cooperation with representatives of various cultural groups that we are fortunate to have in our country.

Monoculturalism
(assimilation, cultural homogenization)

Interculturalism
(integration, cohesion, intercultural dialogue)

Specific cultural identities

Exclusionism
(marginalization, divided society, exclusion)

Multiculturalism
(separation, parallel societies)

Migrant in Romania

12. Summary of the Intercultural Cities Index

The Intercultural City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 69 questions grouped in 14 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general ICC Index).

These indicators comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of these indicators - education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces are grouped in a composite indicator called "urban policies through the intercultural lens" or simply "intercultural lens".

The results of the current ICC Index suggest that in Bucharest there is still ample room for improvement in the intercultural policies. The municipality could identify useful insights and examples from other cities in the field of commitment, public spaces, language, media and welcoming. Special attention should be paid to public services, business life, mediation policies and intelligence/competence practices.

In view of the above, we invite Bucharest to strengthen in most of the policy areas and improve in the policy areas detailed below.

²⁶ http://www.migrant.ro/pages.php?d=1&ids=44&idc=166&lang_id=1

- **Commitment:** Bucharest might consider ameliorating its intercultural commitment by adopting a public statement about being an intercultural city, by designing an intercultural strategy, implementing an intercultural action plan, as well as by implementing a webpage. The city may also implement an evaluation process.
- **Neighbourhood:** Bucharest may wish to design a policy or projects to encourage residents from one neighbourhood to meet and interact with residents from another from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, as well as to meet and interact within the neighbourhoods.
- **Public services:** Bucharest may wish to lay down a specific recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees mirrors that of the city's inhabitants, and to encourage intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market. The municipality may also wish to more deploy services which are tailored to the needs of the ethnic/cultural background of its citizens.
- **Business and labour market:** Bucharest may wish to ameliorate its policies in this field by establishing a local charter against ethnic discrimination in its own administration and services, as well as taking action to incite minority-owned businesses to enter the mainstream economy and higher value-added sectors.
- **Cultural and civil life:** Bucharest may wish to ameliorate its cultural and civil life policies, for example, by encourage cultural organisations to openly deal with diversity.
- **Public space:** Bucharest may wish to take into account the population diversity and involve citizens from different ethnic/cultural background in the design and management of new public buildings or spaces, as well as when dealing with the reconstruction of areas. The city might also encourage intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums, playgrounds, etc.
- **Mediation and conflict resolution:** Bucharest may wish to ameliorate its intercultural mediation policies by establishing a dedicated municipal service dealing exclusively with intercultural issues and providing intercultural mediation in specialised institutions such as hospitals, police, youth clubs, mediation centres and retirement homes. It may also wish to initiate an organisation dealing specifically with inter-religious relations.
- **Language:** Bucharest may wish to ameliorate its language policies in the future, for example by ensuring that all of the city's citizens are eligible to receive training in immigrant/minority languages and by supporting private/civil sector institutions in providing language training in migrant/minority languages. Bucharest may also find it interesting to provide specific language training in Romanian for specific groups; to introduce the learning of minority languages to the regular school curriculum; to introduce awareness measures aiming to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages and to provide financial assistance to minority press, radio and TV programmes, including in languages other than French.
- **Media:** Bucharest may wish to further explore possible media policies, for instance, by providing advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds and by instructing the city's information service to promote harmonious intercultural relations. Bucharest may also wish to introduce monitoring mechanisms to examine how media portray minorities.
- **International outlook:** Bucharest may wish to ameliorate its international outlook policies by encouraging co-development projects with migrant groups' countries of origin and by involving the foreign students in the life of the city.

- **Intelligence and competence:** Bucharest may wish to further explore promoting the intercultural competences of the city's officials and staff through training courses; and carrying out surveys including questions about the perception of migrants and minorities, as well as mainstreaming the findings and information about interculturalism and diversity to inform the process of policy formulation.
- **Welcoming:** Bucharest may wish ameliorate its welcoming policies by creating a comprehensive package of information to aid newly-arrived foreign residents; and by designating an agency to act as a first contact and welcoming point with the new-comers. The municipality may also wish to have a special public ceremony to greet newly arrived persons in the presence of the local government's officials.
- **Governance:** Bucharest may wish to further explore possible governance policies by introducing activities to increase the representation of migrants in the city administration and by establishing a standard for the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies supervising schools and public services.

Bucharest may wish to look into further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided in the Intercultural cities database²⁷.

13. Final Reflections of the ICC Visiting Team

The Team was impressed with the energy and goodwill with which the City Government and the various civil society actors of Bucharest conducted the visit, particularly in the atmosphere of political turmoil and large-scale street demonstrations. Whilst the city is starting from a low base, as evidenced in the ICC Index, and whilst the range of topics investigated was relatively narrow, the Team saw much cause for optimism ahead.

In contrast to many parts of Europe at present, there seemed to be in Bucharest a spirit of acceptance and open-heartedness both towards the immediate factors of the refugee crisis and to the wider strategic picture of global migration and cultural diversity. In particular the Team was encouraged by the widespread tendency of individuals and agencies to seek out the 'diversity advantage' as well as to prepare for the difficulties and challenges which might lie ahead. Whilst acknowledging both that there are some deep structural problems (as discussed above) and that we were probably introduced to what might be an unrepresentatively positivist sample of people from the migrant communities, we were nevertheless impressed by the many ways in which people sought to describe the hospitality with which Bucharest has treated them.

It seems that for Bucharest there is a moment of opportunity, during which the popular mood of openness can be combined with the sense of urgency precipitated by international crisis to set out some ambitious policy goals and to realistically pursue them. Bucharest is starting from a low base and it should not try to make up shortfalls in all directions at once, but should rather agree a few areas of priority, in which a broad alliance of actors can work together and in which short-term and longer-term goals can be achieved. Entrepreneurship and labour market integration are clear one of these priorities and one in which there is already a sense of momentum. Paradoxically, for a city which prides itself on its natural hospitality, the other priority should be to institutionalise the procedures for welcoming newcomers.

Ironically, both of these topics, whilst holding the promise of significant gains to be made, also draw attention to the fundamental weakness that threatens the city's efforts. Throughout our visit the Team was

²⁷ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance_en.asp

alarmed at the degree of frustration (and often resignation) which various actors expressed towards the system of politics and public administration. Whilst the Government fell during our stay, no-one seemed to have any confidence that it would be replaced by a new government any better able to run the country in an honest, equitable and efficient manner. The spectre of corruption loomed over our discussions, as did its habitual companion, byzantine bureaucracy. Despite enormous reserves of goodwill and ingenuity it seemed that there two threatened to stymie or drain attempts to bring improvements to the legal and regulatory environment which governs the lives of local and newcomers alike. Our primary concern was that if immigration continues to rise over a sustained period and yet these major issues of public ethics and efficiency are not solved, then the current atmosphere of openness might quickly turn sour, and the opportunities of the diversity advantage will never be realised.

In practical terms we identify the need for a concentration and consolidation of effort across the public, private and NGO sectors, and this will need the creation of an agency and a visible, physical space which can become the champion of diversity in Bucharest. Able to deal with both the intricacies of the law as well as the 'big picture' issues of advocacy, communication and public opinion.

Specifically, such an agency should address

- The need to offer an effective welcome service for newly arrived migrants (and expats) providing information on legal and administrative matters, support with paperwork and contacts with institutions and organisations who can help newcomers in relation to housing, education, employment, language learning, entrepreneurship etc.
- The need to establish positive relations and to reduce the social distance between the institutions and migrants;
- The need for an organised framework for the communication between minorities and public authorities;
- Provision of information on integration opportunities, that can be obtained through diverse sources;
- Opportunities for promotion of cultural specificities and recognition from the society;
- Provision of professional multipliers and resource persons in the community, that can successfully represent the "voice" of migrants in dialogue with public authorities and civil society;
- Empowerment of migrant organisations to participate in social, cultural community life.