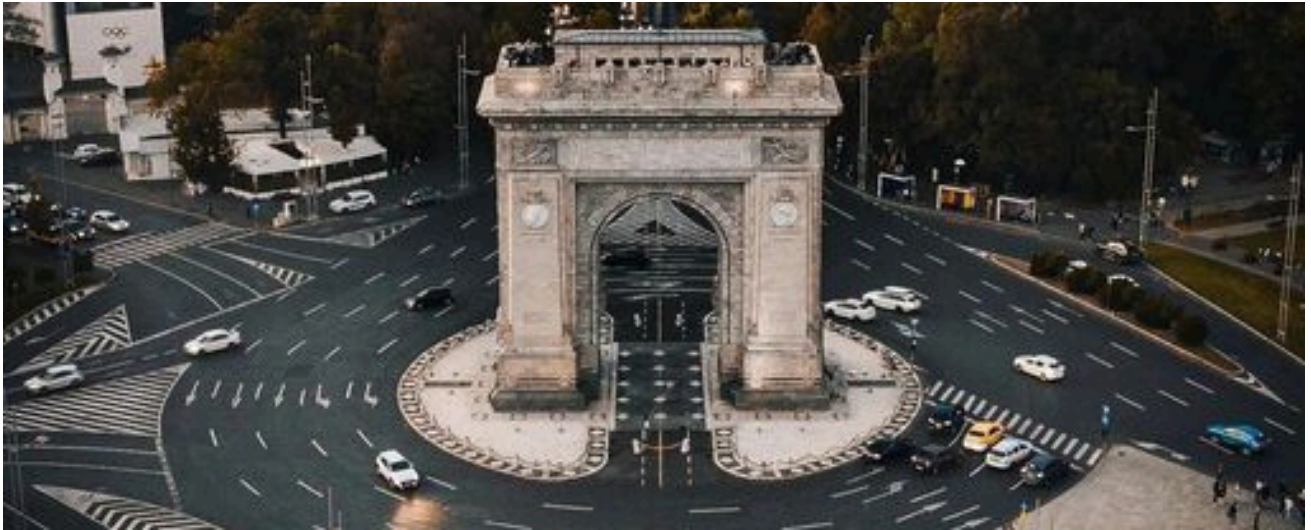


An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Bucharest, Romania. The street is wide and lined with trees, with a large, ornate building in the background. The sky is hazy, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

Invest in Romania.

**ACTIONABLE INSIGHT,
IN-DEPTH STRATEGY.
EXPERIENCE.**
2026 OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW



In 2026, Romania enters a new phase of its economic and strategic trajectory. The country is no longer defined primarily by convergence or catch-up dynamics, but by its ability to act as a platform of consequence in Europe: militarily, economically, geopolitically, and industrially. This shift creates both complexity and opportunity for investors, companies, and institutional partners seeking durable positions in a rapidly evolving regional environment.

Romania's untapped potential lies not in isolated advantages, but in the way multiple structural factors now intersect: security relevance, energy sector growth, infrastructure revitalisation, digital modernization, and regional connectivity. These forces are reshaping the country's role within the European Union and NATO, while elevating the importance of informed decision-making, local execution capacity, and long-term strategic alignment. Romania rewards those who approach the market with discipline, patience, commitment to local partnerships, and a clear understanding of how policy, capital, and geopolitics interact.

For decision-makers operating in a dynamic and often volatile context, Romania presents a compelling proposition, but not a simple one. Success depends less on market entry alone and more on the ability to translate vision into strategic execution across often complex regulatory, institutional, and operational layers.

*This 2026 outlook, prepared by the Team of **Carstens Consulting Global Inc.**, is addressed to Leaders seeking clarity beyond headlines and depth beyond surface-level opportunity. It frames Romania not as a short-term play, but as a strategic environment for sustainable growth, long-term investment, and regional engagement, where informed partners can build lasting value.*

*At **Carstens Consulting Global Inc.**, we remain committed to supporting our Clients at this intersection of insight and execution, as they navigate Romania's evolving landscape with confidence and precision.*

*Moving Forward Together,
David H. Carstens
CEO & Founder, CCG Inc.*

CONTENTS

- ROMANIA AT A GLANCE
- MARKET POSITION AND RESOURCES
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- ENERGY RESOURCES
- ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROSPECTS
- IT&C
- DEFENSE INDUSTRY AND OPPORTUNITY
- RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE
- POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND GOVERNMENT POLICY
- HUMAN RESOURCES AND OTHER UNIQUE SELLING POINTS (USP)

Scenic Transfăgărășan mountain road in the Carpathians

1. ROMANIA AT A GLANCE

Romania is a Southeastern European country and a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 2004 and the European Union since 2007. Following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 and the transition to democratic governance, Romania underwent sustained political, economic, and institutional change, consolidating its position within the Euro-Atlantic community. Geographically, Romania borders Ukraine to the north, the Republic of Moldova to the northeast, the Black Sea to the southeast, Bulgaria to the south, Serbia to the southwest, and Hungary to the west. This location places Romania at the junction of Central Europe, the Balkans, and the Black Sea basin, with direct relevance for regional trade, connectivity, and security.

Romania benefits from substantial natural endowments, including fertile agricultural land, extensive forests, significant onshore and offshore oil and natural gas reserves, rare earth elements (magnesium, copper, and gold), and dense river systems that support hydroelectric generation. Its Black Sea coastline hosts major ports and industrial assets, most notably the Port of Constanța: the largest and deepest port on the Black Sea and in the top of 10 of ports in Europe ranked by cargo volume.

As one of the largest economies in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania combines scale with market access. With a population of approximately 19 million and GDP exceeding EUR 320 billion, Romania offers investors a sizeable domestic market, a competitive and increasingly skilled workforce, and full access to the EU Single Market. These fundamentals provide the structural base for Romania's evolving economic and strategic role within Europe.

Investment Climate and Regulatory Execution: Romania offers a generally predictable regulatory environment anchored in EU law, but execution remains uneven across sectors. Permitting timelines, state-aid approvals, and public-sector coordination can introduce delays, particularly in energy, infrastructure, and defense-related projects. Investors typically achieve better outcomes through early engagement with regulators, alignment with EU-funded frameworks, and credible local partnerships capable of navigating administrative complexities and procurement practices.

U.S.–Romania Strategic Cooperation: The United States remains Romania's primary security guarantor and a critical economic partner. U.S. involvement is strongest in defense procurement (via FMS), energy cooperation (natural gas and nuclear), cybersecurity, and defense-adjacent digital technologies. For Romanian decision-makers, U.S. capital and industrial presence are viewed as strategic anchors, reinforcing both a deterrence posture and long-term policy alignment.

Capital Absorption Capacity: Romania's ability to absorb large volumes of capital has improved, but remains constrained by workforce availability, institutional capacity, and project-management maturity. The most successful projects are those that combine foreign capital with local execution capability, phased investment structures, well defined offset plans, and realistic timelines. Sectors aligned with EU and NATO priorities benefit from faster institutional alignment and lower execution risk.

TAKEAWAYS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

- Romania successfully transitioned from a convergence market to a strategic EU and NATO platform, with elevated relevance in energy security, defense industrial capacity, logistics, and digital resilience.
- In 2026–2028, Romania offers a time-sensitive investment window driven by EU strategic financing, defense procurement acceleration, and execution of large-scale infrastructure and energy projects.
- Capital deployment opportunities are most credible in energy (gas, nuclear), AI, defense manufacturing, logistics infrastructure, and cybersecurity-enabled IT&C.
- Execution success depends on local regulatory navigation, institutional coordination, selective local partner identification and collaboration, and disciplined project management, rather than market access alone.
- Romania rewards investors with a long-term, partnership oriented approach, aligned with EU and NATO security frameworks.



Turda Salt Mine



Bran Castle in Transylvania

2. MARKET POSITION AND RESOURCES

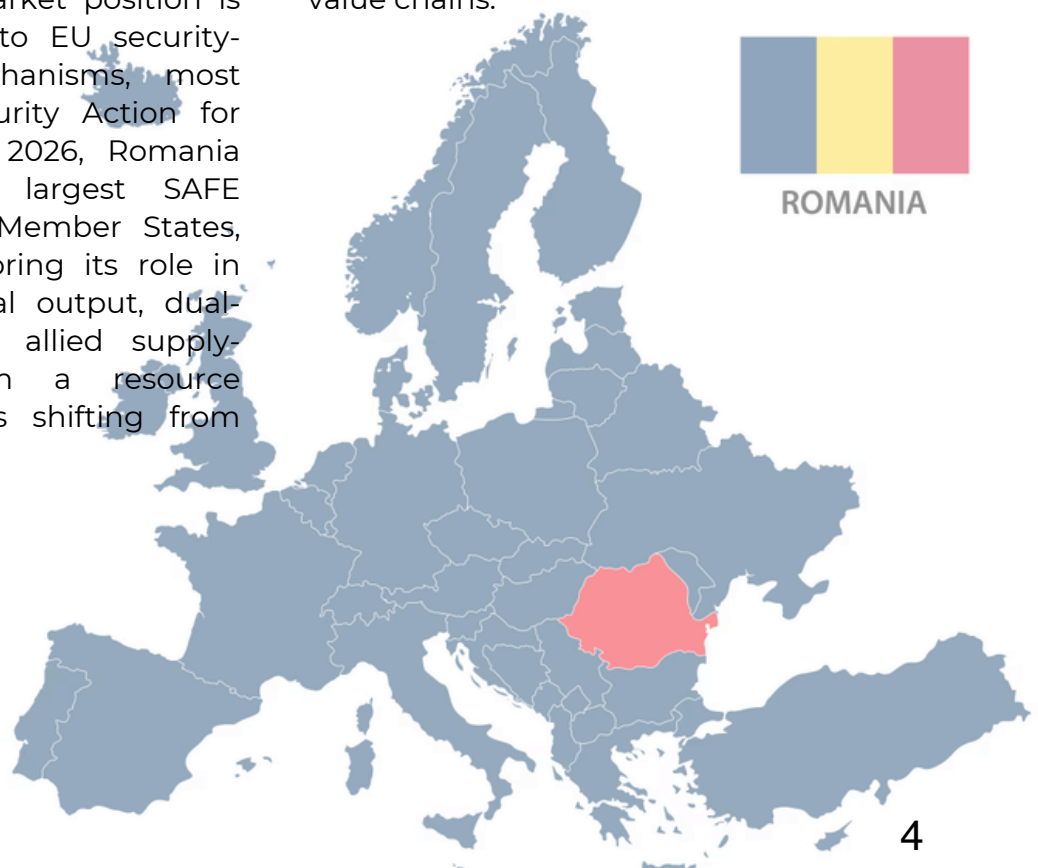
Since its accession to the European Union in 2007, Romania operates as a fully integrated participant in the EU Single Market, with access to nearly 500 million consumers and, following Schengen integration, materially improved trade fluidity. While Romania's formal market status within the EU has remained unchanged, its strategic position within the European system strengthened significantly since 2025.

In 2026, Romania functions as a frontline EU and NATO state bordering both Ukraine and the Black Sea, elevating its relevance across the energy security, defense industrial, logistics, and regional stability domains. This positioning has translated into increased political attention at EU and allied levels, priority access to strategic financing instruments, and a growing role in initiatives linked to security, mobility, and reconstruction.

Romania's enhanced market position is reflected in its access to EU security-oriented funding mechanisms, most notably the SAFE (Security Action for Europe) framework. In 2026, Romania secured one of the largest SAFE allocations among EU Member States, (€16.68 billion) underscoring its role in defense-related industrial output, dual-use infrastructure, and allied supply-chain resilience. From a resource perspective, Romania is shifting from potential to execution.

The Neptun Deep offshore natural gas project, taking place 163 kilometers from shore, deep in Romania's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), has advanced from planning into full implementation. Drilling operations are underway and there is a realistic defined path toward first gas in 2027. Once operational, Neptun Deep will materially alter Romania's and the region's energy balance, positioning the country as a leading natural gas producer within the European Union and a net contributor to regional energy security.

Taken together, Romania's market position in 2026 is defined not by convergence metrics, but by strategic function. The country increasingly serves as a platform for capital deployment, industrial production, and allied cooperation at the intersection of EU markets, Black Sea access, and Eastern European security and reconstruction value chains.



3. INFRASTRUCTURE

Romania's infrastructure trajectory in 2026 reflects a clear shift from planning and allocation toward execution and delivery, particularly in transport corridors with direct relevance to regional logistics, military mobility, and industrial supply chains. Infrastructure development now functions as an enabling layer for Romania's broader strategic and economic role, rather than as a standalone policy objective.

In road transport, Romania's motorway and expressway network expanded materially through 2025 and into 2026. By the end of 2025, the operational network reached approximately 1,418 km, with close to 840 km under active construction. Priority corridors include the A0 Bucharest Ring Road, the A1 west-east axis, and key expressways linking industrial regions to border crossings and ports. Forecasts for 2026 indicate that approximately 244 km of new highways and expressways could be commissioned, marking one of the strongest delivery years on record and signalling a sustained shift toward implementation.

International financing continues to support this execution phase. In 2026, the European Investment Bank (EIB) approved a EUR 500 million loan to co-finance key sections of the A1 motorway, reinforcing confidence in Romania's capacity to absorb large-scale infrastructure funding and deliver complex projects. Rail infrastructure remains critical for heavy freight, defense mobility, and long-distance transport, even as the network requires continued modernization.

Romania has prioritized strategic freight corridors and intermodal nodes, supported through EU instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF – Transport). Despite EU-wide trends, Romania maintains a relatively high rail freight share at 20.4% of total freight transport (ton-km), placing it among the stronger-performing EU countries with combined rail and maritime capacity.

Romania is also a core participant in regional connectivity initiatives with direct security and logistics implications, including the Rail2Sea corridor linking Gdańsk to Constanța under the Three Seas Initiative. By anchoring the southern endpoint at the Port of Constanța, Rail2Sea strengthens north-south mobility, improves interoperability, and enhances Romania's role in allied logistics, military mobility, and future reconstruction-related freight flows toward Eastern Europe and Ukraine. Inland waterways further reinforce Romania's logistics depth. The Danube River and the Danube-Black Sea Canal continue to carry significant freight volumes, with inland waterways accounting for nearly 19% of national freight transport, one of the highest shares in the EU. This multimodal capacity supports redundancy, resilience, and scalability across civilian and dual-use transport networks.

Overall, Romania's infrastructure in 2026 should be viewed less as a domestic development story and more as a strategic enabler, supporting industrial growth, defense mobility, energy flows, and regional reconstruction within an increasingly security-conscious European environment.

4. ENERGY

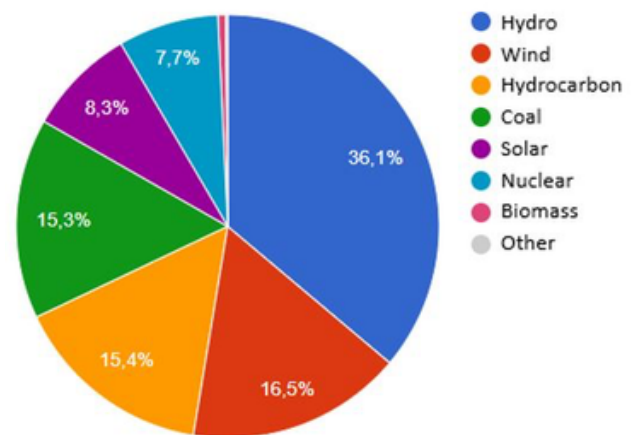
Romania’s energy sector in 2026 functions as a core national security and economic resilience asset, underpinning industrial activity, defense readiness, and regional stability. Energy policy is increasingly shaped by execution priorities: supply security, system resilience, and the ability to support allied and EU-wide objectives in a contested strategic environment.

Romania maintains a diversified energy mix, including natural gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, coal, and an expanding share of renewables. Under the revised National Integrated Plan for Energy and Climate Change (PNIESC), Romania targets installed generation capacity exceeding 32 GW by 2030, with approximately 75% derived from renewable sources. These targets are designed not only to meet decarbonization objectives, but also to strengthen system redundancy, reduce external dependency, and support long-term export capability within the EU internal energy market.

Natural gas remains the central transition and security fuel source. The Neptun Deep offshore project, jointly developed by OMV Petrom and Romgaz, has progressed into full execution, with drilling operations underway and a defined timeline toward first gas in 2027. With expected production of approximately 8 billion cubic metres per year, Neptun Deep will materially alter Romania’s energy balance, positioning the country as one of the European Union’s leading gas producers. From a security perspective, this capacity enhances national energy autonomy, supports regional supply diversification, offsets Russian influence in Serbia, Republic of Moldova, and Hungary, and contributes to resilience across Central and Eastern Europe.

Nuclear energy continues to serve as Romania’s primary source of stable, low-carbon baseload power. The modernization of Cernavodă Nuclear Power Plant Units 1 and 2 is ongoing, while preparations for Units 3 and 4 advance under an integrated, multi-year investment framework estimated at approximately EUR 20 billion. In parallel, Romania is advancing deployment of Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology at Doicești, in partnership with U.S. firms. The SMR program is moving toward a Final Investment Decision in 2026 and is viewed as a strategic capability, supporting grid stability, decarbonization, and long-term industrial and defense-related power demand.

ROMANIAN ENERGY MIX

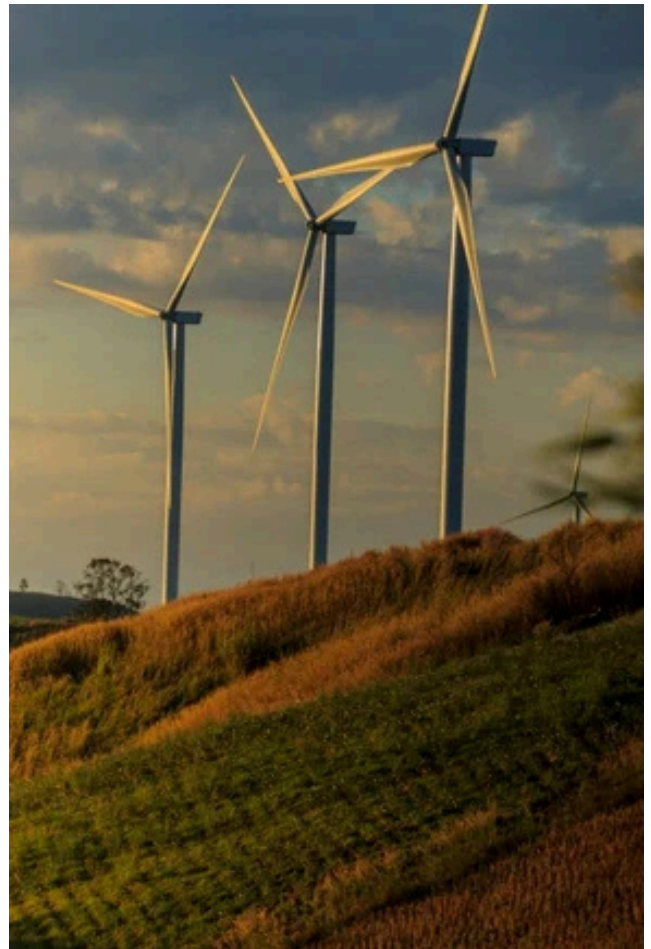


4. ENERGY (CONT'D)

Renewable energy deployment, particularly wind and solar, continues to expand, supported by EU funding mechanisms, national support schemes, and private capital. While renewables contribute to emissions reduction, Romanian planning increasingly emphasizes grid integration, storage, and balancing capacity, recognizing that system resilience is as critical as installed capacity in a security-sensitive environment.

Romania participates fully in the EU internal electricity and gas markets, engaging in cross-border trade with neighbouring states and contributing to regional supply balancing. Energy diversity, interconnection capacity, and domestic production, reduce exposure to supply disruption and price volatility, strengthening Romania's ability to sustain industrial output and defense activity during periods of stress.

These factors also set the conditions for AI capacity expansion in Romania as energy is the key component of AI projects. In 2026, Romania's energy sector should be understood not simply as a decarbonization story, but as a strategic enabler, supporting industrial competitiveness, defense readiness, and allied energy security. For investors and partners, opportunities increasingly lie in upstream execution, nuclear and SMR development, grid modernization, storage, and infrastructure aligned with long-term resilience rather than short-term market cycles.



Romania has a significant wind power capacity of over 3 GW, with the Dobrogea region offering some of the best onshore wind potential in Europe



5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROSPECTS

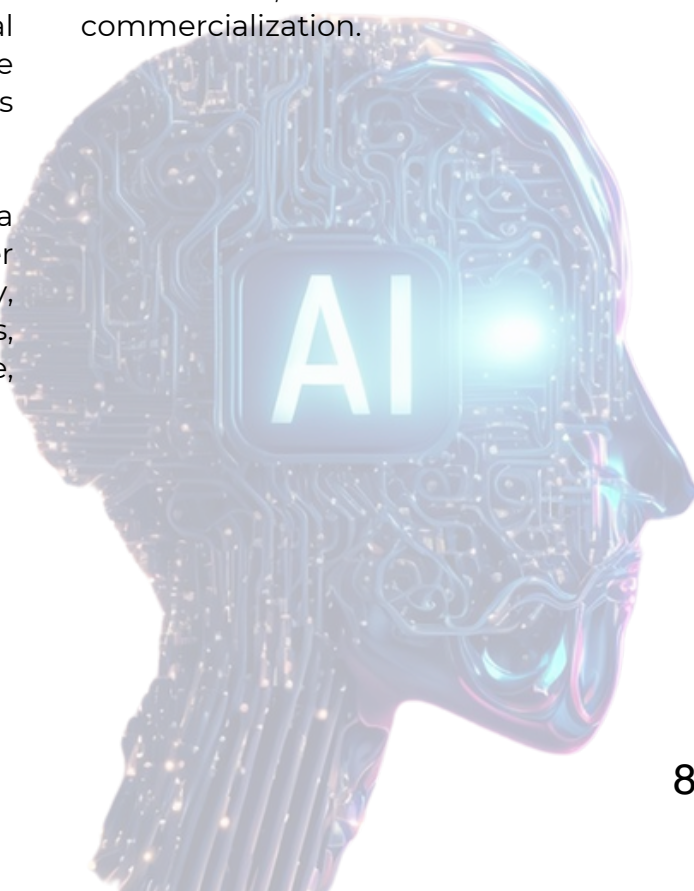
Romania moved from AI potential to an explicit policy runway, as the government approved the National Strategy in the field of Artificial Intelligence for 2024 to 2027 in July 2024. This positions AI in Romania as a cross-sector accelerator for public administration modernization, economic competitiveness, and trustworthy adoption aligned with EU principles. The strategy's core focus lies in strengthening research and innovation, developing advanced human capital, improving access to high quality data and interoperable digital infrastructure, and scaling safe AI use cases across the public sector.

For AI builders, Romania's market advantages are stacked. Abundant energy, a highly educated workforce, high-speed connectivity, plentiful water reserves, and recently ratified National Strategy make Romania the location of choice for AI expansion in Eastern Europe. As a EU member state, successful deployments can be designed from inception for EU wide compliance and regulatory portability, while national governance increasingly anticipates the requirements of the EU AI Act as it is progressively implemented.

As previously mentioned, Romania consistently ranks as a strong performer in fixed and high speed connectivity, including beyond major urban centers, supporting data intensive cloud, edge, and real time AI deployments.

Ongoing public sector digitization efforts, including government cloud initiatives, improve the foundations for secure data sharing, model deployment, and modern MLOps, meaning the operational practices and toolchains that govern how machine learning models are developed, deployed, monitored, updated, and scaled reliably in production environments.

Strategically and geographically, Romania sits at the intersection of Central and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea corridor, offering nearshore access to EU markets, operational resilience through regional diversification, and particular relevance for dual use innovation in cybersecurity, logistics, critical infrastructure, and defense adjacent applications. This momentum is reinforced by Romania's participation in European high performance computing and emerging AI factory initiatives, signaling a credible pathway toward accessible compute, ecosystem scale collaboration, and accelerated AI commercialization.



6. IT & C

Romania's Information Technology and Communications (IT&C) sector in 2026 represents a strategic capability base rather than a cost-driven services industry. The sector underpins economic competitiveness while increasingly supporting cybersecurity, digital resilience, defense enablement, and dual-use technology development relevant to both national and allied security objectives. The IT&C sector continues to expand in scale and sophistication. In 2024, it generated approximately EUR 23.6 billion in turnover, contributing around 6.7% of GDP and accounting for more than 25% of Romania's services exports. Growth is driven less by volume outsourcing and more by higher-value activities, including advanced software engineering, cybersecurity services, cloud infrastructure, data analytics, and AI.

Romania's digital workforce, estimated at nearly 250,000 IT professionals in 2025, provides depth in engineering, systems integration, and applied research. This talent base supports not only commercial digitalization but also cyber defense, secure communications, and mission-critical systems. Bucharest remains the primary national hub, generating approximately 63% of sector revenue, with additional clusters developing in major academic and industrial centers such as Cluj.

From a security perspective, Romania has become an increasingly relevant node within the European cybersecurity and digital defense ecosystem. Bucharest hosts the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC), which coordinates EU-level funding, research, and industrial cooperation in cybersecurity. This positioning reinforces Romania's role in cyber capability development, standard-setting, and public-private cooperation across the EU.

Romania's IT&C sector is also moving into dual-use and defense-adjacent technologies, including AI-enabled analytics, secure cloud environments, cyber incident response, and software for command, control, logistics, and infrastructure management. While not all activity is defense-specific, the overlap between civilian digital infrastructure and military requirements is increasingly explicit, particularly in areas such as critical infrastructure protection, situational awareness, and cyber resilience.

Looking ahead, Romania's IT&C value proposition in 2026 is defined less by labor arbitrage and more by capability, trust, and alignment with allied security frameworks. For investors and strategic partners, the most compelling opportunities lie in cybersecurity platforms, AI and data-driven applications, defense-relevant software, secure cloud and communications infrastructure, and technologies that strengthen both economic performance and national resilience.

7. DEFENSE INDUSTRY AND OPPORTUNITY

Romania's defense sector in 2026 is defined by capability development, industrial execution, and readiness delivery, driven by its position on NATO's Eastern Flank and sustained commitments to allied force posture and deterrence. Defense policy is no longer aspirational; it is operational, programmatic, and increasingly industrial. Romania adopted a new National Defense Strategy for 2025–2030, prioritizing air and missile defense, force mobility, critical infrastructure protection, cyber defense, and stockpile resilience. Defense spending remains above the NATO 2% guideline and is programmed toward approximately 2.5% of GDP, with public debate around a potential increase toward 3%, subject to fiscal capacity and allied burden-sharing dynamics.

The defense industrial base comprises state-owned enterprises, most notably ROMARM, alongside private Romanian firms and subsidiaries of international defense primes. Current priorities include modernization of production facilities, NATO-standard certification, supply-chain reliability, and expansion of maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) capacity. Romanian procurement practice continues to link high-value acquisitions to parliamentary oversight and industrial cooperation requirements, particularly for contracts exceeding EUR 100 million.

Romania's Ministry of National Defense frequently relies on U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) for high-end capabilities, while pursuing local sustainment, industrial participation, and selected technology transfer where feasible. Major acquisition programs include F-16 and F-35 aircraft, Patriot air and missile defense systems, HIMARS, Naval Strike Missiles, infantry fighting vehicles, and enabling systems across C4ISR and logistics.

Cyber defense and emerging technologies are increasingly integrated into force planning. Romania hosts the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC) and is investing in cyber defense, secure communications, and digital resilience as core military functions. A persistent constraint across NATO and Romania specifically remains munitions and energetics production capacity. In response, Romania and Rheinmetall announced a large-scale investment in a new ammunition powder facility, with construction expected to begin in 2026. Once operational, the facility is expected to contribute meaningfully to regional supply resilience.

Romania is strategically positioned to leverage the European Union's SAFE (Security Action for Europe) program as a major accelerator of defense modernization and industrial capability development. SAFE is a new EU financial instrument under the broader ReArm Europe and Readiness 2030 framework, designed to unlock up to 150 billion EUR in competitively priced, long term loans for member states undertaking urgent and large scale investments in defense capabilities and related infrastructure.

Romania's national plan was approved in the first wave, with an allocation of approximately 16.6 to 16.7 billion EUR, representing the second largest national envelope in the program after Poland. The funding supports priority investments in modern military equipment, strategic mobility and dual use infrastructure, and enhanced capabilities for national and internal security institutions.

7. DEFENSE INDUSTRY AND OPPORTUNITY (CONT'D)

From a strategic perspective, SAFE provides Romania with an unusually favorable financing window, combining long maturities and low interest rates, enabling accelerated capability acquisition while simultaneously strengthening domestic industrial participation, technology transfer, and workforce development. For companies and innovators in Romania's defense, security, and adjacent technology sectors, SAFE therefore creates a large and relatively predictable pipeline of public expenditure that aligns with national ambitions to scale systems integration, secure communications, AI enabled situational awareness, and dual use manufacturing.

While SAFE is not an instant access vehicle for non EU capital, U.S. investors and technology providers can strategically leverage the program through EU incorporated subsidiaries, joint ventures with Romanian or European primes, local manufacturing and integration footprints, and participation in eligible procurement and industrial offset structures. In this configuration, Romania functions as both a frontline security stakeholder and a credible gateway for U.S. defense and advanced technology players seeking long term exposure to European security spending under a stable EU regulatory and financing framework.

Looking ahead, Romania's defense execution risks center on procurement lead times, workforce availability, industrial absorption capacity, and program management maturity. Outcomes will depend on Romania's ability to synchronize funding, industrial delivery, and allied integration over a multi-year horizon.



**120 MM HIGH EXPLOSIVE STEEL
MORTAR BOMB WITH ROCKET-
ASSISTED MOTOR (HERA-C5)
by Carfil**

8. RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE

Romania's role in Ukraine's reconstruction is operational rather than political. In 2026, Romania functions as a rear-area logistics, coordination, and investment platform supporting reconstruction-related supply chains while remaining outside active combat zones. Romania shares approximately 600 km of border with Ukraine and offers direct access routes via the Black Sea, the Danube corridor, and integrated road and rail networks connecting Ukraine to EU markets. This positioning enables scalable throughput of construction materials, energy equipment, industrial inputs, and humanitarian supplies. The Port of Constanța, combined with inland multimodal corridors, provides alternative routing and redundancy in an environment of constrained maritime access and damaged infrastructure inside Ukraine. From a planning perspective, Romania offers depth, security, and regulatory alignment that allow reconstruction activities to be staged efficiently and at scale.

Connectivity initiatives such as Rail2Sea materially enhance this role by increasing north-south rail capacity and improving reliability for long-haul freight flows originating in Northern and Western Europe.

These corridors are increasingly viewed through a dual-use logistics lens, supporting both commercial reconstruction and allied sustainment requirements. Beyond transport, Romania serves as a coordination environment for private-sector engagement, industrial cooperation, and workforce deployment. EU and NATO membership, EU-standard procurement and regulatory frameworks, and a stable financial system allow Romania to act as a bridge between Western capital and Ukrainian demand, particularly in transport infrastructure, energy systems, defense-adjacent production, and human capital development.

Enhanced cooperation among Romania, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova further strengthens this model, particularly for southern Ukrainian regions and border areas most affected by the conflict. Romania's contribution to reconstruction is therefore best understood as enabling, scalable, and allied-aligned, rather than symbolic.



9. POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

Romania's political environment in 2026 is characterized by managed instability and policy continuity. While internal tensions within the governing coalition are expected, our assessment is that the current coalition will remain intact throughout the year. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) has endorsed severe austerity measures implemented by Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan, absorbing significant electoral cost to preserve government stability. PSD leadership has a strong incentive to remain in power, particularly given expectations around a planned premiership transition in 2027.

As a result, scenarios involving coalition collapse or abrupt realignment are assessed as low probability. Appointments to senior positions within prosecutorial and intelligence institutions represent a potential friction point in 2026, with risks of politicization and renewed anti-corruption campaigns. While a presidential suspension scenario remains unlikely, it cannot be fully excluded under conditions of acute political erosion.

In opposition, AUR is expected to consolidate support, polling above 37%, and to intensify Eurosceptic and MAGA-aligned rhetoric. While unlikely to enter government in 2026, AUR's trajectory introduces medium-term political risk and messaging volatility. At the international level, Romania faces a structurally complex environment. Its post-1989 development model rests on three pillars: EU membership, NATO membership, and the strategic partnership with the United States.

For the first time, friction among these pillars is visible. Romania remains economically and institutionally aligned with the EU mainstream, maintaining strong relations with France and Germany and supporting EU trade and defense initiatives. At the same time, Romania remains acutely dependent on U.S. security guarantees. Pro-American sentiment is deeply embedded in society and strategic culture, yet Romania's limited high-level access to the current U.S. political leadership represents a vulnerability.

In the event of a sharper EU-U.S. confrontation, Romania would face a high-cost strategic dilemma between security dependence and economic alignment. Assuming escalation is avoided, Romania is expected to continue aligning politically with the EU while prioritizing U.S. capital, defense procurement, and industrial cooperation as anchors of the bilateral relationship. Economically, 2026 is expected to mark stabilization following the austerity of 2025. Inflation is forecast to decline, the budget deficit to continue narrowing, and the National Bank of Romania to implement limited rate cuts. No major tax increases are anticipated, though public-sector reform may generate renewed social tension.



Parliament of Romania

10. HUMAN RESOURCES AND OTHER USPS

Romania offers a combination of cost competitiveness and a growing, well-trained workforce. The average net salary in Romania reached around RON 5,492 (approx. EUR 1,372) in late 2025, up from previous years, reflecting, thus, ongoing wage growth across sectors.

In the IT sector, wages are significantly higher than the national average. Data from 2025 shows that the average net salary in IT and related services was nearly RON 11,957 per month, placing it among the top-paid industries in Romania.

The average monthly net wage in Romania was around RON 5,388 in late 2024 and continued to rise in 2025, staying above RON 5,500 (around EUR 1,000, depending on the exchange rate). In parallel, the minimum gross monthly wage was set at RON 4,050 from January 2025.^{29,30,31} In 2026, Romanian authorities approved a further increase in the gross minimum wage, which is set to rise to RON 4,325 per month starting 1 July 2026.

Romania's unique selling points have become more clearly defined since 2025: EU and NATO membership, Black Sea and Danube access, a strong digital sector, energy security relevance, and a central role in Eastern European logistics and reconstruction. Together, these factors position Romania not merely as an emerging market, but as a strategic platform for investment, production, and regional engagement.

11. CONCLUSION

In 2026, Romania completes a structural transition from a convergence economy to a strategic platform within Europe's economic, security, and industrial architecture. Its relevance no longer derives from cost arbitrage or untapped potential alone, but from function, scale, and positioning at the intersection of EU markets, NATO security priorities, Black Sea access, and Eastern European reconstruction flows. Energy security, defense industrial execution, infrastructure delivery, digital and AI capacity, and logistics resilience now reinforce one another, creating an investment environment that rewards informed, long term engagement.

Romania offers a time sensitive opportunity window. EU strategic financing instruments, accelerated defense procurement, large scale energy and infrastructure execution, and reconstruction demand converge over the 2026 to 2028 horizon. At the same time, procurement discipline requires investors to move beyond market entry and toward structured execution models anchored in local partnerships, phased capital deployment, and policy alignment.

For U.S. and international investors, Romania represents both a destination and a gateway, enabling access to EU markets, security aligned industrial ecosystems, and regional growth corridors under a stable Euro Atlantic framework. It is not a short term play, but a platform for durable value creation. Romania rewards clarity of intent, patience, and strategic discipline. Those who combine capital with execution capability, institutional understanding, and long term commitment are positioned to build resilient positions in one of Europe's most consequential emerging strategic environments.

SOURCES

- ADS Group, Romania defense Trade Mission 2025 (defense budget figures and 2.5 percent of GDP target via commitment appropriations).
- Agerpres, "Parliament approves National defense Strategy of Romania," 26 November 2025.
- Airforce Technology, "Romania signs LOA to procure 32 F 35A Lightning II jets," 22 November 2024.
- Colliers, "Romania industrial and logistics market reaches record levels in 2025,"
- <https://www.colliers.com/en-ro/news/romania-industrial-and-logistics-market-reaches-record-levels-in-2025>
- Consilium of the European Union, "The EU Single Market, benefits, facts and figures,"
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/the-eu-single-market-benefits-facts-and-figures>
- Curs de Guvernare, "ANIS study on IT sector growth and GDP contribution,"
- <https://cursdeguvernare.ro/studiu-anis-crestere-it-sector-contributie-pib.html>
- Digi24, "CNSP: Average net salary to grow in 2025,"
- <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/economie/cnsp-salariul-mediu-net-va-creste-cu-62-in-2025-castigul-real-se-va-majora-cu-16-3087413>
- European Commission, "Security Action for Europe (SAFE),"
- https://defense-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defense-industry/safe-security-action-europe_en
- European Commission, Eurostat, "Freight transport statistics, modal split,"
- https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Freight_transport_statistics_-_modal_split
- European Investment Bank, "Romania's flagship A1 motorway project set for EIB backing of EUR 500 million,"
- <https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2025-368-romania-s-flagship-a1-motorway-project-set-for-eib-backing-of-eur500-million>
- European Union, "European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC)," EU institutions and bodies register.
- Inland Navigation Market Observatory, "Freight and passenger transport on inland waterways,"
- <https://inland-navigation-market.org/chapitre/1-freight-and-passenger-transport-on-inland-waterways-3>
- INSSE, "Monthly average earnings,"
- <https://insse.ro/cms/en/content/monthly-average-earning-119>
- MAE Romania, "Romania and the European Union,"
- <https://ue.mae.ro/en/romania/312>
- Outsourcing Today, "Romania IT and outsourcing sector analysis,"
- <https://outsourcing-today.ro/?p=14672>
- Oportunități UE, "Selected projects under the CEF Transport 2024 call,"
- <https://oportunitati-ue.gov.ro/en/informare-privind-proiectele-selectate-pentru-finantare-in-cadrul-apelului-de-proiecte-cef-transport-2024-cu-termen-de-inchidere-21-ianuarie-2025>
- Reuters, "Romanian defense spending could reach 3 percent of GDP in 1 to 2 years, president says," 28 February 2025.
- Reuters, "Romanian lawmakers approve donation of Patriot missile system to Ukraine," 3 September 2024.
- Reuters, "Romanian national defense strategy highlights risks to Black Sea infrastructure," 12 November 2025.
- Reuters, "Rheinmetall to build 626 million dollar ammunition powder factory in Romania," 27 August 2025.
- Romania Insider, "Net wage in Bucharest, October 2025,"
- <https://www.romania-insider.com/net-wage-bucharest-oct-2025>
- Romania Journal, "244 km of highways and express roads could be commissioned in 2026,"
- <https://www.romaniajournal.ro/business/244-km-of-highways-and-express-roads-could-be-commissioned-in-2026>
- TechTalent Romania, "Romania's tech talent and the future of R and D and innovation,"
- <https://www.techtalent.ro/romania-tech-talent-takeover-the-future-of-rd-and-innovation>
- Three Seas Initiative, "Rail 2 Sea, modernization and development of railway line Gdańsk to Constanța,"
- [https://projects.3seas.eu/projects/rail-2-sea-modernization-and-development-of-railway-line-gdansk\(pl\)-constanta-\(ro\)](https://projects.3seas.eu/projects/rail-2-sea-modernization-and-development-of-railway-line-gdansk(pl)-constanta-(ro))
- Trade Council of Denmark, "About Romania,"
- <https://rumaenien.um.dk/en/the-trade-council/about-romania>
- U.S. International Trade Administration, "Romania, Defense Industry," Country Commercial Guide, 12 January 2024,
- <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/romania-information-communications-technology-ict>
- U.S. International Trade Administration, "Romania, Information and Communications Technology (ICT)," Country Commercial Guide.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

We are experts at creating opportunities for growing businesses in emerging markets. Access to a global network with intensive experience in Romania, the Balkans and Black Sea regions.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

We make use of advance tools and relationships to create the products necessary to drive business development and assess, and mitigate risk. Delivers timely, relative, accurate and predictive business intelligence products to clients.

UNDERSTAND ROMANIA AND ITS OPPORTUNITIES WITH US.



CONTACT US

E-mail: david.carstens@carstensconsultingglobalinc.com

VOIP: [+1 \(410\) 571-9010](tel:+14105719010) (messages only)

MOBILE: [+1 \(410\) 271-6473](tel:+14102716473) (WhatsApp or Signal)

www.carstensconsultingglobalinc.com