



Romania 2010 Crime & Safety Report

Other

Europe; Europe > Romania

2/25/2010

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Crime Threats

Most crimes against visitors are limited to crimes of opportunity. Travelers should be aware of scams involving individuals posing as plainclothes police officers; approaches of “quick friendship” at train/subway stations; and pick-pocketing in crowded areas. Historically, panhandlers – often groups of children - can be very aggressive and have resorted to grabbing/tearing clothing in their efforts to distract and steal from their target. When dining in restaurants, visitors should not hang handbags or suit coats on the backs of chairs. Wallets and other valuables can/will be stolen if caution is not exercised. Extreme care should be taken when patronizing “night clubs,” which can charge exorbitant prices and are relentless in pursuing payment. Additionally, the Regional Security Officer (RSO) has noticed a slight increase in simple assaults directed against Americans outside of clubs, usually late at night, after alcohol has been consumed and the victim is alone. Credit card and Internet fraud are among the most common crimes affecting foreigners in Romania. Exercise caution when traveling to Romania to meet individuals known only through contact over the Internet.

Road Safety

Driving in Romania is hazardous and is perhaps the biggest safety concern that visitors to Romania will encounter. At times, there is little regard for commonly accepted rules of the road. The Government of Romania has enacted new legislation which may result in better enforcement of existing traffic laws and has introduced a new traffic code intended to make driving in Romania safer. While the road code was improved, the government subsequently announced it was going to ease enforcement. Visitors who will drive in Romania must familiarize themselves with Romanian traffic laws. Romania experiences severe winters and it is important to note that roads are not maintained to the same standard as those in the United States. Travelers must be prepared for these conditions and expect lengthy delays if traveling

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



by vehicle, train, or air during the winter. It is advised that travelers driving between cities do so only during the day, as there is little lighting on Romanian roads outside of major cities. Additionally, if an accident takes place in a rural location between cities, emergency medical response may be severely delayed and will not meet U.S. standards.

Political Violence

There have been no recent cases or reports of regional terrorism in Romania. Organized crime threats in Romania include drug smuggling, cyber crime, human trafficking, financial crime, and counterfeiting. The latest statistical report published by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police in January 2009 indicates that Romania is actively fighting Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and illegal migration as part of its role as a guardian to one of the European Union's main external borders. Sixty-four groups specializing in TIP were dismantled and a radical decrease of the number of victims was noted in the last 12 months. The fight against drug trafficking was more effective in 2009, when more than 92 criminal groups were identified and the quantity of narcotics seized showed an increase of 423%, as compared to statistics from 2008. Last year, Romania made the largest seizure of cocaine in the history of drug investigations (over 1,200 kg). Economic and financial crimes continue to be a threat and the authorities expect an increase of illegitimate activities like cigarette and alcohol smuggling and sales of counterfeit products due to unfavorable economic conditions all over the world. Cyber crime is a major threat and a constant challenge for the local law enforcement as it grows constantly and spreads across the borders, despite the efforts of the authorities to combat this phenomenon through international cooperation. Phishing, credit card fraud, fraudulent electronic bids, and hacking are some of the trends noted in recent months. More than 102 criminal cases were finalized in 2009 by cyber crime investigators and prosecutors. One of the main priorities of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police for 2010 is to increase the effectiveness of its counter-organized crime units in order to react to the new threats and challenges posed by criminals in the region.

While the possibility of an international or transnational terrorism incident targeting Americans in Romania is unlikely, you should still adhere to basic security practices as recommended below under: "How to Avoid Becoming a Victim."

Historically, and since the collapse of the former communist regime in 1989, Romania has had no major instances of civil unrest. The Government of Romania grants permission to groups who wish to assemble for demonstration purposes, and a permit is required by these groups in accordance with Romanian law. Demonstrations are normally well contained and the police are close at hand. Nevertheless, for general safety purposes, it is wise to stay away from

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



these gatherings and be alert to the fact that normal traffic patterns can be disrupted during and just after the event.

Post-specific Concerns

Natural Disasters

Several Romanian cities, to include Bucharest, are located in active seismic zones. The last major earthquake in Bucharest took place in 1977, with a loss of over 1,000 lives, but smaller quakes have taken place as recently as 2009. Civil authorities have plans in place for major disasters, but financial resources to prepare for natural disasters are not available and local authorities would be quickly overwhelmed in such an event. Travelers should assume that in the event of a natural disaster authorities will determine priorities - with no guaranteed support for visitors.

H1N1

In 2009, H1N1 flu virus was identified in Romania. At present, the Romanian government reports there are 6,803 confirmed cases in country, and approximately 110 fatalities. Visitors are advised to avoid areas identified by the Romanian government as being affected by this flu. An EU-approved H1N1 vaccination is available in Romania. U.S. Embassy Bucharest reminds all visitors coming to Romania to take all suggested precautions which may be found at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1181.html.

Kidnapping

Kidnappings are uncommon in Romania, though there have been "child custody" cases reported to the embassy within the past year.

Drugs

Romania is a major transit point for various drugs to include heroin from the East and cocaine from South America.

Police Response

The level of assistance that can be expected from Romanian police varies. Authorities are often ineffective at deterring crime, and response to emergency calls can be too slow to disrupt incidents in progress. Proactive enforcement of traffic violations is improving. Romanian police do have the capability to conduct complex criminal investigations but are heavily burdened with petty crimes. If a victim desires a serious response by the local authorities, s/he must be prepared to devote time and effort to wade through local bureaucracy. If a visitor is on a schedule that precludes time, it should be assumed that there will be no legal or law enforcement resolution of the incident.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



How to handle incidents of police detention or harassment:

Call the embassy at:

021-200-3300 (normal working hours)

or

021-200-3433 (after hours and weekends)

Where to turn for assistance if you become a victim of a crime:

Call the embassy at:

021-200-3300 (normal working hours)

or

021-200-3433 (after hours and weekends)

Local police phone numbers are:

Auto Accidents: 955 / 9545

Police: 955

Traffic Police: 981 / 323-3030

Any emergency: 112

Medical Emergencies

Contact information for local hospitals and clinics

Emergency Hospitals:

Floreasca Emergency Hospital.

8 Calea Floreasca Street, Sector 1

Telephone: 021-599-2300 / 962

Hospital Euro Clinic

14A Calea Floreasca Street, Sector 1

Telephone 021-200-6800, FAX – 021/2313525

e-mail: office@spitaluleuroclinic.ro

Hospital Euro Clinic, Pipera

124 Iancu Nicolae, 021-200-6800

www.euroclinic.ro

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Central Hospital for Children
"Grigore Alexandrescu"
30-32 Iancu de Hunedoara Street
Telephone: 021-316-9366

Private Clinics

BioDerm
42 Mihai Eminescu Street
Telephone: 021-211-7136 or 021-211-9674

Village Medical Clinic
119 Soseaua Nordului Telephone: 021-232-3580

Centrul Medical "Usa Deschisa"
27 Prelungirea Ghencea, Sector 6
Telephone: 021-444-1994

Ambulance

Bio-Medica Ambulance
Telephone: 021-230-4570 or 0788-246-004

Air ambulance services

Air Ambulance
SOS Geneva
Telephone: 0041-22-785-6464

How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Travelers to Romania, particularly those who plan to visit large metropolitan areas, should be aware that organized groups of thieves and pickpockets (including very young children and well-dressed young adults) operate in train stations and on trains, buses and other forms of public transportation. Train travel in Romania is inexpensive, convenient, and can be

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



enjoyable if you are careful. Unfortunately, crimes against train passengers are not uncommon, particularly in the rural areas and on overnight trains. A number of thefts and assaults have occurred on trains, including thefts from passengers in closed compartments. If you are considering a trip via train in the near future, please consider the following advice: Do not travel alone if you can avoid it. This is especially true if you are contemplating taking an overnight train. Without exception, every incident reported to the embassy has involved a lone traveler. If you are traveling with a small group on the overnight train, RSO suggests that you sleep in shifts. This will allow you to protect your belongings.

Do not leave your personal property unattended while you use the restroom or visit another railcar to purchase a snack. The majority of the thefts reported to RSO involve this scenario. Laptops, cell phones, IPODs, wallets, and purses are the favorites.

Avoid spending a great deal of time at the train station – particularly late at night. Travelers have reported approaches of “quick friendship,” pick-pocketing in crowded terminals, aggressive panhandlers, and encounters with inebriated and emotionally disturbed individuals.

If you are approached by someone claiming to represent the rail company and there is a dispute about your ticket, do not relocate to the crew coach to resolve the disagreement. Your accommodation and class of service while traveling by train can make a difference. We strongly urge you to pay a little extra for the roomier first class seating options which afford more privacy. Comfort and privacy decrease with lower classes of service.

Visitors should exercise care and rely on the recommendations of hotels and dining establishments when selecting taxis. Dishonest cab drivers have been known to take advantage of unsuspecting visitors.

Visitors should be aware that money exchange schemes are commonplace and some of these scams have become rather sophisticated, involving individuals posing as plain clothes “policemen” who approach the potential victim, flash a “badge” or other official-looking document, and accuse the victim of changing money illegally. Once approached, the victim is normally asked to prove that he/she did not change money illegally and is demanded to show the “policemen” his/her money or wallet. In many of these cases, the thieves succeed in obtaining money, passports, and cell phones carried by the victims. If approached by someone who offers to change money on the street or by someone who accuses you of changing money illegally, you should continue walking.

There are other variations to this scam – sometimes the individuals pose as “militia” and request passports for an “immigration inspection.” The bottom line is that legitimate

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



plainclothes Romanian police officers do not ask travelers to present identification. If presented with a situation like this, the visitor should insist on the presence of a uniformed police officer.

Note: The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Include any areas of town to be avoided and best security practices.

During the new employee security in-brief, it is advised against travelling to the SE Ferentari area of Bucharest because of drug crimes.

Further Information

Embassy contact numbers: Regional Security Officer, Embassy Operator, Medical Unit, Consular Affairs, Political/Economic Section, Marine Post One.

Regional Security Officer	021 200 3450
Embassy operator	X 3300
Medical Unit	X 3445
Consular Affairs (American Citizen Services)	X 3535
Political/Economic Section	X 3325 / 3424
Post One (during and after business hours)	X 3433

OSAC Country Council

There is no Country Council in Romania at this time.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.