



Romania

Continuing with our review of the Emerging Europe countries this month we focus on Romania, which is located in south-eastern Europe, adjoining Bulgaria, Moldova, Hungary, Serbia and Ukraine. It has a coastline on the Black Sea and a busy port at Constanta. Its capital is Bucharest; the capital along with Ilfov (a city surrounding Bucharest) constitutes the most developed region in Romania. The population of 19.6 million comprises Romanian (84%), Hungarian (6%), Roma (3%), Ukrainian, German and others and the country is mostly Eastern Orthodox in religion.

An independent republic, Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007. Romania's economic growth is now ranked among the healthiest in the EU and is forecast to perform above its potential in 2016/17. Romania has attracted about USD 59 billion of foreign capital in form of direct investments (76%) and loans granted (34%). It has one of Europe's most advanced ICT infrastructures along with state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities.

Romanians are serious when speaking about business and at the outset it is important to present a highly professional, even conservative, style. Be respectful of protocol and the authority of the person in charge. Business relationships remain formal and reserved and old-world courtesy is the norm. Romanians generally prefer their privacy and do not trust strangers readily. They admire modesty and humility in themselves and others. The post-communist generation, however has been exposed more and more to international experiences both in their working lives and personal relationships and are more used to Western European influences.

Business life is based on personal networks, so invest time in creating all the necessary relationships you require. Newcomers without introductions may find it difficult to break into these groups. Socialising and hospitality in the evenings and even weekends, is an essential part of cementing relationships.

Romanian leaders are aware of their power and status. Managers and subordinates do not tend to socialise together. As with other countries in this region, business is organised along systemic and hierarchical lines and the principal decision-making power is held at the top of the company. The lower down the organisation they are, the less people are willing to deviate from their allotted responsibilities. At all but the highest level of the organisation, people are used to receiving instructions and not being empowered. In meetings, they will need to be encouraged to make contributions as lower-ranking employees normally wait to be addressed.

In presentations, Romanians are attentive listeners but may be concerned about being taken advantage of. They like detailed presentations, presented with logical arguments. Their feedback can be equally lengthy. They prefer delicacy and indirectness - frank bluntness is considered poor manners and offensive. Directness of speech is only for those you know well so avoid confrontational behaviour or high-pressure sales tactics.

At the first meeting it very important to address your Romanian partner with Mr. or Mrs. followed by their last name or title, such as 'Mr. Doctor', 'Mrs. Professor', 'Mr. President', 'Madam Director', etc. It is customary for the younger person to take the initiative when greeting and for men to greet women first. Mr. = Domnule, Mrs. = Doamna and Ms. = Domnisoara.

In Romania, the use of titles is considered a sign of respect and even if the relationship becomes more informal, you should continue using titles during formal meetings particularly when dealing with the public institutions.