

Romania

Ethnicity in Romania

Power relations

The roots of the current ethnic tensions in Romania lie in the events of 1920 when after the Paris Peace Congress new territories like Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina - comprising large ethnic and religious minorities with their own well-organized networks of elites - were integrated into the Romanian nation state (²⁸⁶¹, 67).

²⁸⁶¹ [Dragoman, 2008]

Hungarian minority: The Hungarians are largest minority in Romania and dominate in some smaller cities. Tension between Hungarians and Romanians started after the integration of Transylvania in 1920. After the integration of Romania into the Soviet Bloc in 1945, ethnic tensions diminished because of communist ideology. The Hungarian minority was allowed to create an autonomous region in Transylvania, which officially existed till the fall of communism. However, as Dragoman (²⁸⁶², 68) notes, “after the Hungarian revolution in 1956, this tolerance disappeared”. Although the process was gradual, 1957 is coded as the first year of this nationalist communist regime which abandoned local autonomy and started to discriminate ethnic minorities.

²⁸⁶² [Dragoman, 2008]

The fall of communism intensified the conflict for a few first years leading to ethnic clashes in some cities (²⁸⁶³). Despite these clashes, however, the situation can hardly be called discriminatory or separatist. Dragoman (²⁸⁶⁴, 69) suggests that there was a major improvement for Hungarians in 1996 when a basic treaty between Romania and Hungary was signed and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania was included in the governing coalition. Since 1996, the Hungarian party has been represented in all governments with the only exception of the year 2009. (This government had to step down at the end of 2009 and the Hungarian party came back to the cabinet (²⁸⁶⁵; ²⁸⁶⁶; ²⁸⁶⁷) Thus, the year 2009 is coded here separately with the Hungarians listed as "powerless". A new government had to be formed again in September 2010. The Hungarian party remained in the government. At the end of 2012 parliamentary elections took place and the Hungarian party has not been included in the following new government (²⁸⁶⁸) so that since 2013 a new period is starting where the Hungarians are powerless and Romanians are dominant.

²⁸⁶³ [Andersen, 2005]

²⁸⁶⁴ [Dragoman, 2008]

²⁸⁶⁵ [Stan Zaharia, 2009]

²⁸⁶⁶ [Stan, 2010]

²⁸⁶⁷ [Stan, 2012]

Roma: “Gypsies were considered as slaves until 1856” (²⁸⁶⁹, 67). Later, the communist regime discriminated Roma people, mostly because of their lifestyle. After the fall of the Soviet bloc, official policies in the top level have changed, however widespread social discrimination persists. Roma have poor access to public services, are discriminated in the educational system and often target of public violence. Conflicts between Roma and Hungarians are common (²⁸⁷⁰). Roma are underrepresented in the political area due to their low participation and the lack of ID cards. In 2010, Roma were represented by only one member of parliament (²⁸⁷¹)

²⁸⁶⁹ [Dragoman, 2008]

²⁸⁷⁰ [US Department of State, 2009]

²⁸⁷¹ [Freedom House, 2012]

Other minorities: There are 14 other minorities that have political parties and are represented in the parliament. Establishing ethnic political parties in Romania guarantees one seat in the parliament which is the main reason of such a high number of political parties. However most of them are irrelevant actors in the political arena and the minorities are not politically engaged.

An exception to this pattern is the German-speaking minority. The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania has a strong position at the local level in Transylvania (see website of the party for more details: ²⁸⁷²) but still has to be considered as politically powerless.

²⁸⁷² [Demokratische Forum der Deutschen in Rumänien]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Romania

From 1946 until 1956

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	DOMINANT
Hungarians	0.066	POWERLESS
Roma	0.025	IRRELEVANT
Germans	0.002	IRRELEVANT

From 1957 until 1988

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	DOMINANT
Hungarians	0.066	DISCRIMINATED
Roma	0.025	DISCRIMINATED
Germans	0.002	DISCRIMINATED

From 1989 until 1995

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	DOMINANT
Hungarians	0.066	POWERLESS
Roma	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.002	POWERLESS

From 1996 until 2008

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	SENIOR PARTNER
Hungarians	0.066	JUNIOR PARTNER
Roma	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.002	POWERLESS



Figure 616: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 1946-1956.



Figure 617: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 1957-1988.



Figure 618: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 1989-1995.



From 2009 until 2009

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	DOMINANT
Hungarians	0.066	POWERLESS
Roma	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.002	POWERLESS

From 2010 until 2012

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	SENIOR PARTNER
Hungarians	0.066	JUNIOR PARTNER
Roma	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.002	POWERLESS

From 2013 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Romanians	0.895	DOMINANT
Hungarians	0.066	POWERLESS
Roma	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.002	POWERLESS



Figure 620: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 2009-2009.



Figure 621: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 2010-2012.



Figure 622: Political status of ethnic groups in Romania during 2013-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Romania

From 1946 until 2013

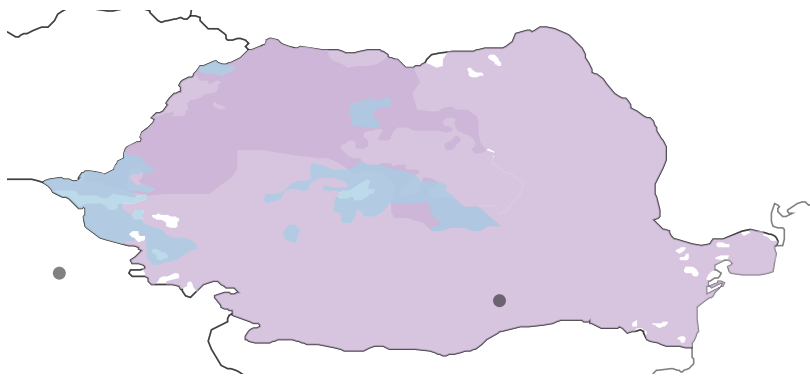


Figure 623: Map of ethnic groups in Romania during 2013-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Romanians	216 257	Regional & urban
■ Hungarians	63 238	Regionally based
■ Germans	21 407	Regional & urban
Roma		Migrant

Table 180: List of ethnic groups in Romania during 1946-2013.

Conflicts in Romania

Starting on 1989-12-22

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Rumania	NSF	Romanians	1989-12-22	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split