

# Travelling in Romania



Your Guide as a  
Consumer in Romania



## SUMMARY

1. GENERAL INFORMATION
2. ARRIVING IN ROMANIA BY PLANE, TRAIN OR BY CAR
3. CUSTOMS DUTY
4. HOTELS
5. PRICING
6. PAYMENTS
7. CURRENCY EXCHANGE
8. VAT
9. OPENING HOURS
10. SHOPPING IN THE SUPERMARKETS
11. PRICE REDUCTIONS
12. SALES
13. PRODUCT EXCHANGE
14. YOUR RIGHTS AS CONSUMERS
15. ADDRESSES

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Currency exchange

Romania's currency is Leu (plural "Lei") (pronunciation: lay).

### Banknote denominations:

1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 lei

### Coins: 1, 5, 10 and 50 bani pieces. (pronunciation: bahnee)

1leu = 100 bani

Foreign currencies may be exchanged at banks or authorized exchange offices (called: "casa de schimb" or "birou de schimb valutar"). International airports and larger hotels also offer currency exchange services.

### ATM (Bancomat)

ATM machines are available at main banks and at airports and shopping centres. Do not expect to find ATMs in remote areas or villages.

## 2. ARRIVING IN ROMANIA BY PLANE, TRAIN OR BY CAR

### BY PLANE

New regulations from the European commission, and the Montreal Convention, have strengthened air passengers' rights. Here you will find the main information that you need if you decide to travel by plane to France.

### Before departure You realise you have to change or cancel your flight:

- ★ What happens if you reserved and paid a ticket for a scheduled flight and you cannot take it due to personal reasons, for example? You should inform the airline company or the travel agency where you reserved the ticket as soon as possible. If you make your request early, you may be able to avoid the cancellation costs.
- ★ If you wish to postpone your journey and use the ticket later, you may be able to do so, as long as it is still valid, but paying an administration fee to change your booking.
- ★ If you have to cancel your flight, in order to be reimbursed you usually have to return the unused ticket in a period of time. For special price tickets or flights subject to special conditions the rules may be different. You should ask your travel agency or the airline on this point.
- ★ If you travel with Tarom you may return the ticket for a refund at the latest 6 months from the expiring of its validity. The airline will reimburse the cost of the ticket minus the applicable taxes and an administration fee. For more information refer to the general conditions or contact Tarom.



★ Important! If you planned to travel with a non regular flight (“charter”) and you need to cancel your journey, you will not be able to get any reimbursement – unless you signed a cancellation insurance, which covers you in certain cases.

★ Nevertheless, if you cancel your flight within a certain time in advance, it will be sometimes possible to obtain a partial refund. You should refer to the general terms and conditions of different airlines.  
At the time of departure

★ The airline company must comply with the announced schedules, unless they can prove a “force majeure”. In certain circumstances their liability can be limited, for example if the customer or a third party is at fault.

★ When it is the case, the tickets price must be reimbursed within 7 days, in cash, by bank transfer or cheque. A voucher refund can be made only with your written agreement.  
Damages

★ In case of delay, if you suffer additional damages, articles 19 and 22 of the Montreal Convention of June 28th 2004 allow a right to compensation. The compensation for damages suffered by passengers is, though, limited to 4150 special drawing rights (SDR), about 4900 € (1 SDR = 1,18 €).

★ In case of loss or delay of luggage, you have to report it first to the baggage service at the airport and fill in a complaint form. If the luggage is found, the company has an obligation to deliver it to the address mentioned on the complaint form and should do this without charging any fee. If because of the delay in delivery, you have extra expenses (you were obliged to buy clothes, basic necessities, etc.) the carrier would have to pay you compensation of up to a maximum of 1000 SDR. However, you have to be able to prove the damage. Therefore remember to keep any receipts and invoices.

★ Your request for compensation must be sent to the airline at the latest 21 days following the recovery of the luggage.

★ In the case of a strike, the airline company will not respond if: the strike is caused by staff who are not directly paid by the airline, the strike was unpredictable or the company demonstrates that it took all the necessary steps to avoid the damage.

★ When the staff of an airline goes on strike, the airline is directly responsible, and so you should be compensated.

★ In the case of a delay:

***if the departure is from within the European Union (EU) or  
if the departure is from a third country outside the EU to an airport within the EU, and the flight is made  
by a European company***

- ★ You have the right to immediate assistance from the airline company, provided that the delay is of:
  - ★ 2 hours or more for flights up to 1500 km
  - ★ 3 hours or more for the flights of more than 1500 km inside the EU and those between 1500 km and 3500 km outside the EU
  - ★ 4 hours or more for all the flights of more than 3500 km outside the EU
- ★ The assistance consists of supplying food and drinks in a sufficient quantity, taking into account the delay, as well as paying for the means of communication so that you can inform your relatives or any other person of the delay (telephone, e-mail and fax). If the delay is of one or several nights, you must be offered accommodation and the transfer from the airport to the hotel.
- ★ In any case, when the delay is announced to be more than 5 hours, the company has to offer you a reimbursement of the full cost of the ticket at the price at which it was bought, for the part or parts of the journey not made, and for the part or parts already made if the flight is no longer serving any purpose in relation to the passenger's original travel plan. If needed the company has to offer a free return flight to the first point of departure, at the earliest opportunity.

#### **In the case of a cancellation:**

- ★ You have the right to assistance from the airline company as in the case of a delay.
- ★ The airline company has to give you the choice between:

***a reimbursement of the full cost of the ticket at the price at which it was bought, for the part or parts of the journey not made, and for the part or parts already made if the flight is no longer serving any purpose in relation to the passenger's original travel plan. If needed the company has to offer a free return flight to the first point of departure, at the earliest opportunity.***

***a re-routing, under comparable transport conditions, to their final destination at the earliest opportunity; or***

***a re-routing, under comparable transport conditions, to their final destination at a later date at the passenger's convenience, subject to availability of seats.***

- ★ Besides this, you have the right to claim compensation of:

**250 € for all the flights of less than 1500 km,  
400 € for flights between 1500 and 3500 km within the EU,  
600 € for all other flights**

- ★ If another flight is offered to you, and if the time of your arrival is not later than the time of arrival of the original reserved flight, this compensation can be decreased with 50 %.



- ★ Please Note! You cannot ask for this compensation if you were warned of the cancellation of the flight:

***At least 2 weeks before date of the flight you booked; or,  
Between 2 weeks, and less than 7 days before, if an offer of re-routing was made to you for the same date, but, with a departure schedule allowing you to leave no more than two hours before the scheduled time of departure and to reach your final destination less than four hours after the scheduled time of arrival;***  
*or,*

***Within less than 7 days, if a re-routing was offered to you for the same date; but with a departure schedule allowing you to leave no more than one hour before the scheduled time of departure and to reach your final destination less than two hours after the scheduled time of arrival.***

- ★ The airline company will not have to pay the compensation if the cancellation is due to a case of force majeure.

### **In the case of an “overbooking”:**

- ★ You reserved a plane ticket but when arriving at the check in desk, they told you there were no more seats available on the plane? You have the right to receive the assistance, refund or re-routing, compensation (as listed above).

### **BY TRAIN**

The railway transport in Romania is assured by a single company, respectively by SNTFC “CFR Passengers S.A.

### **International passenger transport**

- ★ The international railway transport can be realized only based on a valid train ticket, having specified route and chosen class for the journey.

- ★ The tickets can be obtained from different sources (international pay offices for long journeys, credited agencies, Internet).

- ★ The ticket has to compulsorily contain, besides indication of the transporter or transporters, the following remarks:

***Serial, number and security elements; the route, the class; the fee, validity dates – year, day, maybe time, and data of this kind.***

- ★ Besides these compulsory elements, the ticket may also contain other remarks related to its usage way, like the name and photograph of the passenger.

### **Usage conditions of the international travel ticket**

- ★ The international travel tickets are valid for a period of two months

- ★ Exceptions:

***The tickets related to a particular train, or a reservation is valid only for the train and date written on the ticket.***

***Tickets issued based on special offers, which can have a different validity period.***

- ★ The tickets are valid beginning with the date indicated by the cashier for the start of the journey until the moment the train by which the journey was started – respectively the last related train – arrives to the station, the validity being longer with the interruption period for which the ticket is considered as valid.

- ★ The passenger not presenting a valid travel ticket on the train is obliged to pay the fee on the train.

### **Occupation and reserving seats**

- ★ On trains with seat reservation regime the passenger can occupy only the seat indicated on the ticket.

- ★ The passenger can use a seat in a superior class, superior services or a train of superior category to that indicated on the ticket, or an ask for modification of the itinerary only by paying the differential taxes.

- ★ The passenger who cannot obtain a seat and does not want to stand during his journey has the right to ask for refund of the ticket value for the remaining part of the journey, visa for postponing the journey, or change for a superior class by paying the differential taxes. In case the passenger cannot occupy the seat indicated on the ticket, he must receive another seat, in the limit of available seat on the train, or the fee of the reservation ticket must be returned to him. In case of the trains without reservation regime entire compartments can be reserved. These can be labeled at a certain station, indicating the emitted ticket. The persons who effectively occupy the reserved compartment can present any kind of ticket – free, with reduced prices, whole fee – valid for the respective train, but the completion to the number of seats available in the compartment can be made only after the integral payment of the tax valid for the train and the respective class.

- ★ In case the compartment is not fully occupied until the moment the train leaves the station the made reservation is considered annulled. The seats in the compartment are available to passengers immediately after the train left the station.

- ★ On trains with facultative reservation regime of seats for a certain distance, seats can be reserved in the stations on the route the train travels without reservation regime, paying the reservation ticket. The reservation of the seat can be made in the anticipatory period to the sale itself, but not on the day of the journey.

### **Returning the ticket**

- ★ The return of the ticket represents the fact that an emitted ticket is returned by the passenger before the start of its validity with refund, without any penalties.

- ★ The return cannot be made only in the period settled by the transporter and only in the emitting agency.



## Change of ticket

- ★ The change of the ticket represents the fact that a ticket is changed by the passenger, with or without tax for another ticket.
- ★ The change cannot be made only in a certain period settled by the transporter. If it is the case, the rest of the money is returned to the passenger; otherwise he has to pay the difference.

## Refund of the ticket price

- ★ The tax can be returned totally or partially in the following cases:

***the ticket was not used or was used partially;  
due to lack of seats, the ticket was used on an inferior train or class to that mentioned on the ticket, except the cases when the passenger asks for change to an inferior class or train***

- ★ The transportation fee is returned integrally, including the reservation ticket in case the train for which the ticket was emitted does not circulate, or in cases of major force.
- ★ The transportation fee is returned partially in the following cases:

***interruption of circulation;  
annulment of trains;  
missing of relations;  
cases of illness;  
giving up effectuation of the whole journey, but only for the not used route.***

- ★ The fee of tickets emitted at the station or agencies are returned minus the processing fee, representing 10% of the transportation fee. The refund is made at the verbal request of the passenger, irrespective of the motives, on the condition of presenting the ticket to the operating agent in the emitting unit in a maximum period of 1 hour after the train for which it was valid left.
- ★ The tickets emitted at agencies can be returned by presenting them to the chief of the agency, in a maximum period of 2 hours after the train left.
- ★ The tickets emitted for trains leaving after the closing of the agencies have to be presented to the operator agent in an hour after the train left in the railway station, to be taken into evidence as unused, then to the chief of the agency to approve refund on the first work day in 2 hours after the opening of the agency.
- ★ The fee for the reservation ticket cannot be returned.
- ★ After the expiration of these periods the refund can be requested only by a written request, to which the ticket has to be attached, taken into evidence or not as unused, as well as an official act from which it results that the respective person could not be present in time to apply for the unused visa or to request refund because of illness, accident, etc.

- ★ The request has to be presented to the operator agent of railway transportation from the emitting unit, respectively to the chief of the agency for tickets issued by agencies in three days after the train for which the ticket was issued, left.
- ★ The commission paid to agencies is usually not returned.
- ★ The transporters will return the money in a period not longer than 3 months after receiving the request and the justifying documents presented by the passenger.
- ★ In case the passenger lives in another country, the sum that has to be returned and transferred in the currency of the particular country: the taxes of the payment are supported by the transporters making the refund..
- ★ If a ticket was emitted by an agency the transporters has to pay the sum that has to be returned with the mediation of that particular agency. In this case, the sum that has to be returned is paid by the agency, without any penalties, except the costs of expedition.

### **Compensations in case of delays in international train traffic**

- ★ SNTFC "CFR Passengers" S.A. offers passengers compensation equal to 20% of the whole price of transporting contract (ticket, reservation, supplements) for trains having delays.
- ★ The compensations are given in case of international train suppression or in case of a delay longer than an hour in case of an international train per day.
- ★ For a delay longer than 2 hours in case of night-train the same kind of compensation is offered. The compensation is given in the form of travel checks.
- ★ The compensation request for delay has to be given by the passenger to the transporters (emitting the ticket) I a maximum period of 2 months after the end of the journey.
- ★ The period of solving the compensation requests is a period of 3 months after receiving all justifying documents.
- ★ A first answer will be sent to the passenger in all cases in a period of 4 weeks after receiving the compensation request.
- ★ The compensation request for delay is a formulary which can be obtained at the office for international tickets in the destination station, written on the reservation ticket. The commercial personnel have to confirm the delay of the train on the formulary in the box having this destination.

## Conditions of offering compensation:

★ For a delay longer than 60 minutes for an international train per day and 120 minutes for an international night-train or in case the train is annulled, the transporters will offer the passengers 20% from the price of the ticket for a simple journey in the form of a travel check, in case:

***the price of the ticket is minimum 50 EUR (including reservation and supplements);  
the start and the end of the journey are situated inside the UE, Norway or Switzerland;  
the passenger did not benefit of compensation for accommodation costs or taxi transport;  
the offers are not of pass type (Interrail, Eurail, Balkan Plexipass, etc)  
the trains are not specially ordered.***

★ The compensation requests completed correspondingly in all boxes with the stamp and date written by an agent from the station, having attached the original ticket emitted in Romania, valid and taken into evidence with delay, with the reservation titles and supplements will be given by the passenger to the Service of Commercial Regulations and Tariffs from SNTFC "CFR Passengers" S.A.

★ The travel check offered as compensation for delay is valid for 1 year, starting with the date of its issuing.

★ It can be used to pay another ticket for internal or international traffic. This travel check and the tickets cannot be the object of any refund in cash, total or partial.

★ The travel check is nominal and is bought in lei.

★ Instead of compensation the passenger can:

***renounce to continuing the journey and request refund for the unaffected part of the journey;-  
renounce to the continuation of the journey, come back to the station using the first train of a member transporter and request total refund of the transportation fee;  
continue the journey by the train of a member transporter, arriving to destination with a shorter delay.***

★ The passenger cannot request compensation if the delay is imputable:

***to some external circumstances to railway exploitation;  
to traffic restrictions announced before the journey, as consequence of building works;  
to a strike announced in time or an unforeseeable strike  
to the fault of the passenger.***

## Reducing the travel costs

★ Children up to 5 years, who do not require a separate seat, are transported for free, without tickets.

- ★ Children up to 10 years pay 50% of the travel fee and the train supplements, having right to a separate seat. In case of reserved seats they pay the whole price of the ticket.
- ★ No reducing of costs can be made in case of tickets already having a reduction from the whole price.

### BY CAR

The driving rules in Romania have been changed in the late years, especially regarding the sanctions by the introduction of the penalty points system.

Papers

- ★ The minimum age for driving in Romania is 18 years. Children must be at least 12 years old to sit in the front seat. If the children are under 12 years, they must be seated in the rear and, as in front, use a safety belt, or an approved child seat (for children under 3 years).
- ★ It's compulsory to carry your driving license, car registration papers and insurance documents. The driving licenses issued by the European Union Member States are accepted in Romania. Also the driving licenses issued by other countries (other than EU) are accepted, but only if they comply with the rules set out in international treaties.

### Speed limits

★ The general speed limits on the Romanian roads are:

- ★ + 50 km/h inside localities
- ★ + 90 km/h outside localities (regular roads)
- ★ + 130 km/h on highways
- ★ + 100 km/h on expressways and national European roads

★ Please note! In Romania there are fixed radar traffic detectors all over the country which identify the vehicles not complying with the speed limits. The position of these radar detectors are indicated using this sign.



***A list of all the locations, for specific periods of time, is available on the site of the Romanian Police:***

***<http://www.politiaromana.ro/dpr/radare.htm>***

★ The fines for exceeding the speed limits can go from 30 € to 300 € and from two to six penalty points. Be aware also, that for speeds equal to or exceeding 50 km/h over the limit, the driving license will be suspended for 90 days.

★ The sanctions can be disputed in front of the court in the territorial area of which the infringement has been ascertained, in at most 15 days from the moment the sanction has been communicated.

Traffic rules

- ★ Priority to traffic coming from the right applies, unless there is a road marking indicating that you have priority.

### **Safety**

- ★ The wear of safety belts is compulsory for all the occupants of the vehicle. There must be one safety belt per passenger. The fine for the infringement of this obligation can be from 30 € to 40 € and two penalty points.
- ★ The use of mobile telephones while driving is forbidden, unless you are using a “hands free” system. In case of infringement the sanction is two penalty points

### **Alcohol and drugs**

- ★ Driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics is forbidden in Romania and is sanctioned.
- ★ If the level of alcohol in blood is less than 0,80 g/l, the sanction will go from 125 € to 300 € and the driving license will be suspended for 90 days.
- ★ If the level of alcohol in blood is exceeding 0,80 g/l the infringement is considered an infraction and is punished with 1 to 5 years in prison. The same punishment is applied for driving under the influence of narcotics.
- ★ The person who refuses to allow the testing for alcohol or narcotics may be punished with 2 to 7 years in prison.

### **Toll Roads**

- ★ If you are driving to Romania, please note that on entry you are required to pay a road toll to allow you to use the national roads. Tolls are charged on motorways and main roads out of town, payable in Euros. Upon payment, ensure you receive and display the windscreen stickers confirming you have paid the toll. Please note that failure to pay the road toll or to display the sticker may lead to a heavy fine.
- ★ The cost for cars is three Euros for a one-week vignette or six Euros for one month, but prices may change. Costs are higher for freight vehicles and coaches for eight or more passengers. Tickets can be purchased at border points on entering the country or at post offices and at most petrol stations throughout Romania.

## Petrol/Fuel

★ Here are some translation of the denominations under which you can find the fuel:

★ Benzina fara plumb                      Uleaded gazoline

★ 95 sau 98                                      95 or 98

★ Motorina                                      Diesel fuel

★ GPL    LPG

★ Please note, that most of the petrol stations use commercial denomination, so, if you are not sure of the type of fuel they sell, it's better to ask.

★ Most of the petrol stations accept major credit cards. Generally you can pay at a booth.

## Traffic accident

★ If you are involved in an accident in Romania, your insurance should cover any injury or damage that you may cause to another party. Please check details with your insurer before traveling to Romania.

★ Your agent should provide you with a green card which must be displayed in the car windscreen. This serves as proof of valid liability insurance and is accepted throughout Europe in countries which are signatories of the Green Card System. It is not mandatory to have a Green Card when traveling within the EU if you bring your certificate of insurance.

★ In the event of an accident with no serious injuries the parties must present themselves in no more than 24 hours from the accident to the police unit in the territorial area of which the accident has taken place. The police unit will make verifications and will issue a document which can be used with the insurer.

★ In the near future, in Romania will be made available the system of amicable agreement between parties in case of accidents with no serious injuries.

★ If it is a serious accident and you need to go to hospital, the authorities will deal with the paperwork.

★ In case of an accident in Romania, as a general rule, the Romanian law will apply to determine responsibilities and compensation for the damages.

★ If you are not responsible for the accident, the directive 2000/26/EC allows you to demand compensation in your country of place of residence.

★ Your insurer, or yourself, should contact the representative of the other insurance company in your country. Every European insurer has to appoint a competent correspondent in the other member states. You should receive an offer of compensation in the three months following your demand. If you have difficulties to find the coordinates of this correspondent, you should contact the body created for this purpose in your country.

### **Parking in Romania**

★ The parking-meters (“parcometre”) are not very common in the Romanian cities. In Bucharest, especially, the parking represents a problem due to the lack of parking lots, free or not.

★ In the paid parking the tariff can go from 0,5 € to 1,5 € per hour. Usually the tariff is collected by employees of the companies which administer the parking. A receipt must be issued when the tariff is paid.

★ Important: illegally parked vehicles may be wheel-clamped or towed.

#### **Car rental**

★ If you book a car over the Internet, you should check the final contract you conclude with the car rental company before signing it, to see if it contains all the options you have selected on the Internet. Do not hesitate to take time to read again the contract, to ask questions on the coverage of insurance etc.

★ Have a close look at the car and report immediately any damage you discover.

★ Ask for opening hours of the agency, to be able to return the car in person. If you leave the vehicle on the company's parking outside the opening hours, there is a possibility that you will be held responsible for damages to the vehicle you didn't caused.

## **3. CUSTOMS DUTY**

Purchases made for personal use during a trip within the EU do not require any custom declaration when arriving in Romania. No additional taxes will be charged on goods bought with taxes included in other EU countries, provided these goods are for your personal use.

For certain types of goods, if your purchases are equivalent or less than the quantities shown below, in general, they will be regarded as goods for personal use. If you exceed these quantities, you may have to prove the goods are for personal use; otherwise you will have to pay the custom duties.

**Tobacco:**

★ Cigarettes	800 pieces
★ Cigarillos	400 pieces
★ Cigars	200 pieces
★ Tobacco	1 kg

**Alcohol:**

★ Spirits	10 l
★ Intermediate products	20 l
★ Wine	90 l
★ Beer	110 l

**4. HOTELS****Tourism tax**

- ★ In Romania tourists have the obligation of paying a hotel fee. The sum of this fee is established by the local authorities and is comprised between 0,5% and 5% in the case of accommodation in units placed in a tourist resort, varying depending on the accommodation class of the hotel.
- ★ The fee is paid for the whole period of staying, excepting the units placed in a tourist resort, when the fee is paid for a single night, irrespective of the real staying period.
- ★ The hotel fee is paid when taking in evidence the persons accommodated through the service deliverers in the tourist domain is evidenced separately from the accommodation fee.
- ★ Tourists younger than 18 years old, including are free from paying this fee.

**Accommodation at the hotel**

- ★ The hotel is the unit arranged in buildings or building houses for being able to offer tourists rooms, studios or apartments, assures specific services has a reception and rooms for public alimentation.
- ★ Hotels made up of apartments or studios, arranged in order to assure the maintenance and food preparation, as well as the serving of food in its precincts, are considered apartment-hotels.

- ★ Hotels in Romania are classified by the Ministry for small and Medium business, commerce, Tourism and liberal Professions, the only institution able to have activities of authorization in the domain of tourism, depending on the building characteristics, quality of equipments and of offered services, thus giving them a number of stars from 1 to 5.
- ★ The hotels are obliged to post at a visible place, on the outside of the building a booklet containing the signs concerning the type of the structure and the classification level.
- ★ The hotels are obliged to establish non-discriminating unique accommodation fee valid for the Romanian and for the foreign tourists.
- ★ The accommodation fee can be different based on the accommodation based individually or through a tourist agency.
- ★ Usually, if the services of a tourist agency are used, the booking of a hotel is made a few months earlier before planning the holiday, while the individual booking can be made, for example on the Internet, and a week before the holiday.
- ★ If the hotel booking is made individually, the hoteliers can request a deposit or details referring to the credit card.
- ★ Generally, details referring to the credit card are requested in order to verify the availability of reserving funds to guarantee the price of the room. This sum corresponds to accommodation for a night, sum being retained from the account of the tourist in case the tourist does not use the booking and did not annul it in due time, or the integral costs of the booking.
- ★ The hotel can request a maximum limit until when the annulling of the booking can be made without the obligation of paying any kind of penalties or taxes. In case of annulment after this deadline, the hotel can operate the payment from the credit card as penalty for the non-rented room/rooms.
- ★ The value of the penalty is decided by each hotel and can vary from the first night to the whole period of accommodation.
- ★ As the details referring to the credit card are used only for guarantees, the payment of the reserved services is made at the hotel reception in the moment of arrival, where any kind of accepted payment method is available.

★ If booking, as part of a tourist service package is made through a tourist agency, the tourist has to receive in written form information referring to:

***destination place;***

***itinerary;***

***used means of transportation, its characteristics and category;***

***accommodation unit type, address and classification categories of them;***

***offered treatment services and the classification category of these units;***

***duration of program, cu indicating date of arrival and departure;***

***general information regarding passport and visa regime, as well as health assurance necessary for travelling and journey;***

***sum of advance payment, if it is the case, as well as the deadline requested for paying the rest of the sum;***

***deadline for tourist information in case of annulling the travels;***

***possibility of having facultative assurances for assistance in case of illness, accident and other cases;***

***duration of tourist offer validity.***

★ Generally, accommodation in hotels is made in the morning, accommodation hours being different from hotel to hotel.

★ It is indicated that the tourist requests information about accommodation hour of the hotel. In any case, if there is no understanding with the hotel referring to the accommodation hour, the tourist cannot insist on receiving accommodation before 5 pm.

★ In case that for booking there has been constituted a guarantee deposit, the hotelier has to wait until 12.00 o'clock or the afternoon of the next day to rent the room booked for another person, although he can retain from the deposit the sum corresponding to the price of a night of accommodation.

***As a general rule, the leaving of the room is made until noon, usually until 12.00, if there is no other understanding of the parties in this sense.***

### **What if on arrival the hotel does not live up to expectations?**

★ It is indicated before occupying the room offered to the tourist to see the room in order to verify if it corresponds to the description made by the hotelier or the tourist agency.

★ If the tourist notices that he is accommodated in a room not corresponding to the offered description, for example that of found in brochures or web sites he can request the decrease of accommodation fee, based on cheating advertisements.

★ Irrespective of the booking modality, the tourist can make a reclamation referring to the state and functioning of equipments to the organisms able to take measures at the phone numbers listed at the reception, the hoteliers having the obligation of posting at a visible place these telephone numbers.

- ★ If the rooms booking was made through a tourist agency and this did not fulfill its assumed obligations from the contract, the tourist has the right to request other accommodation alternatives without supplementary costs, or refund of the difference between the paid sums and the value of offered services.
- ★ But the responsibility of the tourist agency can be mentioned if the tourist bought a package of tourist services, supposing besides transportation or other tourist services (food, bathing treatment, agreement, etc.) on the condition that the uninterrupted duration of them is longer than 24 hours or comprises a night of accommodation.
- ★ Hoteliers are not responsible for prejudices caused to tourists as a consequence of theft of personal belongings from the hotel or its neighborhood
- ★ Responsibility of hoteliers can be requested in case of theft of personal belongings, if for the period of accommodation the objects (money, jewelry, documents, etc.) were given for maintenance or put in the available safes of the hotel.
- ★ The damaged tourist has to denounce the theft at the management of the hotel and the police department.

## 5. PRICING

Each vendor is compelled to indicate the price for the products sold in his shop, in a clearly, legible and easy to identify manner. The price can be indicated on a tag near the product or in a catalog/list for more products.

The price must be indicated in lei (the national Romanian currency) and must include the VAT. The vendor can also indicate the price in a foreign currency, along the price in lei, in a clear and easy to understand manner.

For pre-packaged products the vendor must indicate the selling price and the unit price, ensuring you are able to compare similar products, but sold in different quantities.

For products sold in bulk, like fresh fruits or vegetables, the vendor must indicate only the unit price. In this case the selling price is determined after the product is weighted or measured.

The vendor is obliged to issue receipts for most of products.

## 6. PAYMENTS

### Credit cards

Major credit cards including American Express, Mastercard and Visa are accepted in large hotels, car rental companies and stores in the main cities. However, credit cards are unlikely to prove useful in small towns or away from tourist areas.

### Travelers' Checks

Preferably in US dollars or Euros, Travelers' Checks can be cashed in large banks, some hotels and selected exchange offices but most of them charge considerable commissions. Do not count on cashing such checks outside Bucharest and a few other major cities. For travel around the country it is a good idea to carry cash. Small stores and restaurants might accept EUR but the exchange rate offered will not be the best. Street handicraft vendors prefer Romanian currency.

### Withdrawal of cash

You can withdraw cash from your account with you Debit or Credit card from every ATM that shows you card symbol.

## 7. CURRENCY EXCHANGE

You can find many offices who offer you currency exchange services, usually for currencies which are more commonly used like Euro, US Dollars or UK Pounds. Other currencies can be exchanged in banks.

Due to some problems in the later years, special rules have been adopted for currency exchange offices. The most important rules are as follows:

***the exchange rates must be indicated outside the exchange office and inside;***

***the currency exchange rates must be indicated on separate boards than the exchange rates for traveler's cheques or vouchers;***

***if the office applies any taxes, these must be indicated distinctly, in red;***

***the font size for exchange rates is clearly set out in the regulation and must be respected;***

***before the exchange is made, the trader must inform you both verbally and in written on the currency exchange rates, through a transaction acceptance form signed by both parties. The form must contain information on: trader's name and address, date, consumer's name, serial number of consumer's identity card or passport, the exchanged amount, the amount the consumer must receive, the taxes, the signatures of the consumer and the trader. The form must be made both in Romanian and in English.***

## 8. VAT

The basic VAT rate in Romania is 19%. It is called TVA – Taxa pe Valoare Adaugata and it is charged on most Romanian goods and services in our country.

A lower rate, 9%, applies to books, medicines, and certain other goods and services.

The prices in shops are always including this tax, except are the shops that are selling engross.

If you are a citizen of a non EU member states you can ask for a refund of this tax in certain stores.

## 9. OPENING HOURS **Widespread opening hours:**

### **HYPERMARKETS' GENERAL OPENING HOURS ARE:**

Mon-Sat: 09:00 – 20:00

Sun: 09:00 – 18:00

### **SHOPS' GENERAL OPENING HOURS ARE:**

Mon-Fri: 09:00 – 19:00

Sat: 09:00 – 16:00 (large shops)

09:00 – 12:00 (small shops)

Sun: closed

### **BANKS' GENERAL OPENING HOURS ARE:**

Mon-Fri: 09:00 – 17:00

Sat-Sun: closed

### **POST OFFICES' OPENING HOURS ARE:**

Mon-Fri: 07:30 – 18:00

Sat: 08:00 – 12:00

Sun: closed

You can still find some nonstop shops which are selling some food and beverages and also most petrol stations in big cities are opened nonstop. You can find there newspapers, food, beverages but they can be in general more expensive.

## 10. SHOPPING IN THE SUPERMARKETS

The advantage of supermarkets comes from the fact you can find lots of product categories, going from food to electronics or clothing, meaning you will not have to spend your time going from one shop to another to buy what you need. Also, some of the prices can be lower.

On the other hand there are also disadvantages, which can be eliminated if you are careful. One of these disadvantages is that sometimes, due to the high number of products existing in supermarkets, the employees forget to change the tag prices, so there are situations when you may buy a product at another price than it was showed on the price tag. To avoid this, if you are unsure of a price, you can use the so called electronic price lectors available in some supermarkets or you can ask the counter employees to tell you if price is right or not.

Another disadvantage comes from the fact that, the supermarkets being self-service shops, many times you cannot find an employee to help you with information on a product. You can eliminate this disadvantage, by gathering information prior to your purchase, from internet or different test magazines.

In many of the supermarkets you must weigh yourself the fruits and vegetables on special scales. You must put your product on the scale, press the button with the picture or number corresponding to the product you choose and then stick the price tag on the bag.

Usually, you must bag the groceries by yourself. Plastic bags are available for free at most counters. Starting January 2009, all consumers will have to pay a fee of at least 0.05 € for plastic bag, for ecological reasons.

## 11. PRICE REDUCTIONS

Any price reduction must be indicated in a clearly, readable and non-equivocal manner for each product or group of identical products:

- ★ by mentioning the new price next to the old price, which will be barred, or
  - ★ by mentioning "new price", "old price" next to the corresponding values, or
  - ★ by mentioning the reduction percent and the new price next to the old price, which will be barred.
- Some rules must be obeyed when announcing a price reduction. First, the reduction is made by rapport to a reference price. The reference price must have been applied for at least a month before the reduction. Second, for some situations the prices reductions cannot be made outside the legal periods (the sales).

## 12. SALES

There are two periods for sales. The periods are established by the trader inside the following time limits:

- ★ 15 January – 15 April for fall-winter goods
- ★ 1 August – 31 October for spring-summer goods.

The sales are restricted to non food seasonal products, like clothing, shoes etc.

It is advisable to check the quality of products, because sometimes on sales, the goods put on market are of a lower quality.

## 13. PRODUCT EXCHANGE

If a product is not faulty, the seller has no legal obligation to exchange it. Some sellers allow the consumers to exchange a product, even if it is not faulty, in a limited period of time from the delivery (24-48h). In this case it is advisable to ask for a written confirmation of the seller's agreement to exchange the product, e.g. on the receipt, a flyer

## 14. YOUR RIGHTS AS CONSUMERS

### Legal warranty

If the good you bought presents a lack of conformity (it doesn't function properly, it hasn't the characteristics you asked for or you expected, seeing the advertising made for that good), then you have the right to have that good brought to conformity.

This is done by the seller, in a first step, either by repairing or by replacing the good affected by the lack of conformity. The reparatory measure should be free of charge and will be taken in a reasonable time period, established by common agreement. The existence of the lack of conformity must be announced to the seller no later than two months from the moment it was observed.

If you do not benefited from the repair or the replacement, or the reparatory measure was not taken in a reasonable time period or it caused you a significant inconvenience, then you can ask for the reimbursement of the price you paid or for the reduction of that price.

### Time limit

The legal warranty applies for any good purchased from a Romanian trader, for a period of two years starting the delivery moment.

### Burden of proof

Any lack of conformity which becomes apparent in the first six months from the delivery, it is presumed to have existed at the moment of delivery. In this case you do not have to prove the good have been defective at the moment of delivery.

If the lack of conformity becomes apparent after this six months period, you must prove it has existed at the moment of delivery.

### Commercial guarantee

Besides and not excluding the legal warranty, the seller or the producer can offer you a so called "commercial guarantee".

The commercial guarantee must state that the consumer has legal rights under applicable national legislation governing the sale of consumer goods and make clear that those rights are not affected by the guarantee.

The commercial guarantee must be set out in plain intelligible language and must contain at least the product identification elements, the guarantee period, the trader's obligations – maintenance, repair, replacement – the name and address of the trader and the service unit.

On request by the consumer, the guarantee shall be made available in writing or in another durable medium available and accessible to him.

**If you need free of charge assistance  
to solve your cross border dispute you can contact:**

European Consumer Centre Romania – ECC Romania  
Bvdul. N. Balcescu 32-34, Floor 4, 16, Sector 1  
Bucharest  
Tel. 021 3157149  
Fax. 021 3110242  
Email: [office@eccromania.ro](mailto:office@eccromania.ro)  
Web: [www.eccromania.ro](http://www.eccromania.ro)

We are opened from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.

European Consumer Centre Bulgaria – ECC Bulgaria  
14 Bacho Kiro str.  
1000 Sofia  
Tel. 02 986 76 72  
Fax. 02 987 55 08  
Email: [ecc.bulgaria@kzpb.bg](mailto:ecc.bulgaria@kzpb.bg)  
Web: <http://ecc.kzpb.bg>

We are opened from Monday to Friday from  
9 am to 12.30 pm.  
and  
13 pm to 17 pm

