

Bucharest, Romania

Key information	
Population (city)	1.9 million
Population (greater metropolitan region)	2.6 million
Existing modes of public transport	Bus, metrorail, light-rail
Public transport expansion planned/underway	Metrorail extension
Existing fare media	Contactless smart card, magnetic-stripe ticket, bank card, and mobile ticketing
Existing fare system integration	Ticketing integrated for surface transport (bus, light rail)
Fare system project underway/planned	Integration across all modes of transport in the metropolitan area is planned

Background: Bucharest is the capital city of Romania. It has a population of 1.9 million. The urban area extends beyond the city limits and has a population of 2.1 million. Bucharest is the sixth largest city in the European Union by city limit population. It is the cultural, industrial and financial centre of Romania, accounting for over one-fifth of gross domestic product (GDP) and for one-quarter of industrial production. The metropolitan area has a population of 2.6 million.

Key players: Regia Autonomă de Transport București (RATB) develops and operates the surface transport systems.

The public company Metrorex SA develops and operates the metrorail system.

Romanian Railways/ Căile Ferate Române (CFR) is the national rail operator in Romania.

There are three regulating authorities in Bucharest:

- City Hall, which regulates surface public transport comprising trams, trolleybuses and buses;
- Ministry of Transport, which regulates the metrorail; and
- Romanian Road Authority, which oversees mini buses linking Bucharest and the neighbouring townships.

Existing public transport system: The public transportation network consists of buses (autobuz), trams (tramvai), trolleybuses (troilebuz) and the subway (Metroul).

Work-based travel accounts for 70 per cent of all trips made on public transport.

Buses, trams and trolleybuses operate from 5.00 a.m. to midnight. The subway operates from 5.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m.

Buses and trolleybuses

Buses operate on 121 routes, which together span 1,374 km. A fleet of over 1,000 vehicles is deployed. Night buses operate from 11.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.

Nineteen trolleybus lines supplement the bus network.

Metrorail

The system comprises four lines, which together span 69.25 km and cover 49 stations.

Trains run at a frequency of 4-7 minutes during peak hours and 15-20 minutes during off-peak hours. Ridership is estimated to be 600,000 passengers daily.

Light-rail

The tram system covers the entire city. It comprises 21 lines, which together span 332.2 km, and three converted light-rail lines (which serve the western part of the city).

Trains

Regional, InterRegional and Inter-City train services are provided.

Fare media and system technology: Magnetic-stripe paper tickets and contactless smart cards called Activ are used for fare collection.

The ticketing system for the metrorail (Metrorex) and surface transport (RATB) was integrated in November 2012, but the collaboration ended in April 2014. Kapsch CarrierCom ticketing solution was deployed with 200 point-of-sale terminals across 22 locations. More than 9,000 validators were installed on local buses, trolleybuses and trams.

Tickets

On Metrorex, magnetic-stripe tickets are available for single trip, two trips and 10 trips, as well as for passes (1-day, 1-week and 1-month). The tickets are available at metro stations and RATB kiosks next to major stops. The discounted passes are available at a specified number of stations.

Multiplu card

The Multiplu card (blue and white) is an anonymous card for RATB services. It can be loaded with credit for two to 10 trips, or with a day pass. It cannot be reloaded. The card allows users travelling together to use the same card. The card costs RON1.60.



Smart card

The contactless smart card, Activ, is used for RATB services. It can be loaded with the electronic wallet (up to RON50) as well as the Multiplu card. The card cannot be transferred to other persons, but the electronic wallet can be used to pay the fare for other persons. The card is free when issued for the first time. The replacement cards cost RON4.70.

Card Reloading Centers allow passengers to load only the type of tickets that already exist on their card. Cards with reduced fare can be reloaded only at the Card Issuing and Reloading Centers. There are 23 centres in sector 1; 14 in sector 2; 19 in sector 3; 14 in sector 4; 9 in sector 5; 18 in sector 6; 2 in sector IF.

Cards must be validated at the special orange-coloured devices immediately after boarding the public transportation vehicle by holding the card for 2-3 seconds at a distance of about 1-2 cm from the central area of the validating device, which is marked with a black disk. A successful validation is confirmed by a short audible signal, the ignition of the green LED and the appearance of the message 'Have a nice journey' on the display of the validating device.

When asked by RATB ticket controllers, passengers have to present the travel cards they are using. Passengers travelling without a valid travel card are required to pay RON50 either on the spot or within 48 hours at any RATB center. The offence report can be challenged within 15 days.

In case of theft, loss or damage of the card, passengers can block the card and get a replacement card with the remaining unused credit. The transfer is made on the spot for subscription and within 24 hours for the electronic wallet, Express journeys and the Metrorex limit subscription of 62 journeys. The list of recovered lost cards is made accessible.

Express bus card

Express buses use a card made of cardboard. It can be loaded with two or 10 journey tickets, as well as with monthly passes.

Bank card

In May 2011, Banca Comerciala Romana and VISA launched a contactless credit card called BCR Zambet card with embedded transport application. The card can be used for retail and fare payment on RATB services. Passengers can charge the cards at ATM machines.

Mobile payments

Margento and Telcor Communications provided data-over-voice technology, which allows customers to pay fares using smart phones enabled with near-field communication (NFC) technology. The phone serves as a communication device between the point-of-sale (POS) terminal and the processor.

Currently, this option is available for all Orange, Vodafone, COSMOTE and DIGI networks clients (both monthly subscribers and pre-paid card users). For monthly subscribers, the fare appears in the telephone bill and for pre-paid card users, the fare is deducted from the initial stored value.

Passengers send the letter 'A' through SMS to the number 7456 and receive confirmation of subscription on their mobile phone within 15-30 seconds. The confirmation contains the code that must be presented to the controller as proof of payment. This code is not transferable and is valid only on the mobile phone on which the payment was made. The subscription is valid for the entire day up to midnight. It is not valid for express lines.

Metrorex eliminated the SMS ticketing option in July 2014 when it did not renew its contract with Telcor Communications.

Fares and fare policy: One trip costs RON1.3 for regular public transport, RON1.5 for suburban railway lines, and RON3.5 for Express lines. Monthly subscriptions start at RON30 for one line, RON35 for two lines and RON50 for all street-level public transport. The passes for all urban lines cost RON8 for one day, RON17 for seven days and RON25 for 15 days.

The metro fare is RON5 for two trips and RON20 for 10 trips. The pass costs RON8 for one day, RON25 for one week and RON70 for one month.

Monthly passes with unlimited trips and limited trips (62 trips) are available for students at a 50 per cent discount at special POS all year long. They can be used for one calendar month from the first validation.

Travel is free of cost for children under the age of seven years, war veterans, revolutionists and descendants of the victims of the December 1989 Revolution, persons persecuted for ethnic causes, former political prisoners, handicapped persons holding a bus pass for public transportation, and retired persons with a permanent address in Bucharest.

Key issues: The cancelled contract between Metrorex and RATB means passengers will no longer be able to use their Activ cards to pay for metro trips, or use the RATB–Metrorex joint tickets.

RATB runs at a loss and requires government subsidies to keep it going. Its ticketing contract with Metrorex suffered because of non-payment of dues.

The ticket systems check permit only at the entrance and the exit is open. This implies that usage information can only be collected at the origin of the trip.

Future plans: The Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 highlights the importance of public transport, in particular improved accessibility to mass transport, for the sustainable development of the city. Separately, plans for the development of the metrorail and for the rehabilitation of tram lines are on the anvil.



The Bucharest Metro Global Development and Modernisation Strategy has proposed short-, medium- and long-term expansion plans. The following table lists the new lines and extensions.

Table: Metro extensions and new lines

Extension/New lines	Route	Length (km)	Stations	Expected year of completion
M2 extension	Pipera to Tunari Services and housing area	8.2	9	2020
M3 extension	Păcii station to Western Ring Road	3.8	4	2020
M4 extension Part 1	Parc Bazilescu to Lac Străulești	1.9	2	2016
M4 extension Part 2	Gara de Nord to Gara Progresul	15.0	20	2018
M5 Phase 1	Universitate to Drumul Taberei	6.0	10	2015
M5 Phase 2	Universitate to Pantelimon	11.1	NA	2020
M6	Connection to the Bucharest International Airport	14.0	14	2018
M7	Connection to Voluntari and Bragadiru	25.0	30	2018

Notes: NA – not available

Source: Global Mass Transit Research

Line M4 extension Part 1 (Bazilescu Park-Straulesti section) is being developed at an investment of EUR97.7 million. Ridership is expected to be 3.63 million passengers per year. The 50,000 inhabitants of Bucurestii Noi and Chitila neighbourhoods will be the main beneficiaries of the new line and those living in north-western Bucharest, Mogosoaia, Buftea and Chitila cities, will also benefit from this expansion.

Line M5 Phase 1 will connect the city centre to Drumul Taberei, which is the largest district in Bucharest without a metro connection. A small segment of this line will go to the Brâncuși area, where a depot will be built.

Fare system

In 2011, it was announced that a unified public transport fare system would be provided for Bucharest and the surrounding townships including Chiajna, Pipera and Pantelimon. A joint metropolitan transport authority will operate under the City Hall to manage all public and private operators.

In August 2014, it was announced that the City Hall plans to introduce a common ticketing system for the metropolitan area. RATB will provide the financial and technical support for the new ticketing system. RATB, Metrorex and CFR travellers have agreed to join the system. There will be five types of tickets including a 60-minute ticket, a 1-day pass and a 90-minute ticket. Depending on the number of trips allowed and the duration of validity, the prices of these tickets will vary between RON5 and RON16. The new tickets will not be valid on RATB's express and special tariff lines.

Recent developments: In June 2015, the European Commission approved a financial contribution of EUR83 million from the Cohesion Fund for the expansion of the Bazilescu Park-Straulesti section of Line 4.

In August 2014, it was announced that the City Hall plans to introduce a common ticketing system based on contactless fare media for the metropolitan area.

(1 EUR [Euro] = 1.11 USD; 1 RON [Roamnian New Lei] = 0.25 USD)

Key contacts:

- Corina Cretu, European Commissioner
- Ion Dedu, Executive Director, Municipality of Bucharest
- Gheorghe Udriste, Director General, Metrorex SA
- Ing. Stefan Rotaru, Director, Tehnic si Investitii, RATB
- Igor Zganjer, Executive Manager, BCR Card Division

