

ROMANIA PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET

This is one of the 28 European Union Member States factsheets on health-enhancing physical activity, developed as a part of a joint initiative between the European Commission (EC) and WHO Regional Office for Europe in the context of the implementation of the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors and the European Noncommunicable Diseases Action Plan 2012-2016.

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World Health
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Europe

ROMANIA

PREVALENCE (%) OF ADOLESCENTS REACHING THE WHO
RECOMMENDED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS, 2009/2010

%	ADOLESCENTS		
	11 YEARS	13 YEARS	15 YEARS
MALES	32	28	16
FEMALES	20	13	7

Total population: 19 861 408

Median age: 40.8 years

Life expectancy at birth males: 71.6 years

Life expectancy at birth females: 78.7 years

GDP per capita: €7 100

GDP spent on health: 5.6% (1)



Monitoring and surveillance

Physical activity in adults

Romania uses the cut-off points for adults reaching the recommended physical activity levels, as endorsed in WHO's *Global recommendation for physical activity for health* (2010) (2). No national health monitoring and surveillance system currently exists in Romania, and there is no specific national representative survey to measure physical activity levels.

The WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO) 2010 estimates for Romania (3) show that 80.9% of adults (aged 18+ years) meet the WHO recommended physical activity levels. Males are more active than females (proportions are 73.5% and 66.7%, respectively).

Physical activity in children and adolescents

Romania also uses the cut-off points specified in WHO's *Global recommendation for physical activity for health* (2010) for children and adolescents reaching the recommended physical activity levels for health. Similarly, the country also has no specific national representative survey measuring levels of physical activity among children and adolescents. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study from 2009/2010 (4) for Romania, as Table 1 shows, reports that across all age groups, significantly more boys than girls are active. The proportions of adolescent males (aged 11, 13 and 15 years) meeting the WHO recommended levels of physical activity for health are higher (32%, 28% and 16%, respectively) than the proportions of girls reaching the same physical activity levels (20%, 13% and 7%, respectively, at the same ages).

Table 1. Prevalence (%) of adolescents reaching the WHO recommended physical activity levels, 2009/2010

%	ADOLESCENTS		
	11 YEARS	13 YEARS	15 YEARS
MALES	32	28	16
FEMALES	20	13	7

Source: Currie et al., 2012 (4).

According to the WHO GHO 2010 estimates for Romanian adolescents (defined as aged 11–17 years in relation to WHO data), 26.8% meet the recommended physical activity levels, with 19.3% of boys and 11.9% of girls.

Policy response

Major policy documents adopted by government bodies

The Romanian Federation of Sport for All has adopted a dedicated national Sports for All policy entitled "Sports for All – 3rd Millennium Romania – a different lifestyle" (5). The policy covers work in the field of sports for health,

education and recreation across the whole country, including Sports for All promotion as a social activity, integral to the country's social policies. The core objectives of this Sports for All policy are to: guarantee everyone's right to free access to sporting and recreational activities; foster a positive approach to keeping active; create the right structural environment for physical activity; and make programmes locally responsive and sensitive to local traditions and needs, rather than taking a top-down approach (addressed specifically in the policy in the "Rural sports" section). The policy has several other interesting focal points, such as the "Baby sports" section, which promotes activity in toddlers from as young as possible, and the "Pro natura" section on tourism for all, which encourages the development of active tourism, such as trekking and mountain climbing, in an attempt to synthesize cultural exploration and physical activity.

A policy has been drafted by the Romanian National Institute of Public Health, focusing on "Multilevel interventions for the prevention of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) associated with lifestyle in Romania" (6). This has 2 main components: the first is in the primary care setting, aiming to continue to develop and promote clinical practice guidelines to improve preventive services, for both insured and uninsured patients from target communities and with a special focus on some of the disadvantaged Roma communities. The second involves public health training to strengthen community care for children and adolescents, and increasing capacity-building to provide behaviour change and communication services that promote healthy lifestyles from an early age, across the country.

The National Institute of Public Health has also drafted a policy document entitled "Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the health status of Roma population" (7). This aims to generally increase the access of the Roma community to basic community health services, including healthy lifestyle advice.

Finally, the Romanian Ministry of Education has created the National School Sport Olympiad (*Olimpiada Nationala a Sportului Scolar*), to increase physical activity within schools (8).

Guidelines and goals

Romania currently has no adopted national guidelines or recommendations on physical activity. The country promotes physical activity in line with WHO's *Global recommendation for physical activity for health* (2010) (2). Box 1 describes a media campaign by the National Audiovisual Council of Romania, and Table 2 summarizes the key physical activity initiatives in Romania.

Box 1. "For a healthy lifestyle" campaign (Pentru un stil de viață sănătos)

The National Audiovisual Council of Romania has collaborated with the International Advertising Association to create the "For a Healthy Lifestyle" campaign. This broadcasts advisory messages, such as "For a healthy lifestyle, avoid excess salt, sugar and fat" and "For a healthy lifestyle, exercise for at least 30 minutes every day". This content alternates throughout the day, during various programmes, including at the end of each block of advertising aimed at children.

Table 2. Summary of key physical activity initiatives in Romania

HEALTH	SPORTS	EDUCATION	TRANSPORT	MONITORING	GUIDELINES
Counselling on physical activity as part of primary health care services	Existence of a national Sports for All policy(ies)	Mandatory physical activity in primary and secondary schools	National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school and/or workplace	Physical activity included in the national health monitoring system or separate routine survey	Existence of a national recommendation on physical activity
YES*	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO

* The European programme entitled "Exercise prescription for health" is expected to be implemented by sports medicine physicians and general practitioners in the coming years, to allow health professionals to provide counselling on physical activity.

Additional information on action in key areas

Physical education (PE) in schools

In grades 3 and 4 of primary school (pupils aged 8–10 years), physical activity is mandatory for 3 hours per week. This is split into PE for 2 hours and 1 hour of play and movement. In grades 1 and 2 (pupils aged 6–8 years) physical activity is mandatory for 2 hours per week, with 1 optional hour of play and movement. In secondary schools, it is mandatory to offer 2 hours of PE per week for grades 5, 6 and 7 (pupils aged 10–13 years), and there is also 1 optional hour per week of PE for all grades.

Active breaks in schools are intended to be introduced with schemes such as "Daily refreshing gymnastics" and sports competitions in schools. It is also hoped that active breaks during daily lessons can be introduced in the next 2 years.

Physical activity coordination

In 2014, the Ministry of Health established an Interministerial Working Group for Physical Activity Promotion, involving multi-stakeholder collaboration across a range of sectors, including health, education, sports, transport and environmental sectors. Bucharest is a member of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network (9) and also takes part in the European Mobility Week (10) every year on 16–22 September. This encourages individuals to use greener forms of transport, while also encouraging European local authorities to introduce and promote sustainable transport measures.

Successful approaches

Physical activity promotion in Romania

A collaborative partnership between local authorities has been implemented in all counties in Romania, aiming to increase access to primary medical prevention services (with a focus on healthy eating and physical ability) for children and adolescents across the country. It has been introduced through county-level action plans for nutrition and physical activity (6).

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