

RETURN MISSION: STRENGTHENING FRANCOPHONE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Francophonie Economic Mission to Bucharest (Romania) – June 10th - 11th, 2026

Building on the momentum, fostering sustainable partnerships

Following the Francophonie Economic Mission held in Romania in March 2024, the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) is organizing a return mission to Bucharest on June 10th and 11th, 2026, in partnership with ARICE (Romanian Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade). This mission is part of an effort to build on and deepen economic relations between Romanian companies and businesses from across the Francophone world. It aims to strengthen the exchanges initiated during the first edition and to engage new companies with a view to facilitating the conclusion of partnership agreements. More targeted and resolutely operational, the return mission emphasizes structured projects, clearly identified needs, and high-quality meetings, with the goal of establishing economic cooperation on a path to sustainable success.

Romania: A Strategic Economic Hub in Central Europe

As a member of the European Union, Romania is one of the most dynamic economies in Central and Eastern Europe. With a population of nearly 19 million and direct access to the European Single Market, it offers a highly attractive environment for businesses seeking opportunities. The country's geographical location at the crossroads of Central Europe, the Balkans, and the Black Sea basin, combined with a high level of technological expertise, places it at the center of potential trade with all countries in Eastern Europe.

The OIF's return mission aims to strengthen synergies between Romanian companies and economic actors from Central and Eastern Europe, while fostering partnerships involving companies located throughout the French-speaking world.

What are the two priority areas of the mission?

Healthcare – with a focus on pharmaceuticals and over-the-counter products

The healthcare sector is a key priority for modernization in Romania, and the pharmaceutical market in particular is one of the most dynamic in Central Europe.

- The Romanian pharmaceutical market is estimated to be worth over **6 billion euros** and is experiencing sustained annual growth.
- Healthcare spending accounts for approximately **5 to 6% of GDP**, with a steady increase driven by an aging population and rising demand for specialized care.
- Hospital investments are bolstered by European funds (National Recovery and Resilience Plan – PNRR) and include hospital modernization, infrastructure digitization, and improved production capacity.

The country has a strong pharmaceutical industrial base (generic drug production, contract manufacturing, and packaging), but remains partially dependent on imports of innovative medicines and needs to modernize its production facilities.

Opportunities for French-speaking companies within the scope of this mission therefore include pharmaceutical production and packaging, the manufacture of medicines and OTC products, parapharmacy (dermo-cosmetics, dietary supplements, and minor medical devices), and all capabilities related to the modernization of industrial facilities in the healthcare sector.

It is worth noting that Romania offers access to the European market at very competitive costs, as well as a skilled workforce, creating a favorable environment for establishing joint ventures, setting up regional distribution agreements, or establishing high-quality subcontracting centers.

Digital Technology – with a focus on cybersecurity and data protection

Romania is one of the most dynamic digital hubs in Central Europe.

The digital sector accounts for **7% of the country's GDP** and is growing steadily. The country is home to more than **200,000 digital professionals**, including many engineers specializing in cybersecurity and software development.

The digital ecosystem is robust and competitive, boasting some of the best internet connectivity in Europe, the presence of development centers for international groups, and a strong technological and academic culture.

The digitization of government agencies and businesses, combined with European requirements regarding data protection, is also creating **real opportunities in infrastructure cybersecurity, digital identity management, sensitive data protection, and secure cloud solutions.**

During this mission, French-speaking companies are invited to engage with Romanian digital sector stakeholders to develop joint projects for public institutions or private companies in their respective countries.

The mission will provide an opportunity to engage with institutional and public sector representatives, notably including **ANIS, the Romanian Federation of the Digital Industry**, technology clusters, and representatives from the sector's leading companies.

A mission focused on concrete results

The return mission will prioritize sector-specific sessions (expert panels), targeted business meetings, visits to specific companies, and direct discussions with relevant public and private decision-makers.

The aim is to facilitate the formalization of agreements or letters of intent, with a view to cooperation and joint projects in the targeted sectors.

A post-mission follow-up mechanism will be established, with the support of the OIF Representation for Central and Eastern Europe, to assist companies in implementing the discussions initiated during the mission.

Targeted Companies

The mission is primarily aimed at French-speaking companies active in the healthcare/pharmaceutical or digital/cybersecurity sectors that wish to strengthen their ties with Romanian counterparts and those in Eastern Europe more generally.

Particular attention will be given to innovative SMEs and companies that already have experience working internationally and are capable of engaging in strategic partnerships.

On the Romanian side, pharmaceutical companies, technology startups, digital clusters, as well as institutional representatives and public agencies will be involved.

Participation Costs

The OIF, in collaboration with its partner, will cover the following participation costs for all selected international participants: conference services, meals, expert support for companies, site visits, and local bus transportation.

The OIF will also cover:

- A portion of international travel costs for a limited number of companies from developing countries, selected for the innovative nature and prospects for implementation of their projects.
- Accommodation for selected companies from developing countries, at a rate of one person per company.

All other international participants are responsible for their own international travel and accommodation.

In conclusion ...

Through this return mission, the OIF is contributing to the development of economic cooperation within the French-speaking world. This initiative aims to frame trade within a framework of partnership-building, innovation, and tangible results.

The call for applications from companies interested in the return mission will open in March 2026.