

## THE BRITISH COUNCIL – TRADITION AND CREATIVITY

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The British Council came to Romania as early as 1938. Bucharest was in fact one of the first five capitals where the Council set up an overseas office, along with Athens, Alexandria, Cairo and Lisbon.

Because of the enormous demand for UK information and expertise that followed the opening up of Romania, in 1990 the British Council reopened its Bucharest headquarters in a splendid villa at 14 Calea Dorobantilor, which is now a well-known landmark in the capital and in Romania.

The Council's overriding aim is to help Romania in its goal of integration into Europe. To attain it, we work closely with Romanian governmental and non-governmental institutions in order to support Romania in its aspiration to join the institutions of the European Union as a full partner.

The British Council operations in Romania are focused on the following fields: English Language, Education, Arts and Culture, Governance, Human Rights and Law, Examinations.

Our Libraries and Information Services are the British Council's most visible and popular presence in Romania. The library has grown tremendously in the last ten years. We now have a main British Council library in Bucharest and a network of six branch libraries in the main university towns (Sibiu, Iasi, Cluj, Timisoara, Constanta and Brasov). Our library service in Romania is regarded as one of the busiest and most active in the world with a reputation for quality service.

A variety of services are offered to Library members: loan of books, CD-ROMs, video and audio cassettes, Internet access, consultancy in all educational matters, general information about the UK, bibliographic information, a Teachers' Resource Centre.

Romanians are also familiar with the variety of cultural events organized by the British Council during the years: musical and theatre shows given by prestigious artists, film festivals, book events including

the recent Bucharest International Book Fair, where the UK was the guest of honour, conferences and workshops on English language, literature, translation, a great number of competitions for those who are interested in British culture and traditions.

Exchanges between Romania and the UK are encouraged through various means: scholarships and grants to the UK such as the annual Chevening Scholarships Scheme for postgraduate courses, study visits and attachments in librarianship, publishing, information services, teaching English, textbook writing. We organize seminars and workshops which bring together Romanian and British specialists and experts to discuss questions of common concern and support reforms in education and in many aspects of the government, governance and human rights agenda. In 1998, we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our original opening in Romania. We are currently refurbishing our building to provide a greater range of services for our customers in a beautiful and practical environment.

The reopening in September 2000 of the British Council in the completely renovated and enhanced premises will also bring new services to the public: an English Teaching Centre for those who wish to learn English with experienced teachers who are native speakers and an Internet Café.

The Teaching Centre will offer quality English teaching using the latest methods, material and technology. As well as General English courses for adults at beginner, intermediate and advanced level, there will be specialised courses for Exam Preparation, Business English and Young Learners. Teaching will begin on 25 September, with Registration from 11 September 2000.

We hope that the British Council presence in Romania will continue to create new opportunities to Romanians with a variety of cultural and educational concerns.

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