

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Romania

Introduction

Whilst historically few lawyers in Romania engaged in pro bono work, pro bono legal services are of increasing importance for the legal profession in Romania. There has been a growing commitment by the legal community to providing and promoting wider availability of pro bono legal services, and various organisations and institutions in Romania (including law firms and bar associations, as well as NGOs) continue to work to foster and develop pro bono legal activity. Lawyers and law firms in Romania are also becoming increasingly aware of the value that many existing and prospective clients place on pro bono activities.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel. 	<p>The regulation of the legal profession in Romania is decentralised for both lawyers in private practice (<i>avocat</i>) and lawyers working as in-house counsel (<i>consilier juridic</i>). A practising lawyer must be a member of one of the regional bar associations (for lawyers in private practice) or in-house counsel councils in Romania. The regional bar associations/in-house counsel councils hold most of the regulatory power. At the national level, the National Association of Bars in Romania (<i>Uniunea Nationala A Barourilor din Romania</i> or <i>UNBR</i>), which consists of representatives from each regional bar association, has advisory jurisdiction over issues related to the regulation and discipline of Romanian lawyers in private practice. The equivalent national body for in-house counsel is the Union of In-house Counsel Councils (<i>Uniunea Colegiilor Consilierilor Juridici din Romania</i> or <i>UCCJR</i>).</p>

The laws and rules that regulate the provision of legal services include:

- For lawyers in private practice: Law no. 51 of 7 June 1995 for the organisation and practice of the lawyer's profession¹ and the Statute of the lawyer's profession.²
- For in-house counsel: Law. no. 514 of 28 November 2003 regarding the organisation and practice of the legal advisor's profession³ and the statute of the legal advisor's profession.⁴

In-house counsel in Romania may represent only the company or public body whose employee/appointee they are; they may not represent individuals (other than close relatives, whom they may represent for free).⁵

Qualifying as a lawyer in private practice (*avocat*) in Romania consists of the following four stages:

- completing a qualifying law degree;
- passing a bar exam in order to apply for admission to one of the 41 regional bar associations in Romania as a trainee lawyer;⁶
- completing a two-year- professional training period under the supervision of a permanent lawyer who has been practising for at least six years;⁷ and
- either passing the bar exam for permanent lawyers or the graduation exam of the National Institute for the Training and Improvement of Lawyers (*Institutul National pentru Pregatirea si Perfectionarea Avocatilor*).⁸

The process for qualifying as in-house counsel in Romania is similar, except there is no exam before commencing the two-year professional training

¹ Available in English at <http://www.unbr.ro/law-no-51-from-june-7-1995-for-the-organisation-and-practice-of-the-lawyers-profession/> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

² Available (in Romanian) at http://www.unbr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Statutul_Profesiei_de_Avocat_041013.pdf (last visited on 16 January 2025).

³ Available in English at <http://ccjsb.ro/Legea-514-engleza.aspx> (link not working)

⁴ Available (in Romanian) at <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/54007> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

⁵ Law. no. 514 of 28 November 2003 regarding the organisation and practice of the legal advisor's profession, available in English at <http://ccjsb.ro/Legea-514-engleza.aspx> (link not working) See also the Statute of the legal advisor's profession, available (in Romanian) at <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/54007> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

⁶ Law no. 51 of 7 June 1995 for the organisation and practice of the lawyer's profession, available in English at <http://www.unbr.ro/law-no-51-from-june-7-1995-for-the-organisation-and-practice-of-the-lawyers-profession/> (last visited on 16 January 2025). See also the Statute of the lawyer's profession, available (in Romanian) at http://www.unbr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Statutul_Profesiei_de_Avocat_041013.pdf (last visited on 16 January 2025).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Uniunea Nationala a Barourilor din Romania, Decision No. 75/2024 of the National Association of the Romanian Bars, available at https://www.inppa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Hotarare-Consiliu-75-2024_Regulament-examen-admitere-in-profesia-de-avocat_modificat-2024_Rev2_comunicata.pdf (last visited on 16 January 2025).

	period. ⁹
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.	<p>Romanian legislation contains no specific rules governing the provision of pro bono legal services by Romanian lawyers.</p> <p>However, at the end of 2018, UNBR adopted a professional policy declaration relating to pro bono legal services.¹⁰ The declaration calls upon sole practitioners, law firms, and the regional bar associations to provide pro bono legal services of the same quality as those provided to paying clients, with pro bono work counting towards the formal training requirements for both trainee lawyers and qualified lawyers. The declaration also encourages the promotion and development of pro bono programs, policies, and events, as well as the publication by law firms of the time and resources dedicated to pro bono work. UNBR's Permanent Commission is tasked with monitoring progress towards the goals set out in the declaration.¹¹ No further discussions or developments have led to the formal regulation of pro bono.</p> <p>Furthermore, multinational companies have continued to demand social responsibility policies from outside counsel in recent years. This increasing trend has contributed to the recognition of pro bono legal services as a key component of social responsibility for law firms.</p>
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	Lawyers in Romania do not require a specific licence to provide pro bono legal services. There are no rules or regulations directly governing pro bono practice in Romania.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	Foreign lawyers do not require any additional licence to provide pro bono legal services. There are no rules or regulations directly governing pro bono practice in Romania.

⁹ Law. no. 514 of 28 November 2003 regarding the organisation and practice of the legal advisor's profession, available in English at <http://ccjsb.ro/Legea-514-ingleza.aspx> (link not working). See also the Statute of the legal advisor's profession, available (in Romanian) at <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/54007> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

¹⁰ See <http://www.unbr.ro/hotararea-consiliului-unbr-nr-414-08-12-2018-referitor-la-declaratia-de-politica-profesionala-privind-avocatura-pro-bono/?highlight=%22pro%20bono%22> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

¹¹ Ibid.

<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>Neither the laws for the organisation and practice of the legal profession,¹² nor the law regarding scholars and students' internships¹³ requires practising lawyers or law students to do pro bono work in Romania.</p>
<p>6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?</p>	<p>Aspiring lawyers in Romania are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers.</p>
<p>7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?</p>	<p>There are no aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body, or other body.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any "Continuing Legal Education" (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Romania do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.</p>
Insurance and advertising	
<p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>Romanian lawyers providing pro bono legal services are required to conclude a legal assistance and representation contract with the beneficiary of the service. Provided that the contract is duly signed, the attorney is insured against any alleged professional misconduct towards the pro bono client, with the exception of wilful misconduct or gross negligence in handling the respective case. Standard professional insurance covers any and all legal representation granted by the insurance beneficiary that is formalised through a legal assistance and representation contract.¹⁴</p> <p>Lawyers not formally affiliated with a law firm need to secure their own professional insurance prior to working on a pro bono project. The process for obtaining individual professional insurance is generally accessible through private insurers, and the annual insurance premiums vary depending on several factors, such as (i) the</p>

¹² Law no. 51/1995 for the organisation and practice of the lawyer's profession and Law. no. 514/2003 regarding the organisation and practice of the legal advisor's profession.

¹³ Law no. 258/2007 regarding scholars and students' internship.

¹⁴ For a general description of the standard professional insurance, see for instance: <http://www.euroins.ro/asigurarea-pentru-avocati,244.html> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

	capacity of the lawyer (i.e., trainee or fully qualified lawyer), (ii) the insurance period, and (iii) the value of the insured risk (the minimum insured risk is EUR 3,000 annually for trainee lawyers and EUR 6,000 annually for fully qualified lawyers).
10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	There are no rules or regulations directly governing pro bono practice in Romania. However, there are restrictive advertising rules applicable to lawyers due to which a prohibition of advertising for the purpose of attracting clients and the limitations applicable to professional publicity would presumably apply also to pro bono successes as well.
Pro bono practice and culture	
11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?	<p>An area where pro bono legal services seem to abound is the NGO sector. For example, in 2012, the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (<i>Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile</i>) launched a project called “Pro Bono legal services for NGOs”, which allowed lawyers to commit available time and resources to provide pro bono legal services to different NGOs.¹⁵</p> <p>As NGOs have dominantly concentrated their efforts on the promotion and protection of human rights in Romania, pro bono projects are usually focused on mitigating human rights violations. In addition, an increasing number of Romanian and international law firms have decided in recent years to engage in pro bono activities, mainly by supporting NGOs that promote social development.</p> <p>Major unmet legal needs that present opportunities for pro bono work include access to justice for vulnerable persons, such as low-income individuals, asylum seekers, and refugees. Additionally, there is a significant need for legal support in areas such as domestic violence, family law, employment rights, and discrimination cases, which offer meaningful opportunities for lawyers to contribute through pro bono services.</p>

¹⁵ See <https://www.fdsc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Servicii-juridice-pro-bono.pdf> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Corporate law firms in Bucharest and Romania's other major cities are notable providers of pro bono legal services, as they have been aligning their practice with the pro bono culture of their international partners. Indeed, it has become customary for large Romanian law firms to dedicate part of their resources to pro bono activities.¹⁶</p> <p>There are several international and local NGOs that provide Romanians with free legal assistance. These NGOs tackle a wide variety of issues, such as government corruption and microfinance, discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or HIV positive status, the rights of the Roma minority, prison conditions, and mental health treatment.</p> <p>For example: (i) the NGO "Accept" created the Anti-Discrimination Coalition, which aims to improve access to justice and efficiency of remedies available to persons exposed to discrimination;¹⁷ (ii) the Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre (an institutional project of the Transparency International network in South-Eastern Europe set up in Romania in 2003) is dedicated to the assistance and guidance of victims and witnesses of abuse or corruption in the public system;¹⁸ (iii) the Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania-Helsinki Committee (APADOR CH) is involved in public efforts to improve prison conditions;¹⁹ (iv) the Romanian Association Against AIDS (ARAS) runs various campaigns, including to raise awareness and encourage prevention and is also providing advocacy help for AIDS-affected vulnerable groups;²⁰ and (v) the Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies (Romani CRISS) advocates Roma rights by providing legal assistance in cases of abuse.²¹</p> <p>The concept of a university legal clinic is fairly</p>
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¹⁶ See <http://www.avocatura.com/stire/8563/se-implica-marile-case-de-avocatura-in-programe-de-responsabilitate-sociala-nu-p.html> (last visited on 16 January 2025).

¹⁷ See <https://www.cncd.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Comunicat-presa-lansare-proiect-Coalitia-anti-discriminare.pdf> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

¹⁸ See https://www.transparency.org.ro/arhiva/centru/alac/index_en.html (last visited on 17 January 2025).

¹⁹ See (in English) <https://apador.org/en/monitorizarea-conditiilor-de-detentie/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²⁰ See <https://arasnet.ro/despre-noi/> and the latest annual report (2023) available at <https://arasnet.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Raport-anual-2023-FINAL-PUBLICAT-RO-1.pdf> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²¹ See <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/collection/p/romani-criss/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

	<p>new in the Romanian legal community. However, initiatives bringing together student and lawyer volunteers have started to take shape in recent years. For example, the Law Faculty of the West University in Timisoara launched a pro bono legal clinic in conjunction with local law offices in early 2022.²² Around the same time, the Bucharest office of an international law firm partnered with the Francophone Legal Clinic in Bucharest (founded by the Law Faculties of the Bucharest and Sorbonne Universities).²³</p>
<p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p>	<p>Not yet.</p> <p>AI and technology tools have the potential to greatly enhance legal pro bono work across Europe by utilizing the framework set by the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). This regulation requires transparency, risk assessments, and human oversight for high-risk AI systems, while prohibiting certain "unacceptable risk" uses. AI and innovative legal technologies can make pro bono work more efficient by automating routine tasks like document drafting, intake, and legal research, allowing lawyers to concentrate on more complex client needs. Furthermore, these technologies could increase access to justice by providing scalable, low-cost tools such as multilingual chatbots and rights checkers, which could help empower vulnerable groups to understand and assert their legal rights.</p>

Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>The main sources of pro bono and/or other pro bono resources in Romania are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNBR and the 41 regional bar associations²⁴ • Centre for Legal Resources Foundation (<i>Fundația Centrul pentru Resurse Juridice</i>)²⁵ • The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights (ACTEDO)²⁶ • Civil Society Development Foundation
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²² See <https://www.uvt.ro/blog/lansare-la-uvt-clinica-juridica-pentru-societatea-civila/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²³ See <https://www.clubantreprenor.ro/2021/12/07/dentons-colaboreaza-cu-facultatea-de-drept-din-bucuresti-si-sorbona-in-cadrul-primei-clinici-de-drept-din-romania/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²⁴ See <http://www.unbr.ro/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²⁵ See <http://www.crj.ro/en/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²⁶ See <https://actedo.org/en/the-pro-bono-network/> (link not working).

	<p>(Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile)²⁷</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre for Legal Resources Applied in National, EU, and International Law (Centrul de Resurse Juridice Aplicate in Drept Intern, Comunitar si International)²⁸
15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?	Lawyers (whether local or foreign) may wish to contact, or subscribe for newsletters from, any of the organizations listed above.
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	N/A

Acknowledgements

Name of law firm: Leroy si Asociatii SCA

Name and lawyer: Andreea Toma and Cristian Bumbac

Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.

²⁷ See <https://www.fdsc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Servicii-juridice-pro-bono.pdf> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

²⁸ See <http://www.stiintejuridice.ro/Stiinte-Juridice/consultanta-asistenta-si-reprezentare-pro-bono.html> (last visited on 17 January 2025).