

# Brazil Wants Romania as Its Door to Europe

Contributed by Carolina Pimentel  
Sunday, 17 October 2004

The Brazilian government wants Romania to serve as a port of entry to Europe for Brazilian products. Its sights are set on the port of Constanta, in the country's second most important city, with the same name.

The Brazilian mission, headed by Vice President José Alencar, arrived in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, October 14, on their way from Russia. This is the first visit to Romania by a top Brazilian government official.

On the first day of the visit, Alencar met with President Ion Iliescu, who will be completing his second term of office at the end of 2004.

Constanta, which lies on the Black Sea, has a man-made canal linking the sea to the Danube River, which crosses various European countries.

Using the port and the canal, Brazilian products can reach various places in Europe quickly and less expensively.

The Vice President emphasized that the idea of enlarging trade relations with the Romanians came as a recommendation from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

"For our part, I am authorized by President Lula to demonstrate that there is a desire to increase trade relations," he said.

President Iliescu affirmed that the Romanians are interested in cooperating with Brazil. He added that Alencar's visit is a "gesture indicative of a desire to develop ties between Brazil and Romania."

At the meeting Alencar was awarded the Great Cross Degree of the Romanian National Order of the Star, the highest honor bestowed by the Romanian government.

Brazil's interest is whetted by the fact that Romania should join the European Union in January, 2007.

For the President of the Romanian Senate, Nicolae Vacaroiu, with whom Alencar also met, the visit will give "a new force to our relationship."

Relations between Brazil and Romania have a long history. The first Romanian consul arrived in Brazil in 1880 to win Don Pedro II's support. He wanted the Brazilian Empire to recognize the independence that Romania had achieved three years earlier.

But business is still slow, compared with Brazil's relations with other Eastern European nations, such as Russia.

Between January and September of this year, Brazil exported US\$ 240 million to Romania and purchased only US\$ 4 million in Romanian goods.

Romania is one of the biggest buyers of Brazilian iron, whose major supplier is the Vale do Rio Doce Company.

Other Brazilian exports include soybean residue, chicken, coffee, tobacco, grains, and cereals.

Agência Brasil  
Translator: David Silberstein