Overseas Market Analysis Report

Romania Lubricants Overseas Market Analysis Report

Target Country: **Romania** Product Category: **Lubricants** Report Date: July 1, 2026

Romania Lubricants: Key Takeaways

Romania's lubricant market has an annual consumption of approximately 145,000 metric tons, with a high import dependency of 76%, making it a major net importer in Southeast Europe. In H1 2026, base oil prices remained at mid-to-high levels, while automotive lubricants accounted for about 58% of total consumption. China's direct lubricant exports to Romania are still at an early stage but show notable momentum (Q1 2026 up approx. 22% YoY). Key risks include tightening EU environmental regulations and supply chain restructuring pressures driven by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

- H1 2026 Consumption: **~72,000 mt** (+1.8% YoY)
- Import Dependency: **76%** → flat at high level
- China Lubricant Exports to Romania (Q1 2026): **~1,850 mt** ▲22% YoY
- Key Risk: EU Euro 7 standards advancing ⚠ rising compliance costs

Sources: National Institute of Statistics of Romania (INS), General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), Argus Media; data as of June 2026

Supply-Demand Fundamentals

Romania's lubricant market is structurally characterized by limited domestic production and high import dependency. In 2025, apparent consumption reached approximately 143,000 mt, while domestic output was only about 34,000 mt, with the deficit covered by intra-EU trade. Key consumption sectors are transportation (58%), industrial manufacturing (27%), and agricultural machinery (10%).

Indicator	2024	2025	H1 2026 (Est.)
Domestic Output (10k mt)	3.2	3.4	1.7
Imports (10k mt)	10.8	10.9	5.5
Exports (10k mt)	0.5	0.5	0.25
Apparent Consumption (10k mt)	13.5	14.3	7.2

Sources: INS, Union of the European Lubricants Industry (UEIL); H1 2026 figures are industry estimates, June 2026

China Market Status

China's lubricant market operated steadily in H1 2026, with Group II base oil prices holding at elevated levels. Domestic lubricant output totaled approximately 3.85 million mt (H1), with operating rates around 72%. On the export side, China's lubricant shipments to Southeast Asia and the Middle East grew rapidly. Exports to the EU remain constrained by environmental certification thresholds, while the growth rate to Romania stands out.

- Group II base oil 150N (East China ex-works): **9,850–10,200 CNY/mt** → narrow range at high level
- Domestic Lubricant Operating Rate (Jun 2026): **~72%**
- Total China Lubricant Exports (Q1 2026): **~98,000 mt** ▲14% YoY
- Romania's Share of Total China Lubricant Exports: **~1.9%** (+0.3pp YoY)

Sources: Longzhong Information, Sublime China Information (Zhuochuang), GACC; data as of June 2026

Romania Market Status

Romania's retail lubricant market is dominated by international brands; Castrol, Shell, and Mobil together hold over 55% market share. Import sources are highly concentrated within the EU: Germany accounts for about 31%, Austria about 16%, and Poland about 13%. In H1 2026, import costs edged up due to EUR exchange rate fluctuations. Local brand Petrom (under OMV) holds a certain competitive position in industrial lubricants.

Import Source	2025 Share	H1 2026 Share (Est.)	YoY Change
Germany	31%	30%	-1pp
Austria	16%	17%	+1pp
Poland	13%	14%	+1pp
Hungary	10%	9%	-1pp

Sources: INS, Eurostat; H1 2026 data are industry estimates, June 2026

Segment Product Structure

Romania's lubricant consumption is dominated by automotive lubricants, with passenger car engine oil holding the largest share. Within industrial lubricants, hydraulic and gear oil demand is stable and has grown slightly, driven by infrastructure investment. Grease and metalworking fluids account for a small share but offer high added value. Rising EV penetration is gradually reshaping the automotive oil product mix.

Segment	2025 Consumption (10k mt)	Share	2026 Trend
Automotive Engine Oil	6.8	47.5%	→ stable
Industrial Hydraulic/Gear Oil	3.1	21.7%	▲ slight increase
Automotive Transmission Oil	1.5	10.5%	→ stable
Grease & Metalworking Fluids	1.2	8.4%	▲ slight increase

Sources: UEIL, Romanian Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACAROM); 2026 trends based on Q1 data projections

Core Finished Product Supply & Demand

Passenger car engine oil (5W-30/5W-40) is the most critical finished product in the Romanian market, with annual demand of approximately 42,000 mt, almost entirely met by imports. In H1 2026, the CIF Constanța price for this category held in the range of 2.8–3.2 EUR/liter. Industrial hydraulic oil (ISO VG 46) demand is about 16,000 mt; there is some local production capacity, but premium grades still rely on imports.

- Passenger Car Engine Oil (5W-30) CIF Price: **2.85–3.15 EUR/liter** ▲ +3.5% vs. end-2025
- Industrial Hydraulic Oil ISO VG46 Wholesale: **1.75–2.05 EUR/liter** → stable
- High-End Synthetic Engine Oil Import Share: **~38%** , demand continues to grow
- Distributor Inventory Level: **~45–55 days** , within normal range

Sources: Argus Media Base Oils & Lubricants Report, public quotations from major Romanian distributors; data as of June 2026

Intermediates & Raw Material Value

Base oil accounts for 60–70% of lubricant production cost and is the core link of the value chain. In H1 2026, international Group II base oil prices operated at high levels, with the spread between China ex-works and European CIF prices around 180–250 USD/mt, creating a window for Chinese base oil exports. The additive supply is dominated by four major international players, offering good price stability but limited bargaining room.

Raw Material / Intermediate	China Ex-Works	Romania CIF Est.	Spread
Group II Base Oil 150N	1,350 USD/mt	1,540 USD/mt	~190 USD
Group III Base Oil 4cst	1,580 USD/mt	1,820 USD/mt	~240 USD
Compound Additive Package	3,800 USD/mt	4,050 USD/mt	~250 USD

⚠ **Cost Transmission Alert:** In Q2 2026, international crude oil prices rebounded to the 82–88 USD/bbl range, strengthening base oil production cost support. Q3 European CIF prices are expected to have a further 3–5% upside.

Sources: Longzhong Information (China base oil), Argus Media (European base oil assessments), ICIS; June 2026 data

Trade & Macro Indicators

Romania's macroeconomy is growing moderately, with GDP growth forecast at approximately 2.6% in 2026. The rising vehicle parc continues to support lubricant demand. Sino-Romanian bilateral trade has steadily expanded; China is already Romania's largest trading partner in Asia. As an EU member, Romania enjoys single-market benefits, but tariff barriers remain for non-EU lubricant imports.

- Romania 2026 GDP Growth (Forecast): **2.6%** (World Bank, updated June 2026)
- Vehicle Parc: **~8.7 million units** (end-2025); ~450 vehicles per 1,000 population
- RON/CNY Exchange Rate: **1 RON ≈ 1.56 CNY** (June 2026 average)
- EU MFN Lubricant Import Tariff: **3.7%–4.5%** ; China benefits from MFN rate
- China-Romania Bilateral Trade (2025): **~9.8 billion EUR** , +7.2% YoY

Sources: World Bank, INS, European Commission Trade Database, Ministry of Commerce of China (MOFCOM); data as of June 2026

Risk & Opportunity Window

Romania's lubricant market faces a complex landscape where multiple risks and opportunities intertwine. Geopolitical tensions continue to affect supply chain stability, and tightening EU environmental regulations drive up compliance costs. At the same time, these dynamics create substitution opportunities for high-quality Chinese lubricants and base oils. Localization incentives and deepening China-Romania economic and trade cooperation are worth monitoring.

□ **Geopolitical Risk:** The Russia-Ukraine conflict persists, with the EU continuously tightening sanctions on Russian base oils and lubricants. Traditional Eastern European supply channels (e.g., Lukoil products) face further restrictions, creating supply gaps in the market.

□ **Regulatory Risk:** The EU's Euro 7 emission standards and REACH regulation amendments are progressing. Demand for low-SAPS, low-viscosity, energy-saving lubricants is rising, while conventional formulations face phase-out pressure and higher compliance certification costs.

- **Opportunity 1:** Supply gaps resulting from EU sanctions provide **substitution market space** for Chinese Group II/III base oils and premium finished lubricants.
- **Opportunity 2:** Romania is encouraging local manufacturing investment; foreign-invested lubricant blending plants may qualify for **tax relief policies** .

- **Opportunity 3:** Deeper China-Romania economic cooperation—bilateral trade facilitation measures are being advanced in 2026, and **room for tariff negotiations exists**.

Sources: EU Commission sanctions announcements, Romanian Investment Promotion Agency, Department of European and Asian Affairs of MOFCOM; comprehensive information as of June 2026

Data Sources Summary

National Institute of Statistics of Romania (INS) — Consumption and import source country data; updated June 2026

General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) — China lubricant exports and trade with Romania; Q1 2026 statistics

Longzhong Information — China base oil & lubricant prices, operating rates; June 2026 weekly reports

Sublime China Information (Zhuochuang) — China lubricant market operating data; June 2026 monthly report

Argus Media — International base oil price assessments, European lubricant CIF prices; June 2026 report

World Bank — Romania GDP growth forecast; June 2026 Global Economic Prospects

Eurostat — Intra-EU trade flow data; updated May 2026

Union of the European Lubricants Industry (UEIL) — Segment consumption structure; 2025 annual report & 2026 estimates

ICIS — International additive and base oil prices; June 2026 data

Romanian Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACAROM) — Vehicle parc and automotive lubricant data

Note: Some H1 2026 figures are industry estimates based on Q1 2026 actual data and trend extrapolation; these are marked in the corresponding cards. Data for July 2026 was not yet fully available as of the report's publication date; the most recent available data has been used.