



Italy 2005

## Preventing the Risks of Exclusion of Families with Difficulties

Comment Paper, Romania



on behalf of



European Commission  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities





## 1: Possible relevance of the policy/measure to Romania

In order to assess the relevance of the Italian Law 285/97 for Romanian context is important to compare on the one hand the two general social policy contexts in Italy and Romania and, on the other hand the specific contexts of the target groups of the law (children, adolescents, women and families at risk).

Many *aspects* of the Italian social policy model described in the Discussion Paper are *similar* with the Romanian ones:

- crisis-based policy (*ad-hocracy*)
- lack of coherence
- lack of effectiveness
- no long-term vision
- top-down approach
- budgetary constrains, etc

These common characteristics make Romanian model to be overall very closed to the so-called *south European or latin model of welfare* (Leibfried, 1992).

One of the most significant, aspect of the south-European countries present also in the Discussion Paper is the very low impact of the transfers upon the poverty level (transfers reduce poverty only with 3% for Italy and with 4-5 % for Spain, Portugal or Greece while for E15 average reduction of poverty through transfers is 8%!) In this respect Romanian case is similar.

In terms of specific target groups as Italy (1.1), Romania has a very low Total Fertility Rate (1.2) and a decreasing population children and youth becoming a very precious capital for the future.

There are forms of exclusion in Romania similar with those of Italy but probably more severe in terms of consequences (poverty, child abandonment, children and youth living in foster families, in institutions, difficult access to services in rural areas, etc)

In terms of legislation important steps have been made also in Romania (especially since 2000) regarding poverty alleviation and social inclusion measures. The most important changes are described in Annex 1.



Besides common features there are *important differences* between Romania and Italy in terms of social policy systems:

- Due to the communist model of “social equality” the position of women in society is “better” in Romania in terms of labour market participation (48% of the employees are women) and access to education (more than 53% of the students are females). That makes women important for social policy only as mothers (eventually single mothers) and not as females.
- Romania is more homogeneous geographically (no huge North-South differences as in Italy), and more divided/fragmented having 41 counties plus Bucharest instead of big regions and cities with special statuses. Subsidiarity, [(considered for Italy “strong” at point *b* and “weak” at point *f* ! (pag 2-3 in the Discussion Paper)] is, for sure, more weak in Romania despite the last decentralization processes.
- Social inequality (Gini coefficient) is higher in Romania and poverty is deeper despite the positive aspects of some policy measures such as Minimum Income Guaranteed Law (see the Annex) and National Antipoverty and Social Inclusion Strategy.
- Romania is facing some specific forms of exclusion such as those of a part of Roma/Gypsy ethnic minority. The social exclusion of the Roma population’s specificity resides in the very existence of certain exclusion sources that do not exist as an underlying trend in the Romanian society. Whelan B.J. and Whelan C.T. (1995) argue that people’s segregation occur in the labour market primarily, as a “causal, pre-disposing factor” for social exclusion as it triggers a chain reaction of exclusion. What can be noted about the Roma population in Romania is that there is no single factor generating exclusion but several of them. If we analyse their nature we notice that, with the exception of their presence on the labour market – that could well be determined by certain conditions present in the local community or nationwide – the causal factors have a determination that is preponderantly individual and, to a certain extent cultural (“communautaire” in the sense of a cultural “acqui”) hence, self-exclusion to a certain degree (some worrying statistics in Annex2) Thus, it can be noticed what huge proportions such primary, fundamental exclusion forms take. In practical terms, to speak of poverty/reduced standard of living for people who, officially, do not even exist (because they have no ID papers as such) is pointless; they are completely excluded from the rights invested upon all individuals by the quality of being a citizen: social assistance, social insurance, the right to political participation, employment in a legally occupied job position etc.



## **2: Potential transferability of the policy/measure**

Starting from above-mentioned similarities some of the potentially transferable measures would be:

- Italian experience regarding policy support for teen-agers and young adults living in foster families or in institution before and immediately after the age of 18. Despite some good but isolated local projects, Romania has not a structured form of support for former institutionalized/abandoned children after the age of 17. They live institutions or foster families at 18 and usually do not get a permanent and institutionalized support. (In that respect the second case –study, “Pollicino” Centre, could be interesting).
- The local initiatives in small communities are also interesting for Romania, 90% of the 3000 Romanian city halls and about 45% of the population being rural. In rural areas initiatives as “Mowgly” could be a good example but adapted to the Romanian context and to the Romanian financing availabilities.
- The experience regarding monitoring and evaluation of the local projects is useful for Romania; (of course, that of the 40% of the local authority that fulfilled the tasks)

What cannot be replicated in Romania is the level of costs and the level of human resources involved even considering the proportion between Romania and Italy in terms of population and GDP.

## **3: Important questions about the policy/measure that are being raised and debated in the peer country.**

There are many questions regarding social policy debated in Romania. Some of them could be mentioned as related to the social inclusion of children, youth and families.

- One important issue is related to social indicators.
  - How do we assess social needs, establish priorities based on evidences and better target our policies?
  - Why do we use national or county average indicators instead of local indicators when there are pockets of poverty and exclusion even inside localities?



- How do we use common/national social indicators and local indicators for strategic planning
- How do we monitor and evaluate projects/programs using indicators not “impressions” or qualitative “evaluations” made by implementing authorities.
- Quality assurance for social services:
  - How it is measured, who is establishing criteria, who is in charge with controlling it?
- Human resources.
  - Who is entitled to implement social projects? When there are no specialists/professionals (social workers, sociologists, psychologists, etc) at local level who is going to implement social projects and at what risks?
  - Why social workers do not prefer to employ in the public sector instead of NGOs?
- Another issue is “sustainability”.
  - Are our projects sustainable on long term?
  - How do we include sustainability as an important criterion for getting the financial support?
- Access to services in small/rural/isolated local communities
- Vertical subsidiarity; Due to the inherited centralized system, which functions should perform national, county and local level public institutions both in terms of financing and implementing social policies?
- How do we adapt foreign experience (especially the EU experience) to the national context (culture, living standards, resources available, etc)
- How do we address specific issues as Roma/gypsy social problems?



## Annex1 . The Social Assistance System Reform in Romania – fundamental mechanism for the promotion of social inclusion -

The fundamental legislative package that sets the framework for reforming the social assistance system, in Romania is presented in the following table.

Law	Target Groups	Rights/ benefits predicted
1. The Law no. 705/2001 concerning the <i>Social Assistance National System</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families with juvenile children in care</li> <li>- Persons with deficiencies/disabilities</li> <li>- Other vulnerable groups</li> <li>- Families on the cusp of poverty</li> <li>- The elderly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social labour conscription in cash or in kind</li> <li>- Family allowance for families with children, vis-à-vis the birth, education children maintenance</li> <li>- Social benefit (in cash or in kind) awarded to persons whose earnings are scarce</li> <li>- Special benefits for persons with deficiencies/disabilities</li> <li>- Social assistance services:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) community, awarded at the beneficiary's place of residence/family/ community</li> <li>b) specialised, awarded at the beneficiary's abode and most often in specialised institutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>- social and medical care services</li> </ul>
2. The Law no. 116/2002 concerning the <i>Prevention and Combating of Social Marginalization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youngsters 16-25 y.o. that will be supported by ANOFM with a view to their professional inclusion on the labour market (single youngsters and those with children in maintenance; young families with or without children in maintenance etc.)</li> <li>- 35 (up to and including) y.o. persons who cannot acquire a home without help (youngsters from placement centres; married people – up to and including 35 y.o. –with/without children in maintenance etc.)</li> <li>- persons earning the GMW</li> <li>- children from families earning the GMW that maintain 2 or more school enrolled children – including those who continue their studies in higher education</li> <li>- adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support for young people's integration on the labour market via compensating with up to 75% of a two-year wage package</li> <li>- access to housing: covering entirely the bond paid in advance of the commencement of the tenancy or the rent for a period of maximum 3 years from County Council funds</li> <li>- medical assistance access (emergency and curative) for persons earning the GMW</li> <li>- access to education               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) schooling bursary (sum indexed to inflation awarded by BS-MEC/ BL)</li> <li>b) adult literacy programmes (literacy scholarship)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. The Law no. 416/2001 concerning the <i>Guaranteed Minimum Wage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different types of families, defined in art. 2 and 3 of the Law who can prove (means tested) that their earnings are below the level stipulated by law</li> <li>- The wives of those doing their military duty that earn nothing or earn less than the GMW (art. 23)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring each family earns a GMW through the monthly awarding of sums representing the difference between the family's net earnings and the GMW for the respective type of family</li> <li>- The level of the GMW is monthly indexed via GD</li> <li>- Heating support between November-March</li> <li>- Newly-born babies' allowance awarded to the first four newly-born babies</li> <li>- Other emergency allowances</li> </ul>
4. The Law concerning the <i>single- parent families</i> (adopted in 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children from single-parent families and single parents raising their own children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial support for single-parent families</li> </ul>



## Annex 2

### Factors for social exclusion at the Roma population in România

<i>Causal/pre-disposing factors</i>		<i>the proportion of people excluded</i>
Do not have any ID papers		3,1% of the total Roma population
Have no ID though they are over 14 (and have Birth Certificate)		5,7% of the total number of 14 year olds
Have never gone to school		24,4% of those over the age of 10 (that never go to school)
Not legally married		39,4% of those married
Do not have a job	Have not worked (even occasionally in 1997 and 1998)	52% of over 14 yo, do not go to school any more and have answered the question (28% of those who have not given an answer to the question)
	Have not worked with worker's passport in 1997 or 1998	84% of over 14 yo, do not go to school any more and have answered the question (28% of those who have not given an answer to the question)

Source: the IRQL(JCCV) database