



Czech Republic 2005

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**Field social work  
programmes in  
neighbourhoods  
threatened by  
social exclusion**

Comment Paper, Romania



on behalf of

 European Commission  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities





*Part 1: A brief assessment of the possible relevance of the policy/measure to the peer country ( e.g. what social inclusion problems in the peer country it could potentially solve, the extent to which it fits the policy and the legislative system in the peer country, etc)*

The program is based on the assumptions that could offer a broad understanding of the problem. The diagnosis takes into consideration the assumptions that could be common to other countries from the area as the difficult access to social services, the specificity of those services designed in connection with the needs of Roma communities, how fit is the existing system of social services in order to combat the combination of economic poverty, social inertia, and unhealthy norms and values conducive for social exclusion. Also, it is important to see if the field social work oriented approach ensures fully the social action toward Roma communities and what is the role, if any, of the community based approach. We can find the same attitude of lack of confidence toward authorities which inspire the Czech project to promote the pro-active approach toward Roma based on field social work. In Romania, most of the projects emphasized the need to use social mediators or health mediators from the Roma community in relation with social workers. This approach is often used with the idea to have a group of skilled inhabitants – social mediators - as a resource for community development, able to produce a change within the community.

The aspects mentioned by Mr. Douhomir Minev as part of the Czech concept of integration policy – human rights, national identity and the social/cultural perspective - could be a model for the development of the Romanian policy.

The international documents related to Human Rights have been incorporated in the national legislation. The National Council to Combat Discrimination (Government decision no. 1194/2001), the Law 202/2002 for the promotion of equal chances for women and men, the Law for establishing the National Agency for Roma (Government Decision no. 78/2004), as well the National Strategy for the improvement of Roma situation (Government Decision no.430/2001) represents legislative and institutional developments in the field of human rights.

The process does not stop at the central level but continue with the formulation of County strategies for improvement of Roma situation, a complex process which included the local authorities assisted by Roma representatives, Roma NGO's, social work professionals. Romanian Government and international donors sponsored the formulation of the local strategies.



I would like to mention the special significance attached to the concept of “integration policy concept” in the public debates in Romania. Some professionals and Roma representative or NGO’s are reluctant to the use of the term “integration” perceived as a threat to identity of Roma.

*Part 2: A brief assessment of the potential transferability of the policy / measure that are being raised and debated in the peer country and of the likely conditions for its application;*

When it is to assess the practical transferability of the Czech model it is important to note that active approach used by the project is a valuable asset. For some reasons, those in need do not address normally themselves to the social services – sometimes they do not know what the social services can offer them, the mistrust produced by some failures appeared in the past in providing services. The complex roles assigned to the social workers in the Czech model could be use in a larger scale in the Romanian system of service provision. The problems which the social worker deals with directly represent the exclusion situations associated with the inclusion solutions. This approach is more effective when the social workers identify the types of exclusion factors or the exclusion situations on a continuum from exclusion to vulnerability and to inclusion.

*Part 3: A note of any important questions about the policy/measure that are being raised and debated in the peer country.*

- what is the balance between preventive and restorative services when dealing with Roma exclusion situations ?
- how is the project managing the street children and the trafficked persons, where awareness and responses have been very late, thus reactive rather than proactive?
- What is the best level of implementing the policy toward Roma in the process of decentralisation and how the different roles and responsibilities of public authorities and other stakeholders can be described?
- Are there any tensions identified in the process of service deliver generated by the traditional lifestyle of most of the Roma communities, with other words, how flexible is the service provision system in order to meet the needs?