

## **GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA**



### **Presentation of the National Agency for Roma**

National Agency for Roma (NAR) is a specialized body of central public administration, with legal personality, subordinated to the Government and coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government.

NAR was set up in 2004 through Governmental Ordinance no.78/2004, approved by Law no. 7 / 2005 and is organized and operates according to Governmental Decision no. 1703/2004, amended and supplemented.

In exercising its duties, NAR initiate, participate and promote activities, projects and sectoral programs to improve the situation of Roma people, in cooperation with institutions and nongovernmental organizations.

The main object of activity of NAR is to ensure the complementarities of various public policies for Roma people, initiated at national and international level, to coordinate and monitor their implementation.

Regarding policies, the new vision of the National Agency for Roma is based on two concepts: transparency and integrated programs. A greater transparency of programs and projects will be provided at the local level and in Roma communities. The integrated nature of this new approach will conduct to a more flexible framework for open dialogue of all actors involved in Roma issues, including the sustained participation of civil society.

### **Public policies for the Roma minority in Romania**

Generally all national and European public policies that included the Roma minority, developed during 2001-2007, whether focused (targeting) or integrating (mainstreaming) were developed for long-term (10 years).

The strategies for Roma minority include guidelines in the following areas: education, health, vocational education and employment, housing and infrastructure, accompanied by measures to combat discrimination and promote gender equality. The action plans for

implementing the strategies are developed for the short term (four years) based on government programs. In 2011, the Government of Romania will adopt a new Strategy for Inclusion of Romanian Roma citizens, elaborated by the NAR's experts with the consultations of the civil society and others ministries having specific responsibilities in this field. The main difference in relation to the old Strategy is responsibility and financing –the activities scheduled in the document will be committed and supported by the ministries responsible, concurrently with the use of European financial instruments and, where appropriate, by attracting other funds from other donors or government loan agreements.

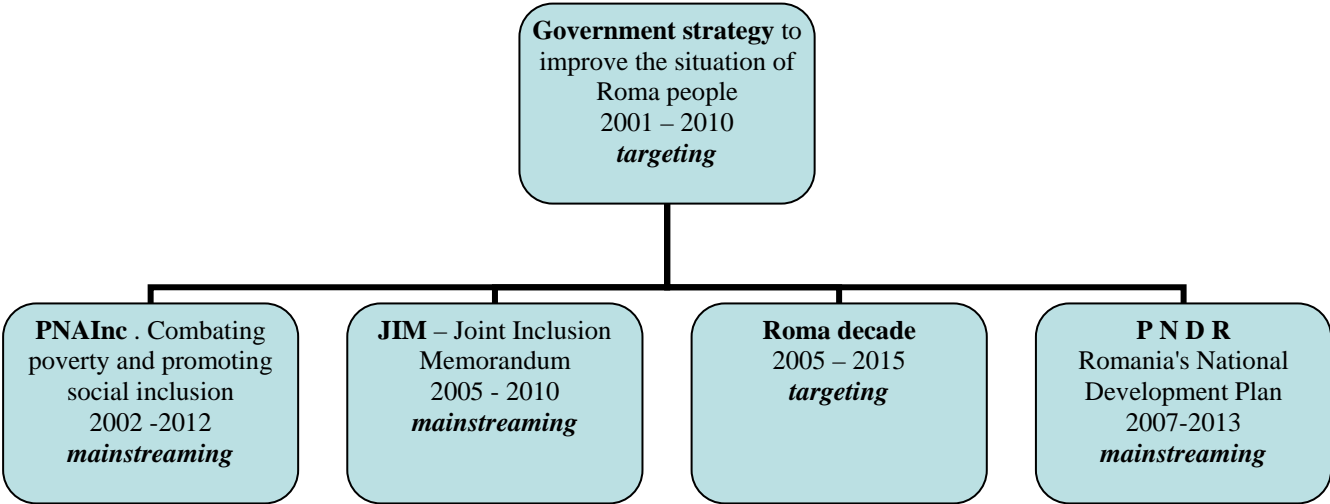


Figure 1. European and national public policies which include Roma people. Approaches

Regarding the public policies implemented by the National Agency for Roma they have to be mentioned:

Within the National Health Programme, the Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with the NGOs, established a system of Roma health mediators, as an interface between providers of medical and social services and the community, in order to improve the health status of the population, especially for persons with low socio-economic status, without medical insurance and those living in rural areas uncovered by family practitioners. In 2010, about 600 Roma sanitary mediators were active, each mediator working for 750 beneficiaries, being focused on mother and child, that mostly live inside disadvantaged communities. Also, the Ministerial Commission on Roma continued its work in order to maintain the cooperation with the National Agency on Roma and other elements of central administration.

In February 2008 the National Agency for Roma signed the Framework Agreement on Housing with the Ministry of Housing in order to implement the inclusive public policy on housing. According to this agreement, in 2010 about 4.5 million lei (about 1.1 million

Euros) have been allocated from the State Budget for a pilot-program of social housing for Roma in Romania. The goal is to build 301 houses in 11 localities. Within Social Inclusion Program (SIP) there were selected 48 local communities with consistent Roma presence, and other 40 will be selected in order to develop and improve their infrastructure (roads, electricity, sewage and drinking water system) (11,7 mil Euros).

As for the anti-discrimination issues, the campaign funded by PHARE program - “Stop Prejudice against Roma”, was implemented between 2007-2008 by General Secretary of Government and NAR. In May 2008 the campaign was awarded with the best ex competition social campaign by Civil Society Gala.

The most recent strategic partnership it is the Protocol of cooperation between the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection and the National Agency for Roma (signed in November 2010), a document that aims to protect the rights of Romanian Roma citizens living in France. The documents provides cooperation at regional level in the two countries in order to find solutions to integrate the Roma people, as well as the set up of mobile units on purpose to assist local governments in developing and accessing European funds. Also, other strategic protocols have been initiated with Italy, Belgium and Ireland.

In 2010, NAR financially supported an innovative cultural event: the first performance in Romani language of a play theatre, the whole cast being Roma professional actors. The aim of the project is to promote and to rise the cultural dialog between the Roma minority and the majority, to promote the ethnical tolerance and the mutual respect, the modernization of attitudes and of mentalities throughout the theatre.

Regarding human resources policy, the Agency is focused on attracting, motivating and coordinating Roma graduates from higher education professionals, both at central and local level.

Connected to the education field, it has to be mentioned the initiative of NAR, who started to implement since the fall of 2010 another ESF project who granted 10 MA scholarships and 30 PhD scholarships especially for Roma students, who will receive also financial support for training and specialization in European institutions.

### **Financial resources allocated to the measures included in the public policies for Roma people**

In order to improve socio-economic situation of the Roma people in Romania, during the period 1999-2010 have been allocated pre and post accession funds, reimbursable and non reimbursable funds (grants), totalling **157.3 million Euros**, as follows:

- 134.4 million Euros grants, out of which:

- 118.1 million Euros EU funds (87.88%)
- 16.3 million Euros from the state budget funds (12.12%).
- 22.9 million euro reimbursable funds from BIRD.

### **Pre-accession funds**

For measures designed to Roma people, during the period 1999 - 2008, were funded 298 projects budgeted with **38.6 million Euros**, out of which 35.1 million Euros from Phare funds and 3.5 million Euro as national contributions.

#### **State Budget**

- 20 projects with a budget of 0,065 million Euros from RAXI fund for measures relating to culture, combating discrimination, racism, training and education;
- 13 projects with a budget of 0.085 million Euros from counterpart fund for infrastructure (rehabilitation of schools and housing);
- 45 projects with a budget of 3.4 million Euros from the Government contribution to the pre-accession funds, for housing and income generating activities.

#### **PHARE grant**

- 220 projects with a budget of 35.1 million Euros from Phare funds in 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004-2006, for vocational education, income generating activities, minor infrastructure, health, identity, civil status and property's documents .

### **Reimbursable funds**

#### **Social Inclusion Programme (SIP)**

The Romanian Government, through the Ministry of Finance, signed on July 4, 2006 the Memorandum for a loan from the BIRD, with a budget of 59 million Euros in order to finance exclusively the project on social inclusion of vulnerable groups and disadvantaged communities.

SIP will be implemented in Romania until 2011 and is targeted for social inclusion of disadvantaged population groups, including Roma people.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Romanian Social Development Fund are implementing SIP through 133 projects with a budget of **22.9 million Euros**, as follows:

- 106 projects with a budget of 15.4 million Euros for the development and infrastructure improvements;
- 27 projects with a budget of 7.5 million Euros for the construction and rehabilitation of kindergartens for children.

## Post-accession funds

### European Social Fund (ESF)

In Romania the European Social Fund is the European fund most often used for the benefit of Roma communities. One of the priorities of Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (POSDRU) is the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, which include the Roma people, but this Operational Programme does not provide a specific financial allocation devoted exclusively to Roma.

According to the data provided by the Management Authority for the Operational Programme Human Resources Development (AMPOSDRU), in Romania currently are implemented **89 projects** dedicated to Roma people funded by the European Social Fund, with a total budget of approximately **250 million Euros**.

The 89 projects were submitted in three priority axes of POSDRU, as follows:

- PA 2 - Linking lifelong learning and labour market: 11 projects;
- PA 5 - Promoting active employment measures: 3 projects;
- PA 6 - Promoting Social Inclusion: 18 projects.

These projects are implemented in partnership by public institutions and private entities in accordance with European legislation. The list of 32 projects funded by POSDRU 2007-2013 dedicated to Roma people is presented in the annex.

The National Agency for Roma is implementing six projects as principal partner funded by the European Social Fund Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013. This **six strategic projects** are implemented at national level, have an implementation period of three years and a total value over **22.2 million Euros**, out of which over EUR 18.6 million contributions from the European Union and 3.6 million Euro national contributions.

Under Priority Axis 2 - Linking lifelong learning and labour market, **preventing and correcting early school leaving** have been contracted **two projects** totalling over **6.4 million Euros**, of which 5.2 million Euros representing EU contribution and 1.2 million Euros representing national contribution. Through these projects are undertaken activities in order to support and to keep pupils in education programs ("after school" programs), to reintegrate persons in schools of those who have early left school ("second chance" programs) and to sensibilise parents concerning the education system, providing integrated guidance and counselling services for people with risk of leaving school early.

Within Priority Axis 6 - **Promoting social inclusion**, **four projects** have been contracted with an amount of **15.8 million Euros**, out of which 12.2 million Euros representing EU contribution and 3.6 million Euros representing national contribution. In these projects

are carried out activities promoting social economy, developing integrated social services, improving access and participation of vulnerable groups to education and to the labour market and promoting equal opportunities between women and men on the labour market.

Strategic projects are implemented in **541 communities** where the number of Roma people is significant, **in partnership with 22** public institutions and representative organizations, out of which 18 are domestic partners and 4 transnational partners from Italy, Spain and Hungary.

The beneficiaries of these six projects are over **37,000 people** belonging to disadvantaged groups, out of which **70% is the percentage of Roma people**, meaning more than **25,000 Roma people**.

When the new president of NAR assumed the management of the NAR, in October 2009, because the implementation of these projects has been delayed, there was a risk of cancelling the contracts and losing the funds. In these conditions, the president applied various measures in order to accelerate implementation of these six projects, and the expenses were increased from **2.27%** to **71,83%** from the total eligible value of the projects, and **85.61%** from EU contribution.

At the initiative of the NAR's president and with the support of the European Commission, during the POSDRU Monitoring Committee meeting of 22 October 2009, has decided to set up a **Technical Working Group to support access of Roma people to the operations financed by European Social Fund through SOPHRD**. In this regard, the National Agency for Roma has prepared and submitted to the Management Authority a draft Regulation of organization and functioning of this working group and its composition, which will be discussed and approved at the next meeting of POSDRU Monitoring Committee in November 2010.

In the same time, the NAR is a partner in the implementation of other four projects, two in education and two in social inclusion, together with the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, municipalities, NGOs and transnational partners from Greece, Portugal and Hungary.

At the initiative of the NAR's president and with the support of the European Commission, during the POSDRU Monitoring Committee meeting of 22 October 2009, has decided to set up a **Technical Working Group to support access of Roma people to the operations financed by European Social Fund through SOPHRD**. In May 2011, the Group transmitted to the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (SOP HRD) its first report referring to its organization and activity.

## **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

In the Regional Operational Program (ROP), haven't been provided special allocation of funds for the Roma people, but they are able to submit projects for housing rehabilitation or to improve social infrastructure.

## **European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**

Roma people can use support from European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development through the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) for projects concerning infrastructure. According to available data regarding the number of approved projects, the financial allocations have been overcome and a reallocation of funds would be appropriate.

### **NAR solutions for a better use of EU funds**

1. Development of a European strategy for solving problems of Roma ethnic citizens.
2. Introduction of a key area of intervention dedicated to Roma people in each Operational Programme, which supports activities for the integration of this vulnerable group.
3. Funding integrated projects including the main areas of social inclusion of Roma people:
  - Jobs
  - Education
  - Housing
  - Health.