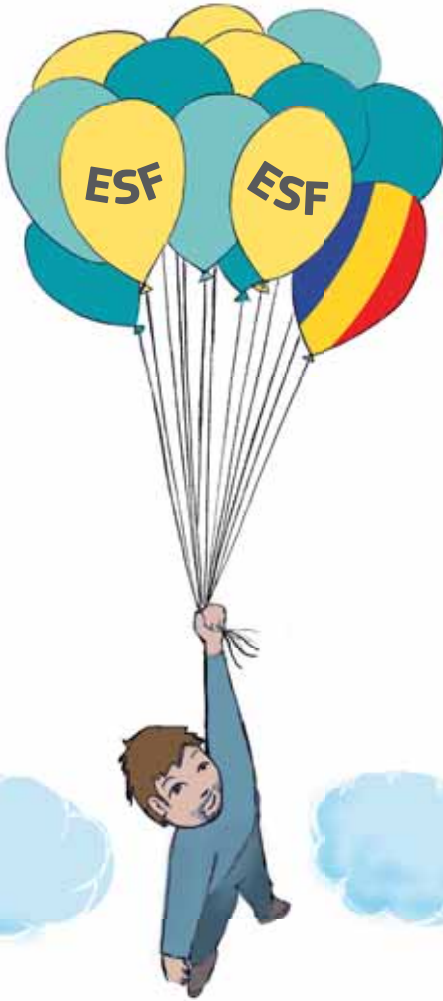




European  
Commission



# ROMANIA

## AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Romania is deploying ESF funds to give its people the jobs and skills they need to benefit from the modernisation of its economy and convergence to EU living standards. Projects are addressing a wide range of activities, from education and training to helping the young, older workers and women gain access to work and careers. And Romania is building a fairer society with focused efforts to help poor, rural populations and its Roma citizens to have the same opportunities for education and jobs as everyone else.

*Social  
Europe*

**ROMANIA**

# INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMANIA

The Romanian economy is forecast to see accelerating economic growth as it exits the crisis, and the government is using this opportunity to boost the 'catch-up' process with the more developed EU economies. In this effort, issues of employment and social inclusion are playing a major role as, to ensure sustainable growth, Romania must help more of its citizens gain access to the labour market, and must equip them with the skills they need to share in the benefits of a growing and modernising economy. Furthermore, jobs and education are at the core of efforts to build a more inclusive society. Romania aims to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social inclusion by 580 000 by 2020. So it is creating more opportunities for the young, women and older people – who find it more difficult to find work – and also for disadvantaged groups, in particular the Roma and rural populations who need substantial support if they are not to miss out on the benefits of growth and convergence towards EU living standards.

These efforts involve using active employment policies to create sustainable job opportunities, such as helping workers from declining industries to train for the jobs that are in demand,

*“Supporting 1.65 million  
Romanians with  
ESF funding”*

and promoting jobs in the developing crafts and tourism sectors in rural areas. In addition, Romania is taking steps to improve the performance of its public administration – which is vital for the effective implementation of its investment programmes for jobs and growth.

## ESF spending in Romania

For 2007-2013, Romania is receiving EUR 3.68 billion in ESF funding. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs and social inclusion to over EUR 4.3 billion. Spending priorities are focused on a wide range of activities to boost employment, offer fairer access to employment, education and training, social inclusion and the quality of public services.



# ROMANIA'S ESF PRIORITIES

## Boosting employment

Romania is using ESF funds to provide a broad range of active employment projects using vocational training and other measures to help more people get work and develop careers. These projects are reaching around 900 000 people a year – many of them young people, women, the long-term unemployed and older workers – and of these, each year, over one-third are finding work. For example, new childcare facilities for 1 000 children in Bucharest allow young parents and women to find work while providing skilled jobs for carers. Likewise, the Ilt County employment agency provided training for 1 500 job-seekers in fields such as health-spa, sport and agro-tourism.

## Better jobs

Other projects are building skills, such as a qualification and training programme for 1 900 railway employees giving them the skills to improve service quality and reliability, to help interoperability with the EU rail system, and to encourage a culture of lifelong learning. And there is help for workers in declining industrial sectors, such as that offered by several companies in southern Romania to retrain 100 recently unemployed energy-sector workers by giving new skills to work in the growing renewable energy sector. Nationwide, Romania has launched an awareness-raising campaign on television and radio accompanied by a travelling road-show to encourage people to take up vocational training opportunities to improve their employability – over 5 million people have been reached so far.

## Promoting inclusion

Many projects are addressing the challenges facing precarious rural populations who have few opportunities, including many Roma groups who also face discrimination. For example, a project which established three regional entrepreneurship centres offered training and guidance to rural inhabitants in order to encourage new businesses. Projects helping the Roma concentrate on the multiple challenges facing this group. The National Roma Agency is running ESF projects to help over 20 000 Roma fight social exclusion and find work. For example, they are providing scholarships for Roma medical students and support for 500 Roma schoolchildren considering a medical career. Other projects are encouraging Roma children to complete school education – for example, by including Roma-specific courses on language and history.

## Better public services

ESF projects are helping public servants improve their skills and competences to achieve a switch from passive functions – such as registration and payments – towards active involvement in employment measures and initiatives to better serve the wider public. Examples include a project that implemented a certified quality management system in eight municipalities in Brasov and Covasna counties. Over 380 staff received training with the aim of improving the services on offer to the public. Likewise, in Caras-Severin county a one-stop shop for a range of public services covering 75 villages was set up to provide a flexible and efficient contact point for local citizens.

*“580 000 fewer people  
at risk of poverty”*

# THE ESF IN ROMANIA: SOME EXAMPLES

## Quality and equality in education

In their fight against discrimination and social exclusion, education is a powerful weapon for the Roma – empowering people to take part in normal working life by giving them the skills and qualifications to do so and ensuring the Roma community has the successful role models it needs for the future. The ‘Quality in education – a step to equality’ project applied an intercultural curriculum in 40 kindergartens covering 800 children. For the youngest Roma children from more traditional communities who only speak Romani, the project offered help to ease the transition into kindergarten and avoid them dropping out later. Pre-school attendance of Roma children is very low and drop-out rates from primary and secondary schools are very high. With ESF help, the Amare Romentza NGO helped change this situation and encourage young Roma to gain a complete education.

## Creating chances for women, changing attitudes to women

Romanian women living in rural, agricultural communities often face limited job opportunities, a situation made worse by traditional attitudes to gender role models and poverty rates three times higher than in urban areas. To improve this situation, the ‘Better Future for Women’ project promoted a more active role for disadvantaged women in their local economies by helping them set up and manage their own businesses and associations – an approach guided by similar projects in Spain. Around 700 potential female entrepreneurs received counselling and training in business, finance, entrepreneurship, project management and community-work skills. The project encouraged them to establish community organisations which can act as catalysts to change attitudes to women and work and help raise living standards and female employment in these rural areas.

### Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Romania?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

Then visit the ESF website:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/romania>

