

EAFRD Workshop

*"Inclusive growth possibilities using EAFRD funds:  
to what extent could Roma people benefit from  
support from the European Agricultural Fund for  
Rural Development (EAFRD) in rural areas"*

**OPENING SPEECH**

12 October 2010 – Bucharest

14:30 – 14:40

Address of Antonis Constantinou  
Director

DG Agriculture and Rural Development  
European Commission

Dear speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this Workshop on behalf of the European Commission, and of DG AGRI in particular.
- The Commission has convened High Level Events in several Member States to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by the EU funds to improve the social and economic situation of Roma and to promote a more efficient use of these funds. This High Level Event in Romania takes place after a first series of events took place in October 2009 and September 2010 in Hungary.
- On 7 April 2010 the Commission has adopted a Communication on the social and economic integration of Roma in Europe – the first ever EU policy document dedicated specifically to Roma. The Communication outlines the complexity and interdependence of the problems faced by Roma in terms of poverty, low educational achievement, labour market barriers, housing segregation, poor health and discrimination. Further to defining the

main challenges ahead, the Communication defined a concrete list of actions to help Member States making their policies for Roma integration more effective.

- The EAFRD is called upon to contribute to the various actions envisaged and we want to do so in close partnership with the Member States and the stakeholders themselves (Roma community).
- The objective of this workshop is to present to and discuss with you to what extent could Roma benefit from support from the EAFRD in rural areas.
- Although rural development policy is not in itself a social policy it makes a vital contribution to the socio-economic development of rural areas, prevention of poverty and elimination of social exclusion in rural areas.
- Like the other Funds, EAFRD operates in respect of the non-discrimination principle. This implies that wherever and whenever there are identified needs or problems which fall within the sphere of the rural development policy, a Member State has to address

them without any discrimination about the ethnic background of the potential beneficiary.

- Our aim is not only to present which support possibilities are offered to you by the rural development legislation, but also to learn what is already done (or can still be done) in the framework of the national rural development programme of Romania.
- In fact I have the pleasure to have with us today, as speaker, Ms Cornelia MIHAI (Head of the Managing Authority of the RDP of Romania).
- I have also the pleasure to welcome Mr Grosu SANDEL (President of the Alliance for Roma Unity) and Mr Nicu Ion STOICA (Executive Director of 'Roma Access'). It is very important to have their views on the role that Roma people can play in this area.
- And last but not least, we are all here also to hear your views, ideas, experience and aspirations.
- We are all aware of the need to be realistic and to address the issue in a practical and down to earth approach with one aim in mind: to get tangible

results as soon as possible and to help making a contribution to the integration and to a better future for Roma, as well as for the other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our societies.

- So, what are the possibilities offered by the legislative framework in the field of rural development to promote integration and inclusive growth in rural areas and how may programming address them?
- This will be further elaborated by Irini Papadimitriou (Head of Unit in DG Agriculture), whom I now call upon to take the floor.
- Ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for your attention.