STANDARD SUMMARY PROJECT FICHE

**Project number:** RO 9803.02

**Title:** Support for Child Protection Reform

**Sub-programme:** strengthen democracy, the rule of law and human rights

**Objectives:** The wider objective of the new Child Protection Reform Project is to assist the Government in the implementation of its comprehensive child care reform strategy, a priority in the context of meeting pre-accession requirements. The reform strategy has, as the starting point, the interest of the child, as stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The immediate objectives are: (a) the development of new, alternative (e.g., non-residential) child welfare services and the reinforcement of the organisational capacity at the county level; (b) the restructuring/rationalisation of residential institutions; (c) the harmonisation of the legal framework (also with regard to international child protection legislation); (d) the reinforcement of the organisational capacity of the central authority for child protection; and (e) development of a national monitoring and evaluation system for child protection including a national awareness campaign.

These objectives are in accordance with the National Programme for Adoption of Acquis. In the years to come, a diversity of child care services should be functioning throughout Romania. Children in difficulty -- be they handicapped, HIV-infected, without home or family, or otherwise disadvantaged -- and their families are expected to have free and full access to these services offered under the auspices of each County Council.

**Description:** Romania and the European Commission, through the Child Protection Reform Project, are jointly addressing the concern that Romania has approaching 100,000 children in institutional care, a heritage of the policies of up to 1990. This is highly centralised and associated with a disregard of the interests and rights of the individual child. With the Emergency Ordinance 26/1997 on the protection of the child in difficulty, the institutional framework for child protection policy was reformed fundamentally. With it, all operational responsibilities regarding the protection of children in difficulty were transferred from various Ministries to the County Councils in a devolved system favouring the individual. The Department of Child Protection (DPC) is responsible for strategy and further reform of child protection.

The Project comprises five sub-projects.

**Sub-project 1, Development of New Alternative Services and the Reinforcement of Organisational Capacity at the Local Level** includes the: (a) introduction at the local level of new regulations, as well as of guidelines and standards for good practice for the various types of child welfare services; (b) implementation and replication of new, alternative services and the facilitation of staff training at county level; and (c) introduction of guidelines for the management/administration of all types of child welfare services.

**Sub-project 2, Restructuring/Rationalisation of Residential Institutions** comprises the: (a) completion of the assessment work of individual residential institutions in view of their needed restructuring/rationalisation; and (b) implementation of restructuring/rationalisation plans for these institutions.

**Sub-project 3, Harmonisation of the Legal Framework** aims to increase the coherence of all Romanian child protection legislation -- including recent reform -- considering also international laws and conventions. It will do so by drafting the guidelines for the review of the legal framework and organising the actual review of the legal framework.

**Sub-project 4, Reinforcement of the DPC’s organisational capacity** will support the organisational structure of the DPC to enable it to fulfil its strategic role in furthering reform, facilitating change and reporting to Government through the: (a) drafting and execution of an organisational plan for the national management and administration of child protection; and (b) drafting and implementation of guidelines for contracting of NGOs for the provision of child welfare services.

**Sub-project 5, Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System** will assist the DPC and County Councils to: (a) develop and implement a system for local and national monitoring and evaluation of the quality of child welfare services/care; (b) review and change of child protection reform, policy, and practice based on evaluation results.

**Institutional framework:** The DPC, a specialised Government body, has the responsibility to initiate and co-ordinate the reform measures and to supervise, monitor, and evaluate child protection reform and practice. The County Councils approve child protection strategies, policies and budgets. Under each County Council are the recently organised Commission for the Protection of the Child, which is responsible for decision making in respect of individual children in need of protection and which accredits NGOs. Also at county level, the Directorate for the Protection of the Rights of the Child prepares and implements county policies and strategies.

Further reform measures have been taken or are foreseen to involve structurally the Civil Society, the NGO-community, in particular, in the development and provision of child protection services through the process of contracting. NGO-representatives have become members of each County’s Commission for the Protection of the Child. On a national level, NGOs have created the Federation of NGOs Active in Child Protection.

A number of Ministries and government agencies, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the State Secretariat for Persons with a Handicap, still retain specific legal and
other responsibilities regarding child care. Therefore, particular attention will be paid to ensuring the necessary degree of harmonisation and co-ordination among the DPC and the other central authorities in the implementation of the reform and of this project. Next to EU/Phare, the child protection reform strategy is actively supported by such organisations as UNICEF, USAID, and the World Bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget (in MECU):</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Institution Building</th>
<th>Total Phare</th>
<th>Romania n Government</th>
<th>Interna tional Donors</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Development of alternative services and reinforcement of organ. capacity at local level</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Restructuring/rationalisation of residential institutions in the interest of the child</td>
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<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37.29</td>
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<td>3. Harmonisation of legal framework (vis-a-vis national and international legislation)</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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<td>4. Reinforcement of organisational capacity of the DPC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.03</td>
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<td>5. Development of a monitoring and evaluation system</td>
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<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>50.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: 1. This budget is subject to confirmation when the results of the ongoing EU/Phare Bridging Programme become available;

2. These sub-projects are part of the national Strategy jointly funded by international donors to a total of 23 MECU; however these Phare supported sub-projects are not individually co-financed.

Implementation arrangements: The Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) will be the Implementing Agency. The DPC will be responsible for the technical implementation of the Project, that is the Implementing Authority. County Councils and NGOs will manage and deliver the actual child welfare services. The DPC, with other involved Government bodies and the County Councils, will provide counterpart resources, as appropriate, for the implementation of this Project. This will be set out in detailed fashion in the specification of the project for contracting.

Implementation schedule:

Equal opportunity: The field of child protection can be characterised by a much higher participation of women than men in all professions, all functions, throughout the country. In the Project, all functions will be scaled and the relevant job descriptions will be prepared. In all reporting, statistics will be given of the men and women working for the Project and how gender issues were dealt with.

Environment, Rates of return, Investment criteria: N/A

Conditionality and sequencing: This Project will build on the extensive results of the Childhood Protection Programme DPC-EU/Phare, which started in August 1994 and terminated in November 1997. The Project will also make use of the results of nation-wide assessments of the needs of children (at local level) and of all available resources and opportunities at county level. These assessments are being realised notably through EU/Phare Programme Bridging TA to Support the Romanian Authorities Implement the Global Child Protection Reform at County Level. The results will be available in August 1998.

The first issue of concern is the long-term financial sustainability of the reform. DPC will utilise resources obtained from the national budget and from foreign and international donors to contribute to the child protection reform strategy. These resources will be applied to the other parts of this strategy, thus reinforcing the impact of the new Child Protection Reform Project. In its role as national co-ordinator of child protection policy and reform, in addition, the DPC will assist the County Councils in channelling the centrally appropriated child protection funds from residential care to alternative services in the interest of the child. This earmarking of funds will also ensure sustainability of reforms by providing for new services and by ensuring a minimum standard of child welfare services throughout the country. Through the passing of the Patrimony and Local Budget Laws, County Councils will have further freedom and additional resources to develop and provide more child care services. All obligations by the Romanian authorities are thus expected to be met in full. Long-term financial sustainability will be evaluated by the DPC.
Another concern is DPC’s capacity to fulfil its role. The DPC will be obliged to consider measures to strengthen its capacity and structure to facilitate short- and medium-term implementation and the longer-term strategic role. A more detailed evaluation will be carried out during the programme that is expected to come up with specific proposals based on DPC’s remit and the situation on the ground.

The third concern is the co-operation of all Ministries involved in child protection. Overall, the Government has to ensure line-Ministries, County Councils, and other involved agencies co-operate to make reforms possible. The project M&A operation will address this issue in detail and recommend courses of action/measures, as necessary.

Implementation of the project is conditional upon meeting satisfactorily the above conditions.