

## Romanian mechanism for promoting social inclusion

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After signing The Common Memorandum concerning the Social Inclusion on June 20 2006, the role of coordinating the policies for social inclusion was taken by The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection. In this respect, it was constituted through Government Decision no. 412/2005 concerning the organization and operation of The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, with subsequent additions and amendments, The Office of Social Inclusion Programmes which has as main attributions supervising and coordinating the implementing of priorities identified in Joint Inclusion Memorandum, as well as collecting the qualitative and quantitative information in the respective area.

For coordinating the strategic process concerning the social inclusion in Romania, the Government Decision no. 385/2006 was adopted for constituting a Director Committee. The Committee includes managers of institutions responsible for social inclusion. It was adopted the Order of Minister no. 436/2006 regarding the monitoring mechanism of priorities identified in social inclusion area. Based on this order, there were established the working method, the main attributions of the Bureau for policies, strategies, social inclusion programmes and were also approved the sector indicators for monitoring which were proposed for use in the progress report concerning the social inclusion.

The coordination mechanism is done in a transversal way through the implication of the participants from the district. In this way, the Compartment for Social Inclusion was installed for each territorial deconcentrated structures subordinated to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. As a consequence, the monitoring and evaluation of social inclusion is done through an informational and managerial system which allows collecting and analyzing information on a local, central and territorial level.

In order to promote the dialog between all the involved partners for implementing policies of social inclusion, on November 30, 2005 was organized the first International Conference for social inclusion. The reunion was done by The Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family together with The European Union. After almost one year from signing The Common Memorandum for Social Inclusion, between May 30-31 2006, took place the second International Conference entitled 'The Way from Good Practice to Social Policies -The Premises of an Inclusive Society'.

For 2006, Romania pledged to continue the efforts concerning the consolidation of institutional capacity for rationalization the policies of social inclusion in national policies and to enable the coordination between ministries and governmental and public institutions and the civil society.

In this way, it was approved the *Government Decision concerning the setting up of a national mechanism for promoting social inclusion in Romania*. This normative act represents the previous step before elaborating The National Strategic Report for Social Protection and Social Inclusion

from September 2006 and its goal is to extend the institutional consultation degree involving more and more the territorial structures.

On the central level:

1. Setting up The National Commission for Social Inclusion, having the duty to establish the national priorities for social inclusion and to monitor the implementation of these priorities.
2. Creating in each central responsible institution of a social inclusion unit. The social inclusion unit collects and analyses the sector social indicators, creating the premises of elaborating a report with the progress made.

On the county level:

1. Setting up in county institutions, commissions for social inclusion, being responsible with the periodical evaluation made upon implementing the social inclusion measures on the local level.
2. Accomplishing the main duties which The Social Inclusion Compartment has, compartment organized at county level, having also to monitor the progress made and to supply extra jobs.

This mechanism will create the premises of a better coordination of elaborating and implementing social inclusion policies and also of making efficient the earmarked fund. The monitoring of social policies impact initiated by the public administration institutions and also the elaboration of studies and analysis which can contribute to more efficient decisions is done by The Social Observer.

In order to make a national system for social welfare more efficient, able to insure equal treatment and opportunities for every citizen, it is considered the setting up of an integrated and uniform system for familial services administration and payment through the informational managerial system. Together with this system will be also set up The National Agency for Social Benefits. By creating the Social Inspection it is wished an adequate implementation of legislation, good social services and also checking the activities of the institutions involved in offering social services.

With a view to improving the process of analysis of the poverty and social exclusion situation, in Romania, the efforts of the year 2007 focused on the establishment of the **Social Observatory**. The main mission of the Social Observatory is to provide information on the poverty and social exclusion situation existing in Romania. The Observatory becomes a barometer of the social needs, a base for the development of the strategic planning in the field of social protection and social inclusion. As it was designed, the Observatory shall submit periodical reports regarding the existing situation and evolution of the poverty and social exclusion, shall submit proposals and recommendations with respect to the manner in which the situation of the vulnerable groups may be improved. The Observatory shall support the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities and the Government *in the drafting and subsequently in the monitoring* of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, and at the same time it shall be able to contribute to the clarification and detailing of the role and activity incumbent on the National Commission for Social Inclu-

sion with respect to the monitoring and implementation of the National Action Plan regarding the Social Inclusion.

*The 2008-2010 stage* will have as core objective *the strengthening of the national mechanism for social inclusion, so as to become a framework for the coordination and drawing up of the social policies, created for the purpose of understanding better the social exclusion situations in order to set sectorial priorities, promote the active inclusion and create an adequate environment of the development of joint social policies in different intervention areas.* This objective shall be achieved by the implementation, as from 2009, of a project financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Programme – Development of the Administrative Capacity.

The accent shall fall on the modernisation of the social inclusion mechanism that will enable the coordination of the national policies with the local and regional ones and on the adoption of the measures proposed for the actual needs of the citizens, observing the proximity principle. The cooperation capacity of different institutions involved in the social inclusion process will be strengthened in order to have a broad perspective, a joint understanding, in order to find joint solutions, to ensure the decentralisation of the responsibilities and efficient distribution of the resources required for the implementation of the local policies.

In order to be efficient and sustainable, the social inclusion policies must be integrated and transversal; they may have the same vision/a joint understanding of the problems; they must promote a general agreement with respect to the observance of the diversity and differences, equality in the exercise of the rights and joint liability undertaking in decision-making.

The local authorities must anticipate the problems of each territory from a structural perspective, taking into account all the factors that may entail vulnerability, risk or social exclusion situations. Any action must be provided with a view to improving the situation and facilitating the social inclusion need related to the identification of the needs, within a preset framework, with clear criteria (for identification and action). This requires an administrative reform (according to the relational government approach, systematic and cooperative approach), the training of the professionals, the development of the cooperation and support networks among the public authorities from different levels of the administration, as well as between the public sector and the private one.

The drafting of the national plans and sectorial strategies having as purpose the promotion of the social inclusion requires a much closer coordination between all the partners. If in the process of drafting the plans a relative mutual agreement is reached, a much higher degree of achievement of the proposed objectives will be obtained. In this respect, the most important actions that may contribute to the improvement of the social inclusion process may be summarised as follows:

- increase inter-institutional cooperation in the field of social inclusion by a clear distribution of the resources and responsibilities;
- promote public debates, at well-established intervals, regarding priority themes related to social inclusion, involving numerous participants from all the activity fields, as well as representatives of the political class;
- community development for the purpose of supporting the local level in the development of the own mechanism for drafting social inclusion plans, in order to be able to assess the actual faced needs, as well as to have an actual assessment and monitoring mechanism;

- the need to rely on data and indicators when assessing the policies and monitoring the social inclusion programmes;
- drafting studies and researches which to enable the analysis of the current situation and drafting recommendations on priority themes in the field of social inclusion, identified at a national level;
- organisation of training sessions for the personnel of the local and national administrations holding responsibilities related to the promotion of social inclusion.