

## **CONSIDERATIONS ON ROMANIA'S GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF ROMANIAN CITIZENS BELONGING TO ROMA MINORITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*THE ACCESSION OF ROMANIA TO EUROPEAN UNION IN 2007, IN AN ALREADY UNSTABLE FRAMEWORK REGARDING THE SOCIAL DOMAIN, BRINGS WITH ITSELF ON THE EUROPEAN SCENE THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF THE ROMANIAN STATE. PRIOR DEMARCHES OF ACCESSION APPEAR NOT TO HAVE FOUND THE FINALITY IN SOLVING THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THIS DISADVANTAGED GROUP OF THE ROMA MINORITY.*

*IN RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS FACED BY ROMA, IN ORDER TO RESPECT AND PROTECT THE MINORITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH EUROPEAN NORMS, AFTER THE ACCESSION TO EU, THE ROMANIA'S GOVERNMENT ADOPTED THE STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE ROMA CONDITION FOR 2001-2010, HAVING YET, AS NEGATIVE POINT, THE LACK OF FUNDING OF THE MEASURES PROPOSED, THE COMMON POINT FOR ALL THE THREE STRATEGIES.*

*THE STRATEGY OF INCLUSION OF ROMANIAN CITIZENS BELONGING TO THE ROMA MINORITY FOR THE PERIOD 2012-2020 WAS CREATED IN THE CONTEXT OF APPROVAL OF A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES BY 2020.*

*THE STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2015-2020 IS NEW, BUT WE CAN OBSERVE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOME MEASURES IS GENERALLY BASED ON THE NATIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATED TO THE VARIOUS NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.*

*THE IMPACT OF THE MEASURES IN THE STRATEGY SEEMS NOT TO GET EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED TO THOSE WHO NEED THEM.*

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**KEYWORDS:** SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY, ROMA MINORITY, INCLUSION, EXCLUSION, DISADVANTAGED GROUP

### **INTRODUCTION**

The accession of Romania to European Union in 2007, in an already unstable framework regarding the social domain, brings with itself on the European scene the specific problems of the Romanian state. In 1993, one of the political criteria for accession to the European Union was respect for and protection of minorities, Roma minority was not as well integrated as the Hungarian minority. In 2002, the European Commission found improvements regarding the Roma community, being adopted the measures of implementation of the Romania's Government Strategy for improving the Roma situation. Despite the fact of having the legal framework for social inclusion policies in Romania, some disadvantaged groups, particularly Roma, are facing difficulties in getting a fair treatment in education, health, employment, social protection, quality of the life; facing with social exclusion and spatial marginalization. Given all the difficulties faced in having a normal life,

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and the existence of the legal measures to achieve the normal life standards, we consider it appropriate to study how social inclusion policies contribute to the actual social inclusion.

## 1. SOCIAL EXCLUSION, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social inclusion policies are addressed to vulnerable groups, the social categories affected by the phenomenon of social exclusion, giving them the means to fully participate in the society they live. The concept of social inclusion is constituted as a whole together with two other concepts, namely: vulnerable group and social exclusion. In order to understand the role of social inclusion, of social inclusion policies, we should follow what combat those policies, by defining of the concept of social exclusion and to whom these policies are addressed to.

The terms of social inclusion and social exclusion have their origins in Europe as a response to the crisis of the welfare state and the fear of social disintegration caused by social and economic crises<sup>2</sup>. It is hard to delimit one single cause for the emergence of social exclusion, due to its social, political, economical implications. René Lenoir is considered to be the author of the social exclusion term, a concept covering a wide range of economic and social problems of "the excluded": persons with mental and physical handicap, disabled elders, abused children, drug addicts, delinquents, single parents. A permanent job, income, insurance, housing, education, citizenship and legal equality, humanity, respect, are some things, in Silver's conception, from which people can be excluded<sup>3</sup>, having partially an answer to the question: exclusion from what?.

The term of social exclusion, in Sen's perspective, covers the phenomena and processes of poverty and deprivation, as well as the social, cultural and political disadvantages, in relation to a wide range of categories of excluded people. Low incomes are a cause for an impoverished living, by not being able to provide food, shelter, not affording to keep the home adequately heated, going on vacations, but poverty should not be seen solely in terms of low incomes. The exclusion from social relations represents another form of social exclusion, which may lead to other privations in the day to day life. The exclusion from being employed and to receive a loan, represents as well a form of exclusion from social relations, leading to economic impoverishment, and deprivations such as lack of food or housing, a stable income represents a means of providing food and shelter. Another form of social exclusion in which is present the inability to interact with others is exclusion from education<sup>4</sup>. The access to education is the primary form of interaction with others, forming abilities and skills that individuals will use in learning, interaction, accumulation of knowledge and information, which will further allow the possibility of obtaining a job, a chance and opportunity of not having an impoverished life, lacking adequate means of livelihood.

Social exclusion has been defined as *the process by which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society they live*<sup>5</sup>. To be politically excluded, as a person, you do not have the opportunity to participate to discussions

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<sup>2</sup> Rajendra Pradhan, "Understanding Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion in the Nepalese Context: Some Preliminary Remarks" paper presented at the workshop *Understanding Social Inclusion and Exclusion: Theories, Methodologies and Data* (Kathmandu, Science Baha and the Social Inclusion Research Fund Secretariat/SNV, 2006), 1

<sup>3</sup> Hilary Silver, *Reconceptualizing social disadvantage: Three paradigms of social exclusion* (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, 1995) 63

<sup>4</sup> Amartya Sen, *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny* (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2000) 3-6

<sup>5</sup> Nabin Rawal, "Social Inclusion and Exclusion: A review", *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Vol.2* (2008): 164, accessed on April 30, 2015, doi: 10.3126/dsaj.v2i0.1362

concerning you, neither you do not have the power regarding the decisional process<sup>6</sup>. In this game of power, only a restricted group has the power to make decisions concerning the excluded groups. These forms of social exclusion, often take the form of violation of human rights, of restriction of access to services guaranteed by the constitution, by laws (eg. the access to education, to health services), affecting the integrity of persons subject to this phenomenon.

The social categories affected by the phenomenon of social exclusion, or at risk of being excluded, are constituted in vulnerable groups. Sickness, disability, poverty, ethnicity represents some of the causes for not being able to meet the needs of daily living. From the category of vulnerable groups, we mention a few examples: former prisoners, street children, ethnic minorities, single parents, women, disabled, homeless etc. In the Romanian national legislation, regarding the prevention and the sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, the disadvantaged category is defined from the point of view of the existing inequalities towards the majority of the citizens, due to identity differences, or due to the behaviors of rejection and marginalization to which are subject. Roma people, as an ethnic minority is considered to be a vulnerable group facing social exclusion<sup>7</sup>. Having now a definition of the social exclusion phenomenon, and of the persons affected by it, constituted in vulnerable groups, we will follow, what is trying to solve or to improve the social inclusion process. Ensuring the full participation in political, cultural, civic and economic life, by respecting and appreciating the differences of individuals, the measures to provide equal opportunities to learn, to work, to get involved in the community and to have a voice on decisions which affect them, represents the process of social inclusion<sup>8</sup>. When these rights and freedoms are infringed, the social exclusion phenomenon appears. The measures of the social inclusion process are intended socially excluded groups, marginalized persons, vulnerable groups, or groups facing multiple forms of deprivation, in order to integrate them to ensure social cohesion or social solidarity. In Romania, the objective of combating social exclusion is the development of an inclusive society, with the insurance of participation to all economic, social, cultural and political aspects of society<sup>9</sup>, rights that are infringed even in nowadays, despite the existence of legislation.

The concept of social protection has emerged as a response to achieve social inclusion, representing public policies mandated and programs to address the risk and vulnerability among poor households. In the 80's social protection was a temporary instrument for supplying the the subsistence support for people in extreme poverty, becoming a political mainstream instrument.

The mid - 2000s brought with it, the widespread advancing of the discourse of social protection, became a political tool for promoting significant improvements in human welfare. Investing in human capital achieved through social protection measures, helps on long-term to strengthen the economic security<sup>10</sup>. Social protection has to provide opportunities for people to invest in themselves to overcome the condition of existence, but the long term

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<sup>6</sup> Pradhan, *Understanding Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion in the Nepalese Context*, 8

<sup>7</sup> *Ordinance no.137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination*, published in the Official Gazette no.166 of March 7, 2014 (republished)

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Labonté et al., *Indicators of Social Exclusion and Inclusion: A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Literature* (Ottawa, ÉL Exchange Working Paper Series, 2011) 24

<sup>9</sup> *Law no.292/2011 Social work law*, published in Official Monitor no.905 from 20 December 2011

<sup>10</sup> Babken Babajanian, *Social Protection and its Contribution to Social Inclusion* (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2013) 4

effects of creating skills to change what is leading to the deprivation and the vulnerability of individuals remaining in doubt<sup>11</sup>.

The objective of social exclusion is very suitable for analyzing the effects of development and transformation of social inclusion interventions. Social exclusion analyzes the multi-dimensional aspects of deprivation and their causes, contributing to the examining of the social protection effects, in the different dimensions of deprivation, as well as its ability to address the wider factors and the conditions that produce and reproduce deprivation, thus the social exclusion framework facilitates the contextualization of the social protection, being exposed the interaction between policies and programs and the existing economic, social and institutional forces that shapes people's welfare.

## **2. THE FRAMEWORK OF EMERGENCE OF ROMANIA'S GOVERNMENT INCLUSION STRATEGIES OF ROMANIAN CITIZENS BELONGING TO ROMA MINORITY**

Adopting of the Strategies for improving the Roma situation and inclusion, in the period 2001-2015, were based on the existing legal framework at European Union level. The economic, social changes from the member states, the economic crisis, have imposed, with the passing of time, establishing of some new measures at the European Union level. Their evolution or involution, represented the base for creating new reglementations concerning fighting poverty and social exclusion. The modifications from the European Union level, were reflected in the juridical national framework, which regulates the adoption of new measures of combating poverty and social exclusion.

The Romania's Government Strategy for improving the Roma situation was based on international documents on the protection and promotion of rights of national minorities. In order to achieve the Strategy goal for the period 2001-2010, namely improving the Roma situation, were set social inclusion measures in ten sectoral areas: Administration and Community Development; Housing; Social security; Health; Economic; Justice and Public Order; Child protection; Education; Culture and Cults; Communication and civic participation<sup>12</sup>. For this Strategy were set time limits for implementing the measures, the responsible institutions for implementation and control of the implementation, the negative aspect of the Strategy being the lack of a budgetary allocations for implementation of these measures, fact noted also by the European Commission in its Regular Report from 2002, visible situation at the first reading of the law of adoption. The positive result of implementing the Strategy measures was was the creation of positions at central, county and local level, where were employed Roma ethnics<sup>13</sup>, where the allocation of funds was possible.

In 2006, it is issued a new decision that comes to amending and supplementing Government Strategy for improving the Roma situation, the ten sectoral domains are transformed into six, having the same content, designating the establishment of budgetary resources from the budget of the institutions responsible for implementation and realization of Strategy measures<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> European University Institute. *The 2010 European Report on Development, Social Protection for Inclusive Development* (San Domenico di Fiesole, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2010) 33

<sup>12</sup> *The judgment no. 430 of 25 April 2001 on the approval of Romania's Government Strategy for improving the Roma situation*, published in the Official Gazette no. 252 of May 16, 2001

<sup>13</sup> *2003 Periodic Report on Romania's progress towards accession*, available at [www.anr.gov.ro/docs/rapoarte/Raport\\_periodic\\_privind\\_progresele\\_Romaniei\\_pe\\_calea\\_aderarii\\_183.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/rapoarte/Raport_periodic_privind_progresele_Romaniei_pe_calea_aderarii_183.pdf), accessed at May 17, 2013

<sup>14</sup> *The judgement no. 522 of 19 April 2006 amending and supplementing Government Decision no. 430/2001 on the approval of Romania's Government Strategy for improving the Roma situation*, published in the Official Gazette no.371 28 April 2006

We might dare to affirm that there has been no measures implementation cost analysis, situation reflected in the absence of a necessary budget for measures implementation, except for the Housing sectoral domain, which has been provided with the amounts required for implementation. We launch thereby the question of, how effective or feasible were these Strategies measures, in the absence of clear budget allocation for implementation. Another situation that justifies our question, is the lack of a methodology for the implementation of measures to achieve the objectives specified in the Plan of measures.

In order to comply with the objectives of The Europe 2020 Strategy, in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, in 2011 was adopted Romania's Government Strategy for inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2012-2020<sup>15</sup>. And in the case of this new strategy for the period 2012-2020, one of the major challenges with regard to the implementation of measures within the Strategy refers to their funding. The adoption of the Strategy before the adoption of the state budget for 2012 led to the inclusion of measures without clearly funding sources, situation repeated also in 2013<sup>16</sup>. The initial database concerning the size of Roma population in Romania, geographic distribution and the problems faced are missing, so is questionable evaluating the effectiveness of measures the Strategy, the existence of this database could also serve to develop effective policies. In the area of Education have continued the affirmative measures of introducing of seats reserved for Roma students in education, activities developed even before the adoption of the Strategy 2012 - 2020. Shrinking budgets of public institutions, has hampered hiring experts for Roma problems, health and school mediators, teachers of language, culture and history Romans, to the detriment of Roma communities. The local actions plans for implementing the Strategy measures are not funded by the responsible institutions, using the same excuse for not having sufficient budget allocation. Within these plans are completed activities that do not request budget, such as counseling and informing. Activities such as professional qualifications, social housing construction or support educational programs find their support more difficult.

The new Romania's Government Strategy adopted for the period 2015-2020, it is at first, but we can observe that the implementation of some measures are generally based on the national budget allocated to the various national institutions<sup>17</sup>. Due to this fact we can assume that it will meet the same difficulties of application of the measures, except where will be identified other funding sources of measures under the strategy.

## CONCLUSIONS

Even if at central level exists institutional structures with specific responsibilities in the application of the Roma minority inclusion policies, the actions of these institutions at local level are rarely concentrated, sectoral interventions targeting the Roma are not placed in a wider local development plan. The lack of data to provide a clear picture of the problems faced by Roma, impedes the revaluation of existing public policies and their readjustment to the situation in the Roma community. Creating public policy on unreliable data, automatically lead to the creation of policies ineffective, unfocused on the objective, the

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<sup>15</sup> *The judgement no. 1221 of 14 December 2011 on the approval of Romania's Government Strategy inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma minority for the period 2012-2020*, published in the Official Gazette no. 6 of January 4, 2012

<sup>16</sup> Florin Moisă et al., *Civil Society Report on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and the Plan of Action for the Decade in Romania in 2012* (Budapest, Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, 2013) 41

<sup>17</sup> *The judgement no. 18 of 14 January 2015 for approval of Romania's Government Strategy inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma minority for the period 2015-2020*, published in the Official Gazette no. 49 of January 21, 2015

evaluation of results being also compromised, not knowing the initial state actually can not achieve the evaluation of policy implementation.

Despite the existence of a legal framework for the the social inclusion policies of Roma, their implementation strategies, bodies responsible for implementing and overseeing the implementation of social policies, however, the needs and problems of Roma communities, seem to remain unchanged.

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