



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**



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Sixth Report submitted by Romania

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the
Framework Convention for the Protection of
National Minorities – received on 18 March 2025**

Sixth Periodic Report submitted by Romania Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Introduction

In accordance with Article 25 paragraph (2) of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), Romania presents its Sixth Periodic Report, regarding the implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned international document.

The Report is based on the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 October 2023 at the 1479th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

The 14 recommendations formulated by the Committee of Ministers in relation to Romania are divided into two categories: immediate action recommendations and other recommendations. The information provided within the present Report include the measures taken by Romanian authorities to implement the above mentioned recommendations as well as any other information considered useful.

We reiterate that updated information regarding the implementation of the FCNM by Romania was also provided in the context of the country visit carried out by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFCNM) experts between 27 June and 1 July 2022, both within the meeting with the Romanian authorities, and also in the exhaustive response sent to the list of questions of ACFCNM regarding the implementation of the Framework Convention by Romania. Also, please note that further updated information regarding the implementation of the FCNM by Romania are available in Romania's Comments in regard to the Advisory Committee 5th Opinion on Romania sent on 24 August 2023.

Taking into account all of these aspects, **the information presented in the Report reflects also the most recent steps** (undertaken in the period following the transmission of Romania's Comments) **carried out by the Romanian authorities with the scope of implementing the recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 October 2023.** Also, the Report includes useful information that reflects the dynamics of the implementation of the respective recommendations.

The Report is structured according to the following content:

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I. General aspects concerning the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Romania

I.1. Overview

On 29 April 1995 Romania was the first State to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities hence assuming the priority objective of preserving the cultural and spiritual heritage, including the linguistic and religious identity of persons belonging to national minorities, in full compliance with the principles and standards established by this multilateral legal instrument.

Romania's commitment to the guarantees promoted by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is reflected in significant legislative and administrative measures adopted in favor of persons belonging to national minorities living in Romania.

Through its legislation and policies with regard to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, Romania has built, over time, a *model* in which respect for cultural diversity is ensured and intercultural dialogue is promoted. The specificity of this model consists in ensuring the conditions for the expression, preservation and development of distinct cultural identities. Thus, the Romanian model of interculturality is identified by two essential features: it fully responds to the need to preserve and affirm ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious identity and ensures the necessary conditions for establishing a space based on tolerance and dialogue that has the vocation of ensuring the full respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

By opting for a *participatory approach* - according to which intercultural policies are the product of co-opting persons belonging to national minorities in the policy making process, Romania has obtained a high-performing national framework for the protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

The *right to self-identification* is a central element of the ongoing dialogue between Romanian authorities and members of national minorities. Romanian authorities have encouraged the exercise of the right to self-identification as provided by Article 3 of the Framework Convention, emphasizing the importance of an informed choice, free from any pressure.

The model ensures the promotion and protection of the cultural, linguistic and religious identity of persons belonging to national minorities, applying an *individual perspective* of guaranteeing the rights of national minorities.

We reiterate, once again in this report, that the Romanian intercultural model does not recognize collective rights to any group defined by a community of origin, culture, language or belief. Romania acknowledges the political and legal tradition of human rights, which is based on individual rights and opposes any form of discrimination, whatever its basis. Therefore, kindly note that any reference made in the Report concerning national minorities shall be construed through the lenses of *individual rights*.

Romania acknowledges the condition of kin-State in relation to all Romanian ethnics from the neighboring countries who affirm their belonging to Romanian spirituality and acts in accordance with international standards in relations with kin-minorities located in the territory of another State.

Bilateral agreements are crucial for upholding the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. On a bilateral level, the role of the Intergovernmental Joint Commissions for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities must be emphasized. The role of Intergovernmental Joint Commissions (Romania-Serbia, Romania-Ukraine, Romania-Germany and Romania-Hungary) is, first of all, to carry out a periodic assessment of the situation of the Romanian minority in the mentioned States, as well as of their kin minorities in Romania. From this perspective, the Intergovernmental Joint Commissions are the optimal dialogue format for identifying practical solutions to specific problems faced by ethnic Romanians in these States.

1.2 Reforming the framework of measures aimed to strengthen the national system for the protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities

Following the 5th Opinion on Romania issued by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFCNM), we note that the members of the Consultative Committee appreciate the Romanian legal framework for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as a solid one.

Nevertheless, Romanian authorities continued the efforts of improving the status of persons belonging to national minorities by reforming the legislation in key areas to ensure the affirmation of their cultural identity.

Ensuring *the right to education in the mother tongue* constitutes a substantial part of the Romanian intercultural model. Regardless of the level at which it is achieved, education has as its primary objective the development of human personality in all its coordinates, directly contributing to the promotion of the cultural heritage of persons belonging to national minorities.

Thus, we will further present the most important legislative amendments brought by the recent reform undertaken in the field of education.

As of 3 September 2023 the Law no. 198/2023 on pre-university education and the Law no. 199/2023 on higher education entered into force. Both laws recognize and guarantee the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, which is one of the guiding principles governing the entire education system.

Law no. 198/2023 on pre-university education provides the regulatory framework for the organization and functioning of the pre-university education system in Romania. The provisions of the previous law regulating the organization of education for persons belonging to national minorities have been fully taken over by the present law, ensuring continuity in guaranteeing a favourable framework for the study of mother tongue and the development of ethnic and cultural identity of persons belonging to national minorities. The articles relating to education for persons belonging to national minorities are contained in Chapter IV, Section 13 of the Law.

Persons belonging to national minorities can enrol in pre-university educational establishments with teaching in national minority languages, where all subjects are studied in their mother tongue, with the exception of Romanian language and literature (art. 60(1)).

Alternatively, pupils belonging to national minorities who attend educational establishments taught in Romanian or in a language other than their mother tongue are provided, on request and in accordance with the law, with the possibility of studying Mother Tongue and Literature, History and Traditions of the respective national minorities and Music Education as part of the common core curriculum (art. 60(5)).

In the framework of the educational reform, we must underline some aspects referring to the organisation of pre-university education taught in national minority languages.

The law provides the right to education in the mother tongue at all levels, types and forms of pre-university education for persons belonging to national minorities, each pupil being entitled to study in his/her mother tongue in the nearest administrative-territorial unit where this is possible (art. 59(1) and art. 6).

To this end, in accordance with Article 1(1), which stipulates the provision of pre-university education in Romania including in the languages of national minorities, the law provides for the establishment of educational units, groups/classes and study groups with teaching in minority languages. Educational units with teaching in national minority languages may be set up by local or county public administration authorities, religious denominations recognised by law, private legal entities and by the Ministry of Education (art. 59(2)).

Depending on local needs, groups, classes or pre-university education units with teaching in national minority languages are organised at the request of parents, guardians, legal representatives or other entities (i.e. local or county public administration authorities, religious denominations recognised by law, private legal entities or the Ministry of Education) (art. 59(3)).

The law provides a number of derogations from the general rules in order to create favourable conditions for the provision educational service for persons belonging to national minorities. Thus, educational establishments with teaching in the language of a national minority with smaller number of pupils are granted legal personality, and educational establishments at lower secondary or high school level with teaching in the languages of national minorities, unique in the municipality, town or commune, operate with legal personality regardless of the number of pupils (art. 16 (8) and (9)).

Upon request, may be set up with a smaller number of pupils than the minimum threshold provided by the law, new study groups (classes) for the education in the mother tongue of a national minority or for the study of the mother tongue of the national minority, the history, religions and traditions of the respective minority, and the musical education of a national minority (article 23 (4) a).

The functioning of groups/classes of pre-school children or pupils for education in the mother tongue of a national minority or groups/ classes for the study of the mother tongue of the national minority and of other subjects specific to the minority may be approved when the number of children/ pupils is below the minimum or above the maximum threshold provided by the law, based on a justified proposal from the board of directors of the educational establishment or from the national minority organisation represented in the Romanian Parliament (article 23 (4) b).

In addition, the organization, reorganization or dissolution of any current groups/classes for education in the mother tongue of a national minority or for the study of the mother tongue of the national minority and of other subjects specific to the minority may be carried out with the approval of the Ministry of Education and the national minority organization represented in the Romanian Parliament (article 23 (4) c).

Pupils who do not have the possibility to study in their mother tongue in their administrative-territorial unit of residence, are provided free transport, accommodation and meals

in the boarding schools serving the pre-university education establishment with teaching in the languages of national minorities (article 59 (5)).

In the educational establishments with teaching in the languages of national minorities, the signage of common areas, the publication of information for pupils and teachers, etc. is done in Romanian and in the language of the respective minority (art. 59 (11)). In addition, the tongue of instruction may also be used in internal communication and in communication with parents/legal representatives of pupils, pre-school and ante-pre-school children (art. 60 (9)). School documents may also be issued in the tongue of instruction, upon request (art. 4 (2)).

The promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is also reflected in the curricular aspects.

Throughout pre-university education, Romanian language and literature for pupils belonging to national minorities attending education in their mother tongue is taught according to curricula and textbooks developed specifically for the minority concerned, by teams of experts having knowledge of the language and culture of the respective minority (art. 60 (2)). However, at the request of the parents/legal representative, of the organisation of the national minority represented in the Romanian Parliament or of the parliamentary group of national minorities, the teaching of Romanian language and literature may be delivered based on the textbooks used in educational establishments with teaching in Romanian (art. 60 (3)).

In pre-university education, the teaching of mother tongue and literature, of the history and traditions of the respective national minorities and the music education is done based on specific syllabi and methodologies drawn up by groups of experts with knowledge of the language and culture of the respective national minority and approved by order of the Ministry of Education (art. 60 (4)).

The law provides that the history and traditions of the national minorities in Romania are reflected in history programmes and textbooks (art. 60 (14)).

Pupils and teachers in State education and in accredited/authorised private and denominational compulsory education benefit from free school textbooks, both for education in Romanian and for education in national minority languages (art. 93(4)). In addition, the Ministry of Education provides school textbooks (in both paper and digital format) specific to the subjects taught in the mother tongue, as well as textbooks developed in the tongue of instruction of national minorities and textbooks translated from Romanian, as the case may be. In case textbooks in the language of a national minority cannot be printed due to the small number of pupils, the law provides the possibility to import textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education (art. 59(10)).

The accessibility of education in favour of people belonging to national minorities is highlighted including in the field of assessment throughout the school year, with a special view regarding National Baccalaureate Examination.

As part of the national written examinations at the end of the 2nd, 4th and 6th grades, which include compulsory tests in language and communication, mathematics and science, students

attending classes taught in national minority languages are also assessed at mother tongue as part of the language and communication test (art. 99(4)).

The national assessment of 8th grade graduates consists of tests at Romanian language and literature, mathematics, and mother tongue for pupils who studied in a language of national minorities. The latter test is optional for pupils who have studied their mother tongue in educational establishments with teaching in Romanian or in a language other than their mother tongue (art. 101(1)).

In the National Baccalaureate Examination, pupils who have studied in their mother tongue during their secondary education, take an oral test to assess their oral communication skills in mother tongue, as well as a written test concerning mother tongue language and literature. Pupils who have studied their mother tongue in educational establishments with teaching in a language other than their mother tongue may take the mother tongue and literature written test as an optional subject (art. 101 (4)).

Admission and graduation examinations in pre-university education may be held in the language in which the respective exam subjects have been studied, as provided by the law (art. 60 (7)).

Another important aspect that we must underline refers to the representation of national minority at central, local/pre-university level.

As far as representation in the management structures is concerned, one of the directors in educational establishments with teaching in national minority languages must be a teacher belonging to the minority concerned, while ensuring compliance with the criteria of professional competence and knowledge of the national minority language (art. 59 (7)). In addition, representatives of the national minorities (teachers, parents, pupils) must be included in the School's Management Board (art. 128 (2) h).

National minorities have the right to representation proportional to the number of classes in the governing bodies of educational establishments, the County Directorates of Pre-university Education/Bucharest Municipality Directorate of Pre-University Education or equivalent institutions, while ensuring compliance with the criteria of professional competence, according to the law (art. 60 (8)).

The law provides for the representation of national minorities in the *National Council for the Financing of Pre-University Education* (art. 139 (8)), the *Commission for the Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Education* (art. 234 (5)), established at the level of educational establishments and for the participation as observer within the Advisory Council for Pre-University Education that will be established at county level (art. 119(8)).

In addition, positions of inspectors for education for persons belonging to national minorities are provided in the establishment plan of Bucharest City Directorate of Pre-University Education and the County Directorates of Pre-University Education of counties where education taught in languages of national minorities is provided. In the counties/Bucharest Municipality

where classes or groups for the study of the national minority language are organized, an additional post of inspector is ensured. The appointment of inspectors for these types of education is made in consultation with the parliamentary group of national minorities (art. 116 (7)).

Other reformatory aspects are visible in the field of pre-university education.

In order to support the learning of Romanian language by pupils in educational establishments with teaching in the language of a national minority, the law provides for the organisation of the National Programme to Support the Learning of the Romanian Language and Literature throughout pre-university education, which is a new policy measure introduced by the Law on pre-university education (art. 83 (16)).

Within the Institute of Education Sciences, an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education whose main tasks are research, development and innovation in education, a research and innovation section for education taught in national minority languages will operate (art. 121 (10)). Similarly, a department made up of specialists in education taught in national minority languages will operate within the National Centre for Curriculum and Assessment, institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education whose main tasks are the coordination of the design and periodic revision of the national curriculum, and the coordination of the national system of assessment and examination in pre-university education ((art. 121 (10)).

The centres for continuous teacher training in the languages of national minority are fully financed from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Education and operate under its subordination (art. 122).

The Law on higher education no. 199/2023 establishes the regulatory framework for the provision of education, research and lifelong learning in higher education and recognises and guarantees the functioning of higher education institutions in Romania.

As a general provision, the law stipulates that the Ministry of Education consults the Council of National Minorities in the process of exercising its powers, among other relevant institutions.

According to the above mentioned Law, the organisation of higher education institutions guarantees the right to education of persons belonging to national minorities.

The Law regulates that higher education for national minorities is provided in: higher education institutions where faculties/study lines/programmes of studies are taught in the mother tongue; multicultural and multilingual higher education institutions, in which case, study lines taught in national minority languages are established; groups, sections or lines with teaching in national minority languages, which may be organised in higher education institutions under the conditions laid down by law (art.24 (1)). In addition, in the higher education for national minorities, education/instruction in mother-tongue is provided for short-term studies, undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies, and postgraduate education (art. 24 (4)). As a support measure, candidates who have attended education taught in the mother tongue of national

minorities can take the entrance exam for higher education studies in their respective mother tongue (art. 24 (8)).

The law provides multicultural and multilingual State higher education institutions with teaching activities in the language of national minorities (art. 24 (6)). These are the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca – with teaching in Romanian, Hungarian and German, the "George Emil Palade" University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of Târgu Mureş – with teaching in Romanian and Hungarian and the University of Arts of Târgu Mureş – with teaching in Romanian and Hungarian (art. 262). Other higher education institutions can acquire the status of multicultural and multilingual higher education institution (art. 24 (7)).

Regarding funding, the basic funding of higher education institutions is calculated based on an increased coefficient for students studying in a national minority language (art. 24 (5)).

In view of stimulating participation in higher education, Baccalaureate graduates belonging to national minorities, alongside other vulnerable candidates, benefit from at least 25 budgeted places for bachelor and master degree programmes, within the framework of the approved enrolment figure (art. 128 (8)). In addition, the law foresees that PhD studies can be organised in a language pertaining to national minorities (art. 64).

The management of higher education institutions is in full compliance with the principle of multiculturalism.

In multilingual and multicultural higher education institutions, at least one of the vice-chancellors is appointed by the chancellor on the proposal of the teaching and research staff of the department of the section or line of study in a national minority tongue, unless the rector comes from the line of study taught in the tongue of the national minority concerned (art. 135(2)).

At the same time, the equitable representation of lines of study/sections with teaching in languages of national minorities must be ensured within each faculty of the respective higher education institutions (Art. 132 (8)).

Also, multiculturalism is a precondition for ensuring the quality of education in the university environment.

With regard to quality assurance, teaching staff or students among national minorities may be members of the Commission for Quality Assessment and Assurance that operates at the level of each higher education institution in Romania (Art. 227(6)).

In the case of external quality evaluation of education, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will consider selecting evaluators among representatives of national minorities. Multicultural universities may be represented on the board by two teachers from different lines of study (which should be teachers of national minority language education) (Art. 255(4)).

With regard to enhancing the efforts of national authorities in addressing disparities in baccalaureate examination results between students receiving instruction in Hungarian and those learning in Romanian-language schools the Ministry of Education has undertaken multiple measures.

As previously reported, the Ministry of Education has taken additional measures to support children and pupils belonging to national minorities in developing adequate communication competences in Romanian language, through the implementation of the Project *Competence and Efficiency in Teaching Romanian to Children and Pupils belonging to National Minorities in Romania*. The project has been implemented in partnership with "Babeş Bolyai" University of Cluj Napoca, the Centre for Continuous Training in Hungarian Language of Oradea and the "Apáczai Csere János" Teacher Training Center of Harghita and aims at reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education, through the design of modern and attractive learning resources and a unified and specific continuous training of teachers.

Within the project, educational resources have been developed in two languages – (Romanian and the mother tongue) for each national minority in Romania. Newly created educational resources can also be accessed through a specialized learning platform. These resources include: methodological guidelines for the development of communication skills in Romanian, as well as for the development of bilingual communication skills (Romanian and mother tongue) that teachers can use as teaching and learning resources, auxiliary learning resources in the language of national minorities, as well as bilingual auxiliary learning resources for different subject, that pupils belonging to national minorities can use to support their learning, and a curriculum upon school's decision on *Communication in Romanian for schools and sections with teaching in Romanian language*, for grades 0, I and II.

In addition, as mentioned in the section on the presentation of the new legal framework in the field of education, the Law no 198/2023 on pre-university education foresees, under Art. 83 (16), the organization of the *National Programme to Support the Learning of the Romanian Language and Literature* for pupils enrolled in educational establishments with teaching in the languages of national minorities, throughout pre-university education. The Program is specifically aiming the pupils whose average results at the *Romanian Language and Literature* test within national assessments, national evaluations and the Baccalaureate are below the national average of classes with teaching in Romanian.

1.3 Further reform concerning the relevant programmatic documents guaranteeing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities

The implementation period of the current “National Strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech” came to an end in December 2023.

Therefore, in July 2023, an Inter-Ministerial Committee for developing the **2024-2027 National Strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech** and its Action Plan started its work.

At the same time, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on monitoring the implementation of the 2021-2023 National Strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech continued its activity. The work of this Committee, including the ongoing and final assessment of the 2021-2023 Strategy's implementation, have been important elements for determining the policies and actions to be included in the next strategic framework.

The drafting process of the new strategy, carried out in close cooperation with the civil society (the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania – The Mosaic Cult, B'nai B'rith Romania and the Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism in Romania participate in the work of the Committee as permanent guests), takes into account the need to adapt the authorities' response to the new realities and challenges, alongside the lessons learned in the implementation process of the current Strategy.

The new Strategy will also continue the implementation of several measures included in the 2021-2023 Strategy, in areas such as education or culture. Another point concerns the need to ensure the synergy and avoid duplications with other national strategies, such as the *Strategy of the Romanian Government on the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority 2022 – 2027*.

The 2024-2027 National Strategy was approved in the first quarter of 2024; its main general objectives are: preventing and combatting antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech; promoting education for inclusion; supporting the knowledge of the Jewish culture; supporting international efforts to combat antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech.

In reference to the **”National Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027”**, the Annual Report on the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy provides an overview related to recent developments.

By the Prime Minister's Decision no. 336/26.05.2022, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 520 of 26 May 2022, was established the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2022-2027 (CIIMES), coordinated by the Secretary of State from the Prime Minister's Chancellery and by the President of the National Agency for Roma.

The implementation of the Strategy is carried out by CIIMES through Thematic Working Groups, which include specialized ministries and central institutions with attributions in the implementation of the measures assumed in the Action Plans.

In the Annual Report on the progress recorded in the implementation of the ”National Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2022-2027” was highlighted the degree to which the specific objectives of the Strategy were achieved for the period under evaluation: May 2022– April 2023.

Referring to Specific Objective 1 – Improving the living conditions of members of vulnerable Roma communities- there were the following developments.

Within the pilot program "Social housing for Roma communities", approved by Government Decision no. 1237/2008 and implemented by the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDLPWA) were built a number of 239 housing units out of the 300 provided for in the program, and during the year 2023, an amount of 48 thousands RON/LEI will be used to carry out the works for another 21 housing units.

The measures adopted within the 6 Action Directions related to specific Objective 1 aim at: ensuring access to social housing, utilities (electricity, water and sewage), local/community infrastructure, the identification of solutions for families in risk areas or at risk of eviction, access to national cadastral programs. These measures are implemented through the ongoing national programs (Multiannual Program for the construction of social and emergency housing, National Local Development Program, National Recovery and Resilience Plan, National Investment Program "Anghel Saligny") (NIP „Anghel Saligny”).

With regard to Specific Objective 2 - Ensuring the access of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity to a quality inclusive education system - national authorities have undertaken various measures.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the implementation of the main measures aimed at ensuring the access of Roma students to school remedial programs, informing and including Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority in national programs in the field of education, hiring and training school mediators coming from Roma communities, monitoring and dropout prevention, school infrastructure, review of curriculum/various school programs, etc.

For most of the proposed measures, the Ministry of Education has planned targets and allocated budget for their achievement in the first year of implementing the Strategy.

Regarding desegregation it was organized at the level of the Ministry of Education, a Ministerial Commission for addressing specific issues. Also, the Desegregation Module of the Ministry of Education's IT system is to be tested in a number of 42 schools, thus being extended to the whole country. This fact will allow the Ministry of Education, starting with the school year of 2023-2024, to have a complete picture of segregated schools in the country, as well as to identify specific solutions for each individual case with a view to desegregation.

Considering Specific Objective 3 - Increasing the employment rate of Roma in accordance with market requirements with the scope of ensuring their professional development- national authorities had taken specific steps.

The institutions responsible for the implementation of Objective 3 are the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, through the National Employment Agency, the National Council on Combating Discrimination, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism.

The measures under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, that are applied through National Employment Agency aim at: anti-discrimination campaigns among employers, the initiation, promotion and implementation of an integrated package of personalized services for people inactive on the labor market, the development of active employment programs provided by the Public Employment Service etc. The Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity planned targets and allocated a budget for the achievement of the targets in the first year of implementation of the Strategy.

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism is part of the Strategy implementation and monitoring process, ensuring within its areas of competence both non-discriminatory treatment

and the introduction of indices in aid schemes to support potential beneficiaries and implicitly individuals included in the categories that fall under the Strategy.

In relation to Specific objective 4 - Improving the health status of members of vulnerable Roma communities, public authorities have undertaken the steps indicated in the following.

The institution responsible for achieving Objective no. 4 is the Ministry of Health and the proposed measures aimed at: increasing the access of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority to primary healthcare services, increasing the teams made up of community medical assistants and health mediators, encouraging health mediators, where possible, to follow post-secondary nursing schools to be able to provide medical services in their communities.

Persons belonging to vulnerable Roma communities have been included in the national information and counseling campaigns carried out at the national level.

The Ministry of Health implemented, in the period 2018-2023, a project regarding the piloting of integrated community services in 139 rural and small urban communities with above-average and severe marginalization by increasing the access to medical-socio-educational services of people belonging to vulnerable groups. 125 territorial administrative units out of a total of 139 applied to this project.

National authorities have undertaken steps in order to include vulnerable Roma communities in: national reproductive health information and counseling campaigns, preventing and combating domestic violence and human trafficking campaigns, including medical caravans and health education campaigns to combat SARS-COV-2/Covid -19.

The National Agency for Roma organized an inter-institutional meeting between specialized public authorities in order to discuss interdisciplinary measures with the professionals with responsibilities in monitoring the implementation of Roma inclusion measures at the county level and support them in communicating more effectively.

In regard to achieving specific objective 5 - Supporting research, conservation and promotion of Roma cultural heritage and Roma cultural identity- the following institutions are responsible : the Ministry of Culture, the National Center for Romani Culture Kher Culture (NCRC-KC), the Department for Interethnic Relations and the National Agency for Roma.

The proposed have the scope to: promote the contribution of Roma to the development of Romanian society through cultural productions; the promotion of modern cultural productions with Roma themes; community actions to valorize history, traditions, language and Roma culture in multicultural communities, promoting the image and creations of Roma artists, writers and intellectuals at national and European level etc..

The Ministry of Culture, with the financial support of EEA Grants 2014 – 2021, launched a funding call dedicated to supporting cultural initiatives about the Roma minority, in which 10 projects were selected for funding. It also initiated a series of measures and actions that are an integral part of the National Strategy for Roma, awarded through the National Cultural Fund Administration (NCFA) program grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) belonging to the Roma minority or for projects related to them.

NCRC-KC carried out a series of projects that contributed to the achievement of some of the objectives included in the National Strategy, as well as to the implementation of the measures in which it is involved. Also, the Department for Interethnic Relations has realized and financed a series of Roma cultural production projects, documentary projects and festivals.

Regarding the measures concerning the establishment of the State Roma Theatre, the establishment of the Museum of Roma Culture, the establishment of the Roma Slavery Monument, working meetings were held in order to identify the most suitable solutions. Within the reporting framework, the National Roma Agency created the Concept of the Museum of Roma History and Culture, which will form the basis of the feasibility study for this project. For the purpose of establishing these cultural institutions will be set up a working group made up of Roma and non-Roma specialists in the field of Roma history and culture. The Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations initiated the project for the placement of the Roma Slavery Monument.

Specific objective 6 - Combating discrimination, anti-Roma speech and attitudes that generate hate speech or hate crimes is implemented by the responsible institutions as follows: the Department for Interethnic Relations, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Council on Combating Discrimination and the National Agency for Roma.

The Department for Interethnic Relations undertakes measures to combat hate speech and anti-Roma attitudes that generate hate speech, racial or hate crimes.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs achieved and ran information and awareness campaigns and organized training courses for law enforcement agents, prosecutors and judges on the topic of understanding anti-Roma phenomena and attitudes. Detailed information on the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs can be found under Recommendation 3.

The National Council on Combating Discrimination carried out a series of concrete and measurable activities, and these mainly concerned the solving of petitions.

The National Agency for Roma upheld activities related to *Specific Objective 6*. The course developed by the National Agency for Roma in 2021, "Elements for strengthening the social knowledge of the Roma minority" was to be included in the offer of optional courses of the Police Academy. In this sense, a Protocol was concluded at the beginning of 2023. Also, the National Roma Agency concluded a partnership with the Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest, managing to deliver to students and teaching staff the educational package mentioned above. The final goal of these partnerships is for specialized educational units to include social knowledge on the Roma minority in the structure of its optional courses.

1.4. Guaranteeing property rights to persons belonging to national minorities and religious cults

As a member state of the European Union and Council of Europe, Romania has made firm commitments in the field of restitution of properties taken over abusively from persons belonging to national minorities during the communist period. In order to achieve this objective, the national legislation was properly consolidated and the relevant case law has gained coherence and contributed to establishing legal norms by clarifying their content.

The Romanian legislature and national courts, as also reflected in previous reports concerning FCNM and ECRML, have a *human rights-based approach* when undertaking steps to ensuring the restitution of property, particularly by taking into account the rights of the persons belonging to national minorities.

As an element of novelty, we would like to note that on 13 November 2023, the High Court of Cassation and Justice issued a judgment aiming at unifying the judicial practice in the matter of restituting immovable property that belonged to religious cults.¹

In the aforementioned judgment, the High Court ruled that the phrase "real estate that belonged to religious cults" refers exclusively to the patrimony of the component units of religious cults, and not to the patrimony of some distinct settlements, registered in the land register as tabular owners.

The general situation of retrocession requests submitted by national minorities (Government Emergency Ordinance no. 83/1999) at 15 December 2023

Entities belonging to national minorities submitted 2.155 applications, of which:

- Entities belonging to the Hungarian minority: 36;
- Entities belonging to the German minority: 136;
- Entities belonging to the Bulgarian minority: 17;
- Entities belonging to the Greek minority: 56;
- Entities belonging to the Jewish minority: 1856;
- Union of Poles: 2;
- Entities belonging to the Italian minority: 3;
- Others (Serbian minority, religious cults, natural persons, Melchizedek Foundation): 49.

Out of the total of 2.155 requests submitted by the entities belonging to national minorities, 1.853 requests were resolved, and 302 requests are pending. (**Annex no. 1**)

*Observation:

The Caritatea Foundation (foundation specially created by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania and the World Jewish Organization for the Restitution of Assets with the aim of recovering the assets that belonged to the Jewish minority in Romania) submitted to the Commission 3.767 requests for retrocession (the total of requests for retrocession submitted under Government Emergency Ordinance no. 94/2000 and pursuant to Government Emergency Ordinance no. 83/1999). Of these, 3.119 were resolved, and 648 are pending.

It is important to note that 1.692 of the retrocession requests made by the Caritatea Foundation pursuant to Government Emergency Ordinance no. 83/1999 concerned/concerns the same buildings as those requested under Government Emergency Ordinance no. 94/2000, which makes the number of applications almost double the number of properties claimed.

The general situation of retrocession requests submitted by religious cults (Government Emergency Ordinance no. 94/2000) at 15 December 2023

Religious cults submitted 16.430 requests, of which:

- Orthodox Church (includes the Romanian Orthodox Church Fund of Bucovina): 3659;
- Roman Catholic Church: 1252;
- Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek-Catholic: 6980;
- Reformed Church: 1191;

¹ Decision no. 21/2023 regarding the admission of the appeal in the interest of the law concerning the interpretation and uniform application of the provisions of art. 1 paragraph (1) and art. 4 paragraphs (2)-(5) of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 94/2000 regarding the restitution of real estate belonging to religious cults in Romania, republished, with subsequent amendments and additions and art. 32-34 of Decree-law no. 115/1938 for the unification of provisions regarding land records, with subsequent amendments. Decision no. 21/2023 of the High Court of Cassation and Justice was published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 1160 of 21.12.2023.

- The Mosaic Cult*: 1911;
- Unitarian Church: 87;
- Evangelical Church C.A.: 1120;
- S.P. Evangelical Lutheran Church: 29;
- Other religions: 201.

Out of the total of 16.430 requests submitted by religious cults, 13.673 requests were resolved, and 2.757 requests are pending. (**Annex no. 2**)

1.5 Promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the media

The right to identity of persons belonging to national minorities is also expressed through the illustration, in the media programs, of elements like language, culture and tradition. The role of the mass media to serve as social cohesion factor is also highlighted through the broadcasting of programs that allow communication and exchange of information in the languages of national minorities.

The presence of people belonging to national minorities in the mass media is ensured through formulating points of view on social issues, broadcasting of programs that refer to persons belonging to national minorities, encouraging journalists to pursue training courses in the field of human rights concerning the subject of the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Specifically, Romanian Television Society (TVR) has adopted a series of measures to implement the recommendations formulated by the Advisory Committee in the 5th Opinion regarding Romania, as follows:

- The Section *Alte minorități* (*Other minorities*), performed in 2023 on a weekly basis on TVR channels (TVRI, TVR2, TVR Cultural, TVR Info), in all its productions ("Conviețuiri", "Europolis", "Opre Roma", "Kalimera", "Mozaika", "La Porțile Orientului", "Cronica Ucraineană", "Etnikult"), a number of 338 minutes/week, to which was added the production "Din muzica popoarelor", a weekly show, in two editions of 48 minutes each, with the opening of TVR Folclor, a new TVR channel;
- The journalists of this Section participated in two training programs, organized by the Department for Interethnic Relations, in the field of respecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of human rights.
- In 2024 was concluded the collaboration partnership with the University of Bucharest, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (Department of Hungarology, Jewish Studies and Rromani) in order to create a special column in the Romani language, broadcast twice a month, within the show Opre Rroma;
- In the future is envisaged the collaboration with young journalism students or people interested in this field, ethnically belonging to any of the 20 national minorities, native speakers of the respective minority tongue;
- The *Alte Minorități* (*Other minorities*), Section will remain active in the online environment, having a streaming service for all its productions, which allows the Facebook user to watch, either in real time or at any other time of the day, the productions of the *Alte Minorități* Section;
- The editorial team has chosen to be proactive in supporting the culture of national minorities in Romania, which has implicitly led to a greater number of minutes of broadcasting (visibility) for each national minority. For example, more and more news, reports or special editions have

been introduced in one of the mother tongues of the national minorities, with Romanian subtitles (e.g. Slovak Song Festival, Nădlac 2023 - 96 minutes, broadcast 17 January 2024);

-The proposal to find training courses at European level for journalists in the field of human rights.

TVR CRAIOVA² has established, as of 15 May 2023, a Department for Minorities ("Direcție pentru minorități").

TVR Craiova responded to all invitations from the Bulgarian³, Czech and Serbian minorities to broadcast events dedicated to promoting the language, culture, customs and traditions of these minorities. Also, it placed a greater emphasis on the media promotion of educational projects within the Serbian and Czech minorities, taking into account that Mehedinți County is home to the largest Serbian minority in the country (Svinita) and to a well-knit minority of Czechs (Eibenthal village, Dubova commune);

TVR Craiova also has a permanent column, entitled "Roma for Oltenia", within the program dedicated to national minorities "Toți Împreună", increasing the broadcasting time in the Romani language.

TVR TIMIȘOARA⁴ is the only territorial channel at the level of the European Union, that broadcasts in 9 languages of the national minorities (Hungarian, Romani, German, Serbian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Italian).

II. Steps for implementing recommendations for immediate action:

1. exercise caution in applying numerical thresholds based on the results of the 2022 population census and ensure these results are not the only indicator taken into account when defining preconditions for the exercise of minority rights. The authorities are urged to ensure the possibility of using minority languages with public authorities in all areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities either traditionally or in substantial numbers. To this end, the authorities are recommended to consider the introduction of an alternative numerical threshold in the form of an absolute number. The authorities are urged to exercise caution and flexibility in applying the 20% threshold with a view to not limiting the scope of existing rights regarding topographical signage in minority languages;

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities allow State Parties a large margin of appreciation in the implementation of the objectives enshrined through national legislation and governmental policies in the field of national minorities. The same margin of appreciation applies regarding the issue of guaranteeing the right to use minority languages in relations with public administration authorities, including in the situation in which their total number would fall below the 20% threshold. Regarding this particular issue, the Romanian authorities adopt a flexible attitude, pursuing an interpretation that ensures the maintenance of the legal protection already obtained by persons belonging to national minorities, even if, by virtue of the dynamics of the movement of persons at the local level, the number of Romanian citizens belonging to national minorities would fall below the minimum threshold provided by law for

² TVR Craiova provides editorial coverage in seven counties: Dolj, Gorj, Olt, Vâlcea, Mehedinți, Argeș; Teleorman.

³ A significant community of Bulgarians is established in Teleorman county (Izvoarele village).

⁴ TVR Timișoara provides editorial coverage for Timiș, Arad, Caraș-Severin and Hunedoara counties.

guaranteeing the right to use their mother tongue - in local public administration, before the courts and in the field of topographical signage.

Thus, according to art. 94 of Emergency Ordinance no. 57 of 3 July 2019 on the Administrative Code, the use of the languages of national minorities in the administrative-territorial units/subdivisions in which citizens belonging to a national minority have a share of over 20% of the number of inhabitants, established at the last census, local public administration authorities, public institutions subordinated to them, as well as decentralized public services ensure the use, in relations with them, of the language of the respective national minority. Local public administration authorities, may decide to ensure the use of the language of national minorities in the administrative-territorial units in which citizens belonging to national minorities do not reach the share of 20%. At the same time, the Administrative Code (art. 604) stipulates that the above provisions also apply when, for various reasons, after the entry into force of this Code, the proportion of citizens belonging to a national minority falls below the percentage provided for in art. 94 until the date of validation of the results of the next census.

At the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, the registration of ethnicity, mother tongue and religion was based on the free self-declaration of persons. For persons who refused to declare these three characteristics, and for persons for whom information was collected indirectly from administrative sources, information on these three characteristics is not available. Therefore, the compositions presented below for the three ethno-cultural characteristics are calculated in terms of the total number of persons who declared their ethnicity, mother tongue and religion, and not in terms of the total number of the usual resident population.

Information on ethnicity was available for 16,568.9 thousand persons (out of the total of 19,053.8 thousand persons that make up the usual resident population of Romania). 14,801.4 thousand persons (89.3%) declared that they were of Romanian ethnicity. The population of Hungarian ethnicity registered at the census was 1,002.2 thousand persons (6.0%), and the number of persons who declared themselves to be of Roma ethnicity was 569.5 thousand persons (3.4%). Other ethnic groups for which the number of persons registered was more than 20 thousand persons were: Ukrainians (45.8 thousand persons), Germans (22.9 thousand persons) and Turks (20.9 thousand persons).

Based on the free declarations of the 16,551.4 thousand persons who declared their mother tongue, the composition of the population by mother tongue is as follows: for 91.6% Romanian is the first language usually spoken in the family during childhood, and for 6.3% of persons Hungarian is their mother tongue; Romani was the mother tongue of 1.2%, and Ukrainian was the mother tongue of 0.2% of the total usual resident population for which this information was available.

Census data on ethnicity can be found below:

Ethnicity	2021 Census
Hungarian	1.002.151
Roma	569.477
Ukrainian	45.835
Germans	22.907
Russian-lipovians	19.394
Turks	20.945

Tatars	18.156
Serbs	12.026
Slovacks	10.232
Bulgarians	5.975
Croatians	4.842
Greeks	2.086
Jews	2.378
Czech	1.576
Polish	2.137
Italiens	4039
Albanians	645
Armenians	1.213
Ruthenians	834
Macedonians	1.089
Other ethnicity	19.510
Undeclared	2.484.926

Regarding the maintenance of the 20% threshold in relation to which it is mandatory to guarantee the linguistic rights of Romanian citizens belonging to national minorities, we mention Romania's point of view formulated on page 119 of the Third Report on Romania, drawn up by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

"It is understood, however, that the provision of such a criterion - in the form of a percentage - is part of the margin of appreciation of the States. Also, it has not been shown so far that the threshold established in Romanian legislation would affect, in any way, the protection regime granted by the Romanian authorities to national minorities on its territory. Thus, for the Romanian authorities, the "number of residents" that justifies the measures provided for in article 10 of the Charter translates into the threshold of at least 20% of the inhabitants of a certain administrative-territorial unit."

In June 2023, the Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR) presented on its website a series of summaries regarding the use of the mother tongue in local public administration and that can be accessed at:

FOCUS DRI: Mother tongue in local public administration – Satu Mare and Târgu Mureş Municipalities – DRI.GOV.RO-Department for Interethnic Relations

FOCUS DRI: Mother tongue in local public administration – Repedea and Dudeştii Vechi Communes – DRI.GOV.RO-Department for Interethnic Relations

FOCUS DRI: Mother tongue in public administration – Caraşova and Izvoarele Sucevei Communes – DRI.GOV.RO-Department for Interethnic Relations

FOCUS DRI: Good practices in the field of the use of the mother tongue in local public administration – DRI.GOV.RO-Department for Interethnic Relations Interethnic

https://dri.gov.ro/w/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/analiza_dr_lingv_aut_loc_EN.pdf .

2.implement the existing legislation on minority language use in contacts with public authorities and health care authorities through approving the list of bilingual forms, explicitly allowing the targeted recruitment of minority language speakers, and financially supporting local and regional authorities in covering the costs for the provision of services in minority languages;

According to the Administrative Code (article 195), in the administrative-territorial units where citizens belonging to a national minority have a share of over 20% of the number of inhabitants, established at the last census, in their relations with the local public administration authorities, with the specialized apparatus and the bodies subordinated to them, they may address, orally or in writing, also in the language of the respective national minority and receive the answer both in Romanian and in the language of the respective national minority.

According to the provisions of the Administrative Code (Article 195, paragraphs 3 and 4), citizens belonging to national minorities have the right to request local public authorities, public institutions subordinated to them, decentralized public services to provide administrative forms and texts in bilingual format, namely in Romanian and in the language of the national minority.

For the purpose of exercising this right, the public authorities and entities provided for in article 94 (local public administration authorities, public institutions subordinated to them, as well as decentralized public services) of the Administrative Code are obliged to make available to citizens belonging to a national minority forms and administrative texts of current use in bilingual format, respectively in Romanian and in the language of the national minority.

The list of forms and types of administrative texts in current use is established by Government decision, at the proposal of the Department for Interethnic Relations developed in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of National Minority Issues, with the approval of the ministries responsible for public administration, public finance and internal affairs. National authorities have initiated steps for inter-institutional consultations in order to fulfill the legal obligation set out in Article 94 of the Administrative Code.

The access to medical care in favor of persons belonging to national minorities is regulated by Law No. 180/2017 approving Government Emergency Ordinance No. 18/2017 on community healthcare. The latter amended important normative acts in the field of health care in order to expand the scope of protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as follows:

- according to *article 7, letter "m"* of Law no. 95/2006 regarding the reform in the field of health care, republished, with its subsequent amendments and additions, one of the principles underlying public health assistance is the provision which ensures a medical or social specialist, in health units, who knows the language of national minorities. This condition applies to the administrative-territorial units in which citizens of national minorities either have a share of more than 20% of the number of inhabitants, or their number is at least 5.000. Therefore, an alternative numerical threshold to the 20% percentage was introduced, which contributes to broadening the scope of application of the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

- according to *article 8* Law no. 46/2003 concerning the Patient's Rights, with subsequent amendments and additions, the information is brought to the attention of the patient in a respectful, clear language, thus minimally using specialized terminology. If the patient does not know the Romanian language, the information is brought to his attention in his mother tongue or in a

language that he knows or, as the case may be, another form of communication will be sought. If the patient is not a Romanian citizen, the information is brought to his attention in an international language or, as the case may be, another form of communication will be sought.

Community health care includes the set of programs, health services and public health actions provided at the community level with the aim of increasing the access of the population and, in particular, of vulnerable groups, including persons of Roma ethnicity, to health services, especially those focused on prevention. In this sense, the community healthcare network is composed of a community nurse and, as the case may be, of a health mediator, in those communities where are identified 700 possible Roma beneficiaries according to Government Decision no. 459/2010 for the approval of the cost/year standard for services provided in medico-social units and some regulations regarding the staff in the medico-social assistance units and the staff carrying out community medical assistance activities.

By Government Decision no. 324/2019 for the approval of the Methodological Norms regarding the organization, operation and financing of the community health care activity, are regulated both the role of the health mediator with regard to the communication and support component in relation to the advised beneficiaries of Roma ethnicity, and also the conditions that a person must fulfill in order to be employed as a health mediator.

Article 13 regulates the scope of the health mediator's duties as follows:

- he participates, by facilitating communication, together with the community medical assistant, in the active detection of cases of tuberculosis and other contagious diseases, under the guidance of the family doctor or the medical staff from the public health department or the pneumophthisiology dispensary;
- he accompanies the medical staff in the activities related to the prevention or control of epidemic situations, facilitating the implementation of appropriate measures, and explaining to the members of the local community the role and purpose of the measures that are to be followed;
- he facilitates communication between local public authorities and the belonging community and also facilitates communication between community members and the medico-social staff serving the community.

Thus, it is not a mandatory condition for the health mediator to know the Romani language, but it is recommended; at the same time, it is highly recommended that he is an accepted member of the community he serves.

3.undertake additional efforts to address educational inequalities between Roma and non-Roma children relating to pre-school education, early dropouts and attainment levels, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, taking a gender-sensitive approach. The authorities are urged to take all necessary measures to combat segregation and other forms of discrimination of Roma in education;

Preventing and combating discrimination based on race and ethnicity are objectives that can be ensured through an open, inclusive, non-discriminatory education. As part of their joint effort, national authorities have adopted comprehensive measures, including affirmative measures, to ensure the full inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity.

With regard to the additional efforts undertaken by Romanian authorities in order to address educational inequalities between Roma and non-Roma children, Ministry of Education has intervened in a multidimensional manner.

The Project "Educated Romania", outlines the strategic framework for education policies up to 2030 and aims at ensuring an equitable education system in Romania that guarantees access to inclusive quality education to all persons. Issues such as combating early school leaving and dropout, functional illiteracy and improving the educational outcomes of pupils, fostering inclusivity by paying a special attention to the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds constitute priority policy areas of intervention and are specifically addressed in the newly adopted Law no. 198/2023 on pre-university education.

As such, the new Law includes a chapter which addresses the *provision of inclusive quality education to all primary beneficiaries*, in which is introduced the concept of *primary beneficiaries at risk of school exclusion* (Chapter V. Art. 67 (3))⁵.

In addition, the law provides the identification of priority investment areas in education, through regular mapping and the implementation of targeted programmes aimed at reducing the gaps in access, participation and educational outcomes faced by *pupils at risk of social exclusion*.

Within the time framework September 2018-October 2023, integrated community services were developed and piloted within rural and small urban communities with a high or above average degree of marginalization, as part of the strategic project *Creation and implementation of integrated community services to combat poverty and social exclusion*, implemented in partnership by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health. In addition, one of the regular activities carried out by the integrated community teams at community level was to raise awareness regarding the conditions and opportunities for access to education, to specifically inform and guide parents regarding the children's enrolment in kindergarten and school, to provide permanent support for participation in early education and school.

Following the call for the *Development of complementary early education services*, financed under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, 98 projects have been selected for financing, out of which, 34 projects aim to create community kindergartens and 55 target combined investments (most often community kindergarten & ludothèque).

In order to support learning and address learning difficulties and poor learning outcomes, the *Law on pre-university education* foresees two support programmes that schools may organize to meet the needs and potential of their pupils: the *"Remedial Learning" programme*, whose aim is to support pupils with gaps in acquiring the key competences set out by the law, and pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school and/or leaving school early, and the *"School after school" programme*, respectively, which includes a wider range of educational activities, such as activities to reinforce, remediate or deepen the skills acquired by pupils in the school curriculum, as well as additional activities to support the right to education and recreational or leisure activities.

For combatting early school drop-out, the Law foresees the implementation of the *National Integrated Programme for Reducing School Drop-out*. Currently, the National Program to Reduce School Drop-out (NPRSD) is under implementation until 2026. The aim of the Program is to reduce the risk of school drop-out in at least 25% of the schools participating in the Programme, improve pupils' results in national assessments and increase the percentage of pupils completing secondary education, increase the participation of lower secondary graduates in the national

⁵ *Primary beneficiaries at risk of school exclusion* are those at risk of being discriminated, segregated, have their cultural identity disregarded, at risk of dropping out and academic failure because they are affected by one or multiple criteria, such as social, economic or cultural status, national minority, refugee, rural or urban marginalised areas, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children temporarily or permanently separated from their parents, pregnant and parenting minors, children and young people within vulnerable Roma communities, children and young people in prisons, educational centres and detention centres, children who are victims of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation and any form of violence against them, children and young people who are drug users.

assessment at the end of the 8th grade and the transition rate to upper secondary education, based on the use of the Early warning mechanism in education (EWME).

Furthermore, the measure on the provision of a *hot meal* in schools, which has proved successful in decreasing the drop-out rates in the schools in which the corresponding program has been implemented so far, has been scaled-up in the 2023-2024 school year through the *National Healthy Meal Programme*.

As of 2023, disadvantaged pre-school children and pupils in primary and lower secondary education receive, social vouchers for educational support as a supplementary measure to combat school dropout and low enrolments rates among vulnerable categories of children and pupils. Over 400,000 children and pupils will receive this financial support in view of purchasing goods needed to attend school (i.e., school supplies, clothes etc.).

In addition, in 2023 other national support programs were implemented by the Ministry of Education, such as the program through which school supplies are provided to pupils in primary and lower secondary education at the beginning of the school year and the Euro 200 Program, which provides a financial aid for the purchase of computers.

With the adoption of the Law on pre-university education, a new approach has been introduced regarding the granting of school scholarships in pre-university education in view of stimulating learning and excellence in education and their value has been significantly increased.

In regards to adopting specific measures to combat segregation and other forms of discrimination of Roma in education, the Ministry of Education has developed specialized policies by means of the normative framework.

As previously reported, the policy framework for combating segregation in education was strengthened in 2016 by the adoption of the Framework Order no. 6134/2016 prohibiting school segregation in pre-university education, which extended the criteria for segregation in education with the scope of including additional criteria such as disability/special educational needs, family socio-economic status, place of residence and school performance criteria in addition to ethnicity.

In 2019, the *Methodology for monitoring school segregation in pre-university education*, was adopted by Order no. 5633/2019, and in 2022 it was piloted in 42 educational establishments at all levels of education. In addition, were developed the technical component for the collection of the data necessary for the monitoring process, as well as the training pack for the personnel (school directors, teachers, county school inspectors, personnel responsible for the corresponding informatics system) that will engage in and support the monitoring. Subsequently, information and training sessions on the implementation of the methodology for monitoring school segregation have been delivered.

With the adoption of the new Law on pre-university education, the framework for combating segregation in education has been once again strengthened, a standalone section being dedicated to this issue, where the definition and segregation criteria are provided.

In addition, monitoring and intervention measures in view of preventing and eliminating all forms of school segregation are provided, as well as the establishment of the *National Commission for School Desegregation*, expert body under the Ministry of Education, tasked with the elaboration and coordination of the *Action plan for school desegregation in pre-university education establishments*. The law foresees that the Commission cooperates with public authorities and institutions, as well as with organisations of citizens belonging to national minorities, based on the cooperation protocols concluded by the Ministry of Education with these entities.

The National Council on Combating Discrimination (NCCD) has the legal authority to sanction segregation in the field of education. During 2018-2023, NCCD adopted 9 decisions on segregation.

In April 2016, the Advocacy and Human Rights Center (AHRC) filed a complaint with the National Council on Combating Discrimination (NCCD) against the Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu School in Iași and Iași County School Inspectorate for the segregation of Roma children. NCCD decided that the situation under discussion (namely the placement of Roma children in a single building while the school disposes of several buildings and the tolerance of these situations by Iași County School Inspectorate) consists of discrimination and violation of the right to dignity according to Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination. As a result, the NCCD fined the Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu School in -Iași with the sum of 3.000 RON/LEI and the County School Inspectorate of Iași with the sum of 5.000 RON/LEI. In 2017, the Court of Appeal Iași annulled the decision of the NCCD on the grounds that the situation reported by the AHRC is due to the geographical area which is an extrinsic element and not to the ethnic affiliation.

Nevertheless, the judgment of the High Court of Cassation and Justice (which is final) upheld the decision of the NCCD, namely that the segregation of students from this school in Corp C is segregation and an act of racial discrimination.

The judgment can be accessed here:

<https://www.scj.ro/1093/Detalii-jurisprudenta?customQuery%5B0%5D.Key=id&customQuery%5B0%5D.Value=159253#highlight=##>.

Furthermore, in the period 2018-2023, NCCD adopted 30 decisions in the field of access to education for Roma. In this sense, the search engine illustrating the decisions adopted is accessible at the address: https://www.cncd.ro/hotarari/?sf=s=698&sft=anul_publicarii=2022.

The National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) issued in March 2016 a decision fining the "Carmen Sylva" Pedagogical High School in Timișoara with the sum of 2.000 LEI for imposing discriminatory criteria when enrolling students in class 0 (primary education). Following this decision of NCCD, the Ministry of Education adopted a Methodology-registration framework (approved by Ministerial Order no. 3.445/2022).

Law no. 198/2023 on pre-university education provides in Section 7, alin.2 “in the matter of school segregation, the rules included in this law are supplemented with the provisions of Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, republished, with subsequent amendments and additions. The normative and institutional framework for monitoring, identifying, preventing or combating school segregation in pre-university education is approved by Order of the Ministry of Education.”

4. ensure the effective investigation, prosecution and sanctioning of hate crime and hate speech and ensure the systematic collection of relevant data;

Romania has a solid legal framework in the matter of protection against hate crimes and hate speech which was supplemented by Law no. 2/2021 on some measures to prevent and combat antigypsyism, published in the Official Gazette no. 8 of 05.01.2021. The law comprehensively addresses antigypsyism, providing a definition of antigypsyism as well as a brief presentation of the measures adopted by the legislator to prevent and combat antigypsyism. According to Article 2 letter "a", antigypsyism means both the perception of Roma expressed as

hatred against them, as well as verbal or physical manifestations, motivated by hatred against Roma, directed against Roma or their property, against institutions/NGOs, leaders of Roma communities or their places of worship, traditions and the Romani language.

A number of 110 case files dealing with hate crime offences against individuals belonging to national minorities have been processed in 2023, of which 42 case files have been registered since the beginning of the year.

As far as the injured persons are concerned, they mainly belong to the Jewish, Roma and Hungarian minorities, but there have also been registered files involving injured persons belonging to the German, Russian, Ukrainian or Turkish-Tartar minorities. 29 case files have been settled in 2023, of which 2 by indictment ("rechizitoriu").

Therefore, a person has been sent to trial for the offence of abusive conduct, as provided by Article 296(1) of the Criminal Code, applying the aggravating circumstance provided by Article 77(h) of the Criminal Code, while it was held that the offence was motivated by the victim's belonging to the Roma minority.

Also, a plea agreement ("acord de recunoaștere a vinovăției") has been concluded with a defendant investigated for the offence provided by Article 5 of the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 31/2002 (promoting, in public, the cult of persons guilty of committing crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as well as promoting, in public, fascist, legionary, racist or xenophobic ideas, concepts or doctrines) consisting of posting content on social media that promoted the cult of a person known to have belonged to fascist organisations.

In the first 6 months of 2024, actual hate crimes were registered, based on ethnic criteria, and crimes for which was retained the aggravating circumstance provided for in Article 77, letter h) of the Criminal Code, as follows:

1- against ethnic Hungarians;

7- anti-Roma

13- anti-Semitism

2- other categories.

The National Council on Combating Discrimination (NCCD) has a good collaboration with law enforcement professionals and issues specialized points of view at the request of the Prosecutor's Office or the Police. Within the time framework 2018-2023, the National Council on Combating Discrimination received 18 requests from the Prosecutor's Offices attached to Courts of Justice and from the Police, to offer specialized points of view regarding the content of articles published in mass media or online media, especially evaluating messages conveyed in public space.

Following the investigation of public messages conveyed in the public space, the National Council on Combating Discrimination obtained the following data regarding the manner of reflecting discrimination/hate speech and the criteria on which it is based:

Year 2018

- 1 case (ethnic criterion - Hungarian ethnicity)

Year 2019

- 0 cases

Year 2020

- 2 cases (1 ethnic criterion - regarding Hungarian ethnicity, 1 ethnic criterion – regarding Jewish ethnicity and the use of fascist messages or symbols)

Year 2021

- 3 cases (1 case - concerning the criterion of political belief, 1 case -regarding the criterion of sexual orientation, 1 case - other criteria)

Year 2022

- 1 case (ethnic criterion - regarding Jewish ethnicity and the use of fascist messages or symbols)

Year 2023

- 11 cases (5 cases – concerning the criteria regarding the xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic nature of the action, 1 case -relating to gender criterion, 2 cases –concerning ethnicity and race criteria, 1 case – related to sexual orientation, 1 case – concerning nationality criterion).

The National Council on Combating Discrimination has organized or participated in courses and training sessions in the field of non-discrimination, including regarding racially motivated crimes and hate speech, for various professional categories, including magistrates, police officers, students attending police schools or the Police Academy. More details can be obtained by accessing institutional activity reports: <https://www.cncd.ro/rapoarte/>.

As regards *the means of collection of statistical data*, the Public Ministry is currently implementing the ECRIS III electronic criminal case management system, in which data such as the referral, the case matter, the legal classification of the offence, the identity of the injured person are entered from the moment of registration of a criminal case file with a unique number, and are supplemented with new information resulting from investigations.

Also, statistical data on hate crime in general are collected by means of the completion of Appendix no. 19 and Appendix no. 20 to the Order of the Prosecutor General No. 213/2014 on the organisation and functioning of the information system at the level of the Public Ministry.

Thus, by Appendix no. 19 to Order No. 298/2017, entitled "Statistics on hate crime - to which the aggravating circumstance provided for in Article 77(h) of the Criminal Code has been applied or to which the element of hatred is part of the constitutive content of the offence (Article 369 of the Criminal Code, Article 297(2) of the Criminal Code, etc.)" statistical data are being collected on the number of cases to be solved by the prosecution units within the statistical period, the number of cases solved, the types of settlements ordered, as well as on the hate or discrimination ground involved.

By means of the Appendix no. 20 to Order No. 298/2017, entitled "*Statistics on offences under Government Emergency Ordinance (GEO) No. 31/2002*", statistical data are being collected, by means of Articles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 61 of GEO No. 31/2002 regarding in principle: the number of cases to be solved by prosecution units within the statistical period, the number of cases solved, the types of settlements ordered, as well as on the hate or discrimination ground involved.

At present, at the level of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, steps are being taken to update Appendix no. 19, above mentioned, in order to include the offences provided for by *Law No. 157/2018 on some measures to prevent and combat antisemitism* and by *Law No. 2/2021 on some measures to prevent and combat anti-Gypsyism* and to adapt the type of information collected to domestic and international statistical requirements - for example, specifying the hate and discrimination ground also regarding the case files currently being processed.

Currently, the Public Ministry is also running the SIPOCA 871 Project - "Development and implementation of ECRIS V and training of staff managing and using the application".

The specific objective of the project is to modernise and adapt the ECRIS electronic case management system in order to meet the current needs of the judicial system. Within the framework of this project, it is envisaged to highlight, for each offence regulated by Article 77(h)

of the Criminal Code, the case of discrimination involved, and in terms of ethnic discrimination, cases of discrimination based on affiliation to the Jewish, Hungarian and Roma minorities shall be recorded distinctly.

The National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2027 contains a comprehensive Action Plan aimed at combating discrimination, anti-gypsyism and anti-gypsyism generating hate speech or hate crimes:

- Monitoring the implementation of criminal legislation criminalizing incitement to racial hatred and hate crimes
- Organize expert meetings to analyze the situation of racially motivated hate speech in public
- Monitoring media and internet forums on the content of racially motivated hate speech
- Awareness-raising campaigns, with an online focus, on the consequences of spreading anti-racial hate speech
- Discussions at expert level to examine the dissuasiveness of applicable sanctions
- Progress reports on the implementation of specific legislation to combat hate speech based on anti-Roma attitudes
- Organize trainings for law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges on understanding the phenomenon and the implications of anti-racist attitudes for the investigation of related cases
- Continuous training courses to prevent and combat discrimination against employees of public institutions and private entities providing public services to the population, with a focus on multiple, intersectional discrimination
- Discussions at expert level for an analysis of how anti-discrimination legislation is used in public entities (competition bibliographies, examination topics, offer of continuous training courses, operational procedures, internal and operating regulations, etc.)
- Establishment of an inter-institutional working group in the field of anti-discrimination (task force) to pilot inter-institutional cooperation measures in the field of combating discrimination against Roma (with a focus on multiple, intersectional discrimination)
- Informing public institutions and private providers of public services to the population on the need to adapt their relevant internal documents to the provisions of anti-discrimination legislation (procedures and methodologies, internal regulations, guidelines, etc.) in order to prevent and combat racial, multiple and intersectional discrimination
- Organizing a debate with public and private employers on the form and content of the tools they wish to disseminate
- Creating a platform for the exchange of good practice in the field of anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for employers
- Dissemination of positive practices by employers.

5. effectively investigate and sanction cases of police misconduct and in particular excessive use of force vis-à-vis Roma. For this purpose, the authorities should strengthen the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms and address racial bias among law enforcement officials through systematic initial and in-service training;

The Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice has been constantly concerned with *streamlining the criminal investigations* carried out in cases in which State agents - police, gendarmes, prison staff - are accused of committing serious offences in the exercise of their duties.

In this regard, the *Order of the Prosecutor General attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice No. 59/2021 on streamlining investigations in cases where State agents are investigated for acts of ill-treatment committed in connection with the performance of their professional duties* established the following:

- the monitoring of cases involving offences under Article 280, Article 281, Article 282 and Article 296 of the Criminal Code and offences against life or offences against bodily integrity or health committed with the use of weapons by the police, in accordance with Article 179 of the Criminal Code;
- the taking over of the above cases by the prosecutor's offices attached to county courts in the case of offences committed by police agents, and by the prosecutor's offices attached to courts of appeal in the case of offences committed by police officers, with the exception of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest County Court (*Tribunalul Bucureşti*) and the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Court of Appeal (*Curtea de Apel Bucureşti*), when the cases that are taken over involve victims who were in the custody of the State at the time of the commission of the offences and have traumatic injuries attested by medical or forensic documents;
- the investigation in these cases shall be carried out by specialised prosecutors, designated for this purpose by the management of the prosecutor's offices;
- the establishment of a system of qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the investigation of these cases by specifically designated prosecutors and the regular completion of the forms set out in Appendix no. 1 - 5 to this Order;
- the investigation carried out must comply with the standards of effectiveness laid down in ECHR case-law.

This Order, although not expressly aimed at the prosecution of cases in which State agents are under criminal investigation for hate crimes, is also applicable in this area by creating, on the one hand, a network of prosecutors specialised in the investigation of State agents belonging to medium and high level prosecutorial units within the hierarchy of the Public Ministry, and, on the other hand, a system of qualitative and quantitative monitoring of investigations by specifically designated prosecutors and the regular completion of the forms set out in Appendix 1 - 5 to the aforementioned Order.

With regard to *training activities*, within the framework of the centralised continuous training programme, several activities in the field of combating hate crimes were organised in 2023 by the National Institute of the Magistracy and attended by prosecutors, as follows:

- *Combating discrimination. Hate crime* - two seminars in May and October;
- *Seminar on antisemitism and the Holocaust - history, memory and legislation*, organised by the National Institute of Magistracy in collaboration with the National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania "Elie Wiesel", in December.

The Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation participates in the *Romanian Government Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for 2022-2027, approved by G.O. No. 560/2022*.

At the same time, the Ministry of Internal Affairs carried out training activities for agents and personnel with responsibilities in the field of law enforcement in order to prevent and combat racial discrimination in conducting its activities.

Thus, it was observed the training of personnel with duties in the field of law enforcement in order to fulfill their professional duties while respecting and protecting: the fundamental rights of the

citizen, the principle of non-discrimination and the scope of inclusion and acceptance of cultural particularities.

With regard to the *initial training* of police agents and deputy officers ("subofițeri") at police and gendarme schools, the curriculum includes topics that ensure the training and development of ethical behaviors, such as:

- Human rights and their respect in the police activity. Hate crimes;
- Addressing conflict situations determined by multicultural diversity.

Continuous training ensures the permanent updating of specialized knowledge and the optimization of professional practices, in this process being included training programs/themes, such as:

- Human rights institution. Human rights protection mechanisms and systems;
- Implementation of EU directives on non-discrimination;
- Respect for human rights in the police activity;
- Gender discrimination and violence.

Also, in the curricula of career courses, as well in the curricula of specialization/improvement courses, topics aimed at combating racial prejudice are addressed, an example in this sense being the training session in the field of "*Preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech*", organized within the "Nicolae Goleescu" Slatina Police Training and Improvement Center, where the following contents are covered:

- Understanding and preventing the creation of discriminatory ethnic profiles;
- Personality and behavioral prediction;
- Measures to prevent and combat ethnic prejudice;
- Hate speech in multicultural communities;
- Preventing and combating discrimination;
- Investigation, analysis, reporting of traumatic marks, the practice of CTP, SPT, the Istanbul Protocol (for the academic years 2021-2023)/National Strategy for the prevention and combating of antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech (for the academic year 2023-2024).

III. Steps for implementing further recommendations

6. evaluate the methodology used for the 2022 census in an open and constructive dialogue with representatives of national minorities and of communities whose affiliation was not listed in the questionnaire, with a view to expanding possibilities for free self-identification and multiple affiliations in the next census and any future data collections;

The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) has complied with national legislation and formulated all the questions in the 2021 census questionnaire in accordance with national standards, European methodologies and recommendations.

The NIS has conducted consultations with relevant State institutions to establish certain questions in this questionnaire. For example: *To which ethnicity do you affirm your belonging? What is your mother tongue? What religion you belong to?*

Furthermore, NIS will consider the recommendations of European experts and will initiate a comprehensive, open, and transparent dialogue to ensure that "national minorities, whose affiliations were not listed in the 2022 questionnaire" are included in the next censuses, while adhering to legal requirements.

During the process of 2021 census, NIS has requested and recommended to representatives of national minorities to participate in the census process not only through the promotion of the entire process but also through active involvement as enumerators. Accordingly, in adherence to the recommendations, there were substantial numbers of representatives of national minorities among the enumerators.

All questionnaires were translated into the languages of the national minorities and were made available on the tablets that enumerators carried with them during the face-to-face enumeration phase. Moreover, enumerators were encouraged to also have paper copies of the questionnaires in certain areas, so that respondents could better understand all census questions, not just by using the enumerators' tablets.

The National Institute of Statistics recommended and insisted through the messages conveyed in public space that enumerators in areas inhabited by national minorities should include speakers of these languages, representatives of the respective minority.

Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR), as a member of the Central Commission for the 2021 Population and Housing Census⁶, was actively involved in this process and carried out a series of activities, in the exercise of its duties regarding the organization and conduct of the population and housing census in Romania in 2021:

- consultation with the parliamentary groups of national minorities constituted in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, with the organizations of citizens belonging to national minorities members of the Council of National Minorities, with the National Agency for Roma and with the Romanian Institute for the Study of National Minority Issues (ISPMN) in the finalization of the nomenclature of ethnicities and mother tongues;

- offered support to the National Institute of Statistics in the translation into 16 languages of national minorities of the questionnaire used in the process of population and housing census;

- organized a series of meetings with representatives of organizations of the citizens belonging to national minorities members of the Council of National Minorities with the aim of promoting the participation of national minorities in the census among which we mention:

- ✓ in Bucharest, meetings with representatives of the Union of Ukrainians in Romania, the Community of Russian Lipovans in Romania and the Union of Bulgarians in Romania;
- ✓ in Sibiu, meetings with the representatives of the Democratic Forum of the Germans of Romania;
- ✓ in Constanța, meetings with the representatives of the Turkish and Tatar communities, as well as with the Muftiate of the Muslim Cult in Romania.

7. create the conditions necessary for the National Council on Combating Discrimination to fulfil its mandate effectively. The authorities should ensure office-holders are independent and the institution is sufficiently resourced

The mandate of the National Council on Combating Discrimination (NCCD) is regulated by Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, with subsequent amendments and additions.

⁶ Information about the organization and functioning of the Central Census Commission in 2022, referred to as RPL 2021 or RPL round 2021, can be found in Article 4 of Emergency Ordinance 19/2020.

According to the aforementioned legal framework, the National Council for Combating Discrimination is the state authority in the field of discrimination, autonomous, with legal personality, under parliamentary control and at the same time it is the guarantor of the respect and application of the principle of non-discrimination, in accordance with the domestic legislation in force and with the international documents to which Romania is a party.

In the exercise of its duties, the Council carries out its activity independently, without it being restricted or influenced by other institutions or public authorities.

The Council is responsible for the application and review of compliance with the provisions of the Government Ordinance that regulates its field of activity, as well as for the harmonization of provisions contained in normative or administrative acts that contravene the principle of non-discrimination.

The Council develops and applies public policies in the matter of non-discrimination. In this sense, the Council consults public authorities, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other legal entities that aim to protect human rights or that have a legitimate interest in combating discrimination.

The Romanian Parliament approves the budget of the National Council for Combating Discrimination based on the budget proposals and staff funding proposals made by the Council.

8. adopt in a timely manner a comprehensive, cross-sectoral set of measures to combat antigypsyism, in close consultation with representatives of the Roma minority;

On this issue, Romania has adopted specific legislation the Law No. 2/2021 regarding some measures to prevent and combat anti-Gypsyism, published in the Official Gazette no. 8 of 05.01.2021. The law addresses anti-Gypsyism comprehensively, defining anti-Gypsyism and regulating the measures adopted by the legislator to prevent and combat anti-Gypsyism.

According to article 2 letter "a", anti-Gypsyism means both the hateful perception of Roma, as well as verbal or physical manifestations, motivated by hatred against Roma, directed against Roma individuals or their property, against institutions or NGOs, leaders of Roma communities or their places of worship, against Roma traditions and the Romani language.

The law also establishes the meaning of the following expressions: *anti-Gypsy organization*, *anti-Gypsy symbols* and *anti-Gypsy materials*. Thus, the expression "anti-Gypsy organization" means any group formed by 3 or more individuals, who carry out their activity temporarily or permanently, in order to promote anti-Gypsy ideas, conceptions or doctrines. This category may include organizations with or without legal personality, political parties and movements, associations and foundations, companies regulated by Commercial Companies Law no. 31/1990, as well as any other legal entity that falls under Law no. 2/2021.

According to article 3, the act of a person to promote, in public, in any way, anti-Gypsy ideas, conceptions or doctrines constitutes a crime and is punishable by imprisonment between 3 months and up to 3 years and the prohibition of certain rights. According to article 4 it is also a crime to distribute or make available to the public, by any means, anti-Gypsy news and information or materials, and it is punishable by 1 to 5 years in prison.

At the same time, as provided by article 5, making, selling, spreading, as well as possessing for the purpose of spreading anti-Gypsy symbols constitutes a crime and is punishable by

imprisonment starting from 3 months and up to 3 years and the prohibition of certain rights. Moreover, the same punishment is to be applied for the public use of anti-Gypsy symbols. However, the aforementioned acts do not constitute crimes if they are committed in the interest of art or science, research or education or for the purpose of debating issues of public interest.

As established by article 6, constitutes a crime and is punishable by imprisonment starting from 3 years and up to 10 years and the prohibition of certain rights to initiate or constitute an organization with an anti-Gypsy character, to join or support, in any form, such a group.

The recent changes in legislation and educational curricula have contributed to improving general knowledge of the Roma deportations. An increasing number of members of the Romanian society are becoming aware that the Roma were also part of the Holocaust.

This evolution can be seen from the results of six opinion polls conducted in Romania between May 2007 and November 2019. Asked what the Holocaust means, most respondents tended to answer the extermination of Jews (at the hands of the Germans). Without insisting on Jewish centrality and guilt externalization, it is relevant that recently more people have noted that the term also includes the Roma. For example, while in May 2007 only 2% responded that the Holocaust also meant the persecution of Roma and in November 2010, the number had increased only to 5%, in the following polls these figures increased constantly and significantly: 13% of respondents in 2013, 18% in June 2015, 36% in 2017, and, finally, the most recent opinion poll from November 2019 showed that 49% of the respondents associated the Holocaust in Romania with the Roma deportations to Transnistria.

9. identify additional ways to further promote intercultural dialogue and mutual respect, based on the general understanding that integration of society is a two-way process encompassing majorities and minorities alike;

The Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR) is the main national institution within the Romanian Government with attributions to stimulate the dialogue between the majority and national minorities in order to improve the decision-making process and the implementation measures.

The Romanian Government, through DIR has constantly promoted intercultural dialogue, linguistic and confessional diversity, pursuing through specialized activities and projects, the cultivation of common values, combating discrimination and prejudice.

To this end, in the period 2019 - 2023, the activities and projects set out in **Annex no. 3** have been carried out under the coordination / with the involvement of DIR.

By way of example, in 2023, the following activities and projects were carried out under the coordination/with the involvement of DIR:

-On 1 February 2023 was marked the “International Holocaust Remembrance Day” through a show of lyricism, based on testimonies of Holocaust survivors and their relatives. The event brought together Jewish and Roma artists who shared with the public fragments of literature, in their own creation or the results of collections and scientific research, recounting the devastating experience of the Holocaust. The Jewish testimonies were presented by the actress Maia Morgenstern and the director Dan Michael Schlanger, through their own creations, inspired by

their own life story. The Roma testimonies were narrated by the translator Norica Costache and the actor Sorin Sandu. Also, were presented testimonies collected by the researcher Adrian Furtună of Roma survivors who were deported in Transnistria.

-On 21 February 2023 with the occasion of celebrating "International Mother Tongue Day" the National Institute of Statistics and the Department for Interethnic Relations jointly created an information platform that addresses both the public belonging to the majority and members of national minorities, through which the authorities wanted to disseminate the results of the Population and Housing Census 2021, related to the mother tongue. Also, national authorities aimed to reflect the perceptions that members of national minorities have about their own languages.

-In March 2023 was carried out the project „Mirror portraits” - which brought together representative personalities from various fields (literature, theater, film, visual arts, education) among women who belong to national minorities and proposed a mirror representation of them alongside their mentors. Each selected personality related their own activity filtered through another female personality in the same field of activity. Through this form of "mirroring", the project aimed both to highlight the contribution of female personalities belonging to national minorities to the Romanian culture and to emphasize the importance of a form of mentoring that ensures the transfer of experience in the professional field, but also especially in the human field.

-On 21 May 2023, in the context of celebrating the International Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, the Department for Interethnic Relations, together with the National Museum of Romanian Literature, organized the event *Cultural Diversity Month*.

The event included the organization of an exhibition of panels with fragments of prose and poetry by writers belonging to national minorities in Romania, as well as a round table that took place on 23 May 2023 at the National Museum of Romanian Literature. The event was attended by writers who belong to the following national minorities in Romania: Armenian (Bedros Horasangian), Bulgarian (Ioan Vasilcin), Croatian (Mihai Șera), Jewish (Andrei Oișteanu), German (Eginald Norbert Schlattner), Greek (Marina Costa), Italian (Coleta De Sabata), Macedonian (Mariana Venera Popescu), Hungarian (György Alida, Káli István), Roma (Sorin Aurel Sandu), Ruthenian (Gaál Francisc Oscar), Serbian (Slavomir Gvozdenovici), Slovak (Ivan Miroslav Ambruš), Turkish-Tatar minority (Neriman Ibraim-Tatar and Gülten Abdula-Nazare - Turkish) and Ukrainian (Mihai Hafia Traista). The exhibition was open to the public until the end of May and was displayed on the facade of the building of the National Museum of Romanian Literature.

-In June 2023, took place the "Writers Union Awards" an important event of Romanian literature, where awards were also given with the support of the Department for Interethnic Relations. The Commission for Minorities was composed of: Markó Béla (chairman), Karácsonyi Zsolt, Ivan Kovaci, Slavomir Gvozdenovici, Carolina Ana Dovaly (members). The Commission decided to reward the following volumes:

- Fekete Vince, *Halálgyakorlatok (Exerciții pentru moarte)*, poems in Hungarian
- Myhailo Hafia Traista, *Styzherety (Stejeret)*, novel in Ukrainian.

With regard to the promotion of theatrical art in Romania, *in the second semester of 2023*, DIR addressed an invitation for collaboration to renowned theaters of national minorities, in order to highlight and integrate into the European circuit the values and diversity of the theatrical art belonging to national minorities in Romania. This aim was achieved through the realization of theatrical events with an original and varied program, which will place dramaturgy in the languages of national minorities in the national theatrical landscape.

In this vein, the Department for Interethnic Relations financially supported the following projects:

- TESFEST International Theater Festival, organized by the State Jewish Theater;
- "draMA" contemporary Theater Festival, realized by the "Pro Theatrum" Foundation in Odorheiu Secuiesc;
- the first edition of the International Festival "Shakespeare Studio", organized by "Aradi Kamaraszínház" Association in Arad;
- the HTC230/STUDIO15/UTEFest20 Festival of the Hungarian State Theater in Cluj;
- the Colloquium of National Minority Theaters in Gheorgheni;
- the realization of the Timișoara show "Sidy Thal a schtikl", based on the piece with which Thomas Perle bids farewell as resident writer of the European Cultural Capital Timișoara.

TESFEST. The State Jewish Theatre, in collaboration with the Department for Interethnic Relations organized, in May 2023, the 8th edition of the International Yiddish Theater Festival TES FEST. During the six days of the festival, professional Yiddish-language theater groups from all over the world (including USA, Israel, Poland), world-renowned klezmer bands and performers were present on the stage of the State Jewish Theater, presenting to the public the Yiddish culture, in all its aspects. The uniqueness of Yiddish culture was presented in the current cultural context, raising awareness of the importance of intercultural dialogue, through the exchange of experience with communities that promote Yiddish culture in the world, the preservation of the Jewish cultural tradition in Romania and the transmission of the Jewish cultural heritage, through artistic means, throughout the world.

The contemporary Theater Festival dráMA. The festival, organized by the "Tomcsa Sándor" Theater and the Pro Theatrum Foundation from Odorheiu Secuiesc in collaboration with DIR, reached in 2023 its 14th edition, and offered once again an opportunity of a meeting between local contemporary drama and theater-loving audiences. The program included, in addition to the performances presented, discussions with the creators of the participating productions, the presentation of a book on the history of the theater, and concerts. During the festival, the spectators, as well as representatives of specialized critics from Romania and Hungary watched over 13 performances presented by 12 theater groups.

The HTC230/STUDIO15/UTEFest20 Festival of the Hungarian State Theater in Cluj. Between 14-19 November 2023, the Hungarian State Theater in Cluj-Napoca in collaboration with DIR organized the European Theater Union Festival. The title of the festival was HTC230/STUDIO15/UTEFest20, signifying the celebration of 230 years of theater in the Hungarian language in Cluj-Napoca and 15 years since the opening of the Studio hall of the Hungarian State Theatre. During the festival, 11 member theaters from 11 countries were invited to participate, the shows being staged by directors such as Alexandra Kazazou, Eleana Georgouli, Michal Dočekal, Botond Nagy, Máté Szabó, Gábor Tompa, László Bocsárdi, Nina Šorak, Attila Vidnyánszky jr., Ewa Kaim, Erika Z. Galli, Martina Ruggeri, István Szabó K., Margarita Mladenova, Nuno Cardoso, Frank Hoffmann and András Urbán. The productions were accompanied by discussions, meetings with the public and book launches. All performances were subtitled in Romanian, Hungarian and English.

The Colloquium of National Minority Theaters from Gheorgheni. The 14th edition of the prestigious Colloquium of National Minority Theaters took place between 18-31 October and 2023 in Gheorgheni, Joseni,

Odorheiu Secuiesc and Miercurea Ciuc. The 2023 edition was organized by the Figura Studio Theater and the Figura Association, in collaboration with DIR. The performances were subtitled in Romanian and/or Hungarian, and each performance was followed by a meeting with the audience. For the young audience, the organizers have provided theater-themed activities throughout the performances and meetings with the public.

Sidy Thal. Between 11 October and 4 November 2023, DIR, in partnership with the German State Theater in Timișoara and the State Jewish Theater in Bucharest, organized the event “Sidy Thal”, a play being presented to the public in order to reconstruct this historical fact. Playwright Thomas Perle and director Clemens Bechtel did the research, with the help of Maria Mădălina Irimia from the "Wilhelm Filderman" Center for the Study of Jewish History in Romania; they tried to reconstruct this event and the moment when anti-Semitism and fascism became a part of everyday life in an already multicultural society. The play brought together actors, instrumentalists, directors, scenographers, artists and was performed in Yiddish, German and Romanian, with subtitles in Romanian and English. The premiere of the play took place on 4th November at the German State Theater in Timișoara, and on 12 November in Bucharest on the stage of the State Jewish Theater.

The activities carried out by the Department for Interethnic Relations during 2023 in the field of promoting intercultural dialogue represented a continuation of the activities undertaken during the previous year.

In the second semester of 2022 the Department for Interethnic Relations undertook the following activities and projects in the field of promoting intercultural dialogue:

The project “Bartók and Enescu, a Friendship in the Universal Language of Music” - took place at the initiative of the Department, in collaboration with the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania (the Sibiu branch), between 24 - 28 October 2022, in Sibiu and Brașov. The project aimed to present some significant aspects of the activity and life of the two great composers, Béla Bartók and George Enescu, as well as their friendship, with an emphasis on the means to overcome, through education and the universal language of music and art, the barriers of language, ethnicity, ethnic intolerance or prejudice. The objectives that were achieved within the project consisted in the following: the cultivation of common values, tolerance and intercultural dialogue, evoking some outstanding personalities of the national minorities and the majority and their cultural heritage.

The 29th edition of the "GAUDEAMUS Radio Romania Book Fair"(7-11 December 2022) was a cultural event organized by the Romanian Broadcasting Society with the participation of national minority organizations. During this event, DIR ensured an ethnic diversity section, especially dedicated to literature, press and traditions of national minorities. Participating national minority organizations exhibited at the fair: books, magazines, photos, CDs and organized, in the specially arranged spaces, launch-events of recent publications. The following organizations of national minorities in Romania, members of the Council of National Minorities, took part in the activities of the Book Fair:

- Association of Italians from Romania RO.AS.IT.;
- Association of Macedonians from Romania;
- Association of Roma Party "Pro - Europa";
- The Community of Russian Lipovans in Romania;
- The Federation of Jewish Communities from Romania;

The Hungarian Democratic Union from Romania;
 The Union of Armenians from Romania;
 The Bulgarian Union from Banat-Romania;
 The Union of Croats from Romania;
 The Cultural Union of Ruthenians from Romania;
 The Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars of Romania;
 The Greek Union from Romania;
 The Union of Poles from Romania;
 The Union of Serbs from Romania;
 The Union of Ukrainians from Romania.

The fifth edition of the Conference “Interethnic Relations in Transylvania,” took place within the time framework 20-23 October 2022 in Sibiu. The conference approached the following:

- the presentation of interethnic relations by specialists in the field, with an emphasize on interethnic relations in medieval Transylvania and the neighboring regions and their historical relevance;
- the dissemination of scientific research on interethnic relations in Transylvania and their connection with central and south-eastern European space;
- the knowledge and promotion of the cultural, material and immaterial heritage belonging to national minorities in Transylvania;
- the promotion of history and the promotion of multidisciplinary approach on topics such as the history and archeology of the central European space at an interregional level;
- the promotion of the Transylvanian cultural heritage, as an integral part of the European cultural heritage;
- improving the image of Transylvania as a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional space.

In December 2022, the Department for Interethnic Relations created the catalog *Pandemics and epidemics of the past - multilingual communication challenges*, in partnership with the National Archives of Romania, the Brukenthal National Museum and the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. The catalog contains images of rare manuscript documents and historical decrees, issued in the past by administrative institutions that illustrate the use of the mother tongue to communicate with citizens of different ethnicities. In the context of the recent pandemic, the catalog aims to raise awareness that effective and timely communication in the mother tongue is a mechanism that can support State actions, confirming that the use of mother tongue over time in addressing formal communication generates trust and security.

Also, in the implementation of this recommendation, the Ministry of Culture has a special role.

The financial component for the implementation of these projects within the Priority Projects Program and/or the Emergency Cultural Needs Program was 535,000 lei in 2019; 139,000 lei in 2020; 140,000 lei in 2021; 429,000 lei in 2022; 628, 000 lei in 2023 representing up to 80-90 percent of the total expenses for each project. The financing is done as a result of a request for non-refundable financing submitted by the beneficiary non-governmental organizations, in accordance with the provisions of Government Ordinance no. 51 of 11 August 1998 regarding the improvement of the financing system of programs, projects and cultural actions. It should be noted that due to the restrictive measures imposed by the pandemic, in 2020 and 2021 the number of

cultural activities - held in person or within a certain timetable for the public were cancelled or held online.

The Funding Programme for Cultural Magazines and Publications also funds cultural magazines/publications submitted by associations of national minorities in Romania. The total funding amounted to 295,000 lei in 2019-2022; respectively 95,000 lei in 2022; 105,000 lei in 2020; 95,000 lei in 2019.

More information about the activities undertaken by the Ministry of Culture in the field of promoting cultural identity elements corresponding to national minorities in Romania can be found in **Annex no. 4**.

10. enter into a dialogue with representatives of minorities with a view to addressing shortcomings in the implementation of the rights to topographical signage in minority languages, and take a flexible approach over the introduction of signs displaying street names in minority languages;

Please see the response in reference to Recommendation no. 1.

11. review educational materials in close co-operation with minority representatives so as to increase awareness of issues of importance to national minorities, including about the Jewish and Roma victims of the Holocaust, and address potential bias contained in such materials;

The new Law on pre-university education provides the introduction of two new subjects: the core mandatory subject *The History of Jews. The Holocaust*, to be studied at high school (upper secondary level) and the optional modular discipline *Roma history, enslavement and deportation*, to be included among the optional disciplines at lower secondary and upper secondary education.

The school curriculum proposal was developed by the specialists appointed by the National Center for Policies and Evaluation in Education, a specialized institution of the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania "Elie Wiesel". The curricula was also developed in close consultation with the *Yad Vashem Institute in Israel*, the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, the *Memorial de la Shoah* in France, American Jewish Committee, *Bnai Brith International* as well as the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania and other national ministries and agencies, according to the provisions of Article 6 paragraph 1 of Law 174/2019 establishing the National Museum of History of the Jews and of the Holocaust in Romania.

The discipline *History of Jews. The Holocaust* became part of the core high school study plans as of the school year 2023-2024 and it is now being taught to all 11th grade pupils in high school and vocational education. Making this subject mandatory reflects the significant political and civic will for strengthening young peoples' and the society's resilience in face of threats such as antisemitism, xenophobia, discrimination and hate speech.

The syllabus was developed for one class/per week, throughout the whole school year and it is applied as follows:

- 11th grade, full-time classes, upper secondary education and vocational education, and evening classes, upper secondary education, technological route;
- 12th grade, special vocational education, special education in the upper secondary education; technological route and evening classes upper secondary education, theoretical route.

The syllabus aims to highlight the consequences of historical actions based on prejudices, stereotypes, xenophobia and racism, which persist nowadays.

Furthermore, teaching the *History of Jews. The Holocaust* will lead to a better understanding of the history, culture and traditions of the Romanian Jews, in full respect with human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as of the Jewish community's contribution to development of the Romanian society. This subject also approaches the deportation of Roma in view of their repression and extermination, in the context of the Transnistrian Holocaust under Romanian administration.

12. address the lack of minority language teachers through making the profession more attractive and finding effective solutions in co-operation with minority representatives;

With the adoption and implementation of the “Educated Romania” Project, which has set the policy priorities for 2030 in the field of education, Romania, through the Ministry of Education, has embarked on a process of transforming the teaching profession in order to re-establish its prestige and attractiveness and thus, attract more teachers and mitigate attrition.

The main policy objectives in this field aim at restructuring and improving the initial and continuous training of teachers, as well as the management of the teaching profession, based on teacher competences profile and standards. With regard to the initial teacher training, a great emphasis will be put on practical training/classroom practice, flexibility and supporting teachers at professional debut. In addition, a flexible career management system, with differentiated paths, is being developed, in view of attracting and retaining in the system teachers with excellent pedagogical skills.

Through the adoption of Law no. 198/2023 on pre-university education and Law no. 199/2023 on higher education, which entered into force in September 2023, a series of measures provided by the “Educated Romania” Project have been put in place. Among these, the following have particular relevance for teachers who deliver education to persons belonging to national minorities: the possibility to obtain tenure for only half of the didactical teaching load and more flexible options for initial training, including the possibility of changing the career path. In this respect prospective teachers can obtain a double specialization by pursuing a bachelor degree in teaching with a double specialization, while those who are already teachers have the possibility of changing their initial specialization, through professional conversion postgraduate study programs for the teaching staff.

Also relevant in this context is the implementation of the Didactic master's degree, which is an initial training program for the teaching career addressed to bachelor graduates interested in pursuing a career in education. The Didactic master's degree is currently included in the offer of eight major Romanian universities, which includes didactic master's degrees in some of the languages of national minorities for different field of specialization.

Moreover, Law no. 199/2023 on higher education provides that students enrolled at bachelor degrees programs in teaching with double specialization and in didactic master's degrees at a State university may receive a monthly scholarship in an amount equal to the net wage of a beginner teacher. In addition, in view of further ensuring flexibility and stimulus, the professional conversion postgraduate study programs mentioned above can be attended in parallel with the didactic master's degree. Also, students already holding a master's degree funded through the State budget can attend a didactic master degree tuition free (also through funding from the State budget).

With regard to teachers' remuneration, the salaries of employees in education (that is, teachers, auxiliary teachers and administrative staff) were increased as of June 2023 and subsequent raises will follow in 2024. In addition, as of the 2022-2023 school/academic year, teachers, and the auxiliary teachers in the State education system, as well as the administrative staff in State education, have received teaching career bonus. The teaching career bonus is intended to support teachers to adapt their educational competences, through participation in professional development courses, to embrace the digital transformation and to adapt/develop the corresponding digital skills and competences needed for education context, as well as to cover other specific didactical needs.

By means of the reforms and investments funded through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Romanian education system will undergo an important transformation process which will contribute to raising its quality and relevance, including through better endowment of schools, classes and laboratories (with equipment and resources, especially to support the digital transformation within education), support for schools facing difficulties (high risk of school drop-out), training programs (including at large-scale concerning the job teacher training programme for developing digital skills and competences) and a reform of the education system governance and of the teaching career management. All these actions will improve the conditions offered to both teachers and pupils and will have an important impact on raising the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

13. address shortcomings in the system of allocation of preferential seats in the parliament. The authorities are also called to review, in co-operation with minority representatives, the appointment procedures of the Council of National Minorities and of local minority councils with a view to making them more representative of the diversity within national minorities;

The participation of national minorities in public life, in decision making concerning the society as a whole is guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution.

Politically, national minorities are represented in the Parliament, take part in the Government and are consulted by it.

Article 62(2) of the Constitution on the election of the Chambers of Parliament establishes the right of representation and states that "organizations of citizens belonging to national minorities which fail to obtain the number of votes required for representation in Parliament shall be entitled to one deputy's seat, under the conditions of the electoral law". In the case of a national minority which has more than one organization of citizens belonging to that national minority competing in the parliamentary elections, the seat shall be filled by the candidate of the organization which receives the highest number of votes.

14. step up efforts in improving socio-economic participation of Roma, including through the full implementation of the “Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority 2022-2027” in close co-operation with Roma representatives. To this end, the authorities should earmark sufficient funding for the implementation of all measures outlined in the strategy, develop quantifiable baseline and target indicators to be regularly evaluated, and focus particularly on the specific needs of Roma women and girls.

Since February 2020, the National Agency for Roma (NAR) presented to the representatives of the Government and its Advisory Council (consultative body comprising about

60 Roma civil society organizations active in Romania, together with the President of the NAR) a set of public policy recommendations for Roma inclusion for the post-2020 period, the document on the basis of which the future National Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian Roma citizens was adopted by Government Decision. Numerous rounds of trilateral consultations were organized between the NAR, the National Contact Points for Roma within the Ministry of European Funds (at that time) and each relevant ministry in charge of the matter, in order to adopt the set of indicators for the policy measures proposed by the NAR, the targets and the national budget allocated for the sectoral action plans. Roma and pro-Roma civil society and the academic community were also given the opportunity to propose improvements to the policy measures. In all relevant policy measures in the action plans, most indicators had to be disaggregated by gender in order to reflect the gender dimension as well as youth. Also, as a novelty, the principle of intersectionality was included in the newly adopted NSRI (National Strategy for Roma Inclusion).

The new NSRI was adopted in May 2022 (Government Decision No. 560/2022) and is one of the 14 conditions in order to support the Roma community in its relations with the European Commission. The NSRI is based on six chapters: 1. Housing and infrastructure, 2. Access to quality education, 3. Employment and entrepreneurship, 4. Access to health, 5. Identity, traditions and cultural heritage of the Roma minority. Reconciliation with the past and recognition of Roma slavery, Holocaust and assimilation, and 6. Combating discrimination and anti-Gypsyism.

Roma women are actively involved in public life - many Roma language teachers or Roma school mediators are women, while the Roma health mediator is practically a gendered profession, intended for Roma women (for cultural purposes).

The number of Roma ethnics in government positions has increased; for example, Roma ethnics have been appointed as undersecretaries of state in various ministries, such as Education or Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities. Also, during the reporting period, the Romanian Parliament appointed two Roma professionals, former Roma civic activists, as members of the Romanian institutional mechanism for equality - the National Council for Combating Discrimination.

Many Roma women are present and/or lead the county Roma offices within the prefectures, being directly and effectively involved in the activation of the Joint Working Groups at county level for the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion at county level. Also, as of 2022, the Ministry of Health has appointed a well-known Roma professional woman as an honorary advisor to bridge the gap between health policy makers and Roma communities.

The *Strategy of the Romanian Government on the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority 2022 – 2027*, has as general objective to improve the quality of life of the Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority, based on active citizenship, socio-economic inclusion and enhancing Roma's cultural heritage.

In addition to the information presented above (Chapter I3), the following should be noted:

The full social inclusion of Roma depends directly on tolerant, open and empathetic attitudes and behaviors on the part of community members. Inclusive education is the main means of shaping tolerant human attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the activities initiated by the national authorities were particularly focused on the field of education and research.

In August 2022, Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR) organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education the project *Romani Language - preservation of history, customs, clothing, traditions and practices*.

The project was addressed to Romani language teachers and Roma history teachers of schools implementing teaching in Romani language, or in Romanian or Hungarian languages (where the subjects of the language, history and traditions of the Roma are studied). The project aimed to develop the cultural and intercultural component in the educational process, both at the community/local level and at the national level. 32 teachers participated in the 2022 edition of the Project.

Conceived in the form of a training course, the project had as general objective the development and expansion of the competences of the teaching staff in terms of non-formal education, specific intercultural responsibilities in education, consolidating specialized knowledge and practices. *The objectives of the event are included in the Action Plans regarding the specific objectives of the Romanian Government Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027* and consist of:

- preserving cultural identity and building self-esteem among Roma students;
- promoting modern culture of the Roma, revising school programs at all levels of education concerning the subject of history in order to teach the specific elements of historical traumas with negative consequences for the Roma minority in Romania;
- combating hate speech and anti-Roma attitudes that generate racial hatred or crimes motivated by racial hatred. During the edition were addressed, among other current topics in the field of education the following issues: theoretical foundations, principles, values, dimensions and objectives of intercultural education in general; elements of knowledge of the language, traditions, history and culture of the Roma.

In 2023 the Department for Interethnic Relations resumed the organization of the seminar "Roma Ethos", in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The event took place as a natural continuation of the project *"Romani Language - preservation of history, customs, clothing, traditions and practices"*, carried out in the period 2015 – 2022. The seminar brought together Roma and non-Roma teachers who work with Roma students, as well as school mediators.

The main objective of the seminar consisted of the implementation of some activities and measures included in the Romanian Government Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027 as described in Appendix no. 2 to the Strategy– The plan of measures related to the Specific *Objective 2 – Ensuring the access of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity to a quality inclusive education system*. In particular, was considered Action 1.5 - Preserving cultural identity and building self-esteem among Roma students and its subsequent measures: 1.5 .1 – Revision of the curriculum/"programs of school subjects" and school textbooks of history, civic education, literature, etc., at all levels of education and 1.5.3 – Training of teaching staff for all levels of education in order to teach Romanian language and literature, the history and traditions of the Roma.

22 teachers and 10 school mediators participated in the seminar. Amongst the topics included in the program are mentioned:

- History of education for Roma, in Romania;
- The contribution of the Romani language to the development of the Romanian language;
- School programs regarding the subject of Romani language and literature;
- Romani personalities present in Romanian society;
- Inclusive education in the school space;

- The school programs concerning the subject *History and traditions of the Roma*;
- The contribution of the Roma to the development of Romanian society;
- Curricular revision;
- Alternative teaching methods specific to the Romani language, the history and traditions of the Roma;
- School textbooks for Roma students.

The results of the project contributed to the promotion of modern Roma culture, as well as to the preservation of cultural identity among Roma students.

Also, within the Ministry of Investments and European Projects functions the National Contact Point for Roma (NCPR) which pursues that the policies and measures proposed at the national level are correlated with the recommendations at the European level, by orienting the efforts of social inclusion of the Roma mainly towards the areas of: education, employment, health, housing, non-discrimination.

In this sense, the National Contact Point for Roma (NCPR) within the Ministry of Investments and European Projects organizes meetings with civil society, monitors compliance with the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts.