

CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF VULNERABILITY: EVALUATIONS, PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Piatra Neamț, Romania, 23 May 2024

CONCEPT

Recent global developments have exacerbated the vulnerable situation of marginalised communities both at European and international levels. Challenges linked to war, the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic, the effect of labour migration on children, poverty and discrimination accentuate the situation and require for complex issues to be addressed on systemic levels.

The **Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)**, the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**, as well as the **National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights "Protected Children, Safe Romania" 2023-2027 (HG 969/ 2023)** are the three benchmarks in approaching the theme of this event.

With particular focus on marginalised and vulnerable communities such as the Roma, the [Strategic Action Plan of the Council of Europe for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025](#) addresses the disadvantaged situation of Roma by focusing on three main priority areas: promoting and protecting the human rights of Roma and Travellers, combating antigypsyism and discrimination, and fostering inclusion in society.

To address the issue of violence against children, in 2023, the Council of Europe adopted a ***Recommendation on strengthening reporting systems on violence against children CM/Rec(2023)8***. It includes guidance for member States in developing, strengthening and monitoring effective national systems for professionals and volunteers for reporting all forms of violence against children, as essential elements of national strategies address these issues alongside integrated and multidisciplinary child protection systems. Moreover, the recently adopted ***Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls*** mentions the fact that the vulnerability of Roma women and girls puts them at greater risk of other forms of violence, including human trafficking and domestic, sexual and other forms of violence and that Member States should work on their prevention while establishing victim protection services and designing, funding and implementing, with the involvement of women and girls, public awareness campaigns and relevant training programmes.

Inadequate housing and conditions in which children live, do homework or play, as well as the lack of resources for proper nutrition are aspects of poverty that need to be addressed

at local and national level. Education, access to social assistance or health services are essential for overcoming situations of vulnerability. In addition, there is a need to address new issues arising from substance abuse, human trafficking or cyberbullying that require adequate knowledge, skills and resources. With raise of labour migration, the children left behind by parents going abroad for work are particularly at risk of being affected by these phenomena, in the context of poor / inadequate support structures and protection services. In this regard, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has recognized in its **Recommendation 2196 (2021) on Impact of labour migration on “left-behind” children** that the impact of labour migration is often underestimated, and that left-behind children are a particularly vulnerable group that is largely invisible and not given sufficient attention.

The event "Children in situations of vulnerability: evaluations, problems and proposed solutions" is the framework within which the authorities and relevant institutions / organisations from the national level in Romania can present the current situation and expertise from the field, based on direct evaluations, identified problems and solutions. The multiple facets of children's vulnerabilities make it necessary to collaborate and share knowledge, approaches and identify the most appropriate measures while bringing forward proposals to improve existing policies and practices in the field.

CONTEXT

The ROMACT Programme aimed at strengthening political will and understanding of Roma inclusion at local and regional level was developed based on existing European and national policy frameworks for Roma inclusion. It has been implemented by the Council of Europe and the European Commission since 2013.

The Programme acknowledges that local and national measures are crucial for bringing improvements in Roma communities in key areas such as education, social assistance, housing, employment, and health.

ROMACT methodology emphasizes the involvement of individuals from marginalised communities in developing solutions and projects that target them and aligns with European social inclusion policies supporting also the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy at local level.

For more details on ROMACT, you can visit the official website of the Programme at <https://coe-romact.org/country/romania>

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- [draft AGENDA] –

23 May 2024 – Piatra Neamț, Romania

09.30 – 10.00	Registration of participants
10.00 – 10.30	Opening of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ana Opreșan – Programme Manager, Council of Europe ➤ National Council for Combating Discrimination ➤ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection ➤ National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption ➤ Neamț County Council ➤ Prefect's Institution - Neamț County/County Office for Roma ➤ Piatra Neamț City Hall
10.30 – 11.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SESSION 1 - HOUSING AND LIVING CONDITIONS ➤ Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration ➤ Ministry of European Funds/ Social Inclusion and Dignity Program (PoIDS) 2021-2027 ➤ Piatra Neamț City Hall / Directorate of Social Assistance ➤ Bacău County Council ➤ Florin Bottonogu, Expert ROMACT Programme - Adequate housing as a prerequisite for social protection - good practice on housing / Focșani case ➤ Social housing provision to vulnerable groups / - Iernut – Good practice Questions & Answers
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee Break
11.45 – 13.30	SESSION 2 – EDUCATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ministry of Education ➤ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection ➤ Ministry of Health ➤ National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption ➤ Neamț County School Inspectorate / Neamț County Center for Educational Resources and Assistance

- Directorate of Social Assistance Piatra Neamț - strategy, projects
- ROMACT Programme: Good practice projects/experiences, Reșita, other examples

Available funding

- Ministry of European Investments and Projects – Inclusion and Social Dignity Program (PoIDS) 2021-2027
- Ministry of Education - National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR)
- NE Regional Development Agency

Questions & Answers

13.30 – 14.30

Lunch Break

14.30 – 15.45

SESSION 3- NEW CHALLENGES – ADDICTIONS, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, ONLINE HARASSMENT, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- National Anti-Drug Agency
- National Agency Against Human Trafficking
- Neamț County Police Inspectorate
- General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Neamț
- Other relevant experts
- eLIBERARE Association / PROTECT – Human trafficking platform (eLIBERARE is a social movement against human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Romania founded in 2013 and pursuing in its activity several objectives which involve both education, prevention and combating human trafficking, as well as protecting victims and involvement in the process of improving the legislative framework)
- ALIAT Clinic (offers specialized medical services in the field of mental health and for the treatment of addictions)
- National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men – Domestic Violence

Questions & Answers

15.45 –16.00

Coffee break

16.00 – 18.00

**SESSION 4 – APPROACHING THE ISSUES OF CHILDREN
AT THE LEVEL OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS (LAG),
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)**

- LAG Piatra Neamț
- LAG Tulcea
- LAG Râmnicu Sărat
- LAG Videle (TBC)
- LAG Isacea (TBC)
- LAG Insuratei (TBC)
- LAG Targu Neamț
- LAG Zalau
- LAG Sfântu Gheroghe

Questions & Answers

CONCLUSIONS