



GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA
NATIONAL AGENCY FOR ROMA

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I. The historical background of the institution (National Agency for Roma)

The situation of the Roma has represented and will continue to represent a matter of interest for various social actors, both domestic and external: the scientific milieu, the Romanian political environment, the governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental sectors. On the other hand, what also matters is the overall social and political context of Romania: Romania's NATO accession and its future accession to the European Union allowed for a reorientation of policies towards various population segments which have been hard hit by the transition towards a market economy; the Roma population is one of these segments.

In this context, since 1997 the Romanian Government has paid an increased attention to the national minorities' right to express themselves and to the creation of a framework for the elaboration and enforcement of policies targeted at national minorities in general and at the Roma minority in particular.

In 1997 was the establishment of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities, headed by a Delegated Minister to the Prime Minister of Romania. This department included the National Office for the Roma, as an institution representing Roma interests and problems.

An year later, in 1998, the Department for the Protection of National Minorities established an Inter-ministerial Subcommittee for the Roma (ISR), made up of institution representatives and Roma representatives, brought together under the name of Roma Associations' Working Group (RAWG,

Romanian GLAR). The purpose of establishing the Inter-ministerial Subcommittee for the Roma was to prepare the White Paper for PHARE program RO 980301 "Improving the Condition of the Roma in Romania".

The results of the 2000 elections had a direct effect on the Roma representative institution, the National Office for the Roma, which was involved in the preparation of the White Paper. The Department for the Protection of National Minorities was dissolved, and its tasks were taken over by the Ministry of Public Information. The White Paper became a memorandum on the "Strategic Framework for Improving the Condition of the Roma", adopted by the Government on 7 December 2000.

Up to mid-2005, the role and the position of the National Office for the Roma in the hierarchy of institutions changed.

National Agency for Roma was set up at the end of 2004, as a result of political negotiations. Setting up the National Agency for Roma represents an important achievement in order to increase the visibility and to ensure the fulfilment of the previously Romanian Government engagements, regarding its full involvement in the process of improving o the Roma situation and to continue the public policies meant to decrease the gaps between the Roma minority and the society as a whole.

The initial official document for setting up the Agency - G.D.1703/2004 - stating its organizing and functioning status, stated a certain trend to substitute the new agency to the so called *line ministries* (dealing acting in the field of Education, Health, Labour etc.), a tendency which was criticized not only by the representatives of the civil society but also by some independent experts (Focus Consultancy Report, available on current website of NAR: www.anr.gov.ro)

II. Institutional building of the National Agency for Roma (NAR)

Thus, the first activity of the NAR employees was to debate and to elaborate a new vision of the Agency and the conclusions of this internal debate got shape in a new Government Decision for organizing and functioning of NAR: G.D 1124/2005.

1. Simultaneously with the adoption of the new Government Decision (G.D 1124/2005), the reorganization of the Agency led to an important rising of the number of its employees, inclusively by setting up its Regional Offices. Most of its 48 employees of NAR are young Roma, university alumni and who had previously activated in different Roma nongovernmental organizations; a significant share of the NAR personnel is represented by women. The activity of the regional offices is mostly oriented on accessing the structural funds, while the preparations for the absorption of a part of this sum are ensured through the IDF

grant totalling 350.000 USD, received by Agency accordingly with the agreement signed in September 2005, by the Ministry of Public Finance and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).

According to the new G.D. adopted by the Government in October 2005, the major attributions for NAR are the following ones:

- to elaborate the Government policy and strategy in the area of Roma minority protection;
- to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the social intervention sector measures mentioned in the Romanian Government Strategy for Improving the Roma Condition, approved by the Government Decision No. 430/2001;
- to initiate, participate and promote, along with specialised private non-governmental organisations and/or public institutions, of different sectorial actions and programmes, targeting the improvement of Roma condition as a political criterion for Romania's accession to EU;

In September 2005, the Ministry of Public Finance signed an agreement with International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in order to allot a grant of 350.000 USD (IDF Grant) to the National Agency for Roma.

The purpose of this grant is to strengthen access to the institutional capacity of the National Agency for Roma and of the central and local authorities in preparing and implementing the Roma social inclusion project.

The legal period for spending the money offered by the intermediate of this grant is of three years starting with the signature' date on the agreement letter concerning the granting of the financing and this not involves financial contributions or conditions from the part of Romanian partners.

The activities developed during March and April 2006 regarding the implementation of the IDF grant are the following: elaboration of the acquisition procedures; elaboration of the Terms of Reference for the engagement of the consultants on the fields identified in the project proposal, organizing of the „Curriculum Vitae” bidding and the selection of the consultants; selection of the facilitator of the IDF Grant; organizing the acquisitions Bidding and acquirement /acquisition of some equipments; identifying of training needs for the staff of the National Agency for Roma.

On 3rd of October 2006 it took place the ceremony of taking over the IDF Grant from the General Secretariat of the Government.

2. The NAR instruments in applying its new vision: partnerships and openness

2.1 In November 2005, through the Government Decision 750/2005 regarding the establishment of the Inter ministerial Council, it was set up within the Inter ministerial Council for education, culture, research, youth, sports and minorities, a Working Group for Public Policies on Roma

The President of the Work Groups is the State Ministry, Mr. Marko Bela, while the NAR president is its Vice-President. Regarding the collaboration with the Working Group and the civil society and other social actors, NAR stipulated, within its internal regulations, their participation as guests at the above mentioned working group' sessions.

2.2. In October 2005, it was set up a Consultative Committee of NAR (the president order No. 143/07.10.2005), a body consisting of personalities recognized for their contributions to the Roma issues and/or members of the most important institutions that signed the Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma.

2.3. By the G.D. 112/2005, it was established within the National Agency for Roma, the Department of Public and International Relations, having sections dedicated for youth, women, relations with NGOs and media. It was elaborated a strategy, meant to develop this compartment, which was included in NAR developing strategy for 2006.

2.4. Between 2005 – 2006, some strategic partnerships were concluded between NAR, the line ministries, specialised bodies, domestic or foreign governmental structures and NGOs which implement public policies for Roma in Romania: The National Agency for Workforce Employment (NAWE), the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), the National Agency for Equal Opportunities (NAEO), the National Authority for Child Rights Protection (NACRP), Open Society Foundation (OSF), the Association for Community Safety and Anti-Narcotics (ACSAN).

2.5. Besides the conclusion of these strategic partnerships by April 2006, the National Agency for Roma signed memorandums of collaboration and/or cooperation, conventions with other, domestic and foreign, social partners: the ministry of Education and Research (MER), OSCE/ODIHR United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), General Secretariat of the Government (GSG), World Bank (WB), and Ministry of Public Finance. A protocol was signed between NAR, GSG and Ministry of Public Finance regarding the management of the IDF grant funds allotted by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

In its vision, National Agency for Roma considers that the best solution in coordinating public policies for roma consist in consulting both partners from central and local level and especially with the active involvement of civil society.

II. Main assessments in the field of (a) elaborating, (b) monitoring and (c) evaluating of the public policies for Roma people in Romania

Main assessments in elaborating public policies targeting and containing measures for Roma

A) Government Strategy for Improving the Roma Situation in Romania.

NAR initiated the process of consultations with the central administration institutions, county structures and civil society, inclusively the Roma NGOs in order to elaborate, endorse and adopt the modifications and the completions regarding the Government Strategy for Improving the Roma situation approved by G.D 430/2001.

- In its session from 19th of April 2006 the Romanian Governemnt adopted a new decision, G.D. Nr. 522/2006, issued in the Official Journal of Romania, Nr. 371/28 IV 2006
- The new text of law initiated by NAR encloses a Master Plans of Measures for the period 2005-2008, reorganize and clarify the structures in charged with the strategy implementation and their key-roles and it complements to the Chapter 15 of the National Antipoverty Plan and Social Inclusion Promotion, up-dated at its turn with than AR participation
- The National Action Plans for the Decade of Roma Inclusion were elaborated according to the new framework of developing public policies issued by the General Secretariat of the Government.

B. Joint Inclusion Memorandum

Within the period September - December 2005, NAR contributed to the accomplishment of the Strategic Plans regarding the social inclusion, co-coordinated by the ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family on the priority: promoting social inclusion within the Roma communities.

C. National Development Plan (2007-2013)

The National Agency for Roma made, during the period September-December 2005, its consistent contribution for guiding and laying the basis of the priorities, of the measures and of the activities for the Roma ethnics, within the Sectorial Operational Programme - Developing of Human Resources, The consultative meetings were initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family as Management Authority for the Sectorial Operational Programme.

D. National Programme for Regional Development

During the period October-November 2005, within the consultative meetings initiated by the ministry of European integration, - The National Strategy for Regional Development , NAR made recommendations for including the Roma population within the National Programme for Regional Development (priorities 1 and 4)

E. National Anti-Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion Plan

NAR was involved in consultative process for the elaborating of the National Anti-Poverty and Promoting the Social Inclusion Plan, for the period 2006-3008 and which was approved by Government Decision.

Tha national plan for the implementation was monitored and there are still activities which will begin in October 2006. The data base with the persons without identity papers and property documents will be developed by the regional structures.

F. The Social Inclusion Programme

During 2005, the National Agency for Roma, participated actively at the consultative meetings initiated by the lines ministries aiming to elaborate the Technical Fiches required for the Social Inclusion Programme based on the fields of housing, employment, education and health. The consultative meetings with the Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF), with the World Bank, and with the Department for Programme Implementation and Structural Adjustment (within the Romanian Government) meant to

prepare the Social Inclusion Programme (proposed to the Romanian Government to be included in the country strategic partnerships with WB) also constitute important contributions of NAR.

During the period of 2 - 4 of May, NAR participated along with the romanian delegation at negotiations for the Social Inclusion Plan. The negotiations between the World Bank and the fourth institutions who are involved in the process of implementation (MLSF, MEdR, NAR and RSDF) had as a result the loan made by the Romanian Government through MPF for implementing a project in 5 years.

Sequential, this project will be implemented during the period of 2006-2011 in order to increase the capacity of the National Agency for Roma regarding the Roma Social Inclusion.

On 4th of June, the Memorandum for the Loan was signed.

G. Policies for Social inclusion of the Roma - best practices in

The National Agency for Roma is partner within this project, co-coordinated by the Catalan Government, the Department for Family and Social Affaires. The purpose of this project is to disseminate the best practices in elaborating social policies regarding the social inclusion of the Roma in Europe and it is developing for a period of two years between Sep. 2005 and July 2007. NAR is partner within this project along with partners from Spain, Finland and Belgium.

The community development program of Hădăreni, County of Mures

- Hădăreni.

Starting with October 2005, the National Agency for Roma organized the process of ensuring the fulfilment of the Romanian Government engagements regarding the European Court of Human Rights' decision on Hadareni case. Within a partnership concluded with Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Tourism, it was elaborated a community development program local for a three year period (2006-2008). The Government adopted this programme in its executive session of 19 of April 2006 called: Decision for the approval of the community development programme for the

locality of Hadareni, Mures County . The Government Decision regarding the community development Programme is No. 523/2006.

The coordination of the programme will be accomplished by the General Secretariat of the Government , the National Agency for Roma and the line ministries involved in its implementation. The National Agency for Roma will take the financial responsibilities for the programme development.

- **Community Developing Programmes initiated by the National Agency for Roma**

On the basis of its strategic function established by the G.D. 1124/2005, the National Agency for Roma initiates and participates, along with other institutions and NGOs at the process of elaborating of some community development projects and programmes.

1. Between October 2005 – April 2006, beside Hădăreni programme, NAR initiated other 8 community development programmes, in partnership with institutions and NGOs, in the following localities: Cetatea de Balta (Alba County), Brahasesti, (Galati County), Pitesti, (Arges County), Cuza Voda, (Constanta County), Nistru, (Tautii Magherus commune, Maramures County), Chitila neighborhood (Bucharest), 4th District of Bucharest and Lipscani Area (1st District of Bucharest).

2. The National Agency for Roma is collaborating with the General Secretariat of the Government for elaborating the multi-annual PHARE programming documents. The first priorities contained in the PHARE 2004 fiche are targeting: the completion of a full research regarding the persons who lack identity documents, the elaborating of a system of monitoring and evaluating the Strategy and trainings provided to the NAR personnel and to the county Roma experts in the fields in monitoring techniques. After the completion, at the national scale, of the research addressing the assessment of number of the persons who lack identity papers, it is proposed an investment component meant to solve this delicate situation.

c) Main assessments in *Coordinating public policies for roma at international level*

In coordinating public policies for Roma, NAR will assure the diversity of public policies initiated both at national and international level.

- **The Decade of Roma Inclusion**

The Romanian Government took over since 2004 the Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

1. In October 2005, it was elaborated a document concerning the Romanian's priorities for its presidency period, respectively July 2005-July 2006, a document discussed with young Roma leaders, with the delegates at the Decade sessions at approved by a Prime-minister Decision.

2. In November 2005, it was elaborated the draft law regarding the Ratification of the Management Agreement of the Trust Fund between the Romanian Government, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Association for Development; the Trust Fund is supported by several donors of the Decade for Roma inclusion and the agreement was signed on 17 November 2005.

3. It was organized the second ISC Roma Decade Reunion, scheduled to take place at the beginning of June 2006, simultaneously with the workshop: "mainstreaming complementarities with targeting" in the field of the public policies for Roma people.

4. On the Agency website: www.anr.gov.ro there are published the reports on every activity contained in the national and international activity plan for the Romanian presidency period, implemented by NAR

5. **Interconnected activities for the Decade of Roma Inclusion**

The Presidency of the Decade, assured by the NAR was involved in 2006 in 2 presidencies:

5.1. The Presidency of the Decade for Roma Inclusion - NAR has been involved in the process of taking certain socio-economical, participative, organizational measures.

During the period 4-5 of May, NAR was present at the *International Conference on the Implementation and Harmonization of National Policies for Roma, Sinti and Travellers: Guidelines for a Common Vision* as a co organiser, with the substantial support of the Romanian Government, the Presidency of the Decade for Roma Inclusion, European Commission, CoE, OSCE, PER. The reunion was organised in Bucharest and had as a main purpose identification of good practices within the ISC members – Roma Decade, in the areas of: housing, employment, the relation with the police.

d) Main assessments in *Monitoring public policies targeting or referring to roma*.

In November 2006, according to the Social Inclusion Project, within the National Agency for Roma it will be set up a department responsible with monitoring the level of social inclusion for roma. The department will be set up with 8 experts in monitoring public policies and they will elaborate a monitoring strategy which will be applied by all the structures responsible with the implementation of policies targeting social inclusion of roma.

- Publications under NAR patronage

a) Publishing and Releasing of the study “Roma Social Mapping- *Targeting by a community poverty survey*”, accomplished along with WB and Mr. Prof. Dumitru Sandu PhD (bilingual publication RO-ENG)

b) Publishing Releasing of the Report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Master Plans of Measures of the Strategy for Improving the Roma (bilingual publication RO-ENG)

c) Publishing and Releasing the study „Public policies for Roma- trends and perspectives”, by the NAR, and Institute for Research the Quality of Life (bilingual publication RO-ENG)

d) Republishing the book „ Gipsies’ abolition of slavery , cancelling the land owners’ privileges, gipsies’ emancipation”, by M.Kogalniceanu

e) Publishing and releasing the book: “Housing and extreme poverty: the case of Roma communities” (bilingual publication RO-ENG).