



INEQUALITIES IN ROMANIA

**DESPITE RECENT IMPROVEMENTS
IN ROMANIA, POVERTY AND INCOME
INEQUALITY REMAIN HIGH, AND REGIONAL
DISPARITIES ARE DEEPENING**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Income and wealth

One in three Romanians is at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Despite falling slightly in the last two years, monetary poverty is one of the highest in the EU, affecting 23.6 % of the total population in 2017. 35.7% of the population¹ and 41.7% of children² are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Causes of poverty include inactivity, low educational attainment, intergenerational transmission of poverty and lack of inter-regional mobility. At 18.1% in 2017, the rate of early leavers from education and training (ages 18-24) remains one of the highest in the EU. In rural areas the rate is 27.1% and among the Roma 77%.³ 38.7% of children up to 15 years old are functionally illiterate.⁴ In 2014, 72% of families could not provide a minimum acceptable diet to their children under 5 years old.⁵ Poverty and social exclusion levels in rural areas are more than twice as high as those in cities.

The income of the top 20 % of the population is 6.5 times greater than the income of the bottom 20%.⁶ High income inequality levels are more the consequence of the poorer being relatively poorer rather than the richer getting relatively richer. Romania has the highest rate of in-work poverty in the EU (17.4 %).⁷ The rate of in-work poverty is five times higher for low-educated workers than for university graduates. While women are twice as likely as men to be inactive,⁸ Romania's gender pay gap, at 3.5%, is the lowest in the EU.⁹

While labour market performance has improved, overall inactivity and especially inactivity of women remain a concern. There are not enough people with the skills that the labour market needs and will need in the future. The design of social inclusion policies, the availability of social services and social transfers are still not fully effective at getting people out of

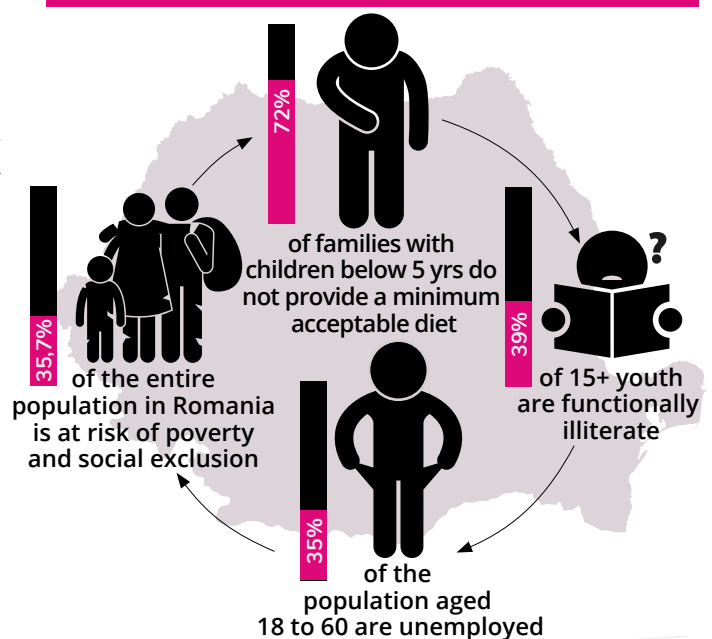
poverty and lack an integrated approach combining employment, health and education measures.¹⁰

Although Romania has a national plan on social inclusion and poverty reduction for 2015-2020, and has passed a comprehensive package of 47 measures to combat poverty, some key measures, including increasing the employment rate, reducing early school leaving rate, scaling-up of national health programs have been delayed.

Gender

The employment rate for women aged 20-64 is 60.6% compared to 78.9% for men.¹¹ The difference is greater for middle-aged women whose inactivity rate is 5% higher than the EU average,¹² mainly due to childcare responsibilities.

ROMANIA - THE CYCLE OF RURAL POVERTY



Source: WorldVision

Patriarchal attitudes, though changing, still persist. 12% of respondents to a World Vision survey¹³ said that women who work cannot care for their children as well as non-working women; 36% believe that women do not need to be fulfilled both personally and professionally; 16% think that men cannot take care of children as well as women; and 16% believe that men can manage businesses better than women.

Roma

3.3% of the Romanian population are Roma (2011 Census).¹⁴ Their living conditions are markedly worse than average, characterised by informal, unhygienic and irregular settlements. 78% of Roma are at risk of poverty (35% for non-Roma); over 60% of Roma went to bed hungry at least once a month (less than 20% for non-Roma); 84% of Roma households have no water, sewage or electricity (52% for non-Roma).¹⁵ Lack of identification documents and/or property deeds precludes some Roma from accessing public services and claiming their rights. The sustainability of programmes to boost inclusion and raise living standards is challenging as existing projects are fragmented and rely heavily on external funding.¹⁶

Migration

In almost three decades Romania has lost 23.3 % of its working-age population due to emigration,¹⁷ causing a 0.6% to 0.9% drop in annual GDP growth. Over 3 million people are estimated to have left the country, with a large proportion of highly qualified among them. The Ministry of Health estimates that 43,000 doctors left the country in the decade after accession to the

EU,¹⁸ while demographers estimate that Romania's population will fall by 22% by 2050, the steepest projected global decline, due to a combination of emigration, high mortality and low birth rates.¹⁹

Recommendations

- Strengthen targeted activation policies and integrated public services, focusing on those furthest from the labour market.
- Give special priority to education. Allocate 6% of GDP to education instead of the current 3.7%.
- Improve access to quality mainstream education, especially for Roma and children in rural areas.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social transfers, particularly for children, and continue social assistance reform.
- Integrated social services should be made available for rural communities.
- Ensure stronger commitment to cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially at grassroots level.
- Improve the efficiency of the health system, with increased funding and better outpatient care, focusing on rural areas and the most vulnerable.
- Develop the action plan for Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 as soon as possible, involving CSOs at all stages.
- The "Leave no one behind" principle should identify and address the causes of vulnerabilities and inequalities and promote respect for human rights.

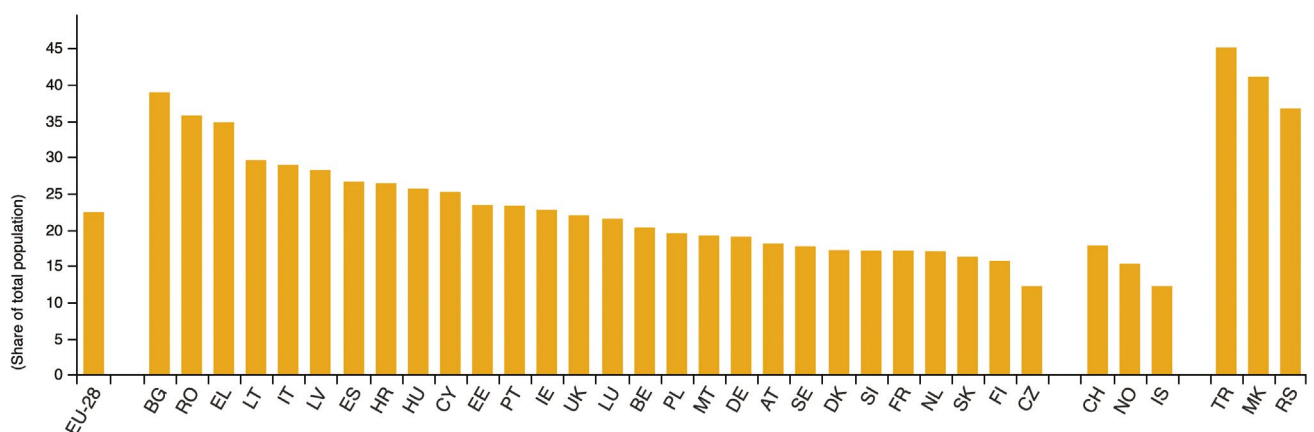
INTRODUCTION

1. What are the most striking inequalities in your country? Which social groups in your countries are the most affected by inequalities?

Although decreasing, poverty and inequality rates remain very high in Romania. In 2018, the head of the European Commission office in Romania declared that “Romania still displays a paradox of social inequality and poverty, while the country’s economic growth stays above the European Union average. The rural area and children remain among the disadvantaged groups, as one in two Romanian children face poverty risks”.²⁰

According to the 2019 edition of the European Semester, one in three Romanians are still at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Despite a decline of 2 pps compared to 2016, monetary poverty is one of the highest in the EU, affecting 23.6 % of the total population in 2017. 41,7% of children are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Poverty and social exclusion levels in rural areas are more than twice as high as those in cities. Moreover, Romania has the highest rate of in-work poverty in the EU (17.4 %).²¹

At risk of poverty or social exclusion rate, 2017



Note: Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, North Macedonia: 2016 data instead of 2017.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_peps01)

The income inequality has declined over the past 2 years, but remains one of the highest in the EU, reflecting in part the weak redistributive capacity of the tax and benefit system. More than 1.5 million people earn under EUR 3 per day (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018).²² and 3.9 million people suffer from severe material deprivation. Opportunities are unequal, in many respects. High poverty levels are associated with unemployment, low education attainment, high intergenerational transmission of poverty and regional disparities. The share of children living in poverty or social exclusion (4 out of 10) is one of the highest in the EU. Socioeconomic status greatly affects students' performance, deterring sustainable growth in the long-run. The education and care systems are not conducive to sufficiently independent living and to the employability of people with disabilities.²³

a. What are the groups left behind? Who is furthest behind? Which groups or people are the least represented?

The most striking inequalities in Romania are related to poverty, low employment and insufficient education. The most affected categories are children and the population in rural areas, Roma and people with disabilities.²⁴

b. If possible, can you describe the situation in your country with regards to the relevant targets of SDG 10 (see the targets and indicators below)? Common Themes for all countries: Income, at-risk-of-poverty, gender and environmental inequality (see Eurostat and World Inequality Data Base for income and at-risk-of-poverty)

3. What are the structural causes -underlying political, economical, social, environmental, historical reasons - of these internal and external inequalities (as mentioned in questions 1. and 2.)?

Income inequality remains high, with regional and gender gaps

Income inequality remains well above the EU average. As shown in the Social Scoreboard accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights, the income of the top 20 % of the population exceeds by 6.5 times the incomes of the bottom 20 % (EU: 5.1) (Eurostat). High income inequality levels are experienced particularly within the working-age population, and can be attributed more to the poorer being relatively poorer rather than the richer getting relatively richer. The rate of in-work poverty is five times higher for low-educated workers than for university graduates. Men are more exposed to this risk than women. However, women are twice as likely as men to be inactive.²⁵

The lack of integration of employment, education, health and social services hinders the sustainable inclusion of diverse disadvantaged groups enter employment and escape social exclusion.²⁶ The poverty among workers is twice higher compared with EU average. The high share of unpaid families from rural areas contributes to this rate. The risk of poverty and social exclusion among Roma people is three time higher than for the rest of population. It's much higher compared with other member states that have a significant Roma minority. Roma live in outskirts communities and two thirds of them live in places that don't have the minimum sanitary facilities.²⁷

The activity rate of women is low, despite the overall positive economic conditions. The activity rate of women aged 20 to 64 is 63.7 % (20 pps below that of men). The situation is particularly critical for young and middle-aged women whose inactivity rate is 5 pps above the EU average, mainly due to personal and family responsibilities. This is primarily due to low participation of children aged 0-3 in formal childcare (15.7 % in 2017). The lack of efficient measures to promote an early return of women to the labor market further aggravates the situation. The inactivity rates of women aged 25-49 are 24.7 % for RO and 19.7 % for the EU (Q3-2018, Eurostat data).²⁸

The number of young people neither in education, employment or training is decreasing, due to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The share of young people neither in education, employment or training stood at 15.2 % in 2017, down from 18.1 % in 2015 and 17.4 % in 2016, but is still among the highest in the EU. The proportion of beneficiaries taking up an offer within the 4-month target has increased significantly from 25.9 % in 2016 to 40.2 % in 2017. However, the Youth Guarantee coverage of the young people neither in education, employment or training is poor (only 14 % of this group aged 15-24 are registered). These points to the limited outreach measures implemented so far and to ineffective coordination between the education, employment and social sectors. In the meantime, emigration remains very high among young people, with Romania being one of the EU countries with the highest numbers of emigrants aged 15 to 24 (European Commission, 2018).²⁹

Access to the labor market is particularly challenging for certain social categories. The share of long-term unemployment in total unemployment declined from 50 % in 2016 to 41.4 % in 2017. However, a large part of the people in this group either remain unemployed (73.2 %) or fall into inactivity (13.2 %), with only about one in eight (12.3 %) being registered with the public employment service, one of the lowest registration rates in the EU. 35, 2% of the population aged 18 to 60 is unemployed, while 20, 8% of young people aged 15-24 have no

occupation. At the same time, the employment rate for people with disabilities (43.5 %) is slightly below the EU average (48.1 %). The labor market participation of people with low educational attainment, which also include persons from the Roma community, is low, as only 46 % of them are active. (Measures co-financed by the European Social Fund such as targeted employment subsidies and job coaching are planned but their implementation is delayed).³⁰

Rural-urban inequalities regarding development opportunities remain high, despite the measures adopted by authorities for their reduction. These inequalities influencing the quality of life of children and families affect areas such as: access to basic services (health, education, social protection) and specialized quality services, living conditions (including access to utilities), the level of income and the areas of activity adults work in, leisure opportunities.

Children living in poverty are more likely to remain poor in their adult life due to inequalities of opportunity. Romania has the highest share of children living in poverty in the EU. The poverty risk for children is directly correlated with parents' education level, and this correlation grew stronger in 2017. Moreover, due to shortcomings in the education and health systems, children born today are set to enter the labour market with only 60 % of their real potential, the lowest level in the EU³¹. Compared to the EU average, families with low incomes report higher difficulties in affording education for their children. The existing offer of public services and the education system do not manage to address this challenge. Growing inequalities of opportunities also affect other vulnerable groups such as young adults and the Roma community.³²

According to the 2018 *Child Wellbeing study in rural areas*, a report done by World Vision Romania, as part of the Make Europe Sustainable for All Project, the main factors influencing the poverty and social exclusion risk threatening children in rural areas are: the composition of the household (the number of adults and of children), income, the education level of adults, living conditions. Romania registers a greater

poverty risk in the families with over three children and in those with only one parent. Therefore, in 2016, in the families that have children, the poverty risk is of 42, 5%, but is increased with 30% in those with three or more children (72, 6%) and also over 16% in those with a single parent (58, 2%). The education level of parents represents an important explanatory factor of child poverty, as a higher level of education is associated with a lower degree of poverty. If 74,3% of the children threatened by poverty live in households where parents have middle school studies at best, the percentage decreases to 47,2% for those whose parents have graduated a vocational school or a high school, and to 15% for those whose parents have university studies. The rate of severe material deprivation in children is of 30, 2% in Romania.³³ The main inequalities-related findings of the 2018 *Child Wellbeing study in rural areas* are presented below:

Income

In the 2018 WVR Child Wellbeing in the rural areas research, more than one half of the households (53, 3%) consider that they are facing financial issues, as their income is placed in the vulnerable category (15, 2% define their income as being insufficient to cover their basic necessities, and 38, 1% say that their income hardly covers one month), and over one third (38, 3%) are able to manage with the income they have.³⁴

Housing and utilities

regarding the access to utilities and the equipment of homes with indoor bathrooms and toilets, Romania is the European country with the fewest homes equipped with sanitary facilities. EUROSTAT data of 2016 indicates that 36,3% of Romanian children (0-18 years old) live in homes with no indoor bathroom or shower, the EU average being of 2,4%; 34% of the children between 0-5 years old live in homes with no indoor bathroom or shower, the EU average being of 1,7%. At the same time 39,4% of Romanian children live in homes with no indoor toilet, the EU average being 2, 6%; 35, 5% of the children aged 0 to 5 live in homes without indoor toilets, the EU average being of 1, 8%.³⁵

Health and nutrition

The health and nutrition of the child in the rural environment still presents a series of problems, in relation to both hygiene and food quality, and the permanent access to medical services. Deficient hygiene creates a series of problems in the rural environment, which can affect the health of children, especially when it comes to households without sanitary facilities (indoor bathroom, toilet and current water), which usually are also the poorer. About 20% of the children in the households without indoor toilet or current water do not wash their hands after using the toilet.

In the rural environment, child's nutrition deteriorated compared to previous years, in terms of quality and quantity, about two thirds of the families being forced, in the past year, to buy cheaper (71%) or fewer (61%) products, due to financial constraints. Even though the financial situation of households has improved during the past six years, 9% of the children in the rural environment eat 2 meals per day only sometimes, 2% never do, 6% sometimes go to bed hungry, while 3% always do, 5% only sometimes have enough food to eat, and 3% never have enough food, in 5% of the cases the family never has enough income to buy what they need (including clothing and footwear). Access to primary health care improved within the past 8 years in the Romanian rural environment, 81% of the respondents declaring that in 2018 the doctor is present always on working days, compared to 65% recorded in 2014. However, 3,5% declare that the doctor is present in the commune only once a week or even less, and 2% say there is not doctor in the locality, which makes their access to primary health care not permanent, and delaying the treatment and diagnosis of their various diseases.

When it comes to pregnant women, access to healthcare remains faulty, as during their pregnancy 6% of them were not examined once by their family doctor, 9% haven't had any tests, 14% haven't had any ultrasounds, and 20% were not subjected to any gynaecological exam during their pregnancy. The importance of medical examinations during the child's first two years of life is not known in the rural environment.

For this reason, in 16% of the households with children aged 0 to 2, the family doctor hasn't performed any visits during the child's first 2 years of life, while the community nurses have failed to visit 45% of them. 10% of the mothers have not given their children vitamin D products during the child's first 2 years, (0-18 years old) and 37 % of the 0-2 years old children didn't receive anaemia prevention supplements.

Furthermore, when it comes to children aged 0 to 5, the lack of medical examinations represents an issue in the rural environment, 10% of the respondents declaring that their child did not benefit of any examinations from the family doctor during the past year. In half of the families, children aged 0 to 5 have did not have any medical tests performed. One third of the children under 5 years old haven't got their vaccines performed according to the vaccination scheme.³⁶

According to the 2019 European Semester the health of the population remains below the EU average, despite recent improvements.

Life expectancy at birth was 75.3 years in 2016, compared to 81 years for the EU.³⁷ The highest shares of avoidable deaths were registered in Romania (48.6%) compared to the 33,1% at EU level³⁸. Ongoing initiatives include screening campaigns for oncological and cardiovascular diseases and a legislative initiative on vaccination. In addition, the current national multiannual plan promotes various healthy living initiatives.

Education

The educational system is underfinanced and administrative capacities to modernise it require strengthening. Investment in education remains one of the lowest in the EU (3.7 % of GDP %). This gap is particularly relevant at pre-primary and primary levels of education which are key to preventing early school leaving, ensuring equal opportunities and tackling inequalities later in life. The participation of children aged 4 to the starting age of compulsory primary education is below the EU average (88% vs 95% in 2016). Pre-school participation is particularly low in rural areas and among Roma.

Only 15.7 % of children aged 0-3 are enrolled in nurseries (EU: 34 %), including due to lack of facilities. The Ministry of Education is in the process of drawing up cost and quality standards and the necessary curricula, together with training for specialised staff. EU funded activities are being implemented but face delays. Despite efforts to introduce a competence-based school curriculum, almost 40 % of teenagers lack the basic competences in reading, mathematics or science.³⁹ Only 38 % of Roma children attend kindergarten (FRA, 2016)⁴⁰.

The involvement of the child in chores within the household or outside it also influences the quality of his involvement in school, the percentage of young people working in the household increasing compared to that of the last study wave. 79% of the young people work in the household, and 4% outside it, the latter usually coming from poor families. Compared to 2016, the current research indicates almost a doubling in the number of children working in the household and then feeling tired at school (6,3%) and of those skipping school in order to go to work (5,5%).⁴¹

Early school leaving remains very high, hampering the development of high skills. The rate of early leavers from education and training stood at 18.1 % in 2017, almost 8 pps above the EU average. The indicator is particularly high in rural areas (27.1 %) and among Roma (77 %, FRA, 2016). Functional illiteracy reached almost 38.7 % according to 2015 PISA result tests for children up to 15 years old.⁴² The early school leavers reaching 18.1% out of the school population⁴³, have alarming increases in rural areas, 22% higher for the lower **secondary education** than the urban.

An integrated approach to prevent early school leaving is still missing. There have been only scattered efforts to improve the quality of education in schools with high dropout rates. A project setting up an early warning system to identify pupils at risk of drop out started in 2018, monitoring the index of socio-educational risk⁴⁴. Access to second chance programmes is insufficient and their design is not tailored to the needs of adult learners. The provision of career guidance services is limited.⁴⁵

Discrepancies between rural and urban education are increasingly visible in terms of **education**:

- School attendance (**enrolment** of 79.4% vs. 100.2%, and **graduation** of 74.1% vs. 98.6%)⁴⁶,
- Quality (grades <5 are 23.2% vs. 13.6%, and grades >9 are 4.3% vs. 14%)⁴⁷.
- Cost of education per child/school year – 662 \$/rural vs 743 \$ urban, taking in account the minimum average wage/year is 3.456\$

The difference between the results of the children from urban and rural at national tests is confirmed by the results on the national tests in 2017. 35, 3 % of the 8th grade pupils from rural areas obtained low results, compared to 14 % in urban schools. Only 68, 3% from pupils in rural areas passed the Bacalaureate exam, compared to 83, 5% in urban areas.⁴⁸

Equity in education, the rural-urban gap and Roma inclusion remain key challenges, with consequences for inclusive growth and inequalities in society.

Gender

Inequalities present in the rural environment are not exclusively related to income, but also to gender roles in the family and society. The tendency is for the increase of the non-discriminatory attitude of adults towards gender roles, but in the Romanian rural environment there still are various stereotypes related to gender and the role of partners within a family: in the view of 12% of the respondents, women that work are not able to care for their children as well as non-working women do, 36% believe that women do not need to be fulfilled both personally and professionally, 16% think that men can't take care of children as well as women do, while 16% believe that men can manage businesses better than women. Even though most adults do not have discriminatory attitudes regarding the importance education holds for both sexes, 4% consider that education is more important for boys than for girls.⁴⁹

Disability

People with disabilities have limited support to achieve independent living and access employment.

Care for people with disabilities is mainly focused on providing medical assistance rather than enabling independent active living. Children in this group have limited access to pre-school facilities and drop out of school twice as often as other children. The education system does not prepare them sufficiently for an independent life.⁵⁰

Roma community

the situation of the Roma community shows very little progress.

The living conditions of part of the Roma community are characterised by informal, unhygienic and irregular settlements. Eight in ten Roma live in a house without running water and only one in two has medical insurance. Lack of identification documents and/or property deeds precludes some Roma from accessing public services and claiming their rights. Implementing the National Roma Inclusion Strategy is being hampered by the fact that coordination between line ministries is not always a priority. The implementation of the National Roma Platform is still pending. Several Roma inclusion projects through integrated measures, co-financed by the European Social Fund, are under implementation. Sustainability of the measures is, however, challenging as the existing projects are fragmented and rely heavily on external funding⁵¹.

4. How is your country responsible for inequalities at the international level/between countries? For example: trade, migration, development cooperation, tax policies etc...

The continued emigration of the labour force challenges sustainable economic growth. In almost three decades Romania lost 23.3 % of its working-age population due to emigration (World Bank, 2018). The decrease in annual GDP growth due to emigration is estimated at 0.6 to 0.9 pps (IMF, 2016). Over 3 million people are estimated to have left the country, with the highest numbers leaving from the larger cities. Emigration from poor rural areas and of the young population (15-34 years old) is prominent in the Nord-Est and Sud-Muntenia regions .⁵² This phenomenon is likely to enhance disparities between the regions and countries.

5. Do you think there are good practices/instruments/policies that have been developed by your government and civil society in your country to reduce/fight inequalities? If yes, please specify which.

Government strategies in implementing the “leave no one behind” principle

The Romanian Government has made progress in putting forward measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion. Romania adopted the National Strategy and Strategic Action Plan on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for 2015-2020, and it passed a comprehensive anti-poverty package of 47 measures to combat poverty in the country through 2020. Some of the key measures, including increasing the employment rate, reducing early school leaving rate, scaling-up of national health programs and others will strongly contribute to narrowing the urban-rural poverty gaps.

Taking in consideration the national context, Romania adopted the National Employment Strategy 2014-2020 (NES) and a corresponding action plan approved by the Government's Decision no. 1071 from 11th December 2013. NES proposes, on short term, a set of objectives such as: improving the legislation in force regarding employment and social dialogue, combating black market, developing and diversifying active measures for the employees, rising financial support and fiscal incentives for employers, consolidating professional competences of the workers, improving the employment rate in rural area, rising the competitiveness on labour market and strengthening the performance of public agencies for employment.

The number of young people neither in education, employment or training is decreasing, due to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, from 17.4 % in 2016 to 15.2 % in 2017.

The negative aspect in 2018 is the fact that there is a high probability that a lot of measures will have a limited and delayed impact. For example, as most of the funding to support the anti-poverty measures/projects comes from the European Structural Funds and there is a delay in actually utilizing the funding, it's possible that most projects' implementation will face even more difficulties besides the administrative and bureaucratic ones. Also, the level of investing (including social investment) is very low. The longer-term success will hinge on the capacity to effectively target and absorb available EU funding.⁵³

Some examples of projects funded with European Structural financing that can support the efficient delivery on national poverty target:

- In order to increase access to sustainable and quality services, in 2018, the Government allocated ESF funds to create and develop integrated community services in 139 disadvantaged communities (132 in rural and 7 in urban areas). The integration of health and social services, the development of affordable and quality social care and the community healthcare network will benefit from ESF funding.

- Other projects aim poverty reduction and socio-economic integration of people in marginalized communities, including those with Roma population, both in developed and less developed areas. In March 2018, 112 projects were contracted (out of which 71 for Roma communities), with investments being made to participate in early education and prevent early school leaving, facilitate access / retention on the labor market, entrepreneurship, social services and medical, improving living conditions, anti-discrimination actions and legal assistance. Investments that contribute to the physical, social and economic revitalization and to the improvement of the quality of life of the urban population are financed by the Regional Operational Program.

- Ensuring food aid and facilitating access to education are essential for reducing poverty among people subject to severe material deprivation. In the 2014-2016 period, 6,347,777 underprivileged people (of whom 1,277,604 children under the age of 15) received basic food packages and benefited from social inclusion measures as a result of FEAD funding. To prevent school dropout among the most disadvantaged children, in the school year 2017/2018, approx. 360,000 children from preschool, primary and lower secondary education receive school materials.⁵⁴

At the same time, the Romanian Government undertakes to assist people and families in difficult situations with a future programme – Minimum Inclusion Income (MII). MII conciliates measures to tackle poverty and consolidates three social assistance benefits (i.e. minimum guaranteed income, family support allowance and house heating aid). The MII is considered to be the main support measure to prevent and tackle poverty and social exclusion, including for poor families with children. MII was supposed to enter into force on April 2018, but its implementation was postponed for April 2021.⁵⁵

Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 approved in December 2018 include a chapter on inequalities aiming to reduce disparities, to eliminate discrimination in all its forms, and to promote progressive policies for the achievement of a fair society, especially in terms of taxation, salary levels, education, and social protection. The document is acknowledging a double "risk of poverty or social exclusion" in rural areas (51.7%) compared to urban areas (24.3%) in 2016. This risk of poverty in rural Romania is double to the risk of poverty in rural EU (25.5%). One of the strategy targets is to bring Romania closer to the EU average for 2030 in terms of the indicators for sustainable development, but the action plan to implement the strategy is not in place⁵⁶.

According to the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), Romania provided €284.76 million (0.155% ODA/GNI) in ODA in 2017: €124.57 million in bilateral and €160.19 million in multilateral ODA. Romania reported in July 2018 for the first time the progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the UN High-level Panel Forum in New York. Interested civil society organisations were able to provide input on the draft Voluntary National Review and the Ministry of Environment accepted the request put forward by the Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND) to have a civil society organisations representative in the national official delegation to the Forum. A new revised national sustainable development strategy was finalised in 2018 after public consultations with relevant stakeholders, civil society organisations included, but its implementation plan is still under development.⁵⁷

6. What are your demands to your government to reduce inequalities/to achieve SDG 10 (at the national level and within the EU)?

The complexity of the development inequalities between urban and rural areas, the persistence of an extreme poverty and social exclusion risk among vulnerable categories requires cross sectorial approaches with focus on the following measures:

Labour market

- Strengthen **targeted activation policies** and **integrated public services**, focusing on those furthest away from the labour market.
- Strengthen the **National Employment Agency's services** to employers and jobseekers, in particular by **tailoring** services to jobseeker profiles, better **linking them with social services** and reaching out to unregistered young people.
- Fight **undeclared work**
- **Minimum wage** setting mechanism

Education

- Romania should allocate 6% of the Gross Domestic Product for education instead of the current 3,7%
- **Increase the quality of education at rural community level** through training of teachers to apply new digitalized teaching methodologies, improvement of the school infrastructure, access to interactive teaching materials, school counselling, collaboration between school and parents.
- **Policies and incentives to attract and retain qualified teachers in the rural areas**
- Improve **access to quality mainstream education**, in particular for **Roma** and **children in rural areas**.
- Ensure better **access to early childhood education and care**
- Increase the quality and access to vocational education and training, apprenticeships, tertiary education and of lifelong learning and adapt them to labour market needs.
- Step up efforts to implement the envisaged measures to favour the **integration of Roma** in the labour market, increase school attendance and reduce early school leaving

Social policies and access to integrated public services

- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of **social transfers**, particularly for children, and continue **reform of social assistance**, strengthening its **links with activation measures**.
- Allocate funding and improve **access to integrated public services**, extend basic infrastructure and foster economic diversification, in particular in **rural areas**.
- A stronger commitment to **cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships**, especially with actors working at the grassroot level (including local authorities and CSOs).
- Policy actions and interventions to address the massive emigration (migration of healthcare professionals, of educators, of youth "brain-drain", etc. and its socioeconomic negative effects (children/ women, elderly left behind, depopulation).

Health services

- improve the **efficiency** of the health system by improving **access and funding**
- Increase the availability of **outpatient care**, with focus on rural areas and most vulnerable categories.

Sustainable development

- Develop the action plan for Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 as soon as possible and involve CSOs in both development, and monitoring and evaluation process.
- The "Leave no one behind" principle should identify and addresses the roots of vulnerabilities and inequalities and promote the respect for human rights, making sure that the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaches "first those who are furthest behind".

- ¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators/europe-2020-strategy/headline-indicators-scoreboard>
- ² https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en
- ³ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-romania_en_0.pdf
- ⁴ <https://cdn.edupedu.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Rapoarte-Romania-Educata.pdf>, pg 23
- ⁵ World Vision Romania. ""Bread for Tomorrow" Programme - a chance for education for children living in poor communities" 01 November 2016. <https://www.wvi.org/romania/article/bread-tomorrow-programme-chance-education-children-living-poor-communities>
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- ¹² The inactivity rates of women aged 25-49 are 24.7 % for RO and 19.7 % for the EU (Q3-2018, Eurostat data)
- ¹³ The research sample included 2.186 households, from 65 of the villages in which WVR carries or has carried out its activities. We collected information from 2186 adults and 2258 children aged between 7 and 18 years old. The data collected has been analyzed comparatively for the period 2012 – 2018.
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The European-wide project **Make Europe Sustainable for All (MESA)** is coordinated by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and implemented in 15 European countries by 25 partners. It aims to raise citizens', CSOs', and policy-makers' awareness on the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the 193 Member states of the United Nations in 2015. At the core of the project are campaigns and advocacy on inequalities, sustainable agriculture, gender equality, climate change, migration and sustainable consumption and production. This report was produced as part of the **Fighting Inequalities** in Europe campaign of the project, and contributes as well as the global **Faces of Inequality** campaign, which gives social exclusion, poverty and discrimination a face.

#SDGS4All ■ <https://makeeuropesustainableforall.org> ■ <https://makeeuropesustainableforall.org/fight-inequalities>
<https://gcap.global/faces-of-inequality>

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and communities worldwide to help them reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Working in nearly 100 countries around the world, World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Child well-being in rural areas is the organization's focus in Romania. World Vision Romania aims to change mentalities regarding community involvement in the children's lives based on child protection concepts.