

Comments on the status of implementation of the Romanian NRIS

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The present documents is a synthesis of a larger report on the situation of the implementation of “*The Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority for the Period 2012-2020*” (NRIS - National Roma Inclusion Strategy, *hereinafter*) prepared for the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, to be launched in May 2013.

NRIS is replacing a previous policy documents that expired in 2011 (strategies adopted in 2001 and revised in 2006). In 2009 the *Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks*¹ proposed a new strategic approach based on the assumption of “*a genuine and constant political approach of the challenges for ensuring equal opportunity policies for the Roma minority*”. This recommendation is hardly reflected in the text of the actual NRIS, it remains a goal to be achieved considering the limited political capacity of the Roma community to act as a strong and reliable partner in relation to public bodies.

The main observation on the Romanian NRIS is that it does not fulfil the existing governmental standards for elaboration of public policy documents². Multiple construction problems may be depicted from the analysis if the NRIS, and we can conclude that NRIS does not meet the requirements of the above mentioned decision, generating significant difficulties to implement and monitor it. As for the **Action Plans attached to the NRIS, they are defined as public policy documents and have to comply with certain standards**³ **that are not fulfilled also, the result being the impossibility of putting them into practice buy the institutional system.**

During 2012 there were almost no new development related to the NRIS, there were no clear actions for actual implementation of the new policy, in a context in which the Romanian Government used the expected assessment of the European Commission (mid 2012) the European Commission as a reason for not taking clear actions.

Due to the fact that NRIS was adopted in December 2011, after the adoption of the 2012 State Budget, the funding of the different measures mentioned in NRIS remained without a clear source of funding. The 2012 election year in Romania made the funding of NRIS outside of the top governmental priorities and there is no clear allocation of financial resources to the NRIS implementation. Practically, the NRIS measures that were actually in place were the ones that have been implemented on a regular basis by the Ministries. At this moment, the discussion on the state budget for 2013 is on the way and there is no information available on the status of preparation at national, regional and local level for funding the NRIS measures.

The National Agency for Roma (NAR) a central public administration structure having a central and regional development, responsible for “*applying, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the sectorial social intervention domains measures that are part of the Romanian Governmental Strategy for Improvement of the Condition of the Roma*”⁴ and is acting as “*secretariat of the Mixed Committee for Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategy*”⁵. There is a certain contradiction regarding the institutional status of NAR and its formal roles. The Governmental hierarchy is placing NAR on a level of subordination under the supervision of the General Government Secretariat, and therefore there is no competence or authority to coordinate policies across line ministries. As presented above it is rather

¹The extended report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks: Risks and Social Inequalities in Romania/*Riscuri și inechități sociale în România*, p. 212. See http://www.presidency.ro/static/CPARSDR_raport_extins.pdf

² Government Decision no. 870 of 28 June 2006 approving the Strategy for improving the development, coordination and planning of public policies at central government level

³ GD 870/2006, Annex, Section II, Lines of Action, 1.1. Types of policy documents

⁴ Order of NAR President no. 80/03.03.2010, article 3

⁵ Order of NAR President no. 80/03.03.2010, article 4

curious to have a structure without authority and competence over the ministries to be responsible for elaboration, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the NRIS measures.

Also, the National Contact Point for the NRIS, the prime-minister's councillor had to coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of the of the NRIS implementation, no relevant information being at the moment available on the status of activities in this area. In this context it is relevant to mention that the actual NRIS has no baseline data that would allow a proper monitoring and evaluation.

Romania is still in the programming process for 2014-2020, the consultation phase (finalization of the documents expected in April 2013), and there is no financial commitment yet on the Roma issue, even if the discussions are mentioning the problems faced by Roma.

The participation of the Roma civil society organizations is still an unresolved issue. The generous principle of participation of the Roma briefly described in the NRIS: "*the active involvement of Roma ethnics in these actions is essential. To this end, starting form 2012, the NAR shall take actions for establishing a mechanism for consultation and permanent involvement of the civil society in implementing and monitoring the Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity*", did not prove to be put into practice.

When talking of coordination of different layers of governance involved in implementation of the NRIS, it is rather difficult to find solid signs of coordination. Also, the activity of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, a formal structure consisting of high level governmental staff, is still to be publicly presented to the general public and international bodies interested. The actual accomplishments of such coordination body are still to be seen.

The activity of the so-called Ministerial Commissions on Roma, structures that existed also during the previous period, is rather low and there are almost no public information regarding their results.

The National Contact Point for the NRIS, which is also representing the so-called Central Department for Monitoring and Evaluation has no clear functionality and operational resources to achieve its responsibilities. It is rather debatable and difficult to assess how robust are built the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, when such a mechanism is based on the "*support and real involvement of the civil society. It is envisaged that this will extend the partnership area through increased role and direct participation of the NGOs and other structures at national level with expertise in implementation and monitoring of the Roma programs, of the Roma NGOs and local initiative groups representing the local Roma communities.*"⁶

A discussion on the monitoring and evaluation of NRIS is relevant only if the public policy document is elaborated according to the standards, but the NRIS is lacking fundamental content elements of the elaboration of policy documents: the problem is not clearly stated, there are too many direction for action, no clear priorities, no clear operational objectives, no envisaged outcomes, diffuse responsibilities, very limited resources and mechanisms for allocation etc.

Therefore, the government should be urged to make a significant revision of the NRIS according to it's own standards of elaboration for public policy documents.

⁶ Presentation form Damian Draghici on the status of NRIS monitoring and evaluation http://www.ndr.ro/INTRANET/Documents/4%20Prezentare%20Damian%20Draghici_329.pdf