

**BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ NAPOCA
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Social Inclusion in Romania. From Concept to the Implementation of Public Policies for the Inclusion of the Roma

**Thesis scientific coordinator:
Professor Maria Roth, Ph.D.**

**Doctoral candidate:
Florin Moisă**

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Key terms: social inclusion, public policy, Roma issue, public policies for the Roma

Social Inclusion in Romania. From Concept to the Implementation of Public Policies for the Inclusion of the Roma

Summary of the thesis

The Roma have been an intense debated topic of discussion over the last 20 years both in Romania, as well as internationally. While these analyses of strategies, policies and programmes have been many, those who have engaged with this body of literature are aware of the need for a systematic attempt at data gathering regarding the Roma and the need for improving the coherence of programmatic documents pertaining to this group in Romanian society. At the same time, the inconsistency and poor sustainability of outputs of implemented policies, programmes and projects aimed at the social inclusion of the Roma make the case for the proposition of a different paradigm. It is this broad context in which the present doctoral study wishes to make a contribution.

Ten years after the adoption of the first policy document aimed at the improvement of the situation of the Roma, the Romanian government has placed the adoption of a new strategy on the public agenda, intended to improve the situation of this ethnic group. This has happened once more not as a result of the government's interests, but at the request of the European Union. Through a communication of the Commission addressing the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions, entitled "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", the EU has created a new legal framework for the adoption of national strategies aimed at the social integration of the Roma.

The aims of the doctoral research were the following:

- To analyse the problematisation of social inclusion at the European and the national level;
- In the context of the implementation of social inclusion mechanisms in Romania, explore the changes that have taken place in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies in Romania;
- To analyse the situation of the Romanian Roma population from the vantage point of the four policy areas included in the international Decade for Roma Inclusion initiative, i.e. education, employment, health and housing;
- To analyse the foundations, design, implementation and evaluation of public policies aimed at the social inclusion of the Roma in Romania; and
- To propose possible alternatives for the formulation of future policies aimed at the improvement of the condition of Romanian Roma.

The starting point for this study has been the recognition that the integration of the Roma in Romanian society has become increasingly complex, in an increasingly unfavourable national and international context and a policy approach, especially at governmental level, which has favoured an anti-poverty agenda. The situation of the Roma community in Romania has attracted attention from a vast number of very diverse institutional actors, both public and private. Roma representative bodies have been formed nationally and in international institutions. EU directives have been issues, laws and governmental decisions formulated, all targeted at improving the situation of the Roma.

The current situation of the Roma in Romanian and Europe – a brief introduction

With around 22 million inhabitants, Romania is home to a large number of ethno-national communities (2002 Census) – amounting to around 10% of the population – who are officially recognised as such. According to the 2002 census, 535,140 citizens referred to themselves as being Roma, i.e. 2.46% of the entire population (21,680,974 inhabitants). In spite of this, debates regarding the real size of this group of citizens continue. Some researchers (Zamfir, Preda, 2002,

13-14) have argued that around 4.3% of the total population in fact identified as Roma (962,423 individuals), while figures based on hetero-identification suggested a Roma population of 1,515,626 individuals (6.7%).

According to 2002 census data, around half of the Romanian Roma population is young: 253,231 Roma (47.4%) were 19 or younger. Moreover, one third of the Roma population was constituted by children, aged 14 or younger, and the average age of the Roma community was 24.

The diversity of Roma communities is a significant, yet arguably underutilised aspect in sociological studies. While historical and anthropological studies have revealed the existence of at least 40 groups of Roma, the importance of traditional families and clans today is greatly diminished. Some researchers have outlined the difficulties of studying Roma communities through kinship ties¹ due to the fact that in contemporary Romania kinship is no longer an important source of identity among a vast majority of the Roma (Burtea, 2002, 52). As a result, recent studies (Burtea, 2002, 71-74) have presented 14 extended families / clans, among whom other, smaller groups may be discerned: blacksmiths, shoemakers, musicians, florists, horse traders, sieve-makers, silversmiths, dyers, *cocalar*, bear-tamers, cauldron-makers, *rudar*, silky Roma, settled Roma. Some sociological studies have engaged with the issue of diversity among Roma communities, proposing five ethnic levels of Roma (Zamfir and Zamfir, 1993, 57):

Table 6. Five levels of Roma ethnicity

- | |
|---|
| A. Roma who bear all traditional ethnic features and who identify themselves in all circumstances as Roma (official, administrative and informal) |
| B. Roma who bear all traditional ethnic features, are typically identified by others as Roma based on their lifestyles, but who refrain from self-identification as Roma in official, administrative circumstances |
| C. “Modernised” Roma, with a modern lifestyle, bearing no signs of a traditional way of life, who identify themselves as Roma in formal and informal settings and who, as a result, are identified by others as Roma, based on their self-identification as Roma (Roma activists, Roma intellectuals, business people etc.) |
| D. “Modernised” Roma who either do not or only occasionally identify themselves as Roma ; who may or may not be identified by others as Roma |
| E. “Former Roma”, who have integrated into the mainstream population at the expense of losing all distinctive features and who do not identify as Roma |

In short, one may discern between a traditional group, a mixed group and three different non-traditional groups. Self-identification is key to categories A and C and identification by others is necessary in demarcating four out of five groups. It is obvious that the “modernised” Roma who tend not to identify themselves as Roma (category D) and those who have integrated completely in mainstream society (category E) cannot really be regarded as members of the Roma community since many of the issues self-identified and hetero-identified Roma face might not be familiar to them. Roma who may be characteristic of groups A or B are deemed in this study to be the targets of social integration policies as it is these groups who face the greatest need for intervention.

Theoretical and conceptual approaches to the understanding of the Roma issue

theoretical perspectives reviewed are the social pathology approach, the social disorganisation approach, the concept of deviant behaviour, the idea of conflict of values / interests and the labelling based on each of these propositions. According to the analysis in the study, neither of the theoretical perspectives reviewed is able to offer a satisfactory approach to discuss the issue of the

¹ Traditionally, the nucleus of the Roma community used to be the family, and a group of related families made up a clan. The clan (*ceata*), which generally consisted of 30-40 families who had the same occupation and travelled together through the country, used to be the classical form of Roma community. A clan was part of a “neam” (tribe), a group of communities that were united not so much by family ties/ blood relations, but by a common trade.

Roma as an example of a social problem. The social pathology approach is least helpful for the formulation of a theoretical grounding for the study not least because this approach is increasingly less used to explore complex social problems, including the issues associated with the Roma. The social disorganisation approach may be useful in addressing questions to do with the migration of the Roma, especially internationally. The mass exodus of Roma groups towards different civilizational milieu, particularly Western, have been associated with processes of acculturation specific for social disorganisation. It should be noted, however, that the observable persistence of emigrant Roma's lifestyles in spite of the pervasive influences of receiving cultures suggests that the effects of social disorganisation have been limited, at the same time causing, however, conflict in the receiving Western societies due to these differences in values and lifestyles.

Often the so-called deviant behaviour of Roma individuals may be better understood as a particularity of a lifestyle grounded in resources to be found at the margins of society and whose use, rightful or illicit, engenders the risk for deviant behaviour. The relevance of the conflict of values / interests approach for understanding the issues faced by the Roma may be the most substantial. Discussions about the inertia that characterises their traditional lifestyles and their resistance towards the adoption of a more modern way of life are important. This apparent resistance towards modernisation may be seen as an obstacle that should be addressed by policies and programmes targeted at the social inclusion of the Roma. Thus, a discussion of the issue of the Roma is significant for the formulation of problems, their debating, the formulation of a consensus, the elaboration of policies and their implementation through interventions and support programmes, in short, a thorough reform concerning social inclusion. Therefore it is this theoretical approach that is deemed to best serve an endeavour centred on public policies aimed at solving social problems.

Representations of the Roma tend to be negative, grounded in prejudice and stereotypes of the other and generate particular attitudes and behaviour on both sides. Roma seem to be a familiar reality for everyone, anyone can express an opinion, which is frequently categorical and negative as far as the Roma are concerned. The common practice of othering is key to understanding the issue that is posed by the Roma. This othering takes shape when individuals recognise and acknowledge differences regarding lifestyles and behaviours and leads to marginalisation and exclusion, as well as self-marginalisation and self-exclusion, forming a massive barrier against any effort aimed at social inclusion.

It is for these reasons that all of the aforementioned theoretical approaches may carry some relevance, although limited and specific for particular aspects to do with the Roma issue. Together, however, they can contribute to a scientific understanding and explanation that is both nuanced, as well as comprehensive.

In the context of the failure of public policies aimed at the Roma, that of the lack of any political will to address problems that Roma face, that of Romanian society's inability to finalise the economic transition towards a market economy that is able to generate wellbeing for all members of society, it is clear that a new paradigm for thinking about the Roma issue is necessary. This new approach is rather pragmatic, instrumental and inspired by mechanisms of social inclusion and public policy measures that can genuinely address the problems of vulnerable groups.

Social inclusion – Romania in a European context

The building of an inclusive society is vital for the achievement of the European Unions' objectives of durable economic development, the qualitative and quantitative improvement of paid work and greater social cohesion. During the pre-accession period, the concept of social inclusion automatically became a readily used Romanian concept, but void of content since the definition to be found in the Romanian thesaurus appears to have little to do with the ways in which this concept is understood in policy documents. The Romanian language might, nevertheless, offer a better understanding of the term as inclusion is defined as the "action of inclusion and its result;

encapsulation, engulfing". At the same time, public and private bodies in the social domain have started using another concept, that of *social exclusion*, through which a better understanding of the notion of social inclusion might be attempted.

As it has been defined in a variety of EU documents, *social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the margins of society and are not allowed to fully participate due to their poverty, lack of basic skills, lack of access to life-long learning or as a result of discrimination*. The outcome of social exclusion is individuals' inability to access jobs, decent incomes, education and other training opportunities, as well as social and community activities. Socially excluded citizens have reduced access to power and decision-making bodies and, as a result, often feel powerless and unable to take charge of the decisions that affect their lives daily. The concept of social exclusion offers a framework for understanding and analysing complex interdependencies between complex life circumstances, social problems and social categories.

Social exclusion may affect individuals, groups of citizens and entire communities and has become, in many European member states, the basis for public policy development and the elaboration of programmes for social development and social services in an attempt to break vicious cycles of various social disadvantages through the effective use of and development of social capital, through excluded groups' and communities' capacity building.

Theories of social exclusion focus on the difficulties, barriers that obstruct the improvement of disadvantaged groups' circumstances and that further perpetuate social inequalities. Exclusion, even if it focuses attention to the analysis of the most disadvantaged groups in society, is a widely accepted concept in the literature without pejorative connotations and meanings (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2006, 10). Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Economically excluded citizens do not have access to jobs, to incomes and material resources to function appropriately in society. At the same time, the socially excluded interiorise the distance they feel towards other groups, a distance that may be measured through the level of residential segregation, the probability of belonging to the same social networks, the incidence of intermarrying and degrees of interaction within social organisations (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2006, 11).

The social exclusion of the Roma population is an extremely complex phenomenon and the socio-economic disadvantages are often coupled, for all vulnerable groups, with prejudice, wide social distancing, the low incidence of social relations among the different groups and a very low capacity to influence. It should be noted that social exclusion may be regarded as an indicator of social development, reflective of widely shared values and norms at any given point in time. Someone marrying a person of another ethnicity may be regarded as progressive, without prejudices against a particular society, but at the same time may generate, for instance, the exclusion of his/her spouse from his/her own family and community. Such experiences are still common among traditional Roma, who avoid couples that marry without the agreement of the two families and who may be excluded from their native communities, with all communication blocked. To be disadvantaged may mean a variety of different practices in different societies, at different points in time.

Social progress does not necessarily take place at the same time for all members of societies and, as a result, one will always be able to discern social norms pervasive among certain groups in society, but not shared by others although norms shared by a majority will enjoy prominence. Technological progress and the explosion in communication technology have brought about new facets of social exclusion. Groups that have limited access to resources are extremely affected, their handicap growing exponentially when compared to their better educated peers, with access to more resources etc., a phenomenon called the "digital divide".

The concept of the *underclass*, as defined by scientists such as Charles Murray is representative of individualist and culturalist theories that put great emphasis on individual choices of self-exclusion and which may also be used to describe ethnic groups such as the Roma, but much less valuable in discussing other vulnerable groups, such as children at risk, for instance. The concept has evolved, but has remained unconvincing to scientists, sociologists and political

scientists, who have continuously doubted its utility, as Murray himself recognises: “No one really talks about the underclass anymore, apparently for a good reason.²” As Marian Preda stated, „even if accept the fact that the people we are talking about are “under” the rest of society, below, at the bottom of the social hierarchy (in terms of income or behaviour), they do not represent a “class” (with a class conscience, identity etc.). But we are also unsure whether they really are at the bottom of society. It is for this reason that this compound concept should not be considered a scientific one ... although it has become so popular in Western common parlance, as well as in political debate and certain (more or less) scientific studies.” (Preda, 2007, 91)

Public policies targeting the Roma issue – theoretical perspectives and the actual situation

This chapter analyses the essential aspects of public policy making in Romania based on the theoretical model of the cycle of policy-making. The Romanian government has legislated, through recent normative acts³, a new approach to the reform of the policy-making process at central level in an attempt to improve the quality of governance and the management of public policies.

The idea of modelling the elaboration process of public policies was first introduced by Harold Lasswell (Fischer, Miller, Sidney, 2007, p.43) in the paper entitled “*The Decision Process: Seven Categories of Functional Analysis*” (1956). His model proposed seven stages that formed the basis for the development, in the 1960’s and 1970’s, of a body of literature focussing on different policy-making models. It may be stated that today the model of the public policy cycle is a conventional one – agenda setting, the formulation of policy, the decision-making process, its implementation and its evaluation. In essence, all policy-making models have at their core a problem-solving model, a rational decision-making model. Any decision-making process should be based on a comprehensive analysis of problems and aims, followed by the collection and analysis of information and the formulation of the best alternatives to attain the goals set (Jann, Wegrich, 2007, p. 44). It may be noticed that these distinct steps have a certain chronology and this process is characterised by entries – *inputs (financial resources, human resources, materials used)* and exits – *outputs (the products: goods and services that result from the intervention and which are relevant for attaining the goals)*. Outputs in turn become inputs for the ensuing stages in the elaboration of the policies (Jann, Wegrich, 2007, p. 44).

This leads to the policy-making cycle, one that may be perpetual. Jann and Wegrich (2007, p. 44) believe that this model is still a simplistic and ideal model and in most instances in the observable world, public policies are rarely grounded in comprehensive analyses and end up, instead, modified, reformulated, adapted, changes that do not always correspond with the policy-making cycle. Moreover, the implementation of public policy may produce undesired outputs in other fields of public policy.

According to Romanian governmental documents (Briggs, Petersone, Smits, 2006, p. 16), public policies follow a complete cycle made up of four stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making and implementation. At a closer look, there are a series of smaller steps within each of these stages that need to be followed in order to complete the cycle. For example, after the agenda setting stage the formulation of policy implies the identification of the problem, the formulation of alternatives and an ex-ante evaluation of likely outcomes. After the formulation of the policy, the political decision-making process is followed by a decision-making process concerning its financing. The actual implementation stage is concluded by an ex-post evaluation of the policy’s outcomes.

² See <http://www.aei.org/papers/society-and-culture/poverty/the-underclass-revisited-paper/>

³ See http://www.sgg.ro/index.php?politici_publice_legislatie, Public policy section, for a comprehensive list of all legally binding documents in force.

According to the “Strategy for the improvement of the system of public policy elaboration, coordination and planning in central public administration” (Annex to HG 870/2006), there are three different public policy documents: (1) the strategy; (2) the plan; (3) public policy proposals.

The strategy (HG 870/2006) is a *public policy document with a medium- and long-term perspective, in essence the Cabinet’s policy towards a particular policy domain that requires a wide breadth of decisions to be made*. A strategy-type policy document is necessary when a new policy is formulated or when a set of policies concerning a particular field of government activity is subjected to substantial change. Strategies generally target a well-defined sectorial domain and they must be interlinked with *national frameworks and, in a particular systematic fashion, should demonstrate how the national goals and objectives through the identification of sectorial interventions should be realised* (Grimwood, Sics, Tulea, 2009).

The plan is a document that operationalizes the implementation process of public policies and may be formulated after the adoption of a strategy or public policy proposal. Depending on the time frame considered, there may be short-term plans – specific –, as well as medium- and long-term plans – more general in character.

The public policy proposal is the document the implementation of which is aimed to actually address specific public problems. Since the discussion is about public problems, a variety of methods to address these may exist, methods generated by various factors, including economic, legal, resources-related, religious, environmental and not least political ideological factors. Given its high complexity, public policy proposals have judicial implications, meaning that they may lead to the adoption, modification or annulment of existing legislation.

Approaches to social inclusion – policy goals and achievements in Romania over the last decade

Rapid changes in contemporary society have led to the abandonment of classic modes of production and we are entering an age of permanent risk. As a result, there is a need for new approaches in which the welfare state’s main goal should be the management of risk and the transfer of responsibility from the state to the individual. Therefore there is a need to enhance individual capacity for economic survival with outcomes that need to still be discussed and evaluated, especially for groups considered to be vulnerable.

At a conceptual level, a more or less coherent preoccupation for social inclusion may be identified in the Romanian context, as well, as early as the early 1990’s. However, the actual implementation of concerns formulated in policy is more recent. 2003 was in this regard a decisive year when, at the request of the EU, Romania initiated the elaboration of and in 2005 adopted the first document addressing the issue of inclusion: the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM). This strategic and pivotal document identified the key problems and challenges that vulnerable groups in Romania faced, as well as the directions for action that needed to be taken. In order to ensure the coherence of all policy initiatives aimed at social inclusion, Government decision no. 1217/2006 was adopted, the focus of which was the creation of the mechanisms for the promotion of social inclusion in Romania and outlines the different levels of government responsibility, central and county-level.

The elaboration of the mechanisms for social inclusion in Romania had been slow, taking almost ten years (1995: The National Council for Combating Poverty) until 2005-2006, when Romania’s pre-accession preparations required the formulation of a complex mechanism regarding social inclusion. This mechanism of social inclusion in Romania is a complex structure of vertical and horizontal connections, but its efficacy and efficiency remains to be demonstrated as so far only national strategies regarding inclusion⁴ and reports void of data about the inclusion of different vulnerable groups have been issued. While there is institutional capacity to put into motion this complex mechanism of social inclusion, in the context of fiscal austerity that has

⁴ See <http://www.mmuncii.ro/ro/634-view.html> for a variety of statistical data and reports.

brought restraint in social spending and limits to social and medical services, the introduction of additional insurance for services considered unessential and the allocation of services for programmes of social inclusion are likely to remain limited. A brief review of the Ministry of Labour's "Set of indicators of social inclusion in 2010" suggests that data collected was generic, referring to the entire population and more specific references are made to populations of different development regions, urban and rural areas, for men and women and "other" differences, but no specific data is provided concerning the Roma population.

The research approach

The research approach is combining the theoretical conceptual analysis, qualitative empirical and exploratory analysis, social documents analysis, quantitative data analysis and critical analysis of public policies.

It brings together several topics, in particular social inclusion, public policies, programmes and projects designed for Roma, the situation of the Roma. As a result, instead of a set of hypotheses, the study is driven by a set of research questions, the answers to which are seen to form the basis for conclusions and recommendations for future public policies targeted at Roma:

- In what ways do relevant actors for the implementation of policies, programmes and projects perceive the issue posed by the Roma?
- How do these actors perceive the efficiency, efficacy, impact and sustainability of policies, programmes and projects aimed at the Roma?
- To what extent are representative structures of the Roma involved in the designing, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects targeted at the Roma?
- Which are the most important policies, programmes and projects aimed at the improvement of the situation of the Roma over the last 10 years?
- Who are the actors involved in the financing and implementation of policies, programmes and projects aimed at the improvement of the situation of the Roma?
- To what extent have public policies and other legally binding documents targeted at improving the situation of the Roma been elaborated in concordance with public policy standards elaborated by the Romanian Cabinet?
- Which are the main indicators used to capture the current situation of the Romanian Roma population?
- Is it possible to elaborate a profile of social problems faced by Romanian Roma as a starting point for an ex-ante evaluation necessary for the formulation of public policies?

The methodological approach chosen for the formulation of answers to the above research questions took account of the complexity and diversity of Roma communities and an attempt has been made to combine quantitative and qualitative data in the following manner:

1. A qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews

The topic guide used for interviewing was based on shared experiences of participants, in this case that of social exclusion among the Roma and the public policies, programmes and projects targeting this population. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews were carried out with the following groups of participants between May and July 2009:

- 3 Roma activists, leaders of NGOs whose organisations have been active in implementing programmes for Roma;
- 2 Roma activists who had been leaders of the National Agency for the Roma;
- 7 public servants and appointed officials (2 of them Roma), representatives of central public administration.

The aim of these interviews was to highlight the more important themes and nature of the issue studied, explore the correlation of certain elements and models of action, approaches to policy implementation, future perspectives etc. The analysis of the interviews was done through

analysis of narratives, the major themes of interest had been outlined in the interview guideline facilitated the collection of opinions of interviewees on these issues. These major themes formed the core of a narrative description that featured interviewees' shared experiences and directed the researcher's approach to relevant accounts for understanding the current status of implementation of public policies for Roma.

The interviews with public figures, specialists and practitioners in the field are opening the possibility to understand the subjective aspects of the perceptions of the politicians, political leaders or civil servants from public administration that can facilitate or block the elaboration of public policies with relevance for Roma population. Several limits of the method have to be mentioned here:

- The interviewees tend to remain in their institutional role, situation that is imposing certain constraints in terms of language, details, interpretations, predictions, evaluations;
- Especially the civil servants will use a politically correct language and will offer answers with high desirability;
- The most frequent references are from the field of activity of the interviewee, therefore a constant come back of the interviewer to some topics is needed.

Still, using a confidentiality climate, with a correct reciprocal trust level, I consider that the answers received were honest and the content of the information was well directed and helpful in terms of deepening certain topics of discussion.

2. The social documents analysis

One aim of the doctoral study was to consult all significant documents regarding public policies aimed at the Roma community in Romania between 2000 and 2011 (for a full list, see Annexes). These documents were diverse both in terms of breadth and complexity, as well as in terms of their authorship. In addition to the content analysis of these documents, reference is made to the different provisions in these documents throughout the study, wherever the topic at hand is connected to their content. A balance has been maintained between governmental texts (Cabinet decisions, ministerial orders, norms, laws, European directives, communications of the European Commission) and nongovernmental sources (implementation reports of certain programmes and projects, research projects concerning topics of interest, public statements). The following types of documents were included in the analysis:

- Legally binding documents with general applicability issues by the Romanian Cabinet between 2000 and 2011: strategies, governmental decisions, ministerial orders;
- Progress reports, programme documents, projects implemented by the National Agency for the Roma with post-accession EU funding;
- Programme documents and reports of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection;
- Documents of the Management Authority for the 2007-2013 Sectorial Operational Programme for Human Resources Development;
- Documents available on the website of the General Secretariat of the Cabinet regarding the 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006 Phare Grant Schemes aimed at improving the situation of the Roma (project lists, reports);
- Documents of the programme entitled *Access to education among disadvantaged groups with a focus on Roma*, implemented by the Ministry of Education;
- Legally binding European documents, issued by the European Parliament and the Commission – directives, communications;
- Programme documents, reports and studies regarding the implementation of projects and publications of Roma organisations in Romania;
- Documents of public and private organisations that have financed the implementation of policies, programmes and projects targeted at the Roma, others than the Romanian Cabinet and

the European Commission: the Open Society Foundation, Roma Education Fund, the Dutch Foundations, World Bank Romania, UNDP, UNICEF, UNCHR, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the International Organisation for Migration, AIDROM and other international organisations.

The results of the study of these documents were an analysis of the the main stages in elaboration of the Strategy (adopted in 2001 and modification in 2006), a critical analysis of the sectorial policies, programs and projects designed for improvement of the condition of the Roma as well as of the new Strategy document adopted by the Romanian Government in December 2011.

2. Secondary analysis of survey data from two different datasets:

For a quantitative analysis regarding the situation of the Roma, the secondary analysis of two datasets has been carried out for the purposes of the doctoral study, based on pieces of research carried out as part of EU-funded projects:

- “Inclusion and exclusion of Roma in Romanian society today” (*Incluziunea și excludiunea romilor în societatea românească de azi*) (data collected in 2007), within the Phare 2004 Strengthening the capacity and development of partnerships for improvement of the Roma perception and condition, having as beneficiary the National Agency for Roma. The programme was implemented between October 2006- March 2008 through a consortium run by Human Dynamics Austria.
- “L@EGAL 2 - European investment for the future of the Roma in Romania” (*L@EGAL 2 - investiție europeană pentru viitorul romilor din România*) (data collected in 2010). The research was implemented as part of a project co-funded by the European Social Fund, through the Human Resources Development Operational Sectorial Programme 2007/2013. The project was implemented September 2009 – August 2011 having as initiator the Resource Center for Roma Communities and partners the Soros Foundation Romania and the Association Resource Center and Training for Social Professions “ProVocatie”.

These datasets contain a large set of indicators that can offer a detailed account of the different problems that the Roma population in Romania currently faces and can serve as a starting point for the elaboration of further policies targeting the Roma. It should be mentioned here that due to financial and time constraints, carrying out a survey for the purposes of the thesis was not possible, while the accessing of these two datasets permitted a thorough analysis.

The analysis carried out focussed on the initial subjects covered in the two surveys, but an attempt was made to rely on alternative methods of analysis in order to generate data that may be more readily used for the grounding and elaboration of coherent public policies targeting Romanian Roma given that the use of such information by governmental bodies in this policy field tends to be rather low. Considering the fact that the two surveys were carried out three years apart, in 2007 and 2010, respectively, the analysis is also longitudinal in focus, as well, although the two datasets could not be merged due to inconsistencies in the two samples and survey items.

Process and Result Analysis of the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation – 2001-2010

In the qualitative part of the research, as well as in the study of social documents, I carried out an analysis of the process by which the Roma public policies in Romania were being developed in the period 2000-2011. In 1998, the European Commission was granting Romania funding for the Phare programme which aimed at developing a so-called *white book* to outline the future governmental strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation. At the time, the *Working Group of Roma Associations* (in Romanian, *Grupul de Lucru al Asociațiilor Romilor – GLAR*), which was set up in 1999 and had stayed inactive until 2000, and which comprised the leading active Roma non-governmental organizations, started meeting regularly and was actively engaged in the

negotiation process with the government representatives, carrying the messages of the Roma communities. Possibly one of the most significant outcomes of GLAR's activities was the *Recommendation for General Policies* (2000) for the future implementation of the government's program for the improvement of the Roma situation, a document that highlighted a key issue for the Roma movement, namely fighting against discrimination. The recommendation points out, "*In the development of the national medium term strategy, the priorities expressed by the Roma associations regarding the focus on elimination of all forms of racial discrimination should be kept in mind.*" This is probably the first and clearest reference of the Roma movement to the issue of antidiscrimination, which would later be a constant dimension of the discourse of Roma community representatives.

In 2001, having consulted with some representatives of the Roma organizations, the new government adopted the *Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation* (Government Decision no. 430/2001). The Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation, which was adopted in April 2001, is the first government-issued document that proposes to tackle the problems faced by the Roma population in Romania. Of the seven principles stated by the strategy, only the 6th, *The Principle of Identity Differentiation*, refers to the issue of antidiscrimination, while the others raise general issues. The first principle – 1. The principle of consensus – states that the strategy is *the result of a joint effort of the Government and of the Roma, and that its implementation should be done in consultation with the representatives of the Roma organizations.*

The General Plan of Measures of the strategy contains 124 measures, but upon careful analysis one can see that the topic of antidiscrimination is merely touched upon in seven measures, hence the conclusion that the Strategy adopted in 2001 did not meet the major claim of the Roma movement, i.e. to promote antidiscrimination as the major principle of the Roma policies. On the contrary, most of the proposed principles, objectives and actions are about fighting against poverty, which is reflected in the 10 domains of intervention. In 2006, the Government decided to modify and amend the initial 2001 Strategy, and prepared a new Action Plan for 2006-2008 (Government decision 522/2006, Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation). It is relevant to point out here that the new Strategy adopted in April 2006 preceded some new directions in the development and implementation of public policies in Romania (GD no. 870/2006), the new law being passed later in 2006. From this standpoint, neither the initial Strategy of 2001, nor the 2006 Strategy could observe the principles of public policy development (Moisă, 2008, 248).

In 2011, a significant initiative of the European Union led to the development of the Strategies for Roma ethnics in various European countries, and the European Commission developed a *Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*. The table below presents the domains of the Strategies, as they were defined in the programming documents developed in 2001, 2006 and 2011:

Table no.18. Strategy domains 2001/2006/2011

	Government Strategy 2001 (GD 430/2001)	Government Strategy 2006 (GD 522/2006)	EU frame for the 2011 Strategy	Government Strategy 2011 (GD 1.221/2011)
1	Community Development and Public Administration	Community Development and Public Administration Communication and civic participation	Access to education	Education
2	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing and small

				infrastructure
3	Social security			
4	Healthcare	Healthcare	Health	Health
5	Economy	Economy, Social security	Employment	Employment
6	Justice and Public Order	Justice and Public Order		Social infrastructure (child protection, justice and public order, administration and community development)
7	Child protection	Child protection, Education, Culture and cults		
8	Education			
9	Culture and cults			Culture
10	Communication and civic participation			

Since the adoption of the 2001 strategy, all efforts that have been made by the Roma representatives to promote antidiscrimination have received a rather negative response from the governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Roma continued to promote antidiscrimination; the most recently issued relevant document (8 April 2008, International Roma Day) was *The Memorandum "The Imperative of Modernization" addressed to the institutions of the state and the Roma associations on the occasion of the „International Roma Day”*⁵, a document that was widely disseminated to the government structures, the presidency, the parliament, etc. It is important to note the change in the approach to Roma movement in Romania, a change in discourse which pleads for the modernization of the Roma communities, in which the issue of social inclusion of the Roma is raised and antidiscrimination is discussed to a limited extent. The memorandum proposes a vision by which there should be an accelerated process of including the Roma ghettos in the local communities, cultural communication with other groups should be promoted, while the Roma cultural identity should be preserved. The ethno-cultural institutionalization and the emergence of active and democratic citizenship among the Roma did not attract much of the attention of the groups in power in Romania, so the topic is lacking in political importance for the time being.

In 2010, this time under the auspices of the Parliamentary Sub-Commission for the Roma, a consultative structure established upon the initiative of the Roma deputy Nicolae Păun, another programming document was issued to set a new direction of approaching the Roma movement, which had been affected by the low impact of the actions taken by the executive power and therefore attempted to target the legislative power. The document, entitled *Recommendations for a New Action Plan*⁶, refers to the international migration of the Roma, their integration in the local communities and the responsibility taken by the Roma civil society in Romania as a response to the ghettoization crisis of the Roma in Romania and in other European countries. A National Action Plan for the Roma is suggested, somewhat like a new Decade for Roma Inclusion (2009-2019) in which the Roma should take the initiative, articulating a self-referential perspective, behind which is the belief that the *ethnocultural and ethnopolitical perspective adopted in the 90s influenced by internal and external factors, had not managed to result in the emergence of a Roma organizational culture capable of responding to the profound social changes, thus leading to deadlock between transition and tradition*. The document promotes the idea that the Roma

5 Available at: <http://www.romanothan.ro/comunicate/Memorandumul-Imperativul-Modernizarii-adresat-institutiilor-statului-si-asociațiilor-rome-cu-prilejul-Zilei-internationale-a-Romilor.html>, accessed 18 January 2011.

6 Available at: <http://www.cdep.ro/co/docs/F1768764652/Plan%20migratia%20internationala%20a%20romilor.pdf>, Accessed 15 January 2011.

themselves want change, that they want to adapt to the new societal standards and that the Roma are capable of overcoming the crisis without the constant involvement of society.

In conclusion, we find that ten years after the adoption of the first document of public policy for the Roma, the approach of the government to the Roma issue has not changed – it is stuck in the poverty reduction and social issues that the Roma face. Even after 2005, when the social inclusion policy was adopted, the governmental documents still talk about fighting social inclusion, which means again to a large extent fighting poverty. However, the approach taken by the Roma movement has changed significantly: while in the 90s and in the early 2000 the perspective of discrimination was favoured, the failure of public policies caused the shift of focus on other concepts, such as social inclusion, the imperative of modernization and taking responsibility for one's own fate – these are the new approaches of the Roma which will have to be translated into practice.

The view of experts from representative institutions on the issue of inclusion of the Roma

As mentioned above, 12 interviews were conducted with people directly involved in the design and implementation of policies, programs and projects for the improved situation of the Roma population. The present chapter highlights their perception of the Roma issues in a dynamic evolving perspective. The interviews have confirmed that the most frequently encountered and the most pressing issues that the Roma in Romania face are related to the below-average educational level, discrimination/ stereotyping, marginalization and self-marginalization, poverty, poor living conditions and poor health, long term unemployment, difficult access to social services, dwindling value of their traditional occupations, above-average rate of crime, insufficient social cohesion and lack of strong political leadership. We have found that there is similarity in the perception of the Roma and non-Roma experts as concerns the problems that the Roma are faced with, and we will highlight some of these common perceptions from the perspective of a possible change in the life of the Roma communities.

Policies, programs, projects – some conclusions

The general context

One can notice progress as concerns the institutional framework and the public policies that have addressed the Roma population in the last decade. Specific mechanisms have been created to put in practice some of the measures that target the Roma population, especially in the fields of education and healthcare, but the measures have not been pushed through all the way, as there have been financial and institutional setbacks which affect for instance the employment of the health and school mediators.

The initial objectives established in the Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation were confirmed by the National Development Plan for 2007-2013 or the Human Resource Development Sectoral Operational Plan. Nevertheless, the mechanisms for applying the measures at the central, county and local levels seem to be inert and they are one of the biggest challenges, alongside the manner of resource allocation – human and financial, as well as specific responsibilities – which is generally vague and failure to meet the needs results in no penalties.

On the other hand „... *we have some wonderful documents, but when we talk about implementation, we find that almost everything is done only as long as it can be done in the absence of extra money, and there is hardly any money set aside for the specific implementation of the measures in the strategy... Political will and resources are needed to support this strategy ... there is also need for a broad perspective and the communities must be prepared for the continuation of activities, including those of attracting European funds.*” (Representative of the Ministry of Education)

As concerns the relevance of public policy documents for the issues that the Roma communities are confronted with, these reflect more or less clearly the needs perceived by the Roma population. The problem seems to arise when they fail to have an integrated approach, when they do not manage to tackle the complex problems that the Roma population is faced with and when their translation into practice is flawed.

It is difficult to discuss the efficiency of implementing various policies, programs and projects, as the monitoring or evaluation reports insist less upon the efficient use of the resources, and more on the fact that they were limited. The tendency to decentralize the Romanian public administration in the clearer context of accession to the EU and more specifically in the context of the current economic crisis have led to negative consequences for the measures in the field of Roma policy. As one of the interviewees puts it, „... *in the absence of monitoring indicators it is difficult to have an evaluation of the effectiveness of policies, programs and projects. In the framework of a technical assistance project for the Government a comprehensive system of indicators was developed to be used in monitoring the implementation of the strategy, but this system was never applied.*” (Roma activist, NGO director)

For instance, the reform in the healthcare system has led, since July 2009, to the transfer of responsibilities over the health mediators, including the financial responsibility, to the local authorities; in the rural areas, i.e. where most of the health mediators operate, there are not enough resources for all the general activities of the public administration, and therefore the local authorities use the mediators for other activities than the ones specified in their job description.

In extreme cases, under the circumstances of budget austerity and in the context of systematic rejection of the Roma, the establishment of funding priorities could lead to the reduction or even suspension of some measures that target the Roma. This can also be the case of the positions of local experts in Roma issues hired by the Town Hall, in the given context of reforming the public system and introduction of the so-called „cost standards” for structures of the public administration. „*A debate on the effectiveness of these policies and programs leads us to the conclusion that there has been some progress in some fields, but also stagnation and regress in others.*”. (Roma activist, former president of ANR)

In education, the system of affirmative measures – special places set aside in the secondary and tertiary education – certainly has had a positive impact in the over 10 years since its start. The presence of several young Roma activists in the public central and local structures, as well as in the NGO sector, is proof of this progress. *In healthcare, the system of health mediation has led to the registration of a significant number of Roma people with the family doctors, as well as to higher rates of child vaccination.* (Roma activist, NGO director)

As for the genuine outcomes of the specific programs that aimed at employing Roma people, these have been rather limited, and the programs did not lead to the inclusion of a critical mass of Roma people on the job market. The research report Inclusion 2007 (Fleck, Rughinis, 2008, 125) indicates that 22.1% of the Roma have a stable job, and 17.5% have seasonal jobs.

The measures undertaken by the Romanian authorities in the field of housing (building social housing) have been modest. Results of recent studies show that in the case of non-Roma people who live in the same area/ locality as Roma people, the density of persons per room is 0.8, while in the case of Roma the density is 1.98 people/ room (Fleck, Rughinis, 2008, 125).

A PHARE program that aimed at providing identity documents for the Roma was implemented in 2008⁷. At the same time, the Ministry of Regional development and Housing initiated a pilot program for the rehabilitation of buildings to be used as social housing for Roma families. The effectiveness of such programs is still difficult to analyse, as reports on the actual attribution of housing are not available. In parallel, the forced – legal or illegal – evacuation of Roma families has continued.

⁷PHARE 2005 "Accelerating the implementation of the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation". More information at: <http://www.sgg.ro/index.php?id=34.98.0.0.1.0>

„Some programs that were implemented in the Roma communities or that meant to benefit the Roma have had an impact on people’s lives – maybe the most influential one, which impacted the entire community, was the health mediation program.” (Roma activist, NGO director) On the other hand, „the specific initiatives concerning housing and the employment projects developed in the PHARE 2004-2006 multiannual program grant schemes had limited impact on the Roma communities”. (Roma activist rom, former ANR president)

As concerns the impact of policies of affirmative measures in the last 17 years they "contributed to the significant increase of the number of Roma students who completed secondary and higher education. However, this contribution is hard to quantify and therefore it is also difficult to estimate its contribution to closing the gap between Roma and non-Roma at these levels of education" (Surdu, Szira, 2009, 132). When the Ministry of Education makes publicly available the data collected through the National Education Database⁸ the impact of the measures taken can be analysed systematically and the information can then be used to underpin other elements of public policy.

The relationship between policy, programs and project

The public policies for the Roma in Romania is characterised by a level of generality which ignores the wide variety of the Roma communities, which would call for specific, adjusted approaches, an opinion that most of the interviewed representatives of the Roma also agreed with.

In the process of social inclusion of the Roma, the public policy type approach has a better chance of leading to positive change in the lives of the Roma communities in Romania, and the participation of the Roma as partners of the Government in designing such policies should be standard procedure. At present, the programmatic documents for the Roma – the national Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation, the Decade of Roma Inclusion, and the associated action plans are not structured according to public policies and are therefore incompatible with such policies as defined by the Romanian government. This approach has showed that the public agenda of previous and current governments has only superficially touched the issues of the Roma and therefore we cannot talk about sound sustainable results. In my opinion, which is also supported by the interviewees who participated in the development of such documents, *„the issues were only identified at the general level, they were negotiated superficially between the government and the Roma representatives with a mind to respond to both the antidiscrimination promoters within the Roma movement, and to the needs of the government to reduce poverty”* (Roma activist, NGO director).

From a technical perspective⁹, a comparison between the Strategy and the public policy cycle used by the government leads us to the conclusion, yet again, that what the majority calls public policy for the Roma cannot in fact be labeled as such for the following reasons:

- There is a lack of ex-ante impact evaluation of the situation;
- This has been a decision-making process pressed by the process of accession to the EU – the political criteria of Copenhagen required urgent adoption of the Strategy in 2001;
- The measures to be taken by the Government were described superficially, in general terms;
- Insufficient government funding was allocated for the implementation of the strategy;
- There is a lack of clear responsibility and task assignment for the implementation of the general plan of measures;
- There is no real monitoring and evaluation mechanisms or system in place;
- There are no penalties/ no accountability for those who fail to meet the set objectives.

In conclusion, we find that the relationship between policies, programs and projects lacks in coherence and consistency, generating results that are barely measurable and not sustainable.

⁸Database with limited availability, accessible only to administrators and data operators in the education system; see <http://ha.bdne.edu.ro/bdne-client/>

⁹See: Manual de metode folosite pentru planificarea politicilor publice și de măsurare a impactului [Handbook of methods used in planning public policies and measuring impact], page 18, available at http://www.sgg.ro/index.php?politici_publice_documente

Balance among the thematic fields

We find that there is a lack of balance among the major thematic fields. „*The level of engagement of the various public structures in the policies, programs and projects for the Roma depends unfortunately on the presence of people who are personally dedicated to the Roma issue ... unfortunately, a small number, as was the case in education or healthcare*”. (Roma activist, NGO director)

Education seems to be the most evolved domain as concerns public policies, programs and projects to ensure access to education for disadvantaged groups, having benefited from European funding of approximately 30 million Euros. Other education related dimensions, such as the special places set aside for the Roma in secondary and tertiary education, employment of school inspectors to oversee the education of Roma, the Second Chance program were funded from the state budget.

In employment, the initiatives have been less diverse and ANOFM has not demonstrated the same capacity to implement large scale programs as has the Ministry of Education. As mentioned above, the genuine results of specific employment programs for the Roma have been quite limited and have not led to the employment/ inclusion in the job market of a critical mass of Roma. In healthcare, the mediation program has often been used as an example, as it has had a significant impact on the access of Roma to healthcare services. Other fields of intervention have not been presented or documented enough, even though the Roma may have been targeted by various national healthcare programs.

The measures for housing have been quite modest, and the authorities have not shown enough interest and have not allocated enough resources for it, except within the PHARE grant scheme for providing identity and property documents. It is relevant to mention that within the PHARE 2006 grant scheme only half of the available budget (18 million Euros) was contracted, proving, in our opinion, some previous limitations of the public authorities, such as lack of capacity to develop projects, lack of capacity to ensure co-funding, lack of human resources to implement projects, difficulty in getting the issue of Roma housing on the agenda of the local authority in localities where the Roma political representation is weak, etc. At the same time, the evacuation of Roma families continues.

Antidiscrimination is reflected in the operation of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, the structure that is responsible for prevention and punishment of all forms of discrimination. The awareness raising campaigns implemented in the last years have not had as their major promoter the National Council for Combating Discrimination; this institution has been only a partner in such efforts¹⁰.

”Mainstreaming versus targeting”

The terms mainstreaming and targeting have been debated extensively in the Roma movement in Romania. The two concepts are discussed as opposites, and my opinion is that this is not a beneficial stance. Most of the Roma activists I interviewed agree that a balanced approach is the best for the Roma population.

„*There are domains in which a certain model of intervention was needed so that it could be adopted and amended into a public policy by the governmental structure in charge. This is the case of the health mediator, the school mediator or the local expert for Roma issues, and all three occupations are now part of the Romanian code of occupations.*” (Roma activist, NGO director)

During the Romanian presidency of the Decade for Roma Inclusion, „*the vision of the Romanian Government, expressed by the President of the National Agency for the Roma was that integration of the Roma means that every social inclusion policy must take into account the Roma issue*” (Roma activist, Former president of NAR). Essentially, the option mainstreaming of targeting is not unique, there is for sure an initial need for piloting of measures targeting Roma

10 See www.sper.org.ro

population, followed by taking over of the results by the responsible ministerial structures. Thus, the role to promote social inclusion rests with the government authorities, and as a result, the National Agency for the Roma should not be held responsible for the accomplishments and failures concerning the measures taken for the Roma, while the ministries and agencies should take responsibility for their area of work and include the Roma in their actions.

From this standpoint, the role of NAR should be restructured, as suggested by the technical assistance team of the Phare 2004 program¹¹:

- To provide proactive services for the ministries and other structures;
- To monitor and evaluate progress in implementing the strategy;
- To receive the annual workplans from the ministries, including details concerning their priorities, measurable and unbiased objectives, allocation of resources;
- To act as the secretariat of the Working Group for Roma Public Policies and to provide information that would allow the periodic check of progress in the implementation of the Strategy;
- To provide feedback to the ministries;
- To identify good practice and lessons learnt as a result of local interventions and to disseminate them widely;
- To build a shared goal and a support network for those involved in implementing the Strategy.

European funding vs funding from other sources

As mentioned above, Romania has benefited from a large number of diverse public and private donors who took on the role to promote the improvement of the Roma situation. It is evident that funding from EU sources outweighed funding from non-EU sources with approximately 52 million Euros allocated by the EU in the pre-accession period from 1998 to 2006. The Romanian government also made a financial contribution of approximately 15 million Euros, the biggest part in the form of own contribution to the EU-funded programs.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to say whether some of the donors have been more successful. While the EU and the government funding concentrated on the areas of the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation, other funding was dedicated to strengthening the Roma NGO capacity so that they can become active and strong partners in the process of strategy development (e.g. the Soros Foundation Romania, or UNICEF Romania in the field of education).

On the other hand, we must take into account the bureaucratic constraints of the various actors. The European Union had a systematic approach to funding programs for the Roma, promoting partnership with the Romanian Government, and using the standard procedures that imply a competitive approach.

The process of accessing funding such as Phare generally takes 3-4 years, a period during which significant changes may appear and therefore the participants' perception may be of a uselessly bureaucratic and time consuming process. The private donors, on the other hand, can afford a much more flexible funding manner of their programs and projects, without the numerous bureaucratic stages and therefore using a much shorter span of time.

As concerns sustainability, there have been policy measures and sustainable programs on a multiannual basis. The first programme with systematic evaluation of the results was the health mediation program. As a project piloted initially by one organization, Romani CRISS, in 5 communities in Romania, this was later scaled up to the national level by the Ministry of Healthcare, and funding was covered from the central public budget. Starting with July 2009, the positions of health mediator were moved from the level of town halls to the level of county healthcare authorities or hospitals, and financial transfers were also operated. It is not clear at this time how funding in this area will work in the future.

¹¹Phare RO 2004/016-772.01.01.01, Report on the revision of the mechanisms for the implementation of the Strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, unpublished

In education, the special places for Roma students in secondary schools and universities have been financed from the central budget of the Ministry of Education. Local Roma experts have been hired in numerous localities with a significant Roma population all over the country. These positions are paid for from the state budget, despite the limited authority they have. Their inclusion in the list of staff of local public administration was one of the most sustainable initiatives and had an impact on the community development processes in the targeted communities. In 2008, within a project implemented by the Resource Center for Roma Communities, the occupational standards for the position of local expert for Roma issues was developed and passed. This means opportunities for the local Roma experts to access specific professional development and secures them a more stable position in the town halls.

“Job fairs for roma” and “Roma jobs caravan” programs continued throughout the last years, but they were not accompanied by support measures for employers and also by raising awareness and training for the Roma individuals looking for a job. The projects funded through structural funds, including the “centers for professional inclusion” type, still have a good potential for professional qualification and finding jobs for Roma.

Not having a coherent national program for social housing and access to infrastructure facilities, the housing situation of the Roma cannot be different from the other disadvantaged communities, therefore one cannot talk about sustainability where the initiatives were isolated, namely the ones funded through Phare programs. The access to infrastructure is, in the end, part of the Romanian state responsibility to offer its citizens a decent standard of living, including for the Roma population.

Policies, program, projects – quality issues

The expectations of the Roma issue stakeholders for what we may call quality projects/ programs/ policies are extremely different at all levels. What is viewed as a successful project by a public authority may be viewed as a failure by the Roma activists. This is, for instance, the case of the large scale education project, Access to education for disadvantaged groups, about which the Roma NGOs feel mostly disappointed as concerns its slow progress and the repeated failure to address school desegregation, and to ensure access to quality education for the Roma children.

It is important to use a participatory approach in designing, implementing and evaluating any policy, program or project for the improvement of the Roma situation, so that there is a shared understanding of the involved parties as concerns the results that must be obtained. In other words, any policy, program or project should benefit from the participation of all stakeholders, including the Roma, in identifying the issues, documenting them, setting objectives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and ensuring sustainability of the results.

However, the quality of a project, program or public policy is a building process, starting with its initial phase, through a correct definition and analysis of the problem to solve, choosing the alternative that respects performance criteria, allocation of resources, implementation of actions, monitoring and final evaluation of the results and the indicators. We are talking, in fact, about the quantity and quality of the changes generated through implementation.

The profile of Roma issues – reflection in public policies

In the present research we are aiming to contribute to the process of developing and implementing public policies for the social inclusion of the Roma. Starting from data collected from secondary quantitative analysis, I find that one can sketch out the profile of the most pressing issues that the Roma population in Romania faces. Corroborating quantitative research data with qualitative ones, i.e. the outputs of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, we can identify a number of priority domains and issues that can be addressed through public policies.

As indicated above, the ex-ante impact analysis is an extremely important stage in the process of public policy making, especially as concerns the decision-making on the lines of action,

estimation of the advantages and disadvantages, the consequences generated in the social and economic environment. Based on the data collected in secondary quantitative analysis and qualitative data we will sketch out below a set of problems as concerns the situation of the Roma in Romania. These problems can become the driving elements for an ex-ante impact analysis and the correct decision-making on the future domains of action, priorities, objectives, activities, considering the availability of financial, human, administrative and political resources for the implementation of future public policies for the Roma.

The identification of priorities must be a fully completed exercise, which is to say that ex-ante expected impact evaluations must be done to underpin the public policy decision, which is an activity I was unfortunately unable to carry out in preparing this paper, and which will have to be done by the responsible government structures. I must point out that these situations and possible directions of action are examples, which can be taken much deeper pending on the availability of resources, and authentic political will for consistent changes in the life of the Roma population.

Education

Table no. 13. Education – problems, situation, directions

Identified problem	Current state	Line of action
Persistent functional illiteracy among the Roma	26% of the Roma over 6 are functionally illiterate	Supplementary courses for adults Continuation of the Second chance program
Reduced school participation	89% of the Roma children do not attend kindergarten or crèche	Ensuring access to preschool education
Reduced level of completion of low secondary education	49% of the Roma did not complete 8 years of education	Support programs such as <i>School after School</i> Continuation of the affirmative action
Reduced level of completion of upper secondary education	85.5% of the Roma do not complete high school	high schools Support for Roma students from disadvantaged rural areas
Reduced level of participation in higher education	1% of the respondents have completed university or post-graduate studies	Continuation of affirmative actions in universities
The need to overcome language barriers to ensure equal access to education for Roma children	45% of the subjects state that their mother tongue is Romanes	Continuation of Roma language teacher training. Access to Romanes textbooks

Healthcare

Table no. 14. Healthcare – problems, situation, directions

Identified problem	Current situation	Line of action
Registration with family doctor	91% of the Roma have registered with the family doctor	Ensuring access to the family doctor through information, health mediation.
Ensuring access to medical services	55% of the Roma have had medical check-up or visited a specialist doctor, or have had medical investigations in the national programs, Only 79% of those who know they have a serious disease state that they have seen a doctor and asked for medical treatment	Annual check-up / assessment of the health of the Roma community members. Ensuring access to the family doctor in the locality of residence
Access to health mediation services	Half of the Roma do not have access to or heard about health mediation services	Continuation of training and employment of health mediators in Roma communities

Employment and traditional activities, Economic situation

Table no. 15. Employment, traditional activities, economic situation - problems, situation, directions

Identified problem	Current state	Line of action
The percentage of active unemployed population and of the	77% non-employed	Active measures for employment.

inactive population		
Employment in poorly qualified jobs or jobs that need no qualifications	Unqualified labour 27% Qualified labour 20% Agricultural workers 17%	Continuation of the <i>Second Chance in education</i> program Access to training courses and work mediation
Significant gender discrimination as concerns access to the labour market	51% of the women are housewives	Programs, information campaigns about discrimination. <i>Second chance</i> type programs for women Training courses for women and support in finding a job.
Illegal employment, seasonal work	36% would accept an illegal job on the black market, 22% a job they are overqualified for, 18% a badly paid job	General control measures in employment of labour. Regulations for seasonal work.
De-valued traditional occupations, dwindling demand	32% of the communities are active in traditional craft	Modernisation programs for the traditional craft.
Lack of integration of the Roma in Romanian business sphere	96% of the Roma are not associates or owners of a business or a private enterprise	Development of entrepreneurship programs and support for starting a family or community business

Housing

Table no. 16. Housing – problems, situation, directions

Identified problem	Current situation	Line of action
Ambiguous situation of the property documents	67% have property papers for their estate 57% state that they do not hold ownership papers for the estate where their house is built	Programs to solve the situation of property.
Difficult access to utilities	81% heat their homes with wood stoves 88% access to electricity, 10% access to natural gas, 17% access to public drinking water supply	Development of programs to build housing with access to utilities Ensuring non-segregation of the Roma in ghettos.

Discrimination

Table no. 17. Discrimination – problems, situation, directions

Identified problem	Current situation	Line of action
Persistence of direct and indirect discrimination of the Roma	30% of the Roma state that they have been treated worse because they belong to the Roma ethnic group 57% in school, 59% in hospitals/ doctor's , 44% at employment, etc.	Develop programs to raise awareness and inform about discrimination. Apply legal measures when encountering discrimination.

The European regulation framework for the national strategies to integrate the Roma up to 2020

At the European level, numerous programmatic documents have been promoted and adopted, among which the „2020 EU Strategy” which aims for *intelligent, durable growth that favors social inclusion*, the reduction of economic and social marginalization of the Roma minority, who are the most numerous ethnic minority without a state at the European level. For the European Union, the situation of the Roma minority is a significant challenge as concerns both the majority perspective, and the Roma perspective. The EU framework for the national strategies to integrate the Roma by 2020 is a communication-type document of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions¹², which urges the member states to adopt or further develop national strategies to integrate the Roma.

¹² Communication no. 8727/6 April 2011 of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – EU Framework for the national strategies of Roma integration up to 2020

Clear and specific policies are demanded to meet the needs of the Roma through explicit measures that prevent and compensate for the disadvantages they are confronted with. Such policies adopted as national strategies of Roma integration should meet the objectives of the EU to integrate the Roma and they will have to be supported from national funds and funds of the European Union, as well as other sources, while solutions must be identified for the more effective use of the structural and cohesion funds of the EU. Progress monitoring mechanisms are also being considered to inform about the attainment of results in Roma integration. Similar to the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the frame proposed by the EU targets the major domains of integration: *access to education, employment, medical services and housing*. The communication asks that by December 2011, member states review their national strategies of Roma integration and submit them to the European Commission, where the strategies are going to be assessed and a report will be submitted to the European Parliament and the European Council in the spring of 2012.

Evaluation of the Romanian Government's Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Members of the Roma Minority for the period 2011-2020

The Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens who are Members of the Roma Minority for the period 2011-2020 was adopted (published in the Official Gazette Part I no. 6 of 4 January 2012, GD 1.221/2011) somewhat in a hurry and without keeping in mind the remarks and comments made by civil society. The document which was developed by the government is a continuation of the *Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Improvement of the Roma Situation*, adopted through Government decision no. 430/2001 and later amended by Government Decision no. 522/2006, regarding the approval of the Romanian Government's Strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, with subsequent modifications and completions. The document acknowledges the need for vision as concerns the Roma minority in Romania both in terms of public policies and in terms of the institutional framework for the implementation of such policies, and this vision should be based on authentic and sustained political will which takes into account the challenges that emerge from the new context in which Romania is, i.e. a member state of the European Union.

The Strategy in the form that it was adopted and shared with the European Commission does not meet the standards for strategy-type public policy documents, as pointed out above. Ten years after the adoption of the first strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, progress is still insignificant, and the adoption of programmatic documents that reiterate the weaknesses of the previous public policy documents is not an approach that meets the spirit or the letter of domestic and international documents that Romania committed to when it joined the European Union. In fact, the failure to carry out an evaluation of the initial Strategy certainly adds to the weakness of the current document, which does not include an ex-ante evaluation of the impact of actions and therefore does not provide a solid basis for the new document. At present all the elements that are needed for a serious analysis of the Roma situation exist, and they would provide a solid foundation for the strategy.

In the consultation process, the government did not prove pro-active; they generated a document that raises serious doubt as concerns authentic political will for positive fundamental change in the situation of the Roma. In the process of developing the Strategy, good participation of the Roma civil society would have added to the relevance of the priority actions, the objectives and activities planned. Especially in the domestic and international economic context, threatened by countries' financial incapacity, the economic crisis, unemployment, etc., failure to take into account the potential for growth and economic contribution of the Roma communities is evident.

From this perspective, the correct solution would have been to review the text of the Strategy and use expertise from the governmental structures, especially the Department for Public Policies of the Government's Secretariat General to develop an adequate Strategy. The expected evaluation of the European Commission, due in April 2012, may contribute to the improvement of the

document and just like the pressure of the European Commission brought along the adoption of Strategy, mobilizing government resources, so the same pressure may bring along the necessary adjustments.

Given the lack of coherence of the Strategy, the action plans that were developed at the same time are at present inadequate, and they could only be taken into consideration after the strategy has been correctly developed and validated by the European Commission.

The evaluation of national strategies by the experts of the European Commission will probably be the element of pressure that will lead to the improvement of the text if there are actions of the Roma civil society and other stakeholders in this field.

Conclusions and recommendations

Ten years after the adoption of the first public policy documents targeting the Roma, the issues that they are confronted with are relatively similar: poverty and extreme poverty, a traditional way of life in the middle of modernized and globalizing society, discrimination, etc. The vicious circle of poverty continues to keep the Roma excluded from society, with the most severe consequences ranging from non-participation in elections, difficult access to healthcare and other social services, lack of employment in legal conditions, poor housing, difficult access to quality education, dwindling solidarity in the community, exacerbation of anti-Roma attitudes, etc.

The election cycles after 1989 did not bring about the desired reach of the 5 % threshold and the political representation of the Roma remained insignificant, while the Roma civil society, even if there are many legally registered associations and foundations, continues to be dominated by a small number of organizations that are perceived as professionally strong, but dependent on the funding from European Union.

The majority perceptions and representation on Roma are rather negative, based on prejudices and stereotypes that are generating attitudes and behaviors on both sides. Roma seem to be a familiar reality for everybody, and almost anybody may have strong and negative statements regarding them. The classical theoretical perspectives may have a certain relevance, specific and limited, for the Roma issue, but only in their complementarity they are supporting the comprehensive scientific understanding and explanation,

The definitions used for social exclusion are perfectly matching the situation of the Roma – a process in which individuals are pushed to the margin of the society and are not allowed to fully participate due to their poverty, lack of basic competences, lack of life-long learning opportunities or as a result of discrimination. The social exclusion is part of the life of the Roma – individuals, groups, communities, and became in many European states, the development engine for public policies, for social development, for new social services – in an attempt to break the vicious cycles to which the Roma are exposed. Therefore, in targeting the Roma issue there is a need for a pragmatic, instrumental approach, based on the social inclusion mechanisms and the public policy cycle.

Building an inclusive society is vital for reaching the goals of the European Union concerning durable economic growth, the improved quality and number of jobs and better social cohesion – which are all intrinsic elements of the European Social Model. The concept of social inclusion, adopted in common institutional Romanian parlance does not have the correct interpretation or the authentic adoption of the content which is rooted in the solidarity promoted at the level of the European Union.

The current economic, social and political context will impact the common European social dimension and will lead to change in the manner of production; it will promote the idea of a productive social policy as a means of advancing social models in Europe and which raises the issue of flexicurity, activation, partnership, etc. The rapid social changes move us away from the classical production system and take us to a world where risk becomes a permanent presence, generating the need for new approaches, in which the welfare state should concentrate on

promoting risk management and transfer of responsibility from the welfare state to the level of the individual.

Thus, we still need to increase the individual's capacity to survive in the economy, with effects that are still to be evaluated and tackled. According to our analysis, for the Roma, the group exposed to the highest degree of risk among the vulnerable groups, there is a need to fully and strictly make use of the system of developing, coordinating and planning public policies at the level of the central public administration, targeting the improvement of governance and management of public policies. Good cooperation is needed between the political and the executive powers within the public administration and in Roma civil society; at the same time, all stakeholders involved in the process of developing and implementing public policies for solving the Roma problems and adjusting to the socio-economic realities need to develop their competences.

The recommendation of the Presidential commission for Social and Demographic Risk Analysis, which proposes to the Government a new strategic approach based „*on engaging authentic constant political will, taking on the challenges of policies aiming at equalizing chances for the Roma minority*” is still a goal that proves difficult to reach under the circumstances defined by lack of political capacity of the Roma community and failure to act as a credible and powerful partner in relations with the public structures in charge.

At present, we cannot talk about coordination between the Mechanism of Social Inclusion in Romania and the mechanism of developing and implementing public policies for the vulnerable groups, as the major documents of public policy targeting them have the same flawed design, rationale, implementation and evaluation.

According to our analysis and different progress reports issued during the last years, we can talk about the failure of the public policies for the Roma communities, of the lack of political will for solving the problems of the Roma, of the incapacity of the Romanian society to overcome transition to market economy and generate welfare for its population. As we presented, there is no systematic collection of data regarding the social, the economic or the educational situation of the Roma. Poverty alleviation programs, most of them being social support, minimum guaranteed income, and other forms of support focussed on state budget transfers, did not prove efficiency. As stated by a recent report of the World Bank (World Bank, 2010)¹³, in Romania the annual economic costs of the productivity loss caused by the exclusion of the Roma are around 887 million Euro, meaning an annual loss of 0,63-2,13 percent of the Internal Gross Product.

Once again, it is necessary to take a pragmatic instrumented approach based on the mechanisms of social inclusion and public policies for tackling the issues of various vulnerable groups. In a way, using the *form* – in our case the mechanism of social inclusion and the process of public policy making – may add value to the *essence*, i.e. the relevant content for the Roma issue, participation, funding mechanisms, adequate implementation and evaluation, the public structures' acceptance of responsibility, etc. This is the case in the current context in which there are suggestions of cutting back on social expenditure, limiting access to social and medical services, introducing supplementary insurance for services considered non-essential and other such aspects, which lead to lessened resources to allocate to the Roma social inclusion programs.

The Mechanism of Social Inclusion in Romania may very well be supported from structural Funds, which are meant to reduce social economic, infrastructural disparities as compared to other European Union Member States. In this context, in the public consultation process for the preparation of the National Development Plan 2014-2020 there should be strong voices and solid

¹³ Vezi raportul „Banca Mondială - Europa și Asia Centrală Costurile economice aferente excluziunii romilor”, disponibil la:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion_Note_Final_RO.pdf

engagement of the government's social partners, including the representatives of vulnerable groups to include the topic of social inclusion among the priorities and the future financing programs.

There is consensus as concerns the problems that the Roma are faced with, even though the perspectives differ, i.e. the government prioritises fighting poverty, while the Roma movement focuses on combating discrimination in its various forms. The complexity, the dimension, the severity and interdependence of the issues (see the vicious circle of poverty) demand an integrated approach which is not common in the Romanian governmental structures.

According to our analysis, *The Strategy of the Romanian Government for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens belonging to the Roma Minority for the period 2011-2020* has a number of *flaws* that result from the way it was conceived, and it does not meet the standards for strategic public policy documents as presented in this paper. Ten years after the adoption of the first strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation, with inconsistent progress recorded, the adoption of a programmatic document that reiterates the weaknesses of the previous one is not the approach the letter or spirit of which Romania committed itself to when signing up to domestic and international documents.

Realism is needed in tackling the social inclusion of the Roma in public policy-making. The first step is to implement a comprehensive evaluation of the results of the initial Strategy adopted in 2001 and adjusted in 2006, using the so-called ex-post evaluation of the impact it had, which can then be the basis for new public policy-making initiatives.

Another step is to identify the most urgent priorities in terms of actions to be taken; as demonstrated in this paper, these must be cleaned of big words and generalities – and that can be targeted through general measures, which only lead to difficulties in implementation, the division of already limited resources, the dissolution of responsibilities, etc.

A set of 4-6 lines of action, the ones set in the European framework – education, healthcare, employment and housing, would suffice, as concentration on a limited number of specific measures which can be funded, implemented and monitored would also suffice. We are positive that the present paper can contribute to this endeavour to improve the Strategy and to create the premises of its adequate implementation.

Recommendations for government policies

- Carry out external evaluation of the *Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma situation 2001 – 2011*, as a basis for developing future public policies.
- In the public policy-making for the Roma, observe the *10 Common Principles of Roma Inclusion*, namely:
 1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies;
 2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting of the Roma;
 3. Intercultural approach;
 4. Integrated approach;
 5. Awareness of gender dimensions;
 6. Transfer of evidence-based policies;
 7. Utilisation of the European Union instruments;
 8. Engagement of the regional and local authorities;
 9. Engagement of civil society;
 10. Active participation of the Roma.
- Revisiting the *Romanian Government's Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens of Roma Minority for the period 2011-2020* and using the expertise available within the government structures, especially in the Direction for Public Policies of the Government's Secretariat general, for the development of the strategy respecting all the requirements of public policy-making.
- According to the criteria set by the EC through the *European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, allocate sufficient funding from the national

budget, which can be supplemented with international and EU funds, especially the structural funds.

- Redefine the role of the National Agency for Roma, in the context of the newly developed *European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* and strengthen the monitoring role of this structure.
- Ensure the operation of the Social Observatory as a structure that provides for relevant data collection from vulnerable groups, with direct implications in underpinning public policies for the Roma. Ensure systematic data collection about the situation of the Roma communities.
- Strengthen the discrimination prevention mechanisms and ensure equal treatment for all citizens as provided for in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.
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The European Union's involvement should focus on:

- Monitoring the application of the *European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*.
- Utilisation of the financial resources for the next programming period, 2014-2020, to ensure consistent fund allocation for the social inclusion of the Roma, especially through integrated projects, which approach the vulnerabilities of these communities in a comprehensive manner.
- In the context of a reduced rate of absorption of structural funds by Romania in 2007-2013, identify mechanisms to redirect the available funds for testing/ piloting integrated projects.
- Ensure access to technical assistance of the Romanian Government in the field of public policy-making targeting the Roma communities.
-

The contribution of Roma civil society should be:

- Sustained participation in the consultation process with public authorities in the development and implementation of public policies for the Roma.
- Participation in public debate on the topic of Roma, encouragement of prompt, clear response against negative manifestations of the majority toward the Roma minority, in the context of economic crisis which may generate the exacerbation of negative attitudes and behaviour.
- Initiate, in partnership with other organizations and institutions, integrated pilot projects that can be replicated.
- Include in their programs research conducted in the Roma communities to build evidence base for future interventions.

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