

In Romania recent studies¹ underline a major demographic decline caused by reducing fertility rate, high values of infant mortality and intense migratory flows in many regions of the country. There is also a high concentration of population in urban areas and in parallel considerable depopulation phenomenon of rural areas.

Responding to these challenges, specific social policies were developed by the Romanian Government, focused on increasing social inclusion, reducing poverty and social exclusion, promoting active ageing and protection of elderly, reducing inequalities and promoting economic growth in order to assure without discrimination the access of all, women and girls, man and boys to health, education, social protection including social services and social benefits.

A wide range of policies and programs bear witness to Romania's commitment to the population and development agenda. For the next five years, poverty reduction, pension system sustainability, employability increase, the improvement of health system, the social care system development and a better access to education remains the main priorities of Romania in social sector.

In the current economic and social context, *stimulating economic growth and creating jobs is the top priority of Romania*. The main mission that the Romanian Government has assumed is to ensure a constant journey towards improving the living standards of the population, which will result in strengthening social cohesion and reducing the gaps.

Therefore, Romania will continue to implement national and local policies to maintain an optimal level of employment by creating jobs, retaining existing ones, increase employment opportunities for people unemployed by improving compatibility with local market demands and hence reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion of vulnerable people. A particular attention is given to increasing birth rates through measures, such as: an extended program to increase the number of nurseries, kindergartens and after-school facilities, developing the professional nanny service and increasing the reinsertion incentive after the child care period of one year is over and the parent returns to work.

Regarding policies to social inclusion and combating poverty, Romania intends to continue the series of structural reforms and strategic actions in the field, complementing them with new initiatives tailored to the current national context. In this respect, one of the most important actions is *reforming the national system of social assistance by applying an integrated approach and balancing preventive measures* (such as social services for early intervention, insurance, contributory pensions and unemployment benefits) with *protective measures* (such as benefits of non-contributory social assistance) and *promotion measures* (on employment and skills programs) to ensure basic needs and to help people affected by poverty to overcome this difficult situation.

Regarding elderly, Romanian Government is committed to ensuring that proper respect is granted to elderly. A new Strategy for Promotion of Active Ageing and Protection of the Elderly 2015 – 2020 is implementing. The document is in accordance with active aging policy agenda, covering a society where older people are encouraged and helped to lead a healthy, productive, participatory, worthy and independent life. Moreover, the priority is to *reform the approach of the social assistance of elderly*, given adequate importance to prevention, to active aging and to complying with the quality principles in providing long term care. Thus, the Law on elderly social protection is in the process of amending, by introducing the long term care benefit, according to the European models.

At national level, *the constant dialogue between all stakeholders* may lead to better addressing the needs of social protection, to prevention or to early and targeted intervention and support.

Partnerships at international level are also needed, taken into account the fact that the demographic challenge is almost a global problem and it could be solved only by cooperation between actors at a wider level. International partnerships are useful as well for practices exchange, finding common solutions for common problems and promoting social innovation, by testing new policy approaches and selecting the most effective ones, testing and promoting new finance mechanisms which is essential since social policies require constant adaptation to new challenges.

Although significant progresses have been made in Romania, there is, however, a lot of work to be done.

In this context, we are firmly committed to support the achievement of the ICPD, the Beijing Platform and achieving the ambitious objectives of the 2030 agenda and, in the same time, we look forward to contributing to the draft resolution presented by the Chairman of the Commission.

Romania aims to be a country in which all citizens are provided with an equal opportunity to participate in society, where their basic needs are met and their differences respected, and where all people feel valued and can live in dignity. And, last, but not least, in every way possible Romania would take a hard look at images of ageing, at respect accorded to the aged and at the nature of relations between generations.

In conclusion, Romania considers the development challenges we face require systematic participation of all stakeholders in crafting responses. We are confident that these responses can be implemented within a framework of partnerships and global leadership through the United Nations.

We consider the 50th session of the Commission on Population and Development as an opportunity to advance our efforts to improve the lives of our people, with equity and dignity, and ensure the respect, protection and fulfillment of universal human rights for all in order to achieved sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Thank you!