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Romania

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I. Methodology and consultation process

1. The present report has been prepared in line with the guidance provided in the HRC resolution 5/1 and the General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), contained in document A/HRC/DEC/17/119. It focuses on the developments of the human rights situation in Romania since the transmission of the mid-term voluntary report¹ and on the progress in the implementation of the recommendations received during the third UPR in 2018.

2. The information selected and compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' experts was supplied by various Romanian institutions², more importantly from: Special Representative of the Government for Promoting the policies of Memory, Combating Antisemitism and Xenophobia, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, Ministry of Investments and European Projects, National Institute for Magistracy, Superior Council of Magistracy, Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Department for Interethnic Relations, National Council for Audio-Visual, and National Agency for Roma, National Parliament (through the Human Rights and the Legal Committees of the two parliamentary chambers), National Authority for the Protection for the Rights of the Child and Adoption, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities. Important input was given by the Romanian Institute for Human Rights, the Ombudsman and the National Council for Combating Discrimination³. Once finalised, the report was made public on the MFA's site.

II. Implementation of the recommendations from the previous cycle

3. Given that the implementation of recommendations supported during the previous cycle could also include information on the adoption of normative frameworks and amendments, the development of policy measures, administrative practice and domestic case-law, as well as challenges ahead, the present report will treat them in an integrated manner.

A. Acceptance of international norms and cooperation with treaty bodies

4. Romania has ratified almost all major international and regional treaties and protocols in the field of human rights and is constantly extending its conventional engagements, as the recent ratification of the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence testifies.

5. Romanian authorities are still in an inter-institutional consultative phase of the ratification process related to the ratification of Kampala agreements on the crimes of aggression, as well as the CRPD-OP, CRC-OP-IC, CDESCR-OP, and ICPPED. The evaluation on accepting the competence of concerned treaty bodies under article 22 CAT is also in its early stages.

6. Romania has no overdue report to submit, although the transmission of some reports was delayed.

B. Constitutional and legislative framework

7. On 16 December 2022, the new (three) Justice Laws – on the statute of prosecutors and judges, on the judicial organization, and on the SCM – have entered into force. In their drafting process, the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) recommendations, the Rule of Law findings, the ECJ rulings, the Venice Commission opinions were taken into consideration, as well as the proposals received from the judiciary, including the SCM, magistrates' associations and individual magistrates. The latest Venice Commission opinion,

published on 18 November 2022, stated that *on the whole the laws seem to be heading in the right direction*. The Constitutional Court examined the draft laws, prior to their entry into force, and rejected all submitted critics.

8. The provisions regarding the admission to the magistracy, the promotion of magistrates, the civil and disciplinary liability of magistrates, the organization and functioning of the Judicial Inspection, the appointment procedure of the high-level prosecutors, were carefully assessed, for a full compliance with the principle of the independence of judiciary.

9. In order to remedy the unconstitutionality of several provisions in the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes, an inter-institutional working group, with the large participation of representatives of the judiciary, was set up. As a result, on 27 July 2021 and 2 September 2021 respectively, the draft Laws on amending and supplementing the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure – as well as other normative acts – were submitted to public debate. The updated version of the drafts was published on the MoJ website on 2 June 2022.

10. The SCM issued a favourable opinion on the draft laws. The final draft laws will be very soon sent to the Government for approval and then to the Parliament for adoption.

11. The SCM is also implementing several projects, funded through EU programmes, to improve the public communication within the judicial system, in order to strengthen its transparency and the access to justice, raise awareness on the litigants' rights and build up the legal culture.

12. On 16 June 2022, the law criminalizing the “Inciting [of] the public, by any means, to violence, hatred or discrimination against a category of persons or against a person on the grounds of belonging to a certain category of persons defined on criteria of race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, opinion or political affiliation, wealth, social origin, age, disability, chronic non-communicable disease or HIV/AIDS infection, considered by the perpetrator as causes of one person's inferiority toward others” was published in the Official Gazette. The constitutional preliminary exam concluded on the conformity of the draft law with the fundamental law and the international human rights standards.

13. The last CVM report, published on 22 November 2022, confirmed that the progress made is sufficient to meet Romania's commitments made at the time of its accession to the EU. Romania will continue to work consistently on translating the remaining commitments within the annual Rule of Law Report cycle and with the support of other parts of the EU rule of law toolbox.

14. Given that both the Ombudsman and the RIHR requested accreditation before the UN subcommittee responsible for the accreditation of human rights institutions, the domestic authorities plead for identification of a formula that is respectful of the Sub-committee's rules, and at the same time allows for maximizing the national institutions' mission and cooperation.

C. Good governance

15. Romania is currently implementing its 6th National Anticorruption Strategy (NAS) for 2021-2025, approved by the Government in December 2021.

16. Its preparation was based on both an internal evaluation and an external audit performed by the OECD, acknowledging the significant steps taken towards strengthening its anti-corruption and integrity policies, while also noting that the lack of political support to implement important legislative reforms was an important challenge.

17. The NAS's implementation work focuses on the defined priority areas; it provides for the reviewing and updating the legislation on the integrity framework, and for the strengthening and extending of the Single Register of Transparency of Interests platform to include the Romanian Parliament and local public administration, as well as raising awareness of the importance of the principles of integrity and transparency and integrity in decision-making processes.

18. The 2022 CVM and EU Rule of Law reports confirm the positive track record in the effectiveness of the investigation and sanctioning of high-level corruption has continued through 2021 and 2022, the cases sent to trial including sitting or former ministers, deputies, senators, or persons holding high-level political or public office in the local administration. The new NAS prioritizes strengthening the performance in the anticorruption field by criminal and administrative means, including by increasing the capacity of the National Anti-corruption Directorate (DNA).

19. The National Agency for the Management of Seized Assets (ANABI) has the mission to ensure an effective execution rate of the confiscation orders issued in criminal matters through an efficient management of seized assets that are distributed to the Agency by prosecutors and judges. In 2022, ANABI entered its sixth year of activity, and it is functioning effectively, implementing a National Strategy for Strengthening the Asset Recovery System for 2021-2025. ANABI's mandate has been extended in July and the Agency is working on increasing the capacity to trace assets both nationally and internationally, enhance cooperation mechanisms, and provide new tools for financial investigations by police and prosecutors. The new law also provides for a fund for crime prevention and victim protection, ANABI seized over €60 million in 2022 compared to almost €57 million in 2021. It manages over 140 mobile assets with a total value of almost €5.5 million.

20. Starting with 2016, a mechanism monitoring the patient's feedback in public hospitals was implemented, covering the quality of medical services, the respect of the patients' rights and the medical staff's ethical conduct.

21. The DNA continued to investigate and prosecute corruption in the health care sector. The criminal cases investigated revealed five areas of corruption in the Romanian public health system: violation of legal provisions on public procurement; medical services; hospital budgeting; staff access to the health system; and authorisation of pharmacies. Since 16 March 2019 to date, DNA has opened 282 criminal cases concerning corruption related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The investigation is currently pending in 96 of them.

22. Starting from 2 August 2021, electronic identity cards are being issued for Romanian citizens; the eIDs will be used for authentication in the IT systems of the institutions within the MoIA and of other public administrations. They will also incorporate the functions of the health cards.

D. Human rights education – general

23. Human rights education is studied both as part of the core (compulsory) curriculum, within core subjects such as *Civic Education* (at primary level), *Social Education* (at lower secondary level), *Sociology*, *Philosophy* (at upper secondary level), as well as through optional/ elective subjects.

24. Human rights education is promoted also through educational activities carried out outside the formal education system by schools or other educational institutions, independently or in partnership with various local, regional, national, and international, governmental, or non-governmental organisations and institutions.

25. Teachers' training is mainly carried out through in-service training programmes provided by the Teacher Training Centres, which operate at the level of the capital and in each county. Their offer is complemented by training opportunities provided by other training providers accredited by the MoE, including NGOs and the RIHR, as well as by participation in activities and projects carried out by international organisations and bodies – CoE, EU, UNESCO and ODIHR.

26. Regarding Holocaust Education, Romania will implement, from the school year 2023-2024 the study of the new core subject *Jewish History. Holocaust*, taught in the 11th grade of high school.

27. From 2023, Romania participates in the Project *Addressing Antisemitism in Europe through Education*, implemented by UNESCO and COM, in partnership with ODIHR.

28. The Audiovisual Law, as modified in 2022, stipulates the obligation of the NAC to ensure the increasing of the level of awareness of public opinion in relation to the use of audiovisual media services, through the development and promotion of *Media Education* at the level of all social categories, including through or in partnership with the MoE.

E. Awareness raising and dissemination

29. The Romanian Police is running, at national level, the "No discrimination!" project, aiming to increase the level of information, both among police officers and various social categories, in the field of preventing discrimination and hate crimes with a view to create non-discriminatory behaviours.

30. The 2022-2027 National Strategies regarding the rights of persons with disabilities ("A fair Romania") and on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, respectively, both list among their priorities national campaigns to raise awareness of the general public regarding: the rights of persons with disabilities to have access to the physical, informational and communication environment in full equality; the need to reduce discrimination on the basis of ethnicity (mainly the Roma minority), social class (mainly the poor), social status (mainly social assistance recipients, in particular recipients of guaranteed minimum income). Another specific measure foreseen is to reduce the prejudices of the population towards vulnerable groups by starting public campaigns with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of social services at local level and on the structural problems that cause poverty or exclusion.

31. DIR continued to organize campaigns to promote public awareness regarding attitudes that generate hate speech or crimes motivated by ethnic and racial hatred⁴.

F. Statistics and indicators

32. The Bureau for Investigation of Hate Crimes, with national competency, is already functional within the Crime Investigations Directorate of the Romanian Police.

33. It has coordinated several working meetings with representatives of national authorities responsible for preventing and combating hate or prejudice crimes, during which a selection was made of relevant crimes for the process of analysis and monitoring of this type of deeds. Following the discussions held within the working group, the chart of police activities in the field of combating hate crimes was designed, while, in order to establish general principles of data gathering, methodological guidelines on data implementation were drawn up as part of the mentioned chart.

G. Equality and non-discrimination

34. To support advanced professional training, MoIA developed, in cooperation with NCCD, the Practical Guide for Police services and partnered with the "E-romnja" Association to organize training sessions for police officers within public order and crime prevention units, on the prevention of violence among Roma girls and women, prevention of discrimination and promotion of gender equality. Within the "*Violence has no colour*" project, police officers designed the content of the topic on "*Prevention of discrimination*", as part of the Intervention Guide for domestic violence cases or similar offences and forced marriages. 2,695 preventive and educational activities were carried out, attended by approximately 133,000 people, and 1,650 training sessions were organized, with 37,750 police officers within operational structures being debriefed.

35. The 2022-2027 Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority (SNIR), adopted in April 2022⁵, aims to ensure a convergent action framework, both at the national level, through various relevant sectoral or horizontal policies, as well as at the subsidiary level – by integrating the relevant measures within regional, county and local development strategies. It includes conducting awareness campaigns, with a focus on the online environment and the consequences of spreading anti-Roma messages generating racial hatred, as well as the organisation of training courses for law enforcement officers,

prosecutors and judges on understanding the phenomenon and the implications of anti-Roma behaviour for the prosecution of related cases.

36. In November 2022, the MoE launched the campaign *You are not alone. Together we stop violence in schools*, to prevent and combat all forms of violence in schools (physical, verbal, psychological violence, cyberbullying), through popularising, *via* social networks, basic notions about types of violence, cyberbullying, the use of social networks, the rights and obligations of students.

37. In March 2021, the Parliament adopted the *Declaration regarding certain anti-Semitic manifestations in Romania and the attempts to rehabilitate war criminals*. In November 2022, the Prime-minister approved the second progress Report on the implementation of the National Strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech, confirming the results are generally satisfactory.

38. The financing for the establishment of the National Museum of Jewish History and of the Holocaust in Romania, an institution that will contribute to preserving the truth and fighting Holocaust distortion, is provided through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).

39. In 2021, the Iasi local authorities inaugurated the Memorial Museum and the Memorial space dedicated to the victims of the Iași Pogrom.

40. Romania signed, in May 2022, the Vienna Declaration on strengthening cooperation in combating antisemitism and encouraging the report of anti-Semitic incidents.

41. In 2022, the Ombudsman, at the MoE's request, evaluated the current school, university and professional training programs that concern the relevant fields for combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech.

42. More than 13,500 complaints have been lodged with the CNCD since its establishment in 2002. Between 2018 and 2022, the CNCD delivered 4,016 judgments, with 732 findings on violations of the anti-discrimination law. In 2022, out of the total 942 complaints lodged until the end of November, approximately 87 concerned acts of discrimination on the basis of nationality, 69 concerned discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, and 26 concerned discrimination on the basis of language⁶.

43. The NCCD and the criminal investigating bodies have a constant cooperation; starting with 2018, 13 cases initially launched before the Council were transferred to prosecutor's offices and the police, to be analysed from the criminal law perspective; inversely, 4 files, concerning aspects relating to statements, public speech, statements, or expressions that undermine personal dignity on the basis of criteria such as national or ethnic origin, were communicated to the CNCD for ruling, following the closure solutions issued by Prosecutor's offices and accordingly.

44. Since 2018, the NCCD has also received 9 requests for opinion from the police, on the facts investigated, in most cases concerning public statements or speech, in the media or social networks on the basis of nationality, the sexual orientation of a person or the nature of racist, fascist, or xenophobic organizations.

45. Since 2018, the NCCD organized or participated in training courses/sessions in the field of non-discrimination, including on racially motivated crimes and hate speech, benefitting 190 magistrates and 473 police and gendarmerie staff. In 2022, 4 training activities in the field of combating discrimination – hate crimes were organised for magistrates, addressing the general notions of non-discrimination, particularities of hate crime (domestic and European legislation, international case-law regarding hate crimes, the current situation of hate crimes).

46. The Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights and Postgraduate Studies, within the National College of Internal Affairs, continued and developed the training courses "Human rights - hate crimes", organizes together with the Institute for Public Order Studies. The curriculum of the course "Human Rights in Public Institutions", managed by the Centre, has also been updated and diversified, with additional time allocated to the study of subjects such as Preventing and combating hate crimes through criminal law, Fundamental rights and freedoms of European Union citizens, Legal protection of victims.

47. The CoE SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Department organized training sessions for police officers in Romania on hate crimes against LGBTI people, on 9–12 March 2021. The training curriculum for police officers on hate crimes against LGBTI people, 2021 edition, is also available in Romanian language.

48. Within the project "*Partnership for the equality of LGBTI persons: implementing ECHR case law on sexual orientation and gender identity*", in 2022, 10 training sessions have been organized, where 93 prosecutors and 96 police officers were trained. The call for the last 6 training sessions planned for 2023 has also published. The number of 67 prosecutors and 64 police officers are expected to attend those training sessions.

49. The POHCCJ is leading the project "Protection of Hate Crime Victims", in partnership with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the MoJ, four General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) in Bucharest. Focusing on improving the protection of victims, with a special focus on children, hate crimes victims and Roma people, the project aims at developing an enhanced response to hate crimes and improving mechanisms for protection and assistance to hate crime victims, through development of a training package, training of trainers and training sessions on hate crimes for prosecutors and other professional categories with the aim of improving knowledge and awareness on the needs of hate crime victims, including those belonging to the Roma minority, the development of guidelines, and improved protection and assistance mechanisms for child victims of crime. A separate section on the POHCCJ's website, entitled Rights of crime victims, contains an information package/brochure on the rights of victims from vulnerable groups, including in the area of discrimination.

50. The MoE, together with the MoH and the MoLSS, implements the project *Creation and implementation of integrated community services to combat poverty and social exclusion*, to increase social inclusion and combat poverty through the development and piloting of integrated community services in 139 rural and small urban marginalised communities. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local administration to initiate, coordinate and implement measures to prevent and combat situations of marginalisation and social exclusion, strengthening the public network of community social assistance by improving the skills of specialists working in integrated community teams.

51. In addition to the early education reform and the two associated investments (construction of crèches and development of complementary services for disadvantaged groups), another reform foreseen and funded by the NRRP is the grant scheme for rural school consortia. The objective is to create three rural school consortia that will strengthen the rural education environment by providing optimal conditions for the delivery of classes and ensuring social equity. The investment has an allocated budget of 29.97 million EUR, from which campuses with modern educational facilities, after-school facilities, sports halls and fields, spaces for practical workshops, laboratories, facilities for non-formal activities, accommodation facilities for pupils and teachers, etc. will be created. The campuses will also have a fleet of cars to provide for the daily transport of pupils and for school trips. At the same time, the rural education system will also benefit from the outcomes of the other reforms and investments foreseen under the NRRP, as, of the 2,500 schools expected to benefit from the grants offered by the *National Programme for the Reduction of School Dropout*, about 1,850 are in rural areas.

52. Starting on 25 June 2018, MoIA has been implementing the project "The Integrated Information System for the Issuance of Civil Status Registration", for the implementation of an electronic service platform based on the civil status information and the development of the system for the application and for the issuance of civil status documents, as well as the implementation of the necessary support for the access to electronic services based on primary civil status information. As a part of this project, the territorial administrative units with competencies in the field of registration of civil status events were endowed with mobile equipment in order to facilitate the registration of birth in rural areas, including within disadvantaged communities.

53. In 2022, the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for 2022-2027 was adopted.

54. The National Programme for Local Development funded, during 2017–2022, infrastructure investments for water supply (544 investment targets), sewage (519 targets), water supply and sewage (352 targets), country roads (233 targets), local roads (1,867 targets), kindergartens and nurseries (854 targets), schools, health facilities. The allocated financing for all investment exceeds 24,800 million RON.

H. Respect for human rights

55. As part of the predefined project "Professional training and consolidation capacity at the level of the judicial system"⁷, currently implemented by NIM in partnership with SCM, the National School of Clerks and the Court Administration in Norway, 15 seminars on human rights jurisprudence are provided in the 2020–2024 continuous training programs, addressed to approximately 375 magistrates. The topics include aspects on **the right to a fair trial**, the right to private and family life, the right to freedom of expression and information, **the right to non-discrimination**; the right to life, the prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to freedom and security of the person; no punishment without the principle of law. In the reporting period 2021–2022, 234 judges and prosecutors participated in 9 such training activities.

56. Within the same project, the SCM organised 5 training sessions for 97 participants, covering the topic of **access to justice** for members of Roma population and vulnerable groups.

Prohibition of slavery, trafficking

57. Between 2018 and 2022, the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NATIP) implemented at national level more than 450 projects/campaigns/educational projects in order to prevent trafficking in persons, within which were carried out more than 10,000 information-preventive activities, reaching approximately 700,000 beneficiaries⁸. The 2018-2022 NATIP's prevention activity also included organizing and conducting more than 700 training sessions for 15,000 specialists who come into contact with victims/potential victims of trafficking in persons.

58. In order to organize and coordinate the activities carried out by the structures with duties and responsibilities in increasing school safety, a National Joint Action Plan has been drawn up for increasing the safety of pupils and teaching staff and preventing juvenile delinquency, in the premises and adjacent areas of pre-university educational establishments for the school year 2022-2023. Based on the mentioned plan, the school safety structures carry out informational and educational activities during school hours on the prevention of human trafficking and violence in the pre-university school environment. In 2022, 26 preventive sessions in schools and training and information from real cases in order to increase awareness of the potential victims were carried out by prosecutors and police officers.

59. As the National Strategy reached its end, its impact will be evaluated by an Inter-institutional Inter-sectoral Strategic Coordination Committee and a new strategy for the period 2023–2027 will be drafted. According to data on sentences imposed in 2021, the domestic courts sentenced 164 adult individuals to 495 years, 3 months and 16 days of imprisonment and 83 years, 5 months and 20 days of which the execution was conditionally suspended.⁹

60. During 1 July 2021–19 December 2022, 193 defendants (out of which 128 in pre-trial detention) were sent to trial for committing trafficking in minors, and 191 defendants (114 in pre-trial detention) were prosecuted for human trafficking.

61. In all criminal cases in which identified victims were heard, the prosecutors provided mandatory legal assistance for each victim by requesting the bar associations to appoint a lawyer, *ex officio*. Victims are entitled to the same benefits irrespective of their nationality. Foreigners who are victims of trafficking in human beings may be granted, upon request, a temporary residence permit.

62. NAPRCA, MoIA and POHCCJ established an informal network for the hearing of child victims of crimes, with priority for child victims of sexual offences, to add a new possibility of interaction and cooperation between the specialists from various fields of activity, in order to help a better instrumenting of these cases.

63. Thus, each county as well as for all the districts of Bucharest nominated representatives of the social services, police and prosecutor's office, who should cooperate in order to facilitate the communication and intervention within the child victims hearings. During November 2021-September 2022, NAPRCA organized an online training program attended by 72 specialists from local social services, working directly with child victims of violence.

64. The NATIP managed an Anti-Trafficking Hotline, free of charge from any network with national coverage; it functions as an information tool on human trafficking, as well as a means of receiving, recording or referring to other structures, services or institutions requests and referrals received from callers. In 2021, 16 possible cases of human trafficking were reported to the hotline, referred to the competent entity from the Romanian Police; in 4 cases criminal investigations have been/are being carried out, and 5 cases are still being checked/no update on the status of the checks has been received yet.

65. As of 5 January 2022, the Anti-Trafficking Hotline, initially managed by NATIP, has been replaced by the single national number 119, in the implementation of the National Support Programme for Children in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic - "Out of concern for **children**".

66. The NAEO also operates a non-stop toll-free hotline for victims of domestic violence. In 2021, the hotline received 4859 calls, including 18 telephone calls alleging human trafficking.

67. Specific measures were taken in respect to the protection of children in the online¹⁰.

68. The POHCCJ continued its cooperation and coordination approach with third country law enforcement counterparts, either through transnational projects (as Westeros II¹¹) or directly with law enforcement authorities of destination countries for victims of human trafficking.

69. In March 2022, new working meetings were held between the national anti-trafficking actors, to update and revise the National Mechanism for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in Persons in accordance with the current needs for configuring the formal framework of cooperation. A Government Decision for the approval of the National Mechanism for the identification and referral of victims of human trafficking was adopted in 31 January 2023, increasing the efficiency and enforcement power of the mechanism.

70. Since 2019, NIM is implementing the Project "Justice 2020: professionalism and integrity", covering 6 training activities for 120 judges and prosecutors in the field of "Combating human trafficking". In the period 2021–2022, 4 seminars were organised in this field, addressed to 59 magistrates. The project also provides the organization of 10 training activities for judges and prosecutors in the field of "Combating domestic violence", aimed at a total number of 200 magistrates. Each training activity includes a *module dedicated to the horizontal principles of equal opportunities and sustainable development*. In the period 2021–2022, 6 seminars were organised, attended by 110 magistrates.

71. As a result of the Cooperation Protocol signed in 2020 with International Justice Mission, the number of 51 prosecutors participated in the „*Multidisciplinary Training Combatting Trafficking in Persons*” during July 2021–December 2022.

72. Regarding the prevention and awareness raising activities in schools, at the beginning of the school year, at each county level, the school inspectorates in collaboration with the schools/educational establishments, the County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance and other stakeholders, such as the County Police Directorate – Prevention Department, the County Directorate of Public Health and representatives of civil society active in the field of human trafficking prevention, elaborate a prevention strategy, which also includes a calendar of activities to be carried out in schools. It is estimated that every month, between 2 and 3 prevention campaigns are organized at county level, with the

participation of 200-400 students and teachers. Special attention is paid to counties with a high proportion of minors left in the care of other persons or members of the family as a result of their parents going abroad to work. The types of prevention and awareness-raising activities carried out in schools include: information campaigns, debates, practical exercises on identifying potential victims; round tables (with guests from IOM); photo or drawing exhibitions, caricature competitions; drama competitions; video screenings; distribution of information materials at sports and art events, etc.

Domestic violence

73. The integrated national program for the protection of victims of domestic violence and the framework methodology regarding the organization and operation of the integrated national network of sheltered housing intended for victims of domestic violence was approved in 2021. It provides the institutional and procedural framework for coordination, necessary for the implementation of integrated protection and support measures for the socio-professional integration/reintegration of victims of domestic violence.

74. The National Strategy for preventing and combating sexual violence "*SYNERGY*" 2020-2030 was also approved in 2021.

75. The 2022-2027 National Strategy on promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and the prevention and combating of domestic violence is in the final stage of the inter-ministerial approval.

76. On 1 October 2022, the Electronic Monitoring Information System (EMIS) was made operational and the application of electronic monitoring began, in the first phase, in a pilot system, for cases concerning the enforcement of provisional protection order and the protection order, as well as that of the European protection order.

77. Within the project in support for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania, the 8 counselling centres for perpetrators (in Bucharest, Giurgiu, Timișoara, Sibiu, Slobozia, Constanta, Bacău, Craiova) as well as the network of 10 integrated centres for victims of sexual violence (Bucharest, Timișoara, Piatra-Neamț, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Slobozia, Constanta, Brăila, Bacău, Craiova) were created. The later centres provide a set of services addressed to victims including: medical examinations, counselling and post-traumatic assistance, through a multidisciplinary team, social services free of charge (psychological and/or legal counselling).

78. The POHCCJ elaborated and published a Guideline for prosecution of sexual violence and sexual abuse, which was disseminated to all prosecutors' units and is available on-line.

79. In initial professional training component for magistrates, one of the institutional strategic objectives is to ensure a complex, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary training. The issue of domestic violence is thus approached from a double perspective: from a legal point of view, to ensure the acquisition/deepening of knowledge by judicial auditors, as well as from a psychological point of view, in order to develop the non-legal skills specific to the profession of magistrate¹².

Economic, social and cultural rights

80. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures adopted by the Romanian Government included financing of the technical unemployment allowance both for employees and for other professional categories that do not carry out lucrative activities based on an individual employment contract, as well as granting compensation for employees that had their individual employment contracts suspended or their working time reduced. Professionals, persons who have concluded individual labour agreements within cooperatives, day laborers, and other self-employed persons were included in the scope of these compensatory measures.

81. To support the telework regime, a financial support of 2,500 lei – to be claimed until 31 December 2020 – was granted to employers, for each teleworker who had worked remotely for at least 15 working days during the state of emergency or alert, for the acquisition of packages of goods and technological services necessary for carrying out telework activity.

82. Faced with the community-wide spread of the virus, as the availability and access to COVID-19 vaccines were limited in the initial stages, in prioritizing the population groups, consideration was given to ethical and social equity principles, epidemiological criteria allowing flexibility in vaccine allocation at regional and local levels, medical criteria (such as risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection, risk of severe progression and death in case of infection, risk of infection transmission from the infected person to others), essential activities ensuring the proper functioning of critical infrastructure etc. The recommendations for priority groups have been consistently linked to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effectiveness of the approved vaccine types. Subsequently, vaccination was made available to the whole population to ensure protection against severe versions of the virus and the achievement of mass immunity.

Right to an adequate standard of living

83. The social inclusion policy aims to increase the living standard of the population and to stimulate the incomes from work by facilitating employment and promoting public policies with addressability to all the vulnerable groups.

84. The right to the social assistance benefits is granted in Romania without discrimination, for all Romanian citizens as well as for all the foreigners and stateless persons who have the domicile or residence in Romania. Currently, in the field of social assistance benefits, the emphasis is put on the correlation of the minimum income systems with employment measures, with the intention to guarantee an adequate level of these benefits based on means-testing, but also to ensure insertion of beneficiaries on the labour market.

85. The Reference Social Indicator (RSI) is the basis for calculating **unemployment benefits** and other employment stimulation measures, as well as some social assistance benefits¹³. Since 2021, the value of the reference social indicator (RSI) adjusts annually, with the average annual inflation rate of the previous year.

86. In order to increase the coverage and adequacy of the social benefits and their correlation with labour activation measures, the NRRP envisages the revision and application of the legal provisions in force on Minimum Inclusion Income (MII)¹⁴, as well as the development of the National Integrated Social Assistance System and provision of logistical support for the implementation of MII. This reform is expected to start in January 2024 and will include two components: MII and the family support allowance. Up to the finalization of the MII reform, the decision was to continue granting the actual means-tested benefits, namely: the minimum income guaranteed program and the family support allowance.

87. In the present crisis' context, during 2021 and 2022 the measures were taken to protect the vulnerable energy consumer, through financial and non-financial aids, so that prices at electricity and natural gas paid by final customers do not increase the level of energy poverty.

88. Recently, additional temporary measures for providing material support to categories of persons at risk of material deprivation and/or risk of extreme poverty, thus compensating a part of the food expenses for the daily living, were adopted, establishing the granting of social vouchers on electronic support, once every two months, for the purchase of food products and/or for the provision of hot meals.

Right to health

89. The National Health Strategy 2014-2020 provided interventions targeted for the main causes of mother and child mortality and morbidity, as well as improving the situation in areas like health and nutrition status of mothers and children, safe pregnancy, reduction of mortality and morbidity caused by the main infectious diseases (e.g. diseases that can be prevented through vaccination, TB, HIV, hepatitis), blood safety, prevention of most frequent cancers, mental health, environmental health, access to treatment of rare diseases, provision of transplants, improving access to health services at all levels (focusing on community health, primary health care, specialist ambulatory care, integrated emergency services, regionalized hospital services, palliative care).

90. The Institute for Mother and Child Health (NIMCH) carried out, together with the CRED Foundation, the project "Hospital – Community, a continuous care flow for the new-

born and infant with high risk of illness and death”, with a budget of 2,065,619.45 EUR and an implementation period of 36 months. Within the project, 810 professionals were trained and 5 new paediatric clinical guidelines were approved by a MoH Order in 2021, in order to develop their competence and offer adequate medical services, so as to reduce the death toll and improve child health indicators.

91. The next strategic health policy framework in Romania up to 2030 will include HIV prevention, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The HIV surveillance system in Romania is carried out by nine Regional HIV Centres, which provide the clinical and biological assessment for all patients in active surveillance, as well as the establishment of the treatment schemes. 51 infectious diseases hospitals and wards can provide the specific antiretroviral therapy.

92. The NIMCH partnered with several NGOs in the project *Renasc (Reborn)*, implemented through June 2018–October 2019, to create a sustainable public-private partnership to monitor the effects of public policies on reproductive health and to draft alternative proposals. The program built a national network for promoting the reproductive health through integrated public policies, gathering 700 relevant persons from over 45 organisations, NGOs and public or private institutions. The program also includes ensuring a better access to information and sexual education, as well as expanding the pre-conception and prenatal screening. The result of the program, namely the Action Plan for increasing the access to family planning services will be annexed to the next strategy.

93. The 2022-2026 National Anti-drug Strategy covers, in the field of drug demand reduction, specific measures and interventions focused on children and young people’s healthy and safe development (sub-populations most affected by the drug phenomenon) and on the reduction of illicit drug use, in conjunction with sustainable measures for the development of vulnerable communities. Priority is also given to assistance for certain vulnerable groups, including women drug users, people with a long history of drug use, communities with a high rate of HIV, hepatitis, TB and immigrants from countries with a high rate of HIV infection.

94. The strategy also aims at improving the access for injecting drug users to prevention, counselling, treatment, testing and vaccination services for HIV, HBV, HCV, TB and other related diseases.

95. Based on a 2017 MoH’ Order, Romania implements each year the National Programme for the prevention, monitoring and control of tuberculosis, a disease considered a major problem of public health. As such, the investigations (including the control of persons in contact with the patient) and the treatment are free of charge; the dynamics of the allocated budget shows a constant yearly funding of 24.1-30.3 million RON during 2018-2021. A methodological guide on managing the cases of chemotherapy-resistant tuberculosis was published in 2020.

Right to education

96. The Romanian education system is currently undergoing a period of reform whose vision and guidelines have been established on the basis of the Country Project "Educated Romania", initiated by the President of Romania. The project included the largest national consultation on education to date and outlines the strategic framework for education policies up to 2030.

97. Its priority directions will be implemented and operationalised through the future legislative package for pre-university and higher education, respectively.

98. The aim of this process of transforming the education system is to provide an equitable education system that ensures and respects the right of every pupil to quality education, organised in a system characterised by integrity, ethics and professionalism, transparency, and flexibility, responsive to the diverse needs of pupils and other stakeholders and able to guarantee their well-being¹⁵.

99. In parallel with the legislative measures mentioned above, the objectives of the "Educated Romania" Project will also be achieved through the implementation of the *Education* component of the NRRP, for which a total budget of € 3.605 billion is allocated¹⁶.

100. In line with the set deadlines, during 2021 and 2022, the planned activities for the reforms and investments under the *Education* component of the NRRP, outlined below, were implemented.

101. The MoE has initiated the *National Programme for the Reduction of School Dropout* (NPRSD), with 2 objectives: to increase the autonomy and capacity of educational establishments in the use of resources by implementing the Early Warning Mechanism in Education (EWME); and to monitor pupils at risk of early school leaving and dropping out through the EWME, by supporting the educational establishments in collecting relevant data, implementing individualised activity plans, and training. Special attention will be paid to pupils from vulnerable groups, by means of adapted teaching methods for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), mediation in Roma communities, adapted activities for pupils from vulnerable groups (Roma pupils, SEN pupils, other pupils at high risk of school dropout), “school after school” activities, individualised support activities, grants to support and assist them in completing compulsory education.

102. NPRSD will address the challenge of rural-urban gaps as well as the issue of educational units with a higher percentage of vulnerable groups.

103. Through the investment *supporting educational establishments at high risk of school dropout*, in 2022, within the first round of the grant scheme targeting lower secondary schools at medium and high risk of dropout, the MoE selected 1,415 applications and subsequently, 1,409 funding contracts were signed with the educational establishments whose applications were accepted. This first stage will be followed by two new calls for projects for schools at high risk of school dropout and a call for small schools. At least 2,500 state schools will receive support according to the specific needs and problems leading to dropout and early school leaving.

104. For the **development of vocational and technical education**, the *Methodology for the organisation of the full dual route and the new qualifications resulting from the full dual route* has been approved in 2022. A call for competitive projects, with a total financial allocation of €338 million, was launched to stimulate the development of regional consortia and integrated vocational campuses to serve them.

105. In the context of the **reform on the digitisation of education**, at least 100,000 teachers will benefit from training in integrated digital education and digital transition by 2025, through training courses for online teaching, with an estimated €80 million in funding from the NRRP.

106. To ensure environmentally friendly design, construction and equipment standards in the pre-university education system, the MoE has already approved the legislative framework establishing the equipment standards for early education, primary education, and lower secondary education, including the lists of equipment that educational establishments for all three levels of education must have, and the MoDPWA has adopted the *regulations on the design, construction, and operation of buildings for schools and high schools*.

107. In January 2023, the National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023-2030 was approved, setting out clear actions to increase education and awareness on sustainable development and environmental responsibility among children and young people.

108. The **modernisation of the educational infrastructure** is also carried out by means of an investment funded through the NRRP which will provide facilities for pre-university classrooms and school laboratories and workshops. To this end accredited state pre-university education establishments will be equipped with ICT equipment, furniture and educational and sports materials, following a competitive call for projects¹⁷, whose preliminary stages were finalized in 2022. The total financial allocation of the call for projects is €1.068 billion.

109. The call will ensure equipping 5,200 computer labs, 3,600 schools (of primary, lower secondary and high school level) with IT equipment for digitising learning resources, computer labs in 909 vocational and technical education units, 75,000 classrooms with furniture, as well as 10,000 laboratories and school offices in the pre-university education

system, including psycho-pedagogical assistance offices. Priority will be given to educational establishments that have not benefited from this type of investment in the last 10 years.

110. **Additional measures** to ensure access to education for all children aim at comprising 19% of 0–3-year-olds and 91% of 3–6-year-olds, respectively, in early education services by 2026, through investment in infrastructure, and to increase the quality of early education services. To achieve the first objective, the NRRP will build and equip 110 nurseries, with a budget allocation of €230 million.

111. 412 complementary services for disadvantaged groups will be set up, equipped, and operationalised to increase the capacity of the system and the quality of early education services, with a budget allocation of €103 million.

112. The third investment within the reform of the early education service system is dedicated to the development of a framework programme for the continuous training of professionals working in standard early education services and through which 19,950 additional teaching and non-teaching staff will be trained.

113. The MoE signed a technical assistance contract with the World Bank to carry out the reform of the governance of the pre-university education system and the professionalisation of management, including through a training and mentoring program for managers and inspectors.

114. For higher education, the investment aimed at digitising universities and preparing them for the digital professions of the future will provide grants to universities for digital equipment for teaching and research purposes and improving the digital skills of students and teaching and research staff. The contracting period ended in August-September 2022 and the implementation of the projects for the 61 winning universities has already started.

115. The Hot Meal Programme has been successively extended; for the school year 2022-2023, 450 schools will participate in the programme.

116. A 50% increase in the number of school counsellors in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, was approved by the Government.

117. A lump sum for commuting pupils and the reimbursement of transport cost for pupils staying in boarding or host families were approved.

118. The MoE is implementing, with funding provided by the World Bank, the Project *Safer, More Inclusive and Sustainable Schools*, which aims to help schools achieve modern infrastructure and functionality requirements in terms of safety, resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability through integrated investments in the reconstruction or upgrading of selected schools, particularly those at high seismic risk¹⁸.

119. In order to facilitate the educational integration of children who have not been enrolled in the Romanian education system in the last two years, in October 2022, accommodation groups will be organised in educational establishments. Within these groups, pupils are taught notions of Romanian language, culture and civilisation. The measure will particularly support children from families returning from abroad. The methodology which will regulate the organisation of the accommodation groups is currently being drafted.

120. In addition to the financial allocation through the NRRP, the European Structural and Investment Funds support investments in education.

Children

121. The NAPRCA was re-established under the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, as central authority responsible with children's rights, adequate budgetary allocations being made available.

122. As the previous period of implementation of the former strategy on children rights ended, a new strategy for the period 2023–2027 is underway; its general objective cover increasing the level of children's participation in making decisions that concern them; reducing poverty and social exclusion among children; improving the child's health; increasing children's participation in quality inclusive education; development of

mechanisms to protect children against violence; ensuring child-friendly justice and ensuring children's access to digital public services in safe conditions.

123. The NAPRCA revised the framework methodologies on the prevention and intervention in multidisciplinary team and network in situations of violence against the child and of domestic violence, regarding the child labourers and those at risk of child labour, children victims of trafficking in human beings, Romanian migrant children victims of other forms of violence in third States, to correlate it with the relevant legislation, the new procedures and introducing instruments for the specialists working with child victims of violence.¹⁹

124. On 31 December 2021, 65,748 vulnerable children received prevention services, such as day care centers, rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities, counselling and support centers for parents and children, family planning, monitoring the pregnant women's health.

125. The number of street children decreased significantly, to 349 registered street children on 30 September 2022, most of them being children who live with their families, so that the measures implemented at national level mainly focused on prevention activities and provision of specialized services (day and night shelters, temporary protection, if needed, or counselling, reintegration within the schooling system).

126. The recent legal amendments withdrew the functioning authorization, starting with 1 October 2022 for all large capacity residential institutions, except for those who are subject to on-going closure projects. Moreover, the placement of a child under 7 years old can be done only to the extended or substitute family, or a foster parent. The only exception refers to the children between 3–7 years old for whom the rehabilitation in other type of services is not possible, if they present both a complete functional deficiency, as well as limitations of activity and complete participation restrictions.

127. On 30 September 2022, at national level, 73,868 children with parents abroad were registered. Most of them (96%) were into the care of their relatives or a person designated by their parents, while only a small part are in the special protection system.

128. Under the NRRP, a network of 150 day care centers will be set up at community level, especially in the most disadvantaged communities, to also cater for the children whose parents are abroad.

129. Several public campaigns to prevent and combat sexual abuse of minors were run by MoIA, in partnership with embassies in Bucharest and NGOs: the "Unwanted Touching"; the project "Prevention of sexual aggression and recruitment of teenagers through social networks"; "Poate te place" (*Maybe they like you*), for the prevention of abuse against minors and women; "Violence has no colour" for the prevention of violence against Roma girls and women.

130. The RIHR has drafted a guide for children and youth living in special protection centres, as well as for the staff thereof, focused on a children's rights-based approach, highlighting the importance of participation and the reporting of cases of abuse.

131. In every county and district of Bucharest there is at least one specialized service for child victims of violence, including sexual exploitation: 13 services that provide counselling for child victims of violence, out of which 4 are private, 53 emergency centers for child victims of violence and 14 other residential services for child victims of violence; since January 2022 there is a single national helpline 119 to report child abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence.

132. From July 2022, the first Barnahus-type center is available in Bucharest; the staff consists of: medical doctor, social worker, 2 psychologists and 2 administrative personnel.

133. The target groups are the child victims of violence, including crimes, with focus on sexual abuse and exploitation, child witnesses, parents and other family members (siblings, grandparents). The services provided in the Barnahus-type center are the following: interview of the child as part of child protection case assessment (including exploratory interview); forensic interview or hearing of the child as part of administrative or judicial proceedings;

forensic medical examination aimed at securing evidence for administrative or judicial proceedings; assistance services for the child and (non-offending) family members.

134. The interviews of the child are conducted by police officers and prosecutors, who have specific training to carry out the interview in a child-friendly manner, using NICHHD Protocol and observed by specialists of the multidisciplinary team, non-offending parent, lawyer, through closed-circuit video-transmission; the video-recording of the interview is admitted as evidence in judicial proceedings.

135. NAPRCA started in 2021 to collect data regarding minor pregnant women and underage mothers who requested social services, to substantiate a procedure regarding cooperation with police and determination of potential sexual abuse and exploitation before reporting to police.

136. All minor pregnant women and minor mothers, both in maternity centers and outside the special protection system (where the majority are) benefit from the following services: information on rights; social, psychological, legal, parental counseling; facilitating access to specialized medical services (pregnancy monitoring, periodic medical evaluations).

Persons with disabilities

137. The 2022-2027 National Strategy regarding the rights of persons with disabilities "A fair Romania" in force from 15 April 2022, pursues the implementation of CRPD and monitoring of the respect of the rights of persons with disabilities by improving the capacity and coordination of actors at the central level for the development and implementation of policies that affect the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the role of independent mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the CRPD.

138. It prioritises increasing the quality of life and changing the status of people with disabilities from inactive people to employed people by introducing new types of support services (assisted employment, work training, workplace adaptation); development of training/training materials for representatives of central and local authorities involved in ensuring and monitoring the access the physical, informational and communication environment; evaluating of the adaptation needs of the physical, informational and communicational environment in order to ensure equal opportunities.

139. The National Agency for Employment (NAE) is implementing the project "Facilitating the labour market integration of persons with disabilities", aimed at increasing the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities by ensuring their access to the physical, informational and communicational environment on equal terms with other people. The Agency provides vocational information and counselling, job-matching, but also subsidy measures for employers who employ disabled people or disabled graduates. All employment stimulation measures, such as integration bonuses, job placement bonuses, mobility bonuses, etc. are also available to persons with disabilities.

140. In 2021, the National Agency for Benefits and Social Inspection verified the accessibility of buildings of all DGASPC, indicated 187 remedial measures and applied 47 sanctions; the quality of 295 social services intended for adults with disabilities in 196 residential centres, 19 home care services, 65 daytime centres, 15 Community services, indicating 193 remedial measures.

141. Pupils with special education needs (SEN) benefit from adapted examination conditions, including the possibility of using assistive equipment and software, in the national assessments and examinations, as well as in local and national examinations/competitions. To this end, the MoE provides the commissions responsible for the organisation of examinations with a uniform procedural framework annually, to ensure equal opportunities for students with disabilities and to optimise the conditions for the organisation and conduct of national examinations.

142. SEN pupils and young people attending special or mainstream educational establishments, including those attending school in a county other than their county of residence, benefit from social assistance in the form of a daily food allowance, school supplies, accommodation, clothing, and footwear, as well as free accommodation in boarding schools or in the SEN children assistance centres run by the general directorates for social

assistance and child protection. In 2022, a 50% increase of the amount allocated to the daily food allowance and to the school supplies, clothing, and footwear, respectively was granted for SEN children in mainstream educational establishments, who also have a disability.

143. The “Educated Romania” Project, envisages to implement a multi-step pedagogical system of intervention, adapted to the needs of children, allowing the transition of SEN children into mainstream schools and their effective integration, by creating a multidisciplinary team of specialists in each school, developing individualised and transition educational plans, respectively, by providing the necessary resources and infrastructure, and a sufficient number of support teachers, school counsellors and specialists to work in schools.

Members of minorities

144. The 2022-2027 National Strategy for Roma Inclusion list among its objectives the combating of discrimination and anti-Roma attitudes and racially motivated hate speech, as well as Supporting research, conservation and promoting the Roma cultural heritage and Roma cultural identity (with a dedicated chapter on Reconciliation with the past and Recognition of Slavery, Holocaust and Roma forced assimilation during the Communist regime), in synergy with the 2021-2023 National Strategy for preventing and combating Antisemitism, Xenophobia, Radicalisation and hate speech. The NAR is monitoring the media anti-Roma attitudes and racially motivate speech. The Strategy’s Action Plan will be funded mainly through the national budget, while EU funds to be additional.

145. Regarding education, annually, approximately 3,000 special places for admission to high school education and approximately 500 special places for admission to university education are allocated from the State budget, for Roma students.

146. In its case-law, the NCCD concluded on the discriminatory language in a statement/speech/post against persons of Roma origin in over 45 cases; it also issued 15 rulings on school segregation of Roma students.

147. A draft law specifically prohibiting school segregation on the basis of ethnic origin within the anti-discrimination law is currently pending before the Romanian Parliament.

148. The 2022-2050 National Housing Strategy is built on social inclusion, to prevent urban poverty isolated housing spaces, disconnected from the public infrastructure; it targets to facilitate access of persons from vulnerable groups and marginalised communities to adequate housing.

149. The 2022-2027 National Strategy regarding the social inclusion and poverty reduction includes specific measures for (i) improving the public health and the performance of preventive services; (ii) limiting the residential spatial segregation phenomenon; (iii) combating the discrimination of vulnerable groups.

150. Yearly, the National Agency for Employment implements a special program dedicated to communities with a large Roma ethnic population, focusing on job matching and the provision of subsidies to employers, in order to ensure faster employment, depending on the availability of jobs.

151. The MoE is implementing, in partnership, the project "Competence and efficiency in teaching the Romanian language to children and pupils belonging to national minorities in Romania"; 6,190 teachers from schools with teaching in the national minority languages, as well as from schools with teaching in Romanian where national minority pupils are enrolled will be trained in view of developing their Romanian language teaching competences. Educational resources will also be developed for each national minority in Romania, in-service training programmes will be designed and accredited and curricula at the school's decision will be developed and piloted, a measure that will contribute to teacher training in view of preventing absenteeism and school dropout of children at high risk and to the elaboration of new learning resources and materials.

Migrants

152. On 18 March 2022, the Government adopted the Decision regarding the establishment of conditions for ensuring temporary protection Foreigners and stateless persons who had

legal residence in Ukraine, as well as the stateless persons and nationals of third countries, other than Ukraine, who benefited from national protection in Ukraine, and who cannot return in safe and stable conditions to their country of origin will benefit from temporary protection on the territory of Romania.

153. Several legislative acts were adopted in 2022 to address practical barriers preventing access to education for asylum-seeking and refugee children:

- the Methodology for the certification of pre-university studies for foreigners who have obtained international protection in Romania and who do not have documents proving their studies or who, for objective reasons, do not fall under the current legal provisions in the field of recognition and attestation of studies of foreigners in Romania, a legislation offering both the possibility to continue education and to facilitate access to the labour market;
- the revision of the legal framework regulating the schooling, as well as the organization and the conduct of the Romanian initiation course for minors who have acquired a form of international protection or a right of residence in Romania, strengthened by adopting a new methodology and a new procedure for the elaboration, approval and distribution of syllabi and textbooks for the Romanian language initiation course for minors;
- A new methodology for the organisation and conduct of the Romanian language initiation course, as well as a new procedure for the elaboration, approval and distribution of the Romanian language initiation course syllabi and textbooks for adult foreigners.

154. The latter 2 acts benefit also the individuals who are citizens of the EU Member States and of the European Economic Area and of the Swiss Confederation who have acquired a form of international protection or a right of residence in Romania.

155. The Ukrainian displaced children and young people have access to kindergartens and schools under the same conditions as the Romanian children. In order to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian children into the Romanian education system, they have access to Romanian language initiation courses and extra-curricular activities in and out of school through school inspectorates.

156. Ukrainian children are eligible for all MoE social support programmes and, in addition, they benefit from scholarships, accommodation in boarding schools, transport, medical assistance in case of emergency, basic personal items and counselling and psychological support. All costs related to access to education in public schools and kindergartens are covered from the Romanian State budget.

157. In order to remove possible obstacles to the transition from lower to upper secondary education, Ukrainian students have been exempted from sitting the national examination at the end of the 8th grade.

158. To strengthen the support and integration measures for Ukrainian refugees who choose to stay in Romania, in June 2022, the Romanian Government adopted the *National Plan of Measures for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine*, which in addition to providing an emergency response, focuses on medium and long-term protection measures.

159. In terms of facilitating the access of displaced Ukrainian students to higher education, special measures have been adopted to support Romanian universities to allow academic mobility during the academic year, as well as the provision of scholarships, counselling and psycho-pedagogical assistance, so that Ukrainian students can continue their studies in Romanian State universities (within English or Romanian university programmes) under the same conditions as the Romanian students.

160. Following the Ukrainian authorities' request, a couple of major universities in Romania have organised two computerised online test centres for admission to higher education in Ukraine, and consequently, admission sessions for bachelor's and master's degrees have been organised during the summer of 2022.

161. Romania, through the National Centre for the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (ENIC-NARIC Centre), is a partner in the CoE European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) project. The EQPR is a tool that facilitates refugees' access to education and the labour market when they cannot provide the necessary or sufficient documentation for the equivalence and/or recognition of studies.

Notes

- ¹ Available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Romania_midterm_report_3rd-cycle.pdf
- ² Please note the present report will use acronyms for all these institutions; please refer to the Annex.
- ³ See Annex.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Financed by the "Justice" Program, financed under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (MFN) 2014-2021.
- ⁸ See Annex.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Call for proposals for the *Provision of furniture, teaching materials and digital equipment in pre-university education establishments*.
- ¹⁸ See Annex.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.