**Midterm progress report on the implementation by Romania of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**

**1. Policies and related implementation measures**

During the reference period (2020-present), the implementation of several national strategies has been completed. Through their objectives and lines of action, these strategies have contributed to the promotion of human rights in terms of access to education, inclusion, recognition of previously acquired skills, literacy, acquisition of qualifications, as well as to the removal of barriers and enjoyment of full exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the promotion of support measures for vulnerable people and measures to educate and the raise awareness of young people. These strategies include:

*- the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2015-2020;*

*- Romania's Vocational Education and Training Strategy for 2016-2020;*

*- the National Strategy "A barrier-free society for people with disabilities" 2015-2020;*

*- National strategy on social inclusion and poverty reduction for the period 2015-2020;*

*- Romania's strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2014-2020;*

*- National strategy on promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and preventing and combating domestic violence for the period 2018-2021.*

At the same time, the implementation of some new strategies has started, as follows:

- **The National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization and Hate Speech for the period 2021 - 2023.** Two of the objectives of the Strategy aim to promote tolerance, civic education and the resilience of the Romanian society to anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech. The Strategy will seek to modernize projects and programmes in the educational and cultural fields and to continue and expand bilateral and multilateral international cooperation programmes to combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech;[[1]](#footnote-1)

- **The National Immigration Strategy 2021-2024**. The Strategy sets out the principles and guidelines for the regulation of national immigration policies. In order to strengthen the social integration mechanism of persons who have acquired a form of protection in Romania and those with legal residence, one of the proposed lines of action is dedicated to the promotion of an education favourable to social inclusion. In this respect, the aim is to adapt the legal framework to the specific needs of migrant pupils and to remove obstacles to the participation of third-country national minors in pre-school and school education by adapting it to the specific needs of children;

- **The Romanian Government Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027.** With regard to the objective of ensuring access to quality education for Roma citizens, the Strategy aims at reducing the school drop-out among Roma pupils, increasing their inclusion in the formal education system, improving the quality of education, promoting interculturality, creating an inclusive school environment and preserving cultural identity and building self-esteem among Roma pupils.

Following the adoption of *Law no. 221/2019 for the modification and completion of the National Education Law no. 1/2011,* which banned bullying in all educational establishments, in 2020 the Ministerial Order no. 4.343/2020 was adopted, approving the methodological norms for the application of the provisions on bullying of Law no. 221/2019. In this way, a safe and positive climate is facilitated in all educational establishments, based on respect for the person, non-discrimination, motivation for learning and ensuring the well-being of preschoolers / pupils in the educational establishment.

In 2020, by Ministerial Order no. 3310/21.02.2020, the syllabus for the Romanian language initiation course for the adult foreigners who have acquired a form of international protection in Romania and third-country nationals and the syllabus for the Romanian language initiation course for foreign children who have acquired a form of international protection in Romania and third-country nationals, respectively, were approved.

In 2020 Romanian participated in the 7th consultation on the implementation of the *1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.*

**2. Teaching and learning processes and tools**

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the large-scale national project Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All - CRED continued during the reporting period. The Project’s overall aim at reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegration into education and training. The project started in 2017 and is due to end in 2022. The following activities have been/are being implemented within its framework:

- a national wide training programme for teachers, detailed in point 3;

- the development of methodological guidelines for primary and secondary school subjects, e.g. subjects covering education for democracy and human rights education (*Social Education*); subjects targeting the mother tongue and literature, the history and traditions of minorities, the music education of minorities. These guidelines will help teachers initiate and carry out teaching approaches that make the most of the cultural diversity of the pupils they work with, include knowledge from areas related to the subjects they teach and initiate educational projects in partnership.

- the development of open educational resources for all subjects in the national curriculum and other relevant resources to support the implementation of the new curricula in the classroom. The resources developed will support learning for the subjects included in the primary and secondary school curricula, including *Civic Education* and *Social Education*, in the short and medium term during the implementation of the project, as well as in the long term.

- the development of syllabi for elective disciplines that schools can offer with the curriculum at the school’s decision, including syllabi for elective subjects addressing human rights issues, e.g. *Migrants in the Contemporary World* (grade 7), *Applied Ethics* (grade 7), *How I get along with the other* (for the *Second Chance Programme*);

The partnerships concluded though the eTwinning projects provide an appropriate framework for addressing human rights and education for democracy issues, taking into account the intercultural context, while also experimenting with educational contexts specific to transnational teaching methodologies. Between January 2020 and April 2022, teachers in Romania have initiated or have been partners in more than 100 international eTwinning projects addressing themes such as human rights or education for democracy.

**3. Training of educators**

The main and systematic approach to the training of teachers in the area of human rights education at national level includes the continuous training of teachers through the training programmes and courses provided by Teacher Training Houses (TTH) [[2]](#footnote-2), operating at county level, including in the municipality of Bucharest. Training courses on human rights education and topics subordinated or related to it are offered on an annual basis by TTHs.

The TTHs’ offer in this area is complemented by the courses and training opportunities offered by other training providers, accredited by the Ministry of Education, which include NGOs, public and private education institutions and other private providers. Romanian teachers also take part in the training activities carried out by international organizations and bodies and in this respect the educational and professional development activities related to human rights organized within the collaboration with the Council of Europe, the European Union, UNICEF, UENSCO and UNHCR are the most important.

In addition, pre-university History teachers have the opportunity to participate in training courses on the Holocaust organized by Jewish study centres, as well as take advantage of the training opportunities from abroad, such as those offered by the International School for Holocaust Studies (ISHS) - Yad Vashem, Shoah Memorial (Paris) or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The involvement and support offered by the Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR) in human right education has continued, through the collaboration with the Ministry of Educations, the TTHs and schools (including partnership-based collaboration). The collaboration with the Ministry of Education includes the organization of the National Didactic Creativity Contest in the field of auxiliary resources for human rights, democracy, and peace education in pre-university education which was continued in 2020 and 2021. The Contest consists in the creation of auxiliary teaching and learning resources by the participating teachers, for use in the classroom, in view of facilitating a better understanding the child rights related topics.

As already mentioned, the CRED project has also included an extensive in-service teacher training programme through which 55,000 primary and secondary school teachers were trained. The training programme was designed to ensure the successful implementation of the new national curriculum, using a key competences based teaching approach and the adaptation of the teaching activities to the individual needs of pupils, especially those at risk of dropping out. The training sessions covered all subjects in the compulsory curriculum, including those in the area of education for democracy and human rights education, namely: *Civic Education* - studied in primary education, *Social Education* - studied in lower secondary education and comprising the following subjects: Criti*cal thinking and the rights of the child* (studied in the 5th grade), *Intercultural education* (studied in the 6th grade), *Education for democratic citizenship* (studied in the 7th grade).

Within the CRED Project, a national curriculum management training programme is being rolled out in 2022, targeting 6000 newly appointed school principals. This training programme includes a special module on pupils at risk, which is part of the overall strategy to increase the inclusion within secondary schools.

Non-governmental organisations active in the field of human rights promotion, including youth non-governmental organisations, take advantage of the training opportunities offered by the various international and intergovernmental organisations. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the *COMPASS training courses on human rights education*, an initiative of the Council of Europe. The courses can be organised at the initiative of national youth organisations or institutions interested in promoting quality human rights education and implementing the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The courses are strategic national or regional activities for the development of multiplier skills on human rights education among young people.

**4. An enabling environment**

During the reporting period, a number of activities relevant to the promotion of an enabling environment for the promotion and enjoyment of human rights in education were carried out, such as:

- Implementation of non-formal education programmes relevant to education for democratic citizenship, with the active involvement of NGOs, universities and the private sector, a relevant example in this regard being the European Union and Council of Europe’s Joint Project “*Inclusive Schools: Making a difference for Roma children”* (INSCHOOL). INSCHOOL Project is aimed at enhancing the social inclusion of Roma by promoting inclusive education and training in selected national schools in several European countries, including Romania. Two phases were already implemented from 2019 to 2021 and a third phase has been initiated as of 2022. Within the Project the participating schools and teachers a the provision of support to teachers were supported to promote inclusion and to improve the learning outcomes of Roma children; remove concrete barriers for vulnerable groups and raise awareness on the benefits of inclusive education among both decision makers and the general public.

In addition, the country report on *Inclusive schools. Making a difference for Roma children* (authors: Duminică Gelu, Fartușnic Ciprian, Ion Daniela, Alexandra Hozsu) was published;

- In order to support teachers and pupils during the school closures in 2020, when education was delivered online/ by distance means, IRDO made available the online course – *I am learning online about the right to education*, which was addressed to lower secondary school students. The course also aimed to actively involve young people in promoting and protecting their right to education (<https://irdo.ro/copii-tineri.php?idpagina=143>).

***- The campaign on the right to information and expression: the role of young people in promoting "democratic dialogue"*** was launched by the Romanian Institute for Human Rights (IRDO) from 4 May to 15 July 2021 in partnership with the European Law Students' Association/ELSA. The Campaign focused on diversity and tolerance, freedom of thought and freedom of speech and aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the right to free expression and the right to information among law students and young lawyers; the exercise of freedom of expression and information in the context of democratic societies. (<https://irdo.ro/copii-tineri.php?idpagina=143>);

- Romania's participation in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), from 2019-2022. This educational benchmarking project is carried out by the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, as Romania's national representatives in the IEA, with the support of the Ministry of Education. The ICCS programme explores how education systems prepare young people to assume their role as citizens, promoting civic behaviour being one of the long-term objectives of the European Union's strategic framework for cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). The study aims to contribute to improving the ways in which civic competences are taught and developed in 13-14 year old pupils.

1. The strategy is mentioned as a model of good practice by the European Commission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Teacher Training Houses are Ministry of Education related units, which are educational and managerial resource and assistance centres for teaching and auxiliary staff, also functioning as continuous training provider, subject to accreditation. Their main activity objective is the continuous training of pre-university teachers through continuous training programmes and scientific, methodological and cultural activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)