

# THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

## 1. Context

Taking into account the obligations Romania will have as an EU member, upon accession, an international development cooperation policy needs to be set-up and implemented.

Development co-operation is a shared competence between the European Community (EC development cooperation is based on articles 177 to 181 of the Treaty of the EC) and the Member States. Development policy is at the heart of the EU's relations with all developing countries.

The primary and overarching objective of EU development co-operation is the eradication of poverty on the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Romania's international development policy is aligned with the European Consensus values, principles and objectives. The policy consists in supporting poor people in developing countries, including low income and middle income countries.

Poverty is not simply defined as the lack of financial resources but also citizens' deprivation of food, education, health services, jobs, political involvement and infrastructure. The poor population is the victim, as well as the cause of the environment deterioration, because it generally lives in ecologically vulnerable areas. This affects its health, but, in the same time, it deteriorates the natural resources, polluting the environment. There is a strong link between poverty, fragile or non-democratic government systems and multiplication of security risks. There is no development without security and no security without good governance and respect of human rights. Therefore, the Romanian actions in the development cooperation policy will consider all these three factors.

After becoming an EU member, Romania will change its status from receiver to donor of development assistance. However, this process will take into consideration the status of Romanian economy and Romania's own priorities in order to guarantee a sustainable development.

The Romanian development cooperation policy is established complementarily with its foreign policy and its foreign economic relations. At the same time, its objectives will be correlated with the ones established at the EU level (the European Commission and the Member States), as well as with the international organizations' objectives (OECD, World Bank Group, UN Agencies like UNDP, UNEP, FAO, UNICEF etc.)

In Romania's view, in order to address the complex development cooperation environment, assistance for development should be based on a mix of policies, in order to respond to the necessity of correlating the intervention in different domains: economic including commercial, social and environmental aspects, good governance, and security.

Romania will make use of its good practices acquired in the transition process, so it could actively contribute to the development cooperation policy, in areas such as good governance and economic management.

## 2. Principles

Romanian development cooperation policy is based on the following principles:

- *Ownership/Partnership*: The assistance provided by Romania will consider all the priorities identified by the beneficiary states as defined in their own national

development strategies or Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; Romania and developing countries will share responsibility and accountability;

- *Differentiation*: Implementation of Romanian development cooperation is necessarily country-specific, tailor-made to each partner country based on the countries own needs, strategies and priorities;
- *Coordination*: Romania will coordinate its assistance for development with the one offered by other donors (states or organizations from the multilateral system). As a future EU Member, the main coordination will be with the Member States and the European Commission by working towards joint multiannual programming;
- *Coherence*: Romania will guarantee the coherence of its policies, so that its policies in other domains (e.g. trade, environment, energy, agriculture, migration etc.) should match the development cooperation policy's objectives;
- *Complementarity*: The development assistance granted by Romania will be channeled into areas, where Romanian expertise can make a difference by comparison with the one provided by the Member States or the Commission. Romania will discuss with its EU partners the annual timetable of the development assistance ( for example, in the context of the discussions of the EU country strategy papers) responding to countries' priorities at the countries' and regional level;
- *Effectiveness*: This is the main principle regarding the managing and monitoring of project and programme implementation. Romania will strive to implement and monitor the commitments on aid effectiveness as laid down in the Paris Declaration of March 2005. In this way the transaction costs of development assistance can be reduced.
- *Transparency*: Policy implementation process will include consultations with NGO's, the academic and business communities and other interested civil groups. The information regarding Romanian projects and programmes and the financial allocation will be made public regularly;
- *Conditionality*: Romania supports all efforts of states to respect good governance, human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. Where extreme human rights violations prevail, development cooperation will not be possible.

Romania will act mostly in the regions and areas/sectors where it can have a significant contribution, due to its experience accumulated in the transition process.

### **3. Objectives**

The overall objective will be the support for the beneficiary countries with regard to their individual development strategies. Romania will support the objectives established by the international community for guaranteeing prosperity and development at a global level. These objectives were expressed through the Millennium Declaration, adopted on September 18, 2000. The main goal of Romania's assistance policy consists in reduction of poverty, as poverty represents the major obstacle for a country's social and economic development.

The achievement of the mentioned objectives will be guided by the principle of sustainable development.

### **4. Geographic and sectorial priorities**

Romania sustains the development of states from the geographic areas labeled as priorities for the Romanian foreign relations, namely the Eastern European states, the West Balkans and South

Caucasian countries. However, Romania will, in principle, also support least developed and low income countries. The list of beneficiary states can be expanded towards Central Asia, Africa and Latin America, once Romanian capacities in the assistance for development field are being consolidated.

Romania is, in principal, is prepared to offer assistance in the following domains:

- A. *Good governance*: citizens' participation, reform of public administration, decentralization, access to information.
- B. *The strengthening of democracy and of the rule of law*: promoting human rights (child protection, equal opportunities, combating discrimination), legislative and institutional reform, etc.
- C. *Economic development*: sustaining the transition towards a market economy, development of the private sector including by means of public private partnership (PPP), sustaining the privatization process, formulation of the monetary policy, management of public finances, assisting the development of information society.
- D. *Education and career development/employment*: supporting partner states in developing a curriculum, the trainers formation, reform of professional and technical education, labor market reforms.
- E. *Health*: focus on the reproduction health, prevention and control of the spreading diseases (developing a system able to prevent and control it), fighting HIV/AIDS (promoting Romanian good practices in administrating the programs financed by the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the formation of trained medical personnel).
- F. *Development of infrastructure and environment protection*: contribution to the rural infrastructure projects (water supplying, roads viability), contribution to the transport infrastructure programmes, energy, telecommunication, housing projects, tourism projects and capitalizing the potential of the tourist's objectives and the environment infrastructure projects. Evaluating the impact on the environment, supporting beneficiary states to define their strategies and policies for environment protection by integrating environmental policies (wastage management, water economy, protecting and preserving the biological diversity, managing dangerous chemical substances and genetically modified organisms, pollution control and risk management, protection of soil and subsoil).

In the first phase, Romania will focus on a limited number of areas, where it has a strong advantage in comparison to the other donor countries: promoting human rights, strengthening of democracy, education and career development and economic development.

## 5. Types of assistance

The assistance granted by Romania will be included in the category of Official Development Assistance (ODA according to the OECD definition).

The assistance for development granted by Romania will be *bilateral* and *multilateral* (through the UN Organizations, the EU, the World Bank Group and other international agencies).

The Romanian bilateral assistance for development represents financial and technical support. The technical assistance in the form of grants will be given priority, considering the importance of Romanian expertise in this field, acquired during the transition period.

The assistance offer for development does not leave out humanitarian aid in case of disasters or prolonged military conflicts. It can consist of providing relief to war refugees and emergency assistance (including food aid) after national disasters (earthquakes, floods, droughts). When responding to such crises, the Romanian government will closely cooperate with NGO's.

Besides bilateral and multilateral cooperation, Romania is also interested in trilateral cooperation projects and programmes, e.g. with other EU member states, the EU Commission or multilateral organizations. Romania will not only support projects, but also integrated sectoral or regional programmes, mainly together with other donors ("programme assistance"). Romania will also participate in co – financing.

## **6. The institutional framework**

The development cooperation policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its responsibilities are:

- To draft the annual and multi-annual programme for the development cooperation assistance, by establishing the main areas and regions the assistance in close coordination with the governmental institutions and after consultations with the civil society;
- To present the annual evaluations on the development projects implemented by the governmental institutions or their partners from the civil society (NGOs, universities, the business environment) and how the budget was spent;
- To negotiate the bilateral agreements in the development cooperation domain, in collaboration with the governmental institutions;
- To coordinate with the EU partners, the European Commission and the multilateral institutions (UN organizations, World Bank Group, regional development banks) in the development cooperation area;
- To manage the bilateral and multilateral budget allocated to the development assistance;
- To elaborate methodologies, procedures, eligibility criteria, for future programs;
- To present an Annual Report on Romanian Development Assistance and Development Policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its capacity as national coordinator for the Romanian international development policy, will work with the relevant institutions when scheduling and choosing the projects. The inter-ministerial consultations will take place whenever is necessary and will have a flexible and open character.

The implementation of the Romanian international development policy will be made by an autonomous structure to be developed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It will include a component for political planning and an implementing department.

The appointment of the governmental or non-governmental agents that will implement the projects will be based on the consent reached in the consultation process at ministerial level.

The implementation process is evaluated and monitored by a special structure which this responsibility is assigned to, according to the European practice.

In order to enhance the engagement of communities from outside the state administration in development cooperation issues and to ensure transparency within development assistance activities,

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will appoint a “Council for Development Cooperation” as an advisory body. The Council will include representatives of Parliament, of non-governmental organizations, churches, academic and business communities, trade unions and the media.

## **7. Financial resources**

In line with the Member States practice, Romania will finance the development cooperation activities from the national budget. These activities will be managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and financed through its budget. An exception will be the governmental scholarship fund for the international students, which will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The involvement of partners from the private sector for co - financing of projects in the area of development cooperation domain is a possibility taken into consideration (e.g.: public – private partnership).

Romania, like the other new EU member states, will strive to increase its ODA to reach, within their respective budget allocation processes, a level of 0.17 % ODA/GNP by 2010. Romania, like the other new EU member states, will strive to increase by 2015 the ODA/GNP rate to 0.33 %.

## **8. Role of NGO's**

The involvement of non-governmental organizations in the development activities is a standard modality applied by EU donors. Such cooperation is also useful for Romania, having very limited human resources in state administration in the area of Development Assistance. NGO's have specific experience of activities in Romania, which they can apply in developing countries, mainly in the area “experience within the transition process”, in the social sphere, education and work with volunteers.

The Romanian government is willing to strengthen its partnership with Romanian civil society organizations. It encourages the establishment of a Romanian “Development Cooperation Round Table”, which brings together Romanian NGO's interested in development issues. Romanian NGOs will participate in policy formulation through a genuine consultative, inclusive process and will have the opportunity to apply for implementing projects. As a further step, an national NGO platform should be established.

## **9. Public Awareness and Development Education**

Romania regards a continuous increase of information on developmental and global issues to be an integral part of Development Policy. The main aim of public relations is to increase the awareness of Romanian public and its sense of solidarity with developing countries. The public relations activities may include, for example, broad information campaigns, organizing seminars, conferences, open day events, fostering “transfer” labels for fair trade with developing countries. Promotion of the knowledge of Romanian Development Cooperation will be conducted through the mass media, including the internet and periodical publications (including an official annual report on Romanian Development Cooperation). Polls on public opinion on Romanian Development Policy could be regularly conducted in collaboration with polling agencies.

Development training and education is a complimentary part of the Romanian Development Policy. Universities will train experts in the area of Development Policy. Specialized courses in “Development Studies” will be established. NGO's, the business community, trade unions, mass media and churches should be involved in such training activities.

Romanian public awareness campaigns will be carried through in line with the recommendations of the EU Conference on Awareness Raising and Development Education held in Bruxelles, in May 2005.