Implementation of 4th cycle of UPR's accepted recommendations
Romania - midterm voluntary report

Methodology

The present report has been prepared in accordance with Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21 and the established roadmap for the preparation of the mid-term report. It outlines the progress achieved in advancing human rights in Romania and reflects the implementation through national action plans of the 208 recommendations accepted out of the 251 that Romania received during the fourth UPR cycle in May 2023.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the collection and compilation of information submitted by the main national institutions with responsibilities in the field of human rights, including: Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity (MLFYSS), Ministry of Education and Research (MER), Ministry of Culture (MoC), Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA), Ministry of Investments and European Project (MIEP), the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), the National Institute for Magistracy (NIM), the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice(POHCCJ), the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, the Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR), the National Audiovisual Council (NAC). Contributions were also provided by the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA), the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for women and men (NAEOWM), the Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR), the Ombudsman, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), the National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS) and the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NAPRPD).

To ensure the inclusion of civil society perspectives, the draft report was also published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for public consultation.

Executive summary of key developments

This document summarises the main actions taken by Romania following the recommendations made in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
Romania has made notable progress in enforcing the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, aligning its legislation with international standards and developing evidence-based public policies, particularly to support vulnerable groups. Romania has strengthened the legislative and institutional framework for the protection of the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities, as well as for promoting equitable access to education and health. Measures to prevent and combat violence have been strengthened, services for victims have been developed, and training programs for professionals have been expanded. Policies for children and persons with disabilities focus on participation, inclusion, and deinstitutionalization. In education, recent national programs support the reduction of school dropouts and functional literacy.
The National Health Strategy 2023–2030 prioritizes prevention and access to basic services for vulnerable groups. Romania has continued to strengthen social and education policies aimed at

reducing inequalities and supporting vulnerable groups, including through investments in community services, education, employment, and housing.
The national framework on equality and non-discrimination has been strengthened through updated strategies, institutional measures, training, and awareness-raising activities, including on the prevention of hate crimes. The National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2027 and EU-funded programs support access for Roma and national minorities to education, healthcare, employment, and social services.
The right to education in the languages of persons belonging to national minorities and the protection of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity are fully guaranteed, alongside cultural initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and social equality.
Romania has substantially strengthened its legislative and operational framework by adopting the National Strategy 2024-2028 and amending the Criminal Code, eliminating suspended sentences for human trafficking and broadening the definition of exploitation. Victims' rights have been strengthened through the new national identification and referral mechanism and Law No. 272/2024. Guarantees for persons deprived of their liberty have been strengthened, including complaint mechanisms, protection of vulnerable persons, and standards on searches and medical care. The Ombudsman, through the National Preventive Mechanism, and the CPT constantly monitor detention centres, and the training of police and prison staff incorporates human rights standards. Between 2020 and 2025, Romania significantly expanded and modernized its prison infrastructure, creating thousands of places that comply with ECHR standards and developing new facilities. Educational, work, and psychosocial assistance programs were expanded, contributing to a reduction in recidivism. National and international projects have supported the professionalization of police officers and prosecutors and alignment with ECHR case law, with a focus on the protection of vulnerable groups. Through these measures, Romania reaffirms its strong commitment to human rights and the rules-based international order.

Follow-up to UPR recommendations received

I. Legal framework, institutions and governance

1. Legal & institutional reform

The National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS) ensures access to civil service through a national competition in a digital format, which is based on the principles of competition, transparency, competence, and equal access to civil service positions. The exams and related bibliography mandatorily include topics on protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as on preventing and combating incitement to hatred and discrimination.

Within its training portfolio, the National Institute of Administration (NIA) delivers both short and long-term programmes covering topics such as Ethics, Integrity and Anti-Corruption, Legal Protection of Human Rights and the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, Personal Data Protection, and Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities.

In relation to the digital component, the NIA has developed training programmes focused on e-governance, digital competencies, cybersecurity, and data protection. These programmes address the ethical use of modern technologies, with a particular emphasis on privacy protection and ensuring that human rights considerations remain central in digital transformation initiatives. In the coming

period, the NIA will continue expanding its efforts by updating and diversifying its training offer, in line with the needs of public institutions and the recommendations formulated under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

In 2024, the Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR) issued an opinion on the European Commission's "State of the Digital Decade" 2023 report, focusing on ethics and human rights in artificial intelligence. RIHR emphasized the need for human rights impact assessments in digitalization and national policymaking to prevent negative effects, particularly on vulnerable groups. It recommended the use of the "Guide on the Assessment of the Impact of Regulations on Human Rights", developed by members of the Technical Secretariat of the Consultative Council for the Assessment of the Impact of Normative Acts (CCEINA), representatives of the NGO Group for Citizens, and experts from RIHR, and highlighted the essential role of national human rights institutions in monitoring and shaping digital policies to ensure respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

2. Ratification of & accession to international instruments

Romania ratified the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization through Law No. 69/2024, published in the Official Journal of Romania, Part I, No. 285 of 2 April 2024. The ratification process of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance is ongoing.

3. Cooperation with international organizations

With regard to the procedure for enforcing ECHR judgments, as shown by statistics compiled by the Department for the Execution of ECHR Judgments (DEJ) within the Council of Europe (CoE), there are, as of 5 December 2025, 298 cases against Romania in which the enforcement of judgments delivered by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers (CM) of the CoE. Of these, 84 cases are classified as leading (meaning that they raise new or significant issues regarding respect for human rights), and another 214 are classified as repetitive.

In 2024, Romania managed to close 105 repetitive cases and 11 leading cases, compared to 109 repetitive cases and 12 leading cases in 2023. The number of Romanian cases closed in 2023 and 2024 is significantly higher than in the previous three years (2 main cases and 13 reference cases in 2020, 3 reference cases and 42 repetitive cases in 2021, 8 reference cases and 29 repetitive cases in 2022).

Also, according to the 2024 CM Report on the execution of ECHR judgments and decisions, Romania ranked first among CoE states in terms of the number of cases closed in 2024 (116 cases, including 11 reference cases, ranking second in this regard, after Turkey, which closed 16 landmark cases).

4. National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)

Both the Ombudsman Institution and the Romanian Institute for Human Rights are currently in the process of accreditation as national human rights institutions by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). In March 2024, the Ombudsman and the Romanian Institute

for Human Rights concluded a Memorandum of Collaboration as part of the resumed accreditation process, in order to comply with Article 6.3(b) of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) Rules of Procedure. In May 2024, the SCA, operating under the auspices of GANHRI, reviewed the requests submitted by both institutions and decided not to invite them to submit full accreditation applications or include them in its calendar until all the requirements set out in Section 6.3 of the SCA Rules of Procedure are fulfilled. The SCA informed the need to clarify the issue concerning accreditation of more than one NHRI from one United Nations Member State. Once the relevant GANHRI Statute provisions are clarified, the two institutions will continue the accreditation steps.

5. Human rights education, trainings & awareness raising

The National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS) coordinates civil servants' training needs based on development plans from public authorities and shares them with the National Institute of Administration (NIA) and other providers. In cooperation with NIA, NACS helps define specialised training topics. By law, civil servants must continuously develop their skills, and public institutions must ensure participation in at least one training program every two years and allocate the necessary budget.

In 2023, the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM) implemented a major public communication initiative to improve transparency and legal literacy, including accessible materials, information campaigns, and legal education activities in schools and universities, with special attention to vulnerable groups. For professional training, the National Institute of Magistracy (INM) integrates ECHR standards and ECtHR case law into the initial training of judges and prosecutors, enhancing their ability to apply human rights standards and address issues such as discrimination and hate crimes.

The "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Police Academy provides systematic human rights education through postgraduate programmes, bachelor's and master's curricula, and continuous professional training. Courses cover hate crimes, anti-discrimination, domestic and gender-based violence, victim protection, and human rights in police work, ensuring these topics are addressed at all levels of law enforcement training, including post-secondary schools under the Romanian Police. Between 2023 and 2025, the Romanian Police, in cooperation with external partners, particularly the U.S. Embassy, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for women and men (NAEOWM), and international and national NGOs, organised numerous training sessions on identifying victims of human trafficking, combating domestic violence, and protecting human rights, involving several hundred police officers nationwide. Methodological meetings and specialised courses strengthened first-responder skills and inter-institutional cooperation.

In addition to formal curricula, the Ministry of Education and Research promotes Human Rights Education through extracurricular activities. The *A Different School* national programme supports thematic activities developed with public institutions and civil society partners. The Legal Education in Schools Programme, implemented with justice-sector institutions, involves legal professionals in age-appropriate activities on human rights, children's rights, democracy, the rule of law, and anti-discrimination. Media literacy and digital rights are promoted through partnerships such as that with the Centre for Independent Journalism, which develops pupils' critical thinking, online safety, and

responsible expression. Human rights values are also fostered through national and county-level civic education competitions and a wide range of regional and national projects, contests, festivals, and awareness campaigns focused on democracy, diversity, intercultural dialogue, inclusion, and pupils' well-being.

6. Rule of law & impunity

On 22 November 2022, the European Commission concluded that Romania had fulfilled all benchmarks under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM), recognising solid and irreversible progress in judicial reform and the fight against corruption. As a result, cooperation and monitoring transitioned fully to the EU-wide Rule of Law Mechanism. This was formally confirmed in the 2024 Rule of Law Report, which noted the official closure of the CVM on 15 September 2023, with Romania now monitored under the same framework as all EU Member States.

7. Good governance & corruption

According to the National Anticorruption Directorate's activity reports, 1052 offences were sent to trial in 2023, including 331 corruption offences and 178 related offences. Defendants included 5 deputies, 2 senators, 17 mayors, and numerous public officials. In the health sector, those indicted included senior officials from the Ministry of Health's Control Body, ambulance services, hospitals, and public health institutions. In 2024, 1050 offences were sent to trial, including 346 corruption offences and 256 related offences. Defendants included 1 deputy, 2 state secretaries, 2 county council presidents, 8 mayors, and other public officials. Health-sector indictments involved senior staff from county health insurance houses, ambulance services, hospitals, and public health directorates.

The Ministry of Justice continued to monitor the implementation of the National Anticorruption Strategy for 2021-2025 (NAS 2021-2025) at the level of public administration. As 2025 marks the final year of implementation of NAS, a post evaluation is currently underway to assess resource use, expected impacts, intervention efficiency, success and failure factors, and the sustainability of results. The evaluation is carried out by independent experts and will inform the next national anticorruption strategy. In parallel, the Ministry of Justice launched a new criminological study on corruption factors. Between July and October, data were collected through 262 questionnaires and 33 semi-structured interviews in prisons and probation services. The Ministry's sociological expert is currently drafting the study.

Romania joined the OECD Working Group on Bribery in September 2023, and the Phase 2 evaluation was completed in 2024, with the report adopted in October 2024. In response, Romania adopted Law No. 319/2024 to implement the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, later amended by Law No. 156/2025.
The amended framework grants exclusive jurisdiction to the National Anticorruption Directorate, increases sanctions through complementary fines for individuals (approx. 100–2,000 EUR) and a structured corporate liability regime with day-fines (approx. 600 to 60,000 EUR), and provides for confiscation of bribery-related assets. It also introduces mitigating circumstances for companies with effective compliance programs, strengthens international judicial cooperation under Law No.

302/2004, and extends whistleblower protections to reports of foreign bribery. Whistleblower protection is governed by Law No. 361/2022, as amended by Laws No. 67/2023 and No. 87/2025, aligning the framework with EU legislation and ensuring safeguards for individuals reporting breaches of the law.

Also, in 2025, Romania adopted Law No. 189/2025, which consolidates and harmonises rules on pre- and post-public employment restrictions ("cooling-off" periods) to prevent conflicts of interest and undue influence, in line with OECD standards. The law applies to senior officials, local elected representatives, and staff involved in procurement, auditing, concessions, regulation, accreditation, and authorization. Public institutions must designate verification structures, while the National Integrity Agency oversees compliance and imposes sanctions.

Additionally, on 30 September 2025, Parliament adopted amendments to Law No. 96/2006 on the Statute of Deputies and Senators introducing the mandatory use of the Single Register of Transparency of Interests (RUTI), an online public platform requiring deputies and senators to disclose meetings with third parties seeking to influence legislative proposals. The Constitutional Court confirmed the law's constitutionality on 5 November 2025.

8. Administration of justice & fair trial

In June 2023, Romania informed the EU Commission of the measures taken to fulfil the remaining commitments under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CMV) and to maintain rule-of-law standards.
Subsequent Rule of Law Reports (2023–2025) acknowledged Romania's significant progress in reforming the justice system, improving the transparency of disciplinary jurisprudence via the ReJust platform, developing digital tools for wider public access to court decisions, and addressing human-resource shortages in the judiciary despite budget constraints. It also noted the new composition of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), which has demonstrated commitment to transparency and responsibility, including through its action plan published in April 2023. The SCM has adopted a strategic plan for 2023–2029 that focuses on safeguarding judicial independence, strengthening the status and stability of judges and prosecutors, ensuring institutional cooperation with the legislative and executive branches, and promoting respect for the independence of the judiciary. It has taken active measures to defend the professional reputation and impartiality of magistrates, issuing public statements and adopting 29 decisions in response to complaints concerning threats to judicial independence. SCM continues to support coherent human-resource policies, adequate funding of the judiciary, digitalisation, transparency, and improved institutional communication.

9. Data collection & research

Romania has strengthened its national data collection and monitoring systems to improve evidence-based public policies for marginalised groups, particularly vulnerable children and families.
A major milestone is the adoption of Law No. 156/2023 on Preventing Child Separation from the Family, which establishes the National Observatory under the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA). By consolidating a unified national database, the Observatory enables real-time data aggregation and disaggregation based on vulnerability criteria,

strengthening intersectoral collaboration and improving policy coherence. This mechanism directly contributes to addressing the needs of marginalized groups, including children at risk of separation, persons with disabilities, and families experiencing socio-economic hardship.

These efforts align with Romania's commitments under the European Child Guarantee and the "National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child 2023–2027", which prioritise early intervention, poverty reduction, and inclusive access to quality services.

The Romanian Police maintains a specialised unit responsible for collecting statistical data on domestic violence. The data gathered covers key indicators such as the number of reported domestic violence offences, provisional protection orders issued, female victims, perpetrators, and the use of electronic monitoring devices.

10. Budget & resources (for human rights implementation)

The implementation of the various human rights strategies is realised by each responsible institution, in collaboration and coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

For example, the National Health Strategy for 2023–2030 is the reference document guiding all public policy proposals in the health sector and serves as the basis for prioritising and planning the use of funds allocated within the national health system. The national action plan for implementing the strategy includes detailed budget estimates and funding sources by activity, including measures related to HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.

II. Human rights

11. Women's rights

Discrimination

Romanian authorities have strengthened measures to prevent and combat violence against women facing intersectional discrimination. NAEOWM coordinates working groups focused on vulnerable groups, integrating the concept of intersectional discrimination into domestic violence legislation (Law No. 217/2003). An inter-institutional group also works on improving the health system's response to gender-based and sexual violence, ensuring access to prevention, care and protection services.

NCCD addressed the topic of gender stereotypes in various seminars/training sessions. Also, the sex/gender criterion was considered when analysing acts of discrimination as part of the administrative jurisdictional activity (in 2023, acts of discrimination were found in 10 files, as well as in 11 others in 2024).

In the past five years, NAEOWM has carried out over 15 awareness-raising campaigns to prevent and combat gender stereotypes. Key initiatives include:

- "Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania": a national campaign targeting high school and university students, with more than 150 information sessions on preventing domestic and gender-based violence, the Istanbul Convention, national legislation, and available services. By the end of 2023, 10,108 young people had participated.

The campaign also included a National Conference titled "Education – the premise of equal opportunities for girls and women."

- "We Are All Responsible!": an online campaign addressing responsibility and stereotypes in cases of emotional abuse, sexual violence, and workplace psychological violence. Its messages reached over 3.5 million users. The project also ran the campaign "When I Understand, I Can Choose!" in high schools promoting zero tolerance for domestic and gender-based violence. More than 2,000 students and 100 teachers participated, and six educational scenarios on gender equality and the effects of gender-based violence were developed.
- Anti-trafficking initiatives (2024): The National Agency Against Human Trafficking implemented 128 educational projects, 26 national and local campaigns, and 20 prevention initiatives, delivering 3,555 awareness activities to over 316,200 beneficiaries (students, teachers, parents, job seekers, vulnerable groups, and the general public). Over 118,000 students were directly reached, and online anti-trafficking messages had a total impact of over 9 million people.

Violence against women

To further strengthen the legal framework in the field of preventing and combating violence against women, Romania adopted a series of legislative measures that have been completed or are currently underway:

- Law No. 1/2025 amended Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, introducing new mandatory tasks for central administration institutions, such as the annual development and dissemination of materials on the prevention, causes, and consequences of domestic violence; issuing instructions requiring family doctors and specialists in public and private healthcare to record suspected domestic violence in patient files and ensure that information on support services (including the emergency helpline) is available in all healthcare units.
- Law No. 26/2024, in force since August 2024, introduced a new protection order applicable outside family relations, complementing the domestic violence framework. It covers a broad range of violent acts, including physical and sexual violence, threats, stalking, online harassment and cyber-violence, coercion to influence judicial proceedings, and any act endangering a person's physical or psychological integrity. This law expands protection to victims of all forms of violence occurring in social, non-family contexts.
- Law No. 116/2025 introduced amendments to the Criminal Code and to Law No. 26/2024 on protection orders. One key change concerns the withdrawal of a prior complaint, which now takes effect only if approved by the prosecutor.
- In parallel, as part of the transposition of Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence (deadline: June 2027), the Ministry of Justice is reviewing relevant criminal and criminal procedure provisions, including aggravating circumstances, to align national legislation with the Directive. The draft transposition law—amending the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and related legislation (such as Law No. 211/2004 on victims' rights)—is expected to be finalised in December 2025. These efforts are coordinated with NAEOWM, including on amendments to Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, within the Ministry's area of competence.

- In 2023, the Romanian Government approved the "Methodology for preventing and combating gender-based and moral harassment at work". The act provides a clear legal and procedural framework for employee protection and requires institutions and companies to take proactive measures—such as information campaigns, training, and codes of conduct—to prevent all forms of workplace harassment.
- On 27 November 2024, a draft law on preserving the anonymity of complaints by victims of sexual harassment was adopted. In the context of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, RIHR launched the campaign "Together for the Safety of Women", gathering and analysing responses from institutions and civil society to identify the main causes of violence, common action pathways, and support for the draft law. With the support of the Working Group, RIHR also formulated and presented recommendations on the situation of women's rights in Romania in preparation for Romania's 9th report to the CEDAW Committee.

The Special Parliamentary Commission "Romania without Violence", established at the beginning of September 2025, initiated a series of legislative proposals to support victims of domestic violence:

- The legislative proposal to amend and supplement Law No. 286/2009 on the Criminal Code – "No woman less" (Bp 356/2025) seeks to criminalise the act of femicide independently.
- The legislative proposal for the prevention and combating of femicide and the violence that precedes it (B541/2025), which, without establishing a separate offense in the Criminal Code, intervenes specifically on existing criminal rules, as well as on the criminal procedural rules. This bill also envisages the inclusion of the aggravated form of domestic violence committed by an adult perpetrator in the presence of a minor, as proposed (not as an obligation) by Directive 2024/1385;
- Draft law amending Article 29 of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 80/2013 on court fees, whereby victims of domestic violence are to be exempted from paying court fees for divorce and property division proceedings. The law was promulgated on 28 November 2025.

The Ombudsman has remained actively engaged in addressing domestic violence and violence against women, undertaking numerous ex officio investigations. The findings and conclusions of these investigations formed the basis of the "Special Report on Domestic Violence in Romania", published in 2025. The Ombudsman's actions led to recommendations directed to police authorities, local administrations, and other institutions involved in responding to domestic violence cases. The report underscored the complex nature of domestic violence and the limited understanding of its actual scale, due primarily to persistent underreporting. This context highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach and permanently coordinated, real-time interventions to adequately meet victims' needs. The report also identified several dysfunctions in the coordination of institutions with responsibilities in this field—particularly between social service providers and police units. In some cases, police departments failed to notify social assistance authorities when minors were not involved, restricting their intervention to briefly informing victims about potential support services. This practice limited the effectiveness of the institutional response and contributed to inconsistencies in victim protection.

The Ministry of Justice published on its website a series of informational materials on rights of victims of domestic violence, informational materials on protection orders, etc., as well as a "Guide on

preventing and combating sexual harassment and moral harassment" within the MoJ, that specifies which acts constitute forms of abuse punishable under the Criminal Code, how to file a complaint, what legal rights exist in criminal proceedings, and the immediate measures that can be ordered to ensure physical or psychological safety, such as a protection order, ways to obtain financial compensation for damages caused by the offense that cannot be obtained from the perpetrator, useful information on victim assistance, the conduct to follow, and the contact details of the prosecution, police, and assistance services.

The ongoing "National Strategy on Equal Opportunities and Domestic Violence" (2022–2027) includes measures to:

- combat behaviours and attitudes that lead to exclusion or marginalisation based on sex;
- integrate the gender perspective into national policies;
- promote an inclusive, non-discriminatory society across education, health, the labour market, and decision-making.

The Strategy assigns the Ministry of Internal Affairs several responsibilities, including developing a compendium of intervention procedures, creating a national digital system for recording domestic violence cases, conducting awareness campaigns (particularly for vulnerable groups), and equipping specialised police officers with non-lethal weapons and body cameras by 2027.

In 2024, to implement Pillar II of the Strategy, the Romanian Police carried out several actions:

- trained officers on victim-friendly procedures and on issuing/enforcing temporary protection orders;
- purchased 3,000 body cameras for officers intervening in domestic violence cases;
- implemented a GPS system to identify the closest patrol for faster response;
- equipped police vehicles with smart tablets for real-time database access.

In 2024, the Common Inter-Institutional Working Procedure for collecting, reporting, and monitoring statistical data on domestic violence was approved. The Order sets out principles and collaboration methods among responsible institutions, standardizes data series and reporting activities, and designates the bodies that collect and manage data: NAEOWM, the Romanian Police (IGPR), the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), the National Institute of Forensic Medicine (NIFM), the Superior Council of Forensic Medicine (SCFM), and the Ministry of Health. A digital platform for data collection is currently being developed.

In 2025, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice established a working group, including the Romanian Police and NGOs, to develop a methodology for investigating domestic violence cases.

In addition, NAEOWM coordinated the Working Group for Strengthening the Legal Framework on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence, established in May 2023 to align with GREVIO recommendations. The group includes representatives from key ministries, public institutions, academia, and NGOs. Main proposals include:

- recognising forced marriage or cohabitation (especially involving minors) as domestic violence and enabling protective measures;

- updating the definition of cyber violence, including AI-related forms;
- introducing mandatory gender-sensitive training (minimum 10 hours) for all relevant professionals;
- improving procedures for issuing protection and provisional protection orders;
- strengthening protection for child witnesses and child victims, including support for children orphaned by maternal murder;
- creating a National Register of domestic violence cases;
- improving victims' access to social services and ensuring continuity of individualized support;
- regulating financial resources needed for social services.

Preventive activities

The Romanian Police's crime analysis and prevention units implement several domestic violence prevention programmes. In 2024, the national awareness campaign "Excuses don't change reality" was launched. That year, police carried out over 2,000 prevention activities nationwide, reaching 44,500 adults, 15,100 minors, and more than 2,100 current or future professionals working with victims. In 2025, domestic violence prevention remains a priority, with 42 local prevention programs and, in the first five months, over 1,000 activities reaching more than 55,000 adults and minors.

The Romanian Police collect statistical data on domestic violence covering reported relevant crimes, characteristics of perpetrators and victims (gender, age, relationship), provisional protection orders and measures, their duration and evolution, and the number of police interventions in domestic violence cases.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has joined the High-Level Network on Gender-Responsive Policing, an initiative of UN Women that supports member states in strengthening law enforcement capacities to address gender dimensions of crime, build public trust, and promote gender diversity in police services.

Sexual & gender-based violence

On 15 March 2025, NATP and IOM Romania launched the national campaign "Get informed! Human trafficking can be prevented" to raise awareness and prevent human trafficking through accurate information. The campaign addresses the high prevalence of sexual exploitation and the disproportionate impact on women and vulnerable groups. As reflected in 2024 data, 75% of human trafficking cases involve sexual exploitation, and 80.5% of victims are female. Romania also continues to be the main destination country for exploitation, with 75.1% of victims being trafficked internally.

Over the past five years, Romania has expanded its services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, largely through the "VENUS – Together for a Safe Life!" project which created 126 new services nationwide, including 42 sheltered housing units (262 places/year), 42 support groups, and 42 vocational counselling offices. Sheltered housing offers up to one year of free accommodation and integrated support such as psychological, legal, social, and vocational assistance.

In 2021, Romania adopted the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Sexual Violence "SYNERGY" 2021–2030, strengthening detection and specialized support for victims of sexual

violence and trafficking. Additionally, the predefined project "Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania" established 10 crisis centres for victims of sexual violence.

In the last five years, NAEOWM has facilitated extensive professional training, including:

- 300+ healthcare professionals, trained in first-line response to intimate partner and sexual violence (with WHO and UNFPA).
- 188 social welfare professionals (2023–2024), trained with UN Interagency Working Group support.
- ~2,150 law enforcement professionals, trained in gender equality, national law, and Istanbul Convention obligations.
- 360 police officers, social workers, prosecutors, legal advisers trained through project VERA.
- 103 prosecutors, 287 lawyers, and 1,900 police officers trained under project VIOGEN.

NAEOWM has also created an Interinstitutional Working Group to strengthen the health system's response to gender-based and sexual violence.

In 2025, the Romanian Police strengthened capacity to investigate sexual and gender-based violence through specialized training and inter-institutional cooperation. In October–November 2025, a hybrid training on investigating sexual abuse of minors using the revised NICHD Protocol was organised in Buzău, with the participation of 51 police officers and 30 prosecutors. The training, delivered by leading international experts, focused on child-sensitive interviewing techniques, including cases of online sexual abuse, child pornography, trafficking, and juvenile offenders, and prepares participants for the future institutionalization of the NICHD Protocol in Romania. Earlier in 2025, police investigators participated in a national conference on improving justice responses to sexual and gender-based violence, contributed expert input to parliamentary consultations on criminalizing femicide, and took part in a joint working group with prosecutors to develop a methodology on domestic violence.

The "2025-2029 National Action Plan for the Political and Economic Empowerment of Romanian Women" that was launched in 2024 includes some key measures such as increasing women's participation in economic and political decision-making, reducing gender-based violence at the workplace and in the public space, and sustaining the work-life balance with updated legislation on parental, paternity, and carer's leave.

12. Children's rights

Law No. 295/2024, which supplements Law No. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, introduced new provisions strengthening the consultation and participation of children in public decision-making.

Starting with 2025, the Parliament, the Presidential Administration, the Government, local public administration authorities, and all subordinated public institutions are required to organise at least one annual consultation session with children. These sessions must provide a protected dialogue framework and encourage children's participation on topics relevant to them.

In line with these provisions, NAPCRA issued Order No. 1541/2025 approving three key instruments:

- the Guide on the Organisation and Conduct of Consultations with Children by Central and Local Public Authorities;
- the Methodological Guide for the Selection and Training of Staff Responsible for Children's Participation in Decision-Making Processes; and
- the Methodological Guide for Reporting on Consultation Activities with Children.

NAPCRA, in partnership with the Special Telecommunications Service (STS), is implementing the "Next Generation System 119" project, which was launched on 26 June 2025. The 119 helpline is the national number for reporting any form of violence against children. One of the project's core components is the modernisation of the 119 telecommunications infrastructures, with the objective of increasing response capacity and reducing intervention times.

STS experts and the NAPCRA team are currently developing a new 119 website, which will become operational shortly. The platform will include a Chatbot application designed to provide real-time responses to frequently asked questions. Children were actively consulted on the architecture of this Chatbot. Beyond offering information, the application will also allow users to establish direct contact with specialists from DGASPC. The system will additionally integrate an advanced digital platform featuring an interactive map that provides key information for intervention teams, such as geolocation data, points of interest, and relevant resources needed for case management.

In 2023, the Intersectoral County Teams (ICTs) reported 18 preventive activities targeting child sexual exploitation, and 17 activities in 2024. Regarding child labour, ICTs reported 21 preventive activities in 2023 and 24 activities in 2024.

Under Pillar I of the project "Protection of Victims of Crime" aimed at child victims of crime, a thematic analysis of existing protection and assistance mechanisms was conducted and a "Guide on the Identification, Reporting, and Prosecution of Crimes against Children" was developed and disseminated to prosecutors. Within the same project, activities were also carried out for training trainers and professionals, primarily focused on techniques for interviewing child victims, with an emphasis on the use of the NICHD Protocol. In November 2025, a training session was organised for police officers and prosecutors (80 participants) on child interviewing techniques, with the authors of the NICHD Protocol participating as lecturers. Additionally, 31 child-friendly interview rooms for victims of crime were set up nationwide.

In October 2025, NAPCRA nominated a substitute member to the European Network for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. The Ombudsman also conducted systemic ex officio investigations concerning the phenomenon of school phobia, examining its prevalence, underlying causes, and the adequacy of institutional responses.

13. Persons with disabilities

Anti-Discrimination and Monitoring Activities

According to annual activity reports, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) identified and sanctioned disability-related discrimination in 9 cases in 2023 and 8 cases in 2024.

Following an investigation concerning a young woman with severe intellectual disabilities, the Ombudsman highlighted systemic gaps in community mental health and social services. As a result,

the Ombudsman recommended the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to develop integrated socio-medical solutions for complex cases.

Through the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), the Ombudsman conducted several visits to Care and Assistance Centres for Adults with Disabilities. Visit reports—available on the Ombudsman's website—include recommendations on issues such as overcrowding, staff shortages, accommodation conditions, food, psycho-social activities, and the exercise of rights. Recommendations were transmitted to the respective institutions and their supervisory authorities.

The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NAPRPD) is currently monitoring the implementation status of the "National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022–2027 A Fair Romania", including measures aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with particular attention to those under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.

Jointly with the National Agency for Payments and Social Inspection, ANPDPD establishes annual control topics and carries out accessibility inspections in institutions nationwide. Organisations of persons with disabilities are invited to participate in these verification missions.

Labour Market Inclusion and Social Services for Persons with Disabilities

Several major projects financed under the Social Inclusion and Dignity Programme 2021–2027 are in preparation or under implementation by NAPRPD in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity and local General Directorates for Social Work and Child Protection:

1. Project: "Improving the professional insertion capacity of persons with disabilities"

General Objective: Develop an innovative system that increases access to the labour market for 1,989 persons with disabilities.

2. Programme: "START in Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities"

General Objective: Facilitate labour market integration by promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the creation of 45 inclusive Authorized Protected Unit businesses.

3. Project: "Continuous training of staff working with and for persons with disabilities"

General Objective: Strengthen the capacity of professionals working in disability-related services.

Legislative developments and capacity building

In February 2024, the project "AdaptJust – Accessible Justice for Persons with Disabilities", implemented with the Centre for Legal Resources and funded through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021, was completed. The project strengthened the capacity of magistrates and civil society to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, piloted protection mechanisms, and drafted an Action Plan to prevent ill-treatment in institutions. Professional training activities were carried out for various practitioners, including prosecutors, on preventing ill-treatment. The project also developed "Ceasul bun"**,** a digital tool that increases access to justice for institutionalised persons with disabilities, enabling them to submit complaints and request rights reviews through the app or the platform *www.cerajutor.ro*

During 2024, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice recommended that prosecutors use facilitators trained in criminal and civil proceedings, who can decode and communicate messages conveyed by judicial authorities/lawyers to persons with intellectual/psychosocial disabilities in civil or criminal proceedings and vice versa.

Persons with disabilities benefit, without discrimination, from all services provided by the National Employment Agency (NAE), including vocational information and counselling, job mediation, vocational training, and free certification of skills acquired outside formal settings. Employers receive counselling and incentives to hire persons with disabilities. Subsidies from the unemployment insurance budget support employers hiring persons with disabilities, including young people at risk of social marginalisation.

Directive (EU) 2024/2841 establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card is currently being transposed into national law. The new parking card will ensure recognition of parking rights across all EU Member States.

Assistive Technology and Independent Living

The TECH ASSIST – Social Inclusion for People with Disabilities through Assistive and Access Technologies project is currently under implementation (duration: 36 months) with the objective of increasing socio-economic inclusion and support independent living by facilitating access to assistive and access technologies.

This project continues the earlier initiative Facilitating Labour Market Insertion for People with Disabilities, completed in 2023, which supported employment through subsidies to employers, access to assistive technologies, and workplace accessibility improvements.

Deinstitutionalization

Since 2018, Romania has been undertaking a major reform of adult disability services, coordinated by NAPRPD, focused on restructuring large-capacity residential institutions and advancing deinstitutionalization. By 2025, restructuring plans were still ongoing in 27 out of 100 centres, with completion expected by 31 December 2025. A comprehensive public policy framework, developed with national and international experts, outlines responsibilities, financing mechanisms, and a timeline for full deinstitutionalization by 31 December 2030.

While the number of residential services increased—from 434 in 2018 to 668 in 2024, due to reduced capacity per unit—community-based services increased only modestly (from 64 to 78), mostly through state-funded programmes. NAPRPD has developed guidelines and tools promoting a person-centred approach, including the "Guide on Accelerating Deinstitutionalization". Over 6,700 professionals will be trained under the "Increasing the Professionalization of Staff" project.

Protection against exploitation, violence & abuse

In 2023, 462 cases involving the abuse and ill-treatment of vulnerable institutionalized persons were resolved and 9 indictments were issued, while in 2024, 512 cases were resolved and 7 indictments were issued.

In 2024, the Working Group established within the Prime Minister's Chancellery, developed the "2024–2029 Action Plan for the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgments in the field of mental health". The action plan aims to develop medical-social and psychiatric services at the community level by developing outpatient facilities, modernizing, streamlining, and expanding them, so that there is at least one such facility for adults and one for children in each county, as well as establishing mental health centres in counties where they do not exist, strengthening mental health centres, including through the establishment of regional centres, and developing community centres (through which community medical care will be provided).

In February 2024, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice signed a cooperation agreement with the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with a view to improving inter-institutional cooperation.

Building on the findings of the "Special Report on Monitoring the Implementation of ECHR Judgments in Cases of Involuntary Hospitalization in Psychiatric Institutions" (published in January 2024), as well as other cases concerning mental health, the Ombudsman initiated an ex officio investigation into the activity of the Inter-ministerial Committee and the extent to which the Ombudsman's recommendations have been implemented.

The Ombudsman's recommendations were also reiterated during the meetings of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe dedicated to supervising the execution of ECHR judgments. These discussions focused, among other issues, on improving the treatment of persons with mental disorders in psychiatric hospitals, identifying the causes of Romania's persistent non-compliance with ECHR rulings, and determining the measures required for effective implementation.

With regard to social services, deaths occurring within such facilities are monitored through a mechanism requiring each case to be reported to the local Prosecutor's Office and simultaneously communicated to both the Monitoring Council and NAPRPD. Each institution conducts visits and requests relevant documentation on a random basis, in response to notifications or as part of methodological oversight.

Quality standards for social services for adults with disabilities are also currently being revised under a World Bank technical assistance programme. Draft standards for professional personal assistants have been completed, and standards for respite and crisis services are under development. In line with transparency principles, all standards will be subject to public consultation.

14. Right to education

The Pre-university Education Law addresses school dropout through an integrated approach combining educational, social, and institutional measures, notably through the National Integrated Program for Reducing School Dropout, which focuses on reducing absenteeism, early school leaving, and dropout at all education levels, with free transportation, social scholarships, and school supplies as core pillars. Implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research since 2022, the National Programme for the Reduction of School Dropout (NPRSD) is Romania's largest initiative supporting participation in primary and lower secondary education, targeting schools with medium and high dropout risk as identified by the World Bank's School Vulnerability Assessment Index. Funded with €500 million under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the programme supported 2,385 schools—predominantly in rural areas—through competitive grants for tailored interventions, including remedial learning, counselling, inclusive environment measures, and extracurricular activities. Evaluations show significant progress, with 45% of participating schools reducing their risk level by the end of the 2022–2023 school year. Complementary initiatives launched in 2025, such as the "Remedial Mathematics" National Program and the project on Intervention Mechanisms for Functional Literacy, further strengthen support for pupils with learning gaps and aim to improve educational outcomes through targeted resources and large-scale teacher training.

In 2024–2025, the Romanian Institute for Human Rights actively promoted the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities "A Fair Romania 2021–2027" through awareness-raising campaigns, training programs, and partnerships aimed at advancing accessibility, social inclusion, independent living, employment, and inclusive education. The Institute integrated disability rights

across its broader anti-discrimination and human rights initiatives, collaborated with public authorities and civil society organizations to support the socio-professional inclusion of persons with disabilities, and organised specialized training on children's rights in juvenile justice procedures. In cooperation with national disability bodies, RIHR conducted educational campaigns in schools and universities, launched nationwide awareness initiatives such as "We respect differences, we celebrate abilities" and "Persons with disabilities creators of beauty!", and contributed to the implementation of the Strategy's Operational Plan and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities. These efforts culminated in high-level public dialogue, including the Human Rights Conference "Accessibility – a real test of respect for human rights", which marked International Human Rights Day and focused on strengthening accessibility standards, legislative reforms, and cooperation among state institutions, civil society, and academia.

The Ministry of Education and Research has adopted key policy documents that guide curriculum development, teacher training, and graduate competencies, ensuring a high-quality and equitable pre-university education system. The Graduate's Training Profile (2023) and the Teacher Professional Standards (2024) underpin curriculum reform and professional development, while the new high school curriculum combines a common core with specialized and elective components. National exam models and mock examinations, including in minority languages, ensure fairness and equal preparation opportunities for all pupils.

The Ministry of Education and Research has enhanced both initial and continuous teacher training through legislative reforms and large-scale national programs. The new education framework adopted in 2023 places greater emphasis on practical training and mentoring, expands pathways into the teaching profession, and introduces double-specialization bachelor's programs from the 2025–2026 academic year. Continuous professional development is supported through systemic projects such as RECRED, ROSE, and NRRP-funded initiatives, which focus on competency-based curriculum implementation, digital pedagogy, educational leadership, and inclusive teaching practices. These programs have enabled tens of thousands of teachers, school leaders, and education staff to upgrade their professional, digital, and pedagogical skills, with a particular focus on supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and improving overall education quality.
Law no. 198/2023 on Pre-University Education establishes inclusive education as a strategic priority for reducing inequalities and ensuring equitable access to education for all children. The law defines pupils at risk of educational exclusion across all levels of pre-university education and prioritizes early intervention, adapted teaching and assessment, psycho-pedagogical support, school mediation, and social and cultural integration. It introduces an updated framework for special education, including the "School in Hospital" model, and sets out targeted measures addressing school dropout, desegregation, equal access for pupil-parents, transportation, and other support facilities, reinforcing a comprehensive and rights-based approach to inclusive education.

Romania's policies to improve the quality and equity of rural education focus on structural consolidation, integrated services, and targeted financial support to reduce disparities and support disadvantaged schools. Key measures include the development of rural campuses, the consolidation of small schools with ensured transportation, the establishment of school consortia (regulated in 2024), and partnerships between educational institutions. Integrated community services, implemented through large-scale national projects, provide coordinated educational, social, and health support in marginalized rural communities, with expansion planned until 2029. National

programs support access and participation through free transportation, electric school buses, scholarships, school supplies, digital inclusion, food assistance, and social vouchers to reduce geographic and socio-economic disparities. Complementary initiatives such as after-school programs, remedial learning, and mandatory remedial preparation hours introduced from the 2025–2026 school year aim to reduce school dropout, improve participation, and ensure inclusive, quality education for children from vulnerable backgrounds, particularly in rural areas.
Romania has strengthened school infrastructure through major national and international investments aimed at ensuring safe, inclusive, and modern learning environments. A €100 million World Bank–financed project implemented by the Ministry of Education and Research supports the rehabilitation, seismic strengthening, and construction of schools in high-risk areas, alongside modern equipment and temporary modular schools to ensure continuity of education. Additional investments under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan have equipped thousands of educational institutions, classrooms, and laboratories with modern furniture and digital technology. These efforts are complemented by national programs managed by the Ministry of Development, which finance the modernization, seismic safety, and energy efficiency of pre-university education infrastructure across the country.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are supported through educational vouchers, psycho-pedagogical interventions, learning materials, social assistance (including food, clothing, accommodation, and free boarding school access), and dedicated places in mainstream schools. Class sizes are reduced to accommodate SEN pupils, and segregation based on disability is actively monitored. Equal opportunity conditions are ensured for SEN pupils during national exams. Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (CERAs), operating nationwide, coordinate and provide specialized services, monitor inclusive education, support early identification of learning difficulties, and facilitate the integration of SEN pupils into mainstream schools, promoting safe and inclusive learning environments.
Law No. 198/2023 integrates nurseries and senior/middle preschool groups into compulsory pre-university education, with junior preschool becoming mandatory in 2030. The law also encourages complementary early childhood education (ECE) services such as toy libraries, playgroups, and community kindergartens.

In 2024, Ministerial Order no. 4018/2024 established a framework for enrolment, prioritizing children from vulnerable backgrounds. The Fundamental Benchmarks in Early Learning and Development (updated in 2024) guide ECE professionals in nurseries, kindergartens, and complementary services, linking early development to later school success.

The SU-ETIC project (2025–2029, EU-funded) develops unified quality standards, inclusive curricula, and good practice guides, while training local and county ECE staff and implementing mentoring and initial training programs to reduce urban–rural gaps. The NRRP-funded project "Integrated Services and Professionals in Early Childhood Education" (until mid-2026) enhances the capacity of staff for inclusive, high-quality ECE, with 19,950 professionals trained and 25 complementary ECE services created and equipped.

The 2024 European-funded call "Diversification and Flexibilisation of Early Childhood Education Services" expands access to ECE for children aged 3 months to 6 years, especially from

disadvantaged backgrounds, supporting parent engagement, children with SEN, and minority language and cultural education.

Law no. 198/2023 bans school segregation in pre-university education based on ethnicity, disability/SEN, socio-economic status, disadvantaged group membership, residential background, and educational attainment, complemented by GO no. 137/2000 on anti-discrimination. The National Commission for School Desegregation, established in 2023, coordinates desegregation plans. The 2024 Methodology sets uniform procedures for monitoring, identifying, and remedying segregation annually. Schools report data via the IISER platform to county inspectorates, which forward it to the Commission for the National Annual Report. Monitoring includes limited risk assessment and extended analysis for schools above the risk threshold, requiring corrective desegregation plans. This system was developed under the TSI project with UNICEF and European Commission support.

The National Council of Pupils, Romania's representative body for students, advises the Ministry of Education, participates in the Social Dialogue Commission, and contributes to legislation, including Law no. 198/2025. In 2025, it provided input on upper secondary curricula and other pupil-relevant issues through meetings with the Minister and stakeholders.

Since 2022, the Ministry of Education and Research, in partnership with the British Council, UNICEF, and IOM, has supported training for teachers of refugee and trauma-affected children. Under the 2024 initiative "Teaching and Learning in Difficult Times", 84 teacher trainers from 41 counties and Bucharest were trained in trauma-informed teaching, with cascade training planned for ~200 teachers annually. The program adapts international resources to Romania, promoting inclusive, resilient classrooms that address trauma from war, migration, poverty, and family issues.

Vulnerable Roma pupils are key beneficiaries of national education support measures addressing material deprivation, school participation, and inclusion. They benefit from programs such as Healthy Meal, School Supplies, Euro 200, educational vouchers, transport facilities, scholarships, and preschool attendance incentives. Roma pupils at risk of dropout are prioritized for remedial learning and School after School programs.

In the 2024–2025 school year, support reached tens of thousands of Roma pupils, including through meals, vouchers, scholarships, transport, remedial education, counselling, mediation, and early childhood education. Gender participation is balanced (≈49% girls). The National Program for Reducing School Dropout supported over 34,000 Roma pupils in 2024–2025, contributing to improved retention and transition rates: around 72% of Roma 8th-grade graduates continued to upper secondary education.

Affirmative measures include reserved places in high school, VET, and higher education; additional enrolment places per class; summer kindergartens; Second Chance programs; and a strong network of school mediators. In 2024–2025, over 4,400 Roma pupils were admitted to upper secondary education on special places, while more than 40,000 benefited from counselling and mediation services.

Education in the Romani language and minority-specific subjects (history, traditions, culture) is ensured, supporting cultural identity and inclusion. Teacher training in inclusive education and anti-

discrimination, awareness campaigns, and infrastructure investments in disadvantaged areas further strengthen outcomes.

EU-funded operational programs complement national measures. Notably, the 2024 call Integrated Measures for the Roma Community (€24.8 million) supports Roma pupils and families through tailored interventions to reduce dropout, improve participation—especially for Roma girls—and strengthen school–community engagement.

The Ministry of Education and Research annually collects voluntary, self-identified data on Roma pupils through the Integrated Information System of Education in Romania and reports from county school inspectorates, in line with data protection rules. These data support monitoring of school participation, transitions between education cycles, and the impact of targeted programs, guiding evidence-based policy and resource allocation. In the 2024–2025 school year, 117,618 Roma pupils and young people were enrolled in Romania's pre-university education system.

The Ministry of Education and Research applies a zero-tolerance policy on school violence, supported by the Law on Pre-University Education and the National Plan for Combating School Violence (2024–2027). Since 2023, all schools apply a standardized procedure for managing violence cases, including anonymous reporting, and are required to establish school-level task forces for prevention and safety. The nationwide program "Together We Take Courage", implemented since the 2023–2024 school year, funds locally tailored prevention activities involving pupils, parents, and communities, with an expanded budget in 2024–2025. In parallel, the Ministry is implementing the *"*Policies and Resources for Safe and Supportive Schools" project (2022–2026), with UNICEF and EU support, to integrate social and emotional learning, well-being, and mental health into a whole-school approach, including pilot interventions, teacher training, and evidence-based policy recommendations.

15. Right to health

The "2023–2030 National Health Strategy" serves as the overarching framework guiding all public policy proposals in the field of health and provides the basis for prioritising and programming the use of resources allocated to the national health system. The Strategy adopts a comprehensive and coordinated approach to health education, the development of healthy behaviours, and the reduction of behavioural risk factors. The National Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy contains detailed budget estimates and identified funding sources for each activity, including those related to HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. In 2024, specific activities were carried out to achieve the objectives of the "National Programme for the Prevention, Surveillance, and Control of HIV/AIDS", focusing on the prevention and surveillance of HIV infection at the national level. These included the provision of screening tests and the supply, both in hospitals and outpatient settings, of antiretroviral medicines necessary for post-exposure prophylaxis. Additionally, targeted interventions were implemented for the treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS, through the provision of ARV medicines in hospital and outpatient care, as well as medicines required for the prophylaxis of major opportunistic infections associated with HIV/AIDS.

<u>National health insurance</u>

Health social insurance is the main mechanism for financing healthcare and ensuring access to a basic package of services for insured persons. Its core objective is to guarantee universal, equitable, and non-discriminatory protection, while ensuring the efficient use of the Single National Health Insurance Fund. Children under 18 and young people aged 18–26 enrolled in education are insured without paying contributions, in accordance with current legislation. Uninsured women are entitled to a minimum package of services within the social health insurance system. Essential medical services for transgender persons, such as 90% reimbursement for certain prescription-based hormonal products, have started to be included in the national health insurance scheme. Although this marks progress toward depathologising gender non-conformity, the scope of coverage and the accessibility of these services may still vary. The inclusion of transgender-specific healthcare is part of a broader effort to depathologise gender non-conformity, which requires the adoption of updated medical classification systems such as ICD-11. At present, Romania continues to use ICD-10, which limits full alignment with contemporary international standards.

Integrated community centres

The Social Inclusion Unit within the Ministry of Health provides guidance on the organization, functioning, and financing of integrated community centres, including integrated community medical assistance, and submits proposals to the Ministry's leadership for the approval of the operation of these integrated community centres. The activity of the community centre is carried out in an integrated system, with staff composed of doctors, community health nurses, midwives, and health mediators.

To further advance the objectives related to the integrated provision of medical, social, and educational services, the MoH, MLFYSS, and MER are implementing the EU co-funded project "Provision of Integrated Services in Rural Communities – Facilitating Access of Vulnerable Persons to Efficient and Quality Basic Services". Launched in 2025, the project provides for the establishment of Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) in 2 000 rural local authorities and aims to increase the number of people benefiting from integrated community services and to improve the quality of life of individuals belonging to vulnerable groups.

The Strategy sets out strategic directions for the development of maternal and child health services that can contribute to improving demographic indicators: ensuring access for eligible persons to free contraceptives; ensuring equitable provision of specialized care and support for at-risk and critically ill newborns. To reduce infant mortality and the risk of neonatal death, obstetrics and gynecology units are regionalized into three levels of hierarchy to ensure adequate medical care for newborns, depending on the complexity of the case.

Prevention

Annual campaigns include activities that primarily aim to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies and encourage young people to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health. The national family planning program, implemented by the Ministry of Health, aims to reduce the rate of abortions and their complications by increasing access to family planning services and the use of modern contraceptive methods, especially at the primary health care level.

In December 2024, the Romanian Government decided to reorganise the Anti-Drug Agency as the National Agency for Drug and Addiction Policy and Coordination, which became operational in March 2025. Apart from coordinating the implementation of the 2022-2026 National Anti-Drug Strategy, the new Agency acts as focal point for European networks and early warning system.

In addition, mental health and addiction prevention centres were developed under the coordination of the National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Control, under the Ministry of Health. In May 2025, the Ministry of Health published Order No. 1562 on the organization and functioning of mental health and addiction prevention centres, establishing their roles, structure, and staffing. They are expected to be fully operational in two years.

Sexual and reproductive health

Romania addresses sexuality education in an integrated manner, by covering related topics within compulsory subjects (such as Biology) and optional disciplines, notably Health Education. The syllabus for the optional subject Health Education includes thematic units on reproductive and family health, responsible sexual behaviour, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, family planning, unwanted pregnancy, sexual violence and abuse, and the social and legal aspects of sexuality. Complementary aspects of healthy relationships and personal development are addressed through compulsory subjects such as Counselling and Personal Development and Social Education/Critical Thinking and Children's Rights, as well as optional subjects.

In addition, pre-university schools organise extracurricular and non-formal activities on health education, including reproductive health and STI prevention, in partnership with civil society and health specialists, with parental consent. Such topics may also be addressed during the national programme "A Different School".

The national strategy for sexual and reproductive health is currently being developed by the Ministry of Health with the support of a multidisciplinary technical working group, bringing together representatives from relevant ministries, professional medical bodies, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and international partners (UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO). The strategy aims to expand and improve family planning and reproductive health services, including health education.

Under Ministry of Health Order No. 3.368/2024, access to abortion on demand is unrestricted in hospitals. In addition, Order No. 5.927/2024 establishes the methodology for including hormonal contraceptives in the reimbursement list. Specialist commissions in obstetrics-gynecology and endocrinology proposed 13 hormonal contraceptives for reimbursement and developed related therapeutic protocols, target groups, and phased implementation for 2025–2027. The Romanian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology also drafted the Family Planning and Contraception Guideline.

16. Social and economic rights

Social housing

Romania's "National Housing Strategy 2022–2050" includes a strong focus on inclusive housing. For 2022–2027, the Action Plan provides for the construction of 8 000 social housing units for vulnerable groups and 4 418 housing units for young people under 35 from marginalized communities, including those living in informal settlements.

To strengthen the regulatory framework, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDPWA) issued methodological norms for implementing Law No. 151/2019 on informal settlements. These norms define procedures for identifying and managing informal settlements and outline priority interventions and cooperation mechanisms among local authorities.

Data collection on informal settlements, resumed in 2024, shows that around 70% of residents are Roma.

To support local authorities in planning integrated interventions, MDPWA, supported by World Bank experts and SG REFORM funding, developed a methodological guide on interventions in informal settlements.

The main national funding source for expanding social housing is the "Program for the Construction of Social and Emergency Housing" under Law No. 114/1996, which provides subsidized-rent units for disadvantaged groups. In addition, the "Social Housing Program for Roma", implemented by the National Housing Agency, includes pilot projects for up to 300 housing units across eight development regions.

Major investments also come from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), which finances energy renovation of residential buildings in communities at risk of poverty, and construction of nZEB+ housing for young people from marginalized and vulnerable groups.

MDPWA's public policy framework includes key sectoral strategies, such as the "Long-Term National Renovation Strategy" which aims to decarbonise the national building stock by 2050 and the "National Housing Strategy 2022–2050", which promotes affordable, inclusive, and sustainable housing. MDPWA also coordinates the Programme for the Construction of Social and Necessity Housing under Law No. 114/1996, with the objective of ensuring adequate living conditions for socially vulnerable groups. Between 2013 and 2024, 74 investment projects delivered 2,857 social housing units, with an additional 160 units completed across six projects in 2025.

The quality of housing in rural areas has improved through national programmes such as the National Local Development Programme (phases I and II) and the National Investment Programme "Anghel Saligny", which support the development and modernisation of local infrastructure. Additional progress has been achieved through investment projects delivered by the National Investment Company CNI S.A., which oversees major public construction initiatives, including social, educational, cultural, and sports facilities. These programmes receive substantial allocations from the state budget and constitute the primary instruments for enhancing living conditions and public infrastructure in rural localities.

MDPWA is also implementing the project "Supporting Rural Areas to Adapt to Demographic Change and Labour Shortages", in partnership with the OECD and financed through the EU Technical Support Instrument. The project will deliver analyses of rural demographic trends, policy recommendations, and a methodology for prioritising investments in the 2028–2034 programming period, ensuring more efficient use of EU and national funds to address challenges in demographically declining rural regions.

The "2021–2027 Social Inclusion and Dignity" Programme (PoIDS), through the amendment submitted to the European Commission in October 2025, expanded interventions to allow implementation through the procurement of social housing, and broadened the target groups and categories of beneficiaries/partners to ensure greater representativeness. Key measures include the development and modernization of social and housing infrastructure, the provision of integrated social and educational services, and targeted social inclusion and employment actions for vulnerable groups, including Roma communities and persons with disabilities. In addition, water and wastewater

projects financed through the Sustainable Development Programme improve access to clean water and sanitation for entire communities, regardless of ethnic background.

Social services

In 2025, the Ministry of Labor, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity (MLFYSS) launched the project "Integrated services in rural communities – facilitating access for vulnerable people to efficient and quality basic service" under the Social Inclusion and Dignity Programme (PIDS 2021-2027), which aims to develop integrated community services in 2 000 marginalized rural communities.

Within the framework of PIDS 2021-2027, in July 2025, MLFYSS began implementing "ADAPT – Tailored training programs for specialists and informal caregivers working with older people", with the objective of increasing access to quality care services for older people by implementing continued education programs tailored to current needs and by facilitating access to training and communication resources for specialists, informal caregivers, as well as beneficiaries and their families.

In addition, the objective of the Swiss-Romanian Social Inclusion Program contributes to reducing economic and social disparities between communities by providing integrated community services (social assistance/education/health) with a focus on vulnerable groups, including Roma, living in urban areas. The program follows a needs-based approach, and includes appropriate intervention aimed at reducing the causes that generate social exclusion.

The 2021-2027 Education and Employment Programme (EEP) of the Ministry of Investment and European Projects promotes equal opportunities by tailoring activation measures for inactive, low-skilled, and marginalized groups, including Roma communities. It helps reduce income disparities and extreme poverty through material support—such as meals, accommodation, and transport—for VET students, as well as training subsidies that include subsistence allowances for low-skilled adults. EEP ensures inclusive education by targeting early school leaving, funding teacher training in inclusive pedagogy, and actively combating discrimination. EEP also improves access to affordable health services and includes hygiene and health-education measures within Roma inclusion packages. Also, the Health Programme funds screening initiatives for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to ensure early detection of major public health conditions.

Employment

Mobility measures within the annual active employment programs continued to be implemented, helping reduce rural–urban disparities in access to work. In 2023, a revised jobseeker profiling procedure entered into force, factoring in the distance between a development pole and the jobseeker's residence when assessing employability. Based on the profiling results, jobseekers may receive tailored active measures such as free qualification courses, mobility bonuses, or employer subsidies for their hiring.

The National Agency for Employment continued to implement its annual vocational training and employment programs, which include measures to support the labor market integration of disadvantaged groups. In 2025, additional measures were introduced to improve employment access for vulnerable individuals: victims of domestic violence and human trafficking now receive free vocational training, and employers hiring them may receive a monthly subsidy from the unemployment insurance budget. Under the MII Program, the support component for families with children also promotes school attendance. Aid is granted only if each school-age child is enrolled in and regularly attends pre-university education, except in medically justified cases. Additionally,

school-age children from families receiving inclusion aid automatically qualify for a social scholarship.

MLFYSS promotes women's access to quality employment through measures that support work–life balance and enhance access to employment services. The National Strategy for Employment 2021–2027 provides the overarching framework for expanding flexible work arrangements, career counselling, and professional reintegration services, including for women in rural areas and single mothers. These measures are being implemented through programmes financed under the Education and Employment Programme 2021–2027. A concrete step forward is the adoption and operationalization of Law No. 111/2022 on domestic service providers, which formalizes domestic work—predominantly carried out by women—by establishing an accessible legal framework that supports the transition from informal to formal work. This measure enables women to obtain legal income and social protection, thereby strengthening their economic autonomy. The law also proposes expanding the categories eligible for employment subsidies to include mothers with at least three dependent children under the age of 18.
Romania is thus advancing toward reducing gender disparities and aligning its national policies with European objectives on equal opportunities in the labour market. In this context, a draft law amending Law No. 76/2002 further proposes expanding the categories eligible for employer wage subsidies, including mothers with at least three children and persons who have served custodial sentences.
The National Agency for Employment (NAE) continues to implement a comprehensive package of employment-stimulation measures, which also benefit women facing structural barriers to labour market participation, including graduates, women over 45, single parents, unemployed persons nearing retirement, young people at risk of social marginalisation, long-term unemployed persons, and NEET youth. NAE also supports women's labour market participation through free information and career counselling services, as well as vocational training courses available to all women, including those returning to work after parental leave (until the child reaches 2 years of age, or 3 or 7 years in the case of a child with disabilities).

Legislative measures

To implement the reforms introduced by Law 100/2024 (addressing social service), Romania has adopted or is drafting several secondary normative acts that regulate key procedural aspects, operationalize the provisions of Law 100/2024 and support consistent implementation across the social services system. These include:

- A joint order approving the framework model for social service development plans.
- An order establishing the methodology for assessing community needs to organise services for the elderly.
- An order approving the standard model for social service contracts.
- A government decision updating the National Assessment Grid for the Needs of Elderly Persons.
- An order approving the procedure for selecting eligible NGOs to conduct monitoring visits in residential social services and the related cooperation protocol.

17. Equality & non-discrimination

The National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) found and sanctioned acts of discrimination in 84 cases in 2024 and in 97 cases in 2023 (55 fines were issued). NCCD supported the normative act that increased the penalties for initiating or supporting extremist groups or spreading fascist, anti-Semitic or racist ideas. Since 2023, the SCM has registered 15 cases concerning incitement to hatred or discrimination under Article 369 of the Criminal Code. To date, 4 cases have been resolved (1 acquittal, 2 convictions, and 1 postponement of the application of the penalty). Information on the operative parts of judicial decisions in cases involving hate-motivated offences is publicly accessible via the Rejust application (www.rejust.ro).

In the framework of the ongoing "2022 – 2027 National Strategy regarding equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and the prevention and combating of domestic violence", NAEOWM implemented the project "Gender Mainstreaming in Public Policy and Budgeting" aimed at approaching gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and women's access to leadership and decision-making.

Romania has also finalised a draft law amending Law no. 202/2002, which is undergoing internal approval procedures, on equal opportunities between women and men. The main new provisions include:

- requiring public and private entities with over 50 employees, as well as central and local authorities, to appoint an equal opportunities expert/technician or assign these duties to an existing employee;
- assigning these experts responsibilities related to preventing workplace harassment and violence, in line with ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206;
- introducing mandatory training for equal opportunities experts and gender equality technicians;
- defining and sanctioning sexist speech, and expanding the definition of gender-based violence to include sexual exploitation, cyber violence and obstetric violence;
- extending equal opportunity measures to all public and private sectors;
- clarifying definitions of sexual and psychological harassment;
- defining violence against women in politics, violence against women in leadership, and institutional gender violence, with related sanctions;
- introducing the concept of intersectionality to address overlapping forms of discrimination;
- implementing a minimum 30% gender quota for candidate lists in local, parliamentary and European elections;
- requiring political parties to include measures in their statutes to support positive action for the underrepresented sex at decision-making levels.

In the process of approval of the „National Implementation Plan of the Pact on Migration and Asylum", the Ombudsman Institution has been assigned to set up an independent monitoring mechanism to evaluate the respect of fundamental rights during screening procedures and border asylum processes, with an implementation deadline set for March 12, 2026.

The National Strategy "Protected children, safe Romania 2022-2027" includes concrete measures to prevent discrimination and offer equal opportunities to all children. In June 2023 the media guide "How to Report on Sexual Abuse Involving Minors", produced by World Vision and VeDem Just, in

partnership with NAC and the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences was launched. In this context, six webinars on how journalists should report on cases of sexual abuse of minors were organised in collaboration with experts on Media, Psychology, Sociology, Criminology and Gender Equality.
With regards to LGBTI people, the Ombudsman Institution has undertaken legal action and facilitated working groups to implement the European Court of Human Rights judgments on sexual orientation and gender identity. It issued recommendations to authorities, supported guidance for fair treatment of transgender voters during the 2024–2025 elections, trained its staff, strengthened cooperation with ACCEPT through partnerships, and engaged in international reporting.

The Ombudsman has contributed to protecting national minorities, including participation in implementing the "2022–2027 Government Strategy for the inclusion of Roma citizens" through eight thematic working groups focused on areas such as housing, education, health, children's rights, and combating discrimination. A working group was established within NAEOWM on the prevention and combating of domestic violence.

In April 2024, Romania's Prosecutor's Office at the High Court of Cassation and Justice (PICCJ) completed a €2 million Norway Grants project aimed at strengthening the protection of crime victims, with particular attention to Roma victims. The project improved the criminal justice system's response to child victims and victims of hate-motivated crimes. It included an integrated analysis of the situation of hate-crime victims and a two-stage training programme: 15 prosecutors and several police officers were prepared as trainers, followed by the training of 80 professionals (prosecutors, judges, police, NGOs, social workers, and psychologists) involved in victim protection.

Under the ECRIS V project, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, the integrated judicial statistics module aims to create a shared database for courts and prosecutor's offices, providing highly detailed data on offences motivated by hatred and/or discrimination. This will be achieved by introducing statistical sub-attributes under the existing category "offence committed out of hatred", such as: race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political opinion or affiliation, wealth, social origin, age, disability, chronic non-communicable disease, HIV/AIDS infection, or other similar circumstances considered by the perpetrator as grounds for the victim's perceived inferiority.

The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police developed a uniform methodology for identifying hate crimes and collecting statistical data, in line with the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism. Criminal investigations apply the "Methodology for Investigating Hate Crimes" developed by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice.
In Romania, changes to a person's legal sex in civil status records require a final court judgment. This judicial procedure ensures that decisions are based on verified legal and factual elements, balancing individual fundamental rights with the public interest in maintaining consistent civil and official records.

In 2024, the "National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Antisemitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization, and Hate Speech for 2024–2027" was adopted.
Notable progress has been recorded across institutions responsible for education, training, and public awareness:

Training and education:

- All educational institutions under the Ministry of Internal Affairs have included at least three thematic modules aimed at fostering non-discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and at strengthening the prevention and combating of antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization, and hate speech.
- The Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR) organised a training course in November 2024 for journalists, editors, and presenters on countering antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, and hate speech in the audiovisual media (21 participants). A second edition, held in November 2025, was specifically dedicated to journalists from religious media institutions, supporting accurate and responsible reporting on minority communities.
- The National Institute for Administration incorporated themes relevant to the Strategy into its 2024 and 2025 professional training programs, aligned with the needs of public administration staff.
- In 2024–2025, the RIHR developed and supported a wide range of training courses, awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives focused on the promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, addressing pupils, students, teachers, and professionals from public institutions. Special emphasis was placed on Holocaust education, in line with the UN 2024 theme "Holocaust Commemoration and Education", as well as on combating Holocaust denial, racism, xenophobia, and hate speech through presentations, debates, and educational materials disseminated nationally.
- In July 2023, two laws, on pre-university education and on higher education, were adopted, prohibiting discrimination in education on any of the grounds set out in Government Ordinance no. 137/2000, except for legally established affirmative measures.
- Under the new pre-university education law, pupils have the right to learn in an environment that respects freedom of expression, dignity, and personality, ensures objective and fair assessment with the possibility of appeal, and provides support according to educational or social needs, including for those with special educational needs (SEN). To enforce school desegregation and combat discrimination, the law mandates the random distribution of pupils in classrooms at the start of each education level (Order No. 3945/2024). It further strengthens the prohibition of school segregation based on ethnicity, disability or SEN, socio-economic background, disadvantaged status, residential environment, or school performance, complementing the broader legal framework against all forms of discrimination.
- Through Ministry of Education and Research procedures, curricula, textbooks, and national assessment materials are monitored to ensure they do not contain discriminatory content, hate speech, or prejudices related to gender roles or minority groups. Compulsory subjects such as Personal Development, Counselling and Personal Development, and Social Education include content on combating discrimination, while elective subjects foster respect for diversity, critical thinking, civic competences, and intercultural understanding. Upper secondary curricula are being reformed to integrate themes such as equal opportunities, European citizenship, gender equality, anti-discrimination, critical media literacy, and interfaith dialogue across core subjects. A key measure, introduced starting with 2023–2024 school year, is the compulsory teaching of "History of the Jews. The Holocaust" (one hour per week for one year in the 11th or 12th grade), becoming the first EU country to do so. Additional measures include teacher training, extracurricular activities, codes of conduct, and cooperation with international partners. Incidents of discrimination, hate speech, or violence

in schools are addressed through the Procedure for managing cases of violence against students and staff.

- During 2023–2025, continuous training programmes organised by SCM and NIM included numerous sessions covering topics such as execution of criminal judgments and child-sensitive interviewing techniques, with attention to Roma communities; analysis of ECtHR case law in civil and criminal matters; prevention and combating of hate crimes and hate speech.
- NIM also conducted specialized training in cooperation with NCCD, Germany's Ministry of Justice and IRZ (focusing on investigating hate crimes and Holocaust denial), the "Elie Wiesel" Institute, and ACCEPT Association (on ECtHR non-discrimination standards for LGBTI persons).
- NCCD signed 2 partnership agreements, one with the Schengen Multifunctional Training Centre for institutional collaboration in the field of non-discrimination, and another with the 2nd District Local Authority Police for the training of its police staff on matters related to equality, non-discrimination and development of European values and principles through the implementation and promotion of policies in the field of human rights protection.
- Since July 2023, the Police has implemented the "No Discrimination" project to support officers' professional development and promote non-discriminatory behavior, complemented by specialized anti-discrimination training within the Romanian Gendarmerie, including 16 courses in 2025 for over 2,000 participants.
- In 2024, the joint project carried out together with the Federal Ministry of Justice of Germany, through the Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (IRZ), continued. The project is aimed at the professional training of magistrates in Romania on topics related to combating hate-motivated offences, particularly hate speech in the online environment.
- In 2024, the implementation of the project entitled "Partnership for LGBTI Equality: Implementing ECtHR Case-Law on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" was completed. The project was carried out by ACCEPT Association in partnership with the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and was financed through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021. Within this project, 18 training sessions were organised for 325 professionals (160 police officers and 165 prosecutors) on the topic of hate-motivated crimes. A "Hate Crime Investigation Manual" and a Brochure on "ECtHR Standards on Non-Discrimination" were also developed.
- The creation of a specialized hate crimes unit within the Romanian Police has strengthened institutional capacity to address hate crimes. Through the "Integrated action to combat hate crimes, particularly those directed against Roma communities, and to ensure a high standard of quality in police services" (PDP3) Project, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, specialized officers, together with national and international partners, delivered multiple training sessions for police investigators, including programs supported by the Council of Europe and the OSCE/ODIHR (TAHCLE).

<u>Awareness campaigns and activities:</u>

- DIR developed and disseminated the Romanian Government's online campaign promoting the reporting of antisemitic, discriminatory, xenophobic, radicalized, and hate-motivated incidents. These efforts were complemented by cultural and educational projects supporting national minority communities and fostering intercultural dialogue.

- The Ombudsman initiated action regarding harmful online content and organised consultations with multiple government institutions and agencies to support the strategy. These discussions led to proposals such as creating an administrative procedure to restrict access to online materials promoting hate and assigning one or more public authorities the power to assess such content and order its blocking to protect the public.
- Beginning with the 2023–2024 school year, military educational institutions have carried out awareness-raising activities on preventing and combating antisemitism and xenophobia and promoting civic engagement, tolerance, and cultural understanding.
- On 13 February 2025, the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training (under the Ministry of Culture) organised the conference "The Role of Public Cultural Institutions in Combating Hate and Intolerance". The event highlighted the essential role of culture in educating the public and encouraging active engagement against all forms of hate.
- The National Institute of Magistracy, with support from the Elie Wiesel Institute, organised a continuing professional development seminar titled "Antisemitism and the Holocaust – History, Memory, and Legislation", attended by 21 judges, prosecutors, and other judicial professionals.
- In March 2025, the National Audiovisual Council (NAC) launched a practical guide to combat illegal content online, in an easy-to-understand format and was disseminated to educational institutions in the country for further discussions with students and parents.

The National Agency for Employment (NAE) has continued to provide employment stimulation measures, by respecting the principle of non-discriminatory access to services and ensuring equal opportunities on the internal labour market. According to the provisions of Law no. 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation, people belonging to the vulnerable groups, including Roma minority, have access to these measures under the same conditions as other categories of beneficiaries.
Furthermore, NAE has continued to apply the annual special employment measures program dedicated to Roma people (called 140/145 Program), which typically covers a number of 140 or 145 communities with a large number of ethnic Roma. Tailored measures have been provided, especially job matching and professional counselling. Collaboration between county employment agencies and local community representatives has been further developed.

The "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Police Academy strengthens national human rights institutions through postgraduate programs, annual modular training on human rights in public institutions, and the integration of human rights and anti-discrimination topics into bachelor's and master's curricula, enhancing law enforcement expertise and compliance with national and international standards.

RIHR actively participated in the European Week to Combat Racism, launching the "NO to Racial Discrimination!" campaign and organising national youth competitions to promote diversity, tolerance, and respect. In partnership with civil society organizations, RIHR also addressed emerging harmful practices such as "cancel culture" and conducted awareness campaigns under the motto "A world without discrimination and intolerance!", highlighting the importance of preventing discrimination, anti-Semitism, and intolerance, while strengthening youth engagement and international cooperation in the fight against racism.

18. Members of minorities &cultural rights

The "National Strategy for Roma Inclusion" (2022–2027) constitutes an enabling condition for ESF+ funding related to the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, including Roma. To ensure this condition remains fulfilled throughout the programming period, Romania established an Interministerial Committee coordinated by the Ministry of Investments and European Projects, bringing together all relevant public institutions, programme managing authorities, and key stakeholders.
Under the "2021–2027 Social Inclusion and Dignity" Programme (PoIDS), Roma inclusion is mainstreamed across priorities, supporting access to education, employment, housing, and social services through measures such as school-retention programmes, labour-market integration, and social housing. These interventions aim to reduce poverty, combat marginalisation, and promote full inclusion.
The Education and Employment Programme (PEO) further advances Roma integration through targeted socio-economic measures and cross-cutting actions It finances individualized support packages for Roma children at risk of early school leaving—covering hygiene products, school supplies, and health-education activities—and supports mentoring schemes involving Roma students and professionals to encourage educational participation and retention.

In 2024–2025, the Managing Authority for the Health Programme launched project calls for health-screening initiatives targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The measures explicitly include Roma communities, aiming to reduce barriers to healthcare and improve overall health outcomes. The projects also support information, counselling, education, and awareness activities to promote healthy behaviours. These interventions are expected to generate impact at both local/regional and national levels.

Education for national minorities is fully guaranteed without discrimination. Minority pupils receive the same educational and social support as other students, with additional attention when multiple risk factors overlap. Romania ensures the right to study in one's mother tongue and to preserve ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity, as reinforced by the 2023 education framework. Mother tongue instruction and courses on minority history, traditions, and music support both cultural preservation and integration into the education system.

To support the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, the Ministry of Culture established the Romano Kher National Centre for Roma Culture, tasked with preserving, developing, and promoting Roma cultural heritage, values, traditions, and identity. In addition, in 2024–2025, the Ministry of Culture, through its National Minorities Department, funded 36 projects aimed at promoting, protecting, and enhancing contemporary cultural creation and diversity, as well as safeguarding the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity of Romania's national minorities and fostering intercultural dialogue. As part of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization, and Hate Speech 2024–2027, a total of 330 programs were implemented in 2024 by the Ministry of Culture to encourage tolerance and interest in other cultures and/or vulnerable groups. Additionally, 193 programs promoting tolerance and awareness of other cultures and vulnerable groups were carried out by institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and other cultural institutions.

To support the integration of the Roma community, the Department for Interethnic Relations (DIR) organised cultural events dedicated to Roma identity and visibility. DIR also facilitated the participation of Roma representatives and experts in capacity-building activities, including the journalist-training courses held in 2023, 2024, and 2025. The Ethos Rom project, coordinated annually by DIR, aims to counter racial hate speech targeting the Roma community.

Moreover, DIR supported a series of cultural, educational, and community projects aimed at reducing discrimination against national minorities, including school-based activities such as the "Desenează-ți identitatea. Desenează-ți drepturile / Draw your identity. Draw your rights" program. The 2024 and 2025 editions of "Cupa Diversității / The Diversity Cup" included Roma youth and Roma organisations, promoting social inclusion through sport and encouraging positive interethnic interaction. Through festivals, cultural events, and artistic programmes, DIR contributed to preserving minority languages and traditions while fostering an inclusive social environment. Projects implemented in 2024 and planned for 2025 further encouraged cooperation and dialogue among different ethnic groups.

Under PDP3 Project, the Romanian Police conducted a national information campaign in 2024 to prevent hate crimes, especially against Roma communities, using mass media and social media to promote tolerance under the slogan "It is in our power to discourage hate."

19. Human trafficking & contemporary forms of slavery

Legislative measures

The national framework is harmonized with Directive 2011/36/EU and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. With the adoption of the "2024-2028 National Strategy against Human Trafficking" (NSHT), Romania has intensified national efforts to combat human trafficking through a multidimensional approach addressing prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership, while tackling underlying structural causes such as poverty, social exclusion, and corruption. The Strategy established among others the creation of several working groups focused on some relevant target groups. One of them is dedicated exclusively to children, reflecting the interinstitutional approach on child protection against human trafficking. The Romanian Criminal Procedure Code provides specific guarantees for the protection of minors during investigation and trial, including the right to legal assistance, the use of child-friendly interview procedures, and protection against secondary victimization.

Also, in the context of NSHT several laws have been amended to strengthen the criminal justice response to this phenomenon:

- Law no. 202/2024 (June 2024) introduced major amendments to the Criminal Code on trafficking in persons. Courts can no longer order suspended sentences for slavery, trafficking in adults, or child trafficking. Penalties were increased for these offences, including their aggravated forms. The law also clarified that exploitation following the trafficking act constitutes an additional offence, establishing explicit rules on concurrence.
- Law no. 269/2024 (October 2024) further amended the Criminal Code by expanding the definition of exploitation to include forcing someone to commit criminal acts. It introduced a new aggravating circumstance when the offender has previous convictions for sexual offences, child pornography, trafficking, or pimping. The law also clarified the distinction between trafficking

and aggravated pimping: coercing or facilitating prostitution under trafficking conditions—or involving a minor—constitutes trafficking in persons or child trafficking. These offences fall under the competence of DIICOT.

Victims' rights

Key legislative progress has been made to strengthen victims' rights, including victims of trafficking. In 2023, Romania adopted the "National Identification and Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking" (MNIR), which aims to ensure victims' rights and the quality of support services, supported by practical guides developed with international and civil society partners. The National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NATP) is responsible for monitoring its implementation.

NATP's prevention campaigns are tailored to local and regional trafficking patterns and vulnerable groups, addressing all forms of exploitation. During the reference period, over 380 prevention campaigns and projects were implemented, comprising more than 7,600 activities and reaching over 600,000 beneficiaries. In addition, NATP's social media outreach reached approximately 11 million people.

In November 2024, Romania adopted Law no. 272/2024 amending Law no. 211/2004, which removes major obstacles to victim support. The law abolishes the 60-day complaint deadline, extends the timeframe for claiming financial compensation from 1 to 3 years, eliminates the need to prove the offender's insolvency, and introduces standardised application forms. It expands the list of offences covered and extends benefits to a wider category of indirect victims. It also improves access to quality legal aid, creates specialised compensation commissions, and introduces measures such as mandatory precautionary measures and anonymisation of victims' data.

The Ministry of Justice continued applying the advance-compensation voucher mechanism. In 2024, three victims received approx. €6,100 in vouchers; in 2025, six victims received approx. €20,550. Several information and training activities (55 in total) were carried out in 2024–2025 to improve the mechanism's accessibility.

Underlying causes

With regard to the underlying causes of human trafficking, such as poverty, starting with 1 January 2024, Romania has applied the Minimum Inclusion Income (MII) program, targeting the most vulnerable persons, which consist of inclusion aid and aid for families with children and offers an integrated support package for employment, social services, education, health, and housing. The eligibility thresholds were indexed twice in 2024, and starting in March 2024 the MII began to be indexed annually according to the previous year's inflation, with the most recent adjustment made in March 2025. Complementing the MII, the Government introduced energy price-capping measures for electricity and natural gas. A new mechanism for household electricity consumers grants 50 lei per month between July 2025 and March 2026 to protect vulnerable households, including MII beneficiaries, and can be combined with existing support under Law No. 226/2021.

Prevention

Raising awareness on the gravity and risks associated to trafficking in human beings, especially when it comes to children, is part of the institutional agenda of NAPCRA. In 2023, the Intersectoral County

Teams (ICTs) reported at total of 902 preventive activities regarding all forms of violence against children, with 1 000 221 beneficiaries, out of which 805 017 children. In 2024, ICTs reported 996 preventive activities for all forms of violence against children, in all 41 counties and Bucharest, with 1 156 651 out of which 981 919 children. In 2023, ICTs reported 21 preventive activities on child labour, 8 on street children and 18 on sexual exploitation. In 2024, ICTs reported 24 preventive activities on child labour, 8 on street children and 17 on sexual exploitation.

Capacity-building

Continuous capacity-building programs have been implemented for prosecutors, police officers, and social workers to strengthen early identification, individualized support, and victim-centred approaches in trafficking cases. The National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA), together with specialized NGOs, have provided training on trauma, rehabilitation, and tailoring services for child victims. These integrated actions have contributed to reducing the root causes of trafficking and ensuring a coordinated national response.

The ICTs for the prevention and eradication of violence against children organise regular training sessions for professionals. In 2023, ICTs reported 56 trainings for child protection professionals and teachers, counting 2,615 participants in all 41 counties and Bucharest. In 2024, ICTs reported 55 trainings for child protection professionals and teachers, 3 trainings for police and 2 trainings for multidisciplinary teams, totalling 1,750 participants in all 41 counties and Bucharest. Each year, the training topics covered various aspects such as violence against children, trafficking in children, bullying, school violence, domestic violence, gender violence, children at risk, drugs, parental education, child rights.

In 2024, NAPCRA and the NGO e-Liberare elaborated and disseminated a guide on the implementation of "The National Mechanism for Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking" and delivered training to professionals working directly with child victims. The sessions were organised both face-to-face as well as online, the total number of professionals trained being of over 370. NAPCRA and the NGO e-Liberare are also in the process of drafting 3 instructions for child protection professionals on a better implementation of "The National Mechanism for Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking". The methodologies will focus on identifying and preventing cases of trafficking in minors in residential centres, identifying and preventing cases of trafficking in minors in the community and risk assessment.

The National Institute of Magistracy (NIM) has incorporated training activities on trafficking in persons, including interdisciplinary modules. Notably, it implemented the programme *"*"Strengthening the Proactive Justice System Response to Human Trafficking in Romania", carried out with support from the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Through this initiative, judicial practitioners received specialized training covering a wide range of topics, including issues highlighted in international recommendations addressed to Romania. Staff of the Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism participated in extensive professional training on combating trafficking in persons, child trafficking, and related offences: 16 activities in 2023, 21 in 2024 and 21 in 2025. These included international workshops and conferences addressing technology-facilitated trafficking, child victim identification, trauma-informed approaches, and cross-border cooperation.

Between June 2023 and October 2025, NATP supported the organisation of over 350 training sessions. These were addressed to a number of approx. 13,130 representatives of socio-professional categories who come /might come in contact with victims of human trafficking.

In 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Emergency Situations Department and the NGO eLiberare trained 290 medical professionals on trafficking indicators, referral procedures under the MNIR, and trauma-informed approaches, supported by a practical guide for doctors. These trainings led to the identification of six potential victims. In 2025, ANITP and the Association for Cooperation and Sustainable Development (ACSD) organised 15 additional training sessions for over 300 frontline professionals, further strengthening early detection and referral capacity.

The National Strategy Against Trafficking in Persons 2024–2028 promotes the voluntary involvement of former victims in anti-trafficking programs, including through an Advisory Council of Persons with Experience of Trafficking. A working group, supported by civil society, drafted a practical guide for involving survivors in public policy development. Within the ProTect Platform, 15 former victims have been identified and are willing to participate in the Advisory Group.

Between 2023 and 2025, NATP, in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, ProTect Platform, IOM Romania, law enforcement, and NGOs, implemented the project "Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking – a Trauma-Focused Perspective". The initiative provided training for police officers on trauma-informed practices, recognising trafficking indicators, and referring victims to appropriate services. Multiplication sessions extended the training nationwide, strengthening a professional network capable of addressing human trafficking while prioritizing victims' needs.

Under the "PDP1 - Improving the National Asylum and Migration System" project, NATP and the General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI) ran a 2024 campaign to prevent sexual exploitation of migrants and vulnerable groups. The campaign, "Human trafficking begins with a promise", provided multilingual information on risks, signs, and protective measures via posters, leaflets, meetings, social media, and videos. Targeted online messaging and collaboration with popular content creators amplified outreach. Within the same project, a campaign was conducted to prevent human trafficking for forced begging among migrants and vulnerable groups and to raise awareness about recruitment methods, signs of exploitation, and ways to seek help.

In 2024, Romania and the US signed a Child Protection Compact Partnership (CPC) to prevent and combat child trafficking. Among the proposed objectives are the establishment of a National Centre for Combating Online Abuse, the creation of a Digital Centre for Child Safety, and the strengthening of awareness and training through ANITP. Over 300 projects reached 225 000 children, teaching online and offline safety, risk management, and exploitation prevention. Notable campaigns included "Looking for a job? Be careful of the traps of human trafficking!" and "Your safety is not a game".

Social services

Under national legislation, victims of human trafficking are entitled to free social services aimed at supporting their social reintegration. These services are provided within an integrated protection system. Romania's main objectives in promoting the social inclusion of disadvantaged persons

include ensuring adequate social protection, guaranteeing a minimum income, and securing access to quality care services.

Several social assistance programs fall under this priority and are implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity. These include family benefits, the Minimum Inclusion Income (MII) program—with its two components (inclusion aid and aid for families with children)—support measures for vulnerable energy consumers (heating aid and energy supplements), disability benefits, and other emergency assistance schemes.

While the situation of social services dedicated to the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking remains a challenge, as regards the protection of child victims, NAPCRA has since 2020 elaborated the minimum quality standards for the social services dedicated to this category of beneficiaries. The standards have been elaborated and approved by both the public and private sector, so that any social services provider can set up such specialized services if they want. Therefore, the legal framework enabling the setting up of social services for children victims of trafficking is already into force.

Child victims benefit from specialized social services provided through the General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC), which coordinate multidisciplinary intervention teams ensuring integrated assistance on psychological, medical, educational, and legal support. Inter-institutional cooperation protocols between law enforcement bodies and child protection authorities have been reinforced to improve referral mechanisms and case management.

20. Prohibition of torture & ill-treatment

In Romania's prison system, all discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, health status or similar criteria is prohibited and sanctioned by law. The legislation lists factors that may indicate vulnerability—such as sexual orientation, disability, mental disorders, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS status, offences against minors, socio-economic situation, previous profession, or cooperation with authorities. These factors only qualify an inmate as vulnerable if they create an actual risk to the person, to others, or institutional security. Protection measures for vulnerable inmates (including those vulnerable due to ethnicity) include separate accommodation, tailored activity schedules and movement routes, supervised contacts, assignment of specialised staff, rapid reporting, prompt investigation of violence, and targeted support. If these measures prove insufficient, inmates may be transferred to another facility or a prison hospital.

The National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) applies zero tolerance to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, and any abuse by staff against inmates. Inmates may report misconduct or rights violations to the custody surveillance judge—who has a permanent office in the prison—as well as to the prison administration or other designated staff. Since 2024, allegations and requests can also be submitted online, where they are automatically registered and processed without content alteration, ensuring transparency and objectivity.

The Public Ministry contributed to the dialogue with the teams of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) during the ad hoc and periodic visits carried out in Romania in 2024 and 2025, concerning the respect of human rights in psychiatric hospitals and in facilities for the enforcement of safety measures, as well as in prisons and police pre-trial detention centres.

The Ombudsman, through the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), carried out visits to several Detention and Preventive Arrest Centres and penitentiaries. The visits' reports, which include recommendations related to issues such as overcrowding, staff shortages, accommodation, food, work, psycho-social activities, rights, etc., were sent for implementation to the visited units and, where applicable, to their higher-level authorities.
Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs No. 20/2025 amended the regulation on detention and preventive arrest centres by introducing new safeguards for body searches, which must be conducted privately, in designated areas, and in two stages to avoid full undressing at once. It also established a trauma register to record injuries observed by medical staff and set clearer standards for medical care, including requirements for medical spaces and mandatory equipment in line with Ministry of Health rules. Additionally, Government Decision No. 850/2023 amended the regulation implementing Law No. 254/2013, extending detainees' telephone rights. Persons deprived of liberty may now make up to three daily calls with a total duration of 30–60 minutes, with additional calls allowed in exceptional cases or to ensure the right to defence. The maximum duration of individual calls was also increased, depending on facility capacity and occupancy.

At the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Police Academy, undergraduate programs include the course "Ethics and Integrity," which addresses police conduct toward persons deprived of liberty, diversity and minorities, use of force, and the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Between 2021 and 2024, 1,998 graduates completed human rights–related courses. The Academy also cooperates with regional and international mechanisms through specialized training on the European Court of Human Rights and international police cooperation. Partnerships, including with the National Agency for Roma, support knowledge exchange, institutional capacity building, and alignment with international human rights standards.

21. Conditions of detention

Between 2020–2025, the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) significantly expanded and modernized detention facilities while ensuring efficient use of public funds. A total of 2,843 new accommodation places were created (625 under the Action Plan and 2,218 through alternative measures), all meeting the 4 m²/detainee standard. An additional 706 places will be completed by year-end, and 397 places have been modernized since 2021. Construction of two new prisons (1,900 places) is underway, with progress at 14–18%. Major upgrades include walking yards, food blocks, detention pavilions, and essential utility networks, in line with national and ECHR standards.

Improving material conditions in detention and preventive arrest centres remains a priority for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Romanian Police. In implementation of the Action Plan 2020–2025, several detention infrastructure projects were completed. Phase II (2023–2025) covered the modernization/expansion of the Argeș County facility (37 places) and the modernization of the Teleorman County facility (22 places), scheduled for completion by December 2025. New and modernized facilities comply with ECHR standards. Following the conclusion of the 2020–2025 Action Plan, a new strategic document is envisaged to continue and update these policies.

To reduce overcrowding and promote rehabilitation, NAP expanded educational, psychological, social and work programmes: over 10 000 inmates are employed or in training. More than 100

programmes are available, with tailored interventions for minors, juveniles, and women. Recidivism has declined steadily, remaining below 37% for the last three years (compared to 46% in 2012).

Reintegration efforts continue under the "2025–2029 National Strategy for Preventing Re-offending". NAP and the Ministry of Health also advanced prison medical and mental-health services through Council of Europe projects (2023–2025), integrated into the "2024–2029 Action Plan for implementing ECHR judgments". Four specialized sections for inmates with severe mental disorders (Botoșani, Galați, Baia Mare, Craiova) have become operational, prison hospital capacity was strengthened, and psychological and support programmes were updated, improving care for inmates with mental health needs.

Persons deprived of liberty receive medical assistance upon admission, upon request, and whenever necessary. Admission includes a mandatory medical examination to identify injuries, health risks, or vulnerabilities, in line with Ministry of Health regulations. Detainees are also entitled to psychological assistance, provided upon request or when deemed necessary, with mandatory psychological support ensured for minors to mitigate the effects of deprivation of liberty.

The Ombudsman carried out several visits through NPM, contributing to the regular monitoring of the treatment of persons living in prisons, the improvement of accommodation conditions, the correction of shortcomings in medical and psycho-social assistance, and the strengthening of institutional accountability towards persons deprived of liberty. The visits' reports have been published on the website of The Ombudsman Institution, under the NPM Section, Annual Reports.

22. Liberty & security of the person

The establishment of a specialized hate crime investigation unit within the Romanian Police has strengthened institutional capacity in this field. Through PDP3 Project, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the unit organised multiple training sessions for police officers in cooperation with the Oslo Police District, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE/ODIHR, including training under the TAHCLE programme.

In line with the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism, the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police developed a uniform methodology for identifying hate crimes and systematically collecting statistical data, based on the environment in which the offence occurs and the discrimination criteria set out in the Criminal Code. Criminal investigations are conducted in accordance with the Methodology for Investigating Hate Crimes developed by the Prosecutor's Office. Also, in 2023, the national adaptation and implementation of a Council of Europe course entitled "Hate Crime" (HELP format), delivered online with tutor support, was completed, with the participation of 60 prosecutors.

In 2024, the implementation of the project "Partnership for LGBTI Equality: Implementing the ECtHR Case Law on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" was completed. The project was carried out by the ACCEPT Association in partnership with the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and was funded through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–

2021. Within this project, 18 training sessions were organised for 325 professionals (160 police officers and 165 prosecutors) on hate crime–motivated offences. A "Manual on the Investigation of Hate Crime–Motivated Offences", and a "Brochure on ECtHR Standards on Non-Discrimination" were also developed.

Additional aspects regarding the activity of prosecutors' offices in combating hate crime–motivated offences can be found in the country report prepared by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in July 2025 and published on 30 October 2025, following the sixth monitoring cycle.

Regarding professional training, the curricula of the educational institutions within the Ministry of Internal Affairs include comprehensive and relevant content addressing, inter alia, the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men, respect for the rights of persons belonging to the LGBTI community, and the prevention and combating of hate speech and hate-motivated offences. These educational components are designed to strengthen a rights-based approach and to ensure fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory treatment of all vulnerable groups, including Roma persons and other minorities.

23. Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information

The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police has adopted a system procedure regulating responses to operational and critical incidents, as well as breaches of internal rules in detention and preventive arrest centres. The procedure sets out how police officers intervene and manage persons deprived of liberty who cause incidents that may endanger detention safety. Law No. 161/2025, published on 22 October 2025, amends and supplements legislation on public order and safety regarding the use of portable body-worn cameras. To strengthen the prevention and investigation of abuse or excessive use of force against persons deprived of liberty, body-worn cameras were distributed to detention and preventive arrest centres in 2025. These devices also protect police officers against assaults and unfounded accusations, while safeguarding the rights and safety of the persons involved in police interventions.

24. Freedom of thought, conscience & religion

Romania officially recognises 19 religious denominations under Law no. 489/2006 on religious freedom. Romania does not differentiate between "major" and "minor" religious denominations. All legally recognised religious organizations are free, autonomous, and equal before the law and public authorities. The national legal framework guarantees their rights and ensures equal treatment for all forms of religious recognition, in full accordance with Romania's international obligations.

During the reporting period, the Prime Minister and other senior officials held several meetings with representatives of religious denominations, including on 2 October 2023, 10 April 2024, and 8 October 2024. Discussions focused on state–church partnership, interconfessional cooperation, and the social and medical contributions of religious organizations. A key outcome was the establishment of 16 May as the National Day of Religious Freedom, adopted by Law No. 98/10 June 2025.

The "National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Antisemitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization, and Hate Speech" (2024–2027), reaffirms, among others, Romania's commitment to combat all forms

of religious intolerance, particularly antisemitism, to promote interreligious dialogue and defend freedom of belief.

Confessional education is regulated by the Pre-university and Higher Education Laws and is organised in accordance with the specific requirements of each recognised denomination. At pre-university level, Religion is an optional subject, with parents or adult pupils choosing the denomination studied from those officially recognised. In addition, recognised religious denominations may establish and administer their own private educational institutions, subject to legal authorization and accreditation procedures.

25. Refugees & asylum seekers

The Ombudsman Institution participated in the plenary meetings and activities of the "International Coalition for the Return of Illegally Deported and Forcibly Displaced Children to Ukraine", organised within Working Group No. 4 titled "Release of All Prisoners and Deportees", established under the Peace Formula proposed by the President of Ukraine, as well as participation in the "Bring Kids Back UA" initiative.

The General Inspectorate for Immigration has begun developing a legislative framework for determining stateless status. Romania grants stateless persons fleeing Ukraine access to temporary protection under Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 and Government Decision 367/2022, including stateless persons and third-country nationals legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. Under Law 122/2006 on asylum, all foreign or stateless persons in Romania, including at the border, can access the asylum procedure upon expressing their intent to seek protection.

26. Rights related to name, identity & nationality

To guarantee the rights of stateless persons in Romania, Civil Status Law No. 116/1996, as amended and supplemented, requires them to register civil status documents and events occurring in Romania with the competent authorities, ensuring their legal recognition by national and foreign entities.