Centre for Legal Resources Oral Statement

Item 6 - UPR adoption Romania, at the 38th session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, 28 June, 2018

Looking at the views of the Romanian Government on recommendations received, as per document distributed on June 22nd[1], one wonders why we all bothered with this UPR process at all. The Romanian Government rejected a number of recommendations and then went on to explain how it has already implemented many of those it had apparently accepted. Our historical experience tells us that stubbornly refusing to accept flaws and shortcomings as a first honest step towards improvement, and instead claiming before international fora that Romania not only complies with, but that it is even a model on various human rights standards, when the opposite is true, this attitude is eerily evocative of Ceausescu's Romania, who strongly maintained his country's democracy was superior.[2]

In the context where Romania is the country with the highest rates of teen pregnancies in the European Union, 12,3% as opposed to a 4% EU average,[3] and the country which has by far the highest cervical cancer driven mortality rates in the EU,[4] the Romanian government flatly rejects to introduce mandatory sexual and reproductive health education in the school curricula. This can only reflect a Government that unashamedly assumes to work directly against the best interests of its children, and particularly against its girls.

The Romanian Government rejected a number of recommendations related to Roma inclusion, stating that they would already be complied with, since there is anti-discrimination legislation and some programmes implemented. In reality, and aside from the persisting huge socio-economic gaps between Roma and non-Roma, research of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency showed that, between 2011 and 2016, enrolment in early childhood education for Roma in Romania is one indicator which actually decreased from 46% to 38%. Roma in Romania continue to live in households without tap water inside their dwelling in a proportion of 68% as opposed to an already high 36% for the general population.[5] But, the Romanian Government is not much in the habit of providing evidence for the achievements it claims. Instead it seems to pick and choose Roma-related recommendations, when in reality the social exclusion and racism against Roma in Romania are such, that no recommendation on Roma inclusion could in good conscience be rejected as already complied with. I leave it to you to conclude what this picking and choosing says about the attitude of the Romanian Government towards the Roma.

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[1] Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Romania, Addendum. Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the state under review, 22 June, 2018, A/HRC/38/6/Add.1, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/ROindex.aspx.

[2] See archival recording of the dictator, with EN translation here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ4mEifZ_YE

[3] Statistics for 2015 available at Eurostat, *Teenage and older mothers in the EU*, at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20170808-1?inheritRedirect=true.

[4] Statistics for 2012, available at European Commission, *Cancer screening in the EU* (2017), p. 58, at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/major_chronic_diseases/docs/2017_cancerscreening_2ndreportimplementation_en.pdf

[5] EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, *A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion (2018)*, pp. 25 and 43, at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/roma-inclusion.