

Romania pledges for Democracy

Predictable democracy is achieved through building resilience and having a pro-active posture. The set of democratic values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the core human rights conventional instruments, and reaffirmed constantly through resolutions and statements, provides the basic necessary tools to protect against human rights violations and abuses.

Modern Romania stands proof of nurturing democratic processes but also how democracies can become resilient.

As an EU and NATO member, Romania has embedded a model based on protecting and promoting democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, free market and trade and acting in the interest of its own citizens. Based on such ambitious goals, Romania actively connects with **like-minded** partners to identify opportunities and means to achieve peace and prosperity. The array of democratic values that feature the Romanian society plays a central role in the Romanian foreign policy and in building dialogue and resilience in our region and its commitments as presented above stand proof of its resilience and determination in protecting the essence of democracy and equip it to stand the test of crisis and time.

I. Fighting Corruption

- I. I.1. Romania commits to implement bans on foreign bribery; as such, although not yet an OECD member (nor a participant in the Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions), it has already initiated demarches to ensure substantive compliance with the 1997 OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. As such, until the end of 2021, a study performed by OECD is analyzing the Romanian legislation's conformity with 1997 conventional provisions.
- II. I.2. Moreover, to tackle corruption in strategic fields of government activity, Romania pledges to enhance measures to control corruption related to the health field and to the environment. The new draft 2021-2025 National Anticorruption Strategy aims at increasing integrity and combatting corruption risks in the health sector through a dedicated mechanism to prioritize investments and budgetary allocations, consolidate transparency of public resources used by making the information on procurement

contracts publicly available on the Health Ministry's site. The strategic draft document also provides for the adoption of a curriculum for the professional training of specialists involved in preventing and combating environmental criminality, including regarding the associated corruption deeds.

- III. I.3. Implementing measures to strengthen the institutional capacity to prevent/fight/corruption is essential for Romania not only at home, but also abroad. Thus, Romania is sharing know-how on collecting evidence in anti-corruption investigations, on increasing institutional and staff integrity in the neighborhood region (RMD, UKR), through enhanced participation in the Istanbul Action Plan within the OECD Anti-corruption Network. Romania also supports digital transformation and stimulating investment in third countries business environment; consequently, Romania will contribute, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the financing of OECD projects for digital transformation of SMSEs in PAE countries and for stimulating the investment for development in the ECOWAS countries.

II. Defending Against Authoritarianism

- I. II.1. Romania stands for free and strong media and will strengthen the implementing legislation to ensure the accuracy of the information and news presented in the audio-visual media, with the respect for ethical rules to prevent panic or emotional distress generated by fake news, the unhindered access to information for all journalists and the transparency of media ownership.
- II. II.2. Combating electoral interference is an essential pledge for electoral processes integrity; the enactment of the National Electoral Network, an advisory entity assisting the Permanent Electoral Authority and including a working group for the digitalization of electoral processes (also an objective pursued in the next Anti-corruption Strategy) will substantively contribute to counter disinformation campaigns aimed at undermining the election process.
- III. II.3. Romania not only stands but ensures through its legislation the independence of media; given the evolving digital media and the effects of the pandemic on press

operations, the Chamber of Deputies expressed their determination to initiate an analysis on the necessity to further amend the national legislation.

- IV. II.4. In order to fully take part in democratic participatory processes, the citizens must learn and understand the democratic values, their rights and obligations; as such, Romania will implement national wide training activities carried out within the “Relevant Curriculum – Open Education for all” Project, targeting the training of 700 - 750 teachers on topics including child’s rights, intercultural education, education for democratic citizenship, which are taught to lower secondary school pupils at **Social Education** discipline. The training activities will conclude in the summer of 2022.
- At the same time, Romania is initiating the Media Education Program for high school teachers and students, aiming at introducing media literacy concepts in their daily activity, for the benefit of 600 teachers and 48.000 students, by 2023.
- V. II.5. Aware of necessity to make sure one’s export rules and flows are not used by other government or entities to control the mobility of innocent individuals, to harass them and to violate their right to respect of private life, Romania will expand, through a new draft piece of legislation, the control over export of cyber monitoring products, if those tools are to be used, integrally or partially, for internal repression or serious human rights/humanitarian law violations. The control will be performed either through licensing the export operation or through prior notification of the intent to export those products. This measure will counter potential repressive application of technology.

III. Advancing Human Rights

- I. III.1. Within the human rights advancement, an essential part is to ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities, individuals, and institutions and to dedicate resources and training, and develop best practices, for the proper documentation, investigation, prosecution, and appropriate punishment of anti-Semitic hate crimes; and, while safeguarding freedom of expression, condemn and counter manifestations of anti-Semitism both online and offline. The Romanian Public Ministry committed to the improvement and harmonization of data collection on anti-Semitic incidents; moreover,

the 2021-2023 National Strategy for the prevention and combating of antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech includes among its objectives the drafting of an integrated methodology for the documentation of hate crimes and for the systematic collection of statistical data on hate crimes within 18 months from its adoption.

- II. III.2. Romania has a tradition in deploying military personnel in the UN Peacekeeping operations, as well as in Multinational Taskforces. As such, respect for human rights is a central element in the behavior of the deployed staff; this fundamental principle must ordinate all their actions and that reverberate in their cooperation relation with third countries' personnel. Mindful of these aspects, the Romanian Ministry of Defense pledges to provide education and training, including curriculum development, on the role of armed forces in a democratic society, professional military ethics and values. Our authorities commit to strengthen accountability for acts of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse and to conduct capacity building programs to strengthen partner nation defense and security forces' adherence to democratic norms and values.
- III. III.3. One of Romania's priorities is preventing and fighting against trafficking of human beings, an objective impossible to attain in isolation; as such, Romania commits to cooperate with all stakeholders to increase professionalism and coordination in dealing with the trafficking in human beings' cases, including by enhancing professional training sessions for police personnel in collaboration with NGOs. At the same time, international cooperation is needed, and capacity building measures for law enforcement in cross-border context are fundamental for a swift reaction to any new crime developments or trends. Romania will implement projects and programs to prevent the trafficking in the origin country as well as in the destination one, through bilateral cooperation and to strengthen the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons in Romania.
- IV. III.4. The full realization of human rights is only possible if every individual can realize her rights and in so doing, persons from underserved communities or vulnerable groups must benefit from effective human rights protection, promotion to ensure their empowerment.

Romania will launch of a new National program focused on providing legal advice and empowering victims of domestic and gender-based violence and affected children, to facilitate their access to justice based on a unified legal counseling methodology; the methodology will be adopted by the end of 2022 and piloted for 6 months in 5 counties before being adjusted and applied in the entire country with permanent character.

At the same time, the authorities will amend and supplement the secondary legislation on multidisciplinary and network-based intervention in situations of violence against children and domestic violence, as well as on exploited children and children at risk of labor exploitation, child victims of human trafficking and Romanian migrant children who are victims of other forms of violence in other countries (by the end of 2022). The relevant authorities will operationalize the information system for electronic monitoring, to better protect the victims of domestic violence.

Romania will also launch in 2022 a campaign to combat racial cyber-hate, putting an emphasize on the consequences of spreading anti-Roma hate messages, the contribution of Roma to the socio-cultural life in Romania and promoting success stories of persons belonging to Roma minority.

The new Roma inclusion Strategy for 2021-2027 encompasses specific measures to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes through constant professional training for magistrates, law enforcement personnel and public administration staff (in particular in the fields of education, social protection and employment, public health, housing); dissemination in 2022 of educational resources for public and private employers for fitting anti-discrimination provisions in internal regulations issued by public and private employers.

To ensure better coordination at the Prime-minister level for the coordination in the implementation of programmatic policies, a newly adopted piece of legislation created within the Prime-minister's Chancellery the Department for community social responsibility and vulnerable groups. Once implemented, the Department will facilitate inter-institutional cooperation in the implementation of programmatic policies for the protection of human rights of children, victims of domestic violence or human trafficking, and other vulnerable persons and to monitor this implementation.

- V. III.5. Preventing and combating violence against women is one of Romania's top priorities; as such, Romania will launch an awareness raising campaign - **Moral harassment is illegal! Stop dysfunctional labor relations!** with the aim of raising awareness about the large number of cases of moral harassment at work, but also for the promotion of new measures adopted at the legislative level in Romania. Romania will also develop, by the end of 2022, a methodology for filing complaints and resolving the cases of harassment in the workplace, to be used both for public and private entities and it will be updated within a year according to the needs and situations identified by the actors with relevant attributions in the field.
- VI. III.6. Supporting women's political participation and empowerment is a pledge Romania is assuming to contribute to women's empowerment, at home and abroad. The first National Action Plan 2022-2027 for the economic and political empowerment of women is in drafting final stages and its adoption will follow swiftly; the NAP will contain a series of measures in fields starting with labor market, education, work-life balance, decision-making, and gender mainstreaming starting with 2022.

A national awareness campaign will raise awareness as to increasing the representation of women in decision-making (through public testimonials and success stories, workshops with women in leadership positions in NGOs, academia, public and private entities, and social partners) and will identify necessary legislative amendments to the legislation on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, amendments to be drafted before the end of 2022.

Moreover, the Chamber of Deputies committed to organize public debates and consultation sessions to evaluate **ex post** the electoral legislation and to identify possible draft amendments to be put forward; and, to ensure the coherence, clarity, and reorganization of electoral laws into a new Electoral Code.