

Universal Periodic Review – Romania – 4th UPR cycle

Mister President,

I make this statement on behalf of ECPI-Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives, ACCEPT Association, Sexual Rights Initiative and the Global Justice Institute.

We recognize the efforts of the Romanian Government to accept specific recommendations in the previous UPR cycle and made progress in area of sexual and reproductive health and rights by adopting the National HIV/AIDS strategy in November 2022 after a delay of 15 years, though we are concerned that the Strategy is not supported by a budget for its implementation, especially in the area of prevention.

The Government has had plans in place to adopt a National Strategy on Reproductive Health for more than a decade, without success, while the situation on ground is deteriorating. Romania is the second in the EU for birth rate among teenagers, the planning family units and access to subsidized contraception have dramatically decreased. No action to implement this accepted recommendation in the previous UPR cycles has been undertaken during that time. **We would therefore urge the government to adopt without further delay measures to operationalize and finance the National Plans in the field of HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health, including enhanced access to testing and prevention for key populations and increased access to Education for Health in schools, under the coordination and monitoring of a national intersectoral and inter-ministerial mechanism.**

Notably, in spite of a decision of the European Court of Justice from 2018 and a decision of the Constitutional Court also from 2018 recognizing the family rights of same sex families, the legislation was not amended and draft bills are shelved in the Parliament. Furthermore, these decisions are not enforced in relation with the claimants and family rights of same sex families are still denied in Romania. **We urge the government to implement without delay the legal decisions issued in 2018 by the Court of Justice of the European Union and the Constitutional Court recognising the family rights of same sex couples on the territory of Romania.**

It is encouraging that the government has accepted all recommendations on hate crimes and hate speech in the 3rd UPR cycle. Despite a limited progress in this field, the Romanian state has failed to develop a common methodology for investigating hate crimes at the level of the Romanian Police and the General Prosecutor's Office. The police do not carry out efficient investigations in the field of hate crimes, and they do not send the prosecutor sufficient evidence for the indictment of hate crimes, considering the very low rates of cases solved and of cases indicted. **We urge the government to increase the capacity of the law enforcement authorities to effectively combat hate crimes by creating a centralized recording system**

and common methodology for the proper investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, systematic trainings for the Police and prosecutors focused on identifying and handling hate crimes, and enhanced cooperation between police and vulnerable groups, especially Roma and LGBTI communities. In the absence of these combined measures and an adequate budget for trainings at national scale, hate crimes will remain severely underreported, while the number of attacks against LGBTI and Roma individuals and groups will continue to grow based on the feeling of impunity among aggressors.

Thank you!