

## SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ROMANIA. PROTECTING CITIZENS OR ELECTORAL ALMS?

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### Abstract:

*Social protection is necessary in the context of the existence of a larger or smaller part of the population that does not have an adequate standard of living. The study was conducted based on data collected from the National Institute of Statistics in 2015-2018 and existing legislation in this field. The economic and social life in Romania shows us that too often the governing parties neglect this aspect and use social protection more as an electoral weapon. Based on the study of legislation and statistical data, we will demonstrate that the social protection of disadvantaged groups is of less interest to the ruling parties and the policies pursued are not aimed at improving living conditions but using public money for this field as a tool to earn or maintain. As proof is the data presented which shows an ever-changing, contradictory, always postponed and unenforced legislation. The data collected show that despite the fact that money has been spent, increasing during the analyzed period, the efficiency of their spending is minimal, no progress has been made, we are always the tail of EU countries on indicators relevant to our existence: poverty rate, health status, life expectancy. The present study is structured as follows: in the first section the importance of social protection was presented, in the second section the working methods were shown, in the next section the relevant legislation for this field was presented, further the fourth section provides the basis for data, and the results and conclusions of the study are presented in the last chapter.*

**Keyword:** social protection, social insurance, social benefits, social services, social reference indicator

**JEL Classification:** H50, H53, H55, I18, I38, J88

### I. INTRODUCTION

The degree of civilization of society is largely determined by the attitude towards disadvantaged people, by creating the conditions for education, socio-professional adaptation and social integration. The socialization process begins early, when a certain attitude is formed towards the role and social position of each one. In the process of socialization, each individual relates to the social environment and the normative system of society.

In order to apply social norms, it has been necessary, over time, to develop tools for regulating the relationship between the individual and society. The most important instrument is the legal norm that appears as the instrument of precise application, in the form of laws, of all human desideratum: order, justice and security.

Human rights are respected to the extent that they are known and to the extent that they are appropriated. It is necessary for each individual to be aware of the existence of their own rights and to respect the rights of the other.

The state is obliged to develop and implement a national development policy, capable of increasing the well-being of all individuals without any discrimination.

Social protection actions target several areas where public sector efforts are needed: health, education, culture, rest and recreation conditions, the socio-political environment. Social living conditions are designed to ensure a basic standard of living for all people, regardless of the means at their disposal.

In this sense, the Romanian Constitution stipulates that: the state is obliged "to take measures for economic development and social protection, in order to ensure a decent standard of living for its citizens. Citizens have the right to a pension, to paid maternity leave, to medical assistance in state health units, to unemployment benefits and to other forms of public or private social insurance, provided by law. Citizens also have the right to social assistance measures, according to the law" (Romanian Constitution, art. 47).

Also: children and young people enjoy a special regime of protection and assistance in the realization of their rights. The state provides allowances for children and aid for the care of sick or disabled children. Public authorities have an obligation to contribute to ensuring the conditions for the free participation of young people in the political, social, economic, cultural and sporting life of the country (Romanian Constitution, art. 49).

Last but not least: the right to work cannot be restricted. The choice of profession, trade or occupation, as well as the job is free. Employees have the right to social protection measures. These concern the "safety and health of employees, the employment regime of women and young people, the establishment of a minimum gross wage in the country, weekly rest, paid leave, work in special or special conditions, vocational training and other specific situations, established by law" (Romanian Constitution, art. 41).

Therefore, Romanian citizens have rights, the parties in power having the obligation to apply the provisions of the Constitution, not to condition or present the social protection measures as their own achievement.

Sustainability, financing and good governance of the insurance and social protection system are key elements of the social model. In any country of the European Union (EU), the European Social Model (ESM) is concretely applied, through labor market regulations, through the provision of health, education and other public services, as well as through taxes and systems. social protection.

Social cohesion, a European concept promoted at the same time and with the same value as the single market and single currency, is the European approach to the problem of social and economic inequalities. This concept is used to describe the European project for the simultaneous promotion of economic growth and social protection.

In the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a Dashboard has been created. The pillar was adopted by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017. It identifies principles and rights in three areas: equal opportunities and access to the labor market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion.

In this paper, the notions of social protection, social insurance, social assistance, social protection, social security are seen as closely related to public finances, the way of collective financing of actions in these fields, institutions and legislation promoted by the state in policies. public social.

Effective insurance and social protection is achieved only with a large volume of funds. The degree of development of a country, the GDP created each year, provides the necessary funds to finance this area. The economic and social crisis and the demographic and options crisis are important factors affecting the size and efficiency of the funds allocated to this area.

## **II. RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The paper starts from the finding that social protection consists of social insurance and social assistance. Social insurance consists of social health insurance, unemployment insurance and the pension system. Social assistance is made up of social assistance benefits and social assistance services.

Social insurance works on the basis of the principle of contributivity and insures participants against risks such as: old age, illness or unemployment and social assistance addresses all categories considered vulnerable and does not take into account contributory.

Social assistance schemes will be analyzed on the eight functions, which cover the major social risks, defined according to the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS): illness and health care, unemployment, age limit, disability, survivor, family and children, housing and social exclusion.

This paper seeks answers to the following questions:

- what social model ensures adequate protection in Romania?
- have the options regarding the way of granting and managing the funds destined for social protection, by the Romanian governments, affected the efficiency of their use?
- is this way of management ensuring the sustainability of the social protection system in the future?

From the point of view of methodology, we tried to analyze first of all the legislation in the field of social protection in Romania. The way it has changed over time gives us a picture of the state's social policy.

A second plan of analysis was the study of statistics in the field of social protection. The evolution of the main indicators in this field gives us an image of the effects of social policy.

Finally, it was looked at whether the policy in the field of social protection led to the improvement of the living standard of the affected population, more precisely, how the poverty indicator in Romania evolved during the analyzed period.

Basically, we want to find out whether social policies have had a concrete effect on improving the living standards of beneficiaries or have been used by parties as an "electoral agent" to gain political power.

## **III. LEGISLATION ON SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ROMANIA**

At the beginning we will review the relevant legislation on social insurance (pensions, health and unemployment) and then we will refer to the regulations on social benefits and benefits.

The pension system in Romania is based on Law no. 127/2019, which will replace Law no. 263/2010. The law will enter into force with all the provisions, in September 2021, because it involves the recalculation of the amount of the pension of individuals, a huge job. The articles of the law that establish the values of the pension point, entered into force starting with September 1, 2019 and September 1, 2020.

The most important changes brought by this law refer to:

- indexation of the pension point until 2021: with 15% from September 2019, 40% from September 2020 and 6% from September 2021;

- starting in 2022, the pension indexation will be 100% of the inflation rate plus 50% of the real increase of the average gross salary;
- from 2021, the correction index that was used to increase the first pension in line with wages will be eliminated;
- the new pensions will be calculated using at the denominator a fixed contribution period of 25 years, instead of 35 years, as provided by the previous law;
- existing pensions will be recalculated in ascending order to be correlated with this new formula.

The law also contains some changes to the minimum pension, invalidity benefits and survivors' pensions.

The beneficiaries of the public pension system, whose incomes are below the minimum limit, beyond which social marginalization and poverty can intervene, will receive the social allowance for pensioners established by GEO 6/2009.

Law no. 95/2006 republished in 2015 on health care reform regulates public health in Romania. The responsibility for public health insurance rests with the Ministry of Health, the County and Bucharest Public Health Directorates and other specialized structures of the Ministry of Health, the National Health Insurance House (CNAS), the specialized structures within the ministries and institutions with their own health network. as well as to the local public administration authorities. (Law no. 95/2006 republished, art.1, pct.7)

The social health insurance system is compulsory for all citizens and is financed mainly by contributions. The social contribution for health is 10% for each employee. According to this law, there are also insureds exempted from paying the contribution. The most important categories exempted are: children, pupils, students under 26 and co-insured. The health legislation is not complete if we do not mention GEO 158/2005 on holidays and social health insurance benefits to which the insured persons are entitled.

Law 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation regulates the issue of employment in Romania. According to it, the minimum contribution period is 12 months during the 24 months preceding the date of submission of the unemployment application. The qualification period does not vary according to age and there is no qualification period for high school or college graduates.

The amount of unemployment benefit is granted according to the contribution period, as follows:

- 75% of the SRI (Social Reference Indicator) value, for persons with a contribution period of at least one year;
- the amount provided for above, to which is added an amount calculated by applying to the average gross monthly basic salary for the last 12 months of the contribution period, a percentage differentiated according to the contribution period.

The state provides a number of facilities for both the unemployed and employers. Measures to stimulate employment aim at both increasing the employment opportunities of job seekers and stimulating employers to employ the unemployed and create new jobs and promote young people at risk of social marginalization. The main measures aimed at employees refer to: vocational training, supplementing salary incomes or stimulating labor mobility.

Among the measures targeted at employers, we note: the support from the unemployment insurance budget of 50% of the expenses with professional training services organized for a maximum of 20% of the employed staff, employers who hire graduates, unemployed over 45 years , unemployed single parents, long-term unemployed or young NEETs, with a permanent contract, receive for each employee a monthly amount of 2,250 lei for a period of 12-18 months or loans on advantageous terms (with an interest rate of 50% of interest NBR reference framework) for the creation of new jobs through the establishment or development of small and medium enterprises, cooperative units, family associations and independent activities.

The cumulation with other social security benefits is not allowed, for example with: invalidity pension, allowance for temporary incapacity for work including due to accidents at work and occupational diseases that occurred during the vocational training of the unemployed, maternity allowance or child raising allowance.

Legislation on social benefits and benefits is cumbersome and sometimes difficult to understand and apply. Social assistance law no. 292/2011, regulates the general framework for the organization, functioning and financing of the national social assistance system in Romania.

The following normative acts: Law no. 416/2001 regarding the guaranteed minimum income, Law no. 277/2010 regarding the allowance for family support and GEO no. 70/2011 on social protection measures during the cold season, refers to concrete aspects of social benefits. According to them, in Romania there are three main social benefits (guaranteed minimum income, family support allowance and heating allowance), which partially overlap for some families, and which are calculated according to different formulas involving the preparation of three different files submitted by beneficiaries.

The current law on guaranteed minimum income discourages work, because it withdraws social assistance from people who are employed, even if their salary is very low. So, poor people have to choose between an uncertain low salary and a modest but certain social assistance.

On this date, Law no. 196/2016 on the minimum inclusion income that was to enter into force on April 1, 2018. It is a normative act that also mitigates the imperfections of the legislation shown above. However, the Government has postponed the entry into force of the law three times, the last being on April 1, 2021.

This law includes the guaranteed minimum income, the family support allowance and heating allowance. A number of advantages are stipulated, such as: a single set of documents will be submitted, 50% of the legally realized income (not more than 400 lei) are taken out of the family income threshold (it is stimulated employment with legal acts), the granting decision moves to the County Agencies for Payments and Social Inspection - now the decisions regarding these aids are taken by the mayors (a partial depoliticization). The law provides working adults, currently inactive and living on social assistance, with an incentive to actively seek employment (allowing them to combine social assistance with work).

Other social benefits are carried out by specific legislation, such as: Law 61/1993 - state allowance for children, GEO 111/2010 - child raising allowance or Law no. 272/2004 - placement allowance.

#### **IV. DATABASE - ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Some data extracted and presented in the tables below, together with the previously presented legislation, will complete the image of social protection in Romania, in evolution, over a longer period of time.

Social protection spending is an important part of state spending in all EU countries. In Romania, they represent about a third of the total budget expenditures, as shown in the table below.

As elsewhere in the world, these expenditures are aimed at reducing poverty. How the expenditures in this field have contributed to the reduction of poverty in Romania, we will see from the data presented in this subchapter.

**Table 1. Evolution of social protection expenditures in Romania**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Social protection expenses (mil. lei)</b>	<b>Social protection expenses (md.euro)</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>	<b>% of total expenses</b>
2015	101.570	23,4	14,6	36,1
2016	110.053	24,9	14,6	34,5
2017	124.253	27,7	14,8	33,6
2018	140.226	30,7	15,0	34,9

Source: processing by: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR\\_EXP\\_SUM\\_\\_custom\\_246415/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR_EXP_SUM__custom_246415/default/table?lang=en)

In 2019, social transfers (social benefits in cash and in kind) accounted for 46.1% of total spending in the EU-27. (see Government finance statistics/ro)

As in the previous chapter, we will start with pensions, the following table revealing an increase in state spending on pensions by 17.4 billion. lei in the period 2015-2018, as a result of two years of increases by 10% and 15% of the pension point. The data in the table also show the very large share of pension expenditures in total social protection expenditures and a high share of them in GDP.

**Table 2. Evolution of pension expenditures in Romania**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Pension expenses (md. lei)</b>	<b>Pension expenses (md. euro)</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>	<b>% of total social protection expenses</b>	<b>Number of retirees (mil.)</b>	<b>Average pension (lei month)</b>
2015	51,3	11,5	7,2	49,4	5.306	892
2016	55,4	12,3	7,2	49,5	5.257	949
2017	62,5	13,7	7,2	49,3	5.228	1.069
2018	68,7	14,8	7,1	48,1	5.207	1.172

Source: processing by: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR\\_EXP\\_SUM\\_\\_custom\\_246415/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR_EXP_SUM__custom_246415/default/table?lang=en)

The figures in the table below show that between 2015-2018 there was an increasing trend of health spending. However, we must note that an important part in the increase of health expenditures was the salary increases with the entry into force of Law no. 153/2017, which determined the increase of the salary rights of the medical staff related to 2017 by up to 301%.

Health spending in Romania has the lowest percentage of GDP among EU member states (about 5% of GDP).

In 2019, the Romanian health system had the following situation: 10.7 million insured exempted from paying the contribution (most exceptions being: 4.5 million children, 4.5 million pensioners, 0.7 million co-insured) and 5, 3 million employees who pay the health insurance contribution.

Health spending in Romania is the "lowest in the EU, both per capita (EUR 1,029, EU average EUR 2,884) and as a proportion of GDP (5%, EU 9.8%). The share of publicly funded health expenditure (79.5%) is similar to the EU average (79.3%), while payments from private sources are generally low, except for medicines, informal payments are substantial and on a large scale. range. In absolute terms, spending in all sectors in this area is low and the health system is significantly underfunded". (State of Health in the EU-Romania. Country Health Profile 2019).

**Table 3. Evolution of health expenditures in Romania**

Year	Health expenses (mil. lei)	Health expenses (md.euro)	% of GDP	% of total expenses
2015	29.922	7,9	4,2	11,8
2016	30.871	8,5	4,0	11,9
2017	44.188	9,7	4,3	12,1
2018	52.920	11,4	4,7	13,3

Source: processing by: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR\\_EXP\\_SUM\\_\\_custom\\_246415/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR_EXP_SUM__custom_246415/default/table?lang=en)

Unemployment data show that the total number of unemployed decreased in the period 2015-2018, but the number of unemployed without benefits compared to those compensated it is extremely high (81% in 2018). As a result of the pandemic, the number of unemployed has been growing since the second half of 2020.

**Table 4. Evolution of unemployment benefits in Romania**

Year	Expenditures on social protection for the unemployed (md. lei)	% of GDP	% of total social protection expenses	Average number of unemployed	Average number of unskilled unemployed	Average rate of unemployment (%)
2015	1,32	0,1	0,7	455.836	352.570	5,12
2016	1,00	0,1	0,6	418.552	334.854	4,77
2017	0,95	0,1	0,4	374.650	301.584	4,29
2018	0,95	0,1	0,4	310.067	250.866	3,56

Source: processing by Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Report on social inclusion in Romania in 2015-2018

Social assistance benefits are amounts intended for persons or families who meet the eligibility conditions provided by law. The main types of social assistance benefits are: state child allowance, placement allowance, child raising allowance and employment incentive, social assistance, heating allowance, family support allowance, support for the disabled, monthly allowance HIV / AIDS food.

The main criteria on the basis of which social assistance benefits are granted are: assessment of the family context, income of the applicant or his family, living conditions, health status and degree of dependency.

The state provides social assistance benefits through central or local public administration authorities.

Some of the most important social benefits are presented in the following table. We note the importance of the state child allowance, the child raising allowance and the employment incentive as well as social assistance (guaranteed minimum income).

**Table 5. Evolution of expenditures with social assistance benefits in Romania**

Explanations	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Number of people	mil. lei	Number of people	mil. lei	Number of people	mil. lei	Number of people	mil. lei
State allowance for children	3.691.195	3.542	3.662.793	4.378	3.635.792	4.397	3.610.503	4.366
Child raising allowance	138.350	1.579	141.151	2.060	159.369	3.409	174.328	4.009
Insertion stimulant	37.834	230	41.334	264	74.593	576	90.427	704
Social aid	245.545	673	244.814	812	233.966	781	202.976	663

Source: processing by Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Report on social inclusion in Romania in 2015-2018

The minimum guaranteed income was established in 2000. The income thresholds of families from which this aid is granted have been changed sporadically, without being correlated with the evolution of wages. As a result of these mismatches, the ratio between the average guaranteed income for a family of two and the minimum gross wage has fallen dramatically. A similar trend was recorded in relation to the average net salary, as shown in the following table.

**Table 6. Evolution of the guaranteed minimum income**

<b>Indicator / year</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>
Threshold help for a family of 2 people	196	225	225	255	255
Minimum gross salary	600	700	800	1.050	1.900
Average net salary	1.361	1.507	1.579	1.859	2.484
Social aid / minimum gross salary	33%	32%	28%	24%	13%
Social aid / average net salary	14,4%	14,9%	14,2%	13,7%	10,3%

Source: Elaborated by the author

ISR is the basis for calculations for all forms of social assistance is 500 lei and has not been increased since 2008. This indicator is important because it represents the value in relation to which all social benefits are calculated. The multiplication coefficient for each type of benefit is called the Social Insertion Index (ISI).

**Table 7. Indicators that measure the risk of poverty**

<b>indicators</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%)										
Romania		47,0	41,5	41,9	40,3	37,4	38,8	35,7	32,5	31,2
EU (27 countries)		n/a	23,9	24,6	24,5	23,8	23,7	22,5	21,6	21,1
People at risk of income poverty after social transfers (%)										
Romania		24,6	21,6	23,0	25,1	25,4	25,3	23,6	23,5	23,8
EU (27 countries)		n/a	16,5	16,8	17,3	17,4	17,5	16,9	16,8	16,5
Severely materially deprived people										
Romania		38,0	30,5	29,8	25,9	22,7	23,8	19,7	16,8	14,5
EU (27 countries)		n/a	8,9	9,8	9,1	8,4	7,9	6,9	6,1	5,6
People living in households with very low work intensity (%)										
Romania		9,9	7,7	7,6	7,2	7,9	8,2	6,9	5,4	5,2
EU (27 countries)		n/a	9,9	10,6	11,1	10,5	10,4	9,4	8,8	8,5
In work at-risk-of-poverty rate % of employed persons aged 18 or over (%)										
Romania		17,4	17,9	18,4	19,8	18,8	18,9	17,4	15,3	15,7
EU (27 countries)		n/a	8,5	9,1	9,6	9,7	9,8	9,5	9,3	9,0
Impact of social transfers on poverty reduction by sex										
Romania		21,90	22,30	18,84	12,85	13,31	14,24	16,61	16,07	15,30
EU (27 countries)		n/a	35,4	33,86	32,68	32,03	31,64	32,40	32,80	32,65

Source: processing made by the author according to the data provided by <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/main-tables>

Despite higher wages and pensions, income inequality increased in 2018 after a two-year decline, while in almost all Member States it decreased slightly. The share of incomes held by the lowest income segment of the population (40% of the population) in total incomes, which was "already one of the lowest in the EU, decreased even more. Although it continued to decline in 2018, the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was still among the highest in the EU, with one in three Romanians being at risk of poverty or social exclusion" (European Commission, 2020 Country Report on Romania).

In 2018, the poverty rate of the employed decreased, but it is still 15.3%. Poverty risks mainly "affect rural areas and vulnerable groups and tend to be associated with a low level of education and an unfavorable socio-economic status. Child poverty remains among the highest in the EU, affecting 38.1% of children compared to the EU average of 24.3%. Social transfers have very little impact on poverty reduction" (European Commission, 2020 Country Report on Romania: 12).

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Although old-age pensions have increased, the increase has been below the level of wage increases in recent years. There are large differences in the adequacy of pensions between different groups of pensioners. The ratio between pensions and salaries (average public pension as a percentage of the average salary) was 35.5% in 2016, well below the EU average of 43.5%. However, the current Government has not increased pensions by 40% since 1 September 2020, but only by 14%, and pensions will subsequently increase in annual installments. In this case, the real value of growth will be much lower, being eroded. inflation.

Social insurance can be considered as taxes, not benefits, because the pensions paid by the state are much lower than a person contributed. About a third of what we contribute returns. Basically, it's a tax increase.

Romania has been occupying the last place in the European Consumer Health Index for several years. The main problems of the Romanian health system are: hospital pay, in-hospital infections and various epidemics, insufficient investment in health, lack of qualified staff, poor organization of medical institutions and lack of prevention.

Romania remained, in 2019, on the last place in the EU in terms of health spending relative to GDP. While the average of EU countries for health is 9.6% of GDP, Romania allocated in 2019 only half of this average - ie a percentage of 4.8%.

Although it has increased, life expectancy in Romania is among the lowest in the EU. This reflects unhealthy behaviors, but also socio-economic inequalities, as well as substantial deficiencies in the provision of health services and chronic underfunding.

There are approximately 17 million insured people in Romania, of which over 10 million have health insurance, but do not pay, because this is what governments have decided over the years. In addition, 4 million Romanians are uninsured. This means that every person who works in Romania pays for health insurance both for himself and for two other people who do not pay anything. Those who pay are employees, about 5.3 million.

The number of those who do not pay, but have insurance, has fluctuated over the years, depending on political decisions. Half are exempted from payment according to law 95/2006, and the other half based on tax measures taken between 2017 and 2019 (pensioners and construction employees).

Underfunding the system undermines Romania's ability to meet the current needs of the population. It will be increasingly difficult to meet these needs as the population ages and the resource base shrinks. (State of Health in the EU-Romania. (Country Health Profile 2019)

Although, theoretically, according to law 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation, employers benefit from certain facilities, in practice, they are difficult or impossible to access and accept. One of the impediments is the obligation to keep the employee for 12 months. Another is that the beneficiaries of loans must meet conditions that are difficult to meet. So the area of application is extremely small.

As the unemployment benefit is granted for a maximum of 12 months, some of the unemployed fail to find a job at the end of the period of receiving the due rights, passing into the category of those not compensated, in table no. 4 highlighting the high proportion of unemployed workers who fall into the category of long-term unemployed and whose chances of reintegration into the labor market are low

As a result of those shown so far, in 2018, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is 6,360 thousand people (Government of Romania, National Reform Program 2020).

The reporting of social benefits to SRI and the capping of this indicator at the level established in 2008 made that, despite the economic growth in recent years, the social protection offered by the Romanian state is increasingly precarious and insufficient. Vulnerable categories have been deliberately excluded from the benefits of economic growth.

Although the social benefits were labeled as electoral gifts, statistical data show that the number of beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum income - often appointed and socially assisted is 202,976 and the amount paid was 663 million lei (in 2018). The average amount paid in the form of the minimum guaranteed income in 2018 was 272 lei. According to the law, the minimum guaranteed income is only 142 RON for one person and can reach 527 RON for a family of 5 members.

It is found that social assistance in Romania is a trap that the state lays for poor people: little money is given, and if you become an employee, you will lose social assistance. So the search for a job is discouraged by the fact that all family support is lost when an adult is hired.

Why was this situation reached? Because Romania is an undeveloped country in terms of mentality, because the citizens have been taught by the parties that social assistance is similar to social assistance, because there are no coherent social policies designed in the future. Therefore, today's social benefits are assimilated by citizens as electoral gifts.

The share of social services in relation to social benefits must be changed. Social services are the only ones that bring vulnerable groups out of the crisis and the provision of benefits is addictive. Every year that passes, deepens the problem.

The solution is not to quickly cut social benefits. The solution is to finance social services and remove from the crisis those who have been left to be socially assisted only.

Even so, when Romania raises the issue of focusing on social services, the EU is discussing the introduction of universal basic income, ie an amount to be transferred to each citizen, without any livelihood testing, without any conditioning and without, in return, imposing conditions.

While in power, politicians are refusing to increase social benefits. They become extremely generous after losing power in the election campaign trying to promote legislation that would improve the social protection of the population.

Exclusive concern for the economy to the detriment of social and moral aspects will end up harming the economy itself. A society in which 83% of employment contracts offer wages below the minimum basket for a decent living cannot be the premise for a healthy economy.

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20. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government\\_finance\\_statistics/ro](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government_finance_statistics/ro)
21. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR\\_EXP\\_SUM\\_\\_custom\\_246415/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SPR_EXP_SUM__custom_246415/default/table?lang=en)