

*"[...] It is necessary to speed up a sustained process of public education to help our fellow citizens to understand that if we help those who are in greater difficulty than we are, this will yield positive returns for us and we can feel secure in the long-term of our own investments and our own plans of economic development."*

Press Statement, Teodor Baconschi, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Opening of the third edition of the Romanian Development Camp, Bucharest, 24th June 2010 .



# Romania

## CONTEXT

2010 was supposed to be the critical year for Romania, together with the other EU new member states, in achieving the intermediary aid target of 0.17% of GNI. During the first visit of a European Commissioner for Development to Romania, in June 2010, Mr. Andris Piebalgs addressed a strong message to the Romanian Government to keep its political commitments concerning ODA. Nonetheless, Romania has not made any progress in achieving the 0.17% of GNI target. Even worse, the ODA budget decreased from EUR €91m in 2009 to €85.9m in 2010.

## AID QUANTITY

Last year the Romanian president announced a supplementary aid to the Republic of Moldova worth €100m for the next 4 years (€25m per year). In 2010, only €7m was allocated as humanitarian aid to mitigate the effects of the severe spring floods on the Moldova bank of the Prut river. Although an official agreement has been signed in April 2010 between the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (MRDT) (as a national coordinator of the aid to the Republic of Moldova) and the Moldovan Ministry of Constructions and Regional Development establishing the priorities of this aid, no annual or multi-annual programming has been made public. Moreover, civil society has not been consulted in this process and there seems to be a poor dialogue and coordination between the Romanian institutions responsible with the implementation.

In terms of inflated aid in 2010, Romania has reported as ODA student costs worth over €11 million for 6,749 foreign students (the majority from the Republic of Moldova) provided by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and roughly €46 thousand for 36 students provided by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment. In 2010 Romania did not report as ODA any refugee costs and debt relief.

## AID QUALITY

The critical issue for Romania's development policy remains its lack of focus and predictability, both in terms of budget allocation and prioritization of interventions. In the 3 years since joining the EU, Romania has not managed to position itself as a credible actor in the global development community. Of course, this is to a great extent due to the very limited budget for bilateral and multilateral aid over the last years which did not allow for much involvement in the context of a difficult economic crisis. However, even with limited resources, Romania could have used the last years to refine its areas of interventions (both geographically and thematically). It could have initiated smaller scale pilot programs and interventions, developing its own capacity and prepared for the moment

when, as expected, the ODA budget increases. Instead, because of a lack of clear strategic priorities matching the limited resources available, Romania is dissipating its ODA budget on many small interventions and multilateral contributions, with no discernable development objectives and impact.

Moreover, the crisis period could have been used to strengthen its institutional and strategic framework for development cooperation. That has not happened. Despite announcing renewed intentions of moving forward, another year has passed without any progress on the long awaited and critical legislative and institutional changes (particularly in the Government Decision 747/2007). These changes should have ensured that the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a better legal framework and adequate instruments to fulfil autonomously its functions of programming and implementation of the national policy for development cooperation. No new programs, strategies or disbursement instruments have been developed.

There is still no strategy to support local initiatives for awareness raising and development education (civil society, schools, local authorities) and the existing projects are carried out exclusively with EC support. Although according to the National Development Strategy one of the important elements of the development cooperation policies is development education, and despite intentions to allocate at least 5% of its budget to activities related to awareness raising and development education, in 2010, the Romanian MFA spent only €10,545 (0.012% from the total ODA budget) on development education.

On the positive side, encouraging steps have been taken to lay the foundations for the study of development cooperation in Romanian universities. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to provide assistance for the establishment of Master Programs on Development Cooperation in 4 Universities across Romania. The Romanian Government also provides a long-term support and commitment to opening and fostering a space of dialogue and cooperation among civil society organisations from the Eastern Neighbourhood region, through the Black Sea NGO Forum and the Moldovan-Romanian Civil Society Forum.

Romania has supported the adoption of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 and Romanian officials declare that national principles in terms of development cooperation strategy do emphasise gender equality as part of the democracy and rule of law thematic priority.



# Romania

## DEMANDS

Romanian NGOs call on their government to:

- Adopt the legislative and institutional changes needed for Romania to actually implement its own development policy.
  - Provide an adequate ODA budget to match its commitments in the field of development cooperation and focus the spending of the existing resources on a strategic and transparent way.
  - Elaborate multi-annual ODA programmes and annual action plans in a timely and transparent way.
  - Elaborate country strategies for priority ODA recipients, especially for the Republic of Moldova, including civil society from both countries as consultative and implementing partners.
- Establish a funding programme for civil society in the Republic of Moldova.
  - Financially support development education initiatives and awareness raising campaigns implemented by civil society actors in Romania (by launching competitive calls for proposals and a co-funding instrument for EC projects, based on successful models existing in other EU member states) and actively engage in a national multi-stakeholder group on development education with the goal to elaborate a national strategy on development education.
  - Support a timely, structured and effective consultation process with civil society in the formulation and implementation of the ODA national policy.

## GENUINE/INFLATED AID GRAPH

Romania's genuine and inflated aid

