

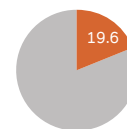
“Country recommendation

Romania should take action to increase the children's participation in the decisions that affect them and should create and strengthen the child participation mechanisms in a way that consultation and participation processes become meaningful and have a long-term impact.

Country
Profile 2023



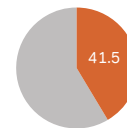
Romania



Child Population:

3,737,960

19.6% of total population



Child Poverty:

1,551,253

41.5% (2022)

▼ -0.2% compared to 2021

RESPONDENT ORGANISATION(S):

[Hope and Homes for Children – Romania](#)

Children's Rights in Romania

At national level, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities is the main body regulating child protection and children's rights in Romania. The Ministry has a dedicated department in this respect – The National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoptions (NAPCRA).

Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) – Romania identified key policies on children's rights in Romania to include child safety online, well-being and mental health, child protection systems, and children impacted by war and conflict (including children in migration and refugees).

Child safety and well-being online

Child safety online is an important subject in Romania and there are several active initiatives – some civil society-led, and others led by authorities. For instance, the Romanian Police

carried out a three-year project aimed at developing the capacity of the national and regional child protection agencies to act against online bullying and to increase children's safety online. NAPCRA also foresees a chapter regarding online safety for children in the future strategy for the promotion and protection of children's rights. In addition, Save the Children Romania has been implementing a longstanding EU-funded programme, which includes research, studies and publications regarding online safety for children, online bullying and ways to use the internet in a safe and creative manner for children.

Child protection systems

The vast majority of the services related to the child protection system are state-owned (and funded) and there are only a few private services. All services (state or private) are registered with NAPCRA and report to it through the county child protection agencies. To HHC – Romania's knowledge, there

are no unregistered services for children in Romania (it is not legal to function as a service for children – or adults for that matter – without a license provided by the state authorities).

Children impacted by war and conflict

Romania has put in place a set of legal provisions regarding support for refugees and the support they would receive (money, access to free health care, access to education for children and to work for adults, etc).

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, a new law has decreased the monthly amount of money refugees are entitled to and has introduced a cap to the overall finances they receive. Around 7,300 children from Ukraine are currently enrolled in the Romanian educational system and for most of the children; the main challenge to access education is the language barrier.

Children's mental health

There is a concern for children's mental health in Romania. Targeted measures are foreseen as part of the new national strategy for the promotion and protection of children's rights, which is currently being developed, as well as measures in initiatives of the government and authorities.

The Ministry of Health carried out an EU-funded project that aims to support developing community services for the children's mental health. While the right to access services for mental health is guaranteed in Romania by law (as part of the right to medical care), these services are scarce and unequally distributed between urban and rural areas.

Climate change and environmental impacts

While climate change is a current challenge for society in general and children in particular, it is not regarded as an important one in Romania, at least by the decision-

makers. A recent study by Save the Children shows that over 70% of children are willing to make changes in their lives in order to minimise their carbon footprint and to reduce climate change, but the same study shows that there is no official data at country level as to what exactly is the impact of climate change on children.

There are campaigns in schools (together with classes of ecology and environmental protection) on climate change and its effects, but overall children believe that Romania is less responsible in this than many of the Western countries.

Child participation

Child participation is encouraged to a certain extent, but in many instances, it remains just a box that needs to be ticked within a programme or an official initiative. A delegation of children did participate in the drafting of the new Child Protection Strategy, but for the National Action Plan of the Child Guarantee (an initiative that would certainly benefit from

the input of children) there were none invited – at least to HHC – Romania's knowledge.

There are national and local organisations of children and youngsters (including young care-leavers), that are formally registered and could constitute a valuable partner for dialogue, but in many instances, they are not acknowledged.

Poverty and Social Exclusion – Experiences of children, families, and communities

Child poverty in Romania

Romania has a total child population of 3.7 million, 41.5% of which live at risk of poverty and social exclusion as of 2022. That amounts to more than 1.5 million children in need in Romania. The rate of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion has slightly decreased with 0.2% since 2021. Overall however, the percentage has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of age categories, children between

the age of 12-15 have the highest deprivation rate, affecting over 50% of the children of this age.

According to Hopes and Homes for Children (HHC) – Romania, there are a few vulnerable groups of children, each one with specific issues; however, there are a series of challenges that cascade into others. This includes children in old-type institutions, children in deprived families, and young care-leavers as the groups that need to be prioritised when it comes to targeted actions.

For instance, children from families in deprived situations cannot have their basic needs covered due to the rising cost of living and high rates of inflation. These children are at risk of school abandonment, particularly children living in rural areas, where they can start contributing to the family income by being engaged in fieldwork. Furthermore, children living in informal settlements do not have equal access to health services and education.

The support packages provided by the government are effective to a certain degree, but they do not remove the vulnerability situation, they only address its effects. While there are local initiatives and programmes for this category, there is no strategy or national plan to address their needs.

Additionally, initiatives to hastily close old-type institutions add extra vulnerability for children, as they need to be properly prepared for their transition into alternative, family-type services or into their families, while the youngsters need preparation to transition into independent living.

HHC – Romania shares that there is a lack of state-provided affordable accommodation for young care leavers, as there are still pre-conceived ideas regarding these youngsters at the level of some communities. Since the end of 2022, there is a National Housing Strategy, which considers these young care leavers as a vulnerable category, but time is still needed for the strategy to take effects.

To help tackle child poverty and social exclusion, the Romanian government should prioritise setting up a national approach to consistent interventions for care leavers that includes preparing the youngsters for their transition into independent life. In addition, there is an immediate need to implement the national prevention programme.

A recent promising practice is HHC – Romania’s long-standing national prevention programme, in cooperation with the local and county authorities in Romania. Over 37,000 children were supported to remain with their families, in more than 27 counties across the country. The needs of families are assessed, and the corresponding intervention is put in place to avoid redundancies in allocating resources or targeting other areas, where families do not need support. The sustainability of the interventions is ensured

by involving the authorities in carrying out the assessments and involving local governments in carrying out the monitoring of the families.



The European Child Guarantee

Romania’s National Action Plan

2023 marked the third year of the European Child Guarantee’s implementation, and two years since Member States were requested to submit their National Action Plans (NAPs) to outline how they would address child poverty at national level.

The National Action Plan of Romania was published on the European Commission website in November 2023.¹ During an event organised in Bucharest on December 6th, 2022, civil society were consultant on a draft. Further analysis will be carried out to identify to what extent the suggested amendments made by Hope and Homes for Children – Romania have been incorporated.

European Semester 2023 – Country reports and recommendations

Overview of the Country Report: identification of the children in need

This year’s European Semester Country Report for Romania outlines vulnerable groups of children that should be targeted by national policymakers, namely children living in poverty and social exclusion, children in their early years of development, and children abandoning school.

Hope and Homes for Children – Romania was not involved in the Semester Process 2023.

Regarding the importance of investing in children, HHC – Romania welcomed inclusion of the call for 150-day centres for children as part of wider investments made to help prevent family separation and

¹ The lists of Child Guarantee National Coordinators and National Action Plans, where published, are available at the bottom of [this page](#).

support children from vulnerable communities. The snapshot that the report presents in terms of poverty rate in Romania has accurately captured the situation for children. HHC – Romania are concerned that the measures listed in the country report will take time to be implemented and make a real impact for children.

Needs analysis: alignment at country-level

The recommendations do not mention children in particular, but they do mention vulnerable households, presumably including children, which need to be protected from further increases in energy prices.

As there is no explicit mention of children, HHC – Romania cannot determine whether the recommendations respect children's rights. However, the recommendations do aim to ensure an adequate standard of living for families, in line with Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that: 'States

Parties recognise the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'.



Eurochild advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policymaking. We are a network of organisations working with and for children throughout Europe, striving for a society that respects the rights of children. We influence policies, build internal capacities, facilitate mutual learning and exchange practice and research. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of all our work.



Eurochild

Putting children at
the heart of Europe

info@eurochild.org - www.eurochild.org

Avenue des Arts 7/8 1210 Brussels, Belgium

+32 2 511 7083

For more information, contact:

Dr Ally Dunhill

Eurochild Director of Policy,

Advocacy and Communications

Ally.Dunhill@eurochild.org