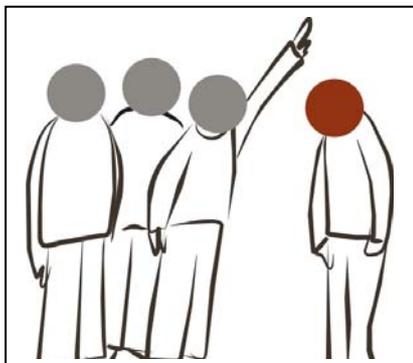


New Anti-Discrimination Caravan Marks the European Year of Equal Opportunities



Bucharest June 19, 2007. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) marked the European Year of Equal Opportunities with a **Caravan for Information and Training on Anti-Discrimination** organized in partnership with the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) and Pro Democracy Association Focsani.

According to a new Eurobarometer survey on discrimination and inequality in Europe, the rampant discrimination in Romania hampering the quality of life especially of Roma, women, people with disabilities or other sexual orientation, must be tackled not only through policy, but also through practical programmes. The study deals with the six legally prohibited forms of discrimination in the EU (sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation).

“Legislation alone will never be sufficient to reduce discrimination,” said Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in her opening statement. “We must all take action in order to enhance awareness of rights and mobilize a critical mass of people to achieve progress in non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all.”

Csaba Asztalos, President of CNCD saluted the partnership with UNDP and said that “Romania has made progress by recognizing and treating the problem of discrimination with honesty, but much more needs to be done.”



L to R: Gruia Bumbu, Monica Tatoi, Soknan Han Jung (speaking), Csaba Asztalos and Victor Giosan.



Florin Lupescu, people with disabilities' rights activist addressing the panel.

The key note speakers invited to present their views and experience on discrimination were Gruia Bumbu, President of the National Authority for Roma, Monica Tatoi, women's rights activist, Victor Giosan, State Secretary of the General Secretariat of the Government, and Florin Lupescu, people with disabilities' rights activist.

In a moving speech, Lupescu reminded the audience that “discrimination not only means negative actions towards the rights of a certain group, but also neglect. At a time when Romania is receiving big inflows of capital to rebuild its infrastructure there is no attention paid to the people with disabilities. These people can't get inside the newly acquired buses, or on the newly built sidewalks, and they can't even get inside judicial courts, turning this physical inconvenience into a political problem.”

Monica Tatoi said that gender discrimination often starts at home, “many working women suffer domestic violence and prejudice by husbands who are earning less money and can't get used to respecting their spouse as an equal decision maker.”

During the debate that followed, on behalf of the Roma Social Democrat Party, Ilie Dinca welcomed the progress of Roma rights achieved with substantial help from UNDP Romania and stressed the fact that “across the country, the Roma population is in a dire need of microcredit, job creation and programmes directed at economic empowerment, which is key to ending the historical discrimination against them.”

The project will support a caravan that will raise awareness about various forms of discrimination as well as about the legal framework and modalities of combating them. It will travel to the North-East, South-East and South-West development regions selected by CNCD for the prevalence of civil society signals and discrimination petitions, most of which were ethnic-based. A publication on racial and ethnic discrimination is also envisaged under this project.