

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 29 August 2017

Romanian government neglects persons with disabilities' employment rights to meet EU fiscal obligations

In view of meeting the EU's strict fiscal obligations, the Romanian government has launched an emergency decree which risks bankrupting hundreds of social economy enterprises, workshops and additional social services who provide essential work-related opportunities for persons with disabilities. EASPD calls on the Romanian government to revise this decree and delay its entry into force. Given the European Commission's priority of tackling the high levels of unemployment for persons with disabilities (Annual Growth Survey 2017), EASPD also calls on the European Commission to request such revision from the Romanian authorities.

On August 4th 2017, the Romanian government adopted an [emergency decree \(60/2017\)](#) that included several positive social protection measures for persons with disabilities. It also enacted a decision which will have very negative consequences for the jobs of an estimated 2,000 persons with severe disabilities. The decree removes the option for companies to compensate shortcomings in complying with Romania's current quota law for employment for persons with disabilities by buying products from protective employment units. The only remaining options for companies are thus to either abide by the quota rules or pay a significant fine to the Public Authorities. The decree does not mention if the Public Authorities would re-distribute the additional income from the fines towards supporting the employment of persons with disabilities.

It is widely understood that the Romanian government implemented such a decree to help fall in line with the European Union's fiscal rules, namely the Stability and Growth Pact. Whilst the emergency decree may increase public income due to an increase in the payment of fines by companies, it is expected that it will significantly hinder employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. **The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) questions if it is a fair policy to raise public income to the detriment of persons with disabilities and their labour market participation.**

The decree, enacted and implemented in the current way, with less than a month for organisations to adjust, **risks the jobs and livelihood of an estimated 2000 persons with disabilities and threatens the existence of 740 employment and work services for persons with disabilities.** This position is shared by Romanian disabled persons' organisations and service providers, who were also not consulted in the

development of the decree.

EASPD calls on the Romanian Government to delay the implementation of the decree and to consult with relevant civil society organisations in order to craft solutions that protect the rights and income of persons with disabilities.

The European Commission highlighted the lack of equal opportunities in the labour market for persons with disabilities as a priority in their [Annual Growth Survey 2017](#). Their [Country Specific Recommendations to Romania](#) also raise the issue that “employment and activity rates for (...) people with disabilities (...) in particular are well below the EU average” and that “the risk of poverty or social exclusion has been very high, in particular for (...) people with disabilities”.

Given the negative impact the emergency decree will have on the employment and income status of persons with disabilities in Romania, EASPD calls on the European Commission to negotiate with the Romanian authorities to revise and delay the implementation of the said decree and -if needed- to provide sufficient flexibility in view of enabling Romania to meet the Stability and Growth Pact’s obligations.

Mr Jim Crowe, EASPD President, states that *“while we understand the Romanian government’s need to comply with the Stability and Growth pact, **we consider that this must not be done at the expense of society’s most disadvantaged citizens, in particular through unnecessary cuts to organisations providing employment support to them.**”*

Mr Luk Zelderloo, Secretary General EASPD, believes that “This is absolutely not the correct way of fostering inclusive growth or complying with the Stability and Growth Pact. **We strongly urge the Commission to adequately assess these developments in Romania and to take action in view of helping to increase the employment of persons with disabilities.**”

Related documents

- [New York times article: Romania: Protest Slams Decree on Jobs for Disabled People](#)
- [EASPD Press Release: European Commission to Member States: invest in inclusive labour markets! \(2016\)](#)
- [Text of the Emergency Decree \(in Romanian\)](#)

Note to editors

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit European umbrella organization, established in 1996, and currently representing over 12,000 social and health services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates for effective and high-quality disability-related services in the field of education, employment and individualised support, in line with the UN CRPD principles, which could bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities, but to society as a whole.

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