

THE NECESSITY FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN THE SOCIAL POLICIES IN ROMANIA

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This paper is arguing in favor of re-orientation of the social policy in Romania. Currently, the social policy system is strongly under-financed. Consequently, it is extremely, important to change to a social policy that is appropriately financed and that can allow a proper utilization of both society's general development potential and population's support for the respective social policy. Adequate financial resources and high quality management of social domain would contribute to catching-up with European Union countries which are far ahead of Romania in this respect.

In the following paper I revert once more to a subject that I approached many times, next to many other authors, in the attempt to contribute to the development of a system of social policies in Romania that is in agreement with the overall changes of the society and with the systems functioning both in the European Union Member states and in other states (I. Mărginean, 2004a). Actually, this is about making use of the development potential of a properly articulated social policy and about developing in Romania a EU compatible social system (pattern) having the quality of life of the population as fundamental mark, expressed by a set of objective and subjective social indicators (I. Mărginean, 2004b).

The reason I want to revert to this subject is because, although during the past 15 years Romania has adopted several social policy-related legal provisions specific to the market economy that added to the already existing social insurance components (mainly represented by the unemployment benefits and by the minimal wage), as well as other regulations of social protection (granted minimal income, various social benefits for the family, for the persons with disabilities, etc.), a system of social policies directed towards economic and social development and towards a high level of the quality of life of the population specific to a mature welfare state has yet to be established. On the other hand, the recent (January 1st, 2005) introduction of the single taxation level (16%) for the income and profit brings in new elements relevant to the projection of changes in the sphere of social policies.

As shown by the past experience of several older or newer EU member states, the social policy may fulfil several essential functions in the modern society such as economic and social development, social integration and inclusion, support for the disfavoured categories of population, improvement of the conditions of living and, on a more general scale, of the quality of life of the