

Recommendations of Romanian NGOs active in the field of Health to the Romanian Government, adopted by participants at the seminar

**‘Civil Society Participation of Romanian Civil Society
In the European Construction Process:
Meeting between the International NGO (INGO) Conference of the Council of
Europe and Romanian NGOs’**

Bucharest, 4-6 May 2006

On 6 May 2006 the following Recommendations aimed at the improvement of the quality of health care for all people in Romania was adopted by the participants at the seminar:

1. NGOs Speaking With One Voice

The NGOs highlight the need for unity and joint forces. They agreed on common ground which brings the Romanian NGOs and the INGO community together on the basis of the primacy of human rights, a patient centred health care system, partnership and transparency.

With a view to implementing a human rights-based approach to health care provision, the NGOs agreed to take the debate on health and human rights forward by creating an informal Forum of Health NGOs in Romania. The aim of the Forum is to share information and best practices, to work together, to be open to each other, to find common ground and to explore possibilities on how to strengthen the participation of NGOs as part of civil society involvement in the decision-making process.

Five priorities areas have already been identified: universal access to care/community care, elderly care, palliative care/cancer care, maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS.

2. Human Rights

The signatories urge the Romanian Government to respect International and National Human Rights legislation¹ and, in particular, call on the Government to enforce the existing law ‘46/2003’ on Patient Rights.

This entails providing financial resources and concrete guidelines on how to apply a patient-centred approach in the public and private health care system. A sound enforcement mechanism and monitoring system should be introduced to ensure that the

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- ¹ Relevant treaties and articles on the right to health: Art. 25 Universal Declaration on Human Rights; Art. 12 ICESCR General Comment No. 14; Art. 12 CEDAW - General Recommendation No. 24; Art. 24 CRC. The reports on the Right to Health, Mr Paul Hunt UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. European Social Charter – Art 11 on the Right to Health Protection, European Charter on Fundamental Rights: Right to Health Care

human rights and safety of patients^{2 3 4} will be respected. Socio-economic barriers to health care must be removed. Discrimination in the access to health care is unacceptable. Denial of essential health care services is a serious breach of human rights and can be tantamount to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and in some cases result in death.

Every health care user has the right to **dignity, information, access to services, choice, safety, privacy, confidentiality, comfort, continuity and opinion.**

The signatories urge the Romanian Government to monitor the enforcement of the ethical codes of conduct of health care providers, to ensure that human rights are respected also in service delivery and to intervene in case of violations.

3. Partnership

The signatories urge the Romanian Government to emphasise the following key principles in health policy making to ensure democracy, good governance, accountability and the rule of law:

- **A Stakeholder Approach⁵:** Stakeholders (beneficiaries, patient groups, civil society organisations, service and health care providers) should be involved in every stage of the decision-making process: this means the planning, the drafting, the implementation and the evaluation of health policies.
- **Inclusion of key stakeholders in Governance of the Health System e.g. in Hospital management and governing bodies.**
- **Financial Transparency:** The tax payer needs to be informed on how and why public funds are allocated. Equal access to information about funding possibilities must be granted. A fair, open and legal tendering system must be applied immediately. The use of these public funds must be evaluated and civil society must be involved in the development of a system to ensure greater transparency.

² European Commission DG Sanco High Level Group, workgroup Patient Safety

³ EU Summit Luxembourg and UK EU Presidency on Patient Safety – Luxembourg Declaration Nov 2005

⁴ Council of Europe Recommendations on Patient Safety

⁵ Council of Europe INGO Health Grouping Strategic Plan 2006-2012 and Action Plan 2006-2008