

Reflection on the Roma Minority and Drug Issues

26 Dicembre 2019

Gabriel Micu, Mihaela Tomita

Abstract

The theme of national minorities emerged with the recognition of the nations after the First World War. In the multitude of states, heterogeneous forms of organization, different ways of forming ethnic communities on a national territory, the Roma/Gypsy minority is identified as a priority by an unwritten culture, governed by traditions and customs. This particularity makes all the states in which such minorities are located to face the same main problem: their integration into the national legal and institutional system. The findings of the research on this minority have revealed that regardless of the nation they belong to, the Gypsies have primary social demands, being a vulnerable category of any society. As drug trafficking and drug use are mainly recruited vulnerable people, many networks of such traffickers are coordinated or made up of persons belonging to Roma minorities. This study aims to highlight the causes for which the Roma become some of the major dealers and drug users.

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction
2. The concept of vulnerability
3. Roma as a vulnerable group
4. Conclusions

1. Introduction

Official statistics in Romania avoided giving a detailed account of the ethnicity of drug users and traffickers in order not to discriminate or facilitate the creation of labels for persons belonging to certain ethnic groups. Any clarifying discussion to determine the percentage of Roma victims of drug consumption and trafficking reveals that it is alarmingly high, and they are de facto the main players on the drug market. **This is not without difficulty, irrespective of the sources of information, whether governmental, such as the National Anti-drug Agency or non-governmental, as is the case with NGOs involved in their work on this issue.**

It is no coincidence that most drug users with desperate limit medical conditions belongs to the Roma ethnic group, which is the largest ethnic minority in Europe. Their relationship with other communities, regardless of the European state they are in, is similar. They are regarded as second-ranked citizens since leaving India and migrated to Europe during the middle Ages, constituting in communities segregated by the majority population or other national minorities.

Roma have their own unconventional lifestyle. Most of them have poorly paid jobs and are dishonorable for the majority population, such as collecting old beasts, drinking beer or refreshments, petting, clothing, etc. The exceptions confirm, even in this case, the rule that there are Roma people who become celebrities, businessmen and members of the royal houses, parliamentarians or public servants Whatever subject we want to look at, housing, education, health, job satisfaction, they are disadvantaged, becoming the most vulnerable social blanket of any community in Europe and consequently the first to fall victims of occupations such as prostitution, trafficking in human beings, drug consumption and trafficking [1].

Sociological and medical studies have highlighted that the overwhelming majority of drug users and drug traffickers are vulnerable, so it is almost possible to use the term equivalence between vulnerability and drug users.

2. The concept of vulnerability

There is currently no unanimously accepted definition of vulnerable groups, with no consensus on groups that could be treated as vulnerable. This category included a wider variety of people, such as children, the elderly, those with disabilities, and low-skilled workers.

In general, socio-demographic indicators such as **gender, age, education, occupation, ethnicity** is used to identify people belonging to vulnerable groups. In the same category of vulnerable people, those who, for reasons independent of their will, become vulnerable due to macrosocial events such as earthquakes, floods, accidents, wars, economic crises.

The term vulnerability is most commonly used in the sense of weakness, lack of defense, lack of means, and vulnerable groups are viewed as those groups that are not supported, often in poverty, who are unable to is faced with problems, unable to cope with difficulties, who cannot defend themselves or take advantage of opportunities. This category may include disabled people, abandoned children, elderly people, single parent families, ethnic minorities.

In this sense, vulnerability is rather a permanent problem state [1].

An alternative variant of the concept of vulnerability is **exposure to risks that can lead to a well-being level below the threshold of what the society considers to be acceptable or desirable.**

Looking at this prism, vulnerable groups include women in maternity, labor market beginners, jobseekers, and so on. In this sense, the vulnerability appears to be related to an event, an intervention, or the failure of a strategy, constituting rather a passenger episode, a transient state.

In the present study we will include in the term vulnerable both disadvantaged groups, defenseless, without any means, facing difficulties and exploiting opportunities, as well as those risk groups, subjected rather to external factors that they failed to cope with.

In Romania, national legislation identifies a series of terms targeting vulnerable groups that include inclusion or social exclusion, such as marginalized people, disadvantaged people, socially excluded people or those at risk of social exclusion, vulnerable persons.

For example, in **GEO no. 137/2000** regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, the disadvantaged category appears as defined in art. 4 as “that category of people either who are in a position of inequality with respect to most citizens because of identity differences from the majority, or face a rejection or marginalization behavior” [2].

Another definition can be found in **Law no. 116/2002** on the prevention and combating of social marginalization where marginalized persons are defined in art. 3 as those who have a “peripheral, isolation social position, with limited access to the economic, political, educational and communicative resources of the community, manifested by the absence of a minimum of social conditions of life”.

At the level of the European Union, there is no formal definition of vulnerable groups, this term being most often used in the official documents of the European Forum in relation to the concept of social inclusion. This, in terms of European experts, is equivalent to giving individuals access to the opportunities and resources needed to be able to participate without restriction in the economic, social and cultural life of their community, to have a minimum standard of living, considered as normal and desirable in the society in which they live.

Promoting equality and social inclusion requires efforts to ensure that all individuals, including vulnerable groups, can play an active role in the workplace and society and benefit from equal opportunities in this respect [3].

At European Union level, there are many legislative documents that protect vulnerable groups, implicitly or explicitly, including the Racial Equality Directive, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of Oriental or racial origin both at work and in other spheres of life, such as access to goods and services. At European Union level, vulnerable groups include different categories of people such as the elderly, children and young people, those with disabilities, large and single-parent families, immigrants, ethnic minority people with a particular interest in the Roma minority, who is currently the largest ethnic minority in Europe, accounting for about 10-12 million Roma.

For the identification of vulnerable groups, the comparative method is used, using as reference most of the population as having more difficult living conditions, such as lack of housing or poor housing, unemployment, low education, lack of income.

Indicators used at European Union level to identify vulnerable groups are the same as those used for social inclusion, such as relative poverty rate, material deprivation, long-term unemployment rate, share of people living in households where there are no hired members, the share of the population at low education level, early school leaving, life expectancy at birth, etc.

3. Roma as a vulnerable group

The vulnerability of the Roma population is recognized at European level, being viewed through the perspective of social inclusion. The Roma population is considered a vulnerable group, viewed in terms relative to the population as a whole, on all levels of their existence, such as living standards, education, employment, housing, social participation, health. For example, in the framework of the European Strategy 2020 “A Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth and Employment”, we come across indicators that outline vulnerable groups, among which the share of the poor.

Poverty can be not only a cause of increased vulnerability, but also a result of the vulnerable situation. In this sense, the probability of a person who is in a state of poverty to have a low education system is extremely high, with the fallacy that the same likelihood can be encountered for the same person, in the absence of a job or a temporary, poorly paid occupation, as well as poor health, etc.

A study carried out by the Romanian Ministry of Labor in 2010 shows that regardless of the poverty dimension among the population, the profile of the poor and therefore vulnerable is constant, among others, according to ethnicity, and the Roma face a 6 or larger than the population.

Contrary to the European Union's efforts to promote social inclusion in the past two decades, the Roma continue to face a problematic situation, faced with the phenomenon of discrimination, even though the public policies adopted by the European Parliament in 2006 have positive effects. According to the European Union Poll on Discrimination[1] and Discrimination in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, Roma in Romania are among the least discriminated against in Europe [4].

According to the results of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey, only one in four Roma in Romania reported discriminatory events in the investigation year, compared to over 50%, the percentage established for each of the other countries in which the survey was conducted. **According to these results, a hierarchy can be established.** Thus, the first place as discrimination is the "private services", the second discrimination from the medical pearl and third place the discriminatory actions related to the workplace [4]. On the opposite side, the Roma felt less discriminated against by education, social assistance or housing issues.

With all the positive signals, **the Roma in our country have a socially disadvantaged profile, with an extremely low level of education** (10% illiterate), **with a very vulnerable occupational situation** (the Roma in Romania occupying the smallest share in the workplaces 17% of them being spatially segregated 66% of Roma interviewed in Romania live in well-defined spatial communities). The high levels of spatial segregation are an indication of the isolation of Roma communities from the dominant society, which is a de facto high discrimination, but which on another level is perceived as low discrimination, the contact with the dominant society being low [5].

Regarding the poverty indicator, which, as mentioned, is one of the most relevant in identifying the vulnerability of the ugly group, the study reveals that the Roma poverty rate is much higher than the population, even compared to other national minorities. The conclusion is that about one in three Roma are poor.

The relative homogeneity of the problems faced by the European states regarding the social inclusion of Roma at European level already exists in the European Platform for Social Inclusion of Roma, launched in April 2009, being developed in the context of a strengthened cooperation framework, under conditions volunteering, between the European institutions, the Member States and the representatives of the Roma. The purpose of this platform is to create the institutional framework for the skid of ideas and good practices, among the relevant actors in this field, in the field of social inclusion.

The common principles underpinning this platform are the following: **constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies, intercultural approach, goal of integration into traditional society, gender-sensitive, experience-based transfer of policies, use of community tools, involvement of local and regional authorities, involvement of civil society, active participation of Roma.** In this framework, several legislative documents were elaborated referring to the situation of the Roma as a vulnerable group.

At European level there is a political commitment by the governments of nine Central and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia), known as the Decade of Roma Inclusion. One of the main objectives targeted by these states is to find best practices for the inclusion of the Roma in the labor market, which is also an important direction in the draft of the 2011-2020 Strategy, which aims to stimulate employment work in less developed regions and attractiveness for investment.

4. Conclusions

These elements demonstrate the concern not only of the Romanian authorities but also of many other governments for finding ways of social inclusion of the Roma, which have as a direct consequence the diminishing of the poverty rate and implicitly a more active participation in the social life of the community and, obviously, diminishing the vulnerability of Roma populations. This in turn leads to a decrease in the percentage of people involved in drug and even drug trafficking.

[1] European Union Mitigation and Discrimination Survey – EU-MIDS, 2009, conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Contributo selezionato da Filodiritto tra quelli pubblicati nei Proceedings “7th SPECTO 2018”
[Per acquistare i Proceedings clicca qui.](#)

Contribution selected by Filodiritto among those published in the Proceedings “7th SPECTO 2018”
To buy the Proceedings [click here.](#)

REFERENCES

1. Delors, J. (1996). *L'éducation: un trésor est caché dedans. Rapport à l'UNESCO de la Commission Internationale pour l'éducation du vingt et unième siècle*, Paris, Editions Odile Jacob.
2. Meunier, O. (2007). *Approches interculturelles en éducation. Etude comparative internationale*, Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, Lyon.

3. European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2010 – What social policy can do for you.
4. Nedelcu, A.(2008). *Fundamentele educa?iei interculturale*, Editura Polirom, Ia?i.
5. Dumini?, G., Ivasiuc, A.(2010). *O ?coal? pentru to?i? Accesul copiilor romi la o educa?ie de calitate*, Ed. Vanemonde, Bucure?ti.

TAG: *Rom, drug trafficking, proceedings*

Avvertenza

La pubblicazione di contributi, approfondimenti, articoli e in genere di tutte le opere dottrinarie e di commento (ivi comprese le news) presenti su Filodiritto è stata concessa (e richiesta) dai rispettivi autori, titolari di tutti i diritti morali e patrimoniali ai sensi della legge sul diritto d'autore e sui diritti connessi (Legge 633/1941). La riproduzione ed ogni altra forma di diffusione al pubblico delle predette opere (anche in parte), in difetto di autorizzazione dell'autore, è punita a norma degli articoli 171, 171-bis, 171-ter, 174-bis e 174-ter della menzionata Legge 633/1941. È consentito scaricare, prendere visione, estrarre copia o stampare i documenti pubblicati su Filodiritto nella sezione Dottrina per ragioni esclusivamente personali, a scopo informativo-culturale e non commerciale, esclusa ogni modifica o alterazione. Sono parimenti consentite le citazioni a titolo di cronaca, studio, critica o recensione, purché accompagnate dal nome dell'autore dell'articolo e dall'indicazione della fonte, ad esempio: Luca Martini, La discrezionalità del sanitario nella qualificazione di reato perseguibile d'ufficio ai fini dell'obbligo di referto ex. art 365 cod. pen., in "Filodiritto" (<https://www.filodiritto.com>), con relativo collegamento ipertestuale. Se l'autore non è altrimenti indicato i diritti sono di Inforomatica S.r.l. e la riproduzione è vietata senza il consenso esplicito della stessa. È sempre gradita la comunicazione del testo, telematico o cartaceo, ove è avvenuta la citazione.