

*Association of Catholic Families "Vladimir Ghika" PRO VITA Association - Bucharest Branch*

## 50 PROPOSED MEASURES CONCERNING FAMILY POLICIES IN ROMANIA

**General objective:** For Romania to have as many and as large families as possible, for its citizens to experience longevity, by providing their members with an ideal environment for development, perfect from multiple points of view: economic, social, physical and psychological protection, affective; and the Romanian nation to endure and experience continuity and demographic, economic, social and cultural development.

**Current stage objective:** The completion and adaptation of existing family law and the creation of institutions and organizations, necessary to achieve the general objective, which are going to support the accomplishment of the functions of the family.

### I. INSTITUTIONS FOR FAMILY

1. Establishing of a dedicated department - State Secretariat for Families (SSfF) - in the Ministry of Labor, which is going to collaborate with: the state's specialized institutions, religious denominations, familial associations, other non-profit organizations, media, in order to support and protect the family by:

- organizing and coordinating statistical, demographic, sociological and psychosocial studies on the family, in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics, the Research Institute for Quality of Life, the Romanian Academy and other institutions and centers of social research, including academic centers;
- elaborating public family policies, based on these studies;
- creating a coherent middle and long term plan of demographic recovery in Romania;
- organizing an Annual Convention on Families.

2. The creation of an Institute of Family Studies/ Institute for Families (IFS), based on the collaboration between the state institutions and non-governmental structures. The involvement and collaboration with IFS and SSfF in studies, polls, surveys, sociological instruments of scientific structures coordinated by authorities (the Romanian Academy, research institutes, universities, etc.).

3. The creation of a permanent Commission for Family Issues in the Romanian Parliament, whose aim should be the analysis, revision and restoration of the legislative provisions on family.

## **II. FAMILY CULTURE**

4. State - Families Associations partnership campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of family and marriage, maternity and paternity (e.g. "Marriage Week"; Children's Day activities), as well as to give information concerning the family rights in Romania.

5. Measures and counseling on the assumption of the familial roles, according to age and sex, to counter parents' lack of responsibility, spousal alienation and the precocious sexualization of the children. The modification, meaning tightening up, of the laws regarding pornography and publicity on a). minor children's protection, b). prohibiting passive advertising of sexual services, c). removing the indecent advertising on common products and services.

6. Increasing the severity of the punishments in the cases of aggression against the pregnant woman; acknowledging the unborn child as a distinct victim in cases of domestic violence.

7. The elimination of public subsidies for elective abortion and methods of contraception and channeling these funds towards maternal health services.

8. Reinstating the penalty for infanticide immediately after birth as decreed in the previous Criminal Code.

## **III. HOUSES FOR FAMILIES**

9. The continuation of the "First Home" („Prima casă”) program, and the addition of the renting support option for young families ("First Rental").

10. The construction of houses, funded by the local administrations, in order to rent them to young families for a period of maximum 10 years, with the possibility of acquisition by the tenants.

11. The elaboration, in a State - Families Associations partnership, of a plan for the efficient construction and usage of social homes, designed for families with insufficient resources (without shelter, families that have handicapped persons among their members, etc.); including the restoration of abandoned houses.

#### **IV. MEASURES FOR IMPROVING BIRTH RATE AND FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RECOVERY**

12. A substantial sum, given for the birth of the second and each subsequent child, selecting from the following options: a). a lifetime annuity for the mother, b). construction or restoration of a family house, or c). as a university scholarship for all children born after the birth of the first child.

13. The possibility of reducing the retirement age by two years per each child, for mothers who give birth to at least three children.

14. The reduction to 5% of the VAT for hygiene and care products, necessary for children until they reach three years after birth (e.g. diapers, clothes and footwear for children, hygiene products, children's furniture - swing, chair, bed and car seat).

15. The extension of the maternity leave for child raising, up to three years after birth, respectively five years after birth for children with any type of handicap.

16. Starting a program of support for the pregnant woman and the young mother in need, which would offer: financial support, psychosocial, medical and juridical counseling during pregnancy and the first year of the child's extrauterine life, by means of a collaboration between SSfF and the non-governmental organizations. Providing stipends to pregnant women, after 14 weeks of pregnancy, to assist with the special needs that arise during pregnancy.

17. Support for specialized caretakers for children, including professional nanny services.

18. Encouraging domestic adoptions (by Romanian citizens and families) through public campaigns of awareness, active identifying of the parents with adoption potential and by streamlining the adoption procedures.

19. Assist infertile couples in the matters of adoption, or help them cure infertility by means of natural or ethic procreative technologies.

20. Granting support, consisting of financial stimuli, for instance reintegration subsidies, legal, economic, professional, and psychosocial counseling for the return of the young Romanian families that have emigrated.

21. Encouraging the settlement and development in the rural area of young family communities, stimulating the involvement of these families in collective medium-term projects (e.g. zootechnical farms, orchards, vineyards, etc.) and facilitating the access of their products to urban markets. By funding additional projects, beside these functional communities, the concept can be disseminated among those who wish to create new communities.

## **V. THE HARMONIZATION BETWEEN THE FAMILY LIFE AND CAREER**

22. Encouraging employment contracts with flexible working hours and telework for parents.

23. Increasing the number of free days for fathers when a child is born.

24. Creating and developing Family Points, namely specially organized locations, which to provide varied, flexible, dedicated and personalized services to families, such as: the possibility for the parents to leave the child to authorized caretakers for short periods, so that they can take care of necessary and urgent matters.

25. Ensuring an ideal environment at work for the employee's family. Supporting the employers that apply these measures, following the facility model, which is offered to the companies that operate in disadvantaged areas.

26. Stimulating the employment of parents who come from numerous families, by guaranteeing subsidies/facilities to the employers, following the facility model, which is offered to the companies that operate in disadvantaged areas.

## **VI. ELDER'S PROTECTION**

27. Encouraging and promoting programs which support activities for elders/pensioners in families, communities or other locations, following the experience in their domain. Completing and introducing the national strategy of the Ministry of Labor, with programs of support for the migration of elders to similar work places in other places or countries of the European Union.

28. The stimulation of social entrepreneurship for the construction/administration of "elder shelters", to complete the former nursing homes.

29. Support for nursing services for elders at home, services done by the family, and not only, funded from the town halls' budget. Projects for attendance and involvement of the elders.

30. Holiday vouchers for families, so that more families can afford an annual holiday with their relatives, in Romania.

## **VII. MARRIAGE STABILITY AND CHILDREN'S PROTECTION**

31. Encouraging family counseling in order to strengthen couple relationships and to prevent divorce.
32. The obligation of the spouses who intend to divorce, in the case where they have dependent children, to have a plan of family counseling/mediation and a funding plan for the education of their children, agreed to and signed by both parents.
33. The extension on a national level, in a State-Family Associations partnership regime, of "Parents' School" type programs.
34. Financial education for the families, by improving ACP's strategy regarding the financial education 2012-2017.
35. Eliminating the possibility for minors to obtain an abortion and "family planning" services without parental consent.
36. Raising the age of sexual consent to 16/18 years.
37. Children's protection from abuses, by increasing criminal penalties in cases of sexual abuse against children.

## **VIII. IMPLEMENTING THE PARENTS' RIGHT TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN VALUES**

38. The participation of Parents' Associations in all stages of the institutionalized decision making process, of establishment of the school syllabi and of the content of the manuals regarding moral education (religious education, health and family life education, etc.).
39. The legalization of homeschooling, based on the North-American example.
40. A return to the former minimum compulsory school age of 7.

## **IX. FINANCIAL MEASURES TO AID THE FAMILY**

41. The reduction of the income and property tax paid by married couples, for their first property.

42. Doubling the current income tax personal exemption for dependents. The continuation of the program with progressive reductions of income taxes for persons with dependent children in their care.
43. Encouraging the social "micro"- and familial economic initiatives (family owned companies) by reducing or completely eliminating taxation on such initiatives.
44. An inclusion in the personal tax exemption of the services and basic goods expenses, destined for the upbringing and education of preschool children.
45. A raise to 5% of the income tax amount that can be transferred from individuals to non-profit legal entities which offer various activities for children, such as sports, educational, cultural, etc.
46. The annual actualization of every financial support, according to the minimum wage.
47. Pursuing the gradual equalization of the benefits granted to the Romania's families (currently 1,32% of the GDP) with the European average (currently 2,2% of the GDP).

## **X. FAMILIAL HEALTH MEASURES**

48. The completion, on an emergency basis, of family medical networks to offer the whole population real access to the medical services.
49. The implementation of the "telemedicine" project in the family medical network, which can offer specialized diagnosis and treatment to patients who do not have direct access to hospitals.
50. Ensuring practical and real-time investigations (including imagistic) and treatments for in-time diagnosis and prevention of breast and uterine cancer and child obesity.