



## ENHANCING THE EQUITY OF EDUCATION THROUGH PREVENTING AND COMBATING SCHOOL SEGREGATION

### Background

The Ministry of Education has adopted in December 2016 the Order of the Minister of Education No. 6134 of 21st of December 2016 on Prohibiting School Segregation in Pre-university Education School Units. Thus, the legal framework on school desegregation was revised and expanded to include 5 criteria of school segregation: 1) ethnicity, 2) disability, 3) family socio-economic status (SES), 4) students' school performance, and 5) area of residence.

Although the Order No. 6134/2016 has been adopted, it has not been enforced yet (its entry into force is conditioned by the adoption of two methodologies: the school segregation monitoring methodology and the methodology for the prevention and intervention in cases of school segregation). Although the school segregation monitoring methodology was adopted by MoE in December 2019, the other methodology is not yet finalized, and the old Order of the Minister of Education No. 1540/2007 on Prohibiting School Segregation of Roma Children is still in effect.

There is no official data at national or sub-national level on the school segregation on the criteria of disability, SES of families, school performance or area of residence of students, but only anecdotic evidence of school segregation revealed by the mass-media on various criteria.

However, ad-hoc data is available on Roma children school segregation. The Regional Roma Survey data (2011) showed that Romania had the second highest share of children attending 'all' or 'nearly all' Roma kindergartens (46%), after Slovakia (48%), indicating a high degree of segregation in early education. A UNICEF study reported in 2012 that at the level of preschool education, almost one third of Roma children learn in classes where the ethnicity of the preschoolers is predominantly Roma, while 11.7% of Roma children learn in classes with 100% Roma children. According to the EC (2015) in Romania, 26% of Roma students learn in ethnically separate classes, and this share increased first to 29% (Education and Training Monitor, Romania 2017) and to reach a worrying 51% in 2021 (FRA 2022).

The Ministry of Education requested UNICEF technical assistance for the implementation of a consistent part of the strategic actions included in the Action Plan on School Desegregation and Improving the Quality of Education in the Pre-university Education Schools and a MoE-UNICEF Romania Cooperation Protocol on School Desegregation was signed in December 2016. The technical assistance that is provided by UNICEF to the MoE in the area of school desegregation since 2017 consists of the following 5 key strategic actions:

1. Establishing the National Commission on School Desegregation and Inclusion;
2. Development of the methodology for school segregation monitoring;
3. Development of the methodology for the prevention and intervention in cases of school segregation;
4. Testing on a sample of school units (all cycles of pre-university education) the methodology for school segregation monitoring;
5. Developing the training packages for the professionals (school principals, teachers, county school inspectors, and staff of MoE) in the education system on the new legal and policy framework on school desegregation.



In February 2019, with UNICEF assistance, MoE has adopted the Order on the Regulation of Functioning and Organization of the National Commission on School Desegregation and Inclusion (NCSDI) and in December 2019 adopted the school segregation monitoring methodology. While UNICEF support was planned for testing of the monitoring methodology in the schools of 3 pilot counties, in December 2019, the MoE has decided to launch the monitoring strategy at national level. All County School Inspectorates and selected school principals from all counties were trained by UNICEF technical assistance team on the new school segregation monitoring strategy



In January 2020, but the launch of methodology was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency/alert. School desegregation efforts did not stop though, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, MoE is currently developing the SIIR to include the indicators and data necessary to calculate the indicators for monitoring school segregation.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education, in consultation with UNICEF, decided to apply for an European Commission TSI project in order to complete the reforms needed for the entry into effect of the new legal framework on school desegregation. In 2022, The EC approved the TSI Project on school desegregation in Romania, with UNICEF as a provider of technical assistance for the Ministry of Education.

### Project intended impact and outcomes

The expected **impact** of this Project is that all children and students in pre-university education in Romania have access to quality inclusive education, where school units monitor, prevent and combat school segregation.

In addition, the Project has the following **outcomes**:



**Outcome A:** Legal and policy frameworks on school desegregation developed and revised for the Order of the Minister of Education 6134/2016 on the prohibition of school segregation in pre-university education to enter in effect.



**Outcome B:** Ministry of Education has an increased capacity to promote the equity of education at national level through monitoring, preventing, and combating school segregation.

The Project will benefit school units in preuniversity education, County School Inspectorates (CSIs), County Teachers' Training Houses (CTTHs) and the Ministry of Education, the National Commission for School Desegregation and Inclusion (NCSDI) and all students, especially the vulnerable ones.

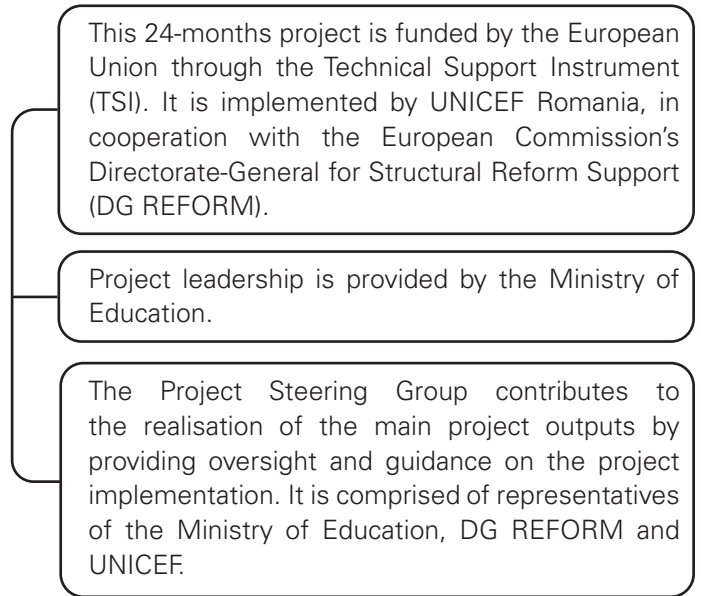


### Key Project Deliverables

The Project has the following key outputs that will contribute to the achievement of the planned outcomes:

- Methodology for monitoring school segregation field tested and adjusted, if needed;
- Methodology for the prevention of school segregation and intervention in cases of school segregation developed, field tested and adopted;
- SIIR adjusted and developed to monitor school segregation;
- Capacity of MoE, NCSDI, CSIs, CTTHs and selected school units developed;
- National strategy for school desegregation and the corresponding action-plan developed and adopted.

### Project Management Structure



The TSI project for school desegregation is supported and financed by the European Union through the Technical Support Instrument and implemented by UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the European Commission.