*Annex 1 to Romania’s response to Joint questionnaire by Special Procedure mandate holders “Protecting human rights during and after the COVID-19 “*

 *Supplementary information on social field - poverty and inequalities*

In order to enhance the support provided to the persons receiving unemployment benefits the period for granting the unemployment indemnity was extended on 15 April 2020 until the end of the state of emergency, respectively until 15 May 2020.

In terms of access to unemployment benefits for the persons placed in technical unemployment during the state of emergency and state of alert, those periods are included in the contribution stage (of minimum 12 months in the last 24 months), mandatory for gaining access to unemployment benefits.

All the efforts were focused on solving the current problems caused by the epidemic crisis, namely to ensure the continuity of the financial resources for every person, and also for the vulnerable citizens. The eligibility thresholds for the social assistance benefits have not been revised during the pandemic crisis.

The employment policies adopted targeted mainly people in formal employment and working on the basis of an individual labour contract. In case of a total or partial reduction or interruption of economic activities during the state of emergency and state of alert, and the temporary suspension of the individual labour contract at the initiative of the employer, the employees benefit from an allowance of 75% of the basic salary corresponding to the job held, but not more than 75% of the average gross earnings at economy level.

Specific income support measures targeted persons who do not have individual employment contracts and cannot benefit from the allowance assimilated to technical unemployment. The specific target groups of the measure were other professionals defined according to the law, workers in the cooperation sector (as defined by the specific legislation), individuals who obtain income exclusively from copyright and related rights, sportsmen and lawyers. These categories received a monthly allowance of 75% of the average gross earnings at economy level, paid from the state budget during the state of emergency and state of alert.

The income support measures remain applicable for persons working in specific economic sectors that are still locked according to public authorities’ decisions.

As a part of the measure package intended to be propose by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (NAEO) will be signed a Protocol with the National Agency for Employment in order to support the activities of the 42 Vocational Counselling Offices (recently established in Romania at the level of each county, having as purpose vocational guidance and support the socio-professional integration of domestic violence victims, especially in the context of the dynamics of the labour market force generated by COVID -19).

The technical unemployment and other measures adopted were available during the state of emergency and state of alert for all the economic sectors, including those where women make up a considerable proportion of the labour force.

As a general rule, the regulations adopted during the state of emergency (by military ordinances) establish for the local public authorities the obligation to identify and keep records of vulnerable persons groups and to ensure their care, including food delivery.

People in self-isolation / quarantine were able to request the support of the County Committees for emergency situations and the local authorities for the supply of food, water, protective masks. Also, as mentioned before, the local authorities were able to decide on the mode of operation involving volunteers, non-governmental organizations (Red Cross, UNICEF, etc.). (purchasing food / medicine / providing hot meals, etc.) Transformation of night shelter services for homeless people into residential services - 24 hours a day and with the provision of the necessary food and medical products Providing financial support for providing meals for social service employees during the period of isolation at work Prohibition of the interruption of the insured social services provided to the persons at risk. Automatic extension of disability certificates, social benefits during the state of emergency and alert and after their completion.
Some of the obligations of employers and employees to ensure safety and health at work during the pandemic are to be considered as relevant for the rapporteurs:

A. Obligations of employers

• Training and informing workers about the new risks of SARS-CoV-2 infection;

• Establishing activities that can be continued and/or adapted, depending on their specifics and available resources, and implementing the necessary measures to resume and/or maintain the activity, provided that measures are taken to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2

• Priority use of electronic means of communication

• Individualization of the work schedule of employees (especially employees from vulnerable groups) who work indoors, so as to reduce, as much as possible, depending on the nature and specifics of activities, direct contact between them, without affecting the duration of the normal working hours.

• The possibility of creating specially designed spaces for employees belonging to vulnerable groups (people with chronic diseases, people over 65 years);

B. Special measures if an employee is suspected / confirmed to be infected with SARS CoV-2 coronavirus:

• employees with respiratory symptoms (cough, sneezing, rhinorrhoea, etc.) and/or fever higher than 37.3 °C and/or altered general condition, which appeared during the working programme, will be immediately isolated from the rest of the colleagues and sent to home or at health units, depending on the person's condition.

C. Obligations of workers

• comply with all instructions provided in the prevention and protection plan and occupational safety and health instructions prepared by the employer to prevent the spread of SARS CoV-2 coronavirus

• wears protective masks to cover the nose and mouth at workplaces organized by employers;

• they can replace the protective equipment used on the way to work (mask and gloves) with new equipment;

• immediately notify the employer if, at the beginning or during the working hours, there are symptoms of SARS CoV-2 virus infection.

D. For the employers from the social services destined to the vulnerable categories, the provisions of the Order no. 3577/831/15.05.2020 are completed with the recommendations of the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions.