

## Euro 200 - Digitalization on Paper

The **National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR)** requests the **updating of criteria regarding financial aid through the "Euro 200" national program**, in order to efficiently stimulate the procurement of computers as regulated by Law no. 269/ 2004 and the Methodological Norms for its application, approved by Government Decision no. 1294/ 2004, **in accordance with the economic reality and the actual needs of potential beneficiaries**. Even though the legal framework aims to "*stimulate the acquisition of computers, by granting financial aid established on socio-economical criteria, for the enhancement of competences in the use of calculation techniques*", the **eligibility conditions are not correlated with the socio-economic context at national level and the amount of 200 euro is clearly insufficient**, with respect to the program's purpose.

Despite the changes made in 2018 following ANOSR's requests, it is still noted that those amendments did not have a considerable impact neither in the secondary, nor in the tertiary education field, as evidenced by the evolution of the number of applicants and, respectively, beneficiaries. The number of applicants **decreased dramatically by 99,37%** (from 4496 applicants in 2004 to only 28 applicants in 2019), together with the decrease of beneficiaries by 94,45% (from 505 beneficiaries in 2004 to only 28 in 2019). Moreover, in 2018 the number of beneficiaries from higher education reached the alarming historical minimum of **3 beneficiaries**.

This worrying decrease in the number of beneficiaries is **caused by the eligibility criteria of this national program**. In addition, the **excessive bureaucracy and the extremely complex file** that has to be submitted in order to benefit from this right, discourages students up to 26 years old to apply. At the same time, this discrepancy of beneficiaries between the two categories of applicants (secondary education students and higher education students) is due to the fact that the **program can only be accessed once in a lifetime**. Therefore, university students that priorly benefited from this financial aid during their secondary education studies, no longer have the possibility to benefit from this support during their higher education studies, even though their socio-economical situation has not changed.

Another outrageous problem is that, according to the eligibility criteria set by Euro 200 program, the maximum gross income per family member is 250 lei (approximately 50 euros), while the minimum gross salary is 2230 lei (approximately 450 euros). **Thus, a student can be eligible only if appartaining to a family of 9 members, out of which only one is employed and earns the minimum salary** established by Government Decision no. 935/ 2019, and that is the only income source for the whole family. Another obstacle lies in the too low value of the voucher (200 euros), which is definitely not sufficient reported to the current development of the IT market. Also, this financial aid is not fitted to the minimum configuration stipulated within the legal framework.

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In order to meet the needs of the potential beneficiaries, ANOSR urges the decision-making bodies to **remodel the "Euro 200" program and to implement the proposals** within the Government Decision project for *modifying the Methodological Norms of applying Law no. 269/2004*. **The insignificant changes brought so far to the program do not prove any desire for reform by stakeholders** within the higher education system. For this program to have the expected outcomes and to reduce inequities within the educational system, it is absolutely necessary to have a clear vision of it, anchored in nowadays' reality.

*"Since technology is advancing at a very fast pace, the proposed changes to Euro 200 program are insufficient and do not help digital progress and the familiarization of direct beneficiaries of education with the information technology. This is why we believe that such a program should be non-bureaucratic and revolutionized properly, in order to achieve its purpose"*  
- Petrișor-Laurențiu ȚUCĂ, President of ANOSR.

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