

The youth representatives request for the support of the youth sector

The **National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR)** and the **National Council of Youth (CTR)** appeals the Romanian Government and the **Ministry of Youth and Sports (MTS)**, respectively, **to support the youth sector**. It has been significantly affected during the past two months, which is why immediate action is needed. **MTS** has all the necessary tools to do so, and no additional budget allocation is required at this time.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports annually organizes three national and/ or local competitions, in which it finances the projects of youth and students' organizations. The amount allocated to them is **8,890,000 RON (approximately 1,835,000 EUR)**. Also, in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, the **National Program "Student Camps" will no longer run in 2020, which will generate an economy of approximately 4,500,000 RON (930,000 EUR)**.

ANOSR and **CTR** propose this saved budget to be redistributed to the **youth NGO sector**, especially for the following actions:

- Carrying out and organizing volunteer projects that support people vulnerable to SARS-CoV-2 virus infection (e.g. food supply, production of masks and other necessary protection equipment);
- Carrying out educational, cultural and leisure activities, that directly target the personal development of youth, given that the educational process has been distorted, thus causing in some cases early forms of anxiety, developed especially during the State of Emergency and State of Alert time;
- Grants to youth organizations which prove that their income has been severely affected during the pandemic (e.g. 30% decrease) in order to cover administrative costs (rent, operating services, permanent employed staff etc.). We must highlight that social changes generated by this period will have a strong impact on the organizational development of youth structures, which is why it is important to support them;
- Financing investments in IT&C infrastructure, in order to accelerate digitalization in the youth sector;
- Organizing projects that implement activities of return to normal everyday life:
 - Concerts that engage the work of independent artists and follow the rules imposed by the pandemic;
 - Outdoor theater performances, with priority given to the young independent sector;
 - Any other type of cultural and/ or educational activity that may be organised outdoor (e.g. debates, lectures, documentary screenings etc).
- Alternatives for leisure activities and mobility between cities (e.g. micro-festivals, with limited number of participants in accordance to the legal provisions);

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- Youth residences, volunteer internships and job shadowing.

The 13,390,000 RON (approximately 2,765,000 EUR) allocated in the present for the youth sector represent much less than the sufficient amount, given the chronic underfunding of the youth sector. The Romanian Government and the Ministry of Youth and Sports have, however, the opportunity to support, **without any additional budget allocation**, the organizations that contribute the most to **the improvement of life quality for young people in Romania**. This tool, available the the Ministry of Youth and Sports, is well-known, being applied annually. Its adaptation to the current situation requires **minimal legislative changes**. We understand the priorities and difficulties generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the **neglect of the future of young Romanians can easily produce unfortunate consequences**.

At the same time, we propose a series of strategic directions for addressing the youth sector, including:

- Introduction of terms and mechanisms necessary for the operational grants, in order to ensure the functioning/ existence of NGOs;
- Inclusion of the fees necessary for the appertaining within the umbrella structures of/ for youth of which youth/ students NGOs are members, among eligible expenses for public grants (expenses included in the Government Decision proposed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports);
- Creating a mechanism similar to that existing for the private sector (*IMM Invest program*), with an adapted implementation.

We also consider the activity of NGOs vital for the continuation of programs carried out among their beneficiaries. Thus, we request the following:

- Postponemnet of tax contributions for staff employed by 3 months, starting with the 15th of June, 2020;
- State coverage of payroll taxes for employees whose contracts have not been suspended during the State of Emergency and State of Alert;
- Exemption from payroll tax for NGOs' employees who pay their taxes on time by the end of 2020.

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