

## **White Charter on the Rights of Elderly in Romania (In brief)**

The White Charter on the Rights of Elderly in Romania is a manifesto document aimed at putting on the public agenda in Romania the subject of active ageing, the rights of the elderly to be cared for in good conditions, at home or wherever they choose, and to continue to have an active life with family and friends.

Population ageing is a significant global trend, and Romania is no exception, facing an ever-increasing ageing population. Hence the need for this document which aims to align, in a common direction, the cooperation and coordination efforts supported by non-governmental organisations, professionals in the field, national and local authorities. It covers practices and policies that need to be updated and that can contribute to a better daily life for older people in Romania.

The document aims to generate fundamental changes in the approach to ageing issues, the vision of ageing and the elderly, and social policies for the elderly, beyond health and care services. We are talking about active ageing and the continued participation of older people in economic, social, cultural and spiritual life.

### Objectives of The White Charter:

- To set strategic guidelines on the rights of the elderly.
- To open and maintain dialogue on the rights of older people.
- To increase the visibility of the issue of older people in Romania.
- To highlight the specific needs and characteristics of older people in Romania, in relation to the organisations working to support them.
- To promote recommendations for public policies for the elderly in Romania.

The principles guiding The White Charter are based on values and rights enshrined in European and national legislation, such as dignity, protection, safety, well-being and freedom of expression.

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This approach is initiated by the SenioriNET Federation - active non-governmental organisations providing socio-medical services for the elderly, which aims to strengthen the contribution of social and medical non-governmental organisations to the development of public policies for the elderly.

The data collection, for the documentation needed to develop the White Charter, was carried out through 2 questionnaires applied to older people and their relatives/carers (nationally) between June and July 2022. Prior to the application of the questionnaires, the subjects were informed by the staff of SenioriNET's member organisations about the purpose of the survey - to carry out a study on the most important issues that can be included in the White Charter on the Rights of Elderly in Romania.

In the first part of the questionnaire, specific questions were asked about the access of older people to social and medical services, and respondents' opinions on specific situations were probed. In the second part of the questionnaire, the level of civic awareness of issues related to democratic culture was investigated.

The questions were answered by 466 elderly people (out of approximately 8,000 people benefiting from services provided by SenioriNET members) and 230 relatives/carers. The survey is a representative one with a 95% confidence level (95% probability that reapplication of the survey will produce similar results) and a margin of error of less than 5% for each question.

In the survey of older people's opinions, out of 466 respondents, 59.4% are older people aged 65-80, 81.5% are women and 60.1 of them live in rural areas. In the survey of the opinion of relatives/carers of older people, out of 230 respondents, 73.9% are aged 36-64, 82.6% are women and 45.2% are carers, i.e. family members of the older person they care for.

Such data are valuable in supporting the Charter's views on the ageing process (which also affects carers), the importance of women in the social long-term care system and the role of family members of the elderly in need of long-term care. 31.7% of respondents are from rural areas, i.e. where the need is greater and where there is a denser 65+ elderly population, there are fewer carers/relatives.

In the documentation process for the development of the White Charter, data collected through a questionnaire applied between June 20 and July 5 was also used to measure the proportion of the target group (older people) with civic awareness.

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Relevant documents in the field were also analysed, which are either current public policies in Europe and Romania or reports and research on different aspects of the lives of the elderly, with a focus on long-term care.

The socio-economic context in Romania, which is in continuous dynamics, has gradually determined qualitative and quantitative changes in the provision of social services and, implicitly, in the provision of home care. Central and local authorities have begun to recognise the importance and necessity of this type of service. Legislation has been initiated and validated to (partially) financially support the work of provider organisations. Unfortunately, local authorities, responsible for their implementation, have had a different understanding of their role in running such programmes, either due to lack of interest or lack of resources.

Lack of funding is the main problem reported by both public institutions and non-governmental organisations providing home care for the elderly. Funds from the state and local budgets are insufficient to cover the needs and do not allow the organisations to grow. In addition, there is a lack of information about the right to home care, as well as unequal distribution of funds at national level (with an impact on rural areas in particular).

Home care services occupy a special place in the sphere of social services due to the nature and diversity of their applicability. They represent a relatively new way of intervening in social issues, with the main goal of avoiding the institutionalisation of dependent people and maintaining them in a familiar living environment.

Legislation to harmonise and standardise the quality of home care services does not yet exist. For this reason, the lack of common policies and strategies of action at the level of organisations providing services in this field is still noticeable. At the same time, service providers also face difficulties in maintaining the continuity of their programmes, influenced by the reduced possibility of accessing external funding and the fact that the sustainability of activities cannot be successfully achieved at local level (very few providers manage to develop viable and long-term public-private partnerships). Moreover, the incoherent legislative framework and bureaucratic structures in Romania have led to the creation of an unstable and insecure institutional environment that visibly affects the implementation and development of home care services.

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Beyond the issue of caring for the elderly, Romania faces the problem of the systemic approach to ageing, the perspective from which ageing is analysed, i.e. active ageing. Active ageing is about encouraging older people to live as healthy, productive, participatory and independent lives as possible.

Through the White Charter on the Rights of Elderly in Romania, we insist on the respect of some fundamental rights:

- The right to a dignified, autonomous, active and useful old age.
- The right to protection and a safe life.
- The right to social assistance, quality care and services.
- The right to health, medical services, treatment and medical care adapted to the needs of each elderly person.
- The right to a life spent with the family.
- The right to information and direct communication, with easy access to digital means of communication.

The White Charter also contains a series of recommendations for improving policies for the protection of the elderly, drawn from the daily practice of SenioriNET representatives (service providers for older people with more than 10 years' experience in the field).

**As a first step, SenioriNET sets out to achieve a series of discussions with the relevant public authorities in order to lead to the creation of a National Agency for Vulnerable Elderly People, with its own authority, subordinated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, which would manage the social assistance budget (not the pension budget). Having a public institution that focuses exclusively on the rights of older people in Romania and manages a budget for social assistance other than pensions, increases the chances that many of the issues raised in this document will become achievable.**

- **SeniorisNET Federation Founder Members**

1. Asociația Caritas Alba Iulia - Asistență Medicală și Socială  
<https://caritas-ab.ro/>
2. Asociația Samaritenii Orăștieni  
<http://www.orastieaso.eu/>
3. Federația Caritas a Diacezei Timișoara  
<https://federatia-caritas.ro/>

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4. Fundația Lumina Brăila  
<https://fundatialumina.ro/>
5. Asociația Centrul Diecezan Caritas Iași  
<http://www.caritas-iasi.ro/>
6. Asociația Casa de Ajutor Reciproc a Pensionarilor Omenia Bucuresti  
<http://www.carp-omenia.ro/>
7. Fundația de Sprijin Comunitar  
<https://fsc.ro/>
8. Asociația AS 2001 Alba Iulia  
<https://www.as2001alba.ro/>
9. Asociația Caritas Mitropolitan Greco-Catolic Blaj  
<https://www.caritas-blaj.ro/>
10. Asociația de Ajutor Mutual ADAM Moldovița  
<http://www.fdaam.ro/>
11. Asociația de Ajutor Mutual Slatina Timiș  
<https://www.slatina-timis.ro/>
12. Asociația Niciodată Singur - Prietenii Vârstnicilor  
<https://niciodatasingur.ro/>
13. Asociația Four Change  
<https://www.4change.ro/>
14. Fundația Crucea Alb Galbenă din România  
<https://www.cag.ro/>
15. Asociația de Ajutor Mutual București  
<http://www.adambu.ro/>

- **SeniorsNET Federation Observer Members**

16. Societatea Română de Sprijin a Vârstnicilor și Suferinzilor cu Afecțiuni de tip Alzheimer  
<https://alz.ro/>
17. Asociația Societatea Română pentru Prevenirea și Recuperarea Medicală a Persoanelor afectate de Accidentul Vascular Cerebral SRPRMPAVC  
<https://accidentulvascular.ro>
18. Fundația pentru Îngrijirea Vârstnicului (FIV) Cluj  
<http://www.fiv.ro/>
19. Asociația Caritas Catolica Oradea  
<http://www.caritascatolica-oradea.ro/>
20. Asociația Organizația Caritas a Diecezei Satu Mare  
<http://www.caritas-satumare.ro/>
21. Fundația Caritabilă "Orizonturi"  
<http://www.orizonturi.org/>
22. Fundația Inovații Sociale Regina Maria  
<https://fundatiainovatiisociale.ro/>
23. Filiala de Cruce Roșie sector 5 București  
<http://www.crucearosie5.ro/>
24. Asociația pentru Dezvoltare Comunitară Nehoiu  
<https://adcnehoiu.org/>
25. Asociația Caritas Eparhial Oradea  
<https://www.caritaseparhial.ro/>

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26. Fundația Crucea Alb-Galbenă din România, Filiala Vrancea  
<http://www.cagfocsani.ro/>
27. Congregația Fiicele Sfintei Maria a Divinei Providențe  
<http://www.surorileguanelliene.ro/> (nefuncțional)
28. Asociația Caritas București  
[www.caritasbucuresti.org](http://www.caritasbucuresti.org)
29. Asociația Serviciul de Ajutor Maltez în România - Sucursala Aiud  
<https://maltez.ro/>
30. Asociația Sofia  
<https://asociatiasofia.ro/>
31. Fundația Crucea Alb-Galbenă din România, Filiala Constanța  
<https://ingrijiri-la-domiciliu.ro/>
32. Asociația Sînziene
33. Asociația Oameni Valori Fapte  
<https://www.facebook.com/AsociatiaOameniValoriFapte/>
34. Fundația de Sprijin a Vârstnicilor Galați  
<https://fsvgalati.ro/>
35. Asociația Humana  
<https://carecluj.ro/>
36. Asociația Colegiul Pacienților  
<https://colegiulpacientilor.org/>
37. Fundația Ruhama  
<https://www.ruhama.ro/>
38. Fundația HOSPICE Casa Speranței  
<https://www.hospice.ro/>
39. Asociația Pro Bunicii  
<https://servicii-medicale-galati.ro/>
40. Crucea Roșie Bacău  
<https://www.crucea-rosie.ro/>
41. Fundația Crucea Alb-Galbenă Buzău  
<https://www.cagbuzau.ro/>
42. Confederația Caritas România  
<https://caritasromania.ro/>
43. Asociația Voluntariat Pentru Viață  
<https://voluntariatpentruviata.ro/>
44. Asociația Lumina  
<https://asociatialumina.ro/>
45. Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Serviciilor Sociale  
<https://www.fdss.ro/>

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