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PRESS RELEASE

Roma children segregation in hospitals – contested in Romania for the first time

Today, Romani CRISS and ECPI – Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives filed a complaint to the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) regarding the differentiate treatment applied to Roma children in Emergency Clinical Hospital “Marie Sklodowska Curie” in Bucharest. It regards segregation of Roma children from the majority children by placing them in separate wards. It’s for the first time when information about this type of practice in Romanian hospitals could have resulted in a complaint towards authorities.

“This year we conducted field research in several hospitals in the capital. We collected information that there are segregated wards with Roma children in “Marie Curie” hospital. Illness does not discriminate based on ethnicity. Denigration and exclusion of little patients just because they are Roma only brings more sufferance and dissatisfaction” declared Oana Mihalache, from Romani CRISS.

The two nongovernmental organisations request NCCD to ascertain and sanction the fact of discrimination, under its severe form of segregation. *“Although the Romanian law expressly bans and sanctions ethnic discrimination, the enforcement of the law is delayed when it comes to the health system. That is why we believe that the Ministry of Health and local public authorities under whom the hospitals are placed should verify whether the hospitals’ internal regulations stipulate banning of ethnic segregation and if such provisions are put into practice”* added Iustina Ionescu, ECPI lawyer.

The Romanian reality often showed us that patients rights’ violations take place and remain unnoticed and uncorrected because the relations within the medical system are relations of power where the patient is in a vulnerable position. A fundamental principle of the basis of exerting the right to health is that of non-discrimination, including in terms of ethnic appurtenance. That is why Romani CRISS and ECPI wrote the **Human right local monitors’ Guide in the field of discrimination in accessing health care services for Roma people**¹. With the help of this guide, the two organisations will intensify the monitoring and reporting activity upon discrimination acts that take place in accessing the right to health-care for Roma people and not only.

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¹ **Human right local monitors’ Guide in the field of discrimination in accessing health care services for Roma people** (Romanian language only) is available in electronic format at <http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Ghid%20monitori%20sanatate.pdf>