

Discrimination is a process which outlines a distinction, a process that can not be defined as good or bad per se, until the ground on which the distinction is made is declared illegal. The concept of discrimination has become a resource with a powerful potential because it has become a legal, political, sociological and psychological concept. The thesis uses a new approach in dealing a topical issue, extremely important in terms of the transformations that occur socially, politically and economically in Romania.

This paper aims to examine thoroughly the phenomenon of discrimination in terms of institutions, policies and the principle of equality as a fundamental principle, by building a society of non-discrimination in Romania and the development, by virtue of this, of the concept of eliminating discrimination. To achieve this goal the following objectives were established:

1. to define and analyze the concept of discrimination between theory and social reality
2. to identify the key policies to combat discrimination and to analyze them critically
3. to analyze the international framework regarding discrimination and to determine the responsibilities of the national and international institutions considering the elimination of all forms of discrimination
4. to analyze the mediatization of the phenomenon of discrimination and thus forming non-discriminatory attitudes towards socially discriminated and marginalized groups in the written press in Romania

The theoretical importance and the practical value of the paper dwells in the fact that a complex research of the phenomenon of discrimination has been performed at the intercrossing of several fields of political science: politics, institutions and communication. The results of the investigation will contribute to the sustained development of political science and the thoroughness of the theoretical knowledge regarding the forms of discrimination.

The study has a great importance in the analysis of the forms of discrimination in terms of social practice. The thesis includes: the foreword, four chapters, conclusions, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter I. Description

The first chapter aims to achieve an overview of the discrimination phenomenon. The first part of the chapter is devoted to defining the concept from different perspectives, based on the idea that discrimination is not only subject to researchers from the legal field, but also to political scientists, psychologists, economists, etc.. Then there are presented the forms of discrimination: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, positive discrimination, harassment and instigation to discrimination as well as victimization and differential treatment. A discussion is necessary here about the concept of positive discrimination, by presenting both pros as well as cons of this form of discrimination. Finally, the emphasis is on the discrimination criteria: gender and sexual orientation, age, disability and HIV infection / AIDS, racial or ethnic origin and religion or beliefs. The second subchapter refers to three related principles: the principle of equality, the principle of equal opportunities and, not least, the principle of non-discrimination. Another important point is represented by the theories underlying the phenomenon: the theory of social stratification, of conflicts, identity and behavioral interactions. The prejudice, the stereotype and stigma are presented as sources of discrimination, because discrimination involves a behaviour and in psycho-sociological terms is based on the formation of some judgments. The last subchapter, the management of diversity, deals with tolerance as a central concept in a world of differences.

Chapter II. Policies to combat discrimination

The emergence of a EU policy with respect to the prohibition of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion (as well as sexual orientation, age, disability) is a remarkable moment because, before the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, the policies concerning the ethnic minorities had remained mainly prerogatives at a national or local level, and the international and European policies of protecting the human rights had proved to be limited in practice. The EU policy has emerged in the middle of opposite national political paradigms and thus require changes in the national institutions and debates on issues that have not yet been admitted (Geddes, Guiraudon, 2007). This chapter tries to review the key moments of the European non-discrimination policy, focusing on the importance of 13 TEC Article. Another important point concerns the "Europeanization of non-discrimination policy" specifying different ways in which the member states have complied considering: the

variety of juridical cultures, mobilization culture and integration culture. The institutional culture of equality emphasizes the tolerance and the respect of the right of equality. However, considering the issue of racism, it seems that security has become a priority to justice and anti-discrimination juridical resources have failed to - achieve the objective of providing equal protection for vulnerable groups. A related area that is required to be discussed in this chapter refers to the means of defining and measuring discrimination. Thus, a 2010 research has been studied, EU-MIDIS, which targets the minorities and the issues of discrimination in the EU. The study shows that it is possible to collect data regarding experiences of "discrimination" in all the states, therefore in Romania as well. The rendering of EU legislation in Romania has been analyzed from the perspective of equality directives: their presentation and criticism, their translation into Romanian legislation, the administrative procedures against discrimination. In order to analyze the phenomenon of discrimination in Romania, we need some statistical data which could give us a clear picture of the reality, because only in this way, a series of public policies to combat the phenomenon might be developed. Thus, we analyzed the Eurobarometer of 2006 compared to that of 2009 regarding discrimination in the EU – country report - Romania, I studied the special Eurobarometer no 296 of 2008 on the perception of different types of social discrimination and finally I compared the results of the 2004 opinion Barometer: opinion Barometer concerning the discrimination in Romania, with results collected in 2011 among Romanian students. At the end of the chapter there are presented some conclusions and recommendations, noting that in Romania the rendering of the legislation has been done properly, the problem being the degree of awareness of the society.

Chapter III. Institutions involved in the fight against discrimination

Starting from the idea: the concept of "European anti-discrimination law", suggests that there is only one European level, a system of rules on non-discrimination, which still has separate origins: the ECHR and EU law, this chapter attempts to specify the main institutions and organizations that have an important role in combating discrimination.

After the mentioning of the Council of Europe and the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the European Union and the directives of equality serve as main topics in the chapter. Then there are presented the EU institutions and their role in the fight against discrimination: the European Parliament by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; the European Commission by the two directives: the Racial Equality Directive and the Directive - framework regarding employment through a series of communications to promote equal opportunities by supporting intermediary parties: NGOs, social partners and organizations to ensure equality, the Agency for Fundamental Rights; the Council of the European Union - Justice and Home Affairs, the Court of Justice of the EU; other institutions and bodies: the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee. The institutional framework in Romania takes into consideration the Government Strategy based on five pillars: the Department for Interethnic Relations, the National Minority Council, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, the Ombudsman and Civil Society. In addition, there are various Parliamentary Commissions for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities, present both in the Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies. In addition, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men was dissolved in 2010 after five years of activity, the issues of Roma are subject to the National Agency for Roma, the National Audiovisual Council is the guarantor of the public interest and ensures freedom of expression, pluralism and free competition. The Labour Inspection and the National Agency for Employment also have a role in ensuring equality, the Disabled Persons Protection Commission and the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection are also dealt with in this chapter. Even though Romania has fulfilled its obligation to create specialized anti-discrimination bodies, they have no real power over their missions. Another problem is that they don't avoid to make the activity reports public, and show a lack of response and monitoring.

Chapter IV. The role of the media in promoting non-discrimination

In the current global environment, defined by mobility and changes, the Europeans acquire multiple and diverse identities and have justified expectations to be properly represented in the political, social or cultural area. In these matters, the media, the institutions and the civil society play a crucial role; however, according to some political analysts, the social, economic and cultural realities in Europe worsen

the discrimination of certain vulnerable groups or minorities. The increase of the political discussions and group awareness as well as the unequal distribution of wealth or the economic climate, are factors that lead to the worsening position of these groups in the political debates and the media. Geographically and socio-politically it has been confirmed that there are still many differences in the European media landscape. The totalitarian past of the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe, sometimes makes them associate the word "equality" with "communism" and this creates a suspiciousness against any "directives" coming from the centralized institutions. Finally it can not be stressed enough that, when policy makers (such as EU institutions, intergovernmental or international organizations) attempt to address issues of discrimination in relation to the media, they need to take into the consideration the structures of local, regional and national authority, surrounding the media. The policy makers can be a powerful accelerator for the activities of the local organizations and can contribute to the public awareness when they make public statements widely and highlight the efforts of their members or their failure, in the field of anti-discrimination in the media. Historical, geographical, social, economic, cultural factors or other factors, that contribute to the emergence or maintenance of discriminations can undermine the efforts of diversity interventions undertaken by the media, when they are not explicitly addressed at a higher level.

Discrimination is a phenomenon with a long history, present in all societies, often passed even as a custom in the attitudes and lifestyle of the people. However, or rather because of the cultural mark which has been carried only in recent years, the European countries have conducted thorough studies and, simultaneously, the conceiving of some actions to protect and support the victims of this phenomenon. This study represents a segment of an extensive research on mediatization of the phenomenon of discrimination and thus forming non-discriminatory attitudes towards the social discriminated and marginalized groups in the written press in Romania. Here it seems to be important to find the answer to the question: what is the contribution of various external factors on the maintenance and propagation of such "values". *The overall objective* of this research project is the presentation / description of the ways in which the phenomenon of discrimination is being covered in the central newspapers of Romania.

The final conclusion of this research shows that the media, especially the written press, does not get involved in promoting the principles of equality and non-discrimination. These topics don't seem "to be sold". The only interest of the media in the fight against discrimination is moment when a public figure is involved in a scandal that revolves around this phenomenon.

Final conclusions

As it can be seen in the present study, the European Union requires that all member states implement anti-discrimination laws in order to protect the racial, ethnic, religious, sexual characteristics. To support anti-discrimination policies, the EU has placed these laws on the national agenda of each member state. The rendering of the anti-discrimination legislation has been carried out properly in Romania, having a complex legal and institutional framework, although the functioning of this structure is not perfect because of a poor performance at the institutional level. The fight against discrimination can not be won solely by law. The victory depends primarily on changing the attitudes and behaviors. There is no doubt about the fact that an effective legal framework, strictly obeyed, which prohibits discrimination and ensures that its victims receive an actual compensation, is a prerequisite to bring about a real change.

Three Directives (2000/43/EC, 2000/78/CE Directive, 2004/113/EC) have already been **enacted** to give effect to Article no. 13 of the EC Treaty, which allows measures to prohibit and combat discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. These directives prohibit the discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation, disability and religion or beliefs regarding employment, employment and vocational training, while the protection against discrimination on grounds of race or sex is extended beyond the employment field to include the social protection and access to goods and services. To promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities based on all grounds of discrimination, both a firm legislative basis and a range of policy instruments are required. These include the raising of awareness, the integration of equal opportunities, data collection and positive action. The resolution of the Council regarding the monitoring of the European Year 2007 has emphasized the importance of taking full account of the development of these policy instruments. The integration of non-discrimination principles should apply to all grounds covered

by Article no 13 of EC, if the reduction of inequality and discrimination suffered by all the groups is intended. The member states should use different integration tools, the best practices and methodologies already available at a local and national level.

The prevention of discrimination acts can be achieved in several practical ways of collaboration. The first method is the development, promotion and implementation of the public policies. A document regarding one's attitude towards a particular area, can not be fully developed by one institution, especially when it comes to sectoral policies on medium and long-term. Their completion requires the collaboration of all institutions working in that field of activity and the support of the civil society.

The promotion and the implementation are two aspects very important for the success of a policy document. If there is no cooperation between the government institutions or, worse, if there is no involvement of the civil society, those principles are likely to remain only at the stage of "concept paper". Returning to the issue of preventing the acts of discrimination, a second way of collaboration is the one of collaboration so as to promote and implement projects and programs. In this field, the cooperation between the government structures and the involvement of the civil society are again crucial. The projects, as well as the policies are directly addressed to society. Or without its involvement, we can infer the result .

As we have seen in this thesis, the term "discrimination" is used to address the relationships between groups, it refers to the differential treatment, favorable or unfavorable to individuals who have the same qualities but who belong to different ethnic, social and religious groups. Social discrimination is primarily a political problem and then a matter of social psychology. The study of discrimination helps to assess the impact of multiculturalism and integration policies, focusing on comparative and interdisciplinary research.

By assisting the member states in the fight against discrimination and social exclusion, the European Community focuses on strengthening the inclusion and cohesion of the European society and wants all citizens to enjoy equal access to the available opportunities and resources. Article 13, which is listed among the basic "principles" of EC Treaty, allows the community to take action in the fight against discrimination both by legal protection for the potential victims, and by establishing incentives. The general prohibition regarding discrimination on grounds of gender, race, religion or other personal circumstances is a common provision to all national

legal systems and international agreements that are based on the protection of the human rights or have it as a goal.

We face discrimination so often that there are cases where we do not even notice this fact. It is impossible to eliminate discrimination because only in an ideal society would people adapt each time, in a perfect manner, to the circumstances surrounding the individuals, without taking into account certain unjust criteria. This means that each of us would give up our own identity.

In today's society, the media is the most powerful means of influencing the public opinion and increase of general awareness. Therefore, working with the media, with NGOs, is essential to promote the principle of equality and human rights. The fight against all forms of discrimination is one of the most important tasks that a democratic society must bear. And this is because discrimination is a manifestation of inequality that prevents individuals or groups in the society to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms and to enjoy the same opportunities. A society where there is discrimination and exclusion can not be considered democratic.

In Romania, the concern for the management of diversity is just at the beginning. The process is even more difficult as the existing models in the private companies are very few, the public commitment to promote diversity is almost nonexistent, while the situations of discrimination and abuse are persisting and are even increasing, in the economic context of recent years. Women are generally discriminated in promotion and can be discriminated even in fields in which they are overrepresented (education, public administration and so on).

In the Romanian society, the fight against discrimination is both a necessity and a challenge. A necessity, because Romania has embarked on a path without compromises, of building a truly democratic society, a society in which the conformation to fundamental rights and freedoms is a reality, while the European models and values are translated socially, legislatively, administratively. A challenge because this fight does not mean only the building of a legal and institutional system, functional and integrated but, in many cases, the changing of some deeply rooted mentalities.

The fundamental acknowledgement that all people are equal and should have equal access to life opportunities is common to all European societies. Therefore, the guaranteeing of the principle of non-discrimination is fundamental in the EU. Of course, the fight against discrimination can not be won solely by law. It depends

primarily on changing some attitudes and behaviors, and an effective legal framework which would prohibit discrimination and would ensure that the victims receive an actual compensation. Moreover, non-discrimination should not be accepted by the coercive force of the legal system, but by the realization that discrimination is itself a special form of insult against the human dignity.

The bibliography includes numerous titles, most of which belong to foreign researchers interested in the discrimination phenomenon, surveys, reports of European institutions, national and international laws as well as internet references. The first appendix represents an evolution of the Romanian legislation regarding the anti-discrimination, and the second the results of the opinion barometer achieved in 2011, based on the one of 2004.

In order to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities based on all grounds of discrimination, a firm legislative ground and a range of policy instruments are required. Among them, the paper proposes measures of awareness, of integration, of equal opportunities, of data collection and positive actions.