

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0201/09  
by Gabriela Crețu (PSE)  
to the Council

Subject: Ensuring the right of universal access to infertility treatment in the Member States

Parliament's resolution of 21 February 2008 on the demographic future of Europe (P6\_TA(2008)0066) - [2007/2156(INI)] observes that 'infertility is a medical condition recognised by the World Health Organisation that can have severe effects such as depression' and that it 'is on the increase and now occurs in about 15% of couples', and 'calls on the Member States ... to ensure the right of couples to universal access to infertility treatment'.

Romania does not as things stand officially recognise infertility as a medical condition, and couples of reproductive age having difficulty in achieving pregnancy by natural means are therefore not covered by the principle of social solidarity. Romanian citizens thus have to pay the full costs of medical procedures such as artificial insemination (AI) or in-vitro fertilisation (IVF), as well as of the prior hormone analyses and related drugs. These costs are enormous if compared with the average income of a Romanian household: for example, the total price of an IVF attempt is between EUR 1 400 and EUR 4 500, depending on the hospital and the procedures and drugs employed. An AI or IVF procedure is an extremely stressful experience for a couple, physically and above all psychologically, and this is even more the case when the inherent difficulties are compounded by insurmountable financial obstacles.

Having a child should not be seen as a luxury. It is therefore essential, as a matter of urgency, to ensure the regulation in law of medically assisted reproduction procedures (AI/IVF) as part of Romania's national health programmes, in such a way that the cost of a given number of procedures is laid down in law and is met from the health insurance budget, as has long been the case in most of the Member States.

Does the Council believe it is necessary to ensure the right of universal access to infertility treatment? If so, does it believe that the non-recognition of this right by the Romanian authorities constitutes a case of discrimination against the citizens affected?

In the context of current demographic policy in Europe, what measures does the Council consider necessary in order to ensure this right in the Member States?