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**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

1. **Information on the older persons in the context of climate change-disasters and recovery**

The Albanian government has drafted recent policies and legislation regarding climate change, disasters/emergency crises through the creation and operation of a comprehensive national legal and sub-legal framework. These policies aim to eliminate inequalities and vulnerability for specific social groups of society, in particular for groups in need and the elderly in terms of access to social and health services, housing provision, etc.

Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) designs policies and programs for social protection and inclusion. MHSP has drafted and is implementing the National Policy Document on Ageing, as well as its 2020-2024 Action Plan, approved by DCM No. 864. Prot, dated 24.12.2019, with the aim of supporting a better integration of the older persons in society, quality services for all and a long, healthy and productive life for them. The policy goals and specific Objectives of the Plan are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals/Agenda 2030, with the aim of improving access to comprehensive services by all older persons and combating all forms of inequality.

The importance of the ageing of the population as a global trend of the demographic transition is already today addressed in the legal frameworks and national and international initiatives in support of the implementation of the measures of the International Strategy of the Elderly, RIS/MIPAA, the aims of the Rome 2022 Ministerial Declaration, the National Strategy of Ageing and its Action Plan 2020-2024, with the aim of adapting policies for the elderly, as a response to economic, social, health and digital transitions as emerging challenges.

Ministry of Tourism and Environment is the responsible institution in Albania for climate policies engaged in the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (NSDRR 2023-2030). The legal and policy institutional framework includes Law No. 155/2020 "On Climate Change" which provides in Article 67 Point 1/b the identification of appropriate measures to reduce vulnerability and increase the recuperative abilities to climate change of the relevant sectors and their implementation.

The National Strategy for Climate Change "For the approval of the strategic document and national plans for mitigation of greenhouse gases and for adaptation to climate change" was approved by DCM no. 466 dated 03.07.2019. DCM No. 568 Datet 06.10.2021 "On the approval of the Determined National Contribution" is also approved.

At the same time, Law No. 45/2019 "On civil protection", aims to reduce the risk from disasters and realize civil protection to guarantee the protection of people's lives, living things, property, cultural heritage and the environment, through strengthening the system of civil defense for disaster risk management and reduction, risk prevention and regeneration.

Social groups such as the elderly, children, minorities and marginalized groups are prioritized through measures such as civil protection, counseling, information and support related to vulnerable social groups including the older persons. These measures are associated with social health care of vulnerable groups and long-term rehabilitation, promotion of self-help groups.

The measures undertaken are related to comprehensive planning, response and recovery interacting between all cross-sectoral sectors as a response to the comprehensive recovery of the country and especially the most vulnerable groups. This has led to the provision of comprehensive services to vulnerable groups and especially to the elderly in the northern area of Albania such as: Lezhë, Shkodër after the floods caused by coherent climate changes.

Albania went through a difficult emergency situation, ground shaking/earthquakes that occurred in 2019, where immediate measures were taken to deal with the situation, especially in Tirana, Durrës and Krujë, the most affected cities. Dealing with the health emergency was immediate in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Response measures and emergency services are already a specific objective in the National Health Strategy 2021-2030.

Good practices evidenced by the above-mentioned emergencies were the provision of services at home to assist categories in need, food and non-food assistance, providing assistance at home, including home delivery of payments benefited from the social protection program for families in economic assistance and Persons with Disabilities, work invalids and the elderly.

Regarding access to psycho-social and mental health services, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in cooperation with the WHO office and the UNICEF office in Albania conducted online training "Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Situations". These trainings aimed to equip frontline professionals with the basic concepts, knowledge and tools to protect and improve people's mental health and psychosocial well-being during an emergency situation.

Impacts from climate change, or crises and disasters can be mainly important for a specific sector without excluding having impacts related to other sectors as well, to the need for cross-sectoral integration in decision-making and the design of policies on environmental protection against human society one of the fundamental concepts of sustainable development.

Also, the need for initiatives for cross-sectoral cooperation is identified to be essential, especially when addressing the needs of social groups for food, lack of water, as well as health issues related to environmental changes.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection responded to the consequences of this most sensitive disaster for the social group of isolated elderly by providing support through home visits, health checks, sanitary assistance and food packages.

Also, during the provision of services to the elderly in this emergency situation, it became possible to identify vulnerable and lonely elderly for support and the provision of basic services such as the distribution of food, medicine, etc.

The government has provided financial support through the first Social Resilience Package as a result of the global electricity crisis, compensating the increase in the price of the basket for elderly pensioners, disability pensioners and pensioners living alone, supporting around 673,000 pensioners.

In the framework of national and international days, activities and awareness campaigns have been organized with the aim of promoting the rights to fight against any form of inequality of social groups and the elderly and access to information for vulnerable groups. This has continued during recovery processes in areas challenged by induced flooding and climate change.

The institutions responsible for the drafting of policies in the field of climate change and the protection of social and health care are committed to the inclusion of the elderly in the dialogue on climate change and access to comprehensive services.