

Franco Frattini
Vice-President of the European Commission

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Dear Dr. Lucas,

I have been forwarded your letter of 5 February, 2007, by Commissioner Rehn. I would like to thank you for the information concerning the living conditions of children, in particular those suffering from physical disabilities, in the orphanages in Romania.

Powers to act on child protection, social inclusion of children and provision of child and care services mainly fall with Member States. The Commission encourages exchange of good practice and policy coordination in the field of social protection and social inclusion through the Open Method of Coordination.

In the context of Romania's efforts to comply with the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, child protection policy has undergone a significant change in recent years. According to the information available to the Commission, reforms have focused on staff training, decentralisation of service provision, establishment of cooperation structures between local authorities and NGOs active in the field of child protection, social integration of street children and children leaving institutional care. In addition, Romania is currently implementing programmes to develop community social services for children and families in order to prevent the separation of children from their family and promote family (re)integration.

*Best regards
Franco Frattini*

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