

To: Health Professional Coordinators
From: Health and Human Rights Team
Date: 14 February 2005

Medical Action Update

Romania: Conditions in psychiatric hospitals

We have been forwarded a reply from AI's health professional network in Germany from the Romanian Minister of Health in response to letters they sent concerning the above action, distributed to the health professional network in July 2004 (AI Index: EUR 39/010/2004).

In the letter, the Minister, Dr Oyidiu Brinzan, says : "The Memorandum regarding the measures for the rehabilitation of the mental health care system in Romania, approved by the Government, is already being put into practice. It contains some practical elements, such as: the evaluation of all residents from the psychiatric institutions, from a medical, social and juridical point of view; an increase of financial incentives for the personnel working in those hospitals, up to 100% extra of their monthly pay; a higher daily food allocation for the patients (from 53,000 lei to 70,000 lei [1.5 - 2 Euros]); and the amount of 50 billion lei [1.4 million Euros], allocated by the Government of Romania, for the rehabilitation of psychiatric hospitals infrastructure...the Memorandum is a first step forward in the strategy of reform of mental healthcare services."

The letter includes a copy of the Memorandum referred to which details the measures for the rehabilitation of the mental health care system in Romania including **modifications to legislation; rehabilitation of the infrastructure of six psychiatric hospitals; improvement of living conditions and of specific therapy; training of medico-sanitary and auxiliary personnel; individual evaluation of residents in psychiatric institutions, and plans for international cooperation with the World Bank and the European Bank.**

If anyone would like a copy of the full 15-page Memorandum, please let us know (send requests to: medical@amnesty.org), with the address to which it should be sent.

Thank you all for your letters on this issue, which will continue to be monitored by the Romania research team. We will let you know if any further action is required from the health professional network in future.