

## **Children's foundations worked only on how the "adopting machine" functioned**

After swelling their pockets, the patrons of humanitarian organizations "pulled the shutters"  
24.08.2006

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Gardianul has been in possession of documents proving that most of the foundations that facilitated international adoptions during the 1990s belonged to influential people from the Romanian society, many of them politicians. Currently, only two organizations, out of 98 how many have existed, still work.

According to the State Secretary, Head of the Romanian Adoption Office (ORA), Theodora Bertzi, during the 1990s, international adoptions were made through non-governmental organizations. More specifically, local foundations have been partnering with foreign agencies, agencies that were meant to scold up as many families as they wanted to adopt a child. Generally, people who were using such agencies came from amongst those who had the ban to infant minors in their native country. The reasons were multiple. Either because they were not married for at least three years, as the law says, either because they were over 40 or because they were suffering from mental illness. Under these conditions, because in Romania of the 90s no one took into account who is adopted and where the infected child arrived, the adoption process was extremely simple. Foreign families donated agencies from their native country, who brokered adoptions in Romania, between 20 and 50 thousand dollars, and the agency was sharing the money with the local foundations partner. To put their hands on as many dollars as possible, Romanian NGOs had to "work" intensively to get as many adoptable children as possible. "Representatives of the foundations had information from maternity medical staff or children's cradles about all minors who were registered in those institutions. Where they find out that mothers have no possibility of raising their baby, they intervened and were not allowed until they were convincing their mother to give up the baby. They went to the notary to sign the papers, but they did not tell her that she would never see her child again. They were trying to induce the idea that the minor would have a better life if he gave up," ORA chief Theodora Bertzi told us. In this way, 98 foundations were enriched overnight. "The thousands of dollars coming from the donations of the adoptive families had to be used by the Romanian foundations to implement programs or to help the children's swings, but they never knew what their way was. As a donation, neither the Court of Accounts nor the Financial Guard could intervene to check the route they took the money," Bertzi explained.

### **Trafficked politicians**

Among those who owned at that time such foundations are: Razvan Andrei Dejeu, son of ex-minister of internal affairs Gavril Dejeu (HELIOS Foundation), Tiberiu Prodan, PNL deputy (New Life Foundation), Petru Dragulescu, PNT MP -CD until 1996, Oana Harvalia, PNT-CD secretary, as well as the lawyer Azota Popescu, famous for the adoption of children from the "Poiana Soarelui" Placement Center in Brasov, orphanage supported by the Ion businessman's foundation Tiriac. Sources inside the system told us that "most of the foundations that did such activities had connections with all political parties." The same sources have said that "international adoptions have been a taboo subject for a long time, forbidden by political order."

"In Romania, international adoptions have been made on tape. The infants were treated as a commodity. They were put on the airplane as packets and sent to adoptive families. Many times they were "refused to export" and sent to the country, as new parents did not like ".

State Secretary, ORA chief, Theodora Bertzi  
Andreea Dancu

( Gardianul, 24 August, 2006 )