

Deprived people in Romania to be issued hot meal tickets under bill passed by Chamber

The Chamber of Deputies on Wednesday passed a bill approving Emergency Ordinance (OUG) 115/2020, which provides for the issuing of digital social vouchers of 180 lei per month for hot meals to people over 75 years of age whose income is at the level of social allowance and to the homeless, with the necessary amounts to be provided from non-reimbursable external funds.

The object of the bill is to set up measures to support the most deprived people by providing digital social vouchers for hot meals and to provide the legal framework for expenses incurred by the distribution of hot meals and the provision of technical assistance. It implements provisions of the European Union regarding the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

The measures apply to persons aged 75 and over on incomes at the level of the social allowance for pensioners, as well as to homeless people at risk of extreme poverty.

The nominal value of the ticket is 180 lei/month. It shall be updated by government decision at least 90 days before the end of a calendar year, for the next calendar year. The vouchers are issued by the Ministry of European Funds. The equivalent value of the digital social vouchers represents non-taxable income for the purpose of taxation.

The digital vouchers for hot meals will be funded under operational programme supporting the most deprived in 2014-2020 and are settled within the available budget for this measure in accordance with the programme's eligibility rules.

The Ministry of European Funds is the coordinator of this scheme, and its partner organisations are the prefectures and the local public administrations, which draw up and update the lists of the deprived persons qualifying for the vouchers.

For the immobile final recipients, the local public administrations, including through the social work services or the affiliated units will have to provide the home delivery of the hot meals.

The Chamber of Deputies is the decision-making body.