

Romania

VET in Europe - Country Report

2009

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Romania. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Legislative and Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities
4. Initial vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Matching VET provision with labour market needs
8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
9. Financing - investment in human resources
10. National VET statistics - allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2009 and its reference year is 2008. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/analysis.asp

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Romania

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY.....	6
1.1.	Political And Socio-Economic Context	6
1.2.	Population And Demographics.....	8
1.3.	Economy And Labour Market Indicators	10
1.4.	Educational Attainment Of Population	13
1.5.	Definitions.....	18
2.	POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES.....	19
2.1.	Objectives And Priorities Of The National Policy Development Areas Of Vet	19
2.2.	The latest developments in the field of European Tools	25
2.3.	Possible projections of the financial crisis on VET policies	28
3.	LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	33
3.1.	Legislative Framework For IVET	33
3.2.	Institutional Framework: IVET	33
3.3.	Legislative Framework For CVET	34
3.4.	Institutional Framework: CVET	35
4.	INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	36
4.1.	Background To The Initial Education Vocational Education And Training System And Diagram Of The Education And Training System.....	36
4.2.	IVET At Lower Secondary Level	39
4.3.	IVET At Upper Secondary Level	40
4.4.	Apprenticeship Training.....	46
4.5.	Other Youth Programmes And Alternative Pathways	48
4.6.	Vocational Education And Training At Post Secondary Level (Non Tertiary)	49
4.7.	Vocational Education And Training At Tertiary Level	49

5.	CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS	50
5.1	Formal Education.....	50
5.2	Non-Formal Education	56
5.3	Measures to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market... 61	
6.	TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS	62
6.1	Types Of Teacher And Trainer Occupations In VET	62
6.2	Types Of Teachers And Trainers In IVET.....	66
6.3	Types Of Teachers And Trainers In CVET.....	66
7.	MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS	67
7.1	Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs.....	67
7.2	Practices to match VET provision with skill needs.....	69
8.	GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT	70
8.1	Strategy And Provision	70
8.2	Target Groups And Modes Of Delivery	76
8.3	Guidance And Counselling Personnel	81
9.	FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES	83
9.1	Funding For Initial Vocational Education And Training.....	83
9.2	Funding For Continuing Vocational Education And Training And Adult Learning	83
9.3	Funding For Training For Unemployed People And Other Groups Excluded From The Labour Market.....	84
9.4	General Funding Arrangements And Mechanisms	86
10.	NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES	87
10.1	Classification Of National VET Programmes	87
10.2	Fields of education and training.....	88
10.3	Links Between National Qualifications And International Qualifications Or Classifications.....	89
11.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

1. GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT – FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

1.1. POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Full name: Romania

Population: 21.6 million (via UN, 2006)

Capital: Bucharest

Area: 238,391 sq km (92,043 sq miles)

Major language: Romanian

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 67 years (men), 74 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 new leu = 10000 bani

Main exports: Textiles and footwear, metal products, machinery, minerals

Romania is situated in South-East Central Europe, North of the Balkan Peninsula, on the Lower Danube, within and outside the Carpathian arch, bordering on the Black Sea. Almost all of the Danube Delta is located within its territory. It shares a border with Hungary and Serbia to the west, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to the northeast, and Bulgaria to the south.

With a surface area of 238.391 square kilometres (92,043 sq mi), Romania is the largest country in southeastern Europe and the twelfth-largest in Europe. A large part of Romania's border with Serbia and Bulgaria is formed by the Danube. The Danube is joined by the Prut River, which forms the border with the Republic of Moldova. The Danube flows into the Black Sea within Romania's territory forming the Danube Delta, the second largest and the best preserved delta in Europe, and a biosphere reserve and a biodiversity World Heritage Site.

Romania is divided into forty-one counties (sing. *judet*, pl. *judete*), plus the municipality of Bucharest (*Bucuresti*) -which has equal rank. Each county is administered by a county council (*consiliu judeţean*), responsible for local affairs and is further subdivided into cities (sing. *oras*, pl. *orase*) and communes (sing. *comună*, pl. *Comune*). There are a total of 319 cities and 2,686 communes in Romania¹. *Bucuresti*). Bucharest has six sectors each of which elects a mayor and a local council.

The NUTS-3 level divisions reflect Romania's administrative-territorial structure, and correspond to the 41 counties, and the Bucharest municipality. Cities and communes are NUTS-5 level divisions. The country currently does not have NUTS-4 level divisions, but

¹[Administrative Organisation of Romanian Territory, on December 31, 2005](#) , *Romanian National Institute of Statistics. Report.*

there are plans to make such associating neighboring localities for better coordination of local development and assimilation of national and European funds.

The 41 counties and Bucharest are grouped into eight development regions corresponding to NUTS-2 divisions in the European Union. There are also proposals to use four NUTS-1 level divisions; they would be called macroregions (Romanian:*Macroregiune*). NUTS-1 and -2 divisions have no administrative capacity and are instead used for co-ordinating regional development projects and statistical purposes.

- Macroregiunea 1:
 - Nord-Vest (6 counties; roughly northern Transylvania)
 - Centru (6 counties; roughly southern Transylvania)
- Macroregiunea 2:
 - Nord-Est (6 counties; Moldavia except the counties of Vrancea and Galați)
 - Sud-Est (6 counties; lower Danube, including Dobrudja)
- Macroregiunea 3:
 - Sud (7 counties; the core of Muntenia)
 - București (1 county and Bucharest)
- Macroregiunea 4:
 - Sud-Vest (5 counties; roughly Oltenia)
 - Vest (4 counties; southwestern Transylvania, or Banat plus Arad and Hunedoara counties).

After 1989, Romania experienced economic problems, followed by economic reforms such as low flat tax rates in 2005. The country joined the European Union in January 1, 2007. While Romania's income level remains one of the lowest in the European Union, reforms have increased the growth speed. Romania is now an upper-middle income country economy. Romania also joined NATO on March 29, 2004, and is also a member of the Latin Union, of the Francophonie of the OSCE and an associate member of the CPLP. In 2007, Sibiu, a city in Transylvania, was chosen as a European Capital of Culture. Romania is a semi-presidential unitary state.

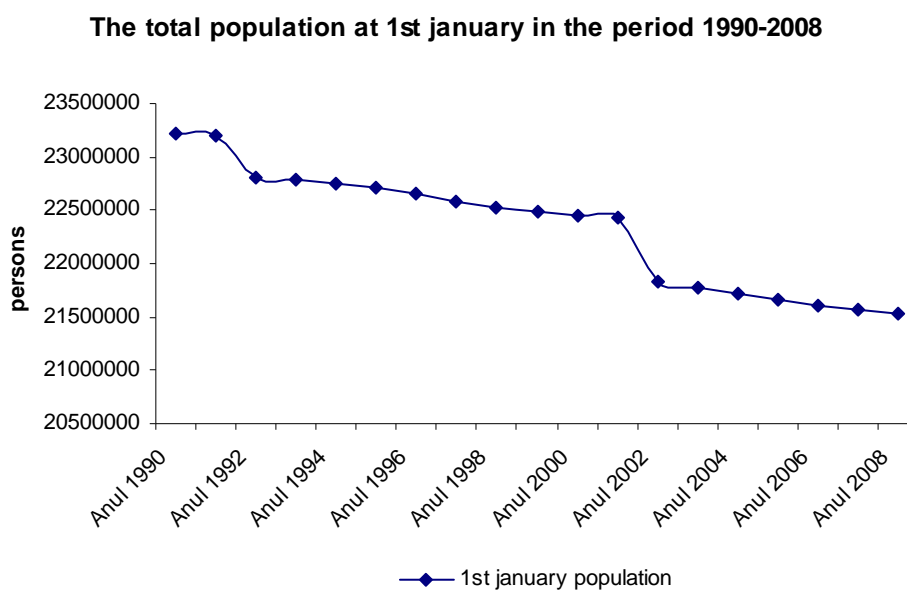
Romania has the 9th largest territory and the 7th largest population (with 21.5 million people) among the European Union member states. Its capital and largest city is Bucharest the 6th largest city in the EU with 1.9 million people. The metropolitan area of Bucharest has a population of about 2.2 million. There are several plans to increase further its metropolitan area to about 20 times the area of the city proper.

There are 5 more cities in Romania, with a population of round 300,000 that are also present in EU top 100 most populated cities. These are: Iași, Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Constanța, and Craiova. Population density equals 90 persons per square km.

1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Romania (RO) covers an area of 238,391 km² and the population was 21.5 million people in 2009. The population of Romania has been constantly decreasing since 1990. We can observe two periods of pronounced decreasing: 1991-1992 when the total population decreased from 23.2 millions of persons to 21.8 millions and the period 2001-2002 when population decreased from 22.4 millions of persons to 21.8 millions.

Figure 1. Population 1990-2008



At the end of 2008 it equalled 21,528 thousand. For the 1990-2008 period it has decreased on an average rate by 100 thousand². Decrease in number is the result of the negative natural population growth (deaths are greater in number than births) and the foreign migration processes. The absolute number and relative share of the population at school age is also decreasing. During the period 2000-2008, the biggest decrease in number can be seen with population at school age-7-14 from 2,536 thousand to 1,793 thousand.

The percentage of the population age 15-18 is also decreasing, which in turn affects the number of students at secondary vocational schools. During the last 8 years the absolute number of the population age 15-19 is also expected by average of 1,650 thousand per year so as to drop down to 1,485 thousand people. The negative natural population growth and the foreign migration have caused great changes in the age structure of the population. These changes, which are called ageing of the population, result in increasing the share of older age groups and decreasing the share of children and young people.

Parallel to the constant decrease in number of the population as a whole, as well as the share of people at school age, during the past few years certain positive trends of the demographic development could also be witnessed as an increase of the birth rate, decrease of children mortality. For example the birth rate³ for 1000 persons has

² Data source - NSI, Population statistics www.insse.ro , Tempo database

³ www.insse.ro, Tempo database

increased- from 9.7 in 2002 to 10.2 in 2006, whereas infantile mortality rate has been reduced from 18.6 in 2000 to 12 per 1,000 persons in 2007.

Forecast data show that the ageing process of the population will continue during the next twenty years. Relative share of the population age 0-24 is expected to decrease. Population ageing is evident in the age index (the ratio of population aged 65+ to 0-14-year-olds), which is expected to rise from 96.63% in 2008 to 118.78% in 2020. At the same time, the burden on the economically active population expressed by the dependency index (the ratio of population aged 65+ and 0-14 to the 15-64 age group) is expected to rise from 42.82% in 2008 to 47.28% in 2020.

Population ageing will have consequences to education and training systems. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably. On the other hand, due to demographic decline, schools (especially basic and secondary schools) will face the problem of low numbers of young students. This process already started and secondary VET schools are supported by national and regional authorities and by European structural funds to develop their capacity for adult education.

TABLE 1. PROJECTION OF THE POPULATION STRUCTURE BY AGE GROUPS								
AGE GROUP	POPULATION(THOUSANDS)				POPULATION STRUCTURE (%)			
	2008	2010	2020	2030	2008	2010	2020	2030
0 - 14	3259.7	3221.6	3057	2596.8	15.22	15.10	14.67	12.95
15 - 64	14968.7	14926.6	14145.5	13392.1	69.87	69.97	67.90	66.80
65+	3194.9	3185.6	3631.3	4060.2	14.91	14.93	17.43	20.25
TOTAL	21 423.4	21 333.8	20 833.8	20 049.1	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

TABLE 2. PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO %											
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
EU (27 COUNTRIES)	25.9	28.26	31.05	34.23	38.04	42.07	45.36	48	50.42	52.45	53.47
ROMANIA	21.34	22.54	25.67	29.11	30.32	35.37	40.75	47.77	54	62.67	65.27

Source: Eurostat, EUROPOP2008 convergence scenario

Source: Eurostat.

This indicator is defined as the projected number of persons aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the projected number of persons aged between 15 and 64. If we take the EU 27 countries, we will see that in 2010 the proportion will be 1 to 4, meaning 1 retired against four employed/active population; whereas in 2060, the proportion will be 2 to 2, meaning 2 retired against 2 employed/active population. In the case of Romania, in 2000 the old-age dependency ratio was about 19.3% and in 2008 was 21.3%. In 2020, the value 25.67% of old-age dependency ratio reveals the fact that 4 employees will support 1

retired and in 2050 the proportion will be 2 to 2, meaning 2 employees will support 2 retired.

1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Analyzing the level of employment by economic activity, in the second quarter of 2008, we can observe the fact that the highest proportion is occupied by primary sector and utilities with 31.7%, followed by manufacturing (20.5%), distribution and transport (20.3%) and non marketed services (12.9%). The area of business and other services have the smallest percentage 6.8% - Table 3.

The EU-27 countries has the highest degree of employment in activities as distribution and transport (22.2%), non marketed services (21.2%), business and other services(17.1%) and manufacturing (15.5%). Unlike Romania, the EU has the smallest rate of employment in the activity of primary sector and utilities - table 3.

The rate of employment in Romania is smaller than in the EU-27, but it has been declining slightly in the period 2002-2007.

Analyzing the level of employment for the level of education ISCED 0-2 in Romania we can observe the fact that it follows a descendent trend in the period 2002-2007, registering the value of 21.2% in 2002 and 16.5% in 2007 for the young people, 48.4% in 2002 and 46.7% in 2007 for the age group 50-64 years - Table 4.

The employment rate measured for education level ISCED 3-4 reveals the fact the it decreased for the age group 15-24 from 37.8(2002) to 31.8(2007), and it increased for the age groups 25-49 years.

At the level ISCED 5-6 the employment increased for all age groups for the period 2002-2007 - table 4.

The unemployment rate in Romania is smaller than in the EU-27 for the age group 25-49 and 50-64, except for the young people for which the rate of employment is higher than in the EU-27 - Table 5.

For young people and for the group 50-64 years, the unemployment rate has the highest level for ISCED 3-4, while for the age groups 25-49 the highest unemployment rate is registered for ISCED 0-2 - Table 5.

The public expenditure on education as % of GDP decreased in Romania from 3.36% in 1999 to 3.28 in 2001. Since 2002 there has been a slight fluctuation in this proportion which reached 3.44% in 2003, 3.29% in 2004 and 3.48% in 2005(in the EU-25 the proportion is higher: 5.81% in 2005).

For the primary level of education (ISCED 1), the public expenditure as % of GDP reached the value of 1.17% in 2001, 1.26% in 2002 and it decreased to 1.2% in 2004. For the 2005 it registered the value of 1.25 % of GDP. For the secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), the public expenditure as % of GDP reaches the value of 0.87% of GDP in 2001, 0.71% in 2003 and 0.77% of GDP in 2005. For the tertiary level of education (ISCED 5-6), the public expenditure as % of GDP reached the value of 0.79% of GDP in 2001, 0.70% in 2004 and 0.81% of GDP in 2005.

The total public expenditure on education as % of total public expenditure reached the value of 8.5% in 2001, 8.9% in 2002, 10.26% in 2003, 10.07% in 2004 and 10.39% in 2005 (but this percentage is higher for EU-27 who registers the value of 10.45% at the end of 2005). The data was collected using Eurostat as the main source.

TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, AGE 15+, MALE AND FEMALE, NACE REV.1.1.-(1000)-2008 Q2

CLASSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES - NACE REV.1.1	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES		TOTAL
	A_B_C_E		D		F		G_H_I		J_K_O_P_Q		L_M_N		
COUNTRIES	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS	PROPORTION	PERSONS
EU27	11508,8	5,2%	34500,5	15,5%	16225,2	7,3%	49200,5	22,2%	38025,2	17,1%	47045,7	21,2%	221873,1
RO	3005,6	31,7%	1943,3	20,5%	745,9	7,9%	1924,4	20,3%	646	6,8%	1227,8	12,9%	9493,2

Source: Eurostat.

TABLE 4. EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)

		2002			2005			2007		
		15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64	15_24	25_49	50_64
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	TOTAL	36.7(i)	77.3(i)	50.2(i)	36.1	78.1	53.3	37.4	80	55.6
	ISCED0_2	25.7(i)	65.9(i)	40.5(i)	24.7	66.2	42.5	25.3	67.5	44.2
	ISCED3_4	47.8(i)	79.1(i)	54.3(i)	47.1	79.4	56.8	48.9	81.4	59.2
	ISCED5_6	61.7(i)	88.2(i)	71.8(i)	60.5	88	73.6	62	89	74.9
	NO ANSWER	15.3(i)	73.4(i)	37.9(i)	4.6	73.7	5	5.1	74.6	6.6
ROMANIA	TOTAL	29.1 (b)	76(b)	47.5(b)	24.9	74.9	49.6	24.4	76.3	51
	ISCED0_2	21.2(b)	66.7(b)	48.4(b)	16.6	59.9	47	16.5	61.1	46.7
	ISCED3_4	37.8(b)	76.3(b)	43.1(b)	34.3	76.2	48.3	31.8	77.3	50.3
	ISCED5_6	61.7(b)	90.8(b)	62.1(b)	61.2	91	68.9	63.4	92.5	71.6

Source: Eurostat

Legend: Isced 0_2; 3_4; 5_6 refer to the ISCED levels of education

b: break in series; u: unreliable or uncertain data

15_24; 25_49; 50_64 refer to the age groupings

TABLE 5. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%)

COUNTRY	ISCED LEVEL	2002			2005			2007		
		AGE 15_24	AGE 25_49	AGE 50_64	AGE 15_24	AGE 25_49	AGE 50_64	AGE 15_24	AGE 25_49	AGE 50_64
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	TOTAL	17.8(i)	8.2(i)	6.6(i)	18.5	8	6.7	15.4	6.4	5.5
	ISCED0_2	19.8(i)	11.3(i)	7.4(i)	21.7	11.6	7.8	19.9	10.3	6.9
	ISCED3_4	17.5(i)	8.4(i)	7.5(i)	17.2	8.2	7.6	13.3	6.1	5.8
	ISCED5_6	12.5(i)	4.5(i)	3.5(i)	14.1	4.7	3.8	11.3	3.7	3.2
	NRESP	14(i)	7.1(i)	6.7(i)	27.5	:	:	20.1	:	:
ROMANIA	TOTAL	22.2 (b)	7.5 (b)	3.8(b)	20.2	6.6	3.6	20.1	5.8	3.5
	ISCED0_2	18.2(b)	7.2(b)	2.6(b)	16.3	8.9	2.9	18.6	9.2	3.2
	ISCED3_4	25(b)	8.2(b)	5.9(b)	22.5	6.7	4.9	21	5.7	4.3
	ISCED5_6	19.8(b)	3.7(b)	2.3(b)	22.1 (u)	3.5	:	21.1(u)	2.4	:

Source: Eurostat

Legend:

isced 0_2; 3_4; 5_6 refer to the ISCED levels of education b break in series

15_24; 25_49; 50_64 refer to the age groupings u unreliable or uncertain data

1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Compared to the EU-27, Romania's tackling of the early school-leaving rate leaves still a lot to desire. The proportion of the population aged 18-24 with basic or at most lower secondary education who no longer participate in either initial or continuing education is higher than in a EU-27 as it results from table 6 below. Nevertheless, we point out the fact that, Romania has also registered a descending since 2002 from 23.2% to 19.2% in 2007.

TABLE 6 - EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 18-24 WITH AT MOST LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND NOT IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING ⁽⁴⁾						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU (27 COUNTRIES)	17.1	16.6	15.9	15.5	15.2	14.8
ROMANIA	23.2	23.2	23.6 (b)	20.8	19	19.2

Source: Eurostat

⁽⁴⁾ Early school leavers refers to persons aged 18 to 24 in the following two conditions: the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding no answers to the questions "highest level of education or training attained" and "participation to education and training". Both the numerators and the denominators come from the EU Labour Force Survey.

Regarding the attainment level of youth education, we can see that the percentage of this indicator for Romania is smaller than for the EU-27. Per total, the share of population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education is slightly higher in the European Union and it registered a higher evolution for the period 2002 to 2007 as compared to Romania. While the share of population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education increased in EU with 1.4 pp for the period 2002 - 2007, in Romania it registered an evolution of 1.1 pp for the same period. . When decomposing the total by gender categories, we notice that Romania is lagging behind the EU for what concerns female completion of at least upper secondary education. For females, this percentage have an oscillate evolution, reaching the value of 77.7% in 2002, 76.8% in 2005 and 77.7% in 2007. On the contrary, males' completion rate of upper secondary education is higher in Romania than in the EU. The share of male population that have completed upper secondary education registers a positive slope, reaching the value of 74.8% in 2002, 77.4% in 2005 and 77.1% in 2007.

TABLE 7 - YOUTH EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVEL - PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 20 TO 24 HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION									
	2002			2005			2007		
	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL	FEMALES	MALES
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	76.7	79.3	74	77.5	80.2	74.9	78.1	80.8	75.5
ROMANIA	76.3	77.7	74.8	76	76.8	75.2	77.4	77.7	77.1

Source: Eurostat

TABLE 8 - . GRADUATES IN ISCED 3-6 BY FIELD OF EDUCATION AND SEX

COUNTRY	SEX	2002			2004			2006		
		ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5_6	ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5_6	ISCED3 VPV	ISCED4 VPV	ISCED5_6
EUROPEAN UNION (27)	T	2293348(s)	379912(s)	3165155(s)	2366669(s)	421341(s)	3595504(s)	2853434(s)	428945(s)	3846498(s)
	M	1244986(s)	171634(s)	1335544(s)	1263141(s)	195713(s)	1482590(s)	1545275(s)	199261(s)	1573072(s)
	F	1063240(s)	208279(s)	1829612(s)	1103528(s)	225628(s)	2112914(s)	1308159(s)	229685(s)	2273425(s)
ROMANIA	T	125687	28456	93467	165393	22636	147412	245042	15899	174821
	M	79278	10160	39843	95729	8080	62964	141903	5437	71305
	F	61288	18296	53624	69664	14556	84448	103139	10462	103516

Source: Eurostat

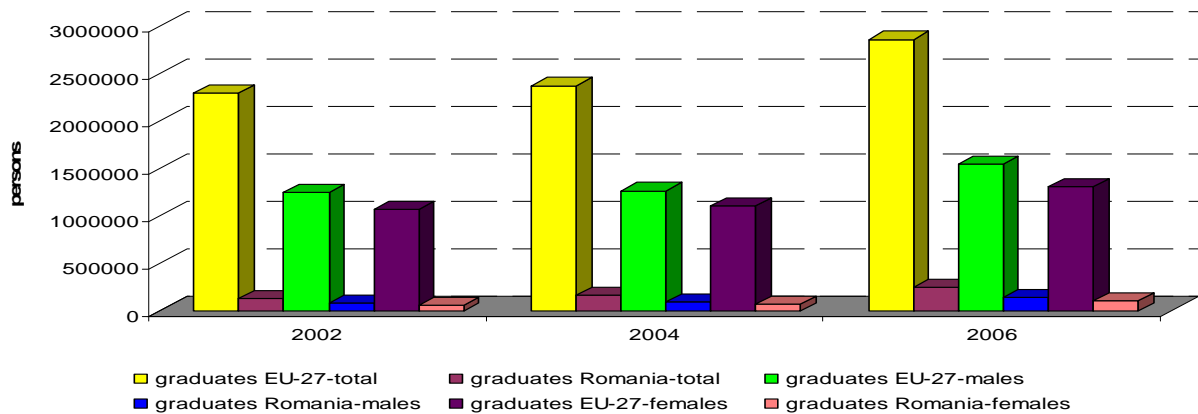
s - Eurostat estimate

t - total; m- males; f - females

vpv - vocational and pre-vocational

Graph 1

The evolution of the graduates for the level ISCED 3vpv for EU-27 and Romania

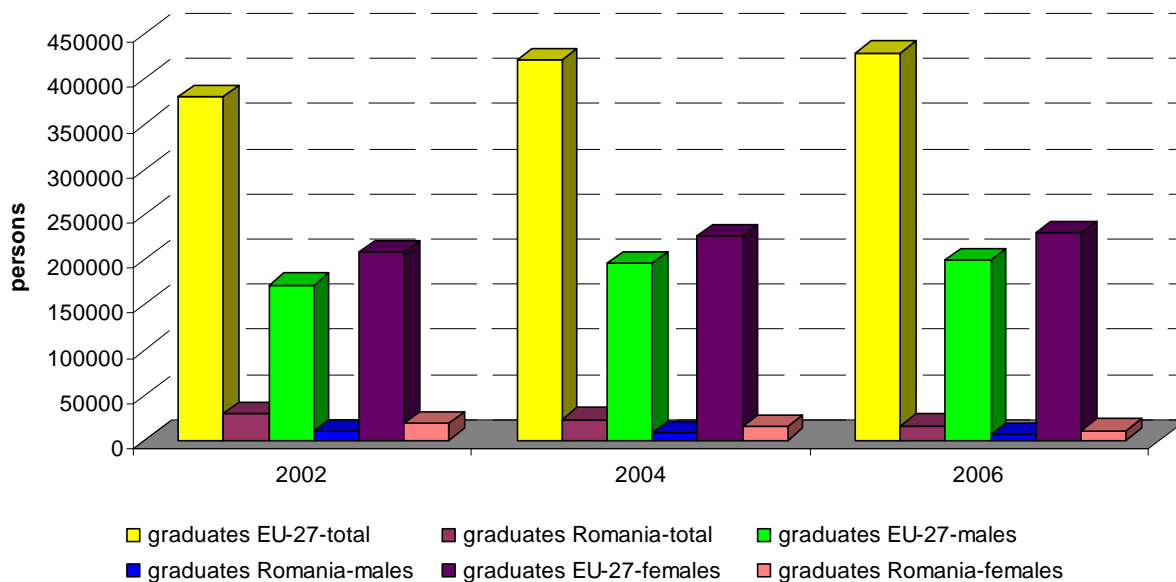


Source: Eurostat

Analyzing the number of graduates for the level of education ISCED 3vpv vocational and pre-vocational in Romania comparative with the average of EU-27, we can observe the fact that the difference is quite large. In the EU-27, the number of males' graduates is higher than that of the females for the period 2002-2006. In Romania, the tendency is the same: there are more men than women graduates. For this level of education, in Romania and in EU-27, we have an ascendant trend for the period 2002-2006 for total level, and also for sex structure, males and females.

Graph 2

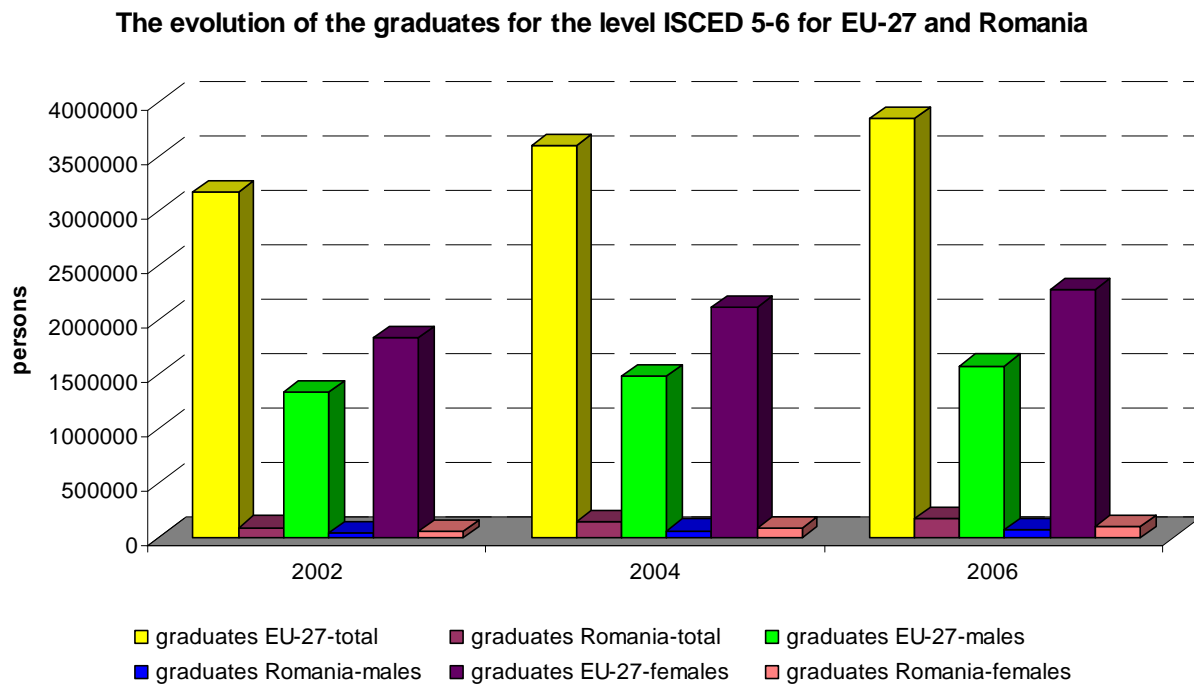
The evolution of the graduates for the level ISCED 4vpv for EU-27 and Romania



Source: Eurostat

For the level of education ISCED 4vpv vocational and pre-vocational, we can observe the fact the proportion of males vs. females is inverting. In EU-27 we have, a number of females graduates higher than the males graduates and this proportion is kept also for Romania. One interesting observation refers to the fact that, while in EU-27 countries the average number of graduates for males, females and total for the ISCED 4vpv is increasing; in Romania we can see a descending trend in all the three situations total, males and females, due to the demographic factor and to the fact that education is compulsory until X-th grade.

Graph 3



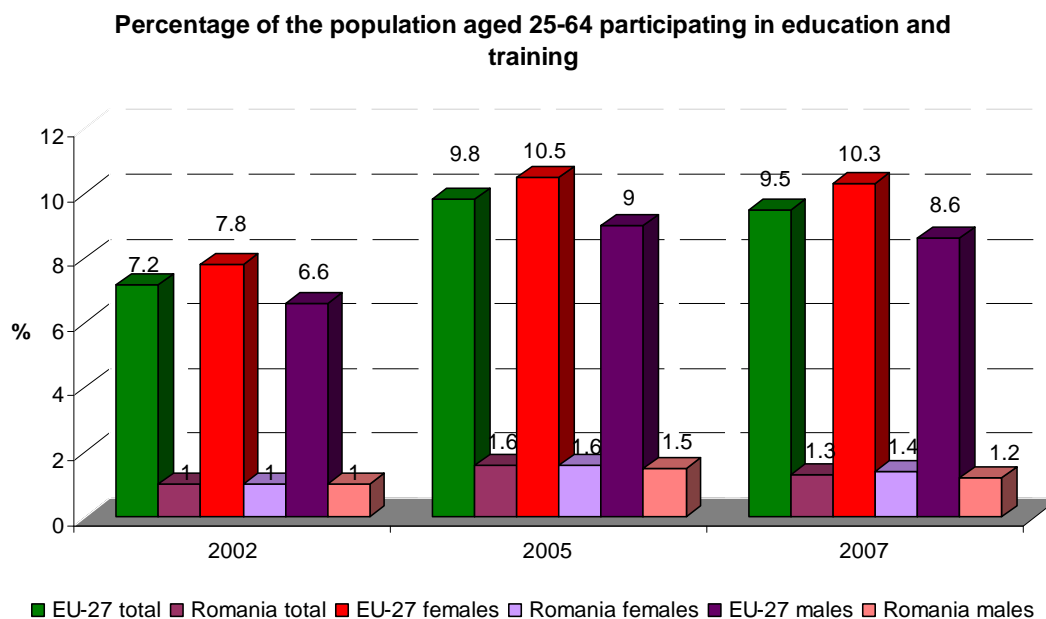
Source: Eurostat

For both the ISCED 3vpv and ISCED 5-6, the number of graduates in EU-27 and Romania is higher for women and is increasing for the period 2002-2006. Recently, the number of graduates has been on the rise for both sexes.

Analyzing the evolution of the number of Romanian graduates for the period 2002-2006 for the three levels of education ISCED 3vpv, ISCED 4vpv and ISCED 5-6 we can observe the fact that the number of men graduates is higher than the number of women for the ISCED 3vpv, and this ratio is inverting for the higher levels of education as ISCED 4vpv and ISCED 5-6.

The conclusion is that in Romania we have more women graduating the colleges and universities than men.

Graph 4

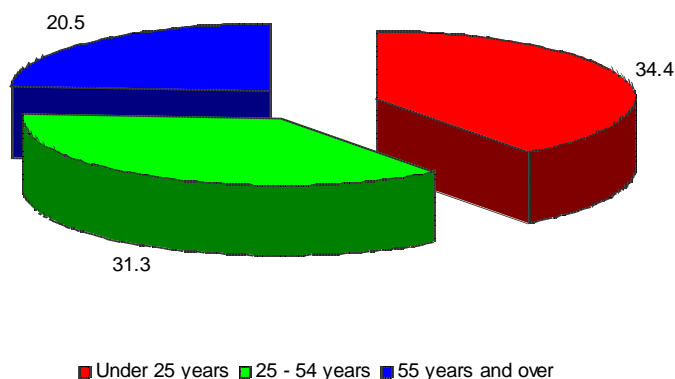


Source: Eurostat

Regarding the life long learning-percentage of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training we can observe that in the year 2002 the share of population for females and males is the same, but for the following years the male ratio is getting lower.

Graph 5

The participation rates for the employees in VET mobility programmes by age in 2005



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

The participation rate is the highest (34.4%) for the young persons with the age under 25 years. On the contrary, the persons over 55 years have the lowest rate of participation to VET programmes.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

The terms concerning education and training are not legally defined and in most cases they are not even clearly identified. Therefore, the terms used do not differ from the European or international definitions.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT – OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

2.1.1 NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

Romania's National LLL strategy is part of the Romanian Government Short and Medium Term Strategy of Continuing Vocational Training 2005-2010. The latter was elaborated under the Phare Twinning Project "Support to MLSSF for CVT" - the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family (MLSSF) from Romania and the Ministry of Education from Denmark - and approved by the Romanian Government through G.D. no. 875/2005:

- The main partners were: National Adult Training Board (NATB), National Agency for employment (NAE), Ministry of Education Research and Innovation, Social Partners;
- A related operational plan has been implemented since 2006;
- The goal consists of increasing participation in education and training of the population of age 25-64 to 7% until 2010 through:
 - Strategic Objective 1 - To facilitate the access to CVT for all the categories of participants, in a LLL perspective;
 - Strategic Objective 2 - To increase the CVT quality.

The national strategy for lifelong learning is under debate and was drawn up by the inter-institutional work group. It provides for the following areas of action:

- Ensuring access to education and lifelong learning:
 - Implementing the national strategy for early education;
 - Including the "education and training" dimension in the national programmes for the elderly;
 - Encouraging the re-integration into the formal education system of early school leavers ("second chance" programmes, promoting informal learning; developing education programmes based on an alternative curriculum for "priority education areas"; setting up community lifelong learning centres at a local level);
 - Removing barriers to participation in continuing training for employed adults, especially for low skilled, people from isolated areas, elderly, people with disabilities;
 - Identifying, assessing and certifying competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts with a view to assure "vertical" and "horizontal" mobility of the labour force;
 - Diversifying the organisation of learning, especially for adults with a low level of education and qualification; one of the measures considered refers to open and distance learning.

- A life-long approach to learning:
 - Encouraging participation in continuing training through measures at individual and institutional levels;
 - Strengthening the educational role of family;
 - Strengthening the educational and training role of holders of cultural values (cultural actors or cultural communities);
 - Encouraging the educational and training role of mass-media;
 - Promoting civic education and education for active, democratic citizenship through formal, nonformal and informal learning.

- Developing competences related to a knowledge economy and society:
 - Increasing quality of basic education, stressing the ICT and key competences with a view to the integration in the “digital economy”; promoting learning of at least two foreign languages;
 - Attracting public interest in lifelong learning and creating a culture of lifelong learning through media campaigns and public debate;
 - Developing information, guidance and counselling systems for lifelong learning;
 - Encouraging e-learning - including the recognition of competences acquired through e-learning;
 - Strengthening the education and training dimension of national programmes for disadvantaged, vulnerable or “risk” groups and communities.

- Developing institutional capacity for lifelong learning:
 - Developing quality assurance and management systems in the field of lifelong learning;
 - Increasing the quality of teacher training and trainer training from a practical lifelong learning perspective;
 - Identifying and developing national, regional and local learning networks;
 - Strengthening the institutional capacity of the social partners - employers’ and employees’ organisations - for initiation and participation in the national lifelong learning programmes.

The main obstacles, which Romania faces in its effort to adopt an integrated and coherent lifelong learning strategy, are:

- the existence of a historical delay with regard to the provisions of the Lisbon Strategy, followed by the insufficient development of a lifelong learning culture;

- the lack of a systemic and coherent debate involving ministries, public institutions, civil society and businesses in the development, implementation and monitoring of lifelong learning policies;
- the lack of global approaches in lifelong learning policies, which should consider the entire path of an individual learning and training and a unique vision, from pre-school education, compulsory education, initial training, to the continuing adult education and training;
- the gaps, sometimes significant, between legal provisions on lifelong learning and their regional and local implementation;
- lack of correspondence between the priorities of the education policy documents and the financial resources allocated to their attainment;
- insufficient commitment of the responsible actors in the development and implementation of human resources development policies.

Lifelong learning and promoting adaptability of workers and enterprises represent the main objective of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD). This programme was elaborated for 2007-2013 and its general objective is the development of human capital and increasing competitiveness, by linking education and lifelong learning with the labour market and ensuring increased opportunities for future participation on a modern, flexible and inclusive labour market.

The SOP HRD addresses the most immediate needs in relation to tackling poverty and social exclusion: Encourage participation in employment, with an accent on lifelong learning and vocational educational training and on fighting forms of discrimination in all socioeconomic sectors; Intensify measures to eliminate nonattendance in compulsory education, reducing school dropout and increasing participation in secondary education, at least to European standards, improving the adaptability of vocational and technical education to the labour market demands and enhancing lifelong learning.

Priority Axis 1 of SOP HRD is: Education and training in support for growth and development of knowledge based society. The overall objective is: development of flexible lifelong learning pathways and increasing the access to education and training by delivering modern quality initial and continuous education, including higher education and research.

The following *specific objectives* will contribute to the achievement of the overall objective:

- Improving the quality assurance system in preuniversity education and initial VET systems by supporting schools in management and capacity to provide relevant qualifications for labour market;
- Improving the quality assurance system in higher education by supporting universities in management and capacity to provide relevant qualifications;
- Improving the teachers' and trainers' qualifications and of other categories of human resources in education and training by supporting their initial and continuous training;
- Increasing the quality assurance in CVT by supporting CVT providers for developing quality assurance and management system;

- Supporting better knowledge and competences of young researchers by doctoral and Postdoctoral programmes.

Priority Axis 2 of SOP HRD is: Linking life long learning and labour market and the following *specific objectives* will contribute to the achievement of the overall objective:

- A better transition from school to active life;
- Improved participation in second chance education and preventing early school leaving in particular for vulnerable groups;
- Increasing the readiness of enterprises to support the enhancement of employees qualification level;
- Increasing the qualification level of employees.

This Priority Axis is focused on lifelong learning for employment/labour market related issues and individuals, in terms of broadening and diversifying forms of learning, increased participation in learning/continuous professional training, provision of skills and competences facilitating the fast adapting to the job requirements for recent graduates etc.

The *continuous vocational training* for the persons in agriculture, subsistence and semisubsistence agriculture will be performed under SOP HRD either within this Priority Axis or Priority Axis 5 - “Promoting active employment measures”. For those persons employed in agriculture and subsistence agriculture, Priority Axis 2 will finance the vocational training only for full qualification achievement (including requalification), as for the rest of sectors.

Guidance, counselling and training in the entrepreneurial field and in nonagricultural fields will be also promoted under SOP HRD PA 5. NRDP (The National Rural Development Programme) under PA 1 “Improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors” will provide only short term training programs (basic training and specialisation) to upgrade the skills of workers employed in agriculture and forestry. A notification of participation will be issued to these trainees.

The need for transforming formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning and broaden access and participation to learning are priorities for the national policy. For employment related purposes, the modernisation of the education and training systems should target more flexible provision, increased relevance of the knowledge and competences delivered for the labour market needs and broaden access to all forms of learning for individuals in life cycle approach.

2.1.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

The initial vocational training system in Romania is based on the following strategic directions:

- The need to ensure a coherent national qualifications framework, based on learning outcomes;
- The focus on demand, not on supply;
- Educational provision with multiple and flexible learning environments;

- Education pathways and multiple forms of organization, in an open system that allows for inputs and outputs based on the recognition of prior learning and certification of achieved competencies in the perspective of facilitating lifelong learning;
- Strong support and consistent implementation of principles of access and equity;
- Quality assurance of the VET provision.

The initial vocational training in Romanian was restructured in order to ensure a better correlation with labour market needs and coherence with continuous vocational training as well as articulation with higher education, in the lifelong learning perspective.

Thus, starting with the year 1995, the IVET system has undergone a reorganization and modernization process (especially with the financial support of Phare VET RO 9405, Phare 2001-2003 and 2004-2006 Programmes).

The IVET system has been addressing issues relating to the definition of training standards and the creation and revision of qualifications in line with the requirements of the emerging national qualifications framework. Quality assurance instruments have been introduced through the inter-assistance school networks and the main players in charge with internal and external assessment have been trained. The curriculum was revised in the perspective of a modular approach and an associated credit system was introduced. The teachers (including the staff in management positions) from the schools benefiting from the modernization projects supported by Phare funds have been trained in actuality fields such as the teaching - learning process and participative management.

The involvement of the social partners in the design and assessment of vocational qualifications has become systematic through the creation of Sector Committees, which represent the various sectors of the Romanian economy. They are also involved in the corresponding Validation Commissions. In the same time, the social partners participate in Regional Consortia and other partnership structures at local level (Local Committee for Developing Social Partnership in Vocational Training) having as main goal educational planning. Thus, the provision of vocational training programmes is developed by increasingly taking into consideration the specific labour market needs, responding to these needs at regional and local level.

As regards higher education, Bologna cycles were introduced and universities have started the process of defining qualifications, reviewing study programmes and adopting quality assurance mechanisms.

The legislation that was adopted concerning the continuous professional training all along the adults' life took into account the needs of access to training opportunities for adults and for people searching for a job. It also took into account reforming the system of professional updating of initial training by introducing the European ideas such as quality assurance, decentralization, social partnership and system transparency. The legislation also foresees for the necessary conditions for institutional enforcement.

The VET curriculum is developed based on validated training standards by Sectoral Committees. Methodologies and mechanisms for updating training standards and VET curricula have been developed and applied during the Phare TVET projects and will be updated by the institutional development of the National Authority for Qualifications (currently the National Adult Training Board), supported by Phare projects. The new VET curriculum introduced some innovations focused on developing learner-based teaching methodologies and the individual tailored educational offers. The new curriculum, based

on competences and the transferable credits system adopted create the premises for flexible and better adapted educational and initial VET offers to the labour market needs and for promoting entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial education is part of the key competences and is reflected in all curriculum development activities.

Entrepreneurial education is also part of the compulsory curriculum in gymnasium education (module within the technical education curricular area) and in the 10th grade of the high school lower cycle. Initial VET offer contains entrepreneurial education as part of the curriculum in upper secondary education. The specific training of teachers teaching entrepreneurship is still insufficient and remains a priority of the system. School-enterprises cooperation as pre-condition for entrepreneurship skills development is still insufficiently exploited, especially in rural areas. In case of university education, entrepreneurial education is less coherent and systematic compared to pre-university education.

Tertiary education, university and non-university (namely post-high school education) is fostering the achievement of managerial skills. The first reference level ensuring managerial skills is the high school. Still labour market is requiring managerial skills within a competences package, including occupational related knowledge, to be delivered by post high school education.

Among the factors limiting the correlation between education and initial VET to the labour market, the following could be considered:

- Still insufficient involvement of relevant stakeholders in the participatory planning of educational activities/offers;
- Insufficient training provided to stakeholders in education and VET planning;
- Insufficient updated information and studies on long term labour market needs affecting the initial VET planning and responsiveness;
- Insufficient development and valorisation of partnership in education and training, limited cooperation in developing continuing learning programs, work based learning programs;
- Absence of mechanisms for monitoring the insertion and professional development of graduates (e.g. “tracer studies”).

At the policy making level, more coherence between education and initial training policy and CVT policy is needed.

The generalization of the validation of learning outcomes, a better articulation between education and initial VET and CVT, an improved definition and transparency of qualifications are issues to be addressed through the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

As the main targets, at policy level:

1. Defining a unified concept for “trainer” based on common core competencies but differentiated for specific functions:

- the extension of the “trainer” concept for all categories of trainers;

- common core competencies for all trainers, not depending of the level of qualification;
- common “framework programs” for training of trainers;
- common procedures for the trainers’ evaluation and accreditation;
- the differentiation of the specific categories of trainers by optional competencies.

2. Developing the professional association(s) of trainers as self-regulating bodies;

3. Developing higher education programs in the area of adult education;

4. The implementation of quality assurance and quality management systems - based on ISO and EFQM models.

The issue of quality of provision, including here also the professionalization of adult educators should be also a priority. As future perspective, a system of continuing professional development for adult educators should be foreseen. Also, building up a more flexible and diversified infrastructure of provision and services, to foster flexible learning paths is needed. Plus clear measures for building up a culture of lifelong learning, and to foster it

2.1.3 CURRENT DEBATES

No available information

2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN IVET

The National Centre for Development of Technical and Vocational Education (Centrul National de Dezvoltare a Invatamantului Profesional si Tehnic - CNDIPT) through the EU Phare TVET projects, developed the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) for TVET in Romania, based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF), and two main instruments for quality assurance at provider level: the Self - assessment Manual, based on the European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers and the Inspection Manual for external monitoring of TVET providers.

CNDIPT created the basis for a National Reference Point (NRP), structured as an inter-institutional coordination structure whose role is to apply national and European QA strategies and measures in VET. NRP was created in 2006 in compliance with the recommendations of the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET), under the name of the National Group for Quality Assurance (Grupul National pentru Asigurarea Calitatii - GNAC). It includes experts of national institutions who have certain attributions regarding QA for initial and continuing VET: *the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, the Romanian Agency for QA in Pre-university Education, the National Adult Training Board, the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development, the National Centre for Staff Training in Pre - university Education.*

In 2007, GNAC coordinated the development of a *Guide of institutional practices in quality assurance of vocational education and training programmes*. The guide is accessible on the CNDIPT site: www.tvet.ro.

The evaluation of the education system is also based on the results obtained by the pupils at the final exams - the exam at the end of grade VIII and the „examenul de bacalaureat”. In the case of IVET, the evaluation of vocational skills follows the vocational training standards devised on the basis of occupational standards. Student assessment is aimed at the certification of learning outcomes.

Following the reform of the assessment and examination system in pre-university education, both these exams have gained a national character - through the standardisation of the content, administration and assessment procedures. This has led to reliable data to be used in evaluating the quality of the education provided and in elaborating educational policies.

However, within the framework of the education reform, it became a priority to establish a National Programme for the Assessment of Educational Progress in Romania - once the changes on the assessment and examination system have been designed and put into practice. With the major aim of establishing and monitoring the educational standards over time, the National Assessments complement the functions of national examinations creating, concomitantly, a more balanced diagnosis of this field at a certain period of time. In Romania, previous National Assessments at grade IV have been conducted in 1995, 1996, and 1998. Starting with the year 2000, the National Assessment and Examination Service has proposed a National Programme for the Assessment of Educational Progress in Romania having the following major aims:

- Selection of grade IV - the end of primary education - as a first key stage for assessment, to be followed in the years to come by other key stages like VI, VIII and, possibly XI grades;
- Selection of Mother Tongue (reading and writing) and Mathematics, possibly Sciences and Foreign Languages to be added in the future as the key subjects for assessment;
- Identification of the main changes over time in students' academic progress and achievement;
- Provision of reliable data on the impact of the new curricula, textbooks, and other important reform measures and changes on the Romanian education system;
- Provision of reliable measures of the degrees and levels of functional literacy, as well as mathematical and science literacy of the students at various education levels and curricular cycles.

The main purpose of the evaluation performed at various levels is to improve the quality of the system and of the education and training provided. In this respect, besides the diagnosis dimension, the evaluation has also an important supportive dimension - being considered as the main modality to assess the existing problems and to plan and carry out corrective measures. This applies to the level of the educational institutions, to the local level and to the national level. In order to become the basis for the educational policy at various levels, all the evaluation processes are materialised through detailed reports on every aspect evaluated.

The information provided within the annual reports elaborated by the County School Inspectorates (see 3.2) and by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education - ARACIP (see 4.1) are aggregated with the results of the national final exams and, if available, the various external studies at the level of the General Directorates of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. Finally, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth elaborates the annual report on the status of education and training in Romania and submit it to the Parliament. The annual national report becomes the basis for the planning in the education and training sector for the next year and it also constitutes an instrument in establishing the medium- and long-term strategies of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CVET

Quality assurance is almost lacking in case of CVET. Nevertheless, the existing systems for quality assurance are challenged by the emerging development and the emphasis placed at EU level on the validation of learning achievements obtained in non formal and informal learning context. The existing tools, methodologies and mechanisms for quality assurances, the authorisation process of CVET providers need to be improved, with a particular focus on addressing the challenges of informal and nonformal learning. Also, insufficiency in quantitative and qualitative data provided by the quality evaluators and accreditation agents of the National Adult Training Board adversely affects the aim of improving quality in CVET. In this area, the ESF cofunded actions will consist of: developing, improving and implementing specific tools and instruments for quality assurance; improving the existing methodology for authorisation of CVET providers; training and retraining of quality evaluators. The ESF supported actions for the quality assurance and management will be in line with the European Framework for quality assurance.

UNIT BASED CREDIT SYSTEM

In 2003/2004 a new curriculum, designed according to the vocational training standards and based on transferable credits has been introduced in the last two years of compulsory education (first 2 years of upper secondary education). The new curriculum embraces the development of core and vocational competencies including career orientation. This structure goes beyond the traditional way of vocational training (limited training to specialised skills) and focuses on broader skills.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

The National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training is managing the community programmes: “Life Long Learning” and “Youth in Action” for the 2007-2013 period. Romania has participated in the first phases of the “Socrates” and “Leonardo Da Vinci” programmes and the projects developed by the Romanian participants have confirmed the capacity of the schools, universities and other institutions or organizations in the educational and vocational education and training field to elaborate European projects in these fields.

2.3 POSSIBLE PROJECTIONS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON VET POLICIES

2.3.1 THE FORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS ON VET

As the world economic recession entered its worst phase with contagion spreading through the markets following the September 2009 bankruptcies on the Wall Street and got a degree of synchronization not known since the Great Depression of 1929-33(41) so the Romanian economy started to falter. The last quarter of 2008 has seen exports in a free fall with several large companies that were dependent on the foreign markets being forced to shut down temporarily due a massive contraction in sales. At the time, the outgoing Government of Calin Popescu Tariceanu, did not tighten the strings of the public purse although it resisted any attempts to rush a 50% increase in the salaries of teachers which if applied could have spelled outright dissolution for the Romanian economy. However, by maintaining public spending at roughly the same levels and leaving the budget deficit to loom at close to 6% of the country's GDP, the liberal Government has, most surely inadvertently, applied for the first at last time in its tortuous four years tenure a counter/anti-cycle policy. As such, while the world economy as a whole has seen in the last quarter of 2008 a contraction of 2% on the year early, the Romanian economy has witnessed a 2.9% growth in the year to the same period thus closing 2008 over any expectations.

The newly appointed two-party coalition Government of Prime Minister Emil Boc, facing a continuous fall in public revenues as large exporters were still lingering in the first months 2009 has decided on a drastic tightening of the purse and finally though still debatably resorted to an emergency loan from the IMF complemented by a MoU with the Commission so as to fill in the gap in public resources and stabilize the exchange rate of the RON.

While some of the measures taken by the Romanian Government since its arrival into office in the last days of December 2008 were long awaited and had to be implemented, the timing of their implementation was and is rather not the best. If in normal times or even in times of a limited contraction these would have been truly the measures to be taken so as to re-balance what was indeed a relatively over-heating economy, the synchronization of the world economic slump has rendered them to a vast extent most inappropriate and rather pro-cycle in their character.

The final data released for the first quarter of 2009 by the NIS (see at www.insse.ro press communiqué June 9th 2009/no.119 on GDP for q1.09), with regard to the evolutions of the national GDP show clearly that while expenditures for the final consumption of households has dropped by only 0.5% as against the last quarter of 2008, final consumption of the public administrations both individual and aggregate has witnessed a slump of 7.3 and respectively 14.7%. In effect the rug has been pulled from under the economy which under the combined effect of the world economic downturn and the massive contraction of public expenditures (in the effect the nullification of the public spending multiplier) has contracted by 6.2% in the year to the first quarter of 2009 and by an astonishing 8.2% in the year to the second quarter of 2009.⁴

⁴ The flash forecast that the SYSDM correspondent has sent to the RO-desk at the end of this July was bent on a value of (-8.2%) for the most pessimistic of forecasting scenarios proposed and therefore practically coincident with subsequently released official data!

Against this very severe recessionary background we will therefore proceed in the pages to follow to the analysis of both short and long term geared measures announced, implemented or projected by the Romanian authorities.

2.3.2 THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN OR ENVISAGED TO BE TAKEN AS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

The main measures envisaged by the Romanian Government have not been geared necessarily towards stimulating the economy and maintaining consumption but towards containing public expenditures, reducing the deficits of both the balance of payments and the public budget and putting a lid on wages while in the meantime ensuring that a certain stability of the exchange rate for the RON is maintained. While after a certain volatility in the last months of 2008 and first weeks of 2009 the exchange rate of the RON stabilized against both the EUR and the US\$ prompting some ill-placed official cheers at a time when even data for the last quarter of 2008 were not yet final, the other measures have only resulted in sharper than expected contraction which has left the economy short of liquidity and rendered the coffers of the state empty, with the real danger that state pensions and salaries of the public servants might go unpaid for the last months of the year. The economic stimulus package is thus amongst the modest in the EU-27, amounting only at around 0.6% of the GDP (in nominal terms around US\$ bn. 1.03 or EUR mil. 726).

The measures taken by the Government so as to stimulate the economy and foster eventually a recovery are as a result dismal in scale. Apart from the continuation of the so-called “junk car” scheme that aims at replacing ageing, heavy polluting cars with new ones but which has limited resources available and with salaries under heavy downward pressure will have little effect overall. Actually, car sales on the domestic market have fallen and the DACIA-RENAULT factory in Pitesti, the country’s only car factory and one of its main exporters has seen a much-needed revival in production on the back of the far more generous German old-cars replacement scheme.

Another measure that may be counted here is the so-called “First Home” scheme, aimed at reviving the real-estate market although it leaves for the moment unfinished constructions out of its scope. Its stated goal is that of helping young families and youngsters in general in becoming home-owners by offering a state guarantee for each bank loan directed at the purchase of a first family/individual home, up to a ceiling of EUR 60,000. The advance which the borrower has to pay only amounts to EUR 3,000 (5% of the total). It is of course understood that credits higher than the amount for which the state provides guarantee can be granted by banks but state blanket will only extend that much, the rest being left to the borrower to cover with the up-front amount to be paid going up also. After several haggles and hassles it seems that finally the scheme has started though its intake is still modest. First of all it actually encourages speculation with old apartments in blocks built under communism where living conditions are not what one would call best actually propping their prices instead of leaving it into the free-fall it would otherwise had to go. Second it seems that banks, still very prudent with lending are imposing rather hefty conditions for applicants which sometimes have to cast their dreams to the dustbin. Thirdly and finally, with individual revenues in a free-fall, growing uncertainty and growing unemployment ahead most households are now weary about taking a credit, even if necessity bites them. On the other hand true, most potential buyers hope that market will continue to fall and that the months to come will bring them a better bargain in hand. However, the overall impact of the scheme cannot and should not be overstated as at the value that the state guarantees the multiplier effect is minimal.

Enhancing automatic stabilizers, anyway meager in Romania (unemployment benefit virtually stuck at 75%⁵ of the so-called social-reference indicator which at its turn shadows the minimum salary currently only at around EUR 142 with minimal additions for higher contribution periods or a higher contribution base) has also been limited. Of course the Romanian Government has acted fast under pressure from growing unemployment so as to increase the duration of unemployment benefit by three months, thus moving towards a 12 months period on the average, though conditional on contribution period and thus disadvantageous to youngsters but there has been no move towards an increase in the amounts granted as unemployment benefits. Therefore, the contribution of this automatic stabilizer remains minimal. Contribution rates for unemployment insurance fund currently at a measly combined 1% after the reckless reductions of the couple of years could hardly be a target for increase given the state of the business sector. As such, the unemployment insurance fund is now deep into red depending on a depleted state budget for a continual disbursement of benefits.

A more innovative though also dismal in effect measure has been taken with respect to pensions. A minimum social pension of RON 320 (EUR 76.2 at current market exchange rates-Aug.2009) has been introduced starting with April 1st 2009. While of course socially it is a step ahead towards greater inclusion, economically nobody can expect anything significant with respect to aggregate demand. Moreover, in a move that is definitely and damagingly pro-cycle the Government has enacted a surge in the contribution rates for the public pension fund by 3pp. thus reversing, though only partly the again reckless reductions of the same rates enacted by the liberal Government during the last couple of years. Of course the measure has been greeted with a hail of protests from the business environment but the Government had little choice on that. In the meantime one has to note that contribution rates for the pre-funded pension schemes that just entered operation in 2008 have been capped for this year, although the Government guaranteed that starting with 2010 their legal progression will be resumed. This however poses a grave danger for those generations that rely for their pensions on a dual system (private and public), with the pre-funded one counting for what will be actually two-thirds of their future pension income. With growth unlikely to return to pre-Recession levels for a number of years to come, the danger that some schemes will become seriously under-capitalized looms even higher even with progression of contribution rates resumed from 2010.

The business environment has been given up until now only faint promises of a stimulus, all being dependent on the state of the public finances which grows weaker by the time passing. Initially talk has revolved around tax exemption for re-invested profits but with state coffers emptying as the economy contracts being deprived of any budgetary or fiscal multiplier (the Prime Minister has announced a budget deficit at the equivalent of only 2.7% of the GDP for the first six months of the year which unfortunately have also been the most critical ones and thus the ones where the support of the state for the economy would have been the most needed - and this comes in the form of a higher deficit of the state budget) even this measure has actually been postponed for 2010 (recently on Aug.18th 2009, the Government has re-announced this measure stating that its application will actually start from Oct.1st; This is hard to picture as it entails a modification of the Fiscal Code, governed by rather cumbersome procedures which have been placed there precisely to avoid instability of the business environment).

⁵ According to NIS data ("Romania in figures 2009/Romania in cifre 2009 - statistical pocketbook") the replacement rate as against the minimum salary of the unemployment benefit has been on the average 78.6% on 2008, with the highest replacement rate being reached in 2007, when it topped over 80%, at 82% of the minimum wage)

On the same meeting on Aug.18th 2009 both parties that form the current governing coalition and which will see confrontation of their presidential candidates this late autumn as the first term in office of the incumbent Traian Basescu comes to an end, have heralded a new set of anti-crisis measures (32 all in all), to come into application this very autumn out of which we will spell only the most important ones, of course without making any analytical commentaries as the time moment of their announcements against the moment when these lines are written (Aug.20th 2009) precludes it:

- state aid schemes for SME to support debt-repayment and investment;
- export promotion measures;
- fiscal credit for the renovation and modernization of buildings and apartments;
- tax-exemption for re-invested profit;
- income-tax exemption for youngsters provided that their income does not exceed RON 1,000 (equiv. at market exchange rate of EUR 238);
- extending the range of collaterals to be accepted by banks so as to include financial instruments;
- the extension of the “junk car” (old cars replacement scheme) so as to include besides individuals also companies, with application from Sept.1st 2009;
- the elimination starting with Jan.1st of the so-called minimum corporate tax and its replacement with a lump-sum corporate tax directed towards those business activities where tax evasion and undeclared work are harder to detect;
- a temporary tax exemption for interest rate earned on bank deposits by individuals;
- a reduction of the initially kind of oversized investment program to a total of EUR mil.10;
- The Government will issues debt worth EUR mil.500 on the foreign markets (EUROBOND issue) with the proceeds to be used for the financing of public investment works.

As said before it is difficult to make an assessment of all these recovery measures that have been announced by the Government as they have just been aired to the wider public but one can only say that most of the measures are too general in character and there is no hint of how or when they will start their application. Moreover, they come at a time when the Government talks of a sharp reduction in public expenditures, of more cuts in salaries coming in for civil servants and other categories of Government-paid employees which all in all make up to almost 30% of the entire mass of salary employees nationwide and even of lay-offs in the public sector all of which will for sure dampen even more aggregate demand. Therefore it is unlikely that an eventual recovery will underpin itself on domestic factors. More likely it seems that all hopes are directed at an improvement of the global economic climate which at its turn might prove a renewed impetus for exports. However, the fact that the current crisis has hit Romanian so severely should raise some question mark with regard to the country’s extreme reliance on foreign markets as once they falter they push it into misery. Accordingly domestic market should receive more attention as it seems that in spite of the aggressive inroads that have been made during the last years of sustained economic growth, this second growth engine of every economy has failed to sustain it in difficult times, actually it went to an almost-complete halt. The

budget multiplier as well as the fiscal multiplier will remain rather muted under this program as there is actually the minimum corporate tax will stay in place until the end of this year and an advanced application of the tax-exemption on re-invested profits is difficult to contemplate. Moreover it is clear that the temporary tax-exemption of interest rates earned on bank deposits by individuals will not have much of an effect. Most of these deposits are actually small and with so many bad news still streaming-in the instinct of hoarding rather than spending this meager surplus will for surely prevail.

On the other hand it seems that any attempt to enhance the automatic stabilizers has been put on halt. As such, growing unemployment combined with an already depressive consumers' mood, lower incomes for at least one third of the country's employees as well as a much-more-than-ever constricted public spending will collide in pushing the downward spiral even deeper towards the end of the year thus outweighing most probably any positive effect that might arise from a revival of exports due to slightly improving world economic conditions. In this respect our most pessimistic of forecasts, made available to the desk roughly one month ahead of this report converges with the IMF's chief negotiator latest of appraisals which foresees a deepening of the economic decline towards the end of the year with growth rate reaching probably in the year to the last quarter an abysmal -9 or even close to -10% thus bringing the Romanian economy to the levels of the end of 2005 in the most pessimistic of variants or alternatively, the end of 2006, in the now most improbable event that the optimistic forecasts will come true. Concluding, all gains of the last three to four years of high growth and surge in living standard not seen by Romanians since the end of WW-II will go down the drain.

In the end one has to mention nonetheless that the Government has moved even from the first quarter of this year so as to drastically reduce R&D spending, cutting them by more than 60%. All R&D projects either funded or co-funded by the National Authority for Scientific Research have been forced to halt.⁶

⁶ The National Authority for Scientific Research only awards funding to R&D projects on a competitive basis and not via direct allocation of public funds earmarked as such. Beneficiaries can be therefore not only publicly financed entities such as universities but also research institutes that act as commercial companies as well as private firms specializing in R&D. Thus the effect of the cuts has been dramatic and rather far-reaching.

3. LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK – PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

A new legislative framework for pre-university education is set up through a law (*no. 268/2003*) and two Executive Orders (*68/2003 and 110/2003*), which amend the 1995 Education Law. According to the new law, the starting age of compulsory education will become 6 years of age (with parents consent) from 7 currently. Compulsory education will be extended from 8 to 10 years, as was already the case before 1990. The Art and Trade Schools (ATS) - IX and X grades, replacing the existing vocational schools and apprenticeship schools provide vocational training at lower secondary education level, and one year of „passage” - XI grade - to high schools. High schools will provide upper secondary education. The existing High schools will continue to offer both technical and general education. At the end of compulsory education graduates in the Arts and Trades School can obtain a level 1 qualification. This qualification enables the holder to perform relatively simple work. A level 2 and 3 qualification that are more in demand on the labour market, will still need an additional one to three year further study after compulsory education.

The GD 844/2003 approves the classifications of occupations, trades and specialisations for initial vocational education and training as well as the principles for updating and adapting specialisations to changing demands on the labour market.

3.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

Romania has made progress in the reform of vocational education and adult training through the creation of a National Qualifications Agency. The planning for technical and vocational education programmes has been decentralised and put into the hands of the regional consortia, and is no longer the responsibility of the central authorities.

The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research plays a predominant role in the IVET system. It is, among others, responsible for policy and strategy development in IVET. It is supported in this by the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education (NCDVTE), that was established in 1998. It is responsible for designing, developing, implementing and revising the VET curricula, the system of evaluation and certification of vocational training, teaching staff training and the scientific coordination over VET development projects. It is also in charge of developing social partnership in IVET at national, regional and local level.

At the county level, the Ministry of Education and Research is represented by the County School Inspectorates that are responsible for the quality of the provision of IVET, for establishing the availability of IVET and for approving school-based curricula (up to 30% in Arts and Trade school and up to 25% in technical high schools). The IVET providers themselves have the responsibility for their personnel (evaluation), ensuring the quality of the teaching and learning processes and developing the local development-based or school-based curriculum.

At the local/county level, social partners have been involved in the setting up of the Local Development Councils (LDCs) with advisory role in IVET. LDCs also include representatives of the County Employment Agencies. These bodies are participating in the planning process at county level, are approving the local component of curriculum and nominating social partners in the assessment commissions for IVET graduates. The chairs of the LDCs are also members of the Regional Consortia, that further consist of representatives from the County School Inspectorates, the County Agencies for Employment and the social partners. Employers are involved in the validation of qualifications acquired through IVET.

In Romania the responsibility for policy making with regard to IVET transnational mobility is shared by The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour. Government has low involvement in IVET mobility. The stakeholder with apparently the biggest involvement in IVET mobility is the individual VET institution.

3.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

Law no. 375/2002 approving and modifying the *GD 129/2000* supports LLL measures specific to CVET such as: guaranteeing the access to CVET of all employees by including this right in the collective labour agreement, encouraging employers to invest in HRD, evaluating and recognising the competencies acquired by non-formal and informal learning. Whereas the above-mentioned issues are addressed in general terms, the law is very specific in defining the responsibilities and conditions for accrediting training providers. The National Adult Training Board is given a central role in the accreditation. *Law no. 253/2003* consequently reviews the functioning of the National Adult Training Board (NATB). It amends and completes a previous one (*Law 132/1999*) focusing more on NATB's new role in authorising training providers. With the new law the Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment (COSA) has been integrated into the NATB, bringing the occupational standards development and assessment tasks under a common umbrella. In October 2003, the methodology for authorising the adult training providers has been adopted through the *EO 522/2003*, completing the legal framework for adult training. The directive regulates the work of County Authorisation Committees under the coordination of NATB.

The National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training has been established through the *Law 145/1998* as a tripartite body with a major role in managing active labour market programmes and organising adult vocational training programmes. Through the regulations *EO 294/2000* and *GD 260/2001* the functioning of the re-baptised National Agency for Employment was reviewed, providing NAE with some new responsibilities in the field of employment and vocational training. According to the *Employment Law (76/2002)*, the Agency is responsible for co-ordinating vocational training and retraining programmes for the unemployed (financed from the Unemployment Fund) as well as for other persons looking for jobs.

According to the Labour Code (art. 189) firms can provide vocational training to their employees in any of the following forms: a) attendance of training courses organized by employers or by suppliers of vocational training services; b) vocational on-the-job training for new-entrants to a position or work place; c) probationary and post-graduate training in Romania and abroad; d) on-the-job vocational training; e) coaching; f) other forms of training agreed upon between employer and employee.

Employers of more than 20 employees are bound by law to prepare and provide, every year, in agreement with the trade union or the employees representatives, vocational training schemes, which are attached to the collective agreement at company level, as an integral part thereof.

Employers are also supposed to create the appropriate conditions for all their employees to take part in vocational training programmes, as follows: a) at least once every 2 years, if they employ 21 or more employees; b) at least once every 3 years, if they employ 21 or less employees. The related training expenses are borne by employers.

When the employer fails to comply with the obligation to provide the funds for the vocational training of an employee, such employee is entitled to a paid leave of up to 10 working days or up to 80 working hours, for vocational training purposes.

Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, regarding the vocational training of adults sets forth that adults have a right to enjoy equal opportunities of vocational training, with no

discrimination on account of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, political or religious affiliation.

The same ordinance expressly provides:

- the obligation of all employers to take appropriate measures enable their employees to enjoy access to vocational training; and
- the right of job seekers to attend the free vocational training programmes provided by the National Agency for Employment (*Agentia Nationala de Ocupare a Fortei de Munca*, ANOFM - see 3.4) or by other, duly licensed, providers of vocational training services.

The Labour Code (*Law 53/2003*), in place since March 2003, pays ample attention to training in enterprises. Employers are obliged to provide regular training and develop annual training plans in consultation with staff representatives or trade unions. The law also establishes the general principles for apprenticeship contracts, whereby the employer, apart from salary payment assumes the responsibility to provide vocational training in a certain trade.

3.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

In Romania, the continuous vocational training system has been organised as a network of national, local and sector structures of the authorities in charge. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities (*Ministerul Muncii, Familiei si Egalitatii de Sanse*), in cooperation with other ministries and other relevant bodies, elaborates the policies and strategies for the continuous vocational training. MMFES closely cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation (*Ministerul Educatiei, Cercetarii si Inovarii*) in order to articulate the correspondence between the initial and the continuous vocational training.

The National Council for the Vocational Training of Adults (*Consiliul National pentru Formarea Profesionala a Adultilor*, CNFPA), which also acts as national authority for qualifications (a tripartite body) performs a multitude of tasks: develops and implements, with the assistance of the sector committees (also tripartite), the methodological basis (including the instruments) for the assessment of competency, based on an occupational analysis for each specific sector; elaborates the occupational standards, and the qualification standards; validates the qualifications; elaborates the national register of occupations; certifies the levels of competence and qualification; ensures the quality of the continuous vocational training system; coordinates the licensing of providers of vocational training services.

The National Agency for Employment (NAE-ANOFM - *Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca*) also a tripartite body, carries out the active measures for the stimulation of employment, including vocational counselling, guidance, and training, and allocates the requisite financial resources from the unemployment fund.

Vocational training programmes are organised by the county employment agencies, through their own vocational training centres, through the regional vocational training centres for adults, and through licensed providers of vocational training services, all being available mainly to job seekers, but also to employees, and other, interested, individuals.

The task of private or state-owned vocational training services providers is to organise, implement and evaluate vocational training programmes, which must satisfy the competence needs of companies and individual clients.

4. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL EDUCATION VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

DIAGRAM 1 - DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

AGE	GRADE	ISCED	EDUCATION LEVEL		QUALIFICATION LEVEL Ro	CORRELATION WITH EQF LEVELS	TYPE OF EDUCATION	
>19		6	POST-UNIVERSITAR (POST UNIVERSITY EDUCATION)	INVATAMANT SUPERIOR SI POST UNIVERSITAR (TERTIARY EDUCATION)	5	8 7 6		
		5	UNIVERSITAR (UNIVERSITY EDUCATION)		4			
		4	SCOALA POST LICEALA (POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION)	INVATAMANT POST SECUNDAR (POST SECONDARY NON TERTIARY EDUCATION)	3	5		
18	XIII	3		CICLUL SUPERIOR AL LICEULUI (HIGH SCHOOL UPPER CYCLE)	INVATAMANT SECUNDAR SUPERIOR (UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION)	3	4	POST OBLIGATORIU (POST COMPULSORY)
17	XII		CICLUL SUPERIOR AL LICEULUI (HIGH SCHOOL UPPER CYCLE)	AN DE COMPLETARE (COMPLETION YEAR)				
16	XI							
15	X	2	CICLUL INFERIOR AL LICEULUI (HIGH SCHOOL LOWER CYCLE)	SCOALA DE ARTE SI MESERII (ARTS AND TRADES SCHOOL)	INVATAMANT SECUNDAR INFERIOR (LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION)	1	2	INVATAMANT OBLIGATORIU (COMPULSORY SCHOOL)
14	IX							
13	VIII							
12	VII							
11	VI							
10	V	1	GIMNAZIU (GYMNASIUM, MIDDLE SCHOOL, A BRIDGE BETWEEN ELEMENATRY SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL)		INVATAMANT PRIMAR (PRIMARY EDUCATION)		1	
9	IV							
8	III							
7	II							
6	I		SCOALA PRIMARA (FIRST STAGE OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)					
5		0	GRADINITA (PRE- SCHOOL EDUCATION, KINDERGARTENS, NURSERY SCHOOL)		INVATAMANT PRESCOLAR (PRE PRIMARY EDUCATION)			
4								
3								

The gymnasium graduates receive a Graduating Certificate (Certificat de Capacitate). The graduates of the high school lower cycle (lower secondary education) get a graduation certificate, personal portofolio.

The high school graduates (upper secondary education) receive a Graduating Certificate which allows them to attend tertiary, non university education and to take the bacalaureate exam or the exam which certifies the vocational competences. The students who pass the bacalaureate exam receive a bacalaureate diploma. The students who pass the exam which certifies the vocational competences get a Vocational Certificate.

The apprenticeship is not included in the above diagram as there is a special law that regulates the institution of apprenticeship in Romania, namely the Apprenticeship Act of 2005 (Law no.279/2005), apprenticeship is regarded as a special and distinct form of vocational training

The Romanian IVET system is a school-based system with two main entry points:

- The high school route or direct route offering two pathways: the technological and the vocational pathways. It offers general secondary education with a large vocational component at high schools providing a level 3 qualification. More than half the students in upper secondary education study in technological and vocational programs, more than at theoretical high schools. The graduates who pass the bacalureate exam get a bacalureate diploma. Many high school graduates pursue their studies in post-high schools and higher education;
- The “progressive route” - Arts and Trades Schools (Scoala de Arte si Meserii) - prepares students for the labour market or further progression to upper secondary education in high schools. At the end of compulsory education (grade IX-X) graduates of ATS can obtain a level 1 qualification that enables them to enter the labour market or continue their studies up to level 3 qualification, after three more years of studies (XI, XII and XIII grades). A level 2 qualification is awarded after grade XI that represents at the same time the “*class de passage*” towards the upper secondary education in the high school system leading to level 3 qualification awarded after completion of 2 years of studies. The graduates of this route get a Vocational Certificate and if they pass the bacalureate exam they also get a bacalureate diploma.

Grades XII-XIII provide a level 3 qualification.

In conclusion in initial VET there are two training routes:

- a) Direct professional route (vocational and technological pathways in high schools)- 2 years of the lower level of high schools (the last two years of compulsory education)+2 years of upper level of high school, leading to level 3 qualification;
- b) Progressive professional route- School of Arts and Trades (2 years - level 1 qualification) + completion year (1 year - level 2 qualification)+2 years in upper secondary education (level 3 qualification).

The Post High Schools are a specialised technological route of 2 years leading to qualifications at level 3. The Foreman School is a post-high type of school aiming at preparing foremen for industry and leading also to a level 3 qualification. Foreman School

courses are organised at the request of companies and do not have a steady intake every year. Post high school education refers to vocational qualification for maximum of 3 years offered to those who graduate high school (including those who do not hold the baccalaureate diploma).

In the case of post high school education, the current financing system does not allow a proper development/pace in relation with labour market needs and current EU experiences in the field. The companies co-finance the post high-schools, in relation with their specific needs. This raises the issue of addressing in a coherent manner the labour market needs which require intermediate qualification levels between high school and higher education. The lack of staff development strategies in companies, in particular in SMEs, affects also the development of this level of education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is in a more advanced phase in initial VET than in the other components of the education system. It started earlier under a PHARE project and a system of quality assurance based on the common quality assurance framework (CQAF) agreed at European level has already been implemented. The experience acquired allowed the starting of implementing of the quality assurance instruments for initial VET at the level of the whole VET system.

In VET, the development of qualifications is organised with the direct involvement of relevant social partners. Since qualifications are not anymore linked to the type of provider (schools or private providers) or to the type of training (initial or continuing VET), their validation is the responsibility of Sectoral Committees 10 that are gradually established by the National Adult Training Board acting as National Authority for Qualifications. This is meant to increase coherence between initial and continuous VET. So far, vocational training standards for qualifications levels I, II and III which can be obtained through the initial VET system have been updated and are implemented at national level. The methodological developments and expertise as regards qualifications development and validation reached within the initial VET have been transferred to the whole VET.

The National Quality Assurance Framework in TVET is based on self-assessment, a process through which TVET providers evaluate their performance, after collecting and analyzing evidences.

The Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation draws up the self-assessment report and formulates the proposals for the improvement of quality of vocational education and training at the level of the TVET provider, with the support of the entire school staff.

The best practice (especially for large TVET providers) is to set up teams to perform the self assessment of their activity area. These can be:

- ✓ teams per subjects of education / curricula areas;
- ✓ teams for specialized services, such as students' assistance.

Inspection is performed by the representatives of the school inspectorates under the coordination of the deputy general inspector responsible for quality assurance. For strengthening the inter-institutional cooperation between IVET providers, it is useful and recommended to include in the teams performing the external monitoring visits, managers

and coordinators of the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation⁷ of IVET providers with good practice in quality assurance. Inspection must be performed in cooperation with a representative of the management or of the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of the TVET provider.

External monitoring of TVET providers' and programmes' quality, validation of TVET providers' self-assessment reports, approval of TVET providers' improvement plans are carried out by school inspectorates.

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP - established on the basis of the QA in Education Law, to promote and to apply QA policies in the pre-university education system) coordinates the authorization and accreditation processes at the end of which it is certified that a TVET provider and its training programmes have met predetermined standards. Accreditation is compulsory for each training programme, on the basis of the QA in Education Law. Accreditation is granted by order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, based on the approval of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, by complying with the accreditation procedure of the QA in Education Law.

Accreditation requires going through two successive stages:

- *provisional authorization*, that grants the right to carry out the education process and to organize the admission to education and training programmes, as the case may be;
- *accreditation*, that also grants the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research, and to organize graduation/certification exams.

External evaluation of TVET providers' and programmes' quality - the multi-criteria examination of the extent to which a TVET provider and its programmes meet the quality standards; it is carried out by independent experts, under the coordination of ARACIP, every 5 years.

4.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

The gymnasium graduates are enrolled in the schools of arts and trades according to the selection procedure from the Ministry of Education Procedure. The selection procedure is based on the evaluation results of the competences achieved during gymnasium. The competences evaluation is made according to the national evaluation standards. For the persons that are not under 18 years old this level of education can be developed with evening and reduced frequency.

School of arts and trades does not allow entrance to universities, but it allows progression to upper secondary education through the „class de passage” (XI grade).

⁷ The Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance develops the quality manual (the sum of all policies and procedures, strategic and operational plans and documentation regarding quality assurance) and monitors the implementation of the procedures; draws up the self-assessment report and formulates the proposals for the improvement of quality of vocational education and training at the level of the TVET provider, with the support of the entire school staff; contributes to quality assurance by: internal monitoring of TVET quality; coordination of TVET quality assurance and evaluation processes.

4.4 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

Upper secondary level of education - vocational (ISCED 3) - is provided in high schools through the technological and vocational pathways. The duration is 2 + 2: 2 years of compulsory education (IX and X grades) of the lower cycle, plus the two years of the upper cycle. For what concerns the progressive route (art and trades school + completion year) the duration is 2 years.

Students are usually aged 15-18 years old. This level of education is developed with daily, evening and reduced frequency.

For registration in the first year of lower cycle of the secondary education (IX grade) it is required graduation of gymnasium education keeping or not Diploma de test national (capacitate). The enrolment in the upper cycle (XI grade) of the secondary education (daily) is allowed in the first two years after graduating the lower cycle or the completion year (class de passage for the Art and trade school gradates), if the student is under 18 years old. There are no exams between the lower cycle and the upper cycle of the secondary education (between the X and the XI grades).

Upper secondary education has three pathways: theoretical, technological and vocational and it is provided in high schools. Public upper secondary education is not compulsory, but it is free.

	TOTAL ISCED3	ISCED3GEN	%	ISCED3PV	%	ISCED3VOC	%
EUROPEAN UNION (27 COUNTRIES)	22205390	10723395	48	1185480	5	10296515	46
EUROPEAN UNION (25 COUNTRIES)	20782183	10183168	49	1185480	6	9413535	45
ROMANIA	1051851	369320	35	-	-	682531	65

gen - general; pv - pre-vocational; voc - vocational

Source of information: Eurostat

ENROLMENT	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
IVET (TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS)						
Total	18,50	19,70	20,00	20,10	20,90	20,30
Urban	18,00	19,00	19,40	18,70	18,40	18,20
Rural	19,30	20,70	20,90	21,80	24,30	23,20
Female	13,60	15,10	15,30	15,50	16,20	16,00
Male	23,30	24,10	24,60	24,50	25,40	24,60
THEORETICAL PATHWAY AND IVET						
Total	71,40	74,80	74,70	74,40	76,40	75,00
Urban	86,00	89,10	90,40	89,00	87,80	86,60
Rural	50,20	54,10	53,90	55,40	61,00	59,90
Female	72,70	76,50	76,70	76,10	78,00	75,90
Male	70,20	73,20	72,70	72,80	74,90	74,20

Source NIS 2005

In high school (theoretical) and IVET, participation in education recorded an ascending evolution: at this level of education, the gross enrolment rate increased from 71.4% in 2000/2001 to 75.0% in 2005/2006, but it is decreasing as compared to the level of 76.4% in 2004/2005; participation in vocational education in rural areas is higher as compared to urban areas, during the entire period analyzed; this trend is explained by the increase of schooling capacity of VET in rural areas as part of the actions undertaken for increasing access to education for all.

TABLE 3: PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RURAL AREAS					
SCHOOL YEAR	INITIAL VET			HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC APTITUDES (I.E. ARTS, SPORT)	THEORETICAL
	TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS ENROLLED (% IN THE RURAL AREAS)	TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS ENROLLED (% IN THE RURAL AREAS)	TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS ENROLLED (% IN THE RURAL AREAS)	TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS ENROLLED (% IN THE RURAL AREAS)	TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS ENROLLED (% IN THE RURAL AREAS)
2001-2002	565,665	252,347	313,318	51,04	346,30
	11,26%	(15.8%)	(7.6%)	(2.6%)	(5.9%)
2002-2003	596,531	270,215	326,316	53,951	360,14
	11,47%	(15.9%)	(7.8%)	(2.3%)	(6.2%)
2003-2004	618,951	279,124	339,827	53,76	365,33
	(12.09%)	(17.3%)	(7.8%)	(2.1%)	(6.7%)
2004-2005	637,803	289,494	348,309	55,54	370,00
	(13.24%)	(19.4%)	(8.1%)	(2.1%)	7%
2005-2006	628,554	284,412	344,142	53,98	369,32
	(8.3%)	(18.0%)	(8.1%)	(2.0%)	(7.0%)

Source NIS 2005

The number of students enrolled in vocational education route, 9th grade, increased by 3.1% in 2004/2005 as compared to 2003/2004, but it decreased by 1.5% in 2005/2006 as compared to 2004/2005). The number of students enrolled in the technological route increased by 2.4% in 2004/2005 as compared to 2003/2004 but it decreased by 1,2% in 2005/2006 as compared to 2004/2005,

The schooling capacity of the initial VET system increased substantially beginning with school year 2002/2003: from 844 school units in 2002/2003 to 1,474 school units in 2004/2005 and 1,495 in 2005/2006. Most of the increase was in rural areas: from 518 school units in 2003/2004 to 713 school units in 2005/2006. The increased number of schools is mainly a result of the reclassification of education. In some of these schools

(those included in the Phare TVET projects) the learning environment has been improved by new equipment. The results achieved in 2005/2006 have been followed by a restructuring of the VET schools network having as result in 2006/2007 a total of 1,367 VET schools units, out of which 611 in rural areas. The reorganization of the network included also transportation facilities for students in rural areas, improving thus the access conditions. These schools offer first chance education to the graduates of grade VIII in their locality, preventing additional costs that the parents have to afford for transport or accommodation in case the students should go for learning in other localities.

Romania has a system which focuses on older teenagers and young adults. Here the IVET is part of the general, state managed, free of charge public system of education. This is framed as a combination between theoretical core subjects, vocational subjects and practical activities. Practical activities take place in school workshops and sometimes in companies or organizations. There are cases when the school runs an 'exercise firm' where the pupils can practice or apply what they learn.

The training firm-represents an interactive learning method for the development of the entrepreneurial spirit, a modern conception of knowledge integration and its interdisciplinary application, a modern training approach, which assures the necessary conditions to practically exercise the competences students acquired during their vocational training. The introduction of the training firm concept in the Romanian technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system was done through a project initiated within the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and developed in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture - the ECO NET Project.

COMPLEXITY LEVELS OF THE TRAINING FIRM

Mini training firm - Level I (*recommended before proceeding to the actual training in the training firm*)

The training will take place in a so called *learning office*, where all economic activities will be simulated on the basis of a closed model. The economic situations are initiated by the teacher, and the commercial relations with the customers, the fiscal institutions, the banks and the service enterprises are presented by teachers. This training firm organization model can be utilized within the framework of the local development curriculum for schools with profiles other than services, or in IXth and Xth grades as a stage preceding the establishment of the training firm.

Training firm features

- no relation with the external environment;
- not registered at ROCT (Romanian Centre for Training Firms);
- the simulated situations are initiated by the teacher;
- action-oriented teaching-learning process. The student goes through all the office's departments and carries out his tasks either individually, or in a team.

Training firm - Level 2 (*For new firms - at the XIth grade, direct pathway, and the XIIth grade, progressive route*)

Training firm features:

- a properly endowed economic and entrepreneurial centre;
- the firm is registered at the ROCT;
- business relations with national training firms;
- carrying out all necessary work within an enterprise in order to solve the current
- operations;
- organizing presentations of the training firm;
- opening of a bank account at the training firm bank within ROCT for the reimbursements.

Training firm - Level 3 (*For more than 2 years-old firms, i.e. training firms attended by several generations of students*)

Training firm features

Besides level 2:

- contracts with at least 3 training firms from abroad;
- operations also in foreign languages;
- students have the status of an employee - are paid;
- taxes are calculated correctly.

IMPLEMENTATION

In Romania, the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation took the strategic decision to disseminate at national level the training firm concept. During 2001-2004, the project was implemented in 10 schools included in the ECO NET project, by applying the method during practical training (on the basis of Order 4508/2001).

The results achieved allowed the extension of the training firm concept at the level of all economic schools by including the contents in the national curriculum at the technological route, services profile, qualification level 3 in the 2006 -2007 school year (on the basis of Order 3172/2006).

The activity in the training firm takes place within the technologic laboratory courses, as follows:

- XIth and XIIth grades, Technologic High-school -direct route, 3 hours/week, compact session;
- XIIth and XIIIth grades, Technologic High-school -progressive route, 3 hours/week, compact session.

Specific objectives:

- Facilitation of the graduates' transition from school to active life;
- Development of the national TVET students' entrepreneurial spirit;
- Development of the adults' entrepreneurial spirit in continuing training programmes.

Beneficiaries in the school year 2007/2008: students from IVET schools - profile: services, following qualifications:

- tourism technician;
- mail activities technician;
- economic activities technician;
- technician in administration;
- technician in contracting and procurement;
- hostel services technician;
- technician in trade activities;
- technician in gastronomy;
- banqueting organizer.

Future beneficiaries are:

- Students who train in other domains than the economic one;
- Adults, to keep their job or find a new one.

The training firm in the compulsory curriculum

Modules included in the compulsory curriculum, through which the necessary conditions to use the training firm method are assured.

XIth grade:

- Operational planning;
- Business marketing;
- Human resources;

XIIth grade:

- Business negotiation;
- Business financing;
- Competitional environment.

These modules include thematic contents which assure the development of entrepreneurship competences through the training firm. These contents refer to:

- Establishment and registration of the training firm at ROCT1(the CRISROM2 department for the coordination of pre-university education training firms) ;
- Legal and structural organization of the training firm;
- Transactions with other training firms;
- Recording of the operations carried out in the operative record;
- Use of the IT software for different applications;
- Use of foreign languages in business;
- Use of commercial correspondence.

The training firm in extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities allow the training of the competences developed through the compulsory curriculum within national and international training firm fairs.

These activities assure optimal conditions for developing the competitive spirit and help recognize the added value of the *training firm* method within the vocational education and training system.

The Romanian students' were awarded with national and international prizes for their competitiveness, creativity and professionalism, in the following categories:

- Best catalogue;
- Best training firm;
- Best marketing department;
- Best stand;
- Best spot video;
- Best negotiation;
- Best salesman.

Implementation stages:

Stage I: 2001-2004

Stage II: 2004-2006

Stage III: 2007-2009

Activities during stages I and II:

- HR training through training seminars for teachers who coordinate training firms from the 10 schools involved in the project;
- HR training through training seminars for teachers who coordinate training firms from other schools than those involved in the project;
- elaboration of didactic support (“The Training firm guide” and a CD with pedagogical resources for the teaching-learning activity carried out through the training firm.

The training has been carried out in cooperation with KulturKontakt, Austria.

Stage III will strengthen and will extend the training firms network. This will be done through:

- Elaboration and implementation of the training firms’ establishment and functioning procedures at the level of the services schools network and of the “quality mark” methodological benchmarks;
- Elaboration of the procedures of monitoring and evaluation of the training firms’ activities;
- Organization of the IVth edition of the International Training Firms Fair, RO TIFE 2008;
- Participation of the training firms to national and international fairs.

4.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

TABLE 1: PUPILS ENROLLED IN APPRENTICESHIP SCHOOLS BY TRAINING PROFILE							
	PUPILS ENROLLED						
	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
APPRENTICESHIP SCHOOLS	62109	60309	52778	20465	387	-	-
INDUSTRY	27706	25381	22732	9153	155	-	-
SMALL SIZED INDUSTRY	23457	22619	19262	7149	232	-	-
SERVICES FOR POPULATION	9316	10242	8378	3156	-	-	-
ACTIVITIES IN AGRICULTURE	1630	2067	2406	1007	-	-	-

Source: NIS 2007

APPRENTICE SCHOOL (THIS TYPE OF EDUCATION IS PHASED OUT)

Schools for apprentices used to provide a 1-2 year training. In the apprenticeship schools (Art and Trade schools and school groups), the gymnasium graduates with or without certificate of capacity could enrol. The courses used to end up in a “graduation examination” and the obtaining of the “graduation diploma”. The exam consisted also of a practical test that lead, in case of success, to a certificate of worker or apprentice worker. The graduation diploma certifies the training of the graduates and gives them the right to practice the profession they were trained for.

Graduates of vocational and apprentice schools who have also a “certificate of capacity” can continue their studies in „completion year” and then in technological high schools, usually in the same field in which they were trained at the schools from which they graduated.

WORKPLACE APPRENTICESHIP

The vocational training of the employees may take place in the form of on the job apprenticeship (workplace apprenticeship). The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration. The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

According to the special law that regulates the institution of apprenticeship in Romania, namely the Apprenticeship Act of 2005 (Law no.279/2005), apprenticeship is regarded as a special and distinct form of vocational training combining employment, in the form of a closed-end, determined duration contract, with vocational training, to be provided by the employer, both practical and theoretical. According to the law and to its application norms, are entitled to apprenticeship individuals aged between 16-and 25 years of age, provided that they had no prior qualification in the trade for which they demand entering into an apprenticeship contract. The contract as such, cannot be longer than three years but, also not shorter than six months, in accordance with the qualification to be provided. Actually, the Norms for the application of the law clearly state that the contract cannot actually exceed 24 months so as to be in full compliance with the provisions of the Labour Code for determined duration contracts. All enterprises can engage into apprenticeship contracts provided that they do have the necessary facilities and they do provide the local Labour Directorates of the Ministry of Labour with proof that apart from these, they do have a specifically designed training program for the occupation for which they do wish to organize apprenticeship. In addition to that, they must specifically employ a so-called “apprenticeship foreman”, a category of personnel that is created by the law and by its application norms and which has to fulfil certain professional criteria among them being that of possessing a “trainer’s training certificate”, thus attesting not only that he or she is a skilled professional in the trade/occupation for which apprenticeship is to be organized but, also that he or she can work with adults and apply specific vocational training techniques. Once the authorization has been given for apprenticeship programs as well as for the apprenticeship foreman it is valid for a period of up to four (4) years, open for consecutive or non-consecutive renewal.

It is important hereby to mention that while the apprentice is considered a full time employee of the firm or of an individual authorized person or family association as these entities are also entitled to organize apprenticeships, he or she is entitled to all associated rights, with minimum salary as well as with working time regulations being applied. The apprentice also has to benefit from theoretical training which is to be provided within the

working hours. Also, employers have to provide housing and accommodation for apprentices if they are unable to shuttle between home and work.

4.4 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

European Social Fund (ESF) offers support for human resources development through the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (SOP HRD) 2007-2013.

The activities that can be financed through the SOP HRD - Key Area of Intervention (KAI) Transition from school to active life (eligible activities) are:

- Learning programmes at the work place for pupils (e. g. practice stages);
- Elaboration/updating/endorsement of the Local Development Curriculum (LDC);
- Career guidance and counselling;
- Development of partnership between schools, universities and enterprises;
- Monitoring of the insertion of young graduates on the labour market;
- Innovative actions to improve transition from school to active life (e. g. training firms).

The activities supported through SOP HRD - KAI 2.1. are addressed (target group) to:

- Pupils;
- Staff from enterprises assigned as tutors for the practice stages;
- Career guidance and counseling specialized staff;
- Personnel involved in the elaboration and endorsement of the LDC etc.;
- Young graduates.

The eligible beneficiaries are:

- Educational institutions from the national education system whose curriculum includes professional competences achieved through practice stages;
- Relevant structures within MoERI or structures coordinated by MoERI;
- Both public and private career guidance and counseling authorized providers etc.

SOP HRD - KAI 2.1 financial assistance can be accessed through projects.

The value of the projects may vary depending on their type, as follows:

- Strategic projects - budget: 1 850 000 lei (minimum) (approximately 460000 Euro) - 18 500 000 lei (maximum) (approximately 4600000 euro);

- Grant projects - budget: 185 000 lei (minimum) (approximately 46 000 Euro) - 1 849 999 lei (maximum) (approximately 460 000 Euro).

Maximum duration of the projects can be of: 3 years for strategic projects and 2 years for grant projects.

4.6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST SECONDARY LEVEL (NON TERTIARY)

Post-secondary non-tertiary level of education (ISCED 4) - duration of this level of education is 2-3 school years and includes students aged 19-21 years old. For registration in the first year of post-secondary non-tertiary level of education is required graduation of upper secondary level of education keeping or not bacalauret diploma. This level of education is developed with daily, evening, reduced frequency and also at distance.

Post high school state education is organized by the Ministry of Education and Research Innovation, on its own initiative or at the request of companies or other institutions that are interested. Tuition costs are paid by the applicants. After they pass the final graduation exams, the graduates get a graduation certificate, accompanied by a certificate specifying their professional competence.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SCHOOL AGED POPULATION							
	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007
POST SECONDARY	1,8	1,6	1,4	1,2	1,1	1,0	0,8
POST HIGH SCHOOL	1,6	1,4	1,2	1,1	1,0	0,9	0,7
FOREMEN	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1

4.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

No information available.

5. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

5.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

5.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

Law no. 375/2002 approving and modifying the *GD 129/2000* supports LLL measures specific to CVET such as: guaranteeing the access to CVET of all employees by including this right in the collective labour agreement, encouraging employers to invest in HRD, evaluating and recognising the competencies acquired by non-formal and informal learning. Whereas the above-mentioned issues are addressed in general terms, the law is very specific in defining the responsibilities and conditions for accrediting training providers. The National Adult Training Board is given a central role in accreditation. Law no. 253/2003 consequently reviews the functioning of the National Adult Training Board (NATB). It amends and completes a previous one (Law 132/1999) focusing more on NATB's new role in authorising training providers. With the new law the Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment (COSA) has been integrated into the NATB, bringing the occupational standards development and accreditation tasks under a common umbrella. In October 2003, the methodology for authorising the adult training providers has been adopted through the *EO 522/2003*, completing the legal framework for adult training. The directive regulates the work of County Authorisation Committees under the coordination of NATB.

The National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training has been established through the Law 145/1998 as a tripartite body with a major role in managing active labour market programmes and organising adult vocational training programmes. Through the regulations EO 294/2000 and GD 260/2001 the agency was re-baptised National Agency for Employment and its tasks were reviewed, providing NAE with some new responsibilities in the field of employment and vocational training. According to the Employment Law (76/2002), the Agency is responsible for co-ordinating vocational training and retraining programmes for the unemployed (financed from the Unemployment Fund) as well as for other persons looking for jobs.

According to the Labour Code (art. 189) firms can provide vocational training to their employees in any of the following forms: a) attendance of training courses organized by employers or by suppliers of vocational training services; b) vocational on-the-job training for new-entrants to a position or work place; c) probationary and post-graduate training in Romania and abroad; d) on-the-job vocational training; e) coaching; f) other forms of training agreed upon between employer and employee.

Employers of more than 20 employees are bound by law to prepare and provide, every year, in agreement with the trade union or the employees representatives, vocational training schemes, which are attached to the collective agreement at company level, as an integral part thereof.

Employers are also supposed to create the appropriate conditions for all their employees to take part in vocational training programmes, as follows: a) at least once every 2 years, if they employ 21 or more employees; b) at least once every 3 years, if they employ 21 or less employees. The related training expenses are borne by employers.

When the employer fails to comply with the obligation to provide the funds for the vocational training of an employee, such employee is entitled to a paid leave of up to 10 working days or up to 80 working hours, for vocational training purposes.

Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, regarding the vocational training of adults sets forth that adults have a right to enjoy equal opportunities of vocational training, with no discrimination on account of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, political or religious affiliation.

The same ordinance expressly provides:

- the obligation of all employers to take appropriate measures in order to put in place the requisite conditions for their employees to enjoy access to vocational training; and
- the right of job seekers to attend the free vocational training programmes provided by the National Agency for Employment (Agentia Nationala de Ocupare a Fortei de Munca, ANOFM) or by other, duly licensed, providers of vocational training services.

The Labour Code (*Law 53/2003*), in place from March 2003, pays ample attention to training in enterprises. Employers are obliged to provide regular training and develop annual training plans in consultation with staff representatives or trade unions. The law also establishes the general principles for apprenticeship contracts, whereby the employer, apart from salary payment assumes the responsibility to provide vocational training in a certain trade.

In Romania, the continuous vocational training system has been organised as a network of national, local and sector structures of the authorities in charge. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities (Ministerul Muncii, Familiei si Egalitatii de Sanse), in cooperation with the ministries and other relevant bodies, elaborates the policies and strategies for the continuous vocational training. MMFES closely cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation (Ministerul Educatiei, Cercetarii si Inovarii) in order to articulate the correspondence between the initial and the continuous vocational training.

The National Council for the Vocational Training of Adults (Consiliul National pentru Formarea Profesionala a Adultilor, CNFPA), which also acts as national authority for qualifications (a tripartite body) performs a multitude of tasks: develops and implements, with the assistance of the sector committees (also tripartite), the methodological basis (including the instruments) for the assessment of competency, based on an occupational analysis for each specific sector; elaborates the occupational standards, and the qualification standards; validates the qualifications; elaborates the national register of occupations; certifies the levels of competence and qualification; ensures the quality of the continuous vocational training system; coordinates the licensing of providers of vocational training services.

The National Agency for Employment (NAE-ANOFM-Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca) also a tripartite body, carries out the active measures for the stimulation of employment, including vocational counselling, guidance, and training, and allocates the requisite financial resources from the unemployment fund.

Vocational training programmes are organised by the county employment agencies, through their own vocational training centres, through the regional vocational training centres for adults, and through licensed providers of vocational training services, all being available mainly to job seekers, but also to employees, and other, interested, individuals.

The task of private or state-owned vocational training services providers is to organise, implement and evaluate vocational training programmes, which must satisfy the competence needs of companies and individual clients.

One of the most important sources of finance concerning development of human resources and professional training remains the European Community projects. The European Community has started and financed many programs: Phare: RICOP, which is part of the Economic and Social Cohesion Phare Programs for Human Resources. Romania takes part in the communitarian programme Leonardo da Vinci, which follows the improvement of the quality, innovative character and the European dimension of the practice and of continuous professional training systems.

The expenditures covered from the unemployment fund, for vocational training and retraining of the unemployed rose from 9.4 million in 2001, 11.3 million in 2002, 14.7 million in 2003, 16.6 million in 2004 to 15.4 million in 2005.

The 2006 - 2008 short and medium-term Strategy for continuing vocational training, enacted through Government Decision no. 875/2005 states that: Continuous vocational training (CVT) is not properly supported in the manufacturing industry, with the exception of the big corporations, particularly the multinational ones.

No official data exist in respect of the individuals who funded their own training needs. Individually funded attendance of CVT courses is minimal due to unaffordable costs and due to the lack of a system of incentives or extra deductible costs for the persons who are willing to pay for their own training out of pocket.

The Tax Code has provisions designed to encourage vocational training:

- Vocational training activities performed by any entity, irrespective of such entity ownership status, shall be value added tax exempt;
- For the determination of the taxable income, the expenses incurred by an employer for the vocational training and professional upgrading of its staff shall be deemed deductible;
- For income earned from free lance activities, tax payers may also deduct from their and their employees earnings the amounts spent for participation in congresses and other events if professional by their nature.

The unemployment fund provides free vocational training for the unemployed and disadvantaged persons. The unemployment fund also provides funding for 50% of the vocational/professional training of maximum 20% of the employees of a company. Such vocational/professional training programmes are devised to prevent unemployment, and the companies have to meet a number of requirements to qualify for them.

In Romania, the first two programmes financed from the European Social Fund, i.e. the Sectoral Operational Plan for the Development of Human Resources (SOPDHR), and the SOP for the Development of Administrative Capacity (SOPDAC), were launched on 15 February 2008.

EUROSTAT survey CVTS2 (2002), conducted in enterprises by the National Institute of Statistics with 1999 as the reference year, shows that, on an average, Romanian enterprises spent for each employee 3 times less than the EU member states average.

In many situations, the responsibility for training is “transferred” by the enterprise to the employee. No data are available with regard to the individuals’ contribution to their own training.

A similar survey, using EUROSTAT compatible methodology was completed in 2006, relying on the data collected in 2005. Results show that the discrepancy between Romania and EU27 remains approximately to the same level (average cost of CVT courses/by participant represented 0.3% from the average cost of CVT courses at EU27 level).

5.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

In 2008, the Adult Education Survey (AES) was carried out with the main propose to provide detailed statistical data regarding the participation of adult population to educational activities: participation of population to formal education, to non-formal education and to informal education, participation of population to social activities, the presentation of the fields of education (formal, non-formal, informal).

FORMAL EDUCATION

These types of educational activities take place within the National Education System, especially in schools, colleges and universities. The training activity is considered formal when it leads to the graduation of an education level that may be situated in the National Qualifications Framework.

In the first quarter of 2008, 431 thousands persons have participated in formal education, from which 244 thousands have been women (about 56.6%) and 187 thousands men (about 43.4%). The female participation rate to formal education activities pertained to total population was about 4.1%, while the male participation rate reaches the value of 3.2%.

The great majority of the participants to survey (87.7%) are living in the urban area.

TABLE 1. PARTICIPATION OF POPULATION TO FORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES BY SEX AND AREA		
SEX/AREA	PARTICIPANTS(THOUSANDS PERSONS)	PARTICIPANTS WEIGHT (%)
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	431	100
FEMALE	244	56.6
MALE	187	43.4
URBAN	378	87.7
RURAL	53	12.3

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

Taking into account the fact that the 25 years age is the lowest population threshold in this survey, the participation rate of 3.6% of formal education can be considered as normal. This form of education (formal education) conduce to graduation of an educational level until the accomplishment of the 25 years, fact reflected by the participation rates by age groups and by the participations weight with the highest graduated educational level (table 3). After the age group of 25-34 years, it can observed a strongly decrease of population participation to formal education who ends practically with no participation after the age of 54 years.

TABLE 2. THE PARTICIPATION RATES TO FORMAL EDUCATION BY AGE GROUPS	
AGE GROUPS	PARTICIPATION RATES (%)
TOTAL	3.6
25-34 YEARS	8.5
35-44 YEARS	3.5
45-54 YEARS	0.9
55-64 YEARS	0.1

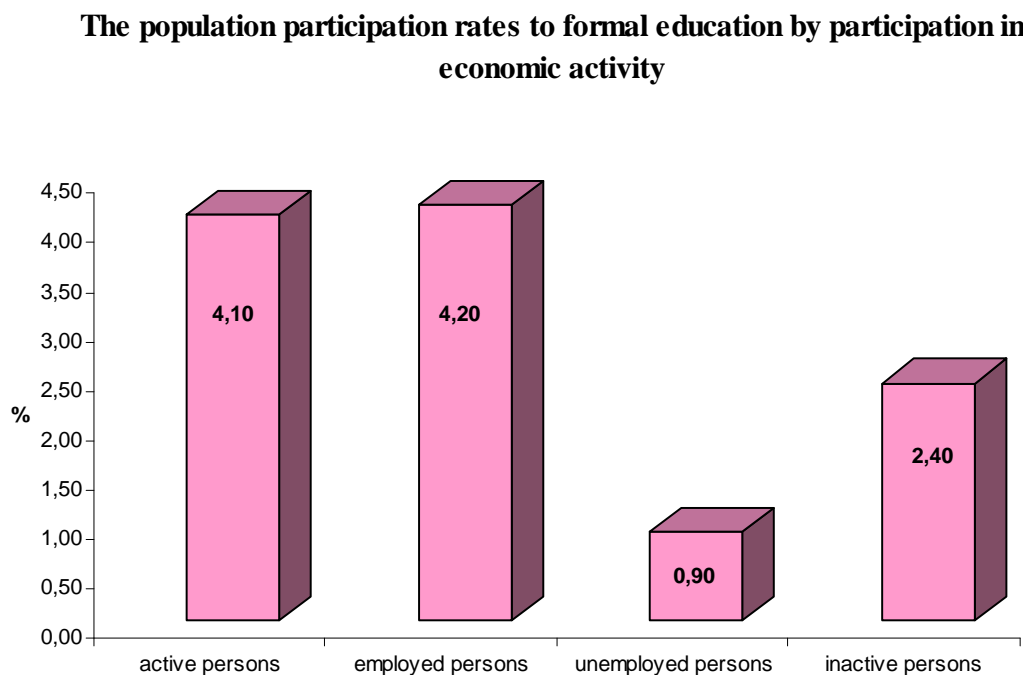
Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

Therefore, the participation rate to formal education reaches the maximum level (8.5%) for the 25-34 age groups.

TABLE 3. ADULTS' PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL		
THE GRADUATED LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PARTICIPANTS TO FORMAL EDUCATION (THOUSANDS PERSONS)	PARTICIPANTS WEIGHT (%)
TOTAL	431	100
LOW LEVEL	6	1.4
MEDIUM LEVEL	268	62.3
HIGH LEVEL	157	36.3

More than half of 25-34 years old population who participated in formal education in the period April 2007- March 2008 has the medium education level. Also, it is interesting to remark the participation rates of the high level graduates: their weight in the total participants to formal education being of 36.3%.

Fig. 1 The population participation rates to formal education by participation in economic activity



Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

The discouragement caused by job loss may be one of the reasons for which the unemployed participation rate to formal education is smaller (0.9%) comparing with the participation rate of inactive population (2.4%) or with that of people in employment (4.2%).

Fig. 2 The population participation rates to formal education by macroregions



Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

The macroregion no.3 had a 4.9% participation rate to formal education with 1.3% higher than the national participation rate (3.6%), being the highest comparing with the other macroregions.

Because the participation rate to formal education was greater for persons with higher education, one of the explanations of the highest level of participation rate from macroregion no.3 is due to the great number of universities from Bucharest comparing with the other academic centres of the country.

5.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

5.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

Non-formal education has not been recognized until very recently in Romania. However, starting with the year 2000, a procedure has been designed so as to recognize non-formally acquired skills and competencies. The NATB has accredited evaluation centres whereby persons having acquired several skills and or competencies can receive certification following an examination procedure. In the meantime, the system allows for partial certification as most of the training curricula for which training providers do receive accreditation from the NATB are modular in their concept thus allowing for partial certification. In most of the cases, this being valid of course for qualification courses, the law allows for participants to go directly at the level of training for which they need certification, after passing an examination which tests their acquired skills and competencies, be they formally or non-formally acquired ones. This system practically

allows for great flexibility in training provision as well as in the recognition of already acquired qualifications or competencies. It also brings into the mainstream of the labour market all those competencies, skills and even sometimes qualifications for which either individuals do not hold a formally recognized certification or for which, alternatively, there is no formal vocational training pathway.

5.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

In this category of education and formation are included the educational activities organised and sustained who can take place inside or outside of educational institutions with or without a diploma or a graduation certificate. The characteristics of these types of activities are the presence of a teacher, of an academic lecturer or of a specialist and the deployment of the activities in a systematic manner.

The non-formal activities can be classified into the following categories:

- lessons or courses (organised training, theoretical and practical courses or seminars), qualification and requalification courses for unemployed persons, courses organised by public or private institutions including union organisations; driver school courses; foreign language courses, computer courses, courses of management, sales, marketing, human resources, regardless of their organisation form;
- Seminars, workshops, conferences, round tables, congresses, training for knowledge and skills improvement.

The non-formal education of the adults in the meaning of continuing education outside the National Education System was been the centre of the Adult Education Survey (AES).

Within the EU policy, one of the objectives regarding the labour force qualification in the Member States is the participation to educational activities through attendance of courses, lessons, seminars, workshops, conferences organized by public and private education institutions and trade-unions.

Therefore, o high ratio of 25-35 year old population should participate in this type of adult education, but the non-formal education area hardly has exceeded the initial phase.

For *12-month* period *ended* March 2008, only 574 thousands adults have participated in non-formal education. 288 thousands persons (50.2%) from total have been women and 286 thousands persons (49.8%) have been men.

TABLE 4. PARTICIPATION OF POPULATION TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION BY GENDER		
SEX	PARTICIPANTS (THOUSANDS PERSONS)	PARTICIPANTS WEIGHT (%)
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	574	100
FEMALE	288	50.2
MALE	286	49.8

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

As it results from table 5 below, persons from urban area have a higher participation rate in non-formal education than those from rural area. The large number of providers of this

type of education (public and private educational institutions, trade-union training centres) from urban area provides more facilities to increase participation rates.

AREA	PARTICIPANTS RATES (%)
TOTAL	4.8
URBAN	6.4
RURAL	2.5

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

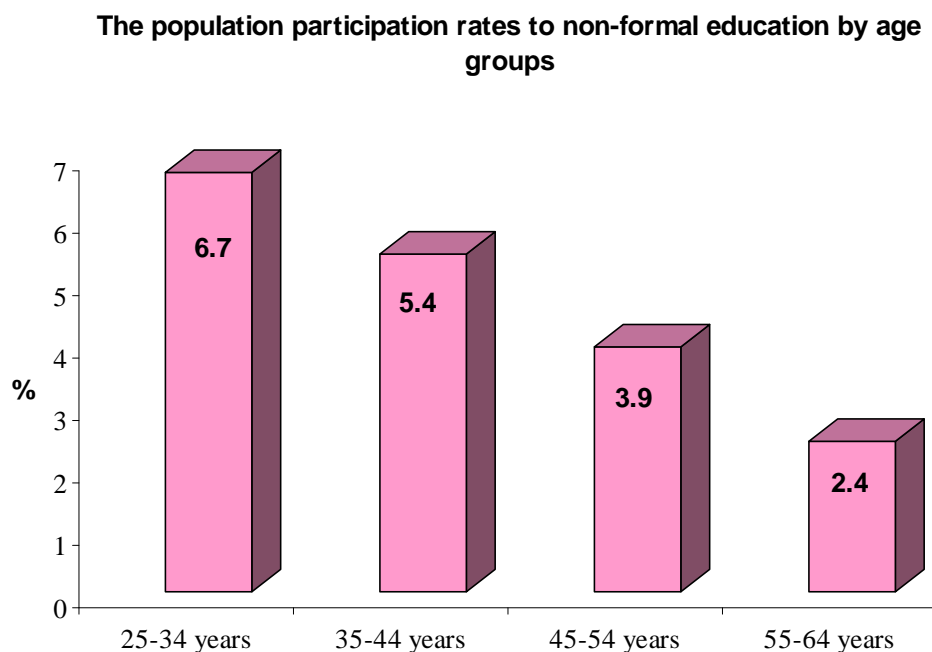
More than 40% of the population who has participated in non-formal education has attended courses or lessons. According with the main purpose of non-formal education- vocational qualification- a large part of non-formal participations has been achieved also by working place guidance (34.9%). The low number of participations to seminars, conferences and workshops can be the results of a low offer, because these manifestations are organised on special occasions.

TYPES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION	PARTICIPANTS (THOUSANDS PERSONS)	PARTICIPANTS WEIGHT (%)
TOTAL	654	100
LESSONS AND COURSES	272	41.6
DISTANCE TRAINING COURSES	55	8.3
SEMINARS, CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS	99	15.2
WORKING PLACE VOCATIONAL TRAINING GUIDANCE	228	34.9

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

For different age groups between 25 and 64 years, the following participation rates have been identified:

Fig. 3 The participation rates to non-formal education by age groups



Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

The decreasing participation rate in non-formal education for the age group 55-64 years was predictable. Thus, the fig. 3 suggests the fact that the young generation has the interest to be abreast with the new requirements of vocational development.

If we compare the participation rates in non-formal education with the participation rates in formal education by participation to economic activity, results reveal the fact that the former are higher with 2.4% for employed persons and with 1.3% for unemployed persons.

TABLE 7. THE POPULATION PARTICIPATION RATES TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION	
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION	PARTICIPATION RATES (%)
TOTAL	4.8
ACTIVE PERSONS	6.4
-EMPLOYED PERSONS	6.6
-UNEMPLOYED PERSONS	2.2
INACTIVE PERSONS	0.7

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008*

TABLE 8. PARTICIPATION RATES IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	
THE GRADUATED LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PARTICIPATIONS TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (THOUSANDS PARTICIPATIONS)
TOTAL	663
LOW LEVEL	37
MEDIUM LEVEL	315
HIGH LEVEL	311

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008

Fig.4 The participation rates to non-formal education by macro-regions



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008

The participation rates registered by regions are higher in the case of non-formal education than for formal education. This fact could be explained by the relative homogenous distribution of the non-formal education providers across the territory of Romania.

5.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The main measures to help people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market are:

- The national programme of vocational training for 2008 of the National Employment Agency with the main objectives:
 - ✓ To facilitate the access of all persons to vocational training in line with their abilities and the needs of the labour market;
 - ✓ To change the qualifications in order for them to correspond with the requirements imposed by the economic reorganization, by the social mobility and by the changes in the work capacity;
 - ✓ To insure a higher participation rate, among the registered unemployed at the territorial agencies of employment;
 - ✓ To increase the level of human capital to become competitive on a competitive market;
 - ✓ To increase the participation rate among the persons from the rural areas;
 - ✓ To reinsert the unprivileged target groups through qualification/requalification.

Thus for 2008, 55,150 persons were foreseen to benefit from vocational training programmes and also 44,059 unemployed registered at territorial employment agencies. Out of the latter, 20,861 were foreseen to be women.

The beneficiaries of the national programme for vocational training for 2008 organized through the employment agencies are:

- ✓ Long term unemployed (8,585 persons);
- ✓ Persons who work in the rural area(20,532 persons);
- ✓ Persons with disabilities(216 persons);
- ✓ Rom persons(2,143 persons);
- ✓ Prisoners(2,549 persons).

Special attention is given to the people from rural area looking for a job.

- The employment programme for the people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market for 2008 of National Employment Agency with the general objective: the social inclusion of the people vulnerable to the exclusion from the labour market.

The specific objectives are:

- ✓ Decreasing the risk of social exclusion;
- ✓ Guidance and counselling for people vulnerable to social exclusion within the system of formal and non-formal education;
- ✓ Decreasing the number of unemployed persons under 35 years of age.

6. TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

6.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET SYSTEM

In Romania, there are three main types of teachers in technical and vocational schools: general education teachers, vocational subject teachers and practical trainers, respectively. A vocational subject teacher in a technical school must have a university education (4-6 year programmes) and a psychology-pedagogy course. A vocational subject teacher in a vocational school must have a three year degree from an institution of higher education. A practical trainer must complete a two year training programme comprising both specialty training (theory and practice) and psychology-pedagogy training in addition to three years of work experience after having completed their vocational education.

Initial training for the teaching profession differs according to the level of education.

- Teachers for pre-school and primary education must be graduates of the pedagogical high school (qualified as educators, primary school teachers respectively) or short-term pedagogical university college (qualified as institutors);
- Teaching staff for the other levels of education (including VET system) must be graduates of higher education (university-pedagogic and university-polytechnic education), long term (4-6 year for high school teachers) or short-term (3 years for vocational and apprenticeship schoolteachers). In addition to specialised training for those who wish to become teachers it is compulsory to take a psychology-pedagogy module organised by the Teacher Training Department, which exists in each higher education institution. The programmes that provide psychological-pedagogical training include: courses in pedagogy, psychology, specific teaching methodology, teaching practice and optional courses (established according to the orientations and options of every higher education institution);
- Foremen instructors must be graduates of a foremen school. At this level and as a consequence of the reform process, the position of foreman-instructor/trainer has been introduced for a variety of broad vocational qualification domains (e.g. foreman-instructor in engineering, telecommunications, etc). Training programmes for foremen-instructors last for 2 years and have a 3-module structure: individual and social development, specialised training (theoretical and practical) and pedagogical and didactic training (theoretical and practical). To become foremen-instructors graduates of foremen schools who have not attended the special training programme described above must have at least 3 years experience in the field.

The teachers contribute to quality assurance in VET by:

- use of student-centred teaching methodology;
- improvement of the quality of the teaching process after regular evaluation (at least annually) of students' satisfaction;
- team planning, at least at curriculum level, of teaching and assessment activities;
- offering individual support, at students' request;
- knowing and applying the quality assurance measures established at school level.

The low attractiveness of a teaching career, the relative persisting rigidity in the professional routes and rewarding of the teachers, limit the possibilities of the education and initial VET providers to recruit and maintain quality young graduates in a teaching career. This will negatively affect the quality and responsiveness of the education and initial VET to the labour market demands, particularly in case of new occupations.

The current stage of VET in Romania induces the necessity that the teachers should conceive and implement development projects inside their school. Project management and project design training is needed to access financing programs issued by the Government or the EU.

Also the teachers in VET currently need communication skills and networking skills in order to enable them to access European projects and networks related to their activity.

As a methodological approach, the teachers of technical disciplines further need pedagogical skills in order to enable their creativity towards implementing new participative training ways, to encourage dialogue and common search for answers with the trainees, thus making a big step towards developing linguistic and logical competences together with technical skills.

Teachers need to learn how to transfer to their students (apart working skills) broader concepts, such as responsibility towards actions, analytic skills, communication skills, teamwork spirit.

Since teachers in VET are preparing workers, skilled workers and technicians for the companies and since SMEs form the majority of employers, the teaching process should give an idea about the real working environment in the companies; pupils must acquire information on how a company generally works.

In 2008, it was continued the implementing of the Phare ESC 2005 and 2006 grant schemes "*Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel*" which support the training of teachers and school principals from high-schools in rural areas; financing contracts were signed for 18 projects aiming at training 1,670 teachers from 77 high-schools in rural areas. Under Phare 2006 "*Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel*", a TA project started and aims to develop the monitoring system of the accredited continuous training programmes; it also seeks to conduct the impact assessment of the continuous training programmes for the direct beneficiaries (teachers and principals) and indirect beneficiaries (students, school, community etc.). The conclusions of this impact assessment will be used for adopting measures to improve the methodological framework and programs for continuous training of teachers.

Regarding the TVET teachers' training, under TVET 2005 Phare, in 2008, 1,274 TVET teachers were trained, as follows:

TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF PERSONS TRAINED UNDER TVET 2005 PHARE IN 2008	
TRAINING COURSES	NUMBER
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY ASSURANCE	227
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT	340
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT /REVIEW AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT,	232
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING MATERIALS	169
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPING LEARNING MODULES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	93
QUALITY MONITORS AND SCHOOL INSPECTORS	196
TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF DISTANCE LEARNING	17

The “*Continuous training for teachers*” programme has continued in 2008 with the following categories being targeted : teachers from the management and control personnel in pre-university education (49% of the management personnel) and some teachers took part in training programmes like: tenure and didactic degrees programmes, regular training programmes with 90 compulsory credits gathered at graduation, Ministry of Education and Research priority programmes, continuous training programmes developed the County Teachers’ Training Centres.

TABLE 2 - TEACHERS TRAINED IN 2008 UNDER CONTINUING TRAINING PROGRAMMES	
	NUMBER OF PERSONS TRAINED IN 2008 UNDER THE <i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING TEACHERS</i> PROGRAMME
TEACHERS FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL PERSONNEL IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION	6,089
TEACHERS IN TENURE AND DIDACTIC DEGREES PROGRAMMES	18,306
TEACHERS IN REGULAR TRAINING PROGRAMMES WITH 90 COMPULSORY CREDITS GATHERED AT GRADUATION	19,884
TEACHERS IN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PRIORITY PROGRAMMES,	16,831
TEACHERS IN CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAMMES DEVELOPED THE COUNTY TEACHERS’ TRAINING CENTRES	188,236

Adult learning and education (ALE) for teachers is financed by the government (public funds), by the participants and from dedicated European funds. Every teacher receives an amount equal with the total costs of the courses needed for a five years period and he/she will choose the LLL courses according with his/her training needs.

Build and develop the professional competencies of teachers in order to raise the quality and the efficiency of the education system is an important objective of the Ministry of Education Research and Innovation policy.

As far as Comenius (the component of the Community Programme Socrates) is concerned, there is one sub-component that allows for teachers involved in school education to attend in-service training courses abroad, organised by training centres in EU countries. As a result of their participation at such continuous training activities, one could mention:

- improved teaching skills and knowledge of the teachers, with up-to-date information and methodology provided by European teacher training institutions;
- better knowledge of the other European educational systems and the future objectives in education and training for EU;
- encouraging innovation in teaching and, therefore, in the school life ;
- strengthening the European dimension at school level.

In the period 1997-2008, 4,491 teachers at the pre-university level benefited from in-service training courses/stages/activities abroad, financed through Comenius funds, amounting 6,736,500 EUR.

The National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-university Education (NCTPE) was created in 2001 as a public body in charge with the accreditation of the programs for train the teachers. Among the institutions dealing with the education of adults included also in the Ministry of Education and Research network, NCTPE has mainly attributions in development of the carrier of teachers (the quality assurance in the field of the continuous training programs.

NCTPE's mission is to ensure the quality and diversity of the offered in-service training for pre-university teaching staff through accreditation, monitoring and evaluation of training programs.

Responsibilities of NCTPE:

- establishing professional standards for the teaching staff, auxiliary staff and management staff in pre-university education, as well as guidance and control in preuniversity academic institutions;
- coordinating the establishment of criteria and procedures for in-service training programs accreditation;
- accreditation, by a Specialised Committee, of in-service training programs, designed by training programs deliverers in accordance with standards and methodologies approved by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth;
- initiation and unfolding of researches regarding the content, design, implementation and evaluation of the preuniversity teaching staff training;

- initiation and unfolding of training needs analysis and methodology analysis for in-service training of the preuniversity teaching staff;
- guidance and coordination of in-service training programs deliverers in accordance with standards, criteria and methodologies approved by the Ministry of Education, Reasearch and Youth;
- initiation and unfolding of training activities and professional development activities in various educational areas, funded by national and international programs;
- dissemination and continuous up-dating of the existing offer of in-service training programs.

As a consequence of implementing Law no 288/2004⁸, a new teaching plan has been designed for training teachers both from primary and secondary education. With this law, all teacher training programmes are delivered at tertiary level.

The pre-service training programmes for teachers in primary education focus on general didactic training which puts at risk the efficiency of their work in class. For what concerns teachers at secondary level, the initial training leaves less room for didactics. The accent is placed on general psycho-pedagogical training. Still, the teachers' training programs do not prepare the future teachers properly to face the challenges of the modern classroom and the knowledge-based society.

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET SYSTEM

No information available

6.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

Please see 6.1

6.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

No information available

⁸ Law no.288 of 24/06/2004 on the organizing of university studies ("Lege privind organizarea studiilor universitare"). Organizes the university studies in three stages: the bachelor degree, the master's degree and the doctor's degree university studies the duration of each stage following to be determined by Government Decision. Contains detailed provisions related to each of the three stages and to the correlation of the educational system in Romania with the European educational systems.

7. MATCHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

7.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

For Romania, there is no institutional capacity dedicated to the task of anticipating the skill needs, skill mismatch and other as such. The following studies and researches have been launched with a direct relevance to the issue of anticipating the skill needs:

PROJECT 1:

Title: Anticipating/Forecasting the need for vocational education and training and skills in seven out of the eight Development Regions of ROMANIA (2003-05)

Purpose: To substantiate the Local and Regional Vocational Education and Training Plans, the frame of the Phare-VET Initiative, administrated and implemented by the Ministry of Education; The forecasting exercise has been contracted by the Ministry of Education, via competitive tender, to the National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection; The entire approach has also involved a cooperative exercise with the Local and Regional Action Groups for VET which have been constituted in the frame of the Phare-VET initiative by the Ministry of Education and which were duly incorporating the main local and regional stakeholders.

Scope (time horizon; national/regional levels; sectors/occupations; skills demand/supply...)

Beginning and end of the activity: The initial project was only aimed at regional level and given the absence from the project of the Bucharest and Ilfov region, which alone concentrates 10% of the country's population and has a large contribution to GDP formation, it could not have been extended nationwide. The forecast was spanning in time up to 2010, later to be extended to 2013. Despite the scarce data that were available at the time, the forecast however managed to go down not only to sector level but to branch and even to major groups of occupations level, but could not go down to the demand for skills at the level of specific occupations. However, the project supplied enough data so as to substantiate the planning activity of the local and regional action groups for VET, which have been further integrated into the country's VET strategy as it is mentioned now into the NRP. One of the aims was also to train the members of the local and regional action groups into using the methodology and subsequently develop their own more detailed forecasts at regional and local level, as it was supposed that they will be far more able to get accurate data disaggregated to an extent far beyond the one obtained in a more nation-wide type of exercise. However, this component did not work.

Methodological approach (forecasting/foresight; focus on low/high skills, general/specific skills, labour market demand/supply...) - The idea was initially to anticipate (short and medium term) the demand for VET but it then obviously developed into forecasting the demand for skills as it was clear for everybody that nothing with regard to VET could have been done without this. Therefore, the methodological approach has developed itself into a combination of two strands: (1) one that has been rooted into macro-economic modelling, using as a base a crude version of the Macbeth model and some of the modelling techniques employed by the ROA (Netherlands) . This strand was supposed to give the broad trends, with the anchor variable being labour productivity; (2) the second strand consists of a large scale investigation, a survey actually based on the use of a

structured questionnaire, administered to companies, on a representative sample of 2,400 companies nationwide (except for the regions of Bucharest and Ilfov). This sample which has included only companies with more than four employees, has been complemented with a so-called additional module for the SMEs so as to enable the forecast exercise to reveal aspects that are particular to this type of enterprises. The survey included a number of 244 SME (i.e. those companies employing less than 10 individuals).

The entire exercise has been aiming at forecasting both supply and demand for skills, with the macro-economic strand concentrating on projecting the broad trends in relation to the demand for skills, as they would be derived from the projection of the broad macro-economic and labour market trends (three alternative scenarios have been thus developed here), while the field or enterprise investigation, aiming at the same target but in a more qualitative, detailed and nuanced way. The two strands are supposed to complement and validate each other, a fact which they actually did, with the results of the macro-economic approach being validated by the field data and vice-versa.

For the supply side, an additional module has been designed so as to forecast demographic and schooling related variables, with a breakdown on education (i.e.: vocational education and training) profiles. This module makes use of simple trend equations and heavily relies on forecasts made available by the National Commission for Prognosis as well as on population and school-age population provided by the National Institute for Statistics of Romania (NIS).

Other relevant information: Results have been made available to the Ministry of Education in 2005 and a brochure has been printed.

Starting with late 2004 contact has been made with Cedefop and with the SkillsNet network by Dr. Catalin Ghinararu the Scientific Secretary of the National Scientific Research in the field of Labour and Social Protection, which is also the National SSYSDEM correspondent for Romanian and therefore the author of these lines. As a result, details regarding the methodological approach used are also to be found in the PANORMA publications edited by the Cedefop (series 137 - "Towards European Skills Needs Forecasting", Alena Zukersteinova and Olga Strietska-Ilina editors and series 135, same editors - "Systems, institutional frameworks and processes for early identification of skill needs"); Further to this Dr. Ghinararu has participated since its inception to the process commenced by the Cedefop in late 2005, at the Pafos-Cyprus meeting and which finally resulted in the *Cedefop's centre medium term forecast on "Future Skill Needs in Europe"* officially launched this last February at the AGORA meeting in Thessaloniki. Dr. Ghinararu is therefore one of the contributors to the study, though only as an individual independent expert, as Romania was not yet a member state of the EU when the exercise was officially launched.

PROJECT 2:

Title: Forecasting the demand for skills and national level and the elaboration of monograph occupational profiles for 150 occupations so as to highlight changes in the occupation profiles throughout the Plan to Market and EU Accession period in Romania and thus substantiate decision making process in the Ministry of Labour

Purpose: It was launched by the Ministry of Labour in late 2005 and benefited also from the co-financing of the World Bank using sums from the "Social Sector Development Loan-ROMANIA". The purpose was to map the demand for skills at national level and to highlight changes in the occupation profiles so as to substantiate the Ministry's of Labour related policies as well as to produce something that would serve as methodological reference for

the future. The purpose was also to enable the whole exercise to be undertaken on a rather more regular basis, with particular reference to the skills demand anticipation module. The contract has been awarded via competitive procedure to the National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection as the only national organization having developed capacities in the field which has for this once worked in cooperation with one of Romania's largest and best-known statistical and market investigation companies, the CURS s.a., with this latter partner concentrating mostly on the monographic occupational profiles studies.

Scope (time horizon; national/regional levels; sectors/occupations; skills demand/supply...) While the first two approaches have been rather more regional focused, this has been the single most important national approach. It has focused on two major strands. First the forecasting of the demand for skills using for that the methodology already employed in the previously presented exercise and of which the Institute is the proprietor. The supply side forecast already produced for the previous exercise was to be taken as such given the short time-span in between the two exercises and no distinct was to be produced. The forecasting interval was to be extended to 2013, taking thus into consideration the time-horizon of the National Development Plan. The enterprise survey was to be of course resumed, with further module attached to it so as to allow for the elaboration of the monograph occupational profiles. Forecasts were to be produced for branches of economic activity and major occupational groups.

Methodological approach (forecasting/foresight; focus on low/high skills, general/specific skills, labour market demand/supply...) The methodological approach already explained above has been employed, with the sole difference that it has now been employed at national level and therefore the investigation component was so designed so as to ensure national representation. The novelty were of course the 150 occupational profiles, which have been selected so as to ensure a fair mix of "breakthrough occupations", meaning by this novel occupations that have developed and emerged on the market during the last decade or so, "occupations in transformation", or in other words occupations that have suffered profound changes as a result of developments during the last decade or so and finally occupations that are on the verge of extinction. The exercise on occupational profiles, which has been carried out through an additional module to the survey has produced more than interesting results, being practically a one of its kind in Romania.

Other relevant information: Results of the forecasting component have been published by the Institute together with the Ministry of Labour and a national seminar has been held in Bucharest in late 2005, attended by the then Minister of Labour as well as by other officials.

Occupational profiles though have been only published in an electronic format (CD) and made available in limited number, their intended audience being the Sector Committees of the National Adult Training Board, the body that also acts as National Authority for Qualifications under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education.

7.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION WITH SKILL NEEDS

No information available

8. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

8.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

In 1992 - 1993 the World Bank evaluated career guidance in Romania and pointed out the necessity of creating a national coherent system for information and vocational counselling to provide information to individuals on changes in the labour market. Based on this evaluation a “Career Information and Counselling” component was created in the MoL “Employment and Social Protection” project which was co-financed by the World Bank. The five year project started in the middle of 1995.

Under Government Order 1997, three involved ministries signed a protocol providing for the creation of a national network of Information and Vocational Counselling Centres, including 227 centres in County Agencies for Labour Force Employment, 500 centres in school units and 47 information centres for youth.

The goals of these centres are:

- To offer information regarding the labour market, related education and training, and related personality evaluations and self-evaluations;
- To develop the abilities and self-confidence for students and adults in making career decisions in the context of economic and social changes of the Romanian society.

This network of school and vocational guidance centers represents a convergence point for activity of three ministries: Education and Research Ministry (MoE), Labour and Social Solidarity Ministry (MoL) and Youth and Sports Ministry (MoY) and also helped support and stimulate related services in the non-governmental sector and private sector.

Later, two collaboration protocols have been established between the three involved ministries. The first protocol, dated on July 2001, is established to continue “*Information and Vocational Counselling*” activity. This document defines tasks and responsibilities of the signatory institutions with the purpose of sustaining work-group activity for fulfilling project objectives and for continuing information and vocational counselling activity in subordinated units after The World Bank financing ends. The second protocol dated on December 2002, further defined the implementation of a program titled “*From school to professional life, toward career*” program. The objective of the second protocol was to address youth unemployment. The roles of signatory institutions are: program coordination, monitoring and evaluation within its own territorial structures.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

EDUCATION

The Education Law no. 84/1995 regulates the information, guidance and counselling activities operated by institutions subordinated to MoE. Article 49 of the Law states that:

(1) in each county and in the capital Bucharest exist Psycho -Pedagogical Assistance Centres or Offices; these also ensure educational and vocational guidance activities;

(2) the regulation of this centre function is established by order of the MoE.

(Source: Education Law no. 84 / 1995, modified by Emergency Governmental Ordinance no. 36 / 1997 and by Law no. 15 / 1999).

Orders of the MoE regulate aspects related to the Statute of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres for educational staff, students and parents, the job description for the teachers (counsellors) and the regulations regarding the Organization and Function of the Psycho Pedagogical Assistance Centres and Inter-School Psycho -Pedagogical Assistance Offices.

Orders of the MoE regarding the educational and vocational information, guidance and counselling activities include:

- Orders regarding the establishment and Statute of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres for educational staff, students and parents (MoE Order reg. no. 7895 / 18.09.1991).
- Job description for counsellor teachers in the Psycho -Pedagogical Assistance Centres and the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (MoE Order reg. no. 31314 / 10.05.1994).
- Regulations regarding the organization and functions of the Psycho- Pedagogical Assistance Centres and of the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (MoE Order reg. no. 31315 / 10.05.1994).
- Orders regarding the organization and function of the Information and Vocational Counselling Centres network (MoL Order no. 921 / 24.12.1997, MoE Order no. 3102 / 15.01.1998 and MoY Order no. 59 / 22.01.1998).
- Orders regarding the Consultancy Departments for choosing a vocational route and for placement (MoE Order No. 3277 / 16.02.1998).
- Orders regarding methodological organization of the Houses of Educational Staff and of the Psycho -Pedagogical Assistance Centres (MoE Order no. 3370 / 03.09.1998).
- Notifications regarding the “Counselling and Guidance” curricular area in grades I-V for school year 1998-1999 (MoE Order no. 12487 / 03.09.1998).
- Regulations regarding the organization and function of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance County Centres and of the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (MoE Order no. 4683 / 28.09.1998).
- Orders regarding educational and vocational guidance in Romanian education system (MoE Order no. 3064 / 18.01.2000).

LABOUR

The information, guidance and counselling activities operated by institutions subordinated to MoL are regulated by Law no. 145/9.07.1998 regarding the establishment, organization and function of the National Agency for Labour Force Employment (NAE).

According to Art. 6 alin. (2) of this law, the employment agency offers two kinds of services: services for individuals and services for employers. The first category includes guidance and counselling services for unemployed people and for others with the purpose of finding proper jobs. The Agency administers an Information and Vocational Counselling Centres network, with which provides career information, guidance and counselling based on Common Order of the MoL (Order no. 921 / 24.12.1997), MoE (Order no. 3102 / 15.01.1998) and MoY (Order no. 59 / 22.01.1998).

Also, the Law no. 76 / January 16 20025 regarding the Unemployment Insurances System and Labour Force Employment Stimulation stipulates in Art 57 *“the increase of employment opportunities for persons looking for a job is to be supported by information and vocational counselling”*.

The National Plan for Employment (NAPE) was developed with support from a EUPHARE RO9908 twining project “The Elaboration of the National Action Plan for Employment” and was adopted by the Romanian Government through the Decision of Government No.759/2002 and will be implemented by the end of December 2003. NAPE stipulates at Guideline No.1 - Career Information and Counselling as a major active method in order to prevent and combat unemployment among young people and adults (especially long-term unemployed people). Guideline 1 specifically addresses tackling youth unemployment and preventing long-term unemployment. Every unemployed person receives a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the case of young people, or 12 months of unemployment in the case of adults. This comes in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job, or other employability increase measures, including, *accompanying individual vocational guidance and counselling with a view to effective integration into the labor market.*

YOUTH

The information, guidance and counselling activities operated in the INFOTIN Centres, subordinated to NASYI - MoY is regulated by Orders of this ministry.

OTHER LAWS THAT AFFECT CAREER INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES:

- GO 129/2000 concerning Adults Vocational Training in Enterprises, modified and approved by Law no. 375/2002;
- New Labour Code/Law 53/03.2003 stipulates a special attention for vocational training in enterprises;
- GD 844/2002 concerning approval of classifications for jobs, professions and specialisations destined post high school that offer vocational training as well as approval of scholar period;
- GD 277/21.03.2002 regarding approval of the Criteria for accreditation the specialized services providers for stimulation labour force employment.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND GOALS OF NATIONAL POLICIES FOR INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

The general picture of the guidance and counselling model functioning in Romania involves:

- Counselling integrated in the educational process (by having the “Counselling and Guidance” Curricular area integrated in the national curricular, mainly as a group

activities). All counsellors from CPPAC/ISPPAO have in-service or pre-service training in counselling, but not all the teachers counsellor in schools have in-service or pre-service training in counselling to help ensure they can do this. Because the acute necessity for training of the didactic personnel involved in Guidance and Counselling in schools, specialised continuing training modules were open for teacher counsellor at from Training Centres (University, CCD).

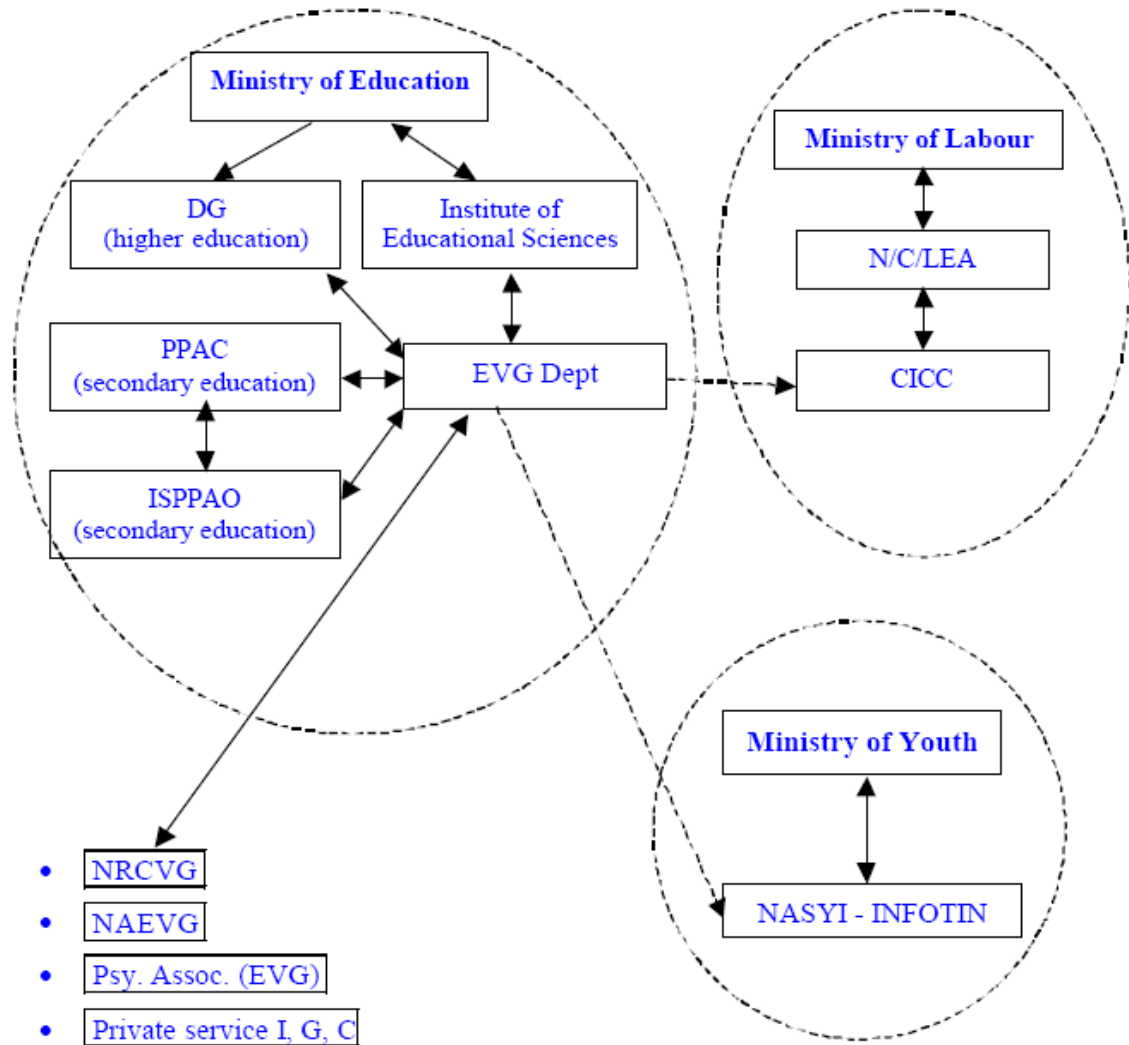
- Educational and vocational guidance (mainly individual, operated in the County Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres and the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices).
- Vocational counselling focused on career development and placement (mainly individual) in the CICC and the Guidance regarding vocational route choice and placement on the labour market Departments (DG).

As mentioned previously, two protocols between the three ministries were involved to support cooperation and coordination in development of these services. But, these protocols do not specifically define responsibilities and leadership for agencies involved in different fields (e.g. development and integration of assessments, career information, education/training information).

PROVISION

The following networks, centres or services form the national system of information, guidance and counselling services:

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM



LEGEND

EVG Dept = Educational and Vocational Guidance Department

IGC = Information and Guidance Centres

CCPPAC = Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres

ISCCPPAC = Inter -School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres

N / C / LEA = National / County / Local Employment Agency

IVGC = Information and Vocational Guidance Centres

NASYI - INFOTIN = National Agency for Supporting Youth Initiatives

NRCVG = National Resources Centre for Vocational Guidance

NAEVG = National Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

Psy. Assoc. (EVG) = Psychologists' Association - Educational and Vocational Guidance Section

Private service I, G, C = Private Information, Guidance and Counselling Service

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (MOE) NETWORK INCLUDES:

- *Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres (CCPPAC)*. These are present in all counties as well as in the capital. In addition *Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (ISPPAO)* are organized in schools with more than 800 students or by groups of schools. The targeted population consists of pupils of all levels of pre-university education, educational staff and parents. Such territorial centres are subordinated to the County School Inspectorates, are guided from the methodological point of view by the Institute of Education Sciences and they are being funded from the state budget.

The goals of CPPAC are ISPPAO co-ordination and mediation of ISPPAO relations with other institutions for school vocational guidance. These offices offer services of information, guidance, counselling, and psycho-pedagogical assistance for pupils, teachers and parents with the purpose of fulfilling the educational and formational objectives of the school, for the benefit of harmonious individual development and good socio-professional integration.

- *Guidance regarding vocational route choice and placement on the labour market Departments (DG) (1998)* These are organized in big university centres. At the national level, 14 DGs exist but in reality only six are active. The goal of these departments are to offer information regarding existing educational programmes and to support the students/graduates contact with labour market. They operated previously as Information and Guidance Centres (IGC).
- *Complex Expertise Commissions* - These commissions offer psycho-diagnosis and guidance for students with disabilities.
- *National Association for School and Vocational Guidance (NASVG)* This is a professional association with interdisciplinary character which supports technical assistance, training, and research for staff, working with youth and adults, from schools and the career guidance field.

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION (MOL) NETWORK INCLUDES:

- *Career Information and Counselling Centres (CICC)* that exist in the framework of the National Agency for Labour Force Employment (NAE), which are located in all counties of the country and in the major cities. The major client group is people searching for a job⁹.

THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS NETWORK (MOY) INCLUDES:

- *Information and Consultancy Centres for Youth (INFOTIN)* work within the framework of the National Agency for Supporting Youth Initiatives (NASYI) and services whose target audience are youths aged 16-26.

⁹ Person registered at NAE or any employment services provider, legal accredited, for to be supported in job search.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY (MOH) NETWORK INCLUDES:

- *Educational and Vocational Guidance Medical Commissions and Prophylactic Medicine Centres which deal with the medical validation of educational and vocational guidance for students at the pre-university level.*
- *Information and Consultancy Pilot Centres for Families which offer information and consultancy to families.*

All institutions above are funded by the state budget. For the labor market, there are other career information, guidance and counselling providers from both public and private sector (private sector employment agencies are accredited by NAE).

Career guidance activities and counselling services are also provided by a wealth of NGOs that operate on the market since the early nineties and are spread over the entire country. Some of them tend to specialize in disadvantaged groups such as the Roma population (gypsies), providing career guidance and counselling for children and youngsters from disadvantaged communities or for children at risk of economic exploitation. Gender dimension and the concept of equal opportunities are incorporated into all the approaches outlined above, irrespective of the nature of the entity providing such services.

8.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Carreer guidance services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary and community sector and in the private sector. Unfortunately, Law no. 375/11.06.2002 regarding adults vocational training has no special references on adult guidance and counselling, on the need for adults to have access to such services, or specific methods and forms of guidance and counselling needed for adults. However, Art. 2 of the Law states that employers will take all the measures to assure employees conditions to access vocational training and Art 3 of the same Law states that the objective of adult vocational training is to facilitate social integration of individuals according to their vocational aspirations and labour market requirements.

The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face- to- face or at a distance.

The guidance career includes:

- Career info provision;
- Assessment and self-assessment tools;
- Counseling interviews;
- Career education programmes;
- Taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them);
- Work search programs;
- Transition services.

One of the main environments for delivering guidance services is -and has been for a long time - the school, and indeed, it is there where young people are most likely first to come across formally-provided guidance.

IN SCHOOLS

The career education and guidance in the primary school are limited or non-existent. Young people need to make a smooth transition from primary to the initial years of secondary school. Career guidance needs to be part of the process that helps them to make a smooth transition.

Career education is increasingly present in the curriculum at the lower secondary school level, either as a separate subject or included in another subject.

At times, the curriculum seems to be designed to suit the organizational needs of the school rather than the career development needs of the student. Often career education has little connection to the wider school curriculum.

In lower secondary school personal career guidance frequently targets students at key decision-making points:

- When they are choosing subjects;
- Prior to the end of compulsory schooling;
- At the transition to upper secondary level or to work.

However, often those who are targeted for personal interviews are not selected on the basis of well-defined need.

It is often assumed that upper secondary- school students have made their educational and career choices and that they do not need further support.

This assumption is especially made for students in vocational education pathways.

As mentioned previously, the targeted population for CCPPAC and ISPPAO are pupils on all levels of pre-university education, parents and educational staff; for DG higher education students and graduates; for CEC students with disabilities; for CICC all people looking for employment, and for INFOTIN youth aged 16-26.

Starting the 1998-1999 school year, the "Counselling and Guidance" Curricular area was included in the National Curriculum. The Ministry Order no. 3064/18.01.2000 specifies two different directions of making school and vocational guidance in the education Romanian system: through curricular activities (especially within Counselling and Guidance classes), and through extracurricular activities (especially within ISPPAO). Formal evaluation of students' achievement is compulsory, but there is some controversy of how to "grade" such activities. The objective of development of learning skills and of good attitudes towards life is difficult to evaluate on a qualitative basis.

An example of such extracurricular activity is the project "From school to vocational life, toward career". Within this programme, young people that will graduate at a pre-university education level can benefit from information and career counselling services and develop individual career plans within the education units.

For school children with disabilities that are educated in special institutions, there is a set of tools for psychological use in order to optimise their educational-and career goals. The use of these tools became compulsory according to the Governmental Decision no. 204/26.03.2002.

IN TERTIARY -EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

There are 14 University Guidance Departments (DG) for career choice and placement in the labour market. They are in the most important public universities, which include multiple faculties (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Craiova, Suceava, Oradea, Tg. Mures). However, in reality only six really function. The DGs have the purpose of assistance assisting students in the final years of secondary school choose programs and careers, and students and graduates from tertiary education connect with the labor market and find jobs. Cooperation between the DGs and related units of MoL support these objectives.

Students who express interest in the possibility of attending a second faculty, obtaining a scholarship abroad, having the opportunity of a training period in the private sector, being employed by certain companies, finding jobs on the Internet area are also serviced by the DGs.

People looking for a job can come to CICC for different reasons: they may be unemployed; they may not be unemployed, but they wish for better jobs; they have a job and wish to keep it; they are young graduates; they intend to change their profession because they are no longer professionally satisfied and/or motivated; they wish to evolve professionally through specialisations, for professional improvement and supplementary qualifications. Rationale for targeting is that each group needs different methodologies and services.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Public employment services (PES) have started to develop special counselling and career guidance services, designed as a basic provision and conceived as an active labour market and employment policy capable of contributing to fast transition of the unemployed, mostly dislocated workers from state firms under restructuring, back into some form of employment or at least into a form of training that would lead to a future employment. Broadly speaking, all of the registered unemployed are eligible for such a service, which has been considered as a basic, fundamental provision of the PES. Regular training of the staff in counselling techniques and career guidance has been carried out. Vocational training provided by the PES in their own facilities has always included a career guidance module as mandatory component. Meanwhile, the PES, while contracting vocational training services for the unemployed with private training providers has always included as an integral part of the contractual provision, a module on career guidance and labour market counselling. This module is integrated into the course curricula submitted by training providers accessing the PES funds. During the late nineties, with industrial restructuring and mass lay-offs in full swing, career guidance and counselling services have been contracted with private providers on a nationwide scale, using both national funds as well as a rather large World Bank loan aimed at alleviating the social impact of radical but much-needed reform. Mandatory job-placements targets, sometimes even deemed as excessive, have been assigned to all contractors providing services (active employment measures) to dislocated workers, including those providing career counselling services. This practice has been retained till now, with job-placements targets being assigned to career counselling services contracted with both private and public service providers.

Career guidance and counselling services have been further boosted starting with 1999, when the PES have been re-organized into an autonomous public service, known as the National Agency for Employment-NAE. Counselling and career guidance services have been since considered an Active Labour Market Policy. Commencing with 2002, when a new law on unemployment insurance has been enacted, so as to replace the already outdated 1991 Act, budgets for active labour market policies have registered a constant increase, with vocational training and life-learning and their accompanying services becoming centre-stage. This has been especially the case after the start of the JAP (Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Policies Paper) Process in 2002, which has firmly stated that vocational training, lifelong learning and their accompanying services should be treated as a national priority and as way of both increasing productivity in Romania's economy as well as a way of increasing the employability of its labour force and the overall employment rate.

Meanwhile, since 2001, such services have received a further boost by the establishment of the National Adult Training Board-NATB, as a body under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, with tripartite structure (Government, trade unions and employers' organizations), in charge with the overall supervision and regulation of the adult vocational training market. As such the NATB has concentrated upon the elaboration of several regulations aimed at creating incentives for the training providers to increase the quality of their service provision. A system of accreditation has been put into place, applying to state, private pro-profit and private non-profit entities. The specialized entities in the structure of NAE, which now include both county as well as regional adult vocational training centres, have undergone the accreditation procedure for the services they provide. Counselling and career guidance services have thus received a most welcome reinforcement as adult vocational training programs contracted by providers, either public or private with the NAE, have to include a mandatory career guidance and labour market counselling module, as a prerequisite for their ability to provide graduates with nationally recognized diplomas or certificates.

EMPLOYMENT BASED GUIDANCE SERVICES

The primary focus of employer initiatives is on training, as opposed to career guidance (although the two are directly linked). Law 53/2003-New Labour Code stipulates that: "Employers have the obligation to ensure periodical access of employees at vocational training" and "the employer must elaborate annual vocational training plans, with the union consultation". GO 129/2000 approved by Law no. 375/June 2003 concerning adults vocational training stipulates that:

- the employers will take measures to ensure employees access to vocational training;
- the employer and employees rights and obligations in the period that employees participate at vocational training will be stipulated in labour work contract;
- the adult vocational training will be organized for initiation, qualification, perfection, specialization, and re-qualification;
- the MoL and MoE, at the proposal of the NCAVT, will elaborate national policies and strategies concerning human resources development, including adults vocational training;
- NAE coordinates, at national level, vocational training activity of persons who looking for a job.

An example of the career development services provided by an employer is represented by Dacia-Renault Romania. The significant investments made for the modernizations of the Mioveni Plant resulted in layoffs in several steps of some 12,000 people up to 2004. Aware of the social consequences of this economic decision, the Dacia car manufacturer asked for technical assistance from the consultant's office Bernard Brunhes International (BBI) in order to implement the social plan of Dacia. BBI took action at the level of both the company and the Arges county. Within Dacia, with the Human Resources Department, BBI set up: Placement Technical Unit (UTR); Mission for Enterprise Creation (MAC); Observatory of Jobs and Local Economy, company incubator in Pitesti, and County Committee for Economic Development.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private (for-profit sector) information, guidance and counselling services are focused mainly on the finding, selection and placement of personnel, generally highly qualified and specialised labour force. Some private institutions or companies contract these private employment agencies, which also provide career guidance and counselling services to select, test and employ personnel, according to specific criteria and standards.

This activity is increasing judging from indirect data such as announcements in media, informal discussions with certain clients etc. In addition some recent initiatives include online counselling and vocational training for adults. Exact data is available from the NAE on the total number of the private providers of such services which have been accredited through Law GD277/21.03.2002.

There is no official framework for community action in information, guidance and counselling.

Some ad-hoc community initiatives generated by parents, teachers, alumni, local authorities are aimed at placing citizens in the local labour force, encouraging participation in various projects or opening small businesses. It should be mentioned that the National Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises initiated entrepreneurial training programmes that have counselling and guidance components.

The Chamber of Commerce also has training components on development entrepreneurial initiative. Finally, some NGOs provide career guidance for specialized groups of clients (i.e. disadvantaged youth).

The Law 53 - New labor Code stipulates a special attention for vocational training in enterprises: Art.192 indicates that employers and individual employees shall establish individual vocational training programmes taking the annual vocational training plan and labor place conditions into account. Art. 204 indicates that the trainer has the obligation to receive, help, inform and guide the employed during training. GO 129/2000, approved by the Law 375/2002 concerning adults' vocational training, stipulates in Art. 2 that "the employers will take measures to ensure employees access to vocational training". In general, the big private companies, with foreign capital, have their own human resources departments that provide or contract these services.

GUIDANCE SERVICES FOR SPECIAL TARGET GROUPS

An important impetus has been given by the Phare funds destined to the Development of Human Resources, which have prompted the emergence of new organizations and programs that have focused on career guidance and counselling services for particular target groups or for particular areas that have been heavily affected by industrial restructuring. The

National Scientific Research Institute for Labour has been itself involved and has operated such a program, destined for women, in the Lower-Danube city port of Braila.

A more recent development in the field, have been the services provided by micro-finance organizations active in Romania, a dynamic sector, benefiting from a recently enacted modern legislation. This institutional framework allows these entities to carry out guidance and counselling activities as an integral part of their services, thus formalizing an activity most of these organizations have been already undertaking on a large scale, especially in rural communities as part and parcel of their micro-lending activities.

THE QUALITY OF CAREER GUIDANCE

Because of the great disparity and lack of professionalization of guidance workers, there is little regular and systematic evaluation of the quality of career guidance services in most countries. Standards for the quality of services do not exist or are present in some sectors but not in others (self-regulation).

Where quality standards exist, they tend to be voluntary rather than mandatory.

Only occasionally do quality standards have checking procedures or sanctions attached to them.

There are no standards or control in private sector provision of career guidance services.

Career guidance policies are insufficiently guided by user feedback and by relevant evidence and data, including such basis of data as levels of usage and types of services accessed.

In the absence of quality frameworks, there is an over-reliance on staff qualifications or professional codes of practice to assure quality.

8.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

MOE Note No. 37866/30.08.1999 from the National Centre for Vocational and Technical Education Development enumerates the personnel categories that can teach this subject including: teachers or engineers with psycho-pedagogical training which are to be assured continuous training through the local or regional system.

Those who provide career education and guidance in schools are often not career-guidance specialists. They are often teachers with career and guidance tasks.

The number of people employed to provide career education & guidance in schools is often not enough to meet students' needs & demands.

Often services continue to be provided largely on an individual, face-to-face model. This reduces the capacity of the service to respond to all the learners' needs.

Often career-guidance staff does not have the resources it needs to do the job properly:

- A private space for interviews;
- A library of up-to-date career information;
- A computer;
- Access to a telephone;

- Secretarial assistance.

Many school career guidance services have tenuous links with the world of work:

- Teaching staff know little about the labour market & what is involved in different types of jobs;
- Little contact exists with the public-employment service;
- Students have very few or no opportunities to take part in work experience;
- Few employers are invited into the schools to talk to students;
- Parents have little involvement in the school's career program.

Lack of professional staff is sometimes acute as motivation packages in the public education system are not particularly attractive for young graduates with specialty studies. Same applies for the public employment services. It is worth mentioning that most of the private training providers contracting with the NAE and thus obliged to include career guidance modules in their programs do not have their own specialized staff and in most cases use staff from the NAE local branch offices. However, large multinationals that steadily increase their presence on the Romanian market are quite active in the field, with most of their in-house training programs having career guidance modules.

9. FINANCING: INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

9.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Since the school year 2001/02 the system of financing public pre-university education has seen quite a measure of de-centralization with the several responsibilities related to the financing process passing from the national to the local level of administration. As such, local authorities have taken over: school budgeting, organising and controlling budgetary execution, as well as the administration of all schools.

Local councils now cover the running costs and capital expenditure (including equipment) of education units. Allocated funds were for maintenance, repairs and electricity and heating expenses. However, the MoER is still responsible for the largest part of the budget (that is, salaries, scholarships, teaching materials and books).

In 2003, the MoER announced plans to further accelerate decentralisation of the management of the education system to give school directors and boards more autonomy over the budget.

9.2 FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND ADULT LEARNING

The Labour Code mandates employers to elaborate annual vocational training plans in cooperation with the trade unions, or, if possible, with the representatives of the employees; this is not done on a large scale, because employers want to reduce their expenditure in the workplace. This is the reason why the expenses regarding professional training are mostly covered by individuals.

One of the most important sources of finance concerning development of human resources and professional training remains the European Community projects. The European Community has started and financed many programs: Phare: RICOP, which is part of the Economic and Social Cohesion Phare Programs for Human Resources. Romania takes part in the communitarian programme Leonardo da Vinci, which follows the improvement of the quality, innovative character and the European dimension of the practice and of continuous professional training systems.

The expenditures covered from the unemployment fund, for vocational training and retraining of the unemployed rose from 9.4 million in 2001, 11.3 million in 2002, 14.7 million in 2003, 16.6 million in 2004 to 15.4 million in 2005.

The 2006 - 2008 short and medium-term Strategy for continuing vocational training, enacted through Government Decision no. 875/2005 states that: Continuous vocational training (CVT) is not properly supported in the manufacturing industry, with the exception of the big corporations, particularly the multinational ones.

No official data exist in respect of the individuals who funded their own training needs. Individually funded attendance of CVT courses is minimal due to unaffordable costs and due to the lack of a system of incentives or extra deductible costs for the persons who are willing to pay for their own training out of pocket.

The Tax Code has provisions designed to encourage vocational training:

- Vocational training activities performed by any entity, irrespective of such entity ownership status, shall be VAT exempt;
- the expenses incurred by an employer for the vocational training and professional upgrading of its staff shall be deemed deductible;
- for income earned from free lance activities, tax payers may also deduct from their and their employees earnings the amounts spent for participation in congresses and other events if professional by their nature;
- the unemployment fund provides free vocational training for the unemployed and disadvantaged persons;
- in addition to these categories of persons, the unemployment fund also provides funding for 50% of the vocational/professional training of maximum 20% of the employees of a company. Such vocational/professional training programmes are targeted to prevent unemployment, and the companies have to meet a number of requirements to qualify for them.

In Romania, the first two programmes financed from the European Social Fund, i.e. the Sectoral Operational Plan for the Development of Human Resources (SOPDHR), and the SOP for the Development of Administrative Capacity (SOPDAC), was launched on 15 February 2008.

EUROSTAT survey CVTS2 (2002), conducted in enterprises by the National Institute of Statistics with 1999 as the reference year, shows that, on an average, Romanian enterprises spent for each employee 3 times less than the EU member states average.

In many situations, the responsibility for training is “transferred” by the enterprise to the employee. No data are available with regard to the individuals’ contribution to their own training.

A similar survey, using EUROSTAT compatible methodology was completed in 2006, relying on the data collected in 2005. Results show that the discrepancy between Romania and EU27 remains approximately to the same level (average cost of CVT courses/by participant represented 0.3% from the average cost of CVT courses at EU27 level).

9.3 FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The training of unemployed is funded out of the Unemployment Fund and organised by the National Agency for Employment (NAE), and partially delivered through its own training centres. Although there has not always been any formal system of accreditation of training providers, the NAE has assisted their contracted CVT providers with methodological assistance to organise their programmes in line with legal requirements. Thus it has performed a quality assurance function for this segment of the training market. From 2004 onwards all training providers need to be accredited by the National Adult Training Board (NATB).

Each Regional Pact on Employment and Social Inclusion¹⁰ will be supported by a Permanent Technical Secretariat¹¹, set up as non-profit NGO, providing counselling to the Pact's members in areas such as: elaborating and monitoring the Regional Action Plans on Employment and Social Inclusion and other relevant documents at regional level, supporting Pact's members as project promoters for submitting eligible projects funded from Community funds. Permanent Technical Secretariats are to be financed in accordance with the Action Plan for the increasing the Structural and Cohesion Funds absorption rate, and is envisaged to be supported from the European Social Fund, in line with the Community regulations.

The National Agency for Employment (NAE) provides, free of charge, from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), vocational training courses for people who perform activities in rural areas and do not have any income or the income is lower than the unemployment benefit and are registered by NAE, in order to acquire the needed competences for facilitating their access on the labour market. Thus, in 2007, NAE organised vocational training programmes for 21.147 people who perform activities in rural areas (out of which 20.992 unemployed people).

In 2007, the allocation from UIF for implementing the National Vocational Training Plan¹² was 42,215 thousand RON (approximately 11 Mil Euro). Until the end of the year the total expenditure for vocational training was 24,724 thousand RON (approximately 6.6 Mil Euro), representing 1.71% of the total expenditure from UIF.

According to the importance of the vocational training as an active measure against unemployment, in 2008, the budget allocated by NAE for the implementation of National Vocational Training Plan was of 44,639 thousand RON (approximately 12 Mil euro), approximately 6% higher than in the previous year. As shown in the table below, the trend of UIF budget allocations destined for vocational training has been constantly on the rise.

¹⁰ Regional pacts for employment and social inclusion are partnership agreements made by stakeholders to a regional level in the field of employment and social inclusion. Setting up these Pacts was an initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, which was launched in the context of the elaboration of Regional Action Programmes for Employment and Social Inclusion (PRAO), through the Technical Assistance Project Phare RO 2003/005-551.05.01.04.04.01 "Assistance for MoLFEO in elaboration and implementation of employment policy and preparation for EDIS" (The Extended Decentralized Implementation System)

¹¹ There is a secretariat for each region

¹² The National Vocational Training Plan for 2009 of the National Agency for Employment -NAE (Agenția Națională pentru ocuparea forței de muncă- ANOFM), main objectives are: to improve the quality and efficiency of vocational training, the validation and recognition of the competences created in nonformal and informal system,, to provide the investments for the modernization of vocational training providers

TABLE 1: BUDGET ALLOCATED FROM UIF FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING				
INDICATOR *	2005	2006	2007	2008
THE PROPORTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING EXPENSES FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSONS OR FOR OTHER CATEGORIES OF BENEFICIARIES, ACCORDING TO LAW NO 76/2002 REGARDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SYSTEM, OF THE TOTAL EXPENSES MADE FROM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND (THIS INDICATOR SHOWS THE LEVEL OF THE FUNDS ALLOCATED FROM THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE UNEMPLOYED).	1.18%	1.64%	1.71%	2.42%

* According to the Short and Medium Term Strategy for CVT 2005-2010 (see 2.1.1)

9.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

In January 2004 the process of authorisation of the providers of adult professional training started. By 2005, there were 856 providers of professional training recognised for 2,307 professional training programmes. From these 2,307, 1,887 licenses were for qualification trainings, 177 for initiation and 75 for specialisation. The reduction of the authorisation fee from three net wages to two minimum gross wages in October 2004 led to the increase in the authorised providers of professional training.

Funding for vocational education and training is coming from several main sources:

- Initial VET is generally financed from the state budget, via general taxation. Although during recent years, ever increasing amounts have been earmarked for education, when expressed as % of the GDP, however it is hard to distinguish financing for what is basically IVET from the general expenditures of the Ministry of Education;
- Financing for continuing VET comes from a host of different sources with the foremost one being company budgets;
- Continuing vocational training for the unemployed is assumed by the National Agency for Employment which, for these purposes makes use of the sums collected from mandatory contributions to the unemployment insurance scheme as well as from state budget transfers, whenever the scheme goes into deficit.

TABLE 2: QUARTERLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN ON LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION -> THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BUDGET EXECUTION FROM THE STATE BUDGET EXECUTION -> EXPENDITURES OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES				
	DECEMBER 31, 2007	MARCH 31, 2008	JUNE 30, 2008	DECEMBER 31, 2008
- TRANSFERS FROM THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BUDGET TO THE STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE BUDGET AS WORK ACCIDENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DISEASES - INSURANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSONS DURING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	51.569 (lei RON)	13.699 (lei RON)	32.528 (lei RON)	59.733 (lei RON)
EMPLOYERS PAYMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	612.221 (lei RON) 153000 Euro	51.364 (lei RON) 12800 Euro	151.426 (lei RON) 38000 Euro	742.212 (lei RON) 185000 Euro

10. NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

10.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES

10.1.1 MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMMES

No information available.

10.1.1 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

LEVEL	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED	MINIMUM DURATION	MAXIMUM DURATION	AVERAGE DURATION	TYPICAL STARTING AGE OF PUPILS
UPPER SECONDARY	3	3 years	4 years	3 years	16
POST SECONDARY	4	1 year	3 years	2 years	18
HIGHER EDUCATION	5b	3 years	3 years	3 years	18

10.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TABLE 1. FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING										
	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL									
	TOTAL	HIGH LEVEL OF EDUCATION					MEDIUM LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
		TOTAL	DOCTORAL AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES	POST GRADUATE STUDIES	LONG TERM HIGHER EDUCATION	SHORT TERM HIGHER EDUCATION	TOTAL	POST SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	VOCATIONAL AND APPRENTICE SCHOOL
TOTAL	544723	408356	22786	96371	260842	28357	136367	22007	104568	9792
GENERAL PROGRAMS	6522	-	-	-	-	-	6522	-	5671	851
TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS, TRAINERS, PEDAGOGY IN ANY AREA	22552	21188	-	4943	11698	3547	2364	-	2364	-
HUMANISTIC SCIENCES AND ARTS	27851	20626	-	1283	17078	2265	7225	-	6684	-
LAW, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES	307584	259196	7277	64200	174324	13395	48388	3788	44600	-
MATHEMATICS AND INFORMATICS	49455	35405	4479	11211	16793	2922	14050	-	12829	1221
INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES SCIENCES (EXTRACTIVE AND MANUFACTURING, INDUSTRY, ELECTRIC AND THERMAL ENERGY, GAS AND WATER), ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION	58322	25568	3523	3532	16402	2111	32754	6247	19979	6528
AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY SCIENCES	15592	9940	2558	1372	6010	-	5652	-	5652	-
HEALTH AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	46807	30745	3272	6941	16416	4116	16062	10949	5113	-
TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	10036	6686	1677	2890	2119	-	3350	-	1675	1192

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Adult Education in Romania, Bucharest, 2008

10.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

The Romanian national qualification framework (NQF) is not yet fully operational. Constituents of NQF have been subject to development over the last 10 years with the support of several EU programs.

In Romania, a national consultation regarding the Commission's proposal for a European Qualifications Framework took place in July-December 2005. Following the consultation, several issues have been identified which need more focusing at European level, such as:

1. the coherence between the EQF and the qualification framework for higher education proposed within the Bologna process;
2. a clearer differentiation between skills, competences and knowledge;
3. Designate a national centre for supporting and coordinating the relationship between NQF and EQF.

At the end of 2005, about 30% of Romanian VET qualifications were learning outcomes based.

The Romanian NQF action plan includes, as priority, the qualification development based on learning outcomes, and the completion timeframe is 2011. All developments will be assisted by Phare projects (Phare programming years 2004-2006). The validation of achieved results will take about 5- 8 years.

Correlation of vocational education and training and higher education is part of the above priority to develop learning outcomes based qualifications. At the same time, despite the clear aspiration in time to merge the Bologna EHEA framework and EQF, more agreements between the two will ease progress.

COUNTRY	HAS YOUR COUNTRY STARTED TO DEVELOP A NQF?	WILL YOUR NQF FOLLOW THE STRUCTURE OF THE EQF FOR EHEA? (MAIN REASONS / DIFFERENCES)	WHICH AUTHORITIES ARE INVOLVED?	
			AUTHORITY IN CHARGE	AUTHORITIES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT
ROMANIA	Begin: 2006 Planned Completion: 2010	Yes, Romania has not yet a NQF based on learning outcomes, but a national authority for HE named ACPART has been established in this purpose. ACPART intend to propose to the political decision bodies the choice of a NQF with 8 levels. The 6, 7, 8 levels will cover the academic qualifications as well as top vocational training and professional qualifications, using the Dublin descriptors developed by the Bologna context for the EHEA.	National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment - ACPART	-Ministry of Education and Research -Ministry of Labour, Family and Social -Solidarity National Adults Training Body -Institute for Education Sciences

Chronological Steps towards The National Qualifications Framework(NQF)

- 8 June 2004 - Signing the Memorandum between the Ministry of education and the Ministry of labour approved by the Prime Minister of Romanian Government.
- 7 December 2004 - Transformation of the National Adult Training Board (NATB), autonomous and tripartite organization, into National Authority for Qualifications.
- 23 February 2005 - Signing the Tripartite Accord for NQF between the Romanian Government and the national representative confederations of trade unions and employers Associations.
- December 2005 - The end of the consultation process for the European Qualification Framework (EQF).
- December 2006 - present - Implementation of the multi-annual PHARE Program 2004-2006 “Establishment of the Romanian National Authority for Qualifications”.

After the consultation process on EQF (finalized in December 2005), Romania decided to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) correlated with EQF.

RATIONALE:

- Facilitating the comparability of Romanian NQF with other NQFs;
- Improving transparency, quality and relevance of Romanian qualifications;
- Enabling more progression and mobility:
 - between different learning systems through the recognition of prior learning;
 - between different working areas (including migration) through the transparency of competences.

REFERENCE LEVELS

- State of the art:

5 qualification levels (VET: 1-3; HE: 4-5) described in G.D. no. 522/2003:

 - correlation between education levels, existing qualification levels and the 8 EQF reference levels proposed.
- Steps to be taken:
 - National reference levels (8 in principle - VET: 1-5; HE: 6-8) defined;
 - Each level defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to the award of a qualification (knowledge, skills, competences - autonomy and responsibility);
 - Current qualification levels correlated with the 8 EQF reference levels;
 - Coherent set of national qualifications correlated with the European reference levels developed and introduced in the National Register for Qualifications (NRQ).

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- State of the art

NATB is acting as National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ) - autonomous tripartite body (including representatives of MoER, MoLSSF, other ministries, and Social Partners).

- Cooperation with National Centre for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCDTVET) (attributions in qualifications' development in IVET), and with ACPART (attributions in qualifications' development in HE);
- Sectoral Committees (SC) involved in validation of qualifications.

- Steps to be taken:

NATB/NAQ - methodological framework, format of qualifications and structure of NRQ defined, with the consultation of ACPART, NCDTVET and other stakeholders.

- SCs established as legal bodies;
- Activity of the SCs co-financed by the Government and Social Partners (SPs)- a dedicated fund for E&T could be a solution;
- Development of qualifications - qualifications developed by interested bodies (sectors, awarding bodies) and validated by the SCs - new qualifications and priorities for qualifications development approved by SCs - EU support through Phare Programme.

CRITICAL POINTS

- Social partners
 - There is no full involvement, on the level of all sectors.
- Sectorial committees
 - They are not fully operational.
- Insufficient human resources (experts) for:
 - Occupational analysis and qualifications' development;
 - Training and assessing based on competences (especially within the Continuing Vocational Training - CVT).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- The Leonardo da Vinci Project 2006-4607/001-001 LE2-707 EQF "Developing Key Methodological Units for the the Implementation of EQF by Means of NQFs - EQF by NQFs". Its development period is January 1st, 2007 - December 31st, 2008.

The general objective of the project was to exchange experiences and to develop and test modular grids of competences and key methodological units comprising principles, mechanisms and guidance tools for the elaboration of EQF and specific NQFs.

The project partners were: University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (France), Higher Education and Training Awards Council (Ireland), CROSS

(Netherlands), The Ministry of Education and Research (Romania), The Association for Information Technology and Communication (Romania), University of Zaragoza (Spain), The National Recognition Information Centre (United Kingdom).

- The Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project FR/04/B/P/PP-151128 „European mechanism for distance information, orientation and validation of the jobs and qualifications in informatics and multimedia, from lifelong learning point of view” - EURO PORTIC promoted by the University of Versailles. Partner countries: France, Spain, Great Britain, Romania, Estonia.
- The transnational cooperation project Socrates-Minerva 116530-CP-1-2004-1-FR-MINERVA-MPP “European programme of e-trainings and validation through competences in data-processing and multimedia” - e-FORMINFO promoted by the University of Versailles. Partner countries: France, Spain, Poland, Romania, Great Britain.
- The Leonardo da Vinci Project RO/05/B/F/PP175012 “Virtual training for young entrepreneurs of innovating business” - eNOV, promoted by ACPART. Partner countries: Romania, France, Greece, Spain, Belgium, Poland and UK.
- The Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Project RO/2006/97041/EX „Experts training in the field of quality assurance and qualifications in HE” - CALEX promoted by the ACPART Agency. Partner countries: France, Ireland, Spain.

FINANCING

- Financing the initial VET by state;
- Financing higher education by state and students;
- Financing the continuous education by:
 - state (through National Adult Training Board and the county commissions for authorization of training programs);
 - companies and training providers (through training programs organized or requested);
 - National Agency for Employment (through training programs requested for unemployed people);
 - Trainees;
 - sectoral committees (through occupational analyses and occupational standards).
- Financing the Competencies Assessment Centers by:
 - state (through National Adult Training Board for assessment and authorization process);
 - beneficiaries of the competencies assessment processes;
 - sectoral committees (through occupational analyses and occupational standards, as basic instruments in non-formal education assessment).
- Financing of all components by other sources (Phare, sectoral, national and international programs).

NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR HE

- State of the art:
 - University studies organized in 3 cycles: Bachelor degree, Master degree, Doctorate studies according to Bologna Process and follow-up documents;
 - Study cycles organized based on the prior identification and definition of the general and specific knowledge and competences, and of the cognitive skills specific of the profession envisaged (Law no. 288/2004 on the organization of university studies);
 - Establishment of National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social Environment - ACPART (G.D. no. 1.357/ 2005). *ACPART, is a specialty body subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research, is the national authority for establishing and periodical up-dating of the national framework of qualifications in higher education.*
- Steps to be taken:
 - Registering all qualifications certified by HE institutions in the NRQ-HE as well as its IT implementation and continuously up-dating;
 - Conceiving a flexible methodology for defining and permanently reviewing the national qualifications for HE correlated to the reference levels;
 - Description of the HE qualifications in terms of competences for each of the 3 cycles of study;
 - Elaboration of a mandatory legislation for qualifications.

STRATEGY FOR 2007-2010

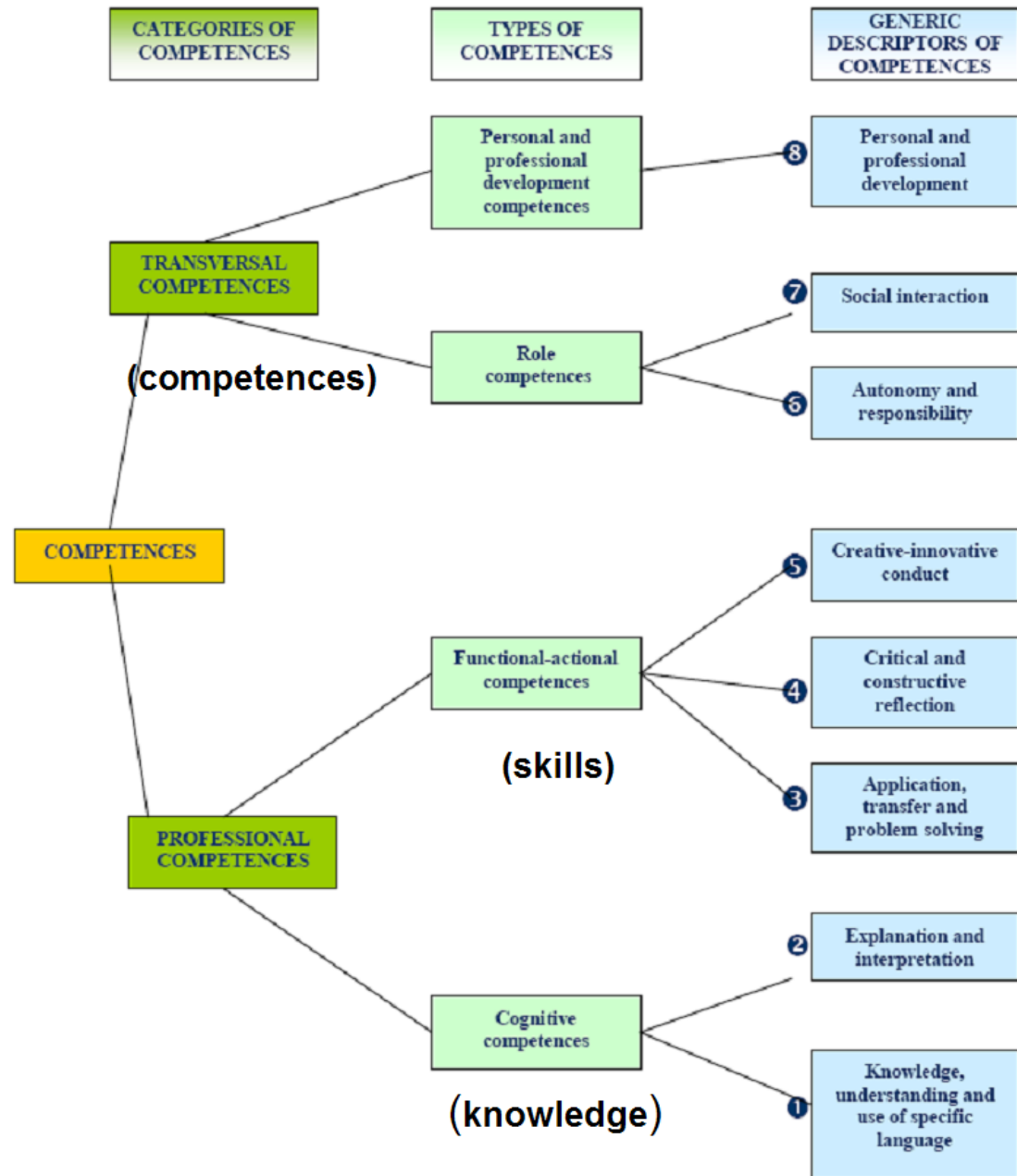
ACTION/STEP	STEP COMPLETED WITH AN INDICATION OF TIMING	STEP TO BE COMPLETED WITH AN INDICATION OF TIMING
1. DECISION TO START TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION	2005 Decision taken by the Ministry of Education	
2. SETTING THE AGENDA: THE PURPOSE OF THE NQF	Development, recognition and certification of qualifications, defined by means of learning outcomes	
3. ORGANIZING THE PROCESS: IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS; SETTING UP A COMMITTEE/WG	2005: According to Government Decision no 1357/November 11, 2005 APART turns into the National Authority for Qualifications in Higher Education (ACPART) 2006 - Rector's Conference - presentation of EQF and discussion related to a possible development of a national qualifications framework in Romania - National conferences, regional workshops organised in order to promote the concepts and principles of NQFHE through the academics and professionals; - Establishment of a Working Group for designing the Methodology on NQFHE development; the Working Group is set up by ACPART, following consultation with higher education institutions.	
4. DESIGN PROFILE: LEVEL STRUCTURE, LEVEL DESCRIPTORS (LEARNING OUTCOMES), CREDIT RANGES	2007 Design of the first draft methodology on NQFHE development - completed by ACPART + WG	
5. CONSULTATION NATIONAL DISCUSSION AND ACCEPTANCE OF DESIGN BY STAKEHOLDERS	2007 - First version of the Methodology on NQFHE subject to public debate for one year (during 2007), by workshops and seminars organised by ACPART with a view to consulting and having the feedback of the representatives of all universities, of important employers, sectoral committees, trade unions, professional associations, high schools and other beneficiaries (students, teachers, graduates); - Piloting the NQFHE Methodology by 10 study programmes described in terms of competences, based on the grids of specific descriptors	

ACTION/STEP	STEP COMPLETED WITH AN INDICATION OF TIMING	STEP TO BE COMPLETED WITH AN INDICATION OF TIMING
6. APPROVAL ACCORDING TO NATIONAL TRADITION BY MINISTER/ GOVERNMENT/ LEGISLATION	The final version of the Methodology for NQFHE development submitted to the Ministry for approval	2008 approved by Government decision
7. ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP DIVISION OF TASKS OF IMPLEMENTATION BETWEEN HEI, QAA AND OTHER BODIES	2008 Accomplished - provided through the methodology	
8. IMPLEMENTATION AT INSTITUTIONAL/ PROGRAMME LEVEL; REFORMULATION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROGRAMMES TO LEARNING OUTCOME BASED APPROACH		2008-2010 The implementation phase of the NQFHE will be done under the European Social Fund by means of a three years project: "Development of an Operational System of the Higher Education Qualifications in Romania - DOCIS". The overall objective of the project is to restructure and improve the higher education system by implementing the NQFHE and re-mapping the entire system according to the labour market requirements
9. INCLUSION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NQF; ACCREDITATION OR SIMILAR (CF. BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ)		Validation of qualifications as provided for by the Methodology on NQFHE development: anticipated for 2010 under the ESF funded project
10. SELF-CERTIFICATION OF COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EHEA FRAMEWORK (ALIGNMENT TO BOLOGNA CYCLES ETC.)	Alignment to the Bologna cycles accomplished - according to Law 288/2004.	2010-2012 Self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework

Romanian Model of NQF for HE

Competences can be classified in two categories:

■ Professional competences;



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