

Romania

VET in Europe - Country Report

2010

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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. VET in times of crisis
4. Historical background, Legislative and Institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing:- investment in human resources
11. National VET statistics - allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2010 and its reference year is 2009. 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

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1.1. POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Full name: Romania

Population: 21.4 million people(January 2010)

Capital: Bucharest

Area: 238 391 km² (92,043 sq miles)

Major language: Romanian

Major religion: Christianity (Romanian Orthodox)

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

Monetary unit: 1 new leu = 10000 bani

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

Romania is located at the crossroads of Central and South-Eastern Europe, north of the Balkan Peninsula, on the Lower Danube, within and outside the Carpathian arch, bordering on the Black Sea. 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. Romania has the ninth largest territory and the seventh largest population (with 21.5 million people) among the European Union member states. Its capital and largest city is Bucharest, the sixth largest city in the EU with about two million people. Romania also joined NATO on April 1st 2004, and is a member of the Latin Union, of the Francophonie as well as of the OSCE and of the United Nations (of the latter since 1955 with the sole exception of the ILO where membership goes back to 1919).

Romania is divided into 41 counties (RO: “judets”) and the municipality of Bucharest. Each county is administered by a county council, responsible for local affairs, as well as by a prefect/the institution of the prefect (senior civil servant) appointed by the central government, acting as head of all central government de-concentrated services in the county, both civilian and military (with the exception however of Army units per se) as well as exercising guardianship of the rule of law in the respective administrative unit.

Each county is further subdivided into cities and communes, with their own directly elected mayors and local councils (by exception the city of Bucharest has a General Mayor and a General Council, also directly elected by citizens; Bucharest in itself is then sub-divided into 6 sectors, each with their own directly elected mayor and local council) In total Romania counts 319 cities and 2686 communes in Romania.

The NUTS-3(Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) level divisions of European Union reflect Romania's administrative-territorial structure, and correspond to the 41 counties, plus Bucharest . The cities and communes correspond to the NUTS-5 level divisions, but there are no current NUTS-4 level divisions. The NUTS-1 (four macroregions) and NUTS-2 (eight development regions) divisions exist but have no administrative capacity, and are instead used for co-ordinating regional development projects, including EU assistance (cohesion and structural funds) and for statistical purposes .

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 Galati)
 - 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).

Throughout the decade to pass Romania has witnessed one of the most dynamic periods of development in its modern history. The strategic drive towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration opened by the radical reforms of the late nineties has unleashed a resumption of economic growth that lasted for more than eight years in a row, completely reshaping the country's economic and social landscape.

Private capital has become the economy's leading force and services have come to prevail both in terms of their contribution to GDP formation as well as in terms of overall employment. Inflation has been brought under control, the national currency has finally gained some measure of attractiveness as an investment vehicle and even prior to Romania formal accession on January 1st 2007, the Union had become the country's leading commercial partner. It was this effort to increase investment in education that helped Romania leapfrog in terms of its participation o the new economy of information and communication technologies. The country's achievements in terms of rise in internet connections, including broadband, mobile telephony as well as number of personal computers have defied any predictions that could be made at the beginning of the decade. True this holds mostly for the urban areas but in itself it makes for a powerful platform from which a new leap in productivity and competitiveness is possible for the decade to come.

Although Romania is one of Europe's best endowed countries in terms of agricultural resources, still this sectors' contribution to GDP formation remains to date dismal. Harnessing the potential of agriculture and turning it from a static, comparative advantage into a dynamic competitive one remains one of the challenges of the decade to come. Standing up to this challenge and capitalizing the progresses made during the last two years in the use of the EU's most powerful of common policies, the CAP, will mean for Romania a genuine possibility not only to increase its economic base but also to sort out a host of inequalities and bring into the formal labour market those small farms workers, largely women, toiling in subsistence or semi-subsistence farms. As a member state, Romania has now the opportunity to enhance its own national effort of development by tapping into the common pool of resources made available by the Union in the form of its structural and cohesion instruments.

Although in its third year as a member state, Romania has still a lot to do on the issue: STATE REFORM OF THE STATE is necessary; streamlining the public administration, overhauling the country's education and social protection system. Increasing the flexibility of its labour market even further will not only augment productivity and competitiveness but will make it far more easy for the private sector and for the civil society to access EU and funds.

Developments subsequent to the EU Accession process aim at reducing the structural gaps that still separate Romania from the developed core of the Union as well as increasing the convergence of its economy. and had an augmenting effect on the whole process of economic growth that marked the period between 2001 and 2008. Although it is difficult empirically to prove how much and to what extent the process of EU Accession in itself has contributed to GDP growth as this has overlapped with Prefects' Offices, County Councils, A.J.O.F.M. (County Employment Authority), I.S.J.(County Education Authority), Chambers of Commerce, M.M.S.S.F.(Ministry of Labor), A.D.R.(Regional Development Agencies), U.G.I.R. 1903 Association of Business Owners, B.N.S. (National Trade Unions Block) and other social partners a period characterized worldwide by high rates of growth, no one can however deny that the process has greatly contributed to an increased openness of the economy (1), has buttressed investor's confidence (2) and fostered change into the country's systems of public administration, education, social protection, justice, health etc (3), all of which could only have been augmenting factors of the economic growth.

It is precisely these economic achievements that have been spurred by the effect of the EU accession process which has greatly contributed to a sharp increase in the inflow of foreign direct investment into the Romanian economy.

It is nonetheless true that such a fast process of development, not witnessed by the country for almost one full generation (30 years), has come with its imbalances and contradictions. While the country's economical and employment structure shifted from one based on industry and agriculture towards one relying for most of its output on services, its dependence on foreign flows of capital has also increased. With internal capital resources far too meagre to sustain such a fast development, Romania has seen its balance of payments deteriorating, with the current account deficit reaching the worrying equivalent of 12% of the country's GDP by the end of 2008.

High GDP growth rates, above the EU average for most of the decade (in 2008 actually Romania topped EU growth rankings with real GDP at 7.3% on the year early) have also come as result of a profound fiscal reform in 2005 which scraped the country's progressive income taxation system and replaced it with a flat-rate 16% income tax. Meanwhile a bold process of reducing the contribution burden of firms has seen drastic cuts of the cumulative contributions rates for the mandatory social protection schemes. While this had a positive effect on growth and, to a certain extent on job creation (employment rate for the 15-64 reached *almost* 60% in 2008) it also weakened the country's fiscal position rendering it far too dependent on cyclical flows of income, bound to exhaust when that very cycle goes into reverse. In the meantime an unfortunate increase in the number of jobs in the public administration (at the end of 2008 public administration was recording one of the highest levels of labour demand with a vacancy rate at 5.73% as against a national average of 1.53%) as well an inflationary development of the public education system (expenditures for public education rose 66-70% from a little bit less than 3% of the GDP in 2000 to around 5% in 2008, without this translating into major performance improvements of the system), both of them coupled with what can be labelled as a rather excessive laxity in the administration of social protection benefits (expenditures with the public pension system have reached the equivalent of 7.3% of the GDP in 2008 up from 5.1% in 2005 although, as a result of parametric and paradigmatic reforms the budget of the pension fund has been fully balanced, for the first time since the early nineties, in 2006 and 2007- however this situation has to take into account high cyclical receipts into the system owing to record GDP growth) have all concurred so as to increase the country's vulnerability to externally induced shocks, the current global economic crisis and its ensuing downturn being the best and most unfortunate of examples.

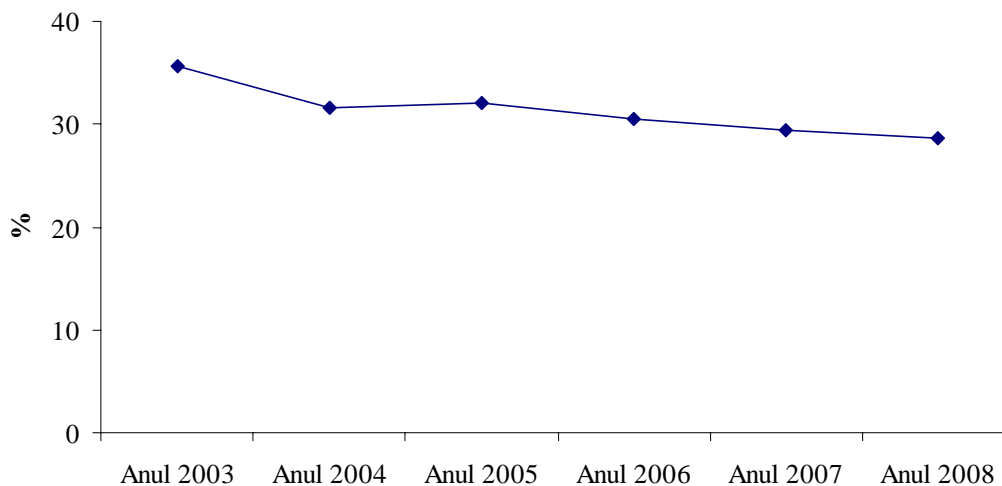
By capitalizing on the current achievement and tackling the remaining concerns, including by making the best use of the available EU-enablers (mainly the structural and cohesion instruments as well as instruments available under the common EU policies) Romania will not only make great leaps forward that will benefit its own citizens but it will also point to the

advantages of closer and deepening integration between open economies and democratic societies, for which the European Union stands as unique example in the world today. Romanian labour market still has to tackle a host of thorny issues, especially due to the still large share of labour that remains involved in what is *household-production for their own final consumption activities* which, to a rather significant extent fuel the channels of the underground labour market. Several measures to combat the extent of this latter phenomenon have been taken, the emphasis on them being high in the context of the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Romania and the European Commission, part of the financial assistance package disbursed to the country so as to counteract the effects of the global downturn. An integrated mechanism for the prevention, monitoring and combat for the undeclared work has been thus been created, concerting the efforts of all relevant stakeholders. In the meantime, the shift towards services, while beneficial from a certain point of view, has been less of a blessing from another one. It has rendered the economy and the labour market far too vulnerable to the vagaries of the world markets. Being a **small, open, emergent market**, Romania needs to structure a domestic market and from this point investing in agriculture and getting the sector out of the *backwater of subsistence economy remains one of the major challenges for the future*. The very fact that Romania has obtained in the structure of the current Commission, the portfolio of agriculture, or in other words the one in charge of the most potent enablers of economic development (i.e.: the Common Agricultural Policy) at the disposal of the Union, signals actually in a direction where a lot more remains to be done. This points out to the plea of women, which making up at the end of 2008 around 45% of total employment make up a far much higher share of employment inside the category of contributing family workers where they represent 72.8% .

According to the National Accounts data, employment in agriculture, forestry and fisheries still represents the bulk of total employment, with 31.2% in 2005, albeit falling from its all-transition period peak of 41.4% in 2000. During the period 2003-2008, the share of agriculture in total employment dropped from 35.6% to about 28.7% at the end of 2008.

Figure 1

Share of agriculture in total employment during the period 2003-2008



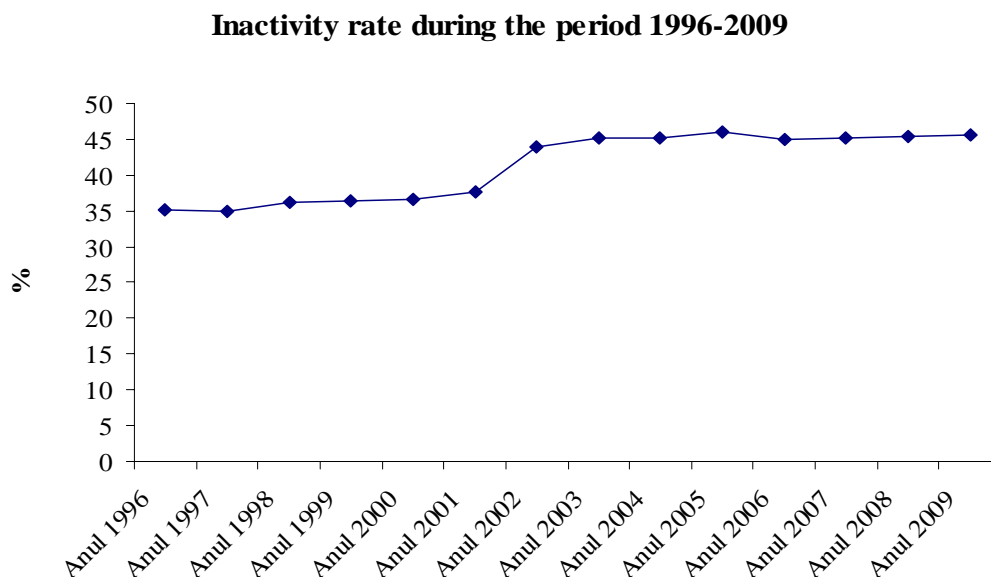
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

The high rates of idleness in the economically active age category, the great number of people working in subsistence farming (estimated at 4 million people) and migration of labour (estimated at 2 million people) are occurrences that could account for the decrease in the number of people earning wages, without any corresponding growth in unemployment rates. A

factor partly mitigating the effect of lay-offs from state-owned businesses was the development of private sector employment.

The inactivity rate increased from about 35% to 45.7% over the period 1996-2009. The ageing of population and increasing inactivity rate generate an increase in the economic old age dependency rate. While in 1990 there were 3.4 employees for 1 pensioner, in 2008 the ratio was 4.7 employees for 1 pensioner.

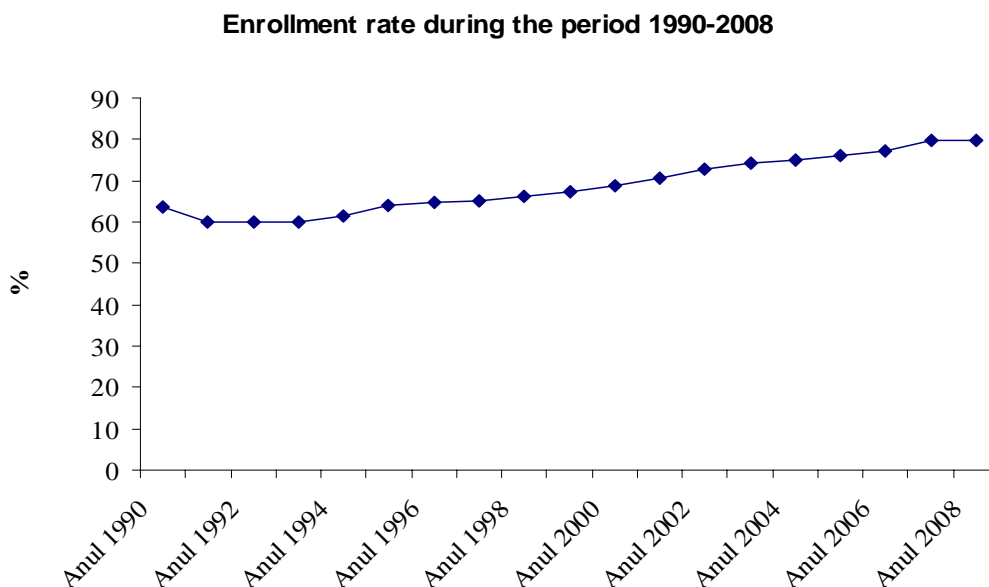
Figure 2



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

According to the latest data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, enrolment rate for the country's school age population stood at 79.6% for the school-year 2008/2009, with the highest value being recorded for the compulsory primary education (population aged between 7 and 10) where enrolment rates have reached the threshold of 95%. Some differences remained in between the rural and urban areas, pointing thus once again to the pressing need of allocating more resources for the rural as well as for its agricultural pillar. While in the urban areas graduation rates for primary and lower secondary cycles (grades from 1 to 8, children aged between 7 and 14) were at 97.2% for the same school year cited above, for the rural areas they were 2 pp. lower standing squarely at 95.8%. The rural lower secondary cycle displayed still at the end the school year 2008-09 the lowest graduation rate, at 94.9%.

Figure 3

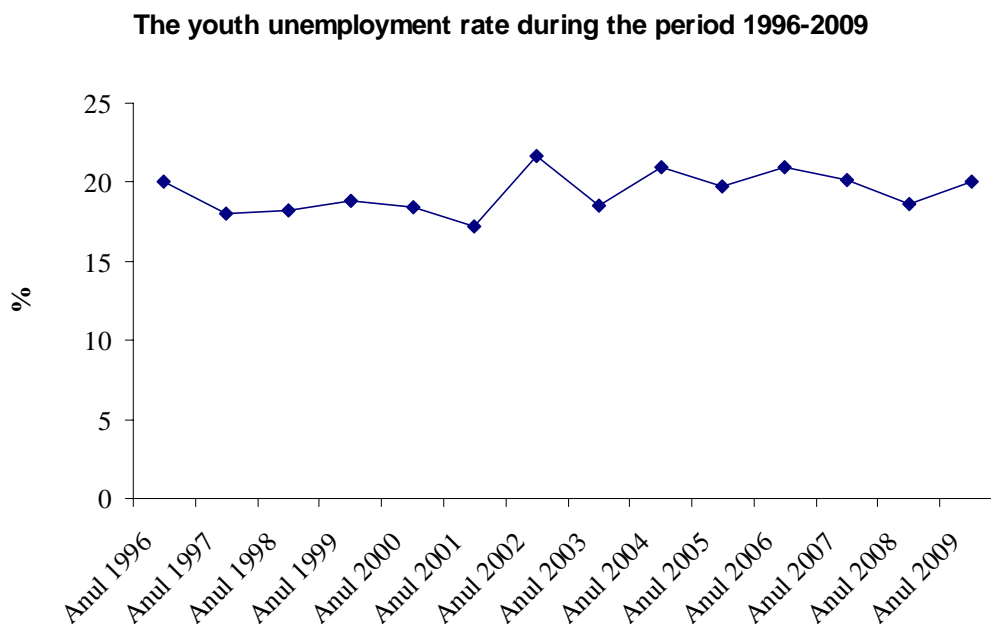


Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

Youth employment rates in Romania - people aged 20 to 24 - was 36.6 percent in 2009, going down to nearly 35 percent in the first quarter of 2010, among the smallest in the European Union, according to data provided by the Romanian National Statistics Institute (INS).

Youth employment in 2005 was over 40 percent, but has dropped each following year. Long-term unemployment (12 months and more) among young people was 10.3 percent in 2009, six times more than the 1.7 percent unemployment rate among the older population. Elderly employment rate - 55-64 years - was 42.6 percent in 2009, 3.4 percent smaller than the EU averages, having declined to below 40 percent in Q1 2010. In the first three months of 2010, employment of people aged 20 to 64 was 61.6 percent, down 0.6 percentage points from the previous quarter and 0.8 percent from the similar period of 2009. The employed population declined 3.4 percent in Q1 2010 from Q1 2009, from 9.097 million to 8.788 million. The number of the employees in the same interval dropped from 6.583 million to 6.486 million, while the number of the self-employed went down from 2.514 million to 2.301 million.

Figure 4



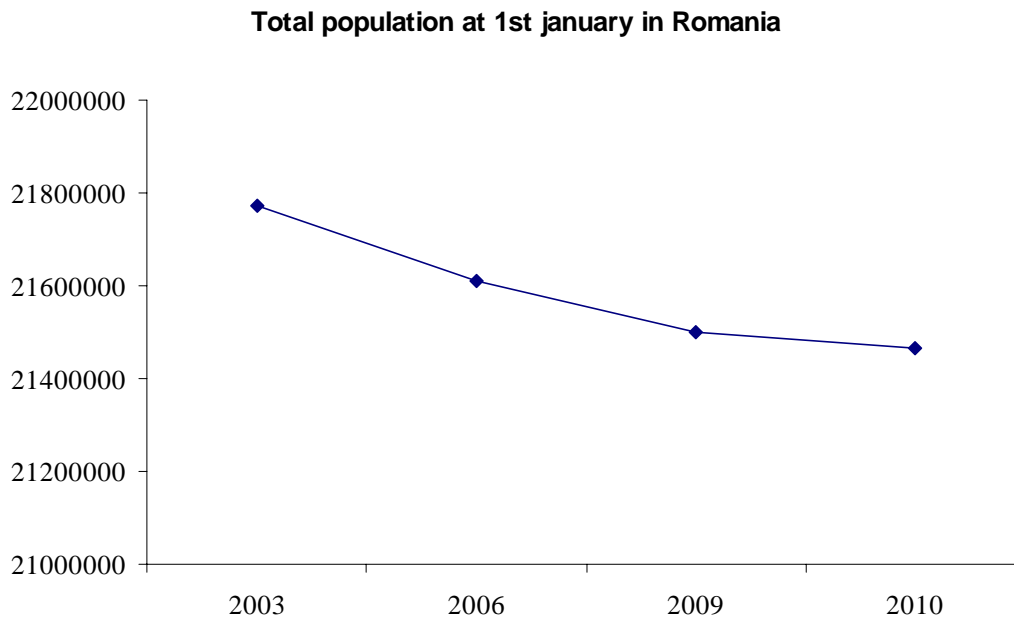
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

Reform in education has also been directed so as to ease un-necessary burden on students, give more time for practical application and competence oriented outputs while in the meantime creating room for disadvantaged minorities such as the romans to promote via public education their own values and culture helping to break the cycle of discrimination. Nevertheless, the education reform also entailed an adaptation to smaller cohorts for the primary education as a result of smaller generations born in the nineties. This has especially affected rural schools and kindergarten, part of which had to be closed (e.g.: in 2008 only 12.2% of kindergartens were functioning in rural areas). The fact that rural areas still lag behind in amenities of modern life makes it difficult to attract teaching personnel especially well trained ones. Despite efforts made to stimulate teachers to come to the rural areas, including via special financial incentives in addition to the basic salary, results remain dismal. Graduation rate for lower secondary education remain lower than in urban areas while drop-out rates, which in the school year 2007-08 have marked a reversal of their rising trend in urban areas have continued their ascent in rural areas unabated. This points to serious problems especially as school age population will continue to be on the fall and funds now available, limited for some time. This might lead to further school closures thus hampering further access to education for village children, small, isolated communities remaining thus at risk.

1.2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

At the end of 2009, the total population of Romania was about 21.4 million people. The population has been constantly decreasing since 1990. During the period 2003-2010, we can observe a sharp decline from 21.8 million people to about 21.4 million people.

Figure 5



Source of data: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics)

Romania's young population or the one between 15 and 24 years of age was totalling 3.11 million in 2008, thus making up approximately 14.46% of the country's total population. If at this we also add population between 25 and 29 years of age so as to extend the age limit of youth we will reach to 4.78 million or in percentages of the country's total 21.5 million inhabitants around 22.23%. This is of course not negligible showing that a window of opportunity in demographic terms still exists for the country. However trends are more than worrying pointing to the fact that while the window might be still look open for now it is closing and at a fast pace. Comparing with the last Census (2002=100) the age group 15 to 24 years lost around 8% with a whopping 75% of this loss being squeezed in the span of three years between 2005 and 2007. Same goes for population between 25 and 29 years of age which lost something like 6% since the beginning of the decade (same 2002 Census=100). Once again, almost the whole of the loss takes place practically during the last three years of the period. This wholly marks the beginning of the end as it clearly shows a reversal of trends. If until 2006-2007 at least this latter segment of the population was still on the rise, afterwards, the declining trend clearly marked the entry into this particular age of the post-1990 smaller cohorts.

In terms of the labour market the fact that economic growth throughout the first eight years of the decade has not been matched by much job creation has worked so as to divert massive cohorts of young population from the labour market into prolonged education. While this has been on one side good as it markedly improved the level of education of the country's population, with the share of those reporting higher education rising from 6.2% (as share of the 15 years and over) in 1996 to 9.6% in 2008 and enrolment rates in a form of education for the 19-23 years of age skyrocketing from 22.6% in 1996 to 63.3% in 2008 (a 280% rise in the span of 12

years making thus for a crude average annual rise of 23%), it has also marked a corresponding shunning of the labour market for the same age cohorts. Activity rates for the young dropped dramatically losing fully 13 pp. between 2000 and 2008. At a time when the economy recorded an average annual growth of 6%, , more and more young people were actually shunning labour market.

The shock of the crisis only made things look worse. The practical “labour market lid” created by the rapid advance on the labour market of generations born in the mid-sixties was what actually strongly diverted the flows of still sufficiently large generations born in the 1980s into the education system. This was and still is, in demographic terms at least, what puts those generations as well as the increasing number from those born in the early nineties, even if fewer in number, at a gross disadvantage on the labour market today. According to the Romanian National Institute of Statistics data, fact is that high skilled unemployed in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 make up more than 35% of all high skilled unemployed.

Analyzing the projection of the population until 2060, the forecast data shows that the ageing process will continue during the next twenty years. Relative share of young population(0-24 years) is expected to decrease. Population ageing is evident in the age index (the ratio of population aged 65+ years to 0-14 years), 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. Population Projection during the period 2010-2060

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION
2010	21333838
2015	21102552
2020	20833786
2025	20483994
2030	20049059
2035	19619064
2040	19160713
2045	18678793
2050	18149247
2055	17583927
2060	16921425

Source of Data: Eurostat, EUROPOP2008 convergence scenario, national level

Romania's population will fall by 4.5 million inhabitants by the year 2060, reaching 16.9 million inhabitants, shows data released by EUROSTAT. Romania will have in this period the fourth sharpest decline in population among the 27 EU states: 21%, after Bulgaria (28%), Latvia (26%) and Lithuania (24%).

TABLE 2. PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO, 2010-2060							
GEO\TIME	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
RO	21.34	22.54	25.67	30.32	40.75	54	65.27
EU 27	25.9	28.26	31.05	38.04	45.36	50.42	53.47

Source of Data: Eurostat (EUROPOP2008 - Convergence scenario, national level)

Also, the old-age dependency ratio in Romania will triple until 2060, from 21.3% in 2010 to 65.3% in 2060, the same data shows. The demographic timebomb is preparing to blow all over Europe, hitting especially the Eastern part of the continent - the only counterattack being private savings for retirement. Data by EUROSTAT shows that Romania will go from 4.7 working-age adults supporting one pensioner in 2008 to just 1.5 working adults per pensioner in 2060.

1.3. ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

In Romania, employment structure by sectors still differs considerable from the Western economies. Starting out in the nineties with a completely oversized, yet unproductive, agricultural sector and a likewise oversized and unproductive industrial sector the underdeveloped services sector could enlarge its share of total employment in recent years, while the size of the industrial sector was largely corrected. Still, the size of the services sector is too low, especially when compared to its much larger contribution to the GDP of Romania. The industrial sector is still somewhat oversized and indicates a large part of labor-intensive, rather than technology intensive industrial activities. The still completely oversized agricultural sector is by no means productive and rather a buffer for the massive lay-offs during the nineties, what explains also its growth until 2001. A large part of the agricultural's sector contribution to employment in Romania has to be interpreted as a form of hidden unemployment. The construction sector follows the trend of the national economy with a growing share during periods of growth and a declining share during times of recession. After 2000 it experienced a real boom and after the arrival of the crisis in early 2009 a sharp downturn. Analyzing the level of employment by economic activity for 2009, the largest share is occupied by the primary sector and utilities(32.3%), followed by distribution and transport (20.5%), manufacturing (18.9%), and non marketed services (13.7%). The area of business and other services has the smallest percentage 6.6%.

For the EU-27 countries the largest share is occupied by distribution and transport (26.4%), non marketed services (24.4%), business and other services(17.7%) and manufacturing (16.1%). Unlike Romania, the EU-27 has the smallest rate of employment in the primary sector and utilities (table 3).

The employment rates for the group 15-24 years old follows a slowly decline from 27.3% in 2003 to 24.5% in 2009. For the group 50-64 years old, the employment rates have slowly increased from 49.9% in 2003 to 51.6% in 2009. Regardless the level of education attained, the largest share of employment is recorded for the 25-49 age group(table 4).

Unemployment in Romania has been in a steady decline during the past years of economic boom and been much lower than in other Eastern European Countries. This is mainly due to three factors: hidden unemployment in the "agricultural" sector, better to be named agriculture of subsistence. Second, a sharp decline in the activity rate from some 85% at the beginning of the 1990-ies to some 65% after 2000 and third, (short) term migration and illicit work in the shadow economy. Yet, the job market after 2004/2005 was characterized by nearly full employment for skilled labor in the economic centers of Romania and double digit-salary growth. The job market in Romania was among the first to feel the arrival of the crisis in 2009 and registered soon a

nearly complete freeze of open positions and soon, dismissals and a new wave of job loss with fast growing rates of unemployment.
The highest level of unemployment is recorded for the age groups 15-24 and 50-64 years for the level of education ISCED3-4, while for ISCED 0-2 the age group 25-49 years has the highest rate of unemployment(table 5).

GEO	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES	
	PERSON S	%	PERSON S	%	PERSON S	%	PERSON S	%	PERSON S	%	PERSON S	%
EU 27	15192.8	7.0	35068.2	16.1	17290.9	7.9	57470.5	26.4	38557.9	17.7	53201.2	24.4
RO	2986.5	32.3	1751.3	18.9	725.9	7.9	1899.5	20.5	609.5	6.6	1270.6	13.7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

GEO	TIME ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2009		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	25.1(i)	66.1(i)	41.9 (i)	24.8	66.9	43.5	22.8	64.1	43.3
	3-4	47.2 (i)	79.1 (i)	54.9 (i)	48.1	80.5	57.9	46.3	80.5	59.5
	5-6	62.0 (i)	88.0 (i)	72.4 (i)	60.5	88.5	74.2	58.4	88.2	74.5
	NO A.	14.9 (i)	72.6 (i)	39.1 (i)	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.5	75.6	63.9
	TOTAL	36.0 (i)	77.4 (i)	51.5 (i)	36.6	79.1	54.4	35.2	78.8	56.5
RO	0-2	19.8	64.6	51.2	15.9	60.3	46.7	16.5	61.0	47.9
	3-4	36.6	76.8	46.1	32.7	77.8	51.1	30.5	75.9	50.7
	5-6	71.3	91.0	59.3	57.6	92.2	74.2	56.4	91.0	70.1
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	27.3	75.8	49.9	24.0	76.4	51.5	24.5	75.3	51.6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Table 5. Unemployment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2009										
	TIME	2003			2006			2009		
GEO	ISCED / AGE	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	20.2 (i)	11.6 (i)	7.2 (i)	21.2	11.2	7.5	25.9	14.8	9.1
	3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	16.9	7.5	6.2
	5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	15.4	4.8	3.4
	No A.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:	22.0	7.5	:
	TOTAL	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	19.7	8.2	6.3
RO	0-2	15.3	8.1	2.0	19.7	9.7	3.2	19.4	9.1	4.0
	3-4	22.8	6.7	5.1	22.0	6.8	4.9	20.9	6.1	5.0
	5-6	15.8	2.9	2.5	27.7	3.2	:	24.9	3.5	:
	No A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	19.5	6.5	3.2	21.4	6.7	3.9	20.8	6.1	4.3

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Table 6 a: Total public expenditure on education, at secondary level of education, by programme orientation, 2007									
	ALL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			VOCATIONAL AND PREVOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)		
GEO	ALL PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	GEN. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	PV-VOC. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
EU27	200368.4	2.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
RO	3384.8	1.5	4.2	3129.1	1.4	3.9	255.7	0.1	0.3

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

TABLE 6 B: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4), 2001-2006						
Geo	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU27	2.27 (s)	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)
RO	0.87 (i)	0.76 (i)	0.71 (i)	0.73 (i)	0.77	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE)

School enrolment rate has been the highest and on a growing trend for higher education where for the university year 2008-2009 (last validated data) it reached 54.9%. Even if at a lesser pace than for the 19-23 years of age and over, school enrolment rates for the 15-18 were also on the rise, going up from a low of 59.7% in 1996 to 79.2% in 2008. School enrolment rates for this age group have been for the whole period higher for female than for male youth. However and in spite of this early school leaving remains high in Romania. For the age group 18-24 early school leaving went down on the whole from a high of 19.15 in 1996 to a 15.9% in 2008. However large differences still loom between the more affluent urban areas where early school leaving for this age group stands now at only 7.7% and the rural areas, where it remains a scary 27.4%, true down by 14 pp. since its all time high of 41% (!) in 2000.

The public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4) has decreased from 0.87% in 2001 to 0.77% in 2005. For the secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), the public expenditure as % of GDP has reached the value of 1.5% at the end of 2007 for all programmes, 1.4% of GDP for general programmes and only 0.1% of GDP for vocational and prevocational programmes. The total public expenditure on education measured as % of total public expenditure for the secondary level of education has reached the value of 4.2% for all programmes, 3.9% for general programmes and only 0.3% for vocational and prevocational programmes.

1.4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Early school leaving is a phenomenon negatively affecting the quality and competitiveness of the human capital. The early school leaving rate slightly decreased from 23.0% in 2002 up to 15.9% in 2008 (Table 7). A significant gap between Romanian and European indicators can be noticed. 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 EU-27. In Romania, the early school leaving rate has a decreasing trend, as in the rest of the EU. It dropped down from 23% in 2002 to 15.9% in 2008. It however exceeds the EU average by a high margin.

There is a gender gap: the early school leaving rate is higher in case of male population, since many of them are leaving schools to enter on the labour market to ensure financial support for their families. Poverty, low educational attainment of parents and the risk of social exclusion are the most important factors leading to the increase of early school leaving rate¹. Also, the surveys² available identify the low attractiveness of education among the motivations for early school leaving (only 33% of the pupils surveyed consider the education provided in schools as useful for their social and professional life).

¹ European Commission, Study on Access to Education and Training, Basic Skills and Early School Leavers (Ref. DG EAC 38/04), Final Report European Commission DG EAC, September 2005

² Institute for Educational Sciences, "Motivation for learning and school performance", 2004

TABLE 7: EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS ³ (%), 2002-2008							
GEO/TIME	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU 27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9
RO	23.0	22.5	22.4 (b)	19.6	17.9	17.3	15.9

Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

By categories, Roma population is the group the most exposed to early school leaving, and the situation is more severe in case of Roma women due to the poor living conditions and traditions. Low achieving pupils are also one of the categories exposed to early school leaving since their poor performance in school seriously affects their self esteem and motivation for learning.

TABLE 8 A: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME ORIENTATION AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2005 AND 2007													
Year		2005						2007					
Geo	S	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
RO	F	53612	:	10183 1	:	:	11854	53981	:	97183	:	:	8322
	M	34114	:	14089 4	:	:	6676	36454	:	13378 7	:	:	4338
	T	87726	:	24272 5	:	:	18530	90435	:	23097 0	:	:	12660
EU 27*	F	10151 69	1081 71	98482 3	2274 9	0	21543 5	12988 81	9875 7	11761 69	2538 6	0	21211 3
	M	74369 4	1579 51	11573 04	2243 2	0	18931 2	96560 0	1349 24	13748 44	2348 8	0	17765 7
	T	17588 63	2661 22	21421 28	4518 2	0	40474 7	22644 81	2336 81	25510 14	4887 4	0	38977 0

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

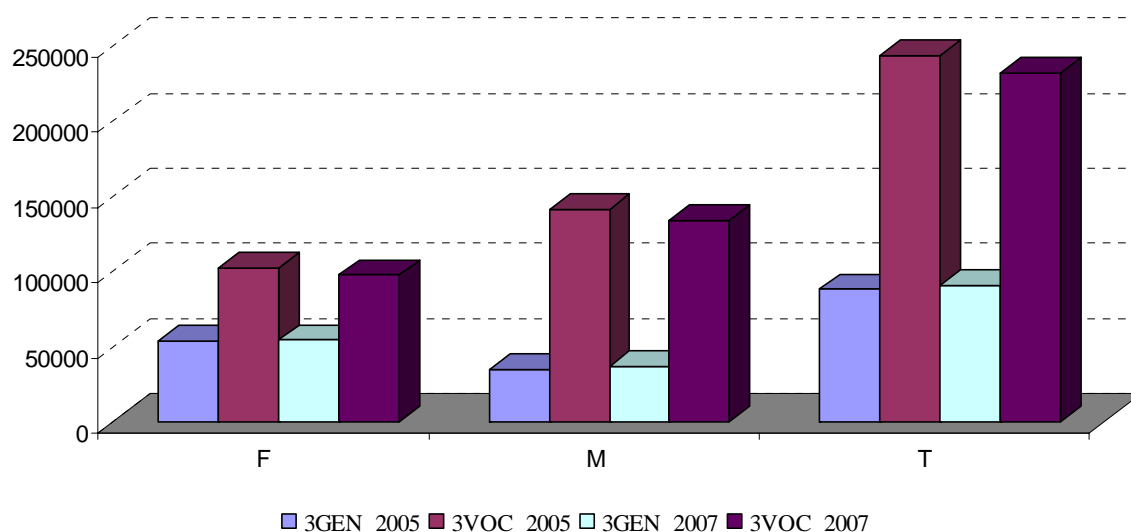
³ Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training. Early school leavers refers to persons aged 18 to 24 in the following two conditions: the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and respondents 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.

TABLE 8 B: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 5 AND LEVEL 6 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME DESTINATION, 1ST/2ND STAGE AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2005, 2007													
Year		2005						2007					
Geo	S	5 A1	5 A2	5 B1	5 B2	6	5 - 6	5 A1	5 A2	5 B1	5 B2	6	5 - 6
RO	F	56120	2461 9	6832	:	1897	89468	68588	4711 7	5871	:	1488	12306 4
	M	41529	1960 0	3994	:	1974	67097	46903	3037 1	4137	:	1495	82906
	T	97649	4421 9	10826	:	3871	15656 5	11549 1	7748 8	10008	:	2983	20597 0
EU 27*	F	11896 46	8752 6	40302 6	7709	3906 8	19938 99	11148 03	3974 31	33215 4	4448	4073 6	18918 03
	M	87611 3	6956 7	27099 4	3441	5096 3	14394 16	79238 1	2492 18	20711 7	3715	5070 0	13041 18
	T	21136 14	1570 93	67799 0	1115 0	9252 5	34944 81	19601 32	6544 80	54516 6	8163	9344 2	32646 01

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

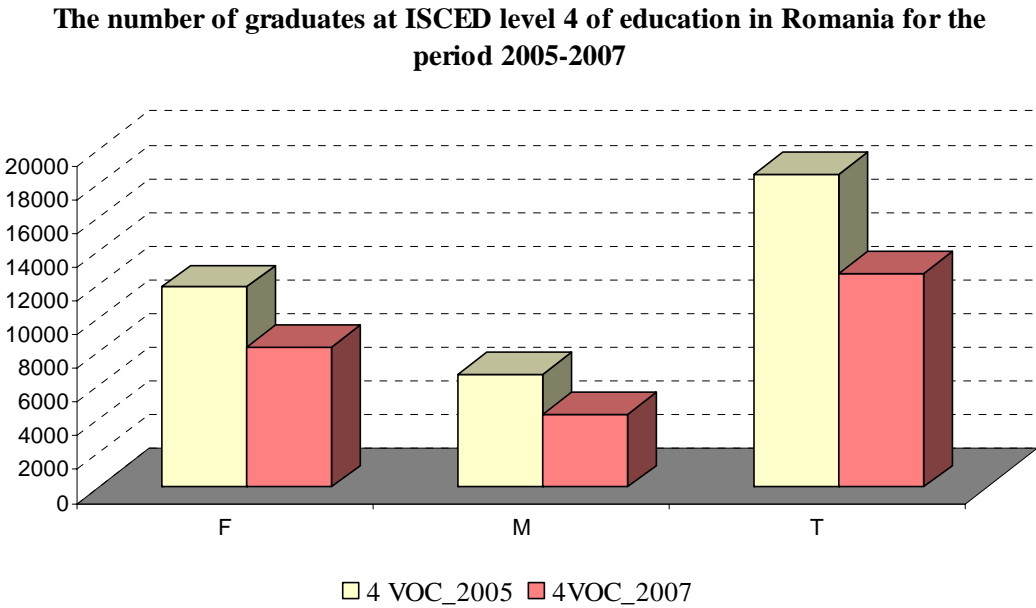
Figure 6

The number of graduates at ISCED level 3 of education in Romania for the period 2005-2007



Analyzing the number of graduates at ISCED level 3 of education by gender we can observe the fact that the difference is quite large. The tendency in Romania is that: there are more men than women graduates. For this level of education, in Romania we have a descendent trend for the period 2005-2007 for total level, and also for gender structure, males and females.

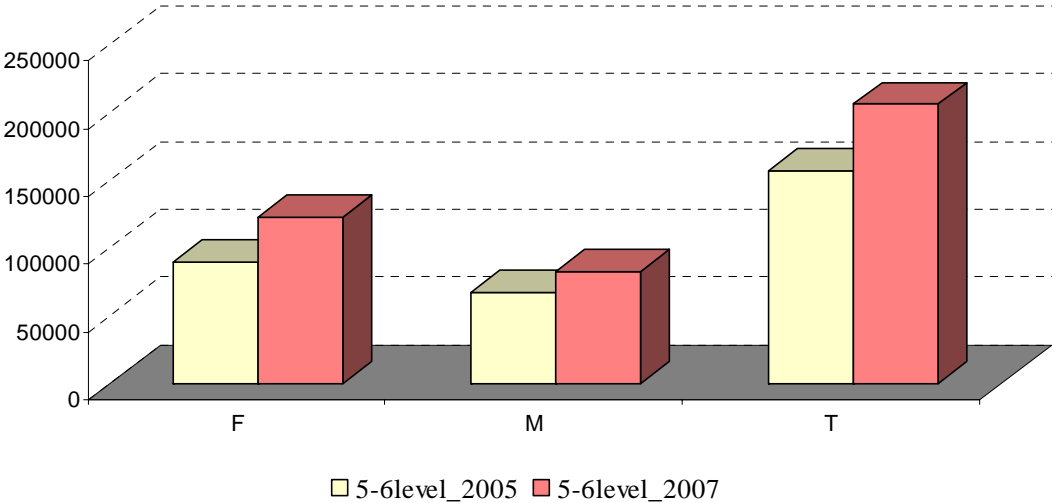
Figure 7



For the level of education ISCED 4, we can observe the fact the proportion of males vs. females is inverting. For the case of Romania, the number of female graduates was higher than the male graduates. One interesting observation has referred to the fact that, while in EU-27 countries, the average number of graduates for males, females and total for the ISCED 4 is increasing; in Romania we can see a descending trend in all the three situations total, males and females.

Figure 8

The number of graduates at ISCED level 5 and 6 of education in Romania for the period 2005-2007



For ISCED 5-6, the number of graduates in Romania is higher for women and is increasing for the period 2005-2007. 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 2005-2007 for the three level of education ISCED 3, 4 and 5-6 we can observe the fact that the number of men graduates is higher than the number of women for the ISCED 3, and this ratio is inverting for the higher levels of education as ISCED 4 and ISCED 5-6.

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

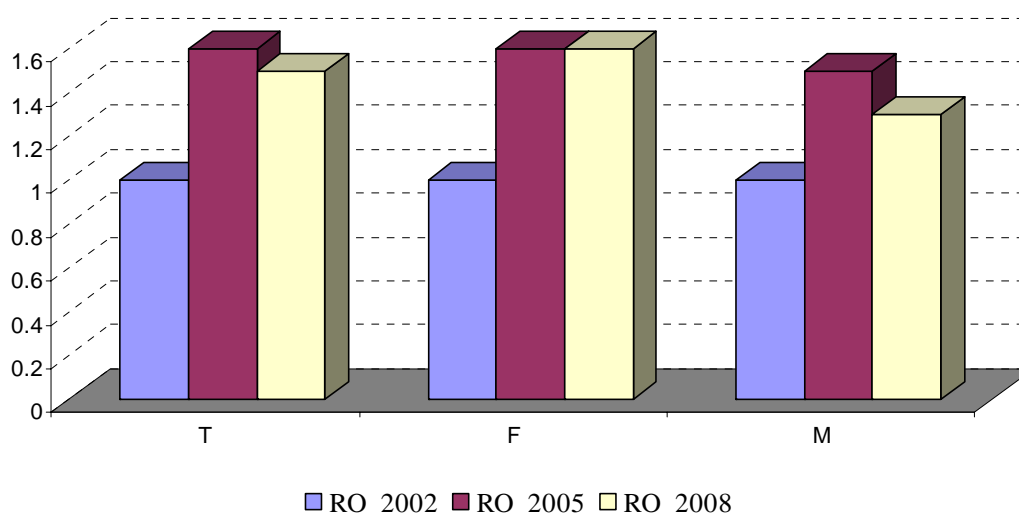
Youth educational attainment levels are lower than the average for EU-27. Overall, the share of population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education is higher in the European Union, 76.7% in 2002, 77.5% in 2005 and 78.5% in 2008. This also holds when looking at the same variable dis-aggregated so as to account for the gender structure. For women, the value, expressed in relative numbers, has a fluctuating evolution, reaching 77.7% in 2002, coming slightly down to 76.8% in 2005 and then climbing up again to 78.6% in 2008. For the male population however, the share of those having completed upper secondary education witnessed a thoroughly upward evolution slope, rising from 74.8% in 2002 to 75.2% in 2005 finally reaching 77.9% in 2007.

time	2002			2005			2008		
geo	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU 27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.5	81.3	75.6
RO	76.3	77.7	74.8	76.0	76.8	75.2	78.3	78.6	77.9

Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

Figure 9

Lifelong learning adult participation in education and training by sex(5), 2002, 2005, 2008



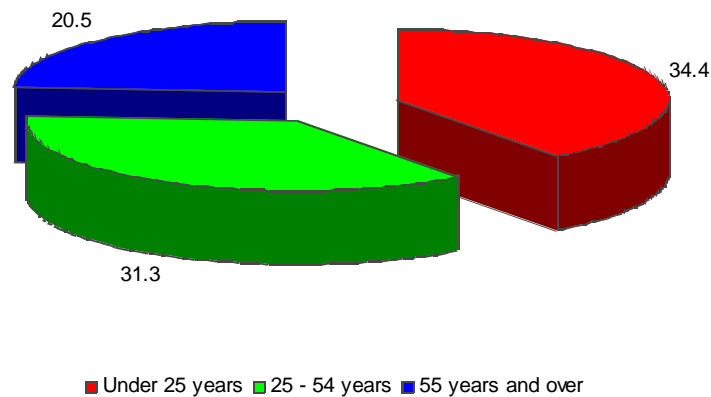
Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

The lifelong learning participation of males is decreasing over the period 2002-2008. Overall, some progress has been made between 2002 and 2005 in the lifelong learning participation.

It is, however, mainly due to the fact that the survey methodology were changed and the statistics data are available for only three years which resulted in a higher numerical rate of participation and exaggerated outcome.

Figure 10

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



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

The participation rate in mobility programs 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 in VET mobility programmes.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

The Public Education Act provides the legal definition for initial education at all levels. Vocational education and training and especially vocational education and training for adults fall under the regulatory authority of the National Adult Training Board (NATB) also acting as Romania's National Authority for Qualifications. Currently the NATB is re-organizing itself and has been shifted from the authority of the Ministry of Labour (current official name: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection) to the one of the Ministry of Education (current official name: Ministry of Education, Research and Youth). The NATB functions as a tripartite body.

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

2.1.1 NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

According with the **National Reform Programme 2007-2010** objectives, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MECT) focused on one of the most important priorities: promoting lifelong learning.

According to the EC Report Progress Towards Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, there are huge gaps regarding the adults participation to lifelong education and training in EU MS: the figures present the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain as having the highest participation rates (over 20%) while in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania this value reach only 2%, four times less than the EU average. These circumstances given, and in order to support of the aim to promote Lifelong Learning (LLL), MECT envisages the upgrade of the legal framework on continuous education (in partnership with MMFES); in this respect, MECT initiated the actions needed for the operationalisation of the inter-ministerial working group to draft the **Strategy for lifelong learning**. There have been started the procedures for the working group' setting-up and formalizing.

For 2010, Romania committed itself for the strategic target of 7 % for the participation to CVT for the 25-64 year age group, by adopting "**The Short and Medium-Term Strategy on lifelong learning 2005 - 2010**". The Strategy aims at developing a structured, transparent and flexible system of CVT, with an appropriate funding and with a strong involvement of the social partners in order to ensure the increase in employment, adaptability and mobility of the labour force, the development of lifelong training, by taking into consideration the economic restructuring and the alignment to the European market.

During the period 2007 - 2009, it is envisaged to revise the legislation on CVT and to support the institutional/administrative capacity of National Board for Adult Training to act as for National Authority for Qualifications. In 2007, there is ongoing a Phare funded project which supports the development of the National Qualifications Framework (the National Register of Qualifications, included) as reference for the provision of information regarding the quality, accessibility, recognition of qualifications and relation with the labour market. There are , also, envisaged the measures to support the development of specific methodology for the certification of qualifications and competences acquired by vocational training, based on the common principles for both initial and continuous vocational training, taking into account the formal, non-formal and informal learning environments in which learning acquisitions take place.

The development of the continuing training system is based on the principle of social partnership and there will be supported the setting up and functioning of sectoral committees. The social partners are involved in the definition and validation of vocational qualifications, as well as in the process of authorizing the CVT/adult training providers and of evaluating competences.

The development of CVT system were also supported under **SOP HRD(Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development) 2007-2013** which addressed the following priorities: quality assurance in CVT, restructuring the National Qualifications Framework, development of specific system for recognition and validation of prior learning. This strategic project is addressed to the training and development of the lifelong learning facilitators. The project aims at creating virtual communities on lifelong learning programmes in school which are to ensure good practice exchange, sharing participants' experiences, creating sustainable partnerships in the field of lifelong learning at local and regional levels, and piloting lifelong learning centres, on the basis of *lifelong learning partnerships*, at which will attend regional and local institutions and other stakeholders.

2.1.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

National Reformme programme 2007-2010 point out the role of the social partners in VET governance and funding and their degree of responsibility by strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees activity. The main role of the sectoral committees is to develop, validate and update the qualifications, benefiting by the full participation of the social partners and of the other actors involved (such as: professional associations, regulation authorities, etc.). Covering all the activity sectors, a number of 23 sectoral committees have been set up through sector agreements, based on the National Tripartite Agreement signed in February 2005 by the Government, Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations representative at national level. These committees, together with the Validation Commissions, are involved in the design and assessment of vocational qualifications. Validation Commissions are working under the authority of sectoral committees.

Performing the role of national authority for qualifications, the National Vocational Training Board implemented activities for strengthening the sectoral committees and training their members, especially through multi-annual Phare project - Establishment of the National Authority for Qualifications.

Four sectoral committees (machinery, fine mechanics, equipments; constructions; food, beverages and tobacco; and tourism, hotels, restaurants) were involved in the implementation of methodological framework in order to create occupational standards and qualifications. During the reporting period, the last occupational standards and qualifications associated with these economic activities were completed and validated by the sectoral committees. The implementation of the methodological framework continues in other 15 economic sectors.

The sectoral committees' representatives participated in training sessions for ESF - SOP HRD multipliers, on the theme Correlation between Life Long Learning and the Labour Market, held in May 2008. Also, the Romanian authorities cooperate with sectoral committees for drafting qualification analyses of vocational qualification nomenclatures provided in pre-university education and for validation of occupational standards at sectoral and trans-sectoral level.

On September 30, 2008, 42 competence evaluation and certification centers and 2342 authorized training providers were operational. The available occupational standards were 475.

Strengthening the sectoral committees' role, a draft law amending the Law no 132/1999, republished, on setting up, organisation and functioning of the National Vocational Training Board was submitted to public debate. The legislative changes aimed to set up the National Authority for Qualifications, while the main task is to correlate the national qualification levels to the European Qualification Framework. During 2008, a public debate was organized for the draft Law on continuous vocational training, a piece of legislation initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities and submitted to social partners and relevant public institutions for discussion.

By 1 March 2009 the sectoral committees for training attains the status of public utility institutions.

Please note the publication of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 28/2009 on the regulation of certain social protection measures. Among the measures established by the Ordinance: the extension of the period during which unemployment benefits are granted, the employer's and employees' exemption from the payment of social insurance contributions throughout the temporary interruption of the activity, ***the regulation of sector committees as social dialogue institutions of public utility, by which it is ensured the participation of social partners to the continuous vocational training improvement.***

According with this ordinance, the financing of sector committees is ensured from:

- a) State budget, for the coverage of expenditures related to the functioning of technical secretariat, from the budget of Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, from The National Council for Adult Vocational Training budget;
- b) revenues from services provided (validation of occupational standards, based on tariffs established by the Ministry of Labor)
- c) revenues from services provided for the validation of qualifications and vocational training standards, in accordance with tariffs established by the Ministry of Education
- d) (Other revenues from service provisions, fees, sponsorships, donations, etc).

Meanwhile 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.

With a view to promoting the partnership principle at regional and local level, during 2005-2006 there were set up 8 Regional Pacts and 34 Local Partnerships for Employment and Social Inclusion, aiming at promoting the local employment initiatives, improvement of vocational training and thereby, increasing employability, and, as well as fighting against discrimination on the labour market and promoting social inclusion for vulnerable groups.

Regional Pacts for Employment and Social Inclusion have been concluded in each of the 8 development regions with a Charter being signed by relevant stakeholders (i.e.: Prefects' Offices, County Councils, A.J.O.F.M. (County Employment Authority), I.S.J.(County Education Authority), Chambers of Commerce, M.M.S.S.F.(Ministry of Labor), A.D.R.(Regional Development Agencies), U.G.I.R. 1903 Association of Business Owners, B.N.S. (National Trade Unions Block) and other social partners).

The Pact Charter (PC) proposes to approach the existing problems at regional level by applying the partnership principle which would represent the community's interests and the private sector's interests. At the same time, the PC promotes local employment initiatives with a view to maintain and promote the increasing of sustainable employment, to reduce unemployment, to fight against social exclusion.

Each Regional Pact for Employment and Social Inclusion will be supported by a Permanent Technical Secretariat, set up as nonprofit 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.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

1. The Romanian authorities continued the implementation of information and counselling measures for jobseekers with a view to ensure a sustainable insertion on the labour market. Through its Employment Programme, Public Employment Service (PES) supported the employment of 235,990 persons out of 421,342 persons who participated in active employment services in the first semester of 2008. Special programmes to promote the employment of vulnerable groups have been implemented, as well. In the first semester of 2008, 8,079 Roma ethnics, 603 disabled people, 115 young people at risk of social marginalisation, 34 foreigners, and 24 persons released from detention succeeded to be hired.
2. Also, in order to strengthen its institutional capacity, 1,082 employees of PES attended training courses organized by National Agency for Employment. Public Employment Services (PES) set up 8 centers for counselling and mediation of disabled persons in order to develop the services provided to these persons. The project was extended up to 12 other counselling and mediation centers, and now they are in the final phase of equipping and furniture providing, as well as staff training. Starting from January 1st, 2009 it becomes functional, so that PES have a network of 20 counselling and mediation centers for disabled persons.
3. According to the socio-professional characteristics of the registered persons, ANOFM implemented personalized measures fostering employment and employability, so as to increase the likelihood of an individual benefiting from more than one related employment services.
In the first semester of 2008, a number of 320,136 people took benefits from the vocational information and counselling services. Also, 183,834 people were employed through employment mediation services, and 10,760 people by means of job fairs. These services targeted specifically the categories of people having problems of insertion on the labour market.
By applying active measures for the social inclusion of disabled people able to work, 603 people were employed, out of which 141 in subsidized jobs, and 134 by information and counselling services, in the first quarter 2008,
In the first semester of 2008, 222 people were assisted through support and counseling services on starting-up a business or becoming self-employed.
4. ANOFM implements the programme - "From school, to professional life, towards career" addressing the future graduates of pre-university education. In the first semester of 2008, a number of 1,392 awareness and counselling sessions were carried out for students in pre-university education (students in the final grades), however a little bit less than the 1,782 sessions held throughout 2007.

TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING

Regarding the training of pupils with special needs emphasised in teacher training we can mention:

1. The two projects of MECT for ensuring equal opportunities to all pupils, in particular for students from rural areas, funded through ESF, namely: “Promoting the extracurricular and extra-school inclusive educational offer on a healthy lifestyle and active citizenship for the children coming from disadvantaged (mainly rural) communities in the primary and secondary education in Romania” and “The second chance in education” project. These projects include actions for employing young persons from Roma community (as non-qualified teachers and/or under qualification teachers) for teaching additional Romany curriculum (Romany language and/or Roma history and traditions, up to 3-4 teaching hours/week).
2. The exercise firms (in case of pre-university education)/ simulated enterprise (in case of university education) that represent a modern learning method which aims at developing pupils and students’ entrepreneurial skills by simulating the internal and external processes which are being developed within a firm. The number of exercise firms increased from 117 in the 2002/2003 school year to 890 firms in the 2007/2008 school year.

Related with teacher and trainer training, the National Reform Programme points out the following measures:

- Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools(I 2008-IV 2008) having the main purpose improving teachers’ qualifications and competences to ensure quality in education;
- **Rehabilitation of the infrastructure facilities and improving the endowment of educational units in rural and disadvantaged areas(II 2007-IV 2009)** having as main objective ensuring the proper teaching conditions in the vocational and technical education and in the pre-university education in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas;

These measures are presented in detail in National Policy Report -Romania A bridge to the future European Policy for Vocational Education and Training 2002-10.

CURRICULUM REFORM AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The **VET curriculum** is developed by the National Centre for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. The VET curriculum is competence-based: there are competence units correlated with the eight domains of key competence and there are also units of general as well as specialized technical competence). Each unit of competences and group of units of competences within the VET standard is associated to a curriculum module. The units of key competence are included in curriculum modules as such, are integrated in various curriculum modules together with the general and specialized technical Competences and are included in the general curriculum in other curricular areas besides the Technology area. (*Language and communication, Mathematics and Science, Counseling and guidance*).

Actions targeting the improvement of teachers’ qualifications and competences together with the actions targeting the reform of national curriculum framework (defined as priority objective for the next period which will benefit of the ESF funding) represent the starting point for implementing comprehensive reforms in primary and secondary education.

Regarding the TVET teachers' training, under TVET 2005 Phare, in 2008, from 1,274 TVET teachers trained, 232 teachers were trained in the field of qualifications development/review and curriculum development.

Related with curriculum reform and innovative approaches to teaching and assessment,, the National Reform Programme points out the following measures:

- Developing the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students(I 2008-IV 2008);
- Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market(I 2008-IV 2008);

These measures are presented in detail in the National Policy Report -Romania A bridge to the future European Policy for Vocational Education and Training 2002-10

SKILL NEEDS STRATEGY

Romania has already made important steps so as to create at least the basis of a skills needs anticipation system. Through the National Labour Research Institute, Romania is actively involved in the anticipation exercise currently financed by the CEDEFOP aiming to produce a mid-term (2020) forecast of the demand and supply of skills in Europe.

Several projects funded by the ESF are aiming, bettering the capacity of the Romanian relevant authorities and enterprises to chart the developments of the demand and supply of skills in what will be an ever more integrated Single Market, revolving around flexicurity and green, smart growth. As such, the SAPERE project which brings together the Romanian National Agency for Employment (NAE) and a host of Italian partners aims at bettering the capacity of the Romanian PES to anticipate changes on the labour market and thus constantly update its toolkit of active policies. The MEDIT project which brings together the NAE and the Italia LAVORO arm of the Italian Ministry of Labour attempts to find a mechanism for an improved regulation of the flow of workers between Romania and Italy,. Finally the recently started FLEXICOVERY project initiated by the National Labour Research Institute attempts to bring the core concept of flexicurity into the daily practice of Romanian enterprises.

The National Reform Programme 2007-2010 points out the following measure for skill needs strategy: **Development of tools and methodologies for analysing and anticipating the labour market changes(III 2008-IV 2009)**

Rationale: Adaptation of the training offer to the requirements of the labour market.

Objectives/measurable targets: Adaptation of the training offer to the requirements of the labour market.

Description of measure:

- Analysis of short-term deficit of labour force in the field of construction industry / adaptation of the vocational training offer to the labour market demand in this sector;
- Anticipation of labour market changes - Increasing the capacity of the Public Employment Service to anticipate short and medium term evolutions on the labour market at local, regional and national level;
- Forecasting the labour market: *Anticipating the labour market changing* project aims to develop and implement a diagnosis model for certain companies, number of jobs, job description, training needs.

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Romania has developed during the last decade a system for the validation of non-formally or informally acquired skills and competencies. According to specific norms adopted by the

National Adult Training Board, procedural arrangements have been put into place so as to create a network of specialized providers known as „Validation/Assessment Centres”. Basically these units functioning for either one or more competencies or skills are simply divisions of existing training providers which, according to specified procedures have certified themselves for the validation/assessment of non-formally or informally acquired skills or competencies associated with a certain occupation. In most of the cases training providers already accredited to provide training for a certain occupation have also opened validation centres for the same occupation or group of occupations for which they already had vocational training accreditation (e.g.: a training provider having accreditation for carpenters also opened a validation/assessment centre for the same occupation). This scheme greatly increased flexibility on the labour market, is highly welcomed by both unions and employers alike and for surely makes for a bonus in times of crises as it reduces the costs associated with formal training. Sector committees which have pivotal role in the development of occupational standards have been greatly encouraging the development of validation centres which at their turn have been an incentive to further develop occupation standards for more occupations as the procedural bedrock for validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills and competencies greatly benefits from the existence and enforcement of occupational standards. Currently 61 validation centres are recorded into the National Register of Validation/Assessment Centres maintained by the NATB. The number of occupations for which validation/assessment of non-formally and informally acquired skills and competencies is possible is currently at 116 according to NATB statistics.

2.1.3 CURRENT DEBATES

While before the crisis the main discussion was that of toughening provisions regarding training schemes offered by companies in the sense of forging a type of financial responsibility on the part of the employee once it was getting the benefit of a company training scheme and that was a fact that many companies did, with the help of smartly crafted individual labour contracts, now it is hardly the case that an employee once trained will be able to flee its „corporate mecenat”. The reason is simple, there are hardly any places left to flee, even if you are packed with training and training certificates. This explains the new focus of the debate which centers around the newly proposed version of the Labour Code.

The version taken on board by the Government and which this one is determined to pursue, even at the cost of alienating the scantest remains of union support, goes far and wide towards a comprehensive liberalization of the labour market. Not only that determined duration labour contracts will become more widespread and more of the rule than nowadays but probation period will get lengthier and employers will have throughout them more of a leverage on the employee thus being able to hire and fire practically at will during these periods. While unions are bent on contesting such proposals, the source of which lies with the powerful lobby of foreign investors, in fact these proposed measures also mark the beginning of a shift in corporate financed vocational training. Expect therefore less of formal training in the companies as these are trying to save on human resource, which again appears aplenty, and its associated cost and make up for lost revenue during the recession period (by the way which is yet to end in the case of Romanian though high hopes are pinned on 2011) and more of informally or non-formally acquired skills and competencies which individuals will strive to attest using the procedures already in place, a demarche getting ever more popular as individuals find out that if they do want a job they have to come out first and make the investment in professional development.

Nevertheless as the Government's proposals are still up for public debate the unions are bargaining hard trying to make them a notch leaner for the employee though the final word will rest actually with the Parliament where debates, bar an intention by the Government to pass it through the speedy procedure of „assuming responsibility” -i.e.: which does away with Parliamentary debate but exposes the cabinet to an eventual non-confidence vote-, will most likely be heated.

2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

An overarching national qualifications framework (NQF) based on learning outcomes is being developed in Romania, which will bring together all nationally recognised qualifications from both initial and continuing VET, apprenticeship at the workplace and HE. It is expected to be completed by 2010.

The development builds on the NQF for VET, which was based on a Tripartite Agreement signed in 2005 by the Prime Minister, the Employers' National Confederation and the Trade Union's National Confederation. It provided for a five-level structure with a common register for qualifications, quality assurance arrangements and accreditation for VET qualifications.

The development work is currently ongoing to incorporate three-level structure for HE into an overarching NQF and it is estimated to be implemented at the end of 2010. The work is supported by the National Agency for Qualifications in HE - ACPART, established in 2007.

The development of the NQF is supported by main stakeholders and is embedded at the inter-ministerial level.

There is a general view that NQF could help to address some current needs of the Romanian society and education and training system. There is a lack of coherency in the qualification system (for example: weak link between IVET and CVET); qualifications should better respond to the labour market needs; there is a need for more transparency of learning outcomes and mobility of trainees and labour force. Apart from that, national qualifications have to be understood abroad and linked to EQF.

Involvement of stakeholders

The work was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection in cooperation with social partners in 2005. The development of the NQF for VET has been coordinated since 2005 by the National Qualifications Authority on two levels. The decision making body is the board, which has 15 members: five represent ministries, five trade unions and five employers' confederations.

Within the National Qualifications Authority, there is a technical unit (about 40 staff), which provides support to the board, coordinates activities and prepares documents. The coordination with Bologna implementation is assured through participation of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation in the board.

The development in higher education has been coordinated by the Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership between Universities and Representatives of the Social and Economic Environment (ACPART). The Agency works closely together with the main stakeholders from higher education (academic staff representatives, students, main professional organisations, employers' organisations, ministries and other public bodies).

Research is being carried out by the National Institute for Educational Sciences, National Centre for Development of Vocational and Technical Education and the National Qualifications Authority.

Levels and descriptors

An eight-level reference structure reflecting EQF will be proposed. Level descriptors are being developed, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The NQF allows including whole qualifications and competence units, which are certified and recognised on the labour market.

There are currently five levels of qualifications but 8 levels will be proposed :

- Level 1 -application in the professional activity of knowledge from different domains, activity characterised by routine and predictable work tasks; Education: compulsory education and professional training
- Level 2 - application of knowledge in a certain professional activity, with non-routine work tasks, that suppose responsibility and team work; Education: compulsory education and professional qualification.
- Level 3 - application of knowledge in an extensive area of the professional activity, with diverse and complex work tasks that exclude routine. Work tasks suppose decision taking, responsibility and, sometimes, team work with co-ordination attributions; Education: technological or vocational high school; post high school education
- Level 4 - application of knowledge in an extensive area of the professional activity, with diverse and complex work tasks, characterised by a significant degree of personal responsibilities, of co-ordination of the activity and allocation of the resources needed in order to efficiently carry out the respective professional activities; Education: post secondary technical training in HE
- Level 5 - use of knowledge in especially diverse contexts of the professional activity, complex and unpredictable. This level is characterised by independent decision taking, high personal responsibility, tasks related to co-ordination of the staff activity, allocation of the resources, analysis, diagnosis, foreseeing, planning, execution and control activities. Education: university and post university level.

Grade	Educational Level	NQF level
	Long duration HE	5
	Short duration HE	4
	Post High School Education	3+
13	Technical High School	3
11-12	General/Vocational/Technical High School	2
9-10	General High School	1
5-8	Gymnasium	
1-4	Primary	

	Preschool	
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The National Reform Programme provides as measure regarding the NQF the development and implementation of NQF of higher education in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements, presented in detail in the Policy Report 2010.

Use of learning outcomes

There is a strong commitment to use a learning outcome approach as a part of the national reform programme. Learning outcomes are already embedded in the competence-based VET reform and the establishment of arrangement for validation of non-formal learning. Vocational training standards are newly established qualification standards approved by the Minister of Education, which are based on learning outcomes to be achieved by the holder of qualification.

This approach to assessment relies on assessment tools like the use of student portfolios, presentation of projects and assignments that the learner has produced after negotiation or agreement with teachers or trainers, and formative assessment of learning experience in the community or workplace.

The decision to adopt the principles of the EQF in Romania is considered an important motivation to revise the existing methodological framework for qualifications development. As part of the process of continuous improvement, the methodologies used in the previous Phare projects, 2004 and 2005, have been evaluated, reviewed and updated in Phare 2006. New methodologies developed in Phare project 2006 are oriented on learning outcomes. A new format for qualifications, based on learning outcomes, was developed. About 15 qualifications per sector for 19 sectors were developed.

In the course of the work it has become clear how difficult it is for the stakeholders from VET and HE to develop joint understanding of learning outcome orientation.

However, this is an important prerequisite for increasing comparability and transfer opportunities between qualifications in the two subsystems and ensuring that the NQF can act as a bridge between education subsystems in various different ways. It is also important to emphasise the need to have structures in place and sustainable financing. The sustainable financing of sectoral committees is deemed crucial for the implementation of the NQF. In 2009 the Law 268/2009 was adopted, which provides for sustainable financing. Sectoral committees will be reorganised to an institution for social dialogue and for public interest, with welldefined responsibilities for qualifications. They will be financed by the State for administrative and services costs.

Referencing to the EQF

The timing for the referencing to the EQF has yet to be fixed, but preparations have started. National Qualifications Authority, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and National Agency for Quality Assurance for Pre-university Education (IVET) are working within their level of competence. The national steering group for referencing has yet to be decided.

In the course of the work it has become clear how difficult it is for the stakeholders from VET and HE to develop a joint understanding of learning outcome orientation. However, this is an important prerequisite for increasing the comparability and transfer opportunities between qualifications in the two subsystems and ensuring that the NQF can act as bridge between the educational subsystems in various different ways.

It is also important to emphasise the need to have structures in place and sustainable financing. The financing of sector committees must be solved in the near future in order to assure a smooth development of the system. To set up the financing agreement (especially for the sector committees) is crucial for the implementation of NQF.

Instruments for building a NQFVET

The instruments used in building qualifications for VET are:

1. Occupational analysis for the identification of occupational area
2. Occupational Standard (OS) - a document which describes the competences units related to one occupation;
 1. used for prior learning validation, but also for qualification within formal CVT and apprenticeship
3. Training Standard (TS) - a document which describes the learning outcomes related to a qualification linked with one or more occupations
 1. developed for IVET
 2. applied within IVET, but also within formal CVT

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ROMANIA⁴

Entities involved in the Quality Assurance (QA) of the Romanian VET system include the following:

- The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth has the overall responsibility for vocational education and training within the formal education system and develops strategies and policies, prepares legislation and manages public education. It also approves curricula, national assessment standards and the school network;
- The Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities (MLFEO) and its regional branches, the County Labour and Social Protection Directorates, are responsible for the retraining and further training of the labour force. The Romanian National Observatory for Employment and Training (NOET) functions within the Department for Labour Force Programs and Strategies, having a central role in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of training programs and strategies on the employment. The Observatory is also an important source of information with regard to the efficiency of measures designed to encourage adult participation in lifelong learning, and measures targeted at specific groups (including the elderly);
- The National Agency for Employment (NAE) implements the policies and strategies regarding employment and vocational training of jobseekers, and coordinates, guides and controls the activities of the subordinated county agencies, whose roles are regulated by law. From April 2007, the Labor Migration Office functions under the coordination of NAE;
- The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) plays a major role in QA and 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. NCTVETD is the main initiator of the proposal of generalizing the manuals at national level, for all TVET providers and is the initiator of the 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. Some of the activities performed by NCTVETD include contribution to the development of policies and strategies on education and

⁴ www.eqavet.eu

training, assessing the curriculum and qualifications for vocational and technical education, ensuring and improving quality in higher professional and technical and planning offers training in technical and vocational education;

- ARACIS is another body involved in VET quality assurance in Romania. It has the tasks of developing the methodology and the periodic accreditation standards for different types of programs and providers of higher education that advise the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MERY); and evaluating the standards and proposing the authorization and accreditation of higher education providers and their programs of study. Based on its accreditation reports, MERY develops regulations for the establishment of structures of higher education. Regarding some of its most important QA responsibilities, ARACIS has to formulate and review periodically, based on best practices, national reference standards and performance indicators for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education; collaborate with MERY in developing and promoting policies and strategies for action to increase the quality of education in Romania; organize annual consultations with higher education institutions to set priorities of quality assurance and develop and make public its procedures for external evaluation of the quality of education;
- The National Adult Training Board (NATB) is another entity involved in QA. Established as a tripartite body, with a consultative role in the field of adult vocational training, the NATB has become responsible for the quality assurance of CVT through the endorsement of occupational standards and through the accreditation of the training providers and of the competences assessment centers (see section 6.2.2.). From 2004, NATB has played the role of National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ), its main responsibilities being the development and implementation of methodological framework for the qualification development, the setting up and upgrading of the National Register of Qualifications and the coordination of the sectoral committees⁵ (develop, validate and update the qualifications for which it benefits from the full participation of social partners and of the other actors involved). The NAQ endorses the draft legislation on training for adults, collaborates with autonomous administrative authorities, with national NGOs and international suppliers of training and other public institutions to fulfill the Ministry's objectives; participates in national and international adult training projects and programs and in developing the methodology for approval of adult training providers. It also participates in developing the adult training certification methodology monitors training providers, draws up and updates the national register of adult training providers; and develops specific criteria and procedures for uniform implementation and use of occupational standards. Finally, it also develops the professional skills assessment and certification methodology for informal learning;
- The National Group for Quality Assurance (GNAC), acting as National QA Reference Point in vocational education and training, was constituted at national level in 2006, in compliance with the recommendations of the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET), founded by the European Commission. GNAC is an inter-institutional coordination structure with the role of applying in a coherent way the European and national measures for quality assurance in vocational education and training. The National Group for Quality Assurance includes experts of national institutions who have certain attributions regarding QA for initial and continuing VET: *the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation,*

⁵ 23 sectoral committees have been set up through sector agreements, covering all the activity sectors based on the National Tripartite Agreement (signed by the Government, Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations)

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 National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development site: www.tvet.ro.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN VET

Presently, depending on the country, between 0.5 to 1.5 % of young people in initial vocational training have a mobility experience during their vocational training courses. The general objective is to significantly increase this percentage and to achieve the outcome that a mobility period in VET becomes a norm rather than an exception.

Together with Comenius (school education), Erasmus (higher education) and Grundtvig (adult education), Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) is an integral component of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, with an overarching priority to reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goals of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

The LdV programme represents the largest single source *of funding for mobility* in the area of vocational training, specifically in initial VET. Other sources of funding exist at national, bi-national or multinational level, but it is not possible to establish reliable statistics of their activity. The same can be said of company-funded schemes. Not less than 60% of funding granted within the LdV programme is used to finance mobility, and more specifically the strand 'young persons in initial vocational training': However with 51 000 young people in initial training funded in 2007, the coverage of the programme remains low compared to the total number of persons in IVET (1 % on average). Nevertheless it has to be pointed out that the numbers of IVET participants in LdV mobility have steadily increased since the year 2000, mainly due to growing budgets for the programme, The action "Preparatory visits" is a component of Lifelong learning Programme. This action confers financial aid to Romanian eligible institutions for making visits in similar institutions from any participant country to the lifelong learning program, in order to initiate future European cooperation projects within the program (2007-2013).

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training has organised various preparatory visits using different programs:

Erasmus:

- Lifelong training - an international bridge between educational institutions and the world of work; 7 - 10 December 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Intercultural Learning; 12 - 15 November 2008, Antalya, Turkey
- Content and Language Integrated Learning; 10 - 14 December 2008, Palma De Mallorca, Spain

Leonardo da Vinci:

- Engaging Ethnic Minorities in Lifelong Learning and Employment; 01 - 04 October 2008, Chester, UK

Grundtvig:

- Learning Partnerships Prison Education; 03 - 07 November 2008, Lisbon, Portugal Prefects' Offices, County Councils, A.J.O.F.M. (County Employment

Authority), I.S.J.(County Education Authority), Chambers of Commerce, M.M.S.S.F.(Ministry of Labor), A.D.R.(Regional Development Agencies), U.G.I.R. 1903 Association of Business Owners, B.N.S. (National Trade Unions Block) and other social partners

3.1. OVERVIEW

2009 marked a drastic return to recession economics for Romania. After a decade of growth, the Romanian Government has been again confronted with the twin spectre of growing masses of jobless and falling public incomes. Therefore by far the first preoccupation of Romania's Governments since early 2009 has been that of securing the country's lines of external financing, maintain a reasonable degree of investor confidence and monetary stability while in the meantime trying to keep fiscal pressure on the private sector at reasonable levels (with a special emphasis on maintaining the 16% flat rate income tax). Accordingly and although by all standards Romania's sovereign debt is still one of the lowest in the EU (less than 30% equivalent of GDP) the Government has concluded an approximately US\$ bn.20 financial assistance package with the IMF, the World Bank, the European Commission and the EBRD, so as to maintain monetary stability, keep the flow of credit towards the private sector and assuage investors. Programs to support the private sector such as the technical unemployment scheme as well as an extension of the duration of unemployment benefit have been swiftly implemented, while in the meantime keeping combined contribution rate for the unemployment insurance fund at 1% (however as of Jan.2009 contribution rates for public pension system have been hiked back to their beginning of 2008 level). Though hopes have been high that the economy will start rebounding in early 2010 after a full 7.1% fall in GDP in 2009, the emergence of a sovereign debt crisis in the EUROZONE area has dashed these hopes altogether. While monetary position remains reasonably re-assuring (average exchange RON/EUR for q1.2010 shows actually a small appreciation as against values for q1.2009-the first quarter of recession), fiscal position continues to be preoccupying. So as to keep both the flows of financing as well as to maintain the fiscal pressure on the private sector at reasonable levels (however VAT had to be increased from 19 to 24% as of Jul.1st 2010), the current Government has moved to a more drastic set of measure(presented into the section 3.2.3), aiming at cutting into the country's far too expensive public sector as well as at rationalizing social protection schemes⁶.

3.2. EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VET AND CORRESPONDING MEASURES

3.2.1 TRENDS IN LEARNERS' BEHAVIOUR

It is hard to discern on the basis of available statistical data how crisis has affected the behaviour of learners as formal participation in vocational education and learning has been always low in Romania although at times it might have been that this has been underestimated. Nevertheless, effects of the crisis are visible on the vocational training providers where activity has been shrinking. True enough there has been here a powerful tool at hand and this has been the ESF through its Human Resources Development Sector Operational Program (SOP HRD). Amongst all of the

⁶ The attempt to rationalize pension expenditures however, via a 15% reduction in the value of pension point has been repealed by the Constitutional Court, which has ruled the measure as contrary to Romania's Constitution. In response to these setback, the Government had to resort to the mentioned VAT increase;

operational programs in Romania this one has been the one to see the highest of application rates. According to officials of the SOP HRD by the end of 2011 all of the funds available for the financial planning period 2007-13 would have been subscribed and thus the only remaining issue would be effective and also efficient absorption of the contracted amounts. Given these figures one can assume, even without much of speculation, that a host of vocational training providers have actually applied for such funding and thus are providing training to enterprises and individuals using European financing making up, at least partly, for the loss of orders that would have come with the loss of income inflicted by crisis upon their customers, be these enterprises or individuals. However, one has to take also into account that sustaining such programs is not easy as amounts involved are large and they require in most of cases the capacity to come with up-front financing. Therefore, the meagre amount that has been disbursed up until now, and which does not exceed actually 13% of the total allocation points to difficulties to come. Learners would have therefore been benefiting up until now and might have probably not felt much the crunch of the crisis as a lot of training continued to flow for free, at least from their own point of view. However as more and more training providers involved in such programs will face difficulties in getting reimbursed, learners will also suffer. As such one can predict that for a while at least, with effective solvency starting to feel the pinch of two years of recession, actual demand for training will remain sluggish and this in spite of what is a genuinely high potential. Increasing the capacity of absorption with regard to the EU funds will nevertheless help in bridging over what will be a painful post-recession adjustment.

3.2.2. TRENDS IN ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOUR

Most enterprises have been hard pressed during the current recession. Throughout 2009 both the domestic demand as well as export demand remained more than low which forced many business either to close up completely or to resort to lay offs. At its mildest it was in some cases about a reduction in working hours or about severe pay cuts which actually preceded those operated in the public sector in mid of 2010. As such most companies have reduced their budgets for training. Although as said previously something has been made up by signing into ESF funded training schemes, strings attached to these vehicles have made them sometimes *not-so-attractive* for the private sector which, obvious enough, is not in much love with red-tape, no matter where it might be coming from.

As external demand has been picking up during late 2009 and especially during 2010 with industry (i.e.: read manufacturing) being the main beneficiary, thus bringing current developments much into contrasts with pre-crisis ones when the main beneficiary of surging domestic demand were services and constructions, one would expect HR dedicated budgets to revive. However as far as it can be seen this is not the case. There is not even the glimpse of a sign that job generation is reviving with the vacancy rate of the National Institute of Statistics being at an all time low for the entire period since 2005, the first time this synthetic labour market gauge has been publicly released. At least however it has stopped falling abruptly as it did during the last 24 months or so. This shows that labour market is practically in state of full stop. Accordingly there is not much to train for. Companies cling to their existing core workers but even in doing so there is not

much indication that they are willing to invest in them from this point of view, emphasizing or making actually a u-turn to cheap ways such as informal or non-formal training and the ubiquitous on-the-job training which suits enterprises best though it leaves labour at a disadvantage especially when talking mobility. A return to the pre-crisis level cannot be envisaged quickly as it is yet unclear if Romania will make the leap out of recession this year and this especially due to domestic demand which is giving practically no sign of revival; actually it might even fall further this year as most households and enterprises have depleted their reserves and now are simply scrapping from one day to another. This will mean that labour market will remain flat for at least the next couple of years or even more with the targets assumed for employment and economic participation under the guise of the new EU 2020 Strategy remaining thus in much of doubt. Accordingly, investment in HR development will remain low and all efforts on the line of absorbing EU funds will not do much to revive it as simply economic conditions do not allow it. The trend will thereby be a flat line for probably the next two or three years to come at its best followed by slowly moving upwards line, if better times lie truly ahead.

3.2.3. MEASURES TAKEN AT GOVERNANCE LEVELS (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL)

The main measures introduced as a direct response to the crisis are:

1. Reduction of salaries of public employees by 25% starting July 1st 2010:

- Public sector employee, both civilian, including teachers at all levels of education, and militar have seen their monthly payment cut by 25%. No gross salary however will be allowed to fall under the minimum threshold of RON 600;
- This measure will bring as savings to the state budget equivalent to roughly 0.5% of GDP (at est. 2010 levels);
- Expected employment effects : Some public sector employees will probably leave thus freeing some labour force for the private sector but this might be as well wishful thinking as private companies are battling a clear “balance sheet recession” with their accumulated liabilities still exceeded the crisis-battered value of their assets; A lot others might opt for migration like in the case of medical personnel. Most of them however will stay put; The overall effect will be a further dampening of domestic demand which will feed into the private sector’s job creation apprehension;

2. Reduction of the number of public employees by around 53,000 due to take place in Aug. Oct./Nov. 2010:

- All public sectors will lose employees, education will be hit hardest as it was probably the most bloated with personnel (see here also other papers of the undersigned); Public administration will also suffer (e.g.: the National Agency for employment will lose probably half of its staff while the Public Pension House will shed around 1,500 of its approx. 4,500 employees countrywide).
- Savings to the state budget equivalent roughly to 0.5-0.6% of the GDP (at est. 2010 levels).
- Expected employment effects: Unemployment rate (national definition, more sensitive to cycle gyrations than the harmonized one which tends to lag the cycle) which recently stabilized at around 7.4% after growing for a full 19 months in row between Oct.2008 and Mar. 2010 (inc. by 210% end of March as against Sept 2008=100) might go up again and reach even 9%; It would be highest value in 24 quarters!

3. Increase of the VAT from 19% to 25% as of July 1st 2010

- VAT for all products (few exceptions are allowed under RO legislation) took up a 26% increase starting July 1st 2010;
- Increase as against same semester of 2009 of 18.9% in the amount of state revenues collected via this tax; But the 1.4 bn. RON of extra income will barely compensate for the loss of an equivalent in excise income due to a fall in both consumption as well, predictably enough, production of excised goods; The forecasted hike in revenues due to the increase, equiv. roughly to 0.27- 0.30% of GDP (at est. 2010 levels)
- Expected employment effects :Indirectly it will hammer domestic consumption and bode well for external competitiveness; Overall it will keep unemployment rather high for RO levels of sustainability;

4. Reduction of the unemployment benefit by 15%

- Unemployment benefit is to be reduced by 15% starting with July 1st 2010; Currently unemployment benefit is entirely contribution based, with the calculation formula combining a flat rate sum of 75% of the minimum salary plus a sum that relates itself to both contribution period as well as indirectly to contribution base; The reduction will however take into account the whole sum received by the beneficiary;
- Savings roughly equivalent to 0.025% of GDP;
- Expected employment effects: Net effect will be a general increase of poverty in unemployment. Moreover it will make unemployed less prone to take on active measures and more and more tempted by undeclared work

5. Introduction of social protection contribution levy (health, pensions, unemployment) for various forms of non-salary type employment (e.g.: civil contracts, authorship etc) starting with Aug.2010;

- Until now non-salary employment was not subject to social protection contribution levy. Of course there was some evasion due to it but taking into account that fact that most of these activities are non-permanent in nature and they include a limited number of individuals it would be preposterous to say that it was here that the budget was really losing money; Moreover it is unclear if individuals combining salary and non-salary employment (popular in urban areas-large ones especially) will have to pay practically a double contribution; Application thus hampered by both bad timing as well as incoherent implementation rules;
- Expected employment effects : Difficult to say but given the general mood it might act as a push factor towards UDW. A very badly timed pro-cycle measure; Effects on employment will be negative though difficult yet to quantify;

The National Reform Programme includes a set of recovery measures as a direct response to the crisis, presented also in The Policy Report for Romania 2010:

- *Strengthening the sector committees' role*
- *Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes*
- *Scholarships for pupils from rural area*
- *Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons*
- *Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes*
- *Minimis aid Scheme "Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities' development"*
- *Developing the management system of labour migration*
- *Ensuring the access to education for disadvantaged groups*

- *Continuous Vocational Training programs for the unemployed people*
- *Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools*

3.3. LONGER TERM CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE RESPONSES

The recessionary move engulfing Romania's economy for two full years has been quite strong and its scars will be lasting. The country entered recession unfortunately with a large development gap and with an economy that throughout the last two decades has accumulated precious little in terms of successive years of economic growth. This shows on the main three strands that define the landscape and trajectory of economic growth; economic policies which include those directed towards labour market and thus have a focus on VET, governance of all of the tiers and sub-tiers included, domestic demand and foreign demand as the two engines on which the economy relies and which economic policies attempt to coax so as to deliver the best possible of outcomes. The economic policies pursued have been vastly marked by a pro-cycle character badly boding for the sustainability of growth in itself as well as for the capacity of the economy to withstand external shocks. The response to crisis has been also marked by the same pro-cycle logic as not much of an option was actually on the table or so it seemed at the moment. Austerity measures destined to rebalance the country's external position as well as to consolidate it fiscally have nevertheless depressed domestic demand a fact which coupled with the free fall of export markets in 2009 has left the economy destitute. As such demand for VET has been falling with many enterprises trying as much they could to contain their costs and divest to the highest extent possible. Households on the other hand have been even harder hit than businesses as they had to absorb the shock of both corporate austerity as well as government austerity with much of the re-distribution based benefits undergoing severe cuts. Consequently while external demand has seen a revival in 2010, domestic demand remained subdued a fact that affected the fiscal equilibrium thus asking for renewed measures of fiscal consolidation including across-the-board cuts of civil servants salaries' (basic package included as bonuses and other perks had already affected and in most of the cases eliminated as early as 2009) as well as a painful 5 pp hike of the VAT. These measures taken halfway in 2010 have dented any hope for a return to growth during the year to pass and this although some things have started genuinely improving when looking especially at the country's external position. This showed nevertheless that while Romania's economy strongly reacts to external stimulus this reaction, like in the case of other emergent markets, is far much better in times of global growth than in times of global slowdown as the few exports such an economy is able to generate are no match for a loss in domestic demand. In other words such an economy has to consume and consume a lot in order to grow and most essentially accumulate a long number of successive years of growth thus building actually a type of „warchest” to shield it when global markets are going nosedive. The consequences of *this recession*, assuming that it will end this year as some modest growth is forecasted for 2011, will be therefore lingering and this for quite a while. For quite some years households will be afflicted severely by the sharp drop in revenue as well as by the fall in the value of their disposable assets which will make the burden of their debt look in relative terms higher. Therefore it is expected that not much of resources will be dedicated from this side to VET at least for a few years to come from now on. Enterprises on the other hand are also feeling the pinch. Managers will be careful about their investment choices and although Romania is a country of great potential it might as well be that human resource will not be their first investment choice. As it happened during the 2000s much will go towards equipment and technology and less will go towards labour which will be left to cater for itself. In the meantime it will be hardly the case that the state might step-in so as to compensate. On the contrary, eager not to repeat the mistakes of the past, state budgets will have the tendency of getting ever more

frugal. Spending on education and training will be more and more shifted towards households and enterprises and this in spite of the acknowledged fact that these entities are badly battered by the crisis. Actually it might be precisely this together with what could be a better use of the EU structural and cohesion funds that might engender a major shift in the culture of the Romanian enterprise, be it indigenous or foreign. And that shift will have to do with the fact that enterprises and managers will no longer be able to count on the state as provider of VET and scapegoat for their failure to invest in it. Cheap VET, subsidized from public money will no longer be an option. If there will be a tangible benefit therefore from crisis then, on the VET side, this will be that enterprises will have to learn that with the nimbler state they have been yearning for coming up finally as a reality, investment in VET by the enterprise, sometimes at a high, albeit necessary, cost, will no longer be an option to shy from.

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The IVET sector in Romania gradually develops a “culture of change” as it moves from a rather centralised to a decentralised system based on self evaluation and responsibility for quality assurance.

Starting with the school year 1999/2000 in Romania the system of vocational and technical education was based on the achievements of the reform programme developed with the European Union support, Phare VET RO 9405.

In 1999 was established The **National Center for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education**, which has as main objective the task to secure the system development, the compliance with the social and economic development at national, regional and local level and to enhance the social partnership in VET.

Traditionally, VET administration has been centralized in Romania.

The major actors in the administration of the system include essentially two Ministries: Ministry of Education, Research Youth and Sport (MECTS) and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (MMSF). Other organizations involved in the VET system include the National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation, National Centre for Training of Pre-university Education Staff (NCPTT), National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development and National Adult Training Board.

Regional intervention is made predominately by the County School Inspectorates and County Directorates for Work, Social Solidarity and Family. Continuing training activities are organized within County Training, Re-training and Further Training Centers, Schools or other Training Units .

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial vocational education and training (IVET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

In the majority of VET schools quality assurance processes have begun to be implemented. This has been supported through the appointment of quality assurance commissioners who have worked with school management teams to involve all staff in the development of the quality assurance system. Developing the culture of quality assurance takes time, and encouraging schools to be more open to the needs of earners, employers and communities requires sustained support and commitment at the system level.

One way of supporting this changing culture has been the promotion and support of IVET school networks. At present, all IVET schools are associated with a network which supports cooperative activities in relation to monitoring, collecting evidence, staff training, peer learning and peer review activities. The process has progressively expanded to cover:

- in 2004, 122 IVET schools assisted by an EU - funded project;
- In 2005, the networks extended to cover 150 rural schools in a Phare TVET project;
- In 2006, all (1376) TVET schools were part of an assisted schools network.

Since the mid '90s, initial VET has been under a continuous process of reforming, aiming at modernizing and better adjusting it to the demands of a society which has known major changes at economic and social level. An important component of this reform is represented by the learning content of initial VET and is based on the “life long learning”

concept: it starts with development of qualifications, then, based on their training standards, curriculum is developed and finally within the certification process the competences described as performance descriptors within the training standards are under assessment during the final examination. 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 that are gradually established by National Adult Training Board acting as National Authority for Qualifications . This is meant to increase coherency between initial and continuous VET. Until present vocational training standards for qualifications levels I, II and III which can be obtained through the initial VET system, and they 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 etc..

Schooling capacity of initial VET system increased substantially beginning with school year 2002/2003: from 844 school units in 2002/2003 to 1474 school units in 2004/2005 and 1495 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. These schools offer first chance education to the graduates of 8 grade in their locality preventing from additional costs the parents have to afford for transport or accommodation in case the students should go for learning in other localities.

4.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

The 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.. High schools and Art and Trade Schools (ATS), the latter replacing the existing vocational schools and apprenticeship schools, will provide upper secondary education. The existing High schools will continue to offer both technical and general 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.

The Ministry of education Order nr. 5021/ 23.09.2005 concerning the Methodology of continuing education after completing compulsory school have offered a framework to ensure the opportunities to continue schooling in the upper secondary through education and training routes for which the access is free within the same domain of training, without further exams.

Evening schools as well as distance education programmes have been extended at both lower and upper secondary education (The Ministry of education Order nr. 4051/24.05.2006, with respect to the approval of curriculum frameworks for evening classes, The Ministry of education Order nr. 4370/25.08.2000 concerning the Methodology for organizing and implementing distance education in lower secondary education, The Ministry of education Order nr. 5139/22.12.1999 concerning the Methodology for organizing and implementing distance education in upper secondary education).

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IVET AND ORGANIGRAM

NATIONAL LEVEL

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.

National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education (NCDVTE) was established in 1998 and supports the Ministry of Education and Research. 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.

Since 2004 the autonomous and tripartite organization, National Adult Training Board (NATB) acts as the National Authority for Qualifications. The National Authority for qualifications (ANC) manages the National Qualifications Register, coordinates the quality assurance process in CVT and is responsible for the planning for technical and vocational education programmes.

The National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training was set up on January 27, 2005, by the Government Decision no. 76/27.01.2005. It was created as an institution governed by public law, under the coordination of Ministry for Education and Research. The Agency itself has a longer history, as it was initially created by unifying the Socrates National Agency and the National Centre for the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, both of which were in function since 1996.

The Romanian National Agency manages at national level the following EU (EC) programmes:

- Lifelong Learning Programme
- Youth in Action
- Erasmus Mundus
- Europass & Youthpass
- Eurodesk

COUNTY LEVEL

County School Inspectorates (under the Ministry of Education and Research) 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.

REGIONAL CONSORTIA

Regional Consortia are tripartite consultative structures at regional level which are responsible for development of policies and strategies regarding TVET planning and development in the region.

INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

At the local/county level, social partners have been involved in the setting up of the Local Development Councils (LDCs) and their 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 evaluation commissions for IVET graduates. The chairs of the LDCs are also member of the Regional Consortia, that further exists 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.

Please find organigram under 4.5.

4.4 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 programs, 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 application since March 2003 dedicates one full section (art. from 188 to 213) to training in enterprises and this without including the special provisions dedicated to training leave (art.149-153). 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.

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CVET AND ORGANIGRAM

In Romania, the continuous vocational training system has been organized as a network of national, local and sector structures of the authorities in charge. MMSF, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (Ministerul Muncii, Familiei si Protectiei Sociale), in cooperation with the ministries and other relevant bodies, elaborates the policies and strategies for the continuous vocational training. MMSF closely cooperates with the MECTS (Ministry of Education, Research Youth and Sport - Ministerul Educatiei, Cercetarii, Tineretului si Sportului) in order to articulate the correspondence between the initial and the continuous vocational training.

The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) (in ro: **Centrul National de Dezvoltare a Invatamantului Profesional si Tehnic (CNDIPT)**) is a special body under the Ministry of Education, a public institution with legal personality established by the Government, nr.855 of 26 November 1998. NCTVETD was established in order to continue the reform of vocational education and training (VET) which began with the assistance of the European Union Phare VET RO 9405. The amendments and additions to the establishing decision, the institution has diversified tasks in developing technical and vocational education

The mission of the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) is to contribute to the development of a qualitative and attractive technical and vocational education, offering equal chances of personal and professional development to each student in order to make that person able to work and to continue its lifelong learning, to be able to contribute as a TVET graduate to the economic development of its community, to the consolidation of the Romanian democratic society.

In order to accomplish its mission NCTVETD:

- Assures the harmonization of the Romanian developments with those realized at European and international level in elaborating the policies and strategies referring to the technical and vocational education, in identification of qualifications and curriculum development for the formal education system, in cooperation with the social partners.

- Contributes to the methodological developments referring to the planning of the educational provision, to the development of schools institutional capacity, to the organization and development of the teaching-learning process, to the examination and certification, to the quality assurance in technical and vocational education

The National Adult Training Board (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 counseling, guidance, and training, and allocates the requisite financial resources from the unemployment fund.

TRAINING PROVIDERS

Vocational training programs are organized by the county employment agencies, through their own vocational training centers, through the regional vocational training centers 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.

Following the creation of the legal and institutional framework for continuous vocational training, the authorization process for the providers of adult vocational training started in January 2004. Until 01.05.2005, 856 providers of vocational training were authorized for 2307 vocational training programmes, of which 1887 of qualification, 177 of initiation, 177 of development and 75 programmes of specialization. The decrease in the authorization fee from three national average net wages to two minimum gross wages, in October 2004, resulted in the increase in the number of authorized training providers.

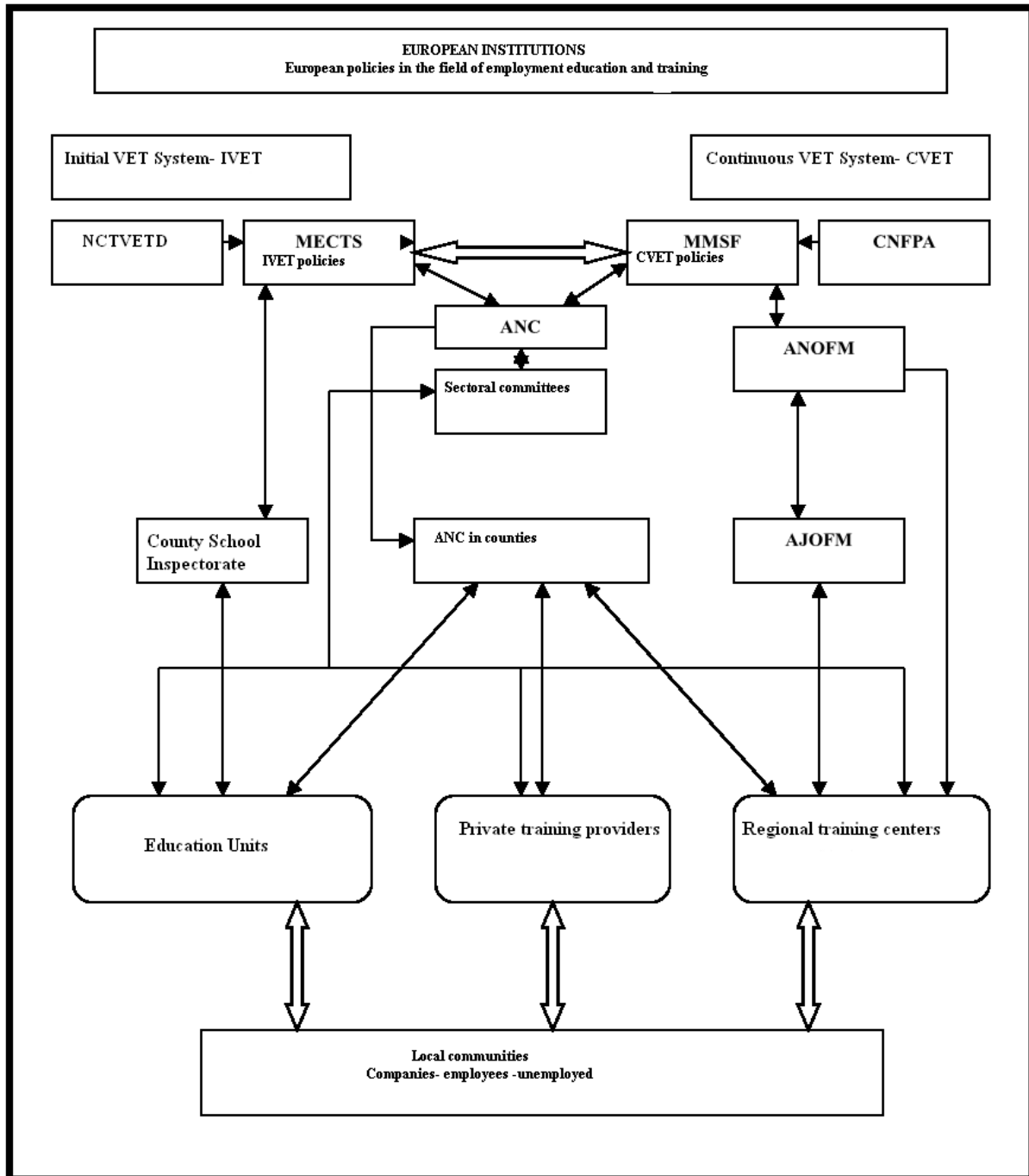
INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

During the last years there was a permanent cooperation between the Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Labour and the labour force agencies, the social partners and the sectorial committees as well as the employers and the training providers. This cooperation aimed at the dissemination of information with respect to in-service training⁷ and to encouraging lifelong learning.

⁷ The programs for **in-service training** that are authorized according to the Government Ordinance *O.G. nr. 129/2000, concerning adult training*, give access to all categories of adults. The key competences are to be found in these authorized programmes as follows: training programmes for each of the 8 key competences, training programmes for certain qualifications / occupations in which one or more key competences are included, according to the occupational standard

Figure 1

Organization of vocational training



ANOFM = The National Agency for Employment

AJOFM= County Agencies for Employment

ANC= National Qualifications Authority

NCTVETD= The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development

CNFPA= The National Adult Training Board

5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Historical Background

At the beginning of the nineties it was more than customary to consider the whole of Central and Eastern Europe as a hub of distinguished intellectuals and highly-trained professional that were just waiting for the reforms to catch speed so that they would pour out their knowledge and skills and simply spur out the long frozen potential of these nations. Countries such as Romania, to which this ad-hoc request is dedicated, were priding themselves with the fact that the only thing which had, supposedly of course, remained intact after decades of systematic communist devastation, was culture and the level of education of its workforce. So widespread was this myth, for we cannot call it otherwise as rationally there was no way of substantiating it, that nobody paid attention to the fundamentals and to the crude data and facts. The crude truth was that while at the onset of WW-II, Romania was the largest importer of French-books in Europe, at the end of the eighties it was the country in Europe with the lowest ratio of tertiary education graduates as against its total population (Ghinararu, 2003). All of its high-schools had been turned into so-called industrial high-schools and the tertiary socio-economic and humanities education had been all but annihilated or it had been simply swamped by the ideological baggage (or should we say garbage rather) of Marxism-Leninism that it was in no way capable of providing the know-how necessary for even the basics of a transition to the market economy. Large swathes of the population and of the workforce could claim what we can now call “secondary education” but what was beneath those diplomas was neither good theoretical knowledge nor good practical aptitudes, a fact which made those masses more vulnerable than in any country to the inevitable shocks of transitions and pushed them to survival strategies also on an unparalleled scale in the region (UNDP-Human Development Report Romania, 2007).

Instead of admitting to the crude realities of the moment and embarking on a strategy of gradual, cautious expansion but of well-prepared consolidation of the education and VET system, the ruling elites, as much as they were, encouraged an uncontrolled expansion of the education sector, especially in its tertiary component, thus acknowledging in practice to what they were reluctant to accept in theory. This contradiction in terms has not only weighed heavily on the pace and path of Romanian Transition and EU-Accession, both of which can be considered of being of the most tortuous in the East but they have also led to the emergence of a hypertrophy in the public as well as in the private education system (though as the latter follows the demand of the market this should not be a worry since correction there is always at hand) that makes the system not only poorly responsive to Romania’s needs as a newcomer to the Union and as an economy in full boom but also a future drag on its development. Moreover and that is the most worrisome aspect which actually justifies that assumption of a future liability that has been nurtured throughout the last almost two decades, is the poor quality of the outputs for which vast amounts of resources have been and are still pouring into what seems an unstoppable, inflationary flow of resources that ever more depreciates the outputs. The results of the PISA study recently released by the OECD come thus as a stern confirmation of those “*vox clamandi in desertum*” (Ghinararu for the European Employment Observatory, 2005-06), among which has constantly numbered the author of these lines, that have constantly argued against the inflationary expansion of tertiary education which has led to the un-natural situation where 1 public university, on the average, serves a basin of total population in the range of maximum 4-500 thousand

inhabitants, while budgets for education seem to be oriented, as we will prove base on statistical data, rather towards the needs of the supply or of the educators than to the real demand of the market. What the PISA tells us in brief is that for an increase of the public expenditures for education expressed as a share of the GDP of 85% as against their 1990 levels (when supposedly our workforce was so well educated that it could reach to the skies!), which to put the things in a more clear perspective represents, in relative terms, a 32% of the rise in nominal GDP of the country throughout the period and is by no less than 76% higher than the rise recorded by the real GDP when expressed in constant prices of 1990, Romania has obtained the following:

- an average performance in science which is significantly below the OECD average, with none of the students being able to reach actually to level 6 of the PISA questionnaire which thereby means that none of the students questioned were actually able to link between their knowledge to corroborate it or to draw creatively on a multiplicity of sources of information; This leads to the conclusion that whatever accumulation of knowledge there is in the Romanian education system, a process that is by no means at the core of the education process is more or less futile as the students can hardly make good use of it;
- an average performance in mathematics that is also significantly below the OECD average, a fact which by itself dispels the myth of a grand power in mathematics and shows that in spite of the huge amount of mathematics and physics classes that is poured on the students the results are dismal;
- an average performance in reading which is also significantly below the OECD average, a fact which dispels the myth of a high degree of general culture that would be supposedly the characteristic of Romanian students as the lack of a real ability to read precludes any access to culture. Actually the lack of general culture shows up in the first finding that we have outlined as usual general culture or general knowledge acts as a “platform” that enables the individual precisely to link in between various categories of information, draw on various sources and creatively then make use of them all;
- not the least the fact that the average performance of students has little to do with their social and economic background with the variance in the performance of students due to their social and economic background not significantly different from the OECD average, This very fact shows that yet another myth has to be dispelled, which is squarely the one telling that the social differentiation that occurred with transition and which by the way has been good thing as it acted as an incentive for individual investment in HR, is to be blamed for the dismal performance of the large mass of students. As a minority of analysts have repeatedly argued ([Hobza and Ionita, 2008](#), [Ghinararu 2006](#)) the Romanian education system has kept its egalitarian character, delivering practically the almost the same for everybody, rich and poor alike, therefore leaving to the individual to make the difference.

As such with the myths dispelled what remains is just the sobering reality of a systems which in spite of receiving ever more resources throughout years since 1990 and this sometimes in spite of a difficult economic situation which prevailed in the country until around the year 2000, to a certain extent seems that it has failed to deliver. This in turn only vindicates one of the statements rightly made in several papers ([OECD 2007](#), [Hobza and Ionita, 2007](#), [Ghinararu 2006](#)) that an increased or an ever increasing allocation of resources for education which is the basis then for the development of a solid LLL IS NOT NECESSARILY THE MOST ADEQUATE RESPONSE.

All of these show that to large extent the progress that has been made and the sky-high increase in the school enrolment rate especially in tertiary education where the curve

over the last eighteen years shows an exponential growth and this, whatever might be the impression, is not necessarily due to the expansion of private tertiary education, which generally plays for the scapegoat for the failures in quality, but it is also the effect of a misallocation of public resources which has favored an actually too-much egalitarian access to public tertiary education, have led to an INFLATIONARY EFFECT of EDUCATION and to what we will call from now on a DEPRECIATION of the OUTPUTS of the education process, which has been put into the limelight by the PISA study.

Therefore applying the un-faulty, fully objective logic of economics to this domain also, one can in all right say that as in any process, an excess of supply that cannot be absorbed by the solvent demand is actually INFLATION and the end result is the DEPRECIATION of the thus supplied good or service. In other words, the fact that education has been over-supplied without taking into account the real needs of the market has created an inflation of EDUCATION, which has at its turn led to a depreciation of its outputs. This asks for a change of vision and for a change of the priorities in the allocation of what will always be scarce resources so as to engender first a *disinflation* process which would also entail a *mop-up or a sterilization of the excess supply* and then commence a gradual process of *re-appreciation of the outputs*. We will therefore apply a monetary-derived model of analysis as this we will allow us to trace the cause of the inflationary process in education which has led to the dismal and disappointing PISA ([Micklewright and Schnepf, 2007](#)) results and thus in the end prescribe a re-appreciation solution which would mean a relative re-formulation of priorities for the investment in Human Capital through what would be indeed BETTER education.

At secondary level, IVET is organized in:

1. vocational education (Schools of Arts and Trades and the Completion Year represent Vocational Education)
2. technological high school
3. post highschool education (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), it is non university education.)

Within **the lower** and upper secondary education, the technical and vocational education is organized in two education routes:

- the high school technologic route, consisting of the lower cycle (2 study years) and the upper cycle (2 study years) of high school
- the progressive professionalizing route, consisting of the trades and arts school (2 study years), the completion year (1 study year) and the upper cycle of high school (2 study years).

Arts and Trades Schools (SAM) is the name of the new education level included in the compulsory education, **which replaces the apprenticeship school** and the vocational school for which schooling was organized until 2002-2003.

The recent restructuring of the preuniversity education system, namely the extension from 8 to 10 years of the compulsory education, includes within the last two years of the compulsory education one pathway dedicated to professional qualifications achievement. These two school years are part of a progressive professional route, which allows students to continue their studies up to ISCED 3 - high school and up to qualification level 3. The School of Arts and Trades is the educational level recently introduced in the structure of the compulsory education.

Post-secondary education (tertiary non-higher education):

- Post-high school
- Foreman school

Post-secondary education provides an opportunity for advanced vocational training for the graduates of secondary schools. Programmes may be recurrent or specially arranged to meet the needs of specific employers. The latter is closely related to the ongoing provision of on-the job training for employers. Such training may be formal or informal with formal training being most closely related to the post-secondary schools.

The post high school:

- Develops, by in-depth study and specialisation, the training fields of the technological high school: technics, services, natural resources and environment, or other particular fields of post high-school specialisation, that are specific to the non-technological branches (certifies qualification level 3 for the qualification areas that presume theoretical capacities, for instance: laboratory technicians, assistants in different sectors of administration, banks, media-advertising).
- Represents a higher level of specialisation for the graduates of the high-school
- The courses are financed by the beneficiaries, either juridical or personal entities, by contract with the providing school.
- Passing the entrance exam entitles the student to a certificate of vocational competences.

The foreman school:

- Is organised in respect of the legal provisions in force that specifically regulates the conditions of participation to this type of school together with diploma recognition.
- It may have alternative financial sources, through social partners and enterprises or by request of individual financing.

Figure 1 - Diagram of the education and training system

Age	Type of education	Grade	ISCED	Educational level		Qualification level	
>19	Post-compulsory		6	Post-university education		5	
				Doctorate (PhD)			
			5	University education	Master	University and post university education	4
					Bachelor		
4	Post high school education		Post-secondary education	3			
18	Post-compulsory	XIII	3	High school – upper cycle	Upper secondary education	3	
17		XII					
16		XI					Completion year
15	Compulsory	X	2	High school – lower cycle	School of Arts and Trades	1	
14		IX					
13		VIII	Lower secondary school (Gymnasium)	Lower secondary education			
12		VII					
11		VI					
10		V					
9		IV	1	Primary school	Primary education		
8		III					
7	II						
6	I						
5			0	Pre-school education (kindergartens)	Pre-school education		
4							
3							

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), it is non university education.

Level 2 of qualification is offered to those who graduate the School of Arts and Trades after the Completion year (XI grade). Schools of Arts and Trades and the Completion Year represent Vocational Education.

Level 1 of qualification is offered to those who graduate the School of Arts and Trades (IX-X grades).

Romania has a two stage accreditation process for initial VET(Initial VET (TVET) is part of the formal system of education) based on the right to provide training and the right to award qualifications.

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial vocational education and training (IVET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

As part of the national quality assurance framework, which is coordinated by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, the following system of accreditation and approval has been adopted:

- In order for an IVET provider to operate, the school must demonstrate that its training programmes have met the predetermined standards. The training provider must also seek approval for each training programme. Accreditation is granted by order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, based on the approval of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education. Accreditation requires training providers to complete a two stage process:
 - provisional authorisation grants the training provider the right to undertake educational activities and organise their application for individual IVET programmes;
 - accreditation grants the training provider the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research, and to organise examinations.
- Independent experts complete an external evaluation of the quality of IVET providers and their programmes every five years. This considers the extent to which an IVET provider and its programmes meet the predetermined quality standards.

Training providers are responsible for self evaluation. Their responsibilities are set out in the national quality assurance manual.

The self evaluation processes require training providers to:

- plan all their VET activities through a strategic and operational plan. This becomes the School Action Plan 2007 - 2013, which responds to regional and local priorities;
- internally monitor that the planned activities are completed and includes evaluation of teaching and learning process through lesson observations. This process has to evaluate the school's difficulties in meeting its objectives, issues arising from teaching and learning, and it identifies appropriate solutions;
- self-assess their performance based on evidence and produce a self-assessment report;
- identify revisions and develop an improvement plan, to underpin the next cycle of the operational plan
- develop a quality manual for the school.

From the point of view of the qualification levels adopted in Romania according to the European Council Decision 85-368-EEC, the pre-university technical and vocational education assures the first 3 qualification levels, as follows: qualification level I through the arts and trades school, qualification level II through the completion year and qualification level III through the upper high school cycle - technologic route and through post-high school education.

Regarding the teacher and trainer training and the curriculum reform and innovative approaches to teaching and assessment, National Reform Programme points out the following measures:

- **Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools(I 2008-IV 2008)** having the main purpose improving teachers' qualifications and competences to ensure quality in education;
- **Rehabilitation of the infrastructure facilities and improving the endowment of educational units in rural and disadvantaged areas(II 2007-IV 2009)** having as main objective ensuring the proper teaching conditions in the vocational and

technical education and in the pre-university education in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas;

- **Developing the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students(I 2008-IV 2008);**
 - **Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market(I 2008-IV 2008);**
- These measures are also detailed in country Policy Report 2010.

5.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Compulsory school includes primary and lower secondary education. Lower secondary education provides general education and covers the last four years of compulsory education (Gimnaziu): the 11 to 15 year old age group.

Within the lower and upper secondary education, the technical and vocational education is organized in two education routes: the high school technologic route, consisting of the lower cycle (2 study years) and the upper cycle (2 study years) of high school and the progressive professionalizing route, consisting of the trades and arts school (2 study years), the completion year (1 study year) and the upper cycle of high school (2 study years). Arts and Trades Schools (SAM) is the name of the new education level included in the compulsory education, which replaces the apprenticeship school and the vocational school for which schooling was organized until 2002-2003. It leads to a qualification level I.

GEO	TOTAL ISCED2	ISCED2GEN (NUM)	ISCE2 GEN (%)	ISCED2PV (NUM)	ISCE2PV (%)	ISCED2VOC (NUM)	ISCED2 VOC (%)
EU 27	22283865	21716207	97.5	291250	1.3	276408	1.2
RO	922769	922769	100.0	: (-)	:	: (-)	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 19-02-2010

5.3 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Concerning general and specialized high schools, there are three types of high schools: general, vocational and technological (see 5.1) All types give access to higher education and most of them also offer a qualification and therefore the opportunity to obtain a job after graduation. High school education covers the 15 to 19(20) year-old age group. Alternatively, vocational school courses lead to employment after 2 or 4 years study, depending on the sector. The vocational training structure and network are established and organized by the Ministry of Education and Research after consulting the institutions concerned.

Since the reforms of 2003, the Romanian upper secondary school system consists of four pathways:

- a general academic strand at academic high schools (Licee Teoretice) leading to a baccalaureate (upper secondary leaving diploma), taken after four years' schooling at around the age of 18;
- a technical strand at technological high schools (Licee Tehnologice). This also leads to a baccalaureate, as well as - and in parallel - to vocational qualifications at

Level 3 of the Romanian framework for vocational qualifications (described later). Technological high schools share much common content with academic high schools and are organised into three technical pathways: natural resources, services and technical occupations. Within each pathway several individual vocational qualifications can be acquired. In 2005, 19 vocational qualifications were available from technological high schools.

- a strand leading to artistic, aesthetic or spiritual professions (performing arts, fine arts, architecture and religious orders). This is a small element in the Romanian system;
- a more specifically vocational strand; As will be explained, this ‘progressive route’ (RO: „ruta progresiva”) was formed from different existing elements. After the recent reforms it consists of a two-year cycle in arts and trades schools (Școli de arte și meserii) leading to a Level 1 qualification, followed by a post-compulsory ‘completion year’, which leads to a Level 2 qualification. These two IVET levels form the standard expected of vocational education, which therefore lasts three years.

Students following this route can then have access to a Level 3 qualification by undertaking a two-year high school programme related to their earlier vocational study. Graduation from the upper cycle of high school entitles the graduate to a ‘double qualification’: a qualification for professional purposes (Level 3) and access to the baccalaureate, which counts as an academic qualification. Vocational qualifications available at Level 2 in this system are more specific than those in the main technological high school route consisting of 135 individual qualification trades organised in 16 vocational groups. Fewer trades are available at Levels 1 and 3.

The baccalaureate demands a given combination of subjects, including centralised examinations. For students at technological high schools this combination reflects their vocational specialisation to an extent, but also includes relevant scientific subjects and (for all students) Romanian and a modern foreign language. Holders of the baccalaureate may apply to university.

Assessment in the school system is carried out by teachers for each unit, supplemented by a final examination for the award of the qualification. For qualifications at Level 1, the final examination comprises a series of practical tasks, pre-set and made public by the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development, which are assigned to students randomly. The results are judged by a panel which includes members from outside the school - they may be trade unionists, employers or professional staff from another school. For Level 2 qualifications, the final certification test includes an oral presentation of a project followed by a practical demonstration. The project must be developed by the student during the year’s programme and teachers monitor and tutor the process. For qualifications at Level 3, assessment and final certification are similar to Level 2 qualifications, the only difference being the project’s complexity. In addition to the Level 3 test, graduates of upper secondary education are entitled to enter the baccalaureate examination, which has academic purposes. Candidates who pass the baccalaureate, regardless of whether or not they have a vocational qualification, can go on to university.

Pupils enrolled in vocational school by training profile(only vocational schools):

Table 2: Vocational education by training profile

	<i>PUPILS ENROLLED</i>					
	<i>2003/ 2004</i>	<i>2004/ 2005</i>	<i>2005/ 2006</i>	<i>2006/ 2007</i>	<i>2007/ 2008</i>	<i>2008/ 2009</i>
VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	246977	277838	274041	240924	211345	181048
Engineering	51063	67680	66068	55392	46740	41022
Electrotechnics and electronics	25520	32729	30650	26995	23595	19174
Mines	750	331	137	16	-	-
Oil	2372	1760	1471	991	762	813
Metallurgy	632	325	148	59	54	39
Energy	1182	1397	1744	1413	983	674
Industrial chemistry	3517	3545	2957	2569	2313	1890
Construction materials	1301	1238	1455	1202	878	629
Assembly-construction	16550	18168	19039	17270	16703	14728
Wood exploitation and processing	14061	16420	15383	13431	11280	9113
Transport	33679	19176	15299	13730	12235	10174
Post and telecommunications	1137	395	484	274	321	172
Food industry	10287	11535	12525	11908	10960	9808
Light industry	31184	37175	34738	26768	21087	15751
Poligraphy	597	674	664	626	554	416
Water management	202	88	124	-	-	-
Agriculture	16544	23709	25083	22203	18457	14710
Forestry	2252	2911	3251	3394	3083	2245
Theology	826	769	592	543	399	317
Tourism	670	1627	1773	1569	2083	2331
Trade	7638	9217	10600	11415	11064	11001
Public catering	17778	21490	23693	22640	21654	20092
Small-sized industry and rendering services	7235	5479	6163	6516	6140	5949

Source: NIS 2009

Special education is organized with the purpose of training, educating, recuperating, and socially integrating children with deficiencies, using curricula, syllabi, textbooks, and educational technologies designed in accordance with the type and degree of the given child's handicap. The special education network includes kindergartens, primary and lower secondary schools, vocational schools, upper secondary schools, and post secondary schools.

Table 3: Enrolments in special vocational schools

	<i>PUPILS ENROLLED</i>					
	<i>2003/ 2004</i>	<i>2004/ 2005</i>	<i>2005/ 2006</i>	<i>2006/ 2007</i>	<i>2007/ 2008</i>	<i>2008/ 2009</i>
SPECIAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	11682	11269	10371	9459	8990	8206
Engineering	1201	1348	1277	1458	1173	1098
Electrotechnics and electronics	29	40	40	7	-	-
Industrial chemistry	9	7	5	-	-	8
Construction materials	41	55	21	16	12	10

Assembly-construction	2341	2092	2123	1774	1677	1420
Wood exploitation and processing	1285	1372	1050	1099	1179	1103
Transport	632	364	263	115	66	45
Food industry	165	302	271	250	334	315
Light industry	3512	3504	3300	2872	2691	2382
Agriculture	358	340	359	312	305	265
Trade	20	58	59	72	132	150
Public catering	1377	1112	1140	1010	950	1016
Small-sized industry and rendering services	712	660	434	401	354	225
Poligraphy	-	15	29	37	29	17
General education	-	-	-	36	88	152

Source: NIS 2009

Table 4: Evolution of share of pupils enrolled in vocational education off all pupils enrolled in high school and vocational school:

2004-2005	2004-2005	2005-2006	2005-2006	2006-2007	2006-2007	2007-2008	2007-2008	2008-2009
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION	PUBLIC EDUCATION	PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION	PUBLIC EDUCATION	PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION	PUBLIC EDUCATION	PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION	PUBLIC EDUCATION	PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION
60,00%	59,90%	59,80%	59,70%	59,90%	60,00%	60,10%	60,30%	59,10%

Source: NIS

In 2007 35.1 % of the students in upper secondary education were enrolled in general education and 64.9% were enrolled in vocational education.

Table 5

ENROLMENT BY ISCED LEVEL (EU 27 vs. RO)							
GEO	Total isced3	isced3gen (num)	isce3 gen (%)	isced3pv (num)	isce3pv (%)	isced3voc (num)	isced3 voc (%)
EU 27	22085482	10719847	48.5	1130868	5.1	10234767	46.3
RO	1031308	362409	35.1	: (-)	:	668899	64.9

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 19-02-2010

5.4 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

A special law on apprenticeship has been mandated by the Labour Code since 2003. The current act adopted in 2007 has seen a rather slow application. One cause at the very beginning was the legal requirement for enterprises willing to apply apprenticeship schemes and engage into apprenticeship contracts⁸ (which have been defined as a special

⁸According to the special law that regulates the institution of apprenticeship in Romania, namely the Apprenticeship Act of 2005 (Law no.279/2005), apprenticeship is to 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

type of labour contracts involving both work as well as vocational training at workplace) of having a number of specially trained apprenticeship foremen, equipped not only with sufficient professional experience and expertise but being also in the possession of a certificate attesting to its formal training-related knowledge and skills. While this has finally seen resolution the advent of the crisis has drastically reduced incentives for apprenticeship training as employers have found themselves struggling to maintain, sometimes while drastically cutting either wages or working hours, their regular staff.

5.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

One of the Projects for the development of vocational education is Metro Education Project , a cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the METRO Group for the development of the quality in practical training in the field of trade. Within the project, METRO Group provides the conditions for conducting practical training of students from schools involved in the project. During the project will be developed learning materials, materials used for practical training carried out in school and shops. Schools involved in the project:

- Colegiul Economic Viilor, Bucharest;
- Colegiul Tehnic de Industrie alimentară „D. Motoc”, Bucharest;
- Grup Scolar Agricol „V. Harnaj”, Bucharest.

Financial resources: Metro Group is financing the project. The project goal (the target group: the students of the above institutions) is to prepare young people for work in modern shopping centers and in providing a comprehensive assistance to the vocational schools in Romania. The activities undertaken in 2009 are:

- 2 workshops for developing the strategies for the current school year
- preparing students for the exam
- a final examination for the class of 2008-2009 at the Romanian-German Chamber of Commerce in Bucharest for 30 students
- a certificate AHK of completion for 30 graduates

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

- participation of students and teachers from Romania to International Social Project 2009 Kiev, which aimed to exchange experience between participants, teachers and organizers for socialization and intercultural cooperation

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

Outside the university sector, Romania has several post-secondary education institutions: post-high schools and foremen schools (*școli postliceale și școli de maiștri*). These are open to students who have attended high school (whether theoretical or technological) and offer a range of qualifications, mostly of two years' duration. They charge fees to students or employers where students are employed.

Table 6: Enrolments in post high-schools and foreman schools

	<i>PUPILS ENROLLED</i>					
	<i>2003/ 2004</i>	<i>2004/ 2005</i>	<i>2005/ 2006</i>	<i>2006/ 2007</i>	<i>2007/ 2008</i>	<i>2008/ 2009</i>
Post high schools	49516	44641	40578	34772	40759	48546
<i>Engineering</i>	343	337	309	215	363	584
<i>Electrotechnics and electronics</i>	164	109	78	65	160	281
<i>Mines</i>	-	28	21	-	-	-
<i>Oil</i>	56	64	41	-	-	-
<i>Geology</i>	63	88	86	89	122	161
<i>Metallurgy</i>	16	18	-	-	-	-
<i>Energy</i>	88	78	54	-	-	36
<i>Industrial chemistry</i>	44	19	-	-	-	55
<i>Construction materials</i>	-	-	-	15	15	15
<i>Architecture, arrangement and assembly-construction</i>	318	256	301	331	786	1086
<i>Wood exploitation and processing</i>	50	221	200	147	171	269
<i>Transport</i>	644	636	619	364	731	1291
<i>Post and telecommunications</i>	741	522	401	243	467	510
<i>Food industry</i>	1331	1098	771	359	665	881
<i>Light industry</i>	386	320	227	118	164	239
<i>Polygraphy</i>	27	28	27	-	-	-
<i>Agriculture</i>	84	34	41	-	337	442
<i>Forestry</i>	1677	1476	1236	502	357	533
<i>Water management</i>	129	16	-	-	-	-
<i>Trade</i>	1088	2533	1913	1041	1191	1408
<i>Finances, accountancy, administrative</i>	7202	4031	2969	1337	564	519
<i>Tourism</i>	491	583	633	289	646	1231
<i>Services</i>	1563	1455	1328	1036	1437	1636
<i>Informatics</i>	2830	2399	1616	759	668	1053
<i>Metrology</i>	97	17	-	-	-	-
<i>Sanitary</i>	28425	26928	26677	26982	31183	35554
<i>Culture</i>	86	74	127	111	57	124
<i>Pedagogy</i>	238	206	228	305	229	207
<i>Social assistance</i>	453	640	487	117	18	39
<i>Others</i>	882	427	188	347	428	392
	PUPILS ENROLLED					

	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009
Foremen schools	5005	3825	2821	2693	4534	6319
Engineering	1182	842	542	454	908	1466
Electronics and electrotechnics	422	274	260	277	470	641
Mines	228	66	14	-	-	-
Oil	360	275	97	121	175	229
Metallurgy	133	126	132	93	193	200
Energy	994	701	477	445	622	821
Industrial chemistry	182	87	101	111	112	143
Construction materials	22	51	32	30	-	-
Assembly-construction	356	327	348	411	1090	1590
Wood exploitation and processing	127	118	135	134	236	202
Transport	823	882	654	588	611	747
Food industry	-	-	-	-	36	72
Light industry	106	47	29	29	54	136
Poligraphy	30	29	-	-	-	-
Agriculture	40	-	-	-	27	72

Source NIS 2009

In Romania, all the students enrolled in post secondary non tertiary education are in the vocational education.

Table 7:

ENROLMENT BY ISCED LEVEL					
GEO	Total isced4	isced4gen (num)	isce4 gen (%)	isced4voc (num)	isced4 (%)
EU 27	1516312	174028	11.5	1342284 (s)	88.5
RO	37697	: (-)	:	37697	100.0

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 19-02-2010;

5.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

At tertiary level, 98.6% of the students are enrolled in Level ISCED 5A programmes which are typically outside the scope of VET.

Table 8:

ENROLMENT BY ISCED LEVEL						
GEO	Total isced5	isced5a (num)	isced5a (%)	isced5b (num)	isced5b (%)	total isced 6
EU 27	18359029	15893156	86.6	2465873	13.4	525809
RO	900463	887526	98.6	12937	1.4	27712

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 19-02-2010

6.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

6.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The principles for lifelong learning have been included as priorities in policy documents related to education, continuous training and employment, such as the National Development Programme 2007-2013 or the Sectoral Operational Program for the Development of Human Resources (SOPDHR).

Additionally, some lifelong learning objectives are explicitly present in sectoral strategic documents, such as The National Employment Strategy 2004-2010, the Short and Medium-Term Strategy of Continuous Vocational Training 2005-2010, The Tripartite Agreement on Development of a National Qualification Framework (signed in 2005 by the Romanian Government representatives, employers and trade union confederations representatives at national level) and The Ministry of Education and Research Strategic Guidelines for 2006-2008 (MER, 2005).

According to the EC Report *Progress Towards Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training*, there are huge gaps regarding the adults participation to lifelong education and training in EU MS: the figures present the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain as having the highest participation rates (over 20%) while in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania this value reach only 2%, four times less than the EU average. Since, in the case of these three countries, the progress made compared with the year 2000 has been very modest, the reports which monitor the progress on Lisbon objectives stress the importance of promoting new policies in this field.

6.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

There are approximately 1200 providers of initial vocational education and training (VET). These are not sufficiently involved in adult vocational training. The network of the National Agency for Employment (see 4.5) has 13 vocational training centres in the subordination of its county agencies and 6 regional centres for adult vocational training⁹. A decision was made to create 7 more vocational education centres, which are currently under a process of rehabilitation and equipment.

⁹ Starting with 2004, in Romania began the establishment of some Regional Centres for Adults Vocational Training subordinated to NAE. Currently there are 6 Regional Centres for Adults Vocational Training, each of them covering from 3 to 5 counties. Within these centres the following services are offered:

- adults vocational training in the view of getting, preserving and increasing the level of vocational competitiveness on the labour market;
- information and vocational counselling;
- vocational training assessment and monitoring;
- vocational training certification.

Generally, vocational training providers are nimble in size, rapidly adjust their training supply to the immediate requirements of the market. In general, they offer programs for level-2 qualification, computer initiation programmes or for acquiring foreign language skills. There is a small supply of programs for qualifications that require important investments by the training providers. The supply of authorized training programs reflects only partially the training needs at the level of jobs. The most efficient form of correlation between the training content and the labour market requirements is achieved when the training takes place upon the request of economic agents, and practice is done on the workplace or when training providers closely cooperate with the economic agents in certain lines of business.

The vocational training supply tends to focus on programs for full qualifications or on programs for the development of general competencies. Also, the vocational training supply is still very fragmented since it is designed rather for persons than for companies, being guided by punctual labour market requirements. The system is mostly focused on the supply of certificates and less on the development of competencies required for employment. The long duration of CVT programs makes them inadequate for persons employed. Another important factor operating like an obstacle in the current CVT system is the fact that the current legislation does not allow the certification of partial qualifications, although the demand for training in the labour market is often focused on narrow qualifications.

The results of Household Labor Force Survey (AMIGO trim.III, 2009) regularly conducted by National Institute for Statistics show that:

- In the third quarter of 2009, 1.909 million people aged 15 years and over followed a form of training in the national education system . The proportion of individuals who have undergone a form of training with the purpose of professional training was 3.6% of the total. From those that have taken some form of training in the national education system, 9.1% were employed persons and only 0.9% were unemployed (ILO definition taken into account for the latter).
- Regarding the areas of training, 29.2% have taken some form of training in social sciences, economics or law, 22.7% in specific areas of industrial activities, construction and architecture, 16.0% had studied physics, mathematics and statistics, computer and 14.9% attended general programs providing basic training.
- Over the four weeks preceding the survey various forms of training (courses, seminars, conferences, etc..) have been organized by enterprises and attended by 12 000 persons aged 15 years and older.

Table 1 Enrolment in VET (persons attending by age group and type of VET)

PERSONS WHO HAVE ATTENDED A FORM OF TRAINING DURING LAST FOR WEEKS	AGE GROUP			
	TOTAL	15-24 YEARS	25-34 YEARS	35-44 YEARS
Total	1909416	1731641	139511	28548
In classrooms	1888058	1713998	137002	27773
In other places (at work, alternately classrooms and firms):	21357	17643		
PERSONS WHO HAVE ATTENDED A FORM OF TRAINING DURING LAST FOR WEEKS	AGE GROUP			
	TOTAL	15-24	25-34	35-44

		YEARS	YEARS	YEARS
Total	1909416	1731641	139511	28548
Basic Education	1830289	1678417	119653	23170
Vocational Training, Training / retraining courses organized by public and private agencies for employment	69554	50966	15936	

Source: AMIGO QIII, 2009

6.2 NON FORMAL EDUCATION

6.2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

See explanations under 2.1.2 under „Validation of non-formal and informal learning”

6.2.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL CVET

CERTIFICATION OF INFORMAL AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION

At the level of compulsory education the Law of education nr. 268/ 2000 stipulates the introduction of the Portfolio for lifelong learning as a document that registers extracurricular activities as well as learning outcomes that result from informal or nonformal contexts. This document is issued for all the graduates of the lower cycle of the highschool, graduates from the VET sector as well as graduates from upper cycle of the highschool. The certification of the competences that are acquired in informal or nonformal contexts is done within *The Second Chance* programme¹⁰ both in basic education and in the vocational training.

The Europass National Centre (CNE) was founded by a Government Resolution nr. 67/ 2007 and operates within the National Agency for Community Programmes in Education and Training. This Centre develops and implements the Europass national strategy and coordinates the process of issuing the Europass documents. **The Youthpass certificate** is a document that recognizes the training activities and the competences that were acquired within the Program „Youth in Action”. The certificate aims the competences that were developed in non-formal and informal contexts and are issued as a result of an online application. This initiative started in 2007 and is jointly administered by the Europass National Centre and the Department „Youth in Action” within the National Agency for Community Programs in Education and training .

¹⁰ The programme for fighting the marginalization and social and professional exclusion of the young people who dropped out from compulsory education without acquiring the minimal competence needed for obtaining a job, also known under the name of “Second chance”, unfolds according to the prescriptions of the Ministry of National Education Order MNEO no. 3062/ January 18, 2000. This programme is addressed to young people aged between 14 and 24 who have not completed their lower secondary education studies and it has two major objectives: the completion of compulsory studies and the obtaining of certain qualifications. The organization of this programme is part of a package of concrete measures regarding the completion of basic education and the ensuring of a chance for social and professional integration of young people. The programme is based on a partnership among several institutions: educational units, public administration, social partners and nongovernmental organizations.

As far as the **adult training** is concerned the recognition and certification of the professional competences that were developed in other contexts than formal education are currently done in validation/assessment centres ¹¹which are authorized by the National Adult Training Board (CNFPA)(see Section 4.5) according to the Evaluation and certification procedure of the professional competences that were 15 developed by other means than the formal ones which was approved by the joint Orders of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor nr. 4543/468/2004, and respectively nr. 3329/81/2005. The evaluation of competences, of key competences included is done in the specific conditions of the activities that are supposed by the respective competences. .

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

National Employment Agency (ANOFM) organized in September 2010, 118 training programs for 2578 persons who benefit according to the law of free vocational training service organized by county employment agencies.

The most requested trades for which will be organized such programs are:

- Trade worker - 283 persons
- Validation and data processing operator - 249 persons
- Human resources inspector - 181 persons
- Chef - 177 persons
- Worker for construction structures - 131 persons
- Security guard - 109 persons.

One of the ANOFM program is called Employment program for people socially excluded (Programul de ocupare a persoanelor marginalizate social).

The objectives of this program are:

- increasing the employment of disadvantaged people
- promoting social inclusion and social security and protection of young people facing the risk of professional exclusion
- preparing young people at risk of social exclusion, for an active life in the community in formal and nonformal education system
- providing access to training, tailored to the labor market, according to personal choices of young people.

In the category of people socially excluded or at risk of exclusion are:

- young people from orphanages
- youths with dependent children
- young people who served custodial sentences

The main tool which provide personalized accompaniment for young people in difficulty and facing the risk of professional exclusion, is the contract of solidarity between them

¹¹ The National Register of the Centers of Evaluation and Certification of the Professional Competences (the assessment centers mentioned above) that are authorized by CNFPA currently includes 61 validation/assessment centres which authorized for a number 116 occupations. These data highlight an important progress compared to the year 2004, when only 9 centers were authorized for only 25 occupations. The competence certificates that are issued mention all the competences that were evaluated including the key competences. Between 2003 and 2007, CNFPA issued 6050 certificates for 84 qualifications, the most numerous being awarded in the following domains: social work, agriculture, trade and constructions;

and the county agencies¹².With this type of contract, the agencies are obliged to give to the young people professional mediation services, to identify employers and appropriate jobs for the young people under the law subject and to place them in jobs identified. One of the measures taken in order to achieve the targets of this program is: Enrolling in vocational training courses for trades required in the labor market's needs of young people, especially in those jobs that could provide solutions to housing (construction sites, farmin, construction).

Table 2: Number of beneficiaries by type of active measures (selected)

Measures	Total number of individuals having benefited from the measure
No. of solidarity contracts signed	1.440
No. of marginalized people helped	1.170
Employment by providing mediation services, out of which:	875
Mediation through employment exchanges	90
Employment by providing professional counseling services	287
Employment by organizing training courses	8

Employment program for socially excluded people for 2010, Source: ANOFM

Other similar programs of ANOFM are Program 150 (especially for communities with large numbers of Roma) for 2010 and Program 155 (especially for rural locations).

¹² The National Agency for Employment subordinates a number of 42 county agencies for employment;

THEME 7: TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

7.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS OCCUPATIONS IN VET

7.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATION IN VET

TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

In Romania, there are three main types of teachers in technical and vocational schools: 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

Initial training for the teaching profession differs according to the level of education at which they teach.

- - 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).
- Foremen instructors must be graduates of a foremen school and must have attended training programs for foremen instructors. These training programmes 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). In the case of graduates of foremen schools who have not attended the special training programme described above, they must have at least 3 years experience in the field. 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).

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).

MAKING TEACHING PROFESSIONS MORE ATTRACTIVE

In 2001, the Ministry of Education adopted the Strategy for Initial and Continuing Training of Educators and Education Managers. Covering the period 2001-2004, the aim of the strategy has been to give the teaching career a more professional status by establishing a system of occupational standards¹³ based on teaching skills and modernise the teacher training provision. For the first time the education manager is recognised as a profession, requiring appropriate training. Modular periodical in-service training programmes have been developed.

By GD 604/June 2002 a National Training Centre for Teaching Staff in pre-Tertiary Education was established as a development and quality assurance agency for teacher training, merging two existing teacher-training centres. Since universities carry out teacher training, the training of teachers will be affected further by changes introduced through the Bologna process. The strategy does not address personnel management issues (such as career perspectives, motivation and remuneration) that could make the teaching profession more attractive.

TEACHERS'ROLE IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

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.

7.1.2 RESPONSIBLE BODIES AND ORGANIGRAM

The **National Centre for Teacher training (CNFP)** guarantees for the quality of the in service teacher training. Between 2005 and March 2009 CNFP issued 145.884 certificates of in-service training and 12.083 certificates of professional competence. This shows that a

¹³ Occupational standards describe the occupation as found in the workplace where, in general, experienced workers unfold their activity. The education system however will deliver a non-experienced, but qualified worker. Some key elements of the standards can only be acquired in working practice. Thus in translating occupational standards in qualifications (learning outcomes) this

'gap' has to be taken into account.

The standardization of the qualifications actually represents the occupational analyze of the trades and professions, followed by a description on discrete competency units, named occupational standards. The school need - as an initial vocational education institution - for expressing the educational contents in terms of educational process determined the initiation of the development of a series of pre-curricular or sub-curricular standards. As these standards describe on distinct units, vocational learning and teaching levels, the vocational training/education standards (VTS) can be considered and treated as cocurricula. The VTS represent the conveying of occupational standards into educational offer. As the CVT programmes are developed based on occupational standards, the training and assessment are competency based. The graduation/qualification certificates issued by the accredited CVT providers have annexes compatible with Europass Certificate supplements.

large number of teachers and managers in primary and secondary education have completed accredited in-service teacher training programs. These programs are provided by 94 institutions: 33 Universities, 28 NGO-s, 32 Staff Development Centers, 2 international organizations. Nowadays, we can really talk of a market for accredited in-service teacher training programs in Romania .

The implication of the **Ministry of Education** in adult learning and education can be seen as:

- Continuing training of its own human resources through General Department of MERY for Human Resources Development, National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-university Education and Teaching Staff Houses (during the last years, the Teaching Staff Houses improved their training offer, promoting education and training programs for other categories of adults, beside the teaching staff);
- Continuous training for teachers in VET to provide training for adults and to become competences evaluators for the recognition of learning in other contexts than the formal ones.

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).

Almost in all the public universities there is, starting with 1998, a department for methodical and psycho-pedagogical studies, running continuing training and specialized courses, with a market oriented offer.

The **National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-university Education** and their 16 operational Regional Centres, has the aim to enhance proper counselling, monitoring and efficient assessment of the continuing training activities. This structure will support the development of a diversified staff-training offer which, this way, facilitates the access of training providers, and involves lower costs and equitable opportunities for teachers and school managers to participate in continuous training programmes.

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.

7.1.3 RECENT REFORMS TO VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

Government strategy for the next 10 years on the professional training of adults, states that "since 1 January 2010 to be certified, training providers must provide proof that they carried out training programs with trainers who have pedagogical training specific for adult vocational training and appropriate specialized training for the training programs.

Vocational Training Center in Culture organized a vocational training program for trainers during March 30 to April 10, 2009, Monday to Friday, 8 hours / day. The program addresses both the trainers who have partially acquired the skills by informal means, and all persons who wish to prepare for this occupation. The course has a strong interactive nature, combining elements of the theory with practical activities. This course aims to assist participants in developing specific skills for trainers, paying special attention to practical skills development.

7.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

7.2.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN IVET

See 7.1.1

7.2.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

See 7.1.1

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

General institutional, and conceptual framework for teacher in-service training

The methodology of continuous training of education staff (Annex MO. 5720/20.10.2009) covers the general institutional, and conceptual framework by which is made the continuous training of teachers, auxiliary teaching, guidance personnel from educational institutions or organizations that are components of education system in Romania. According to the law no. 128/1997 art. 5 and 6 Personnel assigned to duties in teaching or auxiliary teaching in pre-university education have the right to participate in any of the forms of continuing education provided in this Methodology. Teacher training is an ongoing and cumulative process of acquiring and developing the skills of teachers, which is based on the concept of permanent education and comprises two fundamental components: initial training and continuous training. Initial training provides the acquisition of skills and official certifications qualified for admission to the exercise of the teaching profession. Continuous training ensures the upgrading and the development of the education staff skills, including the acquisition of new skills, depending on developments in educational needs and in educational curricula, and depending on the requirements to adapt the teaching staff skill to the educational process changes.

Areas of development of teachers' and trainers' skills

The current stage of VET in Romania induces the necessity that teacher 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 pass to their students (apart working skills) broader concepts, 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 be in fact simulating conditions in the company, and the pupil must acquire information on

how a company generally works, apart technical skills on how his specific technical task has to be fulfilled.

Projects for the development of VET teachers and trainers' skills

1. Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel

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.

2. The national program of education and training for the integrated development of mountain area is a project that began in 2006 and lasts until 2013.

The main objective of the project is : Training Human resources through vocational training in order to support a sustainable development of the mountain. The program runs in an expanded partnership between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports , National Center for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education (CNDIPT), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development , Mountain Forum, Training Center in agriculture Mures, The Centre for Training and Innovation of Development in Carpati Vatra Dornei and KulturKontakt Austria.

The Financial resources are : National budget funds for rehabilitation of schools and farms, Funding of local community, Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture The education units in the project are schools from: Suceava, Brasov, Prahova, Hunedoara, Alba, Neamt, Caras Severin, Arad.

Activities implemented during 2006 - 2009:

- Human resources training (10 teachers, 10 principals of schools and 9 inspectors) in rural tourism by making the seminar "School and the Environment" organized by KulturKontakt Austria, in collaboration with CNDIPT;
- Completion of two training sessions for teachers from the schools involved, in the School of Schlibach, Austria, - in animal husbandry and School of Freistadt in Austria - in the field of tourism;
- Organizing two training seminars for teachers on "Development and evaluation of learning materials for the qualifications in the field of tourism", organized in cooperation with Austria KulturKontakt and CNDIPT;
- Developing training standards, curriculum and learning materials for rural tourism field.

3. Romanian-French cooperation program for developing skills related to auto field

Romanian-French cooperation program has the aim to develop professional skills and programs of initial vocational training in auto field. Partners involved are:

- National Center for the Development of Profesional Education (CNDIPT);
- Automotive Manufacturers and Importers Association of Romania (APIA);
- National Association of Automotive Training (ANFA) France.

The target of the project: 12 teachers from Vocational educational training - auto profile.

4. Training the teacher from vocational and technical education, profile Services in order to expand the modern method of learning "Training firm".

The project is implemented by CNDIPT and it is foreseen to last three years, with the implementation period from 2010 to 2013. The **target** of the project are 600 teachers from vocational and technical education, profile: services.

7.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

See 7.1.1

THEME 8: MATCHING VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS (JOBS)

8.1. SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

Although one cannot point yet to an institutionalized capacity explicitly dedicated to the anticipation of skill needs in Romania, studies and researches have been undertaken by the National Labour Research Institute with financing from the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. As early as 2003, the National Labour Research Institute has undertaken several enterprise investigations with the aim of early identifying the rapidly changing demand for skills. Such investigations have been repeated though with sometimes diverging objectives in 2004-05, 2006 and 2008. Moreover, in 2006 a more audacious step has been made with the enterprise investigation being doubled by an attempt to create at least in a nutshell, a system of occupational monographs. The study has been made available to the Sectoral Committees, (see section 2.1.2) functioning in an advisory position to the National Adult Training Board, now fully recognised as public tripartite bodies, entrusted with the elaboration of occupational standards.

NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, the main institutions in charge of training needs analysis are:

- National Agency for Employment;

The National Agency for Employment has as **main objectives** employment stimulation and increasing employability, ensuring equal opportunities on the internal labor market and fighting any forms of discrimination on the labor market, the protection of the persons within unemployment insurance system, facilitating free movement of workers within Member States of the European Union as well as in the States that signed the agreement on European Economic Area as well as in other states that Romania signed treaties with, agreements, conventions and settlements, as well as supporting Romanian citizens in view of their employment within the states Romania has not signed bilateral agreements on employment with.

- Council for Occupational Standards and Certification (COSC);

- The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD)(see section 2.2);

- National Centre for Leonardo da Vinci Vocational Training Programme (projects run with European partners);

The Leonardo programme supports the development of skills and training. It funds work placements for trainees, workers and staff, and supports European projects to discuss common issues or develop training materials, courses and frameworks.

- The National Labour Research Institute as a member of the SkillsNet network of the CEDEFOP Centre takes an active part in the Pan-European mid-term exercise of anticipating the supply and demand for skills. The National Labour Research Institute provides in the frame of this venture the country group expert (CGE) for seven countries in Central and Eastern Europe plus Greece (currently Dr. Catalin Ghinaru) and attends regularly all meetings since the inception of the SkillsNet network in 2005. Valuable contributions have been made this way also to the development of national tools which

have used the pan-European exercise as a source of inspiration as well as a benchmark for their own results.

Currently in the frame of three regional ESF funded projects, the National Labour Research Institute, jointly with school inspectorates and using survey-based methods is investigating the labour market trajectory of high school graduates so as to enable school inspectorates to adjust their education and training supply, including initial VET in accordance with labour market needs. The exercise is in process with the first results being scheduled for the end of this year;

Also in the frame of an ESF funded project, this time a strategic initiative, the National Labour Research Institute, jointly with its partners including a transnational partner (the Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini-IT) is developing its own system of anticipating labour market trends at national level using this time econometric tools and thus making further use of the experience acquired in the SkillsNet Pan-European exercise. This project is due to end this year with the final results to be ready by the end of November 2011;

REGIONAL LEVEL

At the regional level, Employment County Agencies and School Inspectorates are in charge of the elaboration of periodical studies on training needs analysis. Based on these studies and through collaboration with employers, the following are estimated:

- the school network, specialisations and profiles offered by the IVET system;
- the continuing vocational training (CVT) offer.

MEASURES TO ANTICIPATE SKILL NEEDS

Among the most important measures taken in order to anticipate skill needs as presented in the 2008 National Reform Programme are the following:

1. Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-IV 2010)

2. Extending the exercise of firms/ simulated enterprises network

The exercise firms (in case of pre-university education)/ simulated enterprise (in case of university education) represent a modern learning method which aims at developing pupils and students' entrepreneurial skills by simulating the internal and external processes which are being developed within a firm. The number of exercise firms increased from 117 in the 2002/2003 school year to 890 firms in the 2007/2008 school year.

In 2008, the legal framework regulating "exercise firm"/ "simulated enterprise" was improved by the endorsement of the MECT Order no 5109/2088 which regulates in an unitary manner the concept of simulated enterprise framework at superior education level. The enforcement of this order' provisions, starting with the school/ university year 2008/2009 assures a better coherence regarding the use of this learning method in primary, secondary and superior education levels. The skills obtained through "exercise firm"/ "simulated enterprise" can shorten the new employees/accommodation stage to the working place, which is to the benefit of both the future employees and employers.

3. Development of tools and methodologies for analysing and anticipating the labour market changes(III 2008-IV 2009)

4. 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 Research Labour Institute 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;

5. 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: The purpose of the whole exercise which has been launched by the Ministry of Labour this time in late 2005 and which has benefited also from the co-financing of the World Bank using sums from the “Social Sector Development Loan-ROMANIA”, was to map the demand for skills at national level now 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, thus enabling 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 Research Labour Institute 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;

6. Joint Seminar of the CEDEFOP, the National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education of Romania (the VET Unit), on the investigation and anticipation of the demand for skills via enterprise surveys (June 2007, Bucharest)

Purpose: To raise awareness and network between experts and organizations having expertise in the specific technique of investigating demand for skills via enterprise survey; To find ways and means towards an eventual Pan-European initiative on the issue.

8.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH SKILL NEEDS (JOBS)

In order to provide an overview of some developments in curricula and learning pathways that aim to make the system flexible we mention the following measures:

1. Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-IV 2010);
2. Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market(I 2008-IV 2008);
3. Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools(I 2008-IV 2008).

All the measures are described in detail in National Policy Report -Romania A bridge to the future European Policy for Vocational Education and Training 2002-10

ROLE OF SECTORAL COMMITTEES

Sectoral committees are also involved in developing curricula for various occupations as well as for the inclusion into the National Classification of Occupations of new occupations for which occupational standards are developed. In most cases, the occupational standards as developed by sectoral committees contain specifications for curricula development for specific occupations.

After an occupational standard is developed by sectoral committees all training providers willing to develop training programs for the specific occupations reference in the standard will have to follow specific provisions in the occupational standard. Thus, the sectoral committees and the occupational standards as its flagship product in terms of occupations have a pivotal role in the development of vocational training curricula for the various occupations.

9.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The Romanian system of information, guidance and counselling services is composed of many networks, centres or services, under the supervision of several Ministries (the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Labor Family and Social Protection, the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Health). All institutions above are funded by the state budget.

The majority of the staff employed by the specialised institutions of the MoE network providing information, guidance and counselling services in the education field are psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists and social workers. They are employed in positions such as teacher-psychologist/pedagogue/sociologist. Their basic training is ensured by courses offered by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences and the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work. Many graduates followed post-graduate training modules (Advanced Studies or Master degrees) specialising in counselling and guidance, psychotherapy, management and school administration.

Attending post-graduate courses in Guidance and Counselling is not a pre-requisite of obtaining a counsellor position in pre-university education.

By the Ministry of Education Order no. 3370 (03.09.1998), the **Institute of Educational Sciences** through its **Educational and Vocational Guidance Department** was granted the role of methodological authority for the Ministry of Education guidance and counselling network. The Institute for Educational Sciences is a departmental research institute in the field of education, funded by the Ministry of Education. It undertakes research in the field, designs working tools that meet counsellors' professional needs, organises short-term information/training programs for counsellors working in the information, guidance and counselling network.

In the current context of institutional and professional development of counseling services, the Educational and Vocational Guidance Department undertakes the following activities:

- methodological coordination of the national school-counseling network involving Centres of Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance¹⁴;
- quality assurance for counseling activities at undergraduate level through research focused on working methods, dissemination of publications in the field, curriculum guideline proposals and legislative initiatives;
- interface and resource centre for pupils, teachers, parents and practitioners, aiming at offering information, practical support, guidance, consultations and supervision in the field of career counseling;
- professional information and good practice exchanges together with support and guidelines for a coherent action strategy for counseling networks working with different target groups (pupils, students, adults);
- implementing the Romanian National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG-RO) activities, as the national representative of the Euroguidance Network that is made up of similar centres from European countries;
- facilitating the development of interinstitutional contacts and international partnerships through exchanges and mobility programmes;

¹⁴ Within the Ministry of Education's network the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres (PPAC) and Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (ISPPAC) are territorial centres subordinated to the county School Inspectorates that offer information, guidance and counselling services to students at all levels of pre-university education.

- participating in national and international projects with different objectives: improving working methods in career counseling, free-barrier access to information concerning education, training and working in the EU, diversifying the training offer and structures etc.;
- modernisation of professional practice by promoting modern career counselling tools, especially Information and Communication Technology (ICT) achievements;
- support for the decision making process of the Ministry of Education for implementing policies in the field of career counseling.

The Educational and Vocational Guidance Department within the Institute of Educational Sciences also developed the following ICT instruments for counsellors' use:

- **Education 2000** - educational guidance software, aimed at facilitating the choice of study stream at pre-university level.
- **PICC 2002** - career guidance software for primary registration of data on the beneficiaries of counselling and guidance services: school or university students, adults or other clients.
- **Agenda** - primary registration software on counsellors' working data: institutions, individuals, publications etc.
- **EUROSTAGE project** - facilitates the mobility of students looking for an internship abroad.
- **ESTIA** - European platform containing information on education, labour market, world of occupations.
- **Distance counselling** - the objective of this project is to develop a specific methodology for distance counselling (through phone, letters, fax, e-mail), as a response to the increasing need for information on European opportunities of vocational training and employment.

CURRENT NATIONAL GUIDANCE FORUMS/MECHANISMS SUPPORTING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

The Romanian National Lifelong Guidance Forum is a consultative network which includes Ministry of Education and Labour officials, representatives of research institutes and universities that provide initial and continuous training for guidance practitioners, information and guidance specialists from higher education counselling offices, school counsellors (coordinated by the Ministry of Education), guidance counsellors (coordinated by the Ministry of Labour), social partners (trade unions, employers organisations), representatives of professional associations, and other authorities/institutions involved in designing and implementing policies, as well as beneficiaries of guidance and counseling services. The remit addresses a range of general and specific tasks relating to introducing lifelong guidance policies, including improving training provision for guidance counsellors and access to guidance services for people with special needs.

In Romania, the mission of the National Lifelong Guidance Forum is to:

- support the authorities and responsible government institutions in designing guidance and counselling policies and lifelong learning and guidance strategies;
- promote the quality of guidance and counselling services in education and labour;
- contribute to the personal development and socio-economic efficiency of people working or in search of a job, support their competitiveness on the global labour market and their (re)integration into socio-professional life;
- support access of all persons to guidance and counselling services and contribute to their decision-making on career or educational paths;
- stimulate professional collaboration and networking and adherence to ethical standards and principles;

- find efficient solutions for improving access of special-needs persons to guidance and counselling services;
- promote continuous training of practitioners in guidance and counselling;
- stimulate development of guidance and counselling programmes to ease transition from school to work;
- support partnerships between all responsible institutions in guidance and counselling, at national, regional and local levels.

This mission was established at meetings between experts from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities and representatives of the Institute of Educational Sciences and Euroguidance Romania, based on external evaluation reports on career guidance services in Romania by the World Bank and the European Training Foundation.

9.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

UNEMPLOYED

In order to increase the number of unemployed people participating in continuous vocational training programmes, the National Agency for Employment organizes courses in its own vocational training centers. For 2008, the planned number of persons participating in vocational training is 55,150, out of which 44,059 unemployed people. In the first semester of 2008, 22,868 persons participated in training courses, out of which 20,577 unemployed people.

Most of the vocational training programmes (67%) were organized by the training center network, belonging to the National Agency for Employment (22 county adult vocational training centers and 6 regional adult training centers). In June 2008, the vocational training centers were authorized to provide 481 vocational training programmes for 123 occupations.

ROMA PEOPLE

Special actions aimed at Roma employment were taken; (Caravan of employment, job fairs, Special programme for communities with large numbers of ethnic Roma), focusing on professional reintegration of Roma individuals.

In the first half of 2008, the results were the following:

- 3,351 persons were employed, while emphasis was put on client-tailored actions to stimulate employment;
- Within the Caravan of employment project, developed in towns with significant Roma communities, 17,257 people of Roma ethnic participated, out of which 7,633 were women; 10,549 persons were counselled; 5,470 persons were included in unemployment database, out of which 2,394 were women, and 1,317 people were employed, out of which 463 were women;

9.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

The specialists in the Ministry of Labor network offering information, guidance and counselling services for placement are people with a higher education background: sociologists, legal experts, economists, engineers, but also psychologists, pedagogues and social workers. Some of them attended the Public Policy Master courses within the Career Information and Guidance project and specialised in Career Counselling.

Nevertheless, one of the main problems confronted by decision makers regarding information, guidance and counselling policies is the lack of adequate pre-service training in counselling and guidance provided in Romanian universities. As stated above, students in psychology and educational sciences, sociology and social work faculties attend counselling

and guidance training modules. It is however not necessary to have a Master degree in Counselling and Guidance in order to become counsellors in pre-university education. The faculties decide on the content of initial training modules in counselling and guidance offered to students in psychology and educational sciences, sociology and social work etc. Based on the university autonomy principle, each faculty decides on what curricula it will offer, however taking into account: the analysis of services required from practitioner counsellors, employers' requirements, suggestions from experts in the field, the experience of other countries, requests from professional or employers' associations.

A Master degree in Counselling and Guidance is offered at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, since 1996-1997.

In the university years 1999-2001 and 2000-2002 a Master degree in Public Policies and Public Administration was offered at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy, with about 900 graduates majoring in Information and Career Counselling (project co-funded by the Romanian Government and the World Bank). The graduates are from the network belonging to the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Youth and Sport, involved in the "Information and Career Counselling" Project. Since 1999 a Master degree in Psychological Counselling has also been offered at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

A PhD. or Master degree in Counselling and Guidance or special continuous education courses organised by educational institutions accredited by the ministries or professional associations in the field - such as the Psychologists' Association or the National Centre for Secondary Teachers Training (NCSTT) - are also assets helping career promotion or access to a management position.

10.1 FUNDING FOR IVET

Initial VET is practically in its entirety the responsibility of the state budget, coming under the general heading of education financing. The budget which is administrated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (N.B.: the official title of the ministry has witnessed many variations throughout the years) has been a major focal point for all legislatures since 1990 as education and training have always been dubbed a national priority. During the last decade or so, expressed as a share of the country's GDP the education budget generally went up from around 2-3% of the GDP at the beginnings of the 2000s reaching a maximum of almost 6% of the GDP in 2008, the peak year of economic growth and most unfortunately the last one in what we consider a short successive line of growth years. Although much has been therefore spent on education, including in nominal terms as the increase as a relative share of the GDP has come during the period 2000 - 2008 when in nominal terms the country's GDP went from a meagre 40 bn.EUR to almost 200 bn.EUR , it is clear that not much of this spending has found its way towards the initial VET. This was mainly due to the fact that VET education has not been in much of demand on the Romanian market and this happened as higher education in its various types became ever more accessible for the urban youth while for the rural one, the possibility of migration for employment abroad with the immediate advantages connected to it, far outweighed whatever advantages might have been drawn at home from entering a form of VET-related education. As such it appears clearly that VET has been underfunded although one cannot say that overall allocations for education in general have not been generous given both Romania's possibilities as well as its multiple priorities. National financing has been supplemented by various other sources especially pre-accession financing in the form of Phare programs and, following Romania's full EU membership in 2007, financing from structural and cohesion instruments.

According to the latest strategic report on the use of EU funds covering the period 2007-2009, more than 200 mil. EUR have been already spent on the various sub-themes under the larger scope of the SOP HRD (the Structural Operational Program Human Resources Development)-the operational program covering assistance for human resources development in Romania, thus including investment in VET and related, for various initiatives directed to the improvement of VET. Quality in VET has received also somewhere in the vicinity of 46% of the specifically directed allocation for the period 2007-09. Of course these figures only cover the first two years of the financing period 2007-13, Romania's first major exercise in the use of structural funds, therefore obviously rather weaker in terms of contracts signed and projects starting operation but one has to mention that, amongst all of the operational programs responsible for the administration of EU cohesion and structural instruments in Romania, the SOP HRD has been the most active. Therefore one would expect that for the coming years including for 2010-11 which have been years of crisis and therefore of deep reduction of national financing, the number of applications should have markedly on the up with funds disbursed also on the rise. One has however to mention that in numerous cases where the implementing agent has been a government body or a ministry or any other public-funded entity, projects have tended to run at a slower pace not least because the Government has been rather at a difficulty in meeting its co-financing obligations, including that of ensuring the much needed pre-financing for the projects.

10.2 FUNDING FOR CVET AND ADULT LEARNING

10.2.1 FUNDING FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

10.2.2 FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES

SCHEME FOR CVT FINANCING:

Direct financing:

- Employers own funds (Commercial societies, national companies, autonomous national administrations, may cover staff training costs, Institutions financed from extrabudgetary sources finance training from this income, Institutions financed from the national budget finance training according to their own budget)
- The budget of unemployment insurances
- Sponsorships, donations, external sources
- Fees from trainees

Indirect financing:

- Employers: deduction of expenses encountered for staff training
- Training providers: exemption from VAT payment
- Employees: training leaves

The percent of the cost of CVT courses in total labour cost has significantly increased, becoming in 2005 comparable with the EU27 percent.

STAFF	10-49	10-49	50 - 249	50 - 249	250 +	250 +	TOTAL	TOTAL
TIME	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999
EU 27	1.1		1.4		1.9		1.6	
EU 25	1.1	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.6	2.2
RO	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.2	1.4	0.6	1.1	0.5

Source: Eurostat (CVTS2 and CVTS3); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 19-03-2010

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

Vocational training may be financed from the budget of the unemployment insurance fund, for job

seekers as well as for other categories stipulated by the law. This Fund is separate from the State Budget, and is approved by the Parliament. Law no.76 of 16/01/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and on the stimulation of employing the labor force indicates the resources of the unemployment insurance budget stipulating that, as a rule,

the employers have the obligation to contribute to the unemployment insurance fund with a 0.5% of total payroll while the employed have to contribute with a 0.5% calculated on their gross monthly wages/ earnings (the contribution base). As a result the combined employer and employee contribution rate is of 1%.

The groups benefiting from vocational training are :

1. Unemployed receiving or not the employment benefit
2. Persons that could not find employment after graduating an education institution or after military service;
3. Individuals under refugee status or under another international protection form, according to the law;
4. Persons that could not find employment after detention or repatriation
5. Persons in detention;
6. Individuals back to work after child raising leave
7. Persons back to work after military service
8. Persons back to work or to recuperation of work capacity after invalidity retirement;
9. Persons running work activities in rural environment.

10.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

The Tax Code has provisions aimed at encouraging vocational training:

- Vocational training activities performed by any entity, irrespective of such entity's ownership status, shall by 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 expended for the participation in congresses and other events of a professional nature.
- The unemployment fund provides the free funds for the vocational training of job seekers 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 programs are devised to prevent unemployment, and the companies have to meet a number of requirements to access funding.

The national collective agreement for 2007-2010 spells out that: 'during period in which they attend vocational training courses funded by their employers, the employees shall enjoy the rights provided for them under the applicable collective agreements, equivalent to the normal working time' and that 'the vocational training plan agreed upon by the parties shall be part of the applicable collective agreement.

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), (see 2.1.1) and the SOP for the Development of Administrative Capacity (SOPDAC), were launched on 15 February 2008. SOPDHR consists of six priority axes, of which the following two are specifically dedicated to continuous training: (1) education and professional upgrading aimed at supporting economic growth and the development of a knowledge-based society, which purpose to create the adequate conditions for 15,000 persons - students and young researchers - to take up PhD and post-PhD research programmes; (2) correlation of life-long learning with the labour market, which is designed to put in place the conditions for some 360,000 persons to attend vocational training and re-training, in order to enhance adaptability to working environment of both employees and businesses.

THEME 11: NATIONAL VET STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF PROGRAMMES

11.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMS

11.1.1 MAIN CRITERIA USED TO ALLOCATE VET PROGRAMS

Information not available

11.1.2 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Table 1: Main characteristics of VET education levels in Romania (with indication of ISCED correspondence)

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

Lower secondary education does not include VET or VET type schools. This type of education only starts in the upper secondary education.

11.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Information not available.

11.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR HE IN ROMANIA - STRATEGY FOR 2007-2010

A.National Level

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	<p>2005: According to Government Decision no 1357/November 11, 2005 APART turns into the National Authority for Qualifications in Higher Education (ACPART)</p> <p>2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<p>2007</p> <p>Design of the first draft methodology on NQFHE development - completed by ACPART + WG</p>	
5. Consultation National discussion and acceptance of design by stakeholders	<p>2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	
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	<p>2008</p> <p>To be approved by Government decision</p>
7. Administrative set-up Division of tasks of implementation	<p>2008</p> <p>Accomplished - provided through the methodology</p>	

between HEI, QAA and other bodies		
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

B. International Level

Harmonization of the Romanian NQF with EQF and with other countries the NQFs

Continuing and capitalizing on its actions under the pre-accession Phare programs implemented between 2005-07 for the adoption and gradual implementation of the National Qualifications Framework , the NATB has embarked upon an ESF financed initiative under axis no.1, major intervention domain no.4, relating to the development of vocational education and training the the improvement of quality in VET, titled “Implementation and validation of the National Qualifications Framework. The project

which extends on a 35 month period, having been started in 2009, aims at developing at implementing the principles of the National Qualifications Framework for 4 sectors of activity thus involving four sector committees, with three qualifications being chosen for each of the sectors. Also the project includes validation centres and training providers and is implemented by the NATB jointly with two transnational partners. The total value of the project is of 3.9 mil. RON (approx. the market ex. rate equiv. of EUR: 920,000).

Other international level initiatives are presented below:

- 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 is 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 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.

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