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# Romania

## VET in Europe – Country report

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**2012**

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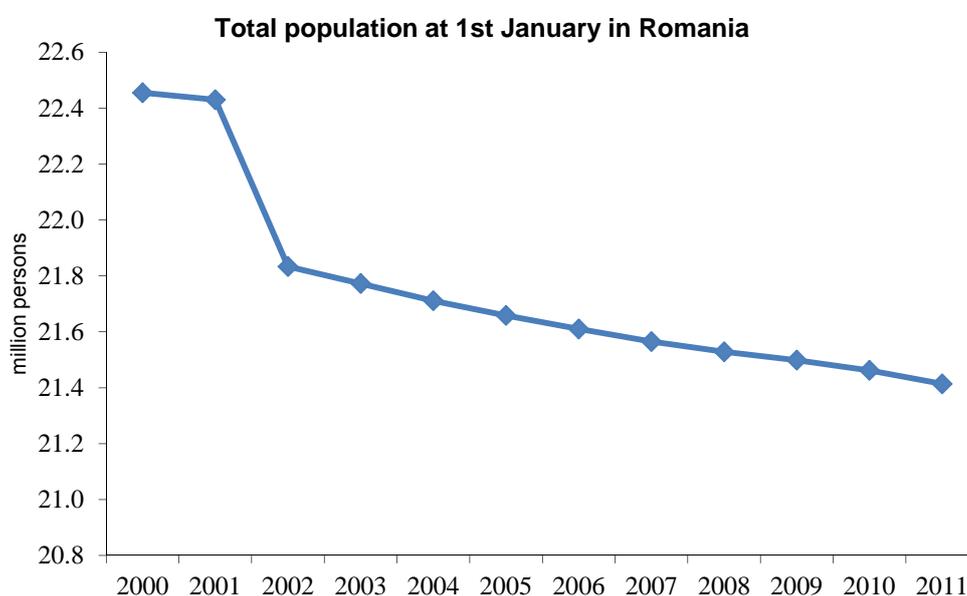
## CHAPTER 1

# 1. External factors influencing VET

## 1.1. Population and demographics

As of the 1st of January 2011, according to EUROSTAT, Romania's population was 21,414,000 inhabitants, 48,000 less than as of the 1st of January of the previous year. From the total population, 10,424,000 were men (accounting for 48.7% in total population) and 10,990,000 were women (51.3%). The population has been constantly decreasing since 2000. A sharp decline was noticeable between 2003 and 2011 from 21,8 million people to an approximate 21,4 million people, caused equally by negative demographic trends and external migration processes.

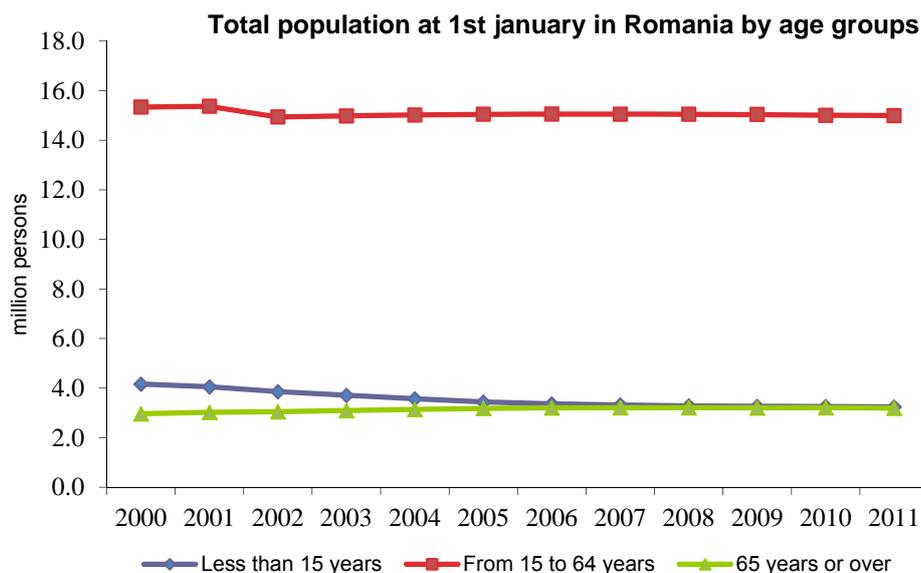
**Fig.1.1. Total population – Romania (as of Jan. 1<sup>ST</sup>) in 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics),2011

This negative trend is even more relevant if analyzed by different age groups. Romania's young population as of January 1<sup>st</sup> (less than 15 years), totaling 4,2 million people in 2000, suffered a sharp decrease to about 3,2 million people in 2011, with very important consequences for the educational and training system. Young persons account for approximately 15.1% of the country's total population.

**Fig.1.2. Total population – Romania (as of Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> ) by age groups**

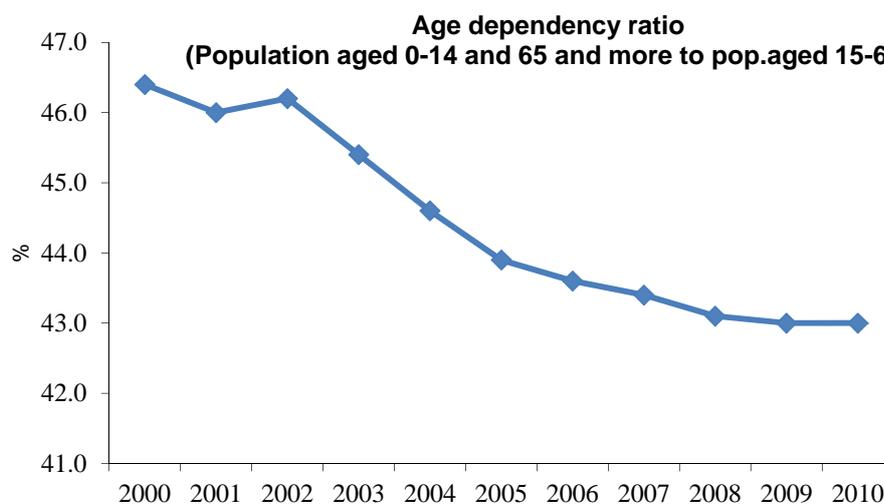


Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics), 2011

For the age group 15-64 years, the population as of January 1<sup>st</sup> was about 15 million people during the period 2000-2011. At the opposite end of the age pyramid, the elderly (those aged 65 years and more) recorded a slow increase throughout the period, reaching the value of 3,2 million people at the beginning of 2011, close to the number of population in the cohort 15 years or less.

Another relevant indicator for the demographic and also the social and economic context of Romania is the age dependency ratio. According to EUROSTAT, the trend for the reference period 2000-2010 is indicating a significant decrease; 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) being reduced during the period from 46.4% in 2000 to 43% at the end of 2010.

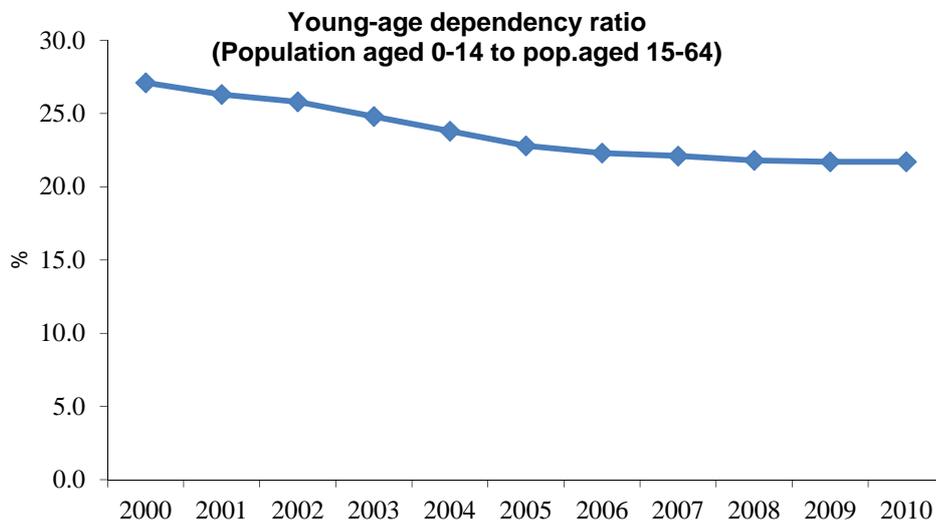
**Fig.1.3. Age dependency ratio in Romania during the period 2000-2010**



Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics), 2011

The same negative trend could be better observed when analyzing the young-age dependency ratio: the share of population aged 0-14 to in the population aged 15-64 years has decreased with more than 5 percentage points from 27% in 2000 to about 21.7% in 2010.

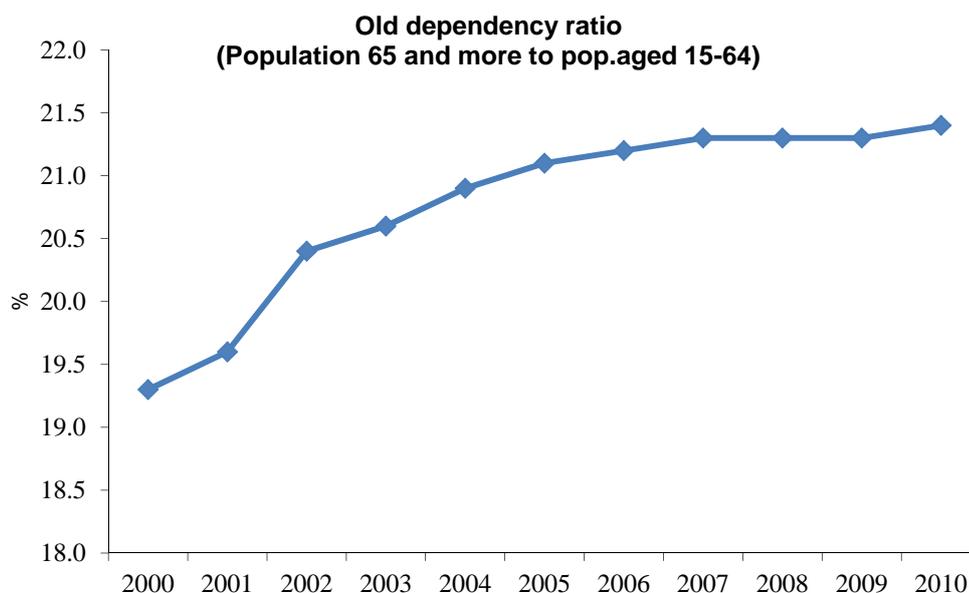
**Fig.1.4. Young dependency ratio in Romania during the period 2000-2010**



Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics)

The old dependency ratio (the percentage ratio between population 65 and more and population aged 15-64) has increased during the analyzed period from about 19.3% in 2000 to about 21.4% at the end of 2010.

**Fig.1.5. Old dependency ratio in Romania during the period 2000-2010**



Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics)

Population forecast data up to 2060 (EUROPOP 2010) shows that the ageing process will continue during the next twenty years: Romania's population is expected to fall by 4,2 million people by the year 2060, reaching about 17,3 million people. On a shorter horizon, in 2020, total population is expected to decrease with about 500 000 persons, registering about 21 million people.

**Table 1.1. Population projection during the period 2010-2060 (million people)**

Total	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
Population	21.5	21.3	21.0	20.7	20.3	19.9	19.4	19.0	18.5	17.9	17.3

Source: Eurostat, EUROPOP2010 convergence scenario, national level 2011

Population ageing will have consequences for the education and training systems. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably. On the other hand, due to demographic decline, schools (especially primary and secondary schools) will face the problem of low numbers of young students. This process has 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.

## 1.2. Labour market indicators

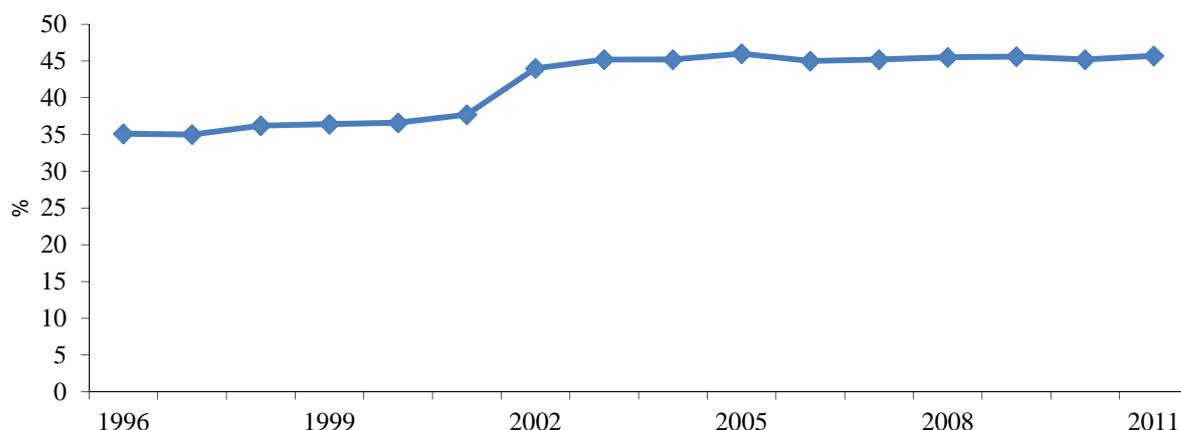
The high rates of inactivity in the economically active age category of the population, the large number of people working in subsistence farming (currently estimated at 4 million people) and external migration of labor (currently estimated at 2 million people) are occurrences that could account for 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 is the development of private sector employment.

The inactivity rate increased from about 35% to 45.7% over the period 1996-2011, according to INS data (2012). The ageing of the population and the increasing inactivity rate generates an increase in the economic old age dependency rate. While in 2000 5.2 employees were 'supporting' 1 pensioner, in 2011 the ratio was 4.7 employees for 1 pensioner<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> However, it has to be noted that the Romanian pension system is entirely based on contributions. There are practically no non-contributory benefits, so the notion of 'support' is relative, rather one can talk of inter-generational solidarity.

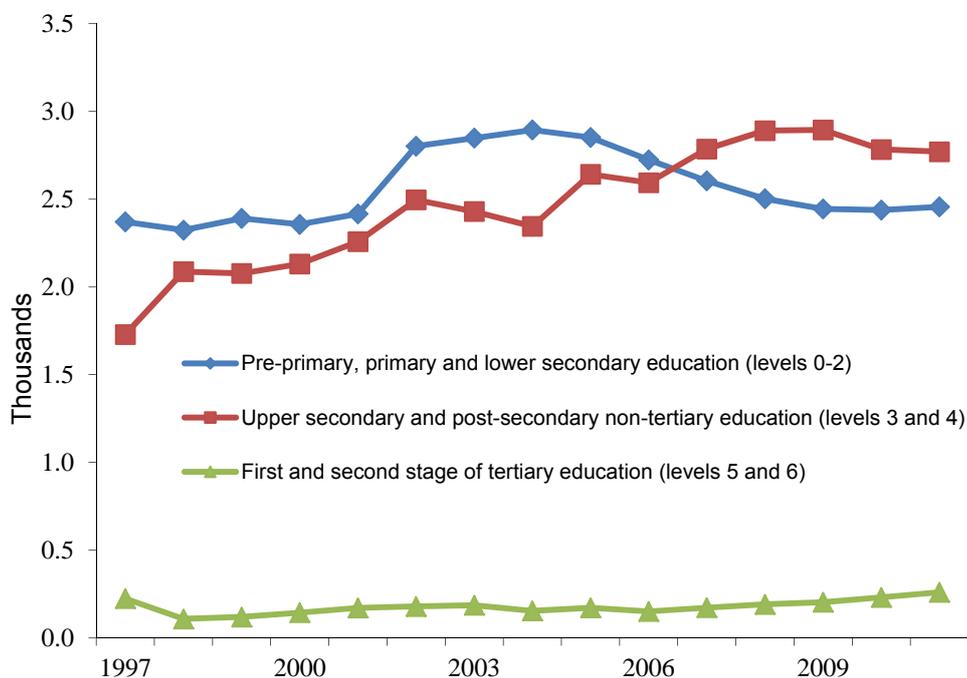
**Fig 1.6. The inactivity rate during the period 1996-2011**



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database 2011

Analyzing the evolution of the inactive population during the period 1997-2011 by highest level of education attained, one may notice that until 2006, the size of inactive population for ISCED 0-2 (pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education) is higher than for the ISCED 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education). Since 2007, the trend reversed, so that the inactive population for ISCED 3-4 is greater than for ISCED 0-2.

**Fig 1.7. The inactive population by highest level of education attained in Romania**

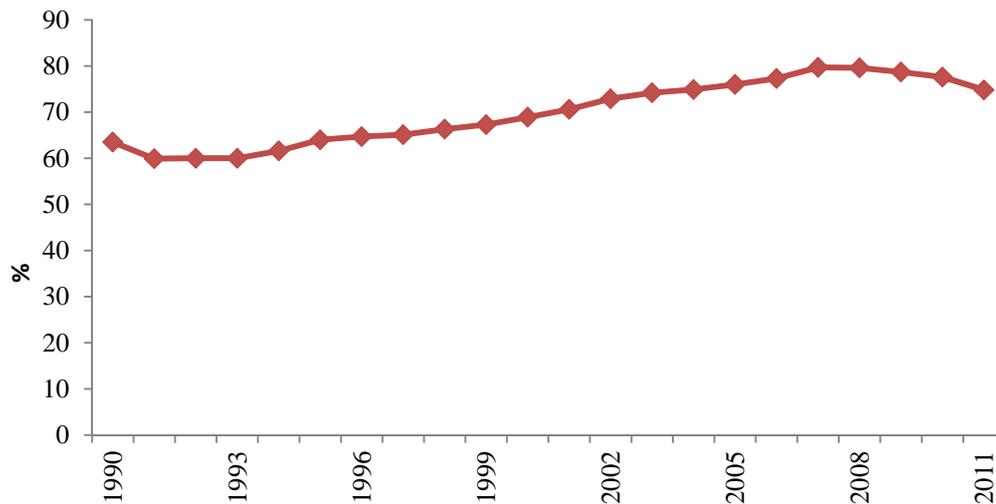


Source: Eurostat, Labour Statistics

According to the latest data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, the enrollment rate for the country's school age population stood at 77.6% for the school-year 2010, 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 between the rural and urban areas, pointing thus once again to the pressing need of allocating more resources for the rural communities 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 percentage points 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%.

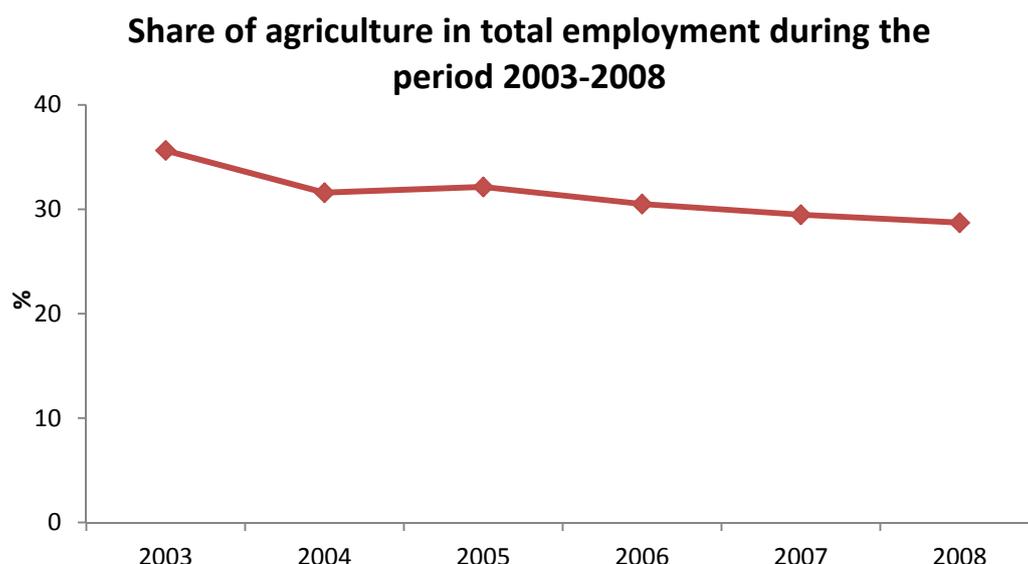
**Fig 1.8. Enrollment rate in Romania during the period 1990-2011**



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

In Romania, employment structure by sectors still differs considerable from the mature market economies of the 'old' EU-15. Starting out in the nineties with a completely oversized, yet unproductive, agricultural sector and a likewise oversized and unproductive industrial sector the services sector increased its share of total employment during the first decade of the 2000s. Industry contracted in terms of employment before stabilizing by the end of the last decade. Agriculture remains oversized in terms of employment and when compared to its contribution to GDP formation but things have started to change in recent years as more and more structural funds are entering Romania's farming sector. By and large employment in Romania's agriculture remains a form of actual under-employment, a sort of subsistence alternative for individuals outside the mainstream labour market but again there are indications that things have started to change. 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 which lasted for almost eight years in a row, going afterwards into a tailspin as the global crisis hit hard the Romanian economy at the beginning of 2009.

**Fig 1.9. Share of agriculture in total employment during the period 2003-2008**



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

Analyzing the level of employment by economic activity for 2010, the largest share is occupied by the primary sector and utilities (33.3%), followed by distribution and transport (20.4%), manufacturing (17.8%), and non-marketed services (13.6%). The area of business and other services has the smallest percentage, 7.2%.

**TABLE 1.2: Employed persons aged 15+ by economic sector of activity (in thousands and as % of total employment), 2010**

GEO	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES	
	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%
RO	3076.8	33.3	1646.7	17.8	704.8	7.6	1883.3	20.4	667.7	7.2	1259.3	13.6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey), 2010

Employment rates for the 15-24 years old displays a slow decline from 27.3% in 2003 to 23.8% in 2011. For the age-group 50-64, the employment rates have slowly decreased from 49.9% in 2003 to 49.2% in 2011. Regardless of the level of education attained, the largest share of employment is recorded for the 25-49 age group.

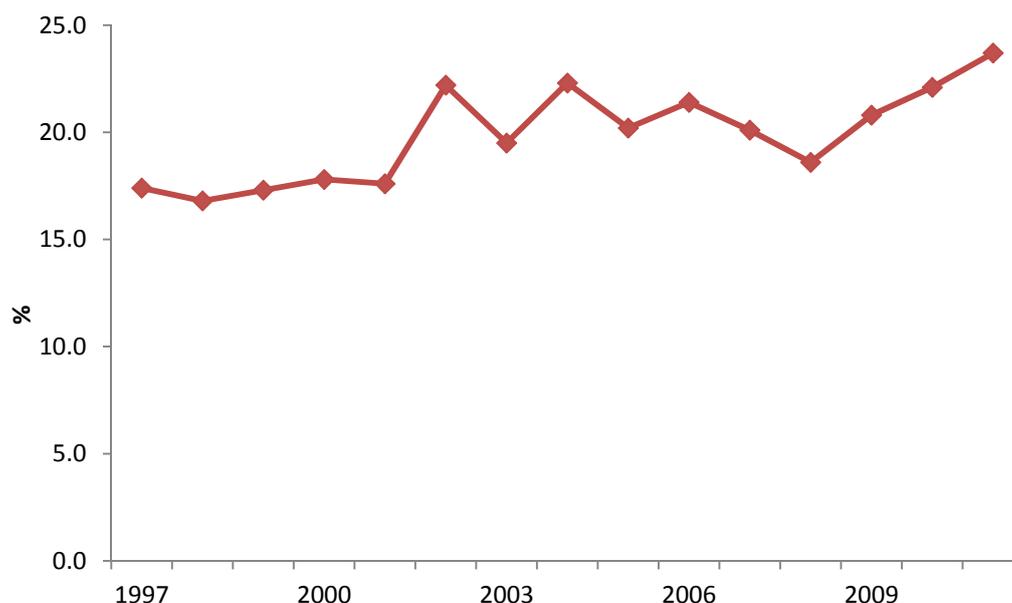
<b>TABLE 1.3: Employment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2011</b>										
	<b>TIME</b>	<b>2003</b>			<b>2006</b>			<b>2011</b>		
<b>GEO</b>	<b>ISCED/ AGE</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>
<b>RO</b>	<b>0-2</b>	19.8	64.6	51.2	15.9	60.3	46.7	16.3	58	43.6
	<b>3-4</b>	36.6	76.8	46.1	32.7	77.8	51.1	29.4	77.1	49.2
	<b>5-6</b>	71.3	91	59.3	57.6	92.2	74.2	42.5	90.1	68.6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	27.3	75.8	49.9	24	76.4	51.5	23.8	75.5	49.2

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey), 2011

Unemployment in Romania has been in a steady decline during the past years of economic boom and has been much lower than in other Eastern European countries. This is mainly due to three factors: (1) (under)employment in the agricultural sector, i.e. subsistence farming, (2) a sharp decline in the activity rate at the beginning of the 1990s from about 85% to some 65% after 2000 due to increased enrolment of these age groups into various forms of education including higher (tertiary) education, and (3) migration for employment abroad coupled with activities in the shadow economy. Yet, the labour market after 2004/2005 was characterised by shortages of skills in some sectors and regions, double digit-salary growth and an accelerating pace of job churning (i.e. quite a high number of job vacancies indicating that individuals were changing jobs fast as new opportunities were arising on the market). With the advent of the global crisis in early 2009 it registered soon a nearly complete freeze of job openings followed by successive, though not necessarily massive, waves of collective dismissals and restructuring affecting both private and public sector.

Youth unemployment rates in Romania – people aged 15 to 24 – was 20.8% in 2009, going up to nearly 23.7 % at the end of 2011, according to data provided by the Romanian National Statistics Institute (INS). Youth unemployment in 2004 was over 22.3 percent, but dropped each following year. Long-term unemployment (12 months and more) among young people was 13 percent in 2010, six times more than the 1.7 percent unemployment rate among the older population. The employment rate of the elderly – 55-64 years olds – was 42.6 percent in 2009, 3.4 percent lower than the EU average, having declined to below 41 percent in 2010. In the first three months of 2010, the employment rate 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 number of employees dropped from 6,21 million in 2009 to 6,06 million in 2010, while the number of the self-employed rises from 1,78 million to 1,87 million in 2010.

**Fig 1.10. Youth unemployment rate during the period 1996-2011**



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database, 2011

Social policies implemented in recent years have also been directed so as to ease unnecessary burdens on students, give more time for practical application and competence-oriented outputs while in the meantime creating room for disadvantaged minorities such as the Roma minority to promote via public education their own values and culture helping to break the cycle of discrimination - lack of education - poverty. Nevertheless, the education reform also entailed an adaptation to smaller cohorts for 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 assure proper education infrastructure and to attract qualified teaching personnel. Despite efforts made to stimulate teachers to move to the rural areas, including special financial incentives in addition to the basic salary, results remain dismal. Graduation rate for lower secondary education remains 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 on a descending trend in the years to come. Compounded with limitations in funding this might lead to further school closures. Children in small, isolated communities will remain thus a group at risk.

The highest level of unemployment is recorded for the age groups 15-24 and 50-64 for the level of education ISCED 3-4, while for ISCED 0-2 the age group 25-49 has the highest rate of unemployment (table 1.4).

<b>TABLE 1.4. Unemployment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2011</b>										
	<b>TIME</b>	<b>2003</b>			<b>2006</b>			<b>2011</b>		
<b>GEO</b>	<b>ISCED/AGE</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50-64</b>
<b>RO</b>	<b>0-2</b>	15.3	8.1	2.0	19.7	9.7	3.2	18.7	9	3.4
	<b>3-4</b>	22.8	6.7	5.1	22.0	6.8	4.9	25.4	6.7	5.5
	<b>5-6</b>	15.8	2.9	2.5	27.7	3.2	:	29.4	4.2	:
	<b>TOTAL</b>	19.5	6.5	3.2	21.4	6.7	3.9	23.7	6.6	4.5

Source: Eurostat (LFS), 2011

Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), has increased from 0.76% of GDP in 2002 to 1.53% of GDP in 2009. For the EU 27 countries, the share of total public expenditure on education has increased over the period reaching about 2.41% of GDP in 2009.

<b>TABLE 1.5. Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), 2002-2009</b>								
<b>GEO</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>EU27</b>	2.32	2.35	2.29	2.25	2.23	2.19	2.24	2.41
<b>RO</b>	0.76	0.71	0.73	0.77	:	1.52	:	1.53

Source: Eurostat (UOE) , 2011

### 1.3. 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 decreased from 23.0% in 2002 to 17.5% in 2011 (Table 1.6). A significant gap between Romanian and European indicators can be noticed. Compared to the EU-27, Romania's tackling of early school-leaving leaves still a lot to desire. The proportion of the population aged 18-24 with primary 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 however exceeds the EU average by a high margin.

There is a gender gap among early school leavers: the early school leaving rate is higher in the male population, since many of them are leaving school to enter 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 rate<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Also, the surveys<sup>3</sup> 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).

**TABLE 1.6. Early school leavers (%), 2002-2011**

<b>GEO/TIME</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>EU-27</b>	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4	14.1	13.5
<b>RO</b>	23.0	22.5	22.4 (b)	19.6	17.9	17.3	15.9	16.6	18.4	17.5

Source of data Eurostat (LFS), 2011

By categories, the Roma population is the group 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Educational Sciences "Motivation for learning and school performance", 2004.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unicef.ro/publicatii/participare-absenteism-scolar-si-experienta-discriminarii-in-cazul-romilor-din-romania/> sau <http://www.unicef.ro/publicatii/renuntarea-timpurie-la-educatie/>).

<b>TABLE 1.7. A: Graduates at ISCED level 3 and level 4 by level of education, programme orientation and sex (numbers)</b>							
	<b>2007</b>				<b>2010</b>		
<b>GEO</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>3 GEN</b>	<b>3 VOC</b>	<b>4 VOC</b>	<b>3 GEN</b>	<b>3 VOC</b>	<b>4 VOC</b>
<b>RO</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	90 435	230 970	12 660	86 466	208 202	19 232
	<b>MALES</b>	36 454	133 787	4 338	36 150	122 715	6 387
	<b>FEMALES</b>	53 981	97 183	8 322	50 316	85 487	12 845

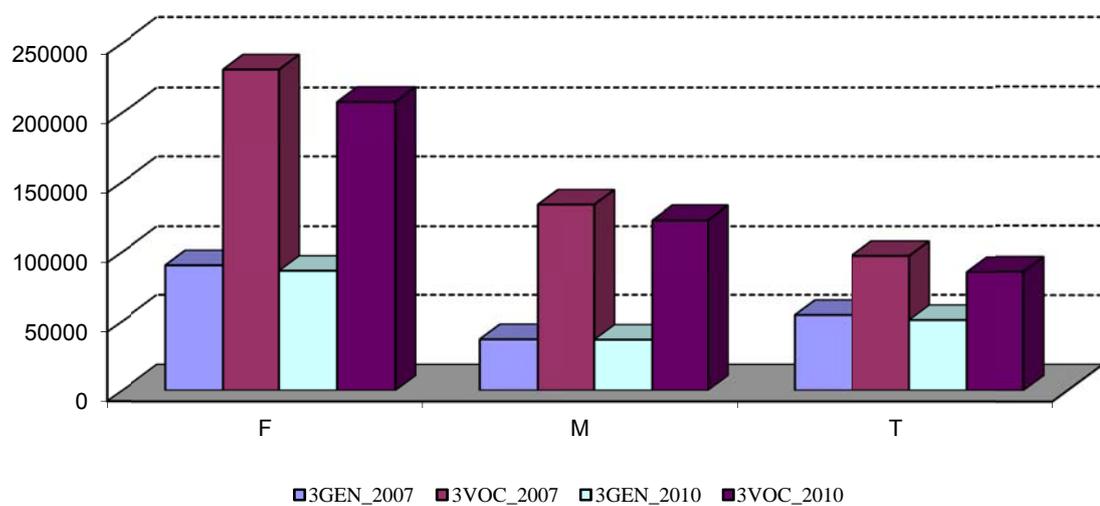
Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

<b>TABLE 1.7. B: Graduates at ISCED level 5 and level 6 by level of education, programme destination, 1st/2nd stage and sex (numbers), 2007, 2010</b>													
<b>YEAR</b>		<b>2007</b>						<b>2010</b>					
<b>GEO</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>5 A1</b>	<b>5 A2</b>	<b>5 B1</b>	<b>5 B2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>	<b>5 A1</b>	<b>5 A2</b>	<b>5 B1</b>	<b>5 B2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>
<b>RO</b>	<b>TOT</b>	115 491	77 488	10 008	:	2 983	205 970	191 151	109 305	140		4 764	305 360
	<b>MALES</b>	46 903	30 371	4 137	:	1 495	82 906	72 269	37 537	30		2 490	112 326
	<b>FEMALES</b>	68 588	47 117	5 871	:	1 488	123 064	118 882	71 768	110		2 274	193 034

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

Analysing the number of graduates at ISCED level 3 by sex and programme orientation we can observe that the difference is quite large: for the general programme and the vocational programme we can observe that there are more women than men who graduate. For this level of education, in Romania we have a descending trend for the period 2007-2010 in total, and also for gender structure, males and females.

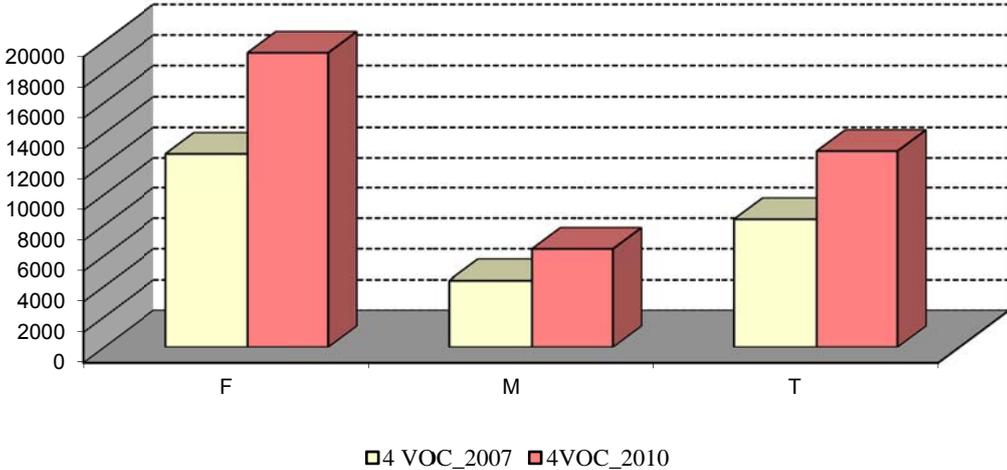
**Fig.1.11. Number of graduates at ISCED level 3 of education, programme orientation and sex in Romania for the period 2007-2010**



Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

For the ISCED 4 level and the vocational programme, we can observe that the number of female graduates was higher than the male graduates. One interesting observation is 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 in total, males and females.

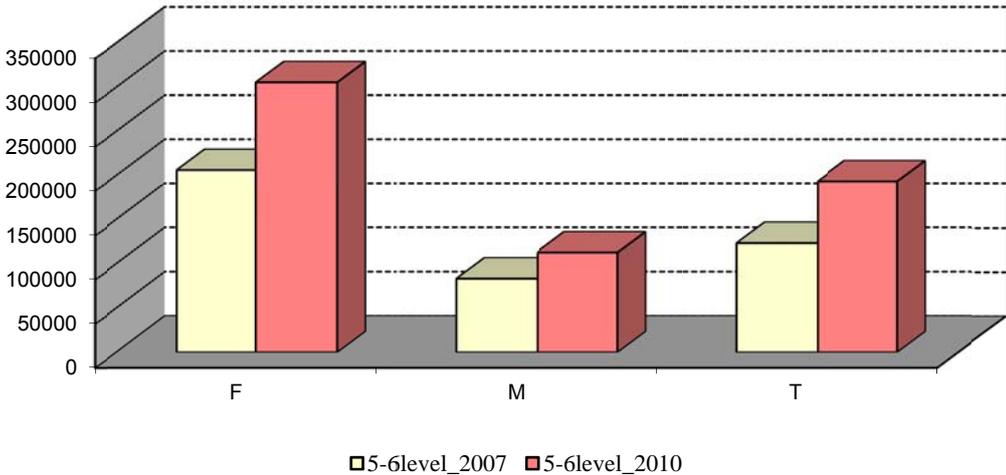
**Fig. 1.12. Number of graduates at ISCED level 4 of education, programme orientation and sex in Romania for the period 2007-2010**



Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

For ISCED 5-6, the number of graduates in Romania is higher for women and is increasing for the period 2007-2010. Recently, the number of graduates has been on the rise for both sexes.

**Fig.1.13. The number of graduates at ISCED level 5 and 6 of education in Romania for the period 2007-2010**



Analysing the evolution of the number of Romanian graduates for the period 2007-2010 for the three levels of education ISCED 3, 4 and 5-6 we can observe that the number of male graduates is higher than the number of women for the ISCED 3, and this ratio is inverting for

the higher levels of education (ISCED 4 and ISCED 5-6).The conclusion is that in Romania we have more women graduating from colleges and universities than men.

Youth educational attainment levels are on the average for EU-27. 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 78.9% in 2009. 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 77.8% in 2009.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>2002</b>			<b>2005</b>			<b>2009</b>		
<b>GEO</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>EU-27</b>	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.6	81.4	75.9
<b>RO</b>	76.3	77.7	74.8	76.0	76.8	75.2	78.3	78.9	77.8

Source: Eurostat (LFS)

The lifelong learning participation of males is decreasing over the period 2002-2011. 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 was changed and the statistics data are available for only three years which resulted in a higher numerical rate of participation and exaggerated outcome.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>2002</b>			<b>2005</b>			<b>2011</b>		
<b>GEO</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>RO</b>	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6

Source: Eurostat (LFS)

CHAPTER 2

2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. Diagram of the national education and training system

Figure 2.1. Education and training system <sup>5</sup>

Starting age	Grade/ Group	ISCED	Educational Level				Qualification Level	
>18-19		6	University Education				5	
		5					4	
		4	Non-university tertiary education Post high school ( <i>Școli postliceale</i> )				3	
18-19	XIII	3	Theoretical high school	Vocational high school (arts, sports, theology) ( <i>Învățământ vocațional</i> )	Technological high school	Technological high school	Technological high school	3
17-18	XII						Completion year ( <i>An de completare</i> )	2
16-17	XI							
15-16	C X	2	Theoretical education ( <i>Liceu teoretic</i> )	Vocational high school (arts, sports, theology) ( <i>Învățământ vocațional</i> )	Technological education ( <i>Liceu tehnologic</i> )	Vocational Education ( <i>Învățământ profesional</i> )		1
14-15	M IX							
13-14	P VIII							
12-13	U VII							
11-12	L VI							
10-11	S V							
9-10	O IV							
8-9	R III	1	Lower-secondary Education ( <i>Gimnaziu</i> )					
7-8	Y II							
6-7	I							
5-6	Preparatory year	0	Primary Education ( <i>Învățământ primar</i> )					
4-5	Group 3							
	Group 2							
3-4	Group 1							
			Pre-primary Education ( <i>Învățământ preșcolar</i> )					

 Vet Programme

<sup>5</sup> (Out of School Children National Report- UNICEF Romania)

## 2.2. Government-regulated VET provision <sup>(6)</sup>

The national education system comprises the following education levels (pre-university):

- a)** pre-primary education (0-6 years);
- b)** primary education;
- c)** secondary education, including:
  - (i) lower secondary education (gimnaziu), grades V-VIII;
  - (ii) upper secondary education, grades IX-XII/XIII, with the following paths:  
theoretical, vocational and technological;
- d)** professional education (învățământ profesional); in Romania Professional education (initial VET) comprises: vocational education, technological path of the upper secondary school and post high school;
- e)** post-secondary education (tertiary education including post-high school education).

The general compulsory education includes primary education and lower secondary education. Upper secondary school education includes the following channels:

- a)** a theoretical path with two programmes (profiles): Science (mathematics and computer programming or earth studies) or Humanities (social studies or languages);
- b)** a technological path with the following programmes: technical, services, natural resources and environmental protection;
- c)** a vocational pathway (învățământ vocational), with the following programmes: military, theological, sports, artistic and educational.

The lower secondary education (gimnaziu) graduates who are not enrolling in upper secondary school education have the possibility to complete a programme of professional training that offers a qualification included in the National Qualification Framework (this programme is free if it is completed until the age of 18 years).

After completing lower secondary education pupils can continue their studies in upper secondary school or professional school. Admission is based on each pupil portfolio including: graduating diploma, transcript (foaie matricola) and on the grades received at national evaluation exams taken at the end of VIII grade. The national evaluation consist of written examinations in Romanian language and literature, mother language (if different from Romanian), mathematics and sciences, and foreign language. Computer skills are assessed during the year of study.

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<sup>(6)</sup> This chapter is meant to encompass all the learning opportunities leading directly to government-recognised qualifications irrespective of the age of the learners or their previous learning experience(s). As a consequence, there is no formal division between IVET and CVET imposed.

The upper secondary school graduates having acquired (formally, non-formally or informally) professional competences can take a certification exam and if they pass this exam they attain a qualification certificate and a descriptive supplement (Europass).

Vocational and technological upper secondary education can be organised for the qualifications included in the national register of qualifications which is periodically updated according to the labour market needs identified through strategic documents regarding training supply planning at regional level. These routes of the upper secondary education can be organised according to the requests of the employers or from the National Agency of Employment (Agenția Națională de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă - ANOFM).

The pupils graduating X grade of the technological path and having completed a practical training (internship) have the possibility of taking a certification exam for the qualification associated to the certification level established through the National Qualification Framework. The internship can be done in the education units or in the public institutions or economic agents to which the education unit has signed training contracts.

The bacalaureate demands a given combination of subjects, including centralised examinations. For students at technological upper secondary 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 bacalaureate may apply to university. Candidates who pass the bacalaureate, regardless of whether or not they have a vocational qualification, can go on to university. In order to go to university one must have the bacalaureate and this is a requirement for both theoretical and vocational upper secondary school graduates.

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 upper secondary 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.

Post-secondary education (post-upper secondary school) is included in the professional and technical education and partially financed by the state. It provides an opportunity for advanced vocational training for the graduates of secondary schools (with or without bacalaureate diploma). 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. Post-secondary education:

- develops, by in-depth study and specialisation, the training fields of the technological upper secondary school: technics, services, natural resources and environment, or other particular fields of post-secondary 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 and advertising);

- represents a higher level of specialisation for the graduates of the upper secondary school;
- is financed by the beneficiaries, either juridical or personal entities, by contract with the providing school;
- entitles the student passing the entrance exam to a certificate of vocational competences.

The foreman school (scoala de maistri) is included in the post-secondary category presenting the following characteristics:

- 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;
- may have alternative financial sources, through social partners and enterprises or by request of individual financing.

Post-secondary education refers to a vocational qualification of a maximum of 3 years offered to those who graduate upper secondary school (including those who do not hold the baccalaureate diploma); it is non-university education. Education and training credits acquired in post-secondary education can be recognised by the university (depending on the decision of the university senate) for graduates with a baccalaureate degree.

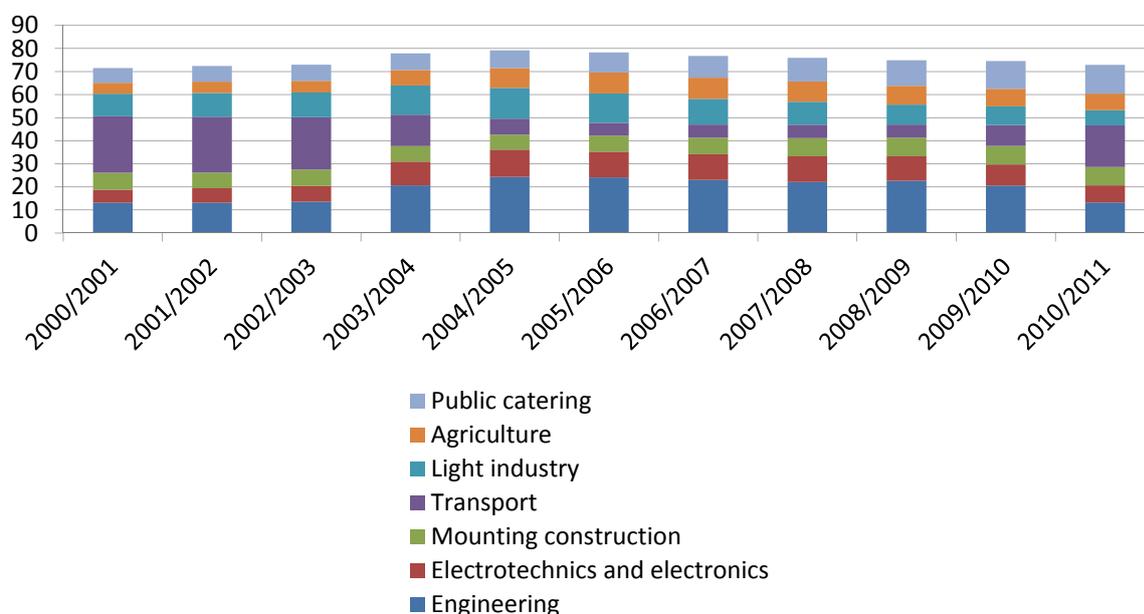
From the point of view of the qualification levels adopted in Romania according to the European Council Decision 85-368-EEC, the pre-university technical and vocational education assures the first 3 qualification levels, as follows: qualification level I through the arts and trades school, qualification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

The number of pupils graduating from vocational schools represents 12.8% of the total number of students enrolled in education programs. In the school year 2010/2011 the number of students enrolled in vocational schools was reduced by 54% compared to the previous year. Also, in recent years there was a decrease in the share of students enrolled in vocational education of the total school population.

**Table 2.1. Pupils enrolled in vocational schools  
(Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2011)**

School year	Pupils enrolled
2000/2001	164973
2001/2002	180476
2002/2003	206109
2003/2004	246977
2004/2005	277838
2005/2006	274041
2006/2007	240924
2007/2008	211345
2008/2009	181048
2009/2010	109847
2010/2011	51029

Figure 2.2. shows the vocational training programmes with more than 6.5% of the pupils enrolled. Of the training programmes registered in the school year 2010-2011 the highest student shares were in transport (18%), engineering (13%), and public catering (12.5%). Other programmes having significant weights were: mounting construction (8%), electro techniques and electronics (7.4%), agriculture (7.18%), and light industry (6.6%).



**Figure 2.2. Share of pupils enrolled in vocational schools by training programme (%)  
(Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2011)**

### 2.2.1. Special education

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

**Table 2.2. Pupils enrolled in special vocational schools**  
(Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2011)

School year	Pupils enrolled
2000/ 2001	12468
2001/ 2002	11562
2002/ 2003	11328
2003/ 2004	11682
2004/ 2005	11269
2005/ 2006	10371
2006/ 2007	9459
2007/ 2008	8990
2008/ 2009	8206
2009/ 2010	5598
2010/2011	3509

Regarding the training profile of the pupils enrolled in special vocational schools, in the school year 2010/2011, 25.3 % enrolled in the light industry programme, 19% in mounting construction, 14% in engineering, 12.5% in public catering, and 12.5% in wood exploitation and processing.

**Table 2.3. Pupils enrolled in post-secondary schools  
(Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2011)**

School year	Pupils enrolled		
	Post high schools	Special post high schools	Foreman schools
2000/ 2001	72942	187	8988
2001/ 2002	64968	225	7492
2002/ 2003	54834	274	6747
2003/ 2004	49516	211	5005
2004/ 2005	44641	227	3825
2005/ 2006	40578	218	2821
2006/ 2007	34772	232	2693
2007/ 2008	40759	235	4534
2008/ 2009	48546	224	6319
2009/ 2010	56063	197	6315
2010/2011	63676	183	6108

Post-secondary schools and foreman education graduates represent approximately 2.7% of the total number of graduates in the Romanian education system (including tertiary education). According to the National Institute of Statistics the number of students enrolled in post-secondary education increased in 2011 by 14% compared with 2010. We have to mention that in the school year 2010/2011 80% of the students enrolled in post-secondary education are in the sanitary training programme.

### 2.2.2. Higher education

The higher education system in Romania has a three-cycle structure, complying with the Bologna system: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. The three study cycles of higher education are also legally mapped against levels 6, 7 and 8 of the European Qualifications Framework, as indicated in Figure 2.1. Besides the three study cycles, the National Education Law in force since 2011 (Law 1/2011) provides for the post-university continuing training and personal development studies which do not lead to qualifications, but to certification of specific professional competences acquired by trainees during the respective study programme<sup>7</sup>.

The qualifications acquired by graduates of higher education study programmes in Romania are attested by 3 types of diplomas: Bachelor/engineer/medical doctor/urban planner diploma, Master diploma and PhD diploma. Competences acquired through post-university continuing training and personal development programmes are attested by

<sup>7</sup> See for details *Self certification report, Verification of compatibility of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*, 2011. Available at [http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Relatii%20Publice/Self\\_certification\\_Report\\_RO\\_2011.pdf](http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Relatii%20Publice/Self_certification_Report_RO_2011.pdf).

certificates and other documents. All these diplomas, certificates and documents may be issued only by accredited higher education institutions and only for accredited study programmes and modes; they are similar for the same study programme, irrespective of the study mode.

Moreover, all these diplomas and certificates are issued upon graduation of a study cycle, which means that the learning outcomes they attest correspond to the level of qualification indicated by the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (Self certification report, Verification of compatibility of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, 2011).

The state provides core funding for accredited professional and high school education (public and private) and also for state post-secondary education. The funding process is based on the standard cost per student according to the Ministry of Education methodology (Education Law). The standard cost per student is an indicator of substantiating the need for funds to cover the financing base.

### **2.2.3. Adult education**

In Romania, adult vocational training is regulated by Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training. According to the ordinance adult vocational training includes initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuous vocational education and training (CVET) organised through pathways different from those specific to the national education systems.

Persons providing teaching and training activities within the system of continuing education and training for adults have a specific denomination in the Classification of Occupations, being considered adult trainers (RO: formatori de adulti). Thus they classify as a specific specialisation inside the system, with their own procedure for certification. In most cases courses for adult trainers are organised by private training providers which are certified for the organisation of trainer's training courses. Certificates (also known in Romanian as 'diplomas', although this is a colloquial denomination) are provided by the National Authority for Qualifications (Autoritatea Nationala pentru Calificari) (formerly the National Adult Training Board). The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth regularly organises andragogy courses for its teachers to qualify them also as adult trainers.

According to the government ordinance 129/2000 regarding adults' vocational training professional competences can be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning as follows:

- formal education is made within a programme organised by an vocational training provider;
- non-formal education refers to performing specific activities at the work place or to self-training;

- informal education contains all the training methods which are unstructured, unintended and non-institutionalised (non-systematic contacts with the family, society and professional environment).

Adult vocational training is organised by programmes of initiation, qualification, re-qualification, improvement, and specialisation:

- a)** initiation is the acquirement of one or more competencies specific for a qualification in accordance with the occupational standard or the training standard;
- b)** qualification, and re-qualification is the vocational training that leads to the acquirement of a set of professional competences that will allow a person to carry out activities specific for one or more occupations;
- c)** improvement and specialisation represent the vocational training that leads to the development or completion of knowledge, skills or professional competences of a person having already a qualification, that is the development of competences in the same qualification, the acquirement of new competences in the same occupational area, the acquirement of fundamental/key competences or new technical competencies, specific to a new occupation.

According to the Ordinance no. 76 of August 19, 2004 on the modification and completion of the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training, the vocational training programmes ensure the acquirement of professional competences in accordance with the occupational standards or the training standards, recognised at national level. The occupational standard or the training standard respectively, is the document defining the professional competences necessary to practice an occupation, respectively specific to a qualification. Within the vocational training framework the credit transfer system and their accumulation certifies the acquiring of the new competence.

Adult vocational training can be done through:

- courses organised by training providers;
- courses organised by employers inside their institutions;
- internships and specialisation;
- other forms of training provided by law.

Adult vocational training is provided by legal persons/entities (either private or public) and in apprenticeships also by individuals acting as vocational training providers. The training providers can also be represented by vocational training centres. In order to be authorised as a training provider it must demonstrate that the vocational training programmes are realised with trainers with specific pedagogical training. The authorisation process is coordinated by The National Authority for Qualifications (Autoritatea Nationala pentru Calificari (ANC) through the authorisation commissions.

The authorisation commissions are composed of 5 members:

- a)** the director of the County General Directorate for Dialogue, Family and Social Solidarity, respectively of the Bucharest General Directorate for Labour and Social Solidarity, who has the position of chairman;

- b) a representative of the county school inspectorate, or Bucharest respectively;
- c) a representative of the County Agency for Employment, or Bucharest respectively;
- d) a representative of the employers organisations representative for the county level, proposed by consensus.

The vocational training programmes are organised for occupations included in the Romanian Classification of occupations (Clasificarea ocupațiilor din Romania - COR) and also for professional competences which are common for a set of occupations.

The vocational training providers that request to organise vocational training programmes for occupations for which there are no occupational standards, or training standards, can design projects of occupational standards that are submitted for approval to the ANC.

In the chapter on adult vocational training financing of the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 it is stipulated that the training and the training results assessment can be financed from:

- employers own funds,
- unemployment insurance fund, and
- sponsorship, donations, and external sources.

#### **2.2.4. Apprenticeship**

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 reason for this at the very beginning was the legal requirement for enterprises willing to apply for apprenticeship schemes and engage into apprenticeship contracts<sup>8</sup> (which have been defined as a special type of labour contracts involving both work as well as vocational training at workplace). The enterprise had to provide a number of specially trained apprenticeship foremen, equipped not only with sufficient professional experience and expertise but also being in the possession of a certificate attesting to his or her formal

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<sup>8</sup>According to the special law that regulates the institution of apprenticeship in Romania, namely the Apprenticeship Act of 2005 (Law no.279/2005), apprenticeship is to be regarded as a special and distinct form of vocational training combining employment, in the form of a closed-end, determined duration contract, with vocational training, to be provided by the employer, both practical and theoretical. According to the law and to its application norms, are entitled to apprenticeship individuals aged between 16-and 25 years of age, provided that they had no prior qualification in the trade for which they demand entering into an apprenticeship contract. The contract as such, cannot be longer than three years but, also not shorter than six months, in accordance with the qualification to be provided. Actually, the Norms for the application of the law clearly state that the contract cannot actually exceed 24 months so as to be in full compliance with the provisions of the Labour Code for determined duration contracts. All 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.

training-related knowledge and skills. While this has finally seen a resolution the advent of the crisis has drastically reduced incentives for apprenticeship training as employers have found themselves struggling, sometimes, drastically cutting either wages or working hours of their regular staff (Ghinararu, 2008).

### 2.3. Other forms of training

Non-formal training in CVET means directly engaging in specific activities at work or self-training. Non-formal learning is a learning process integrated into different planned activities with learning objectives, which not explicitly follow a curriculum and can vary in duration. This type of learning depends on the intention of the learner and not automatically lead to certification of knowledge and skills.

The programme for fighting the marginalisation and social and professional exclusion of young people who dropped out from compulsory education without acquiring the minimal competence needed for obtaining a job (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 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 organisation of this programme is part of a package of concrete measures regarding the completion of compulsory 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 non-governmental organisations.

The main aim of the employment program for socially marginalised people developed by the National Employment Agency in 2011 is the social inclusion of young people facing the risk of professional exclusion. The objectives of this programme are:

- increasing the employment rate 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 non-formal education system;
- providing access to training, tailored to the labor market, according to the personal choices of young people.

The main tool which provides personalised support for young people in difficulty and facing the risk of professional exclusion, is the so-called 'solidarity contract', a scheme specially designed for youngsters between the ages of 16 and 25 and operated by the National Agency for Employment through its nationwide network of local employment offices (Agentie Judeteană de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă). In the frame of this specific arrangement, the National Agency for Employment is providing personalised job counselling, access to training as well as job placement. Jobs are provided by selected employers

(designated as 'social insertion employers') in the frame of solidarity contracts concluded between them and the agency. In the frame of the contract they accept youngsters between the ages of 16 and 25, placed into their job openings by the employment services. For each such person employed, enterprises are reimbursed the full monthly salary of the individual employed provided that the salary does not exceed 75% of the national average. Contracts have to be have a determined duration (closed-ended). Following the termination of such a contract, enterprises engaged in the procedure are mandated to conclude a second, this time of non-determined duration (open-ended) contract. For a period of maximum two years afterwards, provided however that this does not extend beyond the moment when the employed youngster reaches the age of 25, enterprises are eligible for a stipend worth 50% of the amount of the unemployment benefit the youngster would receive if unemployed.

According to the Statistical bulletin on labour and social protection (2012) the number of persons unemployed but following organised vocational training courses is 3 225 after the first quarter of 2012 and 5 126 for the months January-June 2012. Employment through vocational training is an active measure that had in the first quarter of 2012 a national rate of 4.25% of the total achievements.

According to ANOFM (the National Agency of Employment), the most required occupations for which training programmes will be organised in October 2012 are:

- Trade worker - 389 people
- Introduction, validation and processing data operator - 267 people
- Waiter, vendor in the food industry -171 people
- Inspector (referent) HR - 169 people
- Accounting - 166 people
- Communication in English - 163 people
- Barber, hairdresser, manicure, pedicure - 160 people
- Cook - 145 people
- Farm worker - 137 people
- Construction worker -135 people

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. Shaping VET qualifications

#### 3.1. Validation of prior learning

Persons wishing to be evaluated for the recognition of professional skills acquired in other learning contexts than the formal must address an accredited assessment center for the specific occupation or qualification. Depending on the assessment conducted, these centers can give the following types of certificates of national recognition:

- a)** certificate of qualification - if the candidate has been declared competent in all competences related to a qualification or an occupation, according to the occupational standards;
- b)** certificate of competence - if the candidate has been declared competent for one or more skills associated with a qualification or an occupation, according to the occupational standards.

The certificates are printed by the Labor Ministry and are made available to training providers for a fee.

Romania has during the last decade developed a system for the validation of non-formally or informally acquired skills and competences. According to specific norms adopted by the The National Authority for Qualifications (Autoritatea Nationala pentru Calificari (ANC)), procedural arrangements have been put into place so as to create a network of specialised providers known as validation/assessment centres. Basically these units functioning for one or more competences or skills are simply divisions of existing training providers which, according to specific procedures, have certified themselves for the validation/assessment of non-formally or informally acquired skills or competences 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 (e.g.: a training provider having accreditation for carpenters also opened a validation/assessment centre for the same occupation). This scheme greatly increases flexibility on the labour market, is highly welcomed by both unions and employers alike and makes for a bonus in times of crisis as it reduces the costs associated with formal training. Sector committees which have a pivotal role in the development of occupational standards have greatly encouraged 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 competences 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 ANC. The number of occupations for which validation/assessment of non-formally and informally acquired skills and competences is possible is currently at 116 according to ANC statistics.

### 3.2. Anticipating skill needs

Among the most important measures taken in order to anticipate skill needs are the following:

- 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 result 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 Italian Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini), is developing its own system of anticipating labour market trends at national level using econometric tools and thus making further use of the experience acquired in the SkillsNet Pan-European exercise. The Romanian Project ended in 2012 (May);
- ACS - Anticipating changes on the labour market. This project is implemented by ANOFM between 2011-2013 and it is financed by the European Social Fund via the Sector Operational Program Human Resource Development SOP HRD (Priority Axis 4). The aim of the project is to increase the capacity of anticipating the short and medium term developments on the labour market at local, regional and national level. The outcome of the project is to identify adequate employment measures and to improve/develop new ones for labour market participation of a large number of jobseekers through 16 forecasts on regional labour market and 2 at the national level;
- the National Scientific Research Institute also participates, since its inception in 2005, in the SkillsNet network of Cedefop, being also an active partner in the Cedefop financed pan-European initiative on the anticipation of the supply and demand for skills. In the frame of this initiative the Institute has been responsible for the validation of projections for eight countries, most of them in Central and Eastern Europe, plus Greece and the FYR of Macedonia.

### 3.3. Qualifications

The National Authority for Qualifications (ANC), is organised and functions as a public institution with a legal personality and it is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS) .

In 2011 the ANC finished the National Qualification Framework for Romanian higher education. Thus Romania is among the first 10 countries accomplishing this in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process and the commitments made by ministers of education in Bergen (2005) and Leuven (2009).

Fulfilling this commitment was achieved through the development and completion in October 2011 of the strategic project 'Development of an operational system of higher education qualifications in Romania – DOCIS'. The impact of the project consists in ensuring consistency, compatibility and international comparability of qualifications and titles acquired in higher education in Romania.

The ANC established a working group to carry out a self-certification report regarding the compatibility between the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualification Framework for higher education (December 2010). In September 2011 the ANC constituted a committee consisting of Romanian and foreign experts whose tasks are related to the analysis, revision and validation of the self-certification report.

### 3.4. Evaluation

The ANC coordinates the activity of evaluation and certification of the professional competences acquired through other pathways than the formal ones. The professional competences evaluator must be a specialist with work experience and/or coordination in the occupations/qualifications he or she is evaluating and also he or she must be certified by ANC according to an occupational standard professional competences evaluator.

As far as the adult training is concerned recognition and certification of professional competences acquired in other channels than through formal education are currently done in validation/assessment centres which are authorised by the ANC according to the evaluation and certification procedure of the professional competences.

### 3.5. Quality assurance of the process

The methodology of qualification and competences certification<sup>9</sup> is designed for vocational education and training and it is based on the initial and continuous training principles in formal, informal and non-formal training. This methodology was developed and structured in order to follow the model of excellence of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The principles of the methodology should apply to all forms of assessment of skills and competences in education and training (VET). Evaluation results are based on successful completion of the evaluation process which aim is to assess the acquisitions acquired (knowledge, methodological issues, skills and competences) by an individual leading to a certification normally required in the labour market and/or provide access to a higher educational level or academic career. Vocational education and training is based on standards (occupational standards and their corresponding qualifications or training standards). Evaluation associated with these standards is done according to evaluation criteria. The acquisitions of the persons being assessed refer to the following competences: the ability to use knowledge, skills and methodological issues manifested in a given situation.

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<sup>9</sup> The methodology is available at <http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/so/m4.pdf>

The National Qualifications System consists of several organisational entities at national, regional, county and local levels. Regarding the application of the methodology for certification of qualifications and skills, these entities meet a number of additional tasks in relation to the following institutional structures:

1. national infrastructure;
2. development of the assessment requirements;
3. training and evaluation of the evaluators;
4. provision of assessment, certification and quality assurance services;
5. data collection, data analysis and improving quality.

National infrastructure is defined in terms of the institutions that develop and/or implement policies related to the provision of training and qualifications assessment in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These institutions are:

- **the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport** - National Authority for formal education at all levels, in terms of pre-university education (including IVET) and higher education and also CVET policies in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and sectoral committees;
- **the sectoral committees** - bodies responsible (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour) for the definition and validation of the standards and qualifications, and for policies regarding CVET;
- **the Ministry of labour, family and social protection** - National Authority for CVET policies;
- **ACPART** - National Authority for Qualifications in Higher Education;
- **ARACIS** - Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education;
- **CNCEIP** - National Center for Curriculum and Assessment in Pre-university Education;
- **CNDIPT** - National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education at undergraduate level;
- **ARACIP** - Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university education;
- **the School Inspectorate** - Local Authority with responsibilities in quality assurance in initial training;
- **the ANC** - National Authority for Qualifications;
- **Intermediary bodies for certification** - bodies responsible for quality assurance regarding competences certification in CVET.

Regarding the difficulties concerning this topic we should underline the fact that the occupational standards are developed by the training providers on their expenses. The National Group for Quality Assurance (GNAC-Grupul Național pentru Asigurarea Calității) is an informal structure acting as the national reference point of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), whose main function is the coordination and harmonisation of quality assurance systems in VET. GNAC accesses European funds mainly through the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-

University Education (Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Preuniversitar). The project title is 'Capacity Building for the Romanian NRP: Promoting Quality - QUALVET@RO' and its aim is to elaborate a communication strategy for the GNAC in order to implement the EQARF Recommendation, policies and instruments elaborated within EQAVET.

Another national project related to quality assurance is CALISIS (Quality assurance in the continuous vocational education and training system in Romania) (POSDRU 2007-2013), whose main aim is to develop and implement a national system for quality assurance and management in CVET by undertaking relevant scientific studies, having an approach compatible with EQAVET/EQARF.

A national quality assurance mechanism worth mentioning is the national strategy for quality assurance in education that is implemented by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university education. This agency is responsible for:

- external evaluation of the quality of education offered by pre-university schools;
- licensing, accreditation and evaluation of pre-university schools.

The purpose of the external evaluation is mainly:

- to certify the ability of schools to meet quality standards;
- to have a role in the development of a quality culture in the pre-university institutions.

Regarding the university system, in 2006 it was established a similar agency, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

According to the new law on education no.1/2011, the National Qualification Framework helps to ensure the quality of vocational training system. The National Qualification Framework is a tool of classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specific levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualification subsystems and improve transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to labour market and civil society. The implementation of the National Qualification Framework targets the national system of qualifications obtained in general secondary education, continuing vocational training and apprenticeships, and higher education both in formal and informal contexts from the lifelong learning perspective.

Article 355 from law no.1/2011 stipulates that the national quality assurance system of permanent education includes a quality assurance system in pre-university education, in higher education, in initial vocational training and in continuing vocational training.

The National Group for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (GNAC), the informal structure that works as a national reference point for quality assurance in education and training, coordinates the harmonisation of quality assurance in education and training.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. Promoting participation in VET

#### 4.1. Guidance and counseling

There are two types of guidance and counseling: one based on education (university and pre-university levels) and another on the labour market (agencies for employment). Regarding the education network, the new Law on National Education no.1/2011 states that in primary education, the educational counseling is provided by the teacher in cooperation with parents and with the school psychologist, in lower and upper secondary education the guidance and counseling is provided mainly by the pedagogical assistance offices, organised in schools with more than 800 pupils, subordinated to county pedagogical assistance offices (schools with fewer than 800 pupils turn to the pedagogical assistance offices from other schools).

In higher education, guidance and counselling is provided by career guidance and counselling centres in universities in order to facilitate the socio-professional transfer of graduates into the labour market. Also, within each university, teacher assessment tools provide a criterion related to counselling and career guidance activity.

Regarding the labour market network for lifelong guidance, the county agencies for employment are responsible for guidance/counselling, especially for disadvantaged groups (mainly low-skilled people or the unemployed). They offer information about training opportunities and also job opportunities, ensuring thus the necessary consistency between training supply and labour demand. According to article no. 350 from the new Law on National Education no.1/2011, lifelong career guidance and counselling represents all services and activities that assist people of any age and at any time to make choices in education, training or work and to manage their careers. Counselling and career guidance is carried out by units and educational institutions, universities, training institutions, employment services, and labour and youth services.

In the present law, counselling and guidance include the following activities:

- a)** information about careers, which refers to all information necessary to plan, obtain and keep a job;
- b)** education regarding the career, which is done in educational institutions by the curricular area ,counselling and guidance‘;
- c)** career counselling that helps people clarify their goals and aspirations, understand their own educational profile, make informed decisions, be responsible for their actions, and to manage their career transition process at different times;
- d)** employment counselling, which helps people to clarify their immediate goals in hiring, and learn about the skills necessary to seek and obtain a job.

The Romanian system of information, guidance and counselling services is composed by several networks, centres or services, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education,

Research, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection. All institutions above are funded by the state budget.

The majority of the staff employed by the specialised institutions of the Ministry of Education network providing information, guidance and counselling services in the education field are psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists and social workers. Their basic training is ensured by university 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 counseling and guidance, psychotherapy, management and school administration. Attending post-graduate courses in guidance and counselling is not a pre-requisite of obtaining a counselor 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 counseling network EUROGUIDANCE. It undertakes research in the field, designs working tools that meet counselors' professional needs, and organises short-term information/training programs for counselors working in the information, guidance and counselling network. The Educational and Vocational Guidance Department within the Institute of Educational Sciences developed the following projects:

- **Euroguidance (1999-present):** aims to promote the European dimension in guidance and counselling and provide information on mobility;
- **Education for social-professional insertion of pupils. Compendium of methods and techniques used in career counselling (2005-2005):** aims to identify the relevant methods for career guidance;
- **GIRC-Guidance Innovation Relay Centres (2005-2007);**
- **Counselor training program in pre-university education (2006);**
- **Analysis of lifelong counselling needs (2006):** study on initial training programs counselors (university, master, postgraduate) in Romania and the EU;
- **Monitoring system of graduates in the perspective of lifelong counselling (2007):** aims to identify the influence of counselling on career decision-making and on perceptions of graduates in relation to lifelong learning and also to shape a monitoring system of graduates from the perspective of lifelong counselling and guidance;
- **GIANT-Guidance Innovative Actions and New Tools (2008-2010);**
- **NCP-VET-CO (2009-2011):** aims to develop an effective network between the National Coordination Points in the participating countries and compiling a methodological guide for linking VET qualifications with the European Qualification Framework;

- **Virtual Guidance (2009-2011):** aims to increase ICT usage among counselors providing guidance, training and skill formation necessary for the provision of such services.

#### 4.2. Incentives to promote participation in VET and access to the labour market

Among the main measures and initiatives that facilitate cooperation between the education and employment sectors presented in the National Reform Programme 2011-2013, the following is worth mentioned:

- **the transition from unemployment or inactivity to employment:** during the period 2011-2013, a package of measures concerning labour stimulation focuses on supporting jobseekers in order to improve their individual employability (personalised career information and counselling programmes, vocational training programmes and individual entrepreneurship stimulation), and enforcement of the legal framework regarding the unemployment insurance systems and the employment stimulation;
- **the reform of the legal framework on employment stimulation:** the modification and completion of Law no 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation addresses the development of new employment stimulation measures, and the adaptation of their implementation to the current needs of the labour market. The draft law stipulates the introduction of the following elements: providing free services to assess the skills acquired in informal and non-formal learning; grading the financial support to unpaid unemployed persons during the participation in continuous vocational training (CVT) programmes; more flexible conditions for subsidising CVT programmes that have been organised by employers; improve the access of mobility bonuses for unpaid unemployed persons; and reduce the conditionality for the companies that hire unemployed persons and persons belonging to the vulnerable groups.
- **active employment measures:** during the period 2011-2013, through the European Social Fund (SOP HRD, Priority Axis 5), there is an initiative aiming at facilitating the transfer of unemployed people to the labour market, especially those with a precarious situation (long-term unemployed). By the end of 2013, it is estimated that a total of 59,000 long term unemployed will participate in this initiative. The integrated employment programmes include a comprehensive set of measures aimed at developing individual capacity for searching for a job and becoming employable, and facilitating the transfer to the labour market. During the period 2011-2013, the National Agency of Employment (ANOFM) is implementing projects funded under the European Social Fund through SOP HRD (Priority Axis 4):
  - **Call centre PES** - increasing the quality and efficiency of services offered by the implementation of call centres. The project aims to increase the opportunities for vocational guidance/training/development and socio-professional integration on

the labour market of jobseekers by developing an innovative system for providing information. The value of the entire project is RON 11.2 million;

- **Proself - PROMoting SELF-service services** – the project aims to render more modern and flexible the system of providing public employment services (PES). A study on the needs of the agency customers will be prepared, and 47 self-service centres will be set up. The project budget is RON 18.5 million;
- **MedForm** – the project aims to adapt the ANOFM employees to new forms of organisation and management, due to legislative changes, by vocational training of staff to meet the new requirements. The project aims to train 210 persons as facilitators, and 10 persons as facilitators' trainers. The project budget is RON 11 million;
- **RATIO L3** - the project aims to create the general framework for increasing the professional skills level of PES staff based on an innovative approach of continuous training. The project budget is RON 18.3 million;
- **COMPROF - Increasing the level of professional skills** for ANOFM staff in order to provide personalised services to the unemployed, vulnerable groups and jobseekers. The project aims to develop and test a model for providing training programmes for agency staff, to improve staff skills to provide customised employment services. The project budget is RON 18.5 million;
- **CAMPION - Autonomous and modern training centres by implementing a new organisation.** The project aims to modernise and improve the institutional capacity of the eight regional vocational training structures of the agency (regional vocational training centres for adults) to become more competitive in providing quality services tailored to market demands. At the same time, there will be agreed protocols and co-operation agreements with companies, other national and international training centres, and collaborative networks will be set up. The project budget is RON 20.8 million;
- **ECOP - Performance-oriented continuous training dedicated to the professionals involved in the unemployed training.** It aims at increasing the level of professional, social, civic and communicational skills of the personnel involved in training unemployed people. The project budget is RON 20.9 million.

During the period 2011-2013, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport and ANOFM are implementing programmes and/or projects (state aid and co-financing schemes) to stimulate the continuous vocational training (CVT) of employees and the involvement of the social partners in linking education and training systems with labour market evolution.

In order to ensure the long term sustainability of the rural areas during the period 2011-2013, the financial interventions supported under the ESF (HRD SOP) take into consideration guidance, counselling and vocational training of persons living in the rural area in entrepreneurship and non-agricultural fields, as well as integrating inactive persons on the

labour market, including those who earn their living from subsistence farming. Until 2013, it is estimated that 135,500 persons from rural areas are to participate in the integrated programmes dedicated to developing human resources and employment.

In accordance with the Europe 2020 flagship An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, the government will undertake the necessary steps for the implementation, at national level, of the flexicurity concept and of measures leading to the increase of chances of integrating persons of disadvantaged groups, women and young people into the labour market. Moreover, the National Framework of Qualifications will be completed, the Classification of Occupations in Romania will be revised and the development of partnerships between the education system and the labour market will be supported, especially by involving social partners in the planning of education and training offers. The measures of facilitating young people's entry in the labour market (guidance, counselling, apprenticeship, company set-up) will also contribute to the implementation of the Youth on the move flagship initiative.

In order to assure the active participation of people at risk of poverty, and of disadvantaged communities to implement the most appropriate measures of combating poverty, Romania plans to set up the appropriate framework to facilitate the access and participation of persons belonging to vulnerable groups into the labour market. Specific programmes for the (re)integration on the labour market of persons belonging to vulnerable groups and training programmes dedicated to acquire basic skills and qualifications will be developed. The programmes address the following categories of persons: the Roma people, disabled persons, young people under 18 leaving the institutional child care system, persons benefiting from the minimum guaranteed income, the homeless, and people living in remote communities. During the period 2011-2013, it is estimated to set up 500 structures related to the social economy and 10,000 jobs within these structures, and 150,000 people will participate in training/(re)training programmes for vulnerable groups.

## ABBREVIATIONS

**CNDIPT** National Centre for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (RO: Centrul Național de Dezvoltare a Învățământului Profesional și Tehnic)

**ANOFM** The National Agency of Employment (RO: Agenția Națională de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă)

**COSA** Occupational Standards and Accreditation Council (RO: Direcția pentru standarde ocupaționale, calificări și atestare)

**ARACIP** Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Secondary Education

**AJOFM** County Agencies for Employment (RO: Agenții județene de ocupare a forței de muncă)

**ANC** National Qualifications Authority (RO: Autoritatea Națională a Calificărilor)

**NCTPE** National centre for staff training in pre-university education (RO: Centrul Național de formare a Personalului didactic din învățământul preuniversitar)

**TTC** The Teacher Training Centre (RO: Casa Corpului Didactic)

**SOPDHR** Sectoral Operational Program for the Development of Human Resources

**SFPC** Short and medium term strategy for continuous vocational training

## MAIN LAWS REGULATING THE PROVISION OF VET

- Law no. 84/1995
- Adult Training Law is adopted (375/2002)
- The law of quality assurance in education was approved (Law no. 87/2006)
- The Law no 1/2011 on national Education
- Romanian Labour code Law no 40/2011
- Government Ordinance no 129/2000 of adult vocational training, modified through the Law no 375/2002, and the government ordinance 76/2004
- Law no 76/2002
- Law no 107/2004
- Law no 580/2004
- *Law no 76/2002*
- GO No. 129/2000
- Law no. 279/2005
- GD no. 875/2005
- Order no. 701/2003
- Law no 1/2011
- Law no. 53/2003
- Law no. 40/2011
- Law no. 132/1999
- OG no. 129/2000
- OG no. 76/2004
- HG no. 522/2003
- HG no. 887/2004
- HG no. 1829/2004
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no 353/5.202/2003
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 80/3.328/2005
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 501/5.253/2003
- Law no. 279/2005
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Agentia Națională Pentru Calificările din Învățământul Superior și Parteneriat cu Mediul Economic și Social (National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education) <http://www.acpart.ro>

Agenția Națională pentru Programe Comunitare în Domeniul Educației și Formării Profesionale (National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training) [www.anpcdefp.ro](http://www.anpcdefp.ro)

Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Preuniversitar ARACIP (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in School Education): <http://aracip.edu.ro/>

Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education): <http://www.aracis.ro/>

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Consiliul Național de Formare Profesională a Adulților (The National Adult Training Board): [www.cnfpa.ro](http://www.cnfpa.ro)

Consiliul Național Pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior (National Council for Higher Education Financing): <http://www.cnfis.ro/index.html>

Institutul Național de Statistică (National Institute of Statistics): [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro)

Institutul de Științe ale Educației (Institute for Educational Sciences): [www.ise.ro](http://www.ise.ro)

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