

Romania

VET in Europe – Country Report

2011

Theme 1: General context – framework for the knowledge society

1.1 Political and socio-economic context

Full name: Romania

Population: 21.9 million people (July 2011)

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. Romania has the ninth largest territory and the seventh largest population (with 21.9 million people) among the European Union member states (E.U. accession: Jan. 1st 2007). 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 a unitary semi-presidential republic, in which the executive branch consists of the President and the Government.

Romania is divided into 41 counties (RO: “judet”) 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 macro regions) and NUTS-2 (eight development regions) divisions exist but have no administrative capacity, and are instead used for coordinating 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 macro regions (Romanian: Macroregiune). NUTS-1 and -2 divisions have no administrative capacity and are instead used for co-coordinating regional development projects and statistical purposes:

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

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.

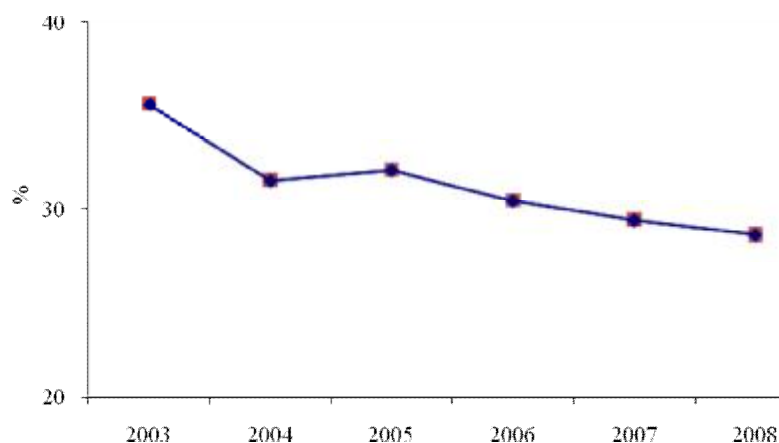
It was this effort to increase investment in education that helped Romania leapfrog in terms of its participation to the new economy of information and communication technologies. The country's achievements in terms of rise in internet connections, including broadband, mobile telephony as well as number 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.

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.

Fig 1. Share of agriculture in total employment during the period 2003-2008

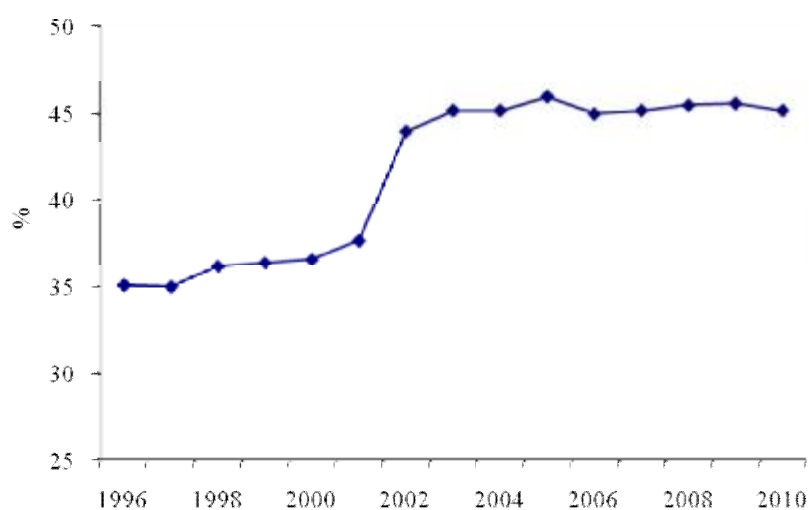


Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

The high rates of inactivity inside what is the economically active age category of the population, the large number of people working in subsistence farming (estimated at 4 million people) and migration of labor (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 45.2% over the period 1996-2010. 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.

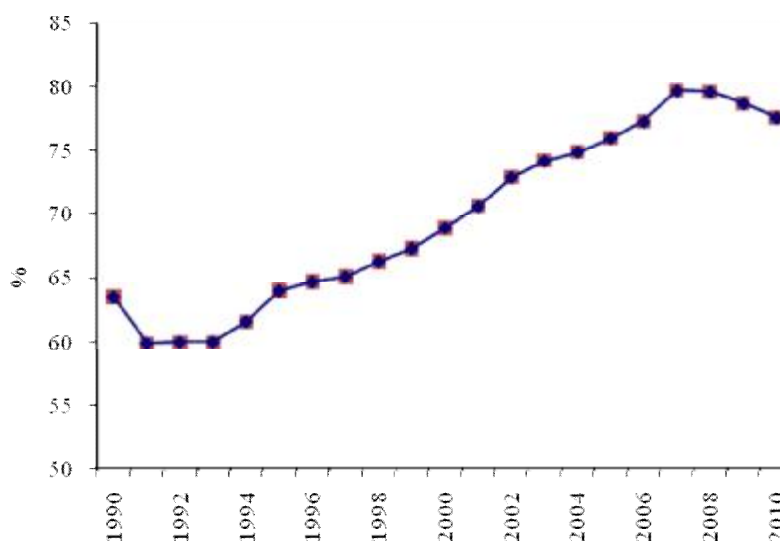
Fig 2. Inactivity rate during the period 1996-2010



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

According to the latest data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, 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 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%.

Fig 3. Enrollment rate during the period 1990-2010

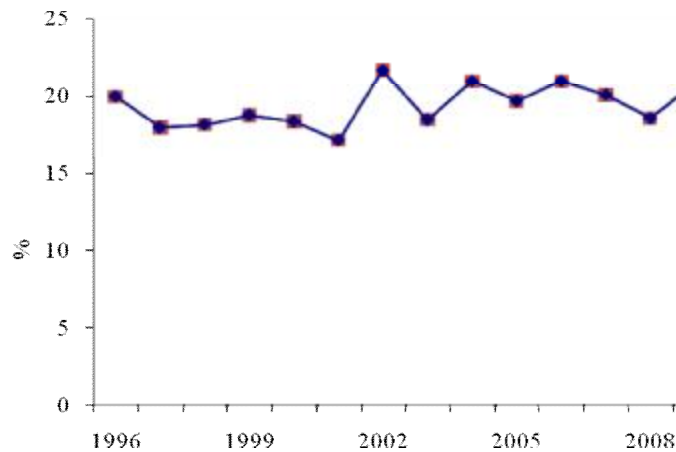


Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

Youth employment rates in Romania – people aged 20 to 24 – was 36.6 percent in 2009, going down to nearly 35.8 percent at the end 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 13 percent in 2010, 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 41 percent in 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 number of the 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 4. Youth unemployment rate during the period 1996-2010



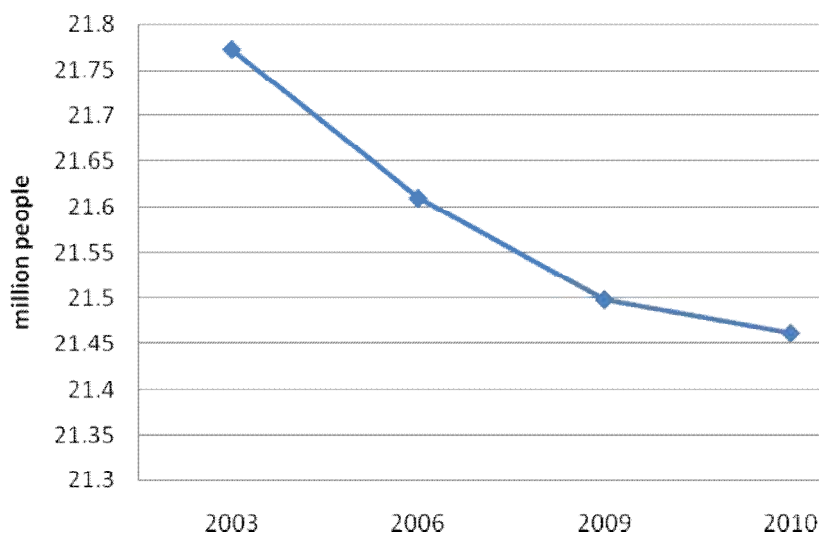
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

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 roma (gypsy; RO: tigani) 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 2010, total population of Romania was about 21.5 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 21.5 million people.

Fig.5. TOTAL POPULATION – ROMANIA (AS OF JAN. 1ST)



Source of data: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics)

Romania's young population as of January 1st of each year (the 15 and 24 age groups) was totaling 3.15 million in 2008 and decreased to about 2.98 million people in 2010, making up approximately 13.9% 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 4.6 million or in percentages of the country's total 21.5 million inhabitants around 21.5% in 2010. 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 beneficial as it led to marked improvement in 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 withdrawal from labour market for the same age cohorts. Activity rates for the young (15-24 years) dropped dramatically losing fully 12 pp. between 2000 and 2010, reaching the value of 31.2% at the end of 2010. 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 hard-ceiling” created by the rapid advance on the labour market of large generations born between the mid-sixties and early seventies 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 39% 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 from about 29% at the end of 2010 to 20% in 2060. 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 98.6% in 2010 to about 117.2% in 2020, respectively 185.1% in 2035. 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 43% in 2010 to about 47.6% in 2020, respectively 54.3% in 2035.

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

		-million people-									
Total Population	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
		21,46	21,26	21,01	20,66	20,25	19,86	19,44	18,99	18,48	17,95

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

Romania's population will fall by 4.15 million people by the year 2060, reaching about 17.3 million people, according to EUROSTAT data. In 2020, total population will decrease with about 460 thousand persons, registering about 21 million people.

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 time bomb 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 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 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 under-employment. 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.

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%. For the EU-27 countries the largest share is occupied by distribution and transport (26.4%), non marketed services (24.8%), business and other services(17.9%) and manufacturing (15.7%). Unlike Romania, the EU-27 has the smallest rate of employment in the primary sector and utilities (table 3).

Employment rates for the 15-24 years old displays a slow decline from 27.3% in 2003 to 24.3% in 2010. For the age-group 50-64 years old, the employment rates have slowly increased from 49.9% in 2003 to 50.4% in 2010. 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, i.e.; subsistence farming. Secondly, a sharp decline in the activity rate at the beginning of the 1990-ies from about 85% to some 65% after 2000 and thirdly, migration for employment abroad coupled with activities 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 labour market felt therefore hard the advent of global crisis in early 2009 and 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 alike.

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).

TABLE 3: 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	%
EU-27	15175.8	7.0	33992.7	15.7	16573.2	7.7	57099.0	26.4	38733.1	17.9	53694.1	24.8
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)

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2010

GEO	TIME ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2010		
		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	21.5	62.8	43.1
	3-4	47.2 (i)	79.1 (i)	54.9 (i)	48.1	80.5	57.9	45.0	79.7	59.6
	5-6	62.0 (i)	88.0 (i)	72.4 (i)	60.5	88.5	74.2	57.1	87.4	74.5
	NO A.	14.9 (i)	72.6 (i)	39.1 (i)	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.2	72.8	62.2
	TOTAL	36.0 (i)	77.4 (i)	51.5 (i)	36.6	79.1	54.4	34.1	78.1	56.7
RO	0-2	19.8	64.6	51.2	15.9	60.3	46.7	17.7	61.8	46.9
	3-4	36.6	76.8	46.1	32.7	77.8	51.1	29.4	76.8	49.5
	5-6	71.3	91.0	59.3	57.6	92.2	74.2	44.8	90.0	69.3
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	27.3	75.8	49.9	24.0	76.4	51.5	24.3	75.8	50.4

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

TABLE 5. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2010

GEO	TIME ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2010		
		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	27.4	16.3	10.2
	3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	18.1	8.2	6.7
	5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	16.2	5.3	3.6
	NO A.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:	:	8.2	:
	TOTAL	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	20.8	8.9	6.9
RO	0-2	15.3	8.1	2.0	19.7	9.7	3.2	15.8	7.4	3.1
	3-4	22.8	6.7	5.1	22.0	6.8	4.9	24.6	6.9	5.9
	5-6	15.8	2.9	2.5	27.7	3.2	:	28.9	4.6	:
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	19.5	6.5	3.2	21.4	6.7	3.9	22.1	6.6	4.5

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

TABLE 6: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4), 2002-2008							
GEO	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU27	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)	2.20 (s)	:
RO	0.76 (i)	0.71 (i)	0.73 (i)	0.77	:	1.52	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE)

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 1.52% of GDP in 2007. For the EU 27 countries, the share of total public expenditure on education has decreased over the period reaching about 2.20% of official GDP in 2007.

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 16.6% in 2009 (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 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).

TABLE 7: EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS (%), 2002-2009								
GEO/TIME	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU-27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4
RO	23.0	22.5	22.4 (b)	19.6	17.9	17.3	15.9	16.6

Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

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.

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.

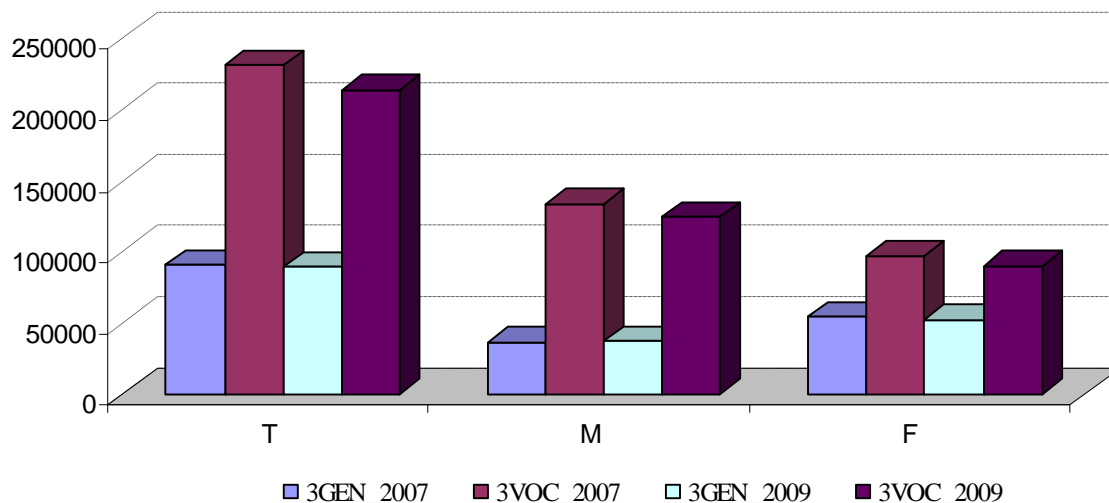
TABLE 8 A: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME ORIENTATION AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2007, 2009													
YEAR		2007						2009					
GEO	S	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
RO	T	90435	:	230970	:	:	12660	89263	:	213751	:	:	17574
	M	36454	:	133787	:	:	4338	37090	:	124047	:	:	6168
	F	53981	:	97183	:	:	8322	52173	:	89704	:	:	11406
EU-27*	T	2393291	:	2595569	49493	:	424537	2319746	:	2480373	:	:	394682
	M	1022202	:	1400317	23958	:	194372	995733	:	1344532	:	:	188195
	F	1371089	:	1195251	25535	:	230165	1324013	:	1135842	:	:	206487

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

TABLE 8 B: GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 5 AND LEVEL 6 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME DESTINATION, 1ST/2ND STAGE AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2007, 2009													
YEAR		2007						2009					
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	T	115491	77488	10008	:	2983	205970	214617	91442	209	:	4618	310886
	M	46903	30371	4137	:	1495	82906	86755	35289	61	:	2466	124571
	F	68588	47117	5871	:	1488	123064	127862	56153	148	:	2152	186315
EU-27*	T	2348435	916150	691661	10355	109512	4076113	2465221	915360	706581	10850	100723	4198735
	M	971270	357768	280571	2703	59335	1671647	1020740	365808	278346	2568	54413	1721875
	F	1377165	558382	411090	7652	50177	2404466	1444481	549552	428235	8282	46310	2476860

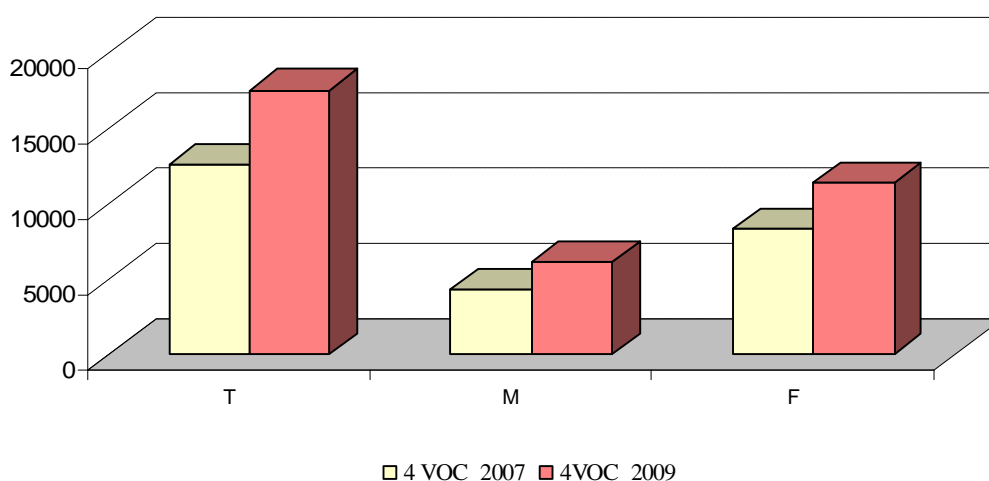
Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection)

Fig.6. The number of graduates at ISCED level 3 of education, programme orientation and sex in Romania for the period 2007-2009



Analyzing the number of graduates at ISCED level 3 of education by sex and programme orientation we can observe the fact that the difference is quite large: if for general programme there are more women than men graduates, for the vocational programme we can observe a reversal of the proportions. 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.

Fig. 7. The number of graduates at ISCED level 4 of education, programme orientation and sex in Romania for the period 2007-2009



For the level of education ISCED 4 and vocational programme, 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.

Fig.8. The number of graduates at ISCED level 5 and 6 of education in Romania for the period 2007-2009



For ISCED 5-6, the number of graduates in Romania is higher for women and is increasing for the period 2007-2009. 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 2007-2009 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 78.6% in 2009. This also holds when looking at the same variable disaggregated 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 78.9% 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.

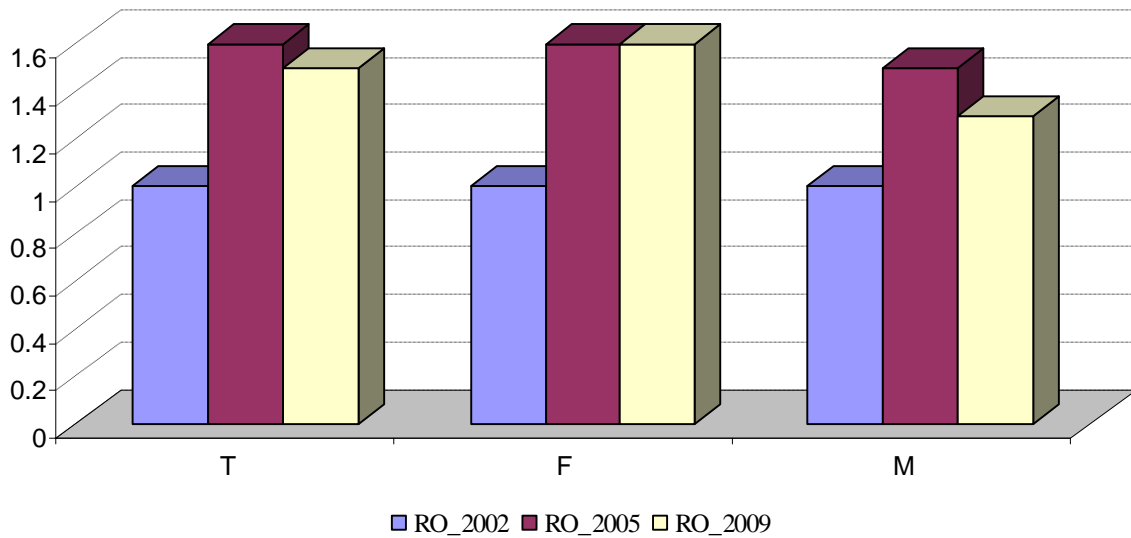
TIME	2002			2005			2009		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU-27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.6	81.4	75.9
RO	76.3	77.7	74.8	76.0	76.8	75.2	78.3	78.9	77.8

Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

TIME	2002			2005			2009		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU-27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9.0	9.3 (p)	10.2 (p)	8.5 (p)
RO	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.3

Source: Eurostat (LFS)

Fig.9. Lifelong learning adult participation in education and training by sex



Source of data: Eurostat (LFS)

The lifelong learning participation of males is decreasing over the period 2002-2009. 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.

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 (CNCFPFA) also acting as Romania's National Authority for Qualifications. Currently the CNCFPFA 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).

2.1 VET policy developments and priorities in supporting LLL

Between 2002 and 2008, Romania experienced a strong economic growth driven by the domestic demand, while wage growth boosted private consumption and investment. Unfortunately, these favourable economic conditions were not reflected by the labour market participation, the employment rate remaining one of the lowest in the EU (63.3% in 2010 as against 68.6% in the EU average). In this context the national target Europe 2020 regarding employment is to reach an employment rate for the age group 20-64 of 70% in the year 2020, with an intermediary value of 64.7% in 2013.

One of the key actions to attain this target, mentioned in the *National Reform Programme 2011-2013 (NRP 2011-2013)* is to improve the vocational skills of the workers by reforming the legal framework on adult training and by providing training courses thru the *National Training Plan 2011 – 2013* financed by the Unemployment Insurance Budget and continuous vocational training (CVT) programmes financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). The main goal of the last one is to improve the flexibility of workers with respect to the new requirements of the labour market and technological developments. The projects dedicated to improve the capacity of service providers for the adult vocational training are also financed by the ESF, on average 1000 CVT suppliers and 600 vocational qualifications are expected to be financed by the end of 2013. Another focus is on increasing the employment quality in rural areas - during 2011-2013 is estimated to be financed the vocational training of 14,287 persons through the European Fund Agriculture and Rural Development.

On 24/25 March 2011 Romania attended the European Council Meeting and joined the *Euro Plus Pact*. The key objectives regarding VET and LLL on which Romania has undertaken firm political commitments are:

- drafting of the national Lifelong Learning Strategy;
- drafting the reference curricula framework focused on skill upgrading;
- strengthening social dialogue and rendering flexible the system of collective labour agreements;
- amending and completing the legal framework on the unemployment insurance, social system and employment stimulation;
- amending and completing the law no. 279/2005 on apprenticeship at work;
- reform of the legal framework and adult professional training;
- implementation of the simplified EU framework for the recognition of professional qualifications, in terms of reciprocity conditions, between Member States.

In order to improve the quality and relevance of the vocational training for the labour market, work is in progress on the *National Qualifications Framework* which will integrate the skills that can be achieved regardless of the way by which they have been achieved by an individual. The new Law on National Education (Law No. 1/2011) contains specific provisions on the quality of training.

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. At the moment, has been initiated the process of developing a new strategy for LLL.

Currently, LLL is stimulated by the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) with a twofold impact: at the labour market level by a better insertion of the graduates and a better

synchronization between education and labour market demand and at the individual level, by increasing the labour force mobility and flexibility.

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. CVT system development has also been supported under *SOP HRD (Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development) 2007-2013* which addressed the following priorities: quality assurance in CVT, restructuring of the National Qualifications Framework, development of specific system for recognition and validation of prior learning. Initiatives financed under this particular SOP address training and development of the lifelong learning facilitators. Projects financed aim at creating virtual communities on lifelong learning programmes in school which, at their turn are to ensure exchanges of good practice, 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*.

There is of course much debate on the role vocational training must play in the development of the economy as well as in increasing the dynamics of a labour market. This is as the number of new jobs created has always been far below the actual demand even in times of plenty. Nevertheless, crisis entering the scene things have radically altered especially as large swathes of state jobs have gone and the ones remaining have suffered severe pay cuts which have rendered them wholly unattractive thus shifting the leverage towards the private employers which once again have the upper hand. Therefore 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 mecena”. 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 canters around the newly adopted version of the Labour Code.

2.2 Implementation of European tools and principles

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) defines the structures of qualifications and ensures the national recognition of qualifications acquired in any context: IVET and CVET; formal, non-formal and informal ways. The NQF ensures quality instruments in VET due to national standards (elaborated by experts based on national methodologies and validated by sector committees), used both in training and evaluation of competencies.

NQF was the subject of a 2005 tripartite agreement between Romanian Government, the national representative trade union confederations and employers associations'. During the same year authorities have also finalized the consultation process on the European Qualification Framework (EQF). During 2006 -2009 have been implemented a PHARE Program "Establishment of the Romanian National Qualifications' Authority" whose main outcomes are: strengthening the institutional capacity of the CNCFPFA as national Authority for Qualifications; growth of the institutional capacity for the sectoral committees; the development of the National Register of Qualifications, as an information database for the labour market and the development of methodologies based on common principles for initial and continuous education and formal or non-formal contexts of acquisition.

The development of the NQF is supported by main stakeholders in the field and benefits from the Government's support and commitment. There is a general view that NQF could help 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.

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 NQA, there is a technical unit 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.

Starting with September 2010 had been reorganized the National Adult Training Board and created the National Qualifications' Authority by reunion of CNCFPA (National Adult Training Board) and Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education (Education Law No 1/2011; Government Ordinance 74 and 132/2010, Government Decisions 885/2010, 1368/2011). The development work of incorporating three-level structure for HE into an overarching NQF was supported by the National Agency for Qualifications in HE - ACPART.

The main tasks of the NQA are: ensure the methodological national framework; manage the national register of qualifications for all qualification levels, coordinate and collaborate with the sector committees (including mainly employers and trade unions)

Currently, three major/strategic European Social Fund Projects are under implementation:

- CALISIS (Quality assurance in continuous education),
- CNC-FPC (National Qualification Framework implementation)
- FPC-FORMATOR (Train the adults' training at the national level).

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

- The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS) 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 Social Protection (MMFPS) 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 Labour Migration Office functions under the coordination of NAE.
- The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (CNDIPT) 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 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 MECTS; and evaluating the standards and proposing the authorization and accreditation of higher education providers and their programs of study. Based on its accreditation reports, MECTS develops regulations for the establishment of structures of higher education. Regarding some of the 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 MECTS 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 (CNCFPA) was established as a tripartite body, with a consultative role in the field of adult vocational training, the CNCFPA 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. From 2004, CNCFPA has played the role of National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ), its mains 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 committees (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 fulfil 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.

In Romania, the Europass National Centre (NEC) was setup through the Government Decision no 67/24 January 2007 regarding Romania's participation at community programs. NEC is integrated

within the National Agency for Community Programs in the Field of Education and Vocational Training.

2.3 Internationalisation and trans-national mobility in VET

2.3.1. Policy framework for internationalization and trans-national mobility in VET

Currently, on a country by country basis 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'.

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).

2.3.2. Trans-national mobility programmes and schemes in VET

Topic not relevant for Romania at the moment-no information available yet on the issue;

2.3.3. Arrangements to secure work placements for trans-national mobility in VET

Topic not relevant for Romania at the moment-no information available yet on the issue

Theme 3: VET to support recovery from the crisis

3.1 Overview

Labour Market conditions in Romania have acknowledged a marked improvement during the eight consecutive years of economic growth witnessed by the country between 2000 and 2008, albeit all of it from a very low starting point. Gains in productivity have been impressive with a compounded growth of 77% between 2000 and 2010, the country being thus the best performer amongst the EU-27 Member States. Nevertheless, this tremendous increase has also come at a cost. Huge imbalances have accumulated within the country's feeble economic structure rendering itself too much exposed to the vagaries of the world markets. Credit expansion fuelled development as well as consumption-although as witnessed throughout the crisis this did not translate in the development of a strong domestic market capable of shielding it when export markets have fallen sharply in the first bout of recession at the beginning of 2009, but failed to materialize in tangible gains when it comes to employment. As such, even before the crisis, while unemployment rate was simply negligible (national definition rate at an all-time low of 3.8%-as of Q3.2008, harmonized definition Q3.2008-5.4%) employment rates were nevertheless lagging far behind what were then, the Revised Lisbon Strategy targets (Employment rate for the 15-64 at 60.5%-2008.Q3, 58% as of Q1.2011), with the young being amongst the worst afflicted by an apparent less-than-potent process of job creation. This was also in spite of the fact that, prior to the first wave of recession (late 2008-early 2009), job-vacancy rates were quite high (2.06-Q3.2008, 0.69%-Q1.2011, as calculated by the National Institute of Statistics of RO). In explaining this paradox one has however to take into account the fact that in most cases, investors entering the market in the early 2000's were keen to substitute labour with capital and thus while factories have increased their output, the amount of labour they were making use went downwards. The service sector made it up partly for this loss of jobs but this compensation proved itself shallow as most of the activities were pro-cycle and bound to end abruptly-as it happened actually, when the cycle went in reverse. Moreover the country's drive towards full EU-Accession in 2007 provided cover for an undesired and, in retrospect, most damaging increase in the number of state employees, with both the central as well as the local administration inflating their personnel. True to say also, that the education system also played its part in a process that wholly de-balanced the country's labour market as it opened the gates of higher-education for an ever increasing number of youngsters, thus not only siphoning them from the market but also channeling them towards occupations for which the domestic market could not offer much perspective or too much linked to a state-apparatus which, given Romania's economic structure and thus resources, was impossible and impractical to sustain.

As such, the shock of the crisis was bound to hit hard and the country forced to ask for emergency financial assistance and this, in spite of having one of the lowest sovereign-debts in Europe when measured as a share of its GDP. Unemployment went sharply upwards for 14 month in a row, output fell drastically for 8 consecutive quarters and job vacancies simply vanished.

A drastic internal devaluation process thus imposed itself in mid of 2010, with salaries of public employees being cut by 25% and social benefits including unemployment benefit reduced by 15%. This however marked a watershed in Romania's approach towards labour

market. It signaled the fact that country could not function in the environment of what is an open-emergent market economy which by definition requires maximum flexibility and operate a social protection system that closely resembled, though at a fraction of resources, mature economies. Accordingly, the Government embarked swiftly on a change of paradigm and drastically amended the Labour Code thus: (1) removing limitations on part-time contracts; (2) removing limitations on the number of contracts an individual can conclude; (2) increasing the scope for overtime work; (3) reducing the minimum number of statutory vacation days an employee can take contiguously; (4) making it easier for employers to hire for the probation period while in the meantime (5) increasing sanctions for the recourse to UDW which now can be applied not only to companies but also to employees. The New Social Dialogue code also adopted this year finally removes the constraint of mandatory national collective agreements, decouples the public sector from the private one in terms of the minimum salary and makes even sector/branch level negotiations non-compulsory thus easing the grip of the unions. Unemployment benefit has also been decoupled from its antiquated link with the minimum salary and tied with the “reference social indicator” fixed at only RON 500 (EUR: 116 at current market ex.rate-Sept.2011) so as to entice labour market participation and discourage prolonged resort to social protection. As a slow but healthy movement of growth started making itself felt with the end of 2010, mostly as a result of increasing exports -industry being the prime beneficiary of it, unemployment rate entered a marked decline, with current rates not much above pre-recession levels (harmonized definition rate at 7.6%, Q1.2011, national definition rate at 5.05%-Q2.2011).

While sticking to its fiscal consolidation program the Government has nevertheless strived to maintain a number of active labour market programs, especially aimed at youngsters and encouraging their labour-market insertion, as listed below:

- a start-up program for young entrepreneurs, inclusive of an exemption from social security contributions for jobs created, tax-free for profits re-invested and state-guarantees for credits; however no lump-sum subsidy!
- a subsidy for employers hiring young graduates coming from both higher education as well as from VET schools;
- a subsidy for individuals re-entering employment (including youngsters) before the termination of their statutory unemployment benefit period;
- a subsidy directed at employers choosing to invest in VET for their workforce.³

While these fiscal-stimulus measures have been maintained they have nevertheless been subject also to a thorough pro-active revamp, with subsidies granted have de-linked from minimum salary and tied with the “social reference indicator”. In other words they got smaller in nominal terms, something that also affected the unemployment benefit for youngsters without contribution period. However, as in the case of subsidies for employers they were not paid in advance but rather reimbursed by local employment offices, such a move might act as incentive to apply and hire as it reduces the initial financial burden to be sustained by applying enterprises, most of them small and medium-sized.

³ For more on this measures see also the EEO publication/Review “Youth Employment Measures”, 2010, published 2011; contribution for Romania by Dr. Catalin Ghinararu;

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 also *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 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 otherwise 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 businesses either to close up completely or to resort to layoffs. 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 it is 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. 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 and this especially due to domestic demand which is giving practically no sign of revival. A turbulent external environment is not of much help either. 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 to address the negative effects or as a result of the crisis (by public authorities at national level):

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

- Description: Public sector employee, both civilian, including teachers at all levels of education, and military have seen their monthly payment cut by 25%. No gross salary however will be allowed to fall under the minimum threshold of RON 600;
- Value in euro (% 2010 GDP): 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.
3. Increase of the VAT from 19% to 25% as of July 1st2010
- 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 but, bode well for external competitiveness! Overall it might keep unemployment rather high for RO levels of sustainability (administrative measures might however curb eventual increases in unemployment and even send it falling).
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 UDW; A more focused action with regard to UDW might however help in stamping down this “side-effect”;
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 rather ill-timed pro-cycle measure; Effects on employment will be however difficult to quantify given the peculiar nature of this “type of employment”;

6. Sweeping Changes to Romania's Labour Code;

The Romanian Government, in the frame of its agreement with the IMF, the World Bank and the European Commission has moved to modify the country's Labour Code adopted early in the last decade and which was heavily geared towards insiders with a disproportionate role for centralized collective bargaining, especially with regard to wages. While not easily accepted by the unions the amendments to the Labour Code (Law no.53/2003) have been fast-tracked through the country's Parliament entering into force with May 1st this year (2011). The main changes include an increased scope for closed-end, determined duration contracts, the removal of the links between the public and the private sector with regard to the minimum wage and, via the social dialogue law (adopted and entered into force also this May 2011), the removal of the mandatory character of national collective bargaining as well as, in some cases, of the sector or branch collective bargaining, thus leaving the enterprise as sole realm of collective bargaining. Amongst the changes have been also the one affecting, at enterprise level, probation of test period, an interval following hiring, which most companies were using for on-the-job training of new entrants and which was counting for a large part of enterprise-based vocational training, both in cases where specific training was not so sophisticated as well as, in cases where it was expected that the new entrant would have sufficient previously accumulated knowledge and skills. The former version of the Code created here a number of restrictions as employers were not allowed to have more than three persons hired successively and under probation for the same job. This created problems as it made labour relations rather rigid for in certain instances employers were unable to find the suitable person and thereby they were compelled by law to hire after three successive attempts or, alternatively they were forced to put their hiring efforts on halt. Moreover, for management positions this period was limited to no more than 90 days, something which now has been extended to 120 days.

In the meantime an important distinction has been introduced with respect to young graduates for which, any initial period in employment, up to 6 months following graduation is to be considered as "professional practice period" with this being applied to all occupations except for the ones where such a period is regulated by special law. This will give young graduates finding a first job after the completion of their studies (provision applies only for graduates of higher education!) a chance to hone their hard-acquired knowledge and skills and obtain also written proof of it as employers are now obliged to make clear mention of it in a written document to be released individually after the completion of the first 6 months in employment following graduation.

7. Adoption of New Social Dialogue code: In the year 2011, according to the commitments undertaken by Romania under the *Stand-by arrangement concluded with IMF*, in order to render more flexible the system of collective labour agreement and to strengthen the social dialogue, the *Social Dialogue Law* will be promoted. The law will bring together both regulations regarding the organization and the functioning of the trade unions and employers' organizations, and the Economic and Social Council, and those related to the negotiations of the collective labour agreements, rendering more flexible the system of wage setting and the settlement of labour disputes. This way it is indented to extend the dialogue structures at the regional level to a better management of the problems, to increase the autonomy of the social partners in the negotiation process and to remove the rigidities existing in the labour relations and in the wage setting in the private sector.

Measures taken by social partners (employers and trade unions)-not the case;

Measures promoted or managed by VET providers-not the case;

Measures financed by ESF:

During the period 2011-2013, through the **European Social Fund** (SOP HRD, Priority Axis 5) there are funded projects aiming at facilitating the insertion of unemployed people on 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 on integrated programmes. The integrated employment programmes include a comprehensive set of **measures** aimed at developing individual capacity for searching a job and employment (vocational counselling and guidance, personal motivation, vocational and entrepreneurial skills development), and facilitating the insertion on the labour market (labour mediation, setting up a business, etc.).

During the period 2011-2013, the National Agency for 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 the 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. 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 agency employees to new forms of organization and management, due to legislative changes, by **vocational training of the 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 personalized services to 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 customized employment services. The project budget is RON 18.5 million;

- **CAMPION - Autonomous and modern training centres by implementing a new organization**. The project aims to modernize and improve the institutional capacity of the 8 regional vocational training structures of the agency (Vocational Training Regional Centres for Adults) to become more competitive in providing quality services tailored to the market demands. At the same time, there will be agreed protocols and co-operation agreements with companies, other national and international training centres, and the 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 the unemployed people. The project budget is RON 20.9 million.

During 2011-2013, the **European Social Fund** (SOP HRD) will make an essential contribution to promote the adaptability of workers to the new labour market requirements, and to the technological and economic developments (**continuous vocational training of workers**). By the end of 2013, a total of 354,100 employees will participate in the CVT programmes (and retraining), by projects financed under SOP HRD (Priority Axe 2). In the year 2011, it is foreseen to be launched a new call for strategic projects estimated at EUR 80 million.

To ensure the adaptability of enterprises and employees, SOP HRD (Priority Axis 3) will support the participation of 13,500 persons in training programmes on management and organization of work and 252,700 students in programmes aimed to update and improve skills.

The Romanian Government in its latest available Strategic Report on the use of EU funds which accounts for evolutions and achievements up to the Nov.30th of 2009 clearly states the fact that the advent of the economic crisis did not make necessary any fundamental change in the initial allocation of funds according to the priorities enshrined in the National Strategic Reference Framework. According to the Government of Romania the initial allocation of funds which dedicated 60% of the total 19.2 bn. EURO of EU money Romania benefits (at which one has to add an estimated EUR bn.5.6 in national co-financing- as a share of GDP as of 2009 nominal levels the equivalent of approx. 4.76%) from under the guise of these funds for infrastructure investment, 20% for investment in human resources and 15% for the improvement of competitiveness is more than in line with priorities in times of crisis and moreover it follows the broad objectives of the European Recovery Plan.

Theme 4: Historical background, Legislative and Institutional framework

4.1 Historical Background

The VET system in Romania has been linked with the production systems of large enterprises. Training took place both in schools and in enterprises. Schools were predominantly preparing future employees for a specific enterprise and the CVT system was systematically organised in all enterprises. But the transition to market economy has involved an adaptation of the VET system as follows:

- Training places in enterprises disappeared rapidly
- The VET system became more school based than before.

In the beginning of the nineties the interest for VET decreased: in rural areas participation in all types of upper secondary education fell, in urban centres general secondary education was preferred (giving the possibility of continuing to higher education). These are the reasons why vocational schools witnessed a steep decline in participation. Therefore, in order to make VET more attractive, the government introduced more practical VET pathways at a lower level for semi-skilled workers and artisans through the apprenticeship schools. According to Education Act adopted in 1995 (Law no. 84/1995) apprenticeship schools were introduced as a form of vocational training targeted to develop more practical skills to students. Progression to university from vocational schools would require completion of technical high schools, often through evening classes.

In 1996 Phare VET RO 9405 program is launched, setting the basis for the first major reform of the VET system in Romania. Main objectives were related to: provision of initial VET according to labour market requirement and to training standards specific to EU member states, decentralisation and promotion of partnership.

In 1997, the Government passes first major changes to the Education Act with high relevance on VET reform process. The new legal provision initiates the system of credit transfer in VET. Also in 1997 Romania joined EU programs in the field of education and training (Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates).

The introduction of the capacity exam (1999) at the end of the 8th grade meant that only those students who passed could continue to technical high schools. Thus the option for VET often is the result of negative selection. In 2003 the duration of compulsory education was increased from 8-10 years. The vocational schools and apprenticeship schools have been replaced by one school type the arts and trade schools offering training at different levels, and providing progression to higher education. The first level of the arts and trade schools is part of compulsory education. As a result of investment and VET reform and the demand for skilled labour in SMEs, the interest in VET is slowly increasing, but the share of early school leavers remains high.

In 2002 first Adult Training Law is adopted (375/2002), promoting LLL through CVT: including the right to training in the collective bargain provisions, stimulating employers to invest in human resources development; evaluation and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning; introduction of credit transfer based on alternative training forms; assigning responsibilities and accreditation conditions of training providers.

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. The law of quality assurance in education was approved (Law no. 87/2006) and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education was established as the institution of national interest in charge with implementing the methodologies of quality assurance in Romania.

Regarding the need to improve the quality and relevance of the education and vocational training for the labour market, the elaboration of the National Qualifications Framework started (2009- 2010), and it will integrate the skills that can be achieved irrespective of the context in which they were obtained.

In order to modernize the Romanian educational system to better accommodate it to the current requirements of the knowledge-based society and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Romanian Government elaborated and the Parliament passed the Law on National Education (The Law no 1/2011 on national Education).

The new Law on National Education defines the concept of lifelong learning education and vocational education and training in an integrated and coherent manner and sets the recognition and certification of skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal education contexts. Moreover, the law provides for the establishment by local authorities of the Community Centres for Lifelong Learning designed to implement lifelong learning policies and strategies at community level.

According to the Law on National Education, the Romania's education reform covers the following changes in the field of VET:

- The support granted to vocational education and training will be substantiated as follows: ensuring the skills acquisition, re-founding of vocational education and training schools; developing and supporting upper-secondary (vocational pathway) and post-secondary education; extending the use of credit transfer system (i.e. between upper-secondary vocational education and the post-secondary education); providing the possibility to complete at least one vocational training programme by those low-secondary education graduates aged < 18 who have previously left school; such a VET programme would allow for the acquisition of appropriate qualifications in accordance with National Qualification Framework and will be provided free of charge by state VET schools.
- Equal access to education in order to both uphold students at risk in school and attract those who have left education early are ensured by means of "School after school" or "Second chance" programmes. Moreover the state will subsidize the costs of high-school attendance for students from rural or social and economic disadvantaged areas as well as for those attending vocational education and training (VET) schools and scholarships will be awarded on the basis of an agreement with companies or other legal or natural persons.

In the period 2011-2013, in order to strengthen the capacity of service providers for the adult vocational training it is foreseen to ensure the quality of continuous vocational training through the implementation of projects dedicated to the authorized training providers. Their purpose is to introduce the quality assurance standards and the vocational skill development. By these projects there are expected to be supported at least 1,000 suppliers of CVT and minimum 600 vocational qualifications CVT. In the year 2011, it is foreseen to be launched a new call for projects funded by the ESF (SOP HRD, Priority Axis 2), with an estimated budget of EUR 9 million.

4.2 Legislative framework for IVET

The main law that regulate the IVET programmes in Romania is The Law no 1/2011 on national Education. This particular act provides for the main structural elements of the system as follows: the structure of education system, compulsory years of schooling and brief information on cycles of compulsory schooling, the pathways available to acquire vocational qualifications, acces requirements, progress opportunities.

4.3 Institutional framework for IVET and organigram

The principle of devolution governing pre-university education as well as higher education and lifelong learning in Romania implies that the main decisions are taken by actors directly involved in the process.

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.

The National Center for the Development of VET (RO: Centrul Național de Dezvoltare a Învățământului Profesional și Tehnic, CNDIPT) is a public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Research Youth and Sports. The responsibilities of the Center are: to propose the principles of educational policy and the strategies to develop initial training; to assure the scientific coordination of innovation and development projects of IVET; to develop the methodologies of design, elaboration, implementation and revision of the curriculum for IVET; to develop methodologies of design of the evaluation and certification system for IVET; to elaborate methodologies for IVET teachers training; to contribute to the correlation of initial and continuing training of the IVET teachers; to assure the development and functioning of the social partnership from within IVET at national, regional and local level; to assure the training coordination and scientific consultancy for authors and trainers at national, regional and local level of IVET; to design and elaborate training standards, curriculum and evaluation; to assure preparation and participation of school units to programmes and projects of socio-economic development at national, regional and local level; to assure, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, the training and participation of its subordinated units and institution to the Community Programmes that aim ESF. The Center has also the role of Implementation Unit for Projects regarding VET modernization that are realized with UE assistance through Phare programmes.

It is also in charge of developing social partnership in IVET at national, regional and local 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.

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.

4.4 Legislative framework for CVET

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection together with the Ministry of Education, National Agency for Employment and The National Adult Training and Qualifications Board (CNCFPA) have completed the legislative framework for adult training, the adopted laws approving the following:

- methodology for authorizing providers of adult training;
- methodology for certification of adults training;
- classification of qualifications for which programs offering qualification certificates can be organized;
- procedure for evaluation and certification of professional competences acquired in other ways than the formal ones governing the evaluation and certification of skills acquired by non-formal and informal pathways .

The legislative framework (laws, government ordinances, government decisions, and orders of different ministers) regarding the continuing vocational training (CVT), consists of:

- The Law no 1/2011 on national Education - contains express provisions on the quality of training. This law aims to modernize the Romanian education, for its adapting to the current requirements of the knowledge society
- Romanian Labour code (Law no 40/2011 adopted for amending and completing the Law no 53/2003) regulates the training within enterprises and stipulates the obligation of the companies to train the personnel every two years (every three years for SME); Also the labour code regulates vocational training objectives, the types of vocational training, mandatory vocational training programs, obligations of vocational training beneficiaries, types of vocational training contracts, the on-the-job apprenticeship contract
- A special law regulating apprenticeship
- Government Ordinance no 129/2000 of adult vocational training, modified through the Law no 375/2002, and the government ordinance 76/2004 which stipulates:
 - the criteria and procedure of quality assurance of CVT programmes;
 - the competences based training, assessment and certification;
 - the assessment and recognition of the competences acquired with in nonformal and informal learning contexts;
- Law no 76/2002, modified through Law no 107/2004 and Law no 580/2004, of unemployment insurance system and stimulation of employment, stipulates the passive and active measure against unemployment; The modification and completion to the *Law no 76/2002 on unemployment insurance system and the employment stimulation* addresses the development of the new employment stimulation measures, and the adaptation of their implementation to the current needs of the labour market. The law stipulates the introduction of the following elements: providing free services to assess the skills acquired in the informal and non-formal system; grading the financial support to the unpaid unemployed persons during the participation at the continuous vocational training (CVT) programmes; more flexible conditions for subsidizing the CVT programmes have been organized by the employers; the access of the unpaid unemployed persons to the mobility bonuses; the reduction of the conditionality for the companies that hire unemployed persons and persons belonging to the vulnerable groups.
- Other regulations concerning the training at sector level.

In the year 2011, reforming the legal framework on adult training envisages the modification and completion of the GO No. 129/2000 on the vocational training of adults, with subsequent amendments and completions. This approach aims at adapting the legislation to the legal provisions related to the education system, and to strengthen the system of authorization and the quality assurance system of CVT.

Amending and completing the Law no. 279/2005 on apprenticeship at work will reduce the administrative burden by repealing the procedure of authorization of the employer and certification of the apprenticeship master, as well as facilitating the implementation of measures to stimulate the apprenticeship at the work. Both draft laws were approved by the Government in 2010 and are under Parliamentary procedure for their adoption.

- GD no. 875/2005 approving the short and medium term strategy for continuous training, 2005-2010
- Order no. 701/2003 for the designation of institutions that automatically will admit the documents proving the qualification acquired abroad, outside the educational system, by the Romanian citizens or nationals of member states of the European Union and European Economic Area

In Romania were established several social dialogue structures. Their area was the initial or continuous training. Some of them have an advisory role, while others make decisions. Development of National Qualifications Framework emphasizes the urgent need to develop social dialogue at sector level . In this regard, the National Adult Training Board (which took over the role of National Qualifications Authority) has established sectoral committees in construction, tourism, ICT, textile, food and machine building industry.

4.5 Institutional framework for CVET and organigram

In order to develop qualification related tools, MMFPS and MECTS aim at finalizing the National Qualifications Framework, reviewing the Classification of Occupations in Romania and developing the occupational analyses, standards and qualifications. During the period 2011-2013, MMFPS, MECTS, 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

Social partners, namely employers and trade unions have a series of tasks and responsibilities in continuous training. Their role is important at the following levels: national, sector and economic unit.

The commissions that authorize training providers at county level are established by the decision of CNCFPA and are all tripartite structure. These commissions can take decisions only in the presence of trade unions and employers.

The main role of sectoral committees is to define and validate qualifications at sectoral level, including validation of qualifications offered by other institutions.

Sectoral committees are essential structures for carrying out a set of common activities in initial and continuous vocational training: identifying skills needs, developing occupational standards, making the National Register of Qualifications, designing training programs, providing common methodology for certification of qualifications and skills and develop common principles and mechanisms to ensure quality training.

The National Agency for Employment (RO: Agenția Națională de Ocupare a Forței de muncă) addresses its services to unemployed persons and to economical agents/employers. Its

main objectives are: institutionalizing of the social dialogue in the field of employment and training; applying strategies in the field of employment and training and applying measures of social protection for the unemployed. The main functions that the National Agency for Employment fulfills: organizes, offers and finances services of training for the unemployed; offers guidance for the unemployed and mediates between them and the employers; makes proposals for elaboration of the project of budgeting unemployment funds;

Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS, RO: Ministerul Educației, Cecetării, Tineretului și Sportului) elaborates, coordinates and applies the policies in the field of education. Its main functions are as follows: to coordinate and control the national education system; to organize the educational network and to propose the school enrollment figures with the consultation of school units, local authorities and economical agents; to approve the national curriculum and the national system of evaluation; to coordinate the activity of scientific research within education; to elaborate the admission criteria for admission to higher education; to elaborate studies of diagnosis and prognosis in the field of restructure and modernization of education; to coordinate naming, transfer, release and evidence of didactic and auxiliary personnel; to assure the distribution of the national fund for training; to assure evaluation of the educational system based on national standards; to elaborate and apply the reform strategies of education and learning; to establish the forms of recognition and equivalence of diplomas, certificates and scientific titles issued outside Romania.

National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment (RO: Agentia Nationala pentru Calificarile din Invatamantul Superior si Parteneriat cu Mediul Economic si Social (ACPART)) is a specialized public body subordinated to the Ministry of Education. Its tasks are as follows: to elaborate, manage and update the national framework for higher education qualifications; to establish, maintain and update the methodology for elaborating and certifying higher education qualifications; to devise and review, based on best practices, the national reference standards and descriptive elements of higher education qualifications; to issue recommendations to higher education institutions on rendering the specialized curricula in fundamental areas of higher education compatible with the national qualifications framework standards; proposes legislative acts to the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth on the national qualifications framework for higher education as well as on the recognition of competences and professional experience acquired; to identify, support and promote cooperation by developing specific partnerships among universities, economic operators, Romanian and foreign institutions and organisations and by elaborating specific programmes and projects; to promote long and medium-term programmes of continuing training for the personnel employed by higher education institutions, economic operators and other specific organizations and to provide consultancy and technical assistance in its areas of expertise.

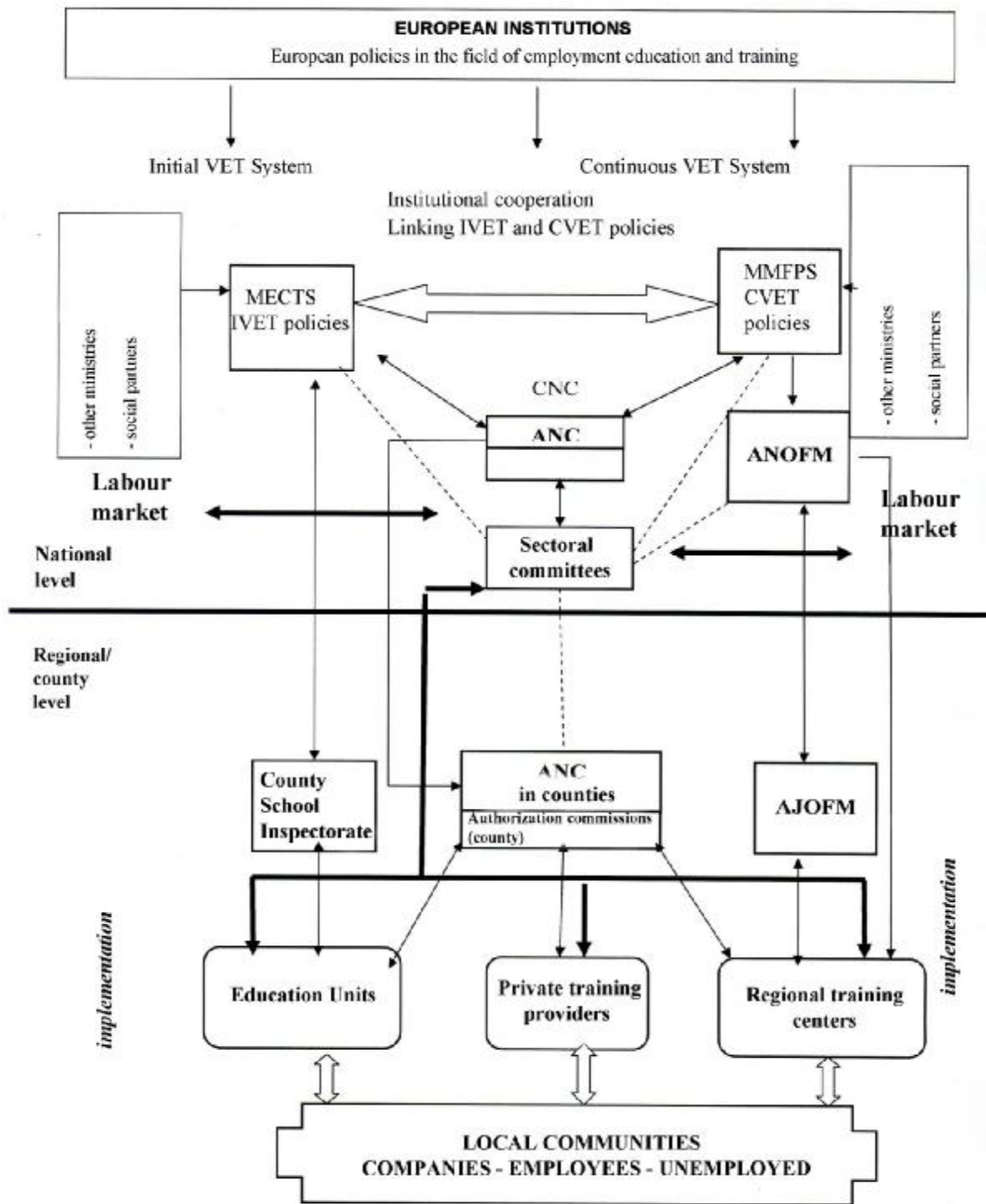
The Law no 1/2011 on education stipulates that the **National Authority for Qualifications (ANC)** is established by reorganization of the **The National Adult Training and Qualification Board (CNCFPA)** (RO: **Consiliu National pentru Calificarea si Formarea Profesionala a Adultilor**) and the Executive Unit of CNCFPA. ANC elaborates the National Qualifications Framework based on European Qualifications Framework, realize and update the National Registry of Adult Training Providers and the National Registry of qualifications. National Qualifications Authority coordinates the authorization of continuous vocational training providers nationwide, coordinates quality assurance system in continuous training and the activities of **sectoral committees**.

Current and capital expenditure of ANC are financed from its own revenues and grants from the state budget through the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. National

Qualifications Authority is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, its structure, organization and operation shall be established by Government decision, within three months after the entry into force of this Law.

Community centres for lifelong learning are established by local authorities in partnership with education and training providers. They are designed to implement policies and strategies in the field of lifelong learning in the community. The functioning of the Community centres for lifelong learning is regulated by Government decision, initiated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The lifelong learning community centres are financed from public and private funds, under the law. All the revenues that community centers for lifelong learning earn remain at their disposal.

The National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Training (RO: Agenția Națională pentru Programe Comunitare în Domeniul Educației și Formării Profesionale) is a public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education. The programmes developed by the Agency are: Lifelong Learning Programme (comprising the following subcomponents: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Eurydice, Grundtvig, Jean Monnet, European Label, Study Visits), Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action. The main objectives that the Agency has are: supporting stakeholders from the Romanian educational and training system in order to gain a better understanding of the structure and content of European educational and training systems; facilitating the intercultural exchanges and of the respect for diversity; supporting Romanian educational and training system in order to reach the Lisbon objectives; diversification of the training offer; improving of initial and continuing training mobility; supporting Lifelong Learning strategies and policies; improving the preuniversity and higher education in terms of: use of ICT, cooperation with social partners, implementation of innovative pedagogical practices.



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Fig. 10 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

MMFPS Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (RO: Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale)

MMFPS (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (RO: Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale)) has the following tasks in the field of lifelong learning:

- to develop, together with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, policies and national strategies on vocational training for adults
- to regulate the training to work through apprenticeships and training in the workplace
- to monitor, evaluate and control (directly or through authorized bodies) training providers, other than those of the national education system;

Theme 5: Initial vocational education and training

5.1 Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system

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 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. 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 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.

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 a recent OECD-PISA study come thus as a stern confirmation of those constantly arguing 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 education budgets seemed to have been oriented 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 when expressed as a share of the GDP, of 85% as against 1990 levels which in relative terms, makes for 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 almost the same for everybody, rich and poor alike, therefore leaving to the individual to make the difference.*

Fig. 11 – 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			2
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							

According to the new law on national education (Law no 1/2011)⁴ the national education system comprises the following education levels (pre-university):

- a) early education (0-6 years);
- b) primary education, including preparatory class and classes I-IV;
- c) secondary education, including:
 - (i) lower secondary education (RO: Gimnaziu), including classes V-IX;
 - (ii) upper secondary or high school, including school classes X-XII/XIII, with the following paths: theoretical, vocational and technological;
- d) vocational education, lasting between 6 months and 2 years;
- e) post-secondary education.

Technical education includes classes XII and XIII of secondary education, technological path. Technical and vocational education consists of: vocational, technical education and post-secondary education.

⁴ Only some of its provisions apply beginning with school year 2011-2012

High school education includes the following channels:

- a) theoretical path;
- b) technological path with the following profiles: technical, services, natural resources and environmental protection;
- c) vocational pathway, with profiles: military, theological, sports, artistic and educational.

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 authorization 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 organize 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);**

5.2 IVET at lower secondary level

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).

At lower secondary level, Schools of Arts and Trades and the Completion Year represent Vocational Education. This represents the last two years from ISCED 2. 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.

TABLE 11: STUDENTS ENROLLED IN LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION (VALUES AND SHARE OF THE TOTAL), 2009							
GEO	TOTAL ISCED2	ISCED2GEN (NUM)	ISCE2 GEN (%)	ISCED2PV (NUM)	ISCE2PV (%)	ISCED2VOC (NUM)	ISCED2 VOC (%)
EU-27	22064045	21484802	97.4	335599	1.5	243644	1.1
RO	893166	893166	100.0	:	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 19-05-2011; last update: 13-05-2011.

5.3 IVET at upper secondary level (mainly school-based)

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.

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.

In 2009 the number of students enrolled in vocational schools decreased by 17% compared with 2008 and by 25% compared with 2007. Also, in recent years there was a decrease in the share of students enrolled in vocational education in total school population.

TABLE 12A: STUDENTS ENROLLED IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION (VALUES AND SHARE OF THE TOTAL), 2009							
GEO	TOTAL ISCED3	ISCED3GEN (NUM)	ISCE3 GEN (%)	ISCED3PV (NUM)	ISCE3PV (%)	ISCED3VOC (NUM)	ISCED3 VOC (%)
EU-27	20633767	10946188	53.0	:	:	9687579	47.0
RO	973615	353416	36.3	:	:	620199	63.7

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 13-05-2011.

5.4 Alternance training (incl. 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 cause at the very beginning was the legal requirement for enterprises willing to apply apprenticeship schemes and engage into apprenticeship contracts⁵ (which have been defined as a special 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

⁵According 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.

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 Programmes and alternative pathways for young people

In the pre-university education system can be initiated and organized educational alternatives, on the basis of regulations approved by the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Alternative education units have organizational and functional autonomy, in accordance with the specific alternative. To all forms of alternative education in Romanian language, in minority languages or foreign languages, can register and prepare any Romanian citizen. Teachers who teach in groups or classes of educational alternatives are entitled to recognition by the county school inspectorates and the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and also to training and refinements made by organizations, associations, federations which manages the development of such alternative nationwide.

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.

5.6 Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non tertiary) level (mainly school-based)

Outside the university sector, Romania has several post-secondary education institutions: post-high schools and foremen schools (*școli postliceale și școli de măștri*). 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.

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 specialization 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 (RO: “scoala de maistri”):

- Is organized 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.

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.

According to National Institute of Statistics the number of students enrolled in post high school education increased in 2010 by 12% compared with 2009 and by 14% compared to 2008. We have to mention that in 2009 73% of the students enrolled in post high school are in sanitary training profile.

TABLE 13: STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POST SECONDARY NON TERTIARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION (VALUES AND SHARE OF THE TOTAL), 2009					
GEO	TOTAL ISCED4	ISCED4GEN (NUM)	ISCE4 GEN (%)	ISCED4VOC (NUM)	ISCED4 (%)
EU-27	1501995	173928	11.6	1328067 (s)	88.4
RO	55089	:	0.0	55089	100.0

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 19-05-2011; last update: 13-05-2011.

5.7 Vocational education and training at tertiary level (mainly school-based)

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

TABLE 14: STUDENTS AT ISCED LEVEL 5 BY PROGRAMME DESTINATION (VALUES AND SHARE OF THE TOTAL) AND AT ISCED LEVEL 6 (VALUES), 2009						
GEO	TOTAL ISCED5	ISCED5A (NUM)	ISCED 5A (%)	ISCED5B (NUM)	ISCED 5B (%)	TOTAL ISCED 6
EU-27	19505749	16370782	83.9	2617882	13.4	517085
RO	1098188	1069723	97.4	573	0.1	27892

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 19-05-2011; last update: 13-05-2011.

5.8. Language learning in IVET

National curriculum for primary and secondary education focuses on eight key competences and the communication skills in foreign languages is one of them. Also, the national high school exam (Baccalaureate) involves (according to the Law 1/2011) a linguistic competence assessment in two foreign languages studied during high school. The result of competence evaluation is expressed by the corresponding Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Students that during high school promoted exams with international recognition for the certification of skills in foreign languages are entitled to recognition and equivalence of the results obtained in these tests, on request and according to a methodology approved by the Minister of education, research, youth and sport.

A methodology concerning the **promotion of multilingualism in Romanian school education** has been carried. The intention is to have a regulation concerning the way modern language departments are established and dissolved, that takes into account the general interest of promoting linguistic diversity. As shown by European recommendations and the needs of the labour market, there is a need for people who speak more languages. Every citizen should speak at least two modern languages. It is desirable that these languages are not always the same, and a diversity of European languages should be learned. This would improve the prospects of every graduate of school education in the labour market and would cover a demand that is disproportionately big now compared to the existing offer. At present, in Romanian school education, about 94 % of the workloads of foreign language teachers are represented by only two languages (English and French), a situation which does not respond to the real demand in the labour market but to a practical reversed approach which goes from the available staff towards the creation of workloads that satisfy this “staff” offer. This situation has led to an increase in the number of private language schools that satisfy the demand not covered by the public system, which contravenes the principle of equal opportunities provided in the Education Law (not all parents can afford paying for “alternative” modern languages for their children). This will lead to a regulation for the establishment and dissolution of departments for modern languages that are underrepresented in a particular area, as well as a motivational framework for decision-makers that would slow down and reverse the current process concerning the disappearance of underrepresented language departments. Some steps have been taken in the previous school year with the introduction of the German language in combinations of two specialities in which

competitions for teaching posts can be organised, but this measure alone is not sufficient and does not satisfy the interest of all underrepresented languages.

Theme 6 - Continuing vocational education and training*

6.1 General background

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 Short and Medium-Term Strategy of Continuous Vocational Training 2005-2010.

Short and medium term strategy for continuous vocational training (SFPC) 2005-2010 aims at developing a transparent and flexible system of continuous training that can to ensure increased employability, adaptability and mobility of the workforce and to meet the needs of firms for qualified workforce.

SFPC established two strategic objectives. The first strategic objective aims at increased participation in CVET and facilitating access for all people in the lifelong learning and the second aims to increase quality and efficiency of the CVT system through a results-oriented management.

One of the measures to achieve Euro Plus Pact target in the context of continuous vocational training are:

- Reform of the legal framework on adult professional training;
- Implementation of the simplified EU framework for the recognition of professional qualifications, in terms of reciprocity conditions, between Member States;
- Initiation of procedures regarding ranking of universities into categories based on evaluating the studies programmes and their institutional capacity: prevalent education universities, scientific research and artistic creation universities and advanced research and education universities.

By implementing the *National Training Plan for 2011-2013* - financed by the Unemployment Insurance Budget – Romania aims at providing training courses for 45,124 persons, out of which about 50% women and 18% older workers - over 45 years old.

One objective specified in the National Training Plan for 2011-2013 is *improving the vocational skills of the workers*, and it is focused on the reform of the legal framework on adult training. in order to adapt it to the legal provisions on the education system (Law No. 1/2011). Another action line focuses on *increasing the quality of employment of persons living in the rural area, youth and women*. In order to increase the employment quality in rural area, Romania finances the vocational training, business set up by young people, and micro-enterprises set up by persons living in rural area. During 2011-2013, the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development finances the vocational training of 14,287 persons, investments carried out by 8,766 young farmers, and the creation of approximately 20,000 new jobs.

* In case the national definition differs from the international one (see Annex I) the latter should apply.

In the **Integrated Strategy for the development of human resources development** from the LLL perspective 2009-2020 are included the following actions:

- Development of institutional and legislative framework favorable for equal access to training and labor market
- Training people that are socially excluded or at risk of exclusion
- Training of staff working with vulnerable groups.

Can be mentioned several initiatives of **social partners** which are examples of good practice:

- The MATRA project "significant agreements" trade unions from machine building affiliated to *CNSLR-frăția* and *NBS* established centres of expertise in training with bipartite leadership, first in naval and aviation sectors;
- Constructor's Social House (CASOC), a non-profit organization, operates and is financed in a bipartite system, trade unions and employers in the construction industry, providing training to the employees in these sectors, through the "House of Jobs (Crafts)";
- The Foundation Port of Constanta was established as a result of a collaboration between the National Federation of Trade Unions from Romania and dockworkers union from Denmark. Initially received support from the Danish Government and currently is an example of cooperation between trade unions and employers for training port workers;
- ETF project "Support for the active involvement of social partners to strengthen sectoral committees' members contribute to the training of sectoral committees members in the field of engineering and food industry.

Units and educational institutions independently or in partnership with local authorities and other public and private institutions and organizations: culture houses, continuing education providers, social partners, NGOs and others can organize local community centres for lifelong learning based on educational offers tailored for different target groups.

The main tasks of the community centres for lifelong learning are:

- to perform studies and analysis on the demand for education and training
- to draw up local plans in the field of continuous training
- to provide educational services for children, youth and adults through:
 - remedial programs designed to acquire key competencies, including educational programs like "second chance" or program of "priority education zones" for young adults who left early education system or who do not have a professional qualification;
 - programs for validating non-formal and informal learning results;
 - professional skills development programs for training / retraining, specialization and professional initiation;
 - entrepreneurial education programs;
 - personal development programs.
 - activities that promotes participation in lifelong learning for all community members.
- to implement the tools developed in Europe, Europass and Youthpass, language passport and continuing education portfolio.

The accreditation methodology, the periodic evaluation, the organization and operation of community centers for lifelong learning are approved by Government decision.

A SWOT analysis of the CVET (Presented in **Integrated Strategy for the development of human resources development**) revealed the following weaknesses:

- an unbalanced and insufficient institutional network of CVET, especially in rural areas;
- low rates of participation in education and training at all ages, especially in rural areas, leading to low competitiveness of the Romanian workforce;
- Insufficient development of national qualifications framework and the competences and skills certification framework of the training providers in the continuous training system;
- the continuous training supply is not consistent with the labour market requirements;
- a mismatch between qualifications, skills and labour market needs;
- Educational campaign to inform adults on the need, opportunities and learning benefits are almost non-existent and ineffective.

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.

In the same SWOT analysis mentioned above are revealed some opportunities of CVET:

- the participation of Romanian companies on the EU market that will determine the restructuring of the national economy sectors and therefore of the occupations;
- accepting the need for changing in enterprises which implies updating the knowledge, skills and abilities and correlating the training of the employees with technological changes;
- the development of national framework of qualifications and of the skills certification framework;
- the diversification of CVET financing from European Funds, the ESF interventions in Romania in the field of human resources development being considerable.

6.2 Formal learning* in CVET ⁽⁶⁾

The adults, being working age persons have access to vocational training. Vocational training for adults is made through initiation, qualification, specialization programs aiming at:

- Acquiring one or more relevant qualifications

⁽⁶⁾ Including adult participation in lower, upper-secondary, and post-secondary VET programs (make use of cross-references with the IVET Theme if necessary).

- acquiring a set of skills that enable a person to carry out activities specific for one or more occupations
- development of knowledge and skills specific to the same qualification, acquiring new skills, new technical skills.

Adult vocational training is managed by the CNCFPA (see Theme 4).

According to Romanian Labour Code (see 4.4) the vocational training of the employees shall have the following main objectives:

- Ø accommodating the employee to the requirements of the job or workplace;
- Ø obtaining a professional qualification;
- Ø updating the knowledge and skills specific to the job and workplace and improvement of the vocational training for the basic occupation;
- Ø vocational retraining determined by social and economic restructuring;
- Ø acquiring advanced knowledge, modern methods and procedures, necessary for the professional activities;
- Ø prevention of unemployment risk;
- Ø promotion and career development.

Also the Romanian Labour Code stipulates that the vocational training of the employees may take place in the following forms:

a) attendance to courses organized by the employer or vocational training service providers in Romania or abroad;

- Ø internships for vocational adjustment to the requirements of the job and workplace;
- Ø internships for practical training and specialization in Romania and abroad;
- Ø on-the-job apprenticeship;
- Ø individualized training;
- Ø other forms of training agreed upon between the employer and the employee.

According to Labour Code an employer that is a legal person with more than 20 employees shall develop and apply annual vocational training plans, after consulting the trade union or, as the case may be, the representatives of the employees. An employer shall ensure the participation of every employee to vocational training, as follows:

- a) at least once every two years, when it has at least 21 employees;
- b) at least once every three years, when it has less than 21 employees.

The expenses related to the vocational training, provided under the terms in paragraph (1), shall be borne by the employers.

The vocational training at employer level under special contracts shall be performed by a trainer. The trainer shall be chosen by the employer among the skilled employees, and shall have with a professional experience of at least two years in the field chosen for the vocational training. A trainer may provide simultaneous training for maximum three employees. The activity of vocational training shall be included in the normal work schedule of the trainer.

The on-the-job apprenticeship shall be organized on the basis of an apprenticeship contract. An on-the-job apprenticeship contract is a particular individual employment contract, under which:

- Ø the employers shall, besides paying a wage, provide the apprentice the vocational training in a certain trade connected to its field;
- Ø the apprentice undertakes to participate to vocational training activities and work under the supervision of the employer concerned.

An on-the-job apprenticeship contract shall be of limited duration.

Vocational training is organised on training levels, occupations, professions, trades depending on the needs of employers and adult skills and job requirements. In the vocational

training works the credit transfer system. Participants in training courses for graduation have to take an exam at the end of their theoretical or practical training. The examination is a set of theoretical and/ or practical tests stating the acquisition of the skills specific to the training program. The training provider can give the following types of certificates:

- graduation certificate for initiation or specialization programs
- professional qualification certificate for the training, retraining and apprenticeships at the workplace programs .

The Ministry of Education approves curricula, national assessment standards and the school network.

The Ministry of Labour its regional branches are responsible for the retraining and further training of the labour force. The National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) 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.

The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (CNDIPT) plays a major role in QA and developed the National Quality Assurance Framework) for VET in Romania, based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework and two main instruments for quality assurance at provider level: the Self - assessment Manual, based on the European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers and the Inspection Manual for external monitoring of TVET providers. CNDIPT is the main initiator of the proposal of generalizing the manuals at national level, for all VET providers and is the initiator of the National Reference Point , 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 CNDIPT include contribution to the development of policies and strategies on education and 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.

The National Adult Training and Qualifications Board (CNCFPA) is another entity involved in QA. Established as a tripartite body, with a consultative role in the field of adult vocational training, the CNCFPA 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.

Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Secondary Education (ARACIP) is also important in quality assurance. It is a public institution of national interest, belonging to the Ministry of Education, whose mission involves external evaluation of the quality of education offered by university education and other organizations providing education and approval, accreditation and evaluation units of pre-university education through inspection and developing standards, reference standards and performance indicators, evaluation methodologies as well as an institutional accreditation manual for the assessment of the good practice in quality.

Employment through vocational training is an active measure that holds in the first quarter of 2011, 3.60% of total outputs (the value of this rate was 4.24 in same period of 2010).

In Romania, the access to CVET courses was higher for employees with higher education that hold management or administrative position (see Table 15 A). The highest rates of participation to vocational training were recorded in the transport, financial banking and insurance industry. The lowest rates were recorded in construction and trade activities. The reasons for low take up and interest in vocational training are represented by the cost of the training and lack of availability locally.

TABLE 15 A: PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007

ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU-27	2.7	6	12.7	6.6
RO	0.2	3.5	8.4	3.3

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); extracted on: 24-05-2011; last update: 30-03-2011

From the persons who attended training courses organized by the National Agency for employment in the first quarter of 2011, 96% are unemployed out of which 93% were attending training courses financed by the unemployment insurance fund. According to a statistical bulletin "Employment, mobility, unemployment and unemployed social protection" from Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, 17% of the unemployed persons were hired after attending training courses. The high participation rate in training of the employed people and the low participation rate for the unemployed suggest that most training programmes are developed by employers and that the weight of the courses organized by ANOFM in the total number of training courses is not very high.

TABLE 15 B: PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007

WSTATUS / GEO	EMPLOYMENT	INACTIVE POPULATION	TOTAL	UNEMPLOYMENT
EU-27	6.6	6.3	6.6	7.1
RO	4	1.9	3.3	0.8

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); extracted on: 24-05-2011; last update: 13-04-2011.

6.3 Non-formal learning* in CVET

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. Persons wishing to be evaluated for the recognition of professional skills acquired in other learning contexts than the formal must address to 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 is issued if the candidate has been declared competent for one or more skills associated with a qualification or an occupation, according to the occupational standards.

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 and Qualifications 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 sure 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 CNCFPA. 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 CNCFPA statistics.

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 centres⁷ which 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.

Participation in non-formal education among young people whose average is about. 15% according to surveys (Institute of Education Sciences, 2010) is relatively high. This is due to:

- youth orientation to the European labor market which increases participation of youth in alternative education;
- increased professional and employment mobility;

⁷ 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;

- diversity of the courses in nonformal education meets the needs of personal and professional development of young people.

This could explain higher participation rates in non formal education.

TABLE 16 A: PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	Total
EU-27	15.6	31.4	51.5	31.3
RO	1.1	3.9	14.7	4.7

TABLE 16 B: PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007				
WSTATUS / GEO	EMPLOYMENT	INACTIVE POPULATION	TOTAL	UNEMPLOYMENT
EU-27	38.8	12.4	31.3	19.5
RO	6.6	0.6	4.7	2.5

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); extracted on: 24-05-2011; last update: 13-04-2011.

6.4. Language learning in CVET

In CVET, participation to language learning is not conditional on meeting any entry requirements except the payment of the fee (if applicable). In language courses the applicants must normally sit a test in order to place them in courses corresponding to their existing level of language competency.

6.5. Training programs to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market

According to the law no 116/2002, social exclusion , is defined by a peripheral social position, an isolation of individuals or groups with limited access to economic resources, political, educational and communication of the community, it is manifested by the absence of a minimum social conditions of life.

A socially marginalized person is considered one that receives financial aid because his individual income or the income of his family is less than the sum representing the national guaranteed minimum salary . In addition, the person in this situation must be in at least two of the following situations:

- Has no job;
- No housing (owned or in use);
- Lives in improper conditions;

- Has one or more dependent children or is part of a family with dependent children;
- Is elderly, not legally binding;
- Is classified as disabled people or disability;
- Has a dependent person classified as severely disabled, disability or increased degree I or II;
- Served a custodial sentence.

The main aim of the **Employment program for socially marginalized people in 2011** developed by the National Employment Agency is the social inclusion of young people facing the risk of professional exclusion.

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

The main tool which provides personalized accompaniment for young people in difficulty and facing the risk of professional exclusion, is the contract of solidarity between them and county agencies for employment. By this type of contract agencies are bound to provide mediation and counseling services to youth, to identify insertion employers and jobs suitable for the young people and to place them in the identified jobs.

The indicators defining the special program for 2011 are the following:

- a total number of people expected to be employed - 1285;
- solidarity contracts for a minimum of 1550 people;
- a number of 223 persons employed by providing information and counseling services;
- a number of 7 persons employed by organizing training courses .

The proposed measures to be implemented are financed from the unemployment insurance fund for 2011 . The provided amount is 36000 RON (aprox. 9000 Euro).

The measures implemented in the first quarter of 2011, in order to stimulate the employers to offer jobs to some disadvantaged categories were:

- subsidizing jobs for the employment of the unemployed older than 45 years or for the unemployed who are single parents (sole provider);
- subsidizing jobs for the employment of the unemployed who who have three years to fulfilling the legal conditions for retirement: 38 persons were employed, which represents 0.04% of the program, compared to 0.02% in the 2010;
- subsidizing jobs through the employment of graduates: 6.07% were schools of arts and trades graduates, 38,8 were upper secondary and or post secondary graduates and 55.13% were higher education graduates;
- providing counseling and assistance services for starting a business. Legal information, efficient management methods and techniques were provided.

In the **Ruraltin project** (integrated and customized services for rural youth) were organized free courses in the following fields: Communication, teamwork, negotiation, management, socio-educational animation. The courses are aimed only at young people in rural areas from the regions North-East, South East and South-Muntenia. In the first courses (which took place during 1-7 august 2011) 100 young people have participated.

Theme 7: Training VET teachers and trainers

7.1 Priorities in training VET teachers and trainers

Teacher training activity is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and it is performed in **The Teacher Training Centre (TTC)**(RO: Casa Corpului Didactic) which is a leading institution for providing in-service-training and professional development for teaching professionals, being the promoter of change and innovation required by the preuniversity educational reform. The teaching Training Centre works in partnership with institutions including academic societies, libraries, government organisations and NGO's. The TTC offers a large variety of courses covering all curriculum areas. The goals of TTC are:

- To organise training courses covering all curriculum areas in order to meet the needs of teachers and staff involved in education
- To strengthen and expand the network of trainers and collaborators of the TTC in their quality of associate teachers
- To create and produce educational software.

National centre for staff training in pre-university education (NCTPE) (RO: Centrul National de formare a Personalului didactic din invatamantul preuniversitar) was legally established following HG nr. 604/2001, with the purpose of ensuring the quality of training programs for the teaching staff, auxiliary staff and management staff in pre-university education, as well as guidance and control in pre-university academic institutions. The National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-university Education is a specialized legal organization under the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. In accordance with HG nr.2191/2004, 16 Regional Centers were set up for Training of the Pre-university Teaching Staff in order to evaluate, and counsel the in-service training activities at regional level.

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

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

- guidance and coordination of in-service training programs delivered in accordance with standards, criteria and methodologies approved by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth;
- initiation and unfolding of training activities and professional development activities in various educational areas, funded by national and international programs;
- dissemination and continuous up-dating of the existing offer of in-service training programs.

One project for the development of VET teachers is implemented by CNDIPT and it is known as "Training the teacher from vocational and technical education, profile Services in order to expand the modern method of learning *Training firm*".

The project is foreseen to last three years, with the implementation period from 2010 to 2013. The **target**-group of the project consists of 600 teachers from vocational and technical education, profile: services.

Also the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports develops a training program (2010-2013) known as "Training teachers in secondary education (ISCED 2-3), in order to use information technology and e-learning tools in teaching" in partnership with the University "Politehnica" of Bucharest, Technical University "Gheorghe Asachi" of Iasi, Pythia International SRL Bucharest and CSI-Piemonte Torino, Italy.

Continuous training program aimed at e-learning it is addressed to teaching staff from secondary education (ISCED 2-3), is accredited by the Ministry of Education, lasting 89 hours and has 25 transferable professional credits.

The subjects that are studied, are organized into five modules including:

- Elements of Information and Communication Technology;
- Teaching specialty;
- Training and computer-aided assessment;
- E-learning platform (Moodle)
- Mobile technologies in learning (mobile learning);

7.2 Teachers and trainers in IVET

7.2.1 Teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET

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, specialized 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 specialized training for those who wish to become teachers it is compulsory to take a psychology-pedagogy module organized by the Teacher Training Department, which exists in each higher education institution. The programs 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).

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.

7.2.2 Pre-service and in-service training of IVET teachers and trainers

For in-service training programs, the Specialized Committee for Accreditation establishes transferable professional credits based on the category, type and duration of the program, in accordance with OMEdC 4611/2005.

Pre-university teaching staff must accumulate, according to the accreditation methodology, at least 90 transferable professional credits over a period of 5 years.

Attending in-service training programs usually results in:

- *Certificate of professional competency of the teaching staff for in-service training programs with **90 transferable professional credits***

or

- *Certificate of in-service training of the teaching staff for in-service courses/stages with **60 transferable professional credits** .*

From the institutional point of view, the training for the didactic profession and career implies two big stages:

- **initial training**, taking place in universities, through programs of psycho-pedagogical studies. The national education law no. 1/2011 provides that a 2 years didactic masters program should be followed, as well as one year of practice in an educational unit, under the coordination of a mentoring teacher, with the purpose of forming the psycho-pedagogical competency of those who want to develop a teaching career.
- **continuous training** of didactic personnel realized after obtaining a definitive degree in the educational field, in 5 years time cycles, by following continuous training programs of accredited suppliers (e.g. Teachers' Centers, universities) and assimilating a number of 90 professional credits.

7.3 Types of teachers and trainers in CVET

7.3.1 Teachers, trainers and training facilitators in CVET

According to Law no 1/2011 staff working in lifelong learning can take the following functions: teacher, auxiliary teacher, trainer, instructor, evaluator, mediator, facilitator of Lifelong Learning, counselor, mentor, facilitator / tutor online, teacher support .

Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, together with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and National Agency for Qualifications, establishes the methodological norms to develop the status and the professional route for staff working in education, approved by Government decision. Training programs will include specific objectives of Lifelong Learning, such as: pedagogical competencies specific to the age and profile of the beneficiaries learning, skills to use modern information and communication technologies, competencies to facilitate learning in virtual environments, using project based learning and educational portfolios.

7.3.2 Pre-service and in-service training of CVET teachers and trainers

According to the_order no. 353/5.202/2003 (Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education) and to the order no. 80/3.328/2005 on the methodology for the authorization of adult training providers (RO: formatori). Authorization of training providers (trainers) is based on evaluation criteria, for a period of four years for each of the qualifications, occupations, competencies trainers organize training programs. In order to authorize training providers, CNCFPA establishes county authorization committees established county.

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)

Starting in 2011 and foreseen for finalization in 2013, MMFPS, MECTS and ANOFM are implementing programmes/projects to stimulate the CVT of employees and the involvement of the social partners in linking education and training systems with the labour market dynamic.

By reforming the legal framework on adult training during 2011, the legislation will be adapted to the legal provisions related to the education system and to improve the system authorization and the quality assurance system of CVT. Also, amending and completing the Law no. 279/2005 on apprenticeship at work reduces the administrative burden and facilitates the implementation of measures to stimulate the apprenticeship on job.

In order to strengthen the capacity of service providers for CVT it is foreseen to improve the quality of CVT by implementing projects for the authorized training providers. Their purpose is to introduce the quality assurance standards and the vocational skill development.

Other measures include in the National Reform Programme 2011 - 2013 regarding the improvement of the vocational skills of the labour force are:

- continuous vocational training for jobseekers - between 2011 - 2013 the National Agency of Employment offers free training programmes financed from the National Training Plan. For the year 2011, 45,124 persons are expected to attend these courses and after finishing the training, a labour market placement rate of 50% to be achieved within 12 months.
- continuous vocational training of workers - during 2011 - 2013 SOP HRD will have solid contribution in promoting the adaptability of workers to the labour market changes and to the technological developments. By the end of 2013, 354,000 employees will participate in CVT programmes.

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

- The National Agency for Employment has as main objective employment stimulation and increasing employability, ensuring equal opportunities on the internal labour market and fighting any forms of discrimination on the labour 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)
- 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.
- 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 and the continuing vocational training (CVT) offer.

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

- 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)
- Extending the exercise of firms/ simulated enterprises network - 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 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.
- 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;
- ACS - Anticipating changes on the labour market. The project is implemented by ANOFM between 2011 - 2013 and is financed from the SOP HRD (Priority Axis 4). The aim of the project is to increase the capacity of anticipating regarding the short and medium term developments on the labour market at local, regional and national level. The outcome of the project is to identify the adequate employment measures and to improve/develop new ones for a 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 the CEDEFOP Centre, being also an active partner in the CEDEFOP financed Pan-European initiative on the anticipation of the supply and demand for skill. In the frame of this initiative the Institute is responsible for the validation of projections for a number of eight countries, most of them in Central and Eastern Europe (RO,BG,CZ,HU,SK,SI), plus Greece and the FYR of Macedonia.

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:

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

Because assigning levels to qualifications has implications for wages, the approval of social partners is a requirement for these levels to be translated into the labour market reality. Involvement of stakeholders should not be restricted to the labour market representatives but also other stakeholders should be engaged since education and training have a role that goes beyond preparation for a particular profession. However labour market representatives do understand and support the need for education and training to provide not only technical learning outcomes but also more generic learning outcomes (e.g. key competences). The involvement of stakeholders requires time: stakeholders themselves need time and space to formulate their positions and views (e.g. sectoral organisations). Stakeholders have to understand the benefits of an NQF for their interests. This will require involvement of a wider range of education and training professionals. The involvement of stakeholders creates trust in the qualifications system: if involved in development and implementation of an NQF, stakeholders will create ownership of the framework. Furthermore, the involvement of national stakeholders will stimulate international trust in the NQF by making it more credible to external actors.

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.

Theme 9: Lifelong guidance for lifelong learning and sustainable employment

9.1 Strategy and provision

During recent years the guidance and counseling services have been developing quickly, including a rapid expansion of the network of counselor.

The Romanian guidance and counseling system is mainly based on two networks:

- education (university and pre-university levels);
- labour market (state run agencies for employment).

Since Romania is divided in 41 counties and the Municipality of Bucharest, each of the 42 administrative divisions has its own local Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance. The number of counselors at pre-university level is around 1600. IES (Institute of Educational Sciences) is the methodological coordinator of the school counseling network (1600 practitioners).

Counseling and guidance are part of the national curriculum, starting with primary school. Main contents: self-awareness, communication and social competences, the management of the learning process, career management and development, life style.

First regulated by the Law of Education (1995) and now by its current version (2011), which established the introduction of counseling centers throughout the educational system. Centers for Educational Resources and Assistance were established in 2005 by order of the Ministry of Education. They are functional since 2006 and they are entrusted with coordinating, monitoring, managing and evaluating the activities of school counselors.

Objectives:

- | the inclusion and support of all children during compulsory education;
- | additional support when the pupils' profile requires such an approach;
- | improving the educational process;
- | creating the proper conditions for children and youth to develop their personality in order to be integrated in social, school and professional life;
- | the involvement of parents in order to create an effective relation between school and the community;

Services provided:

- | Psycho-pedagogical counseling, career counseling;
- | Counseling for initial and continuous; vocational training;
- | Information services;
- | Additional services provided with the help of partners (e.g. universities, NGOs, etc.).

Counselor's Tasks:

- | To provide information and advice to students, parents, and teachers on various topics (knowledge and self-knowledge, the student's adaptation to the school environment, optimization of the student-parent-school relation, school drop, aggression/ violence, etc.)
- | Providing advisory services and courses for parents;
- | To propose and organize orientation programs for school, vocational and career guidance, in collaboration with other teachers.

- I Develop psycho-sociological studies on pupils' options for vocational and professional qualifications in high schools and other types of schools in the educational system.

Pupil allocation:

- I A counselor may be allotted to educational facilities with a cumulated population of 800 pupils/400 preschoolers.
- I In practice this means that larger numbers of children may be assigned to one counselor (over 1500 in some cases)
- I Some of the school counselors have work assigned in 3 or 4 schools. When this happens, the counselor can not spend more than 4-6 hours weekly in one school.
- I It would be desirable to have 400 pupils or less assigned to one counselor, in order to be efficient and to achieve quality educational goals.

Ethical aspects:

All the children who benefit from the educational services offered by the counselors are requested to have the agreement from their parents or their legal guardians to participate in counseling activities.

As we just declared earlier, there are two type guidance and counseling: based on education (university and pre-university levels) and labour market (agencies for employment).

Regarding the education network, the New Law on National Education no.1/2011 points out the fact that if in the case of primary education, the educational counseling is provided by the teacher in cooperation with parents and with the school psychologist, in the case of upper secondary education the guidance and counseling are provided mainly by the pedagogical assistance offices, organized 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 counseling activity is regulated by the establishment of career guidance and counseling centers in universities in order to facilitate the socio-professional insertion of graduates on labour market. Also, within each university, teacher assessment tools provide a criterion related to counseling and career guidance activity of students, respectively this regarding the relationship of the teacher with the students.

Regarding the labour market network for lifelong guidance, the agencies for employment are responsible for guidance/counseling especially for disadvantaged groups (mainly low-skilled people or unemployed). They offer information about training opportunities and also job opportunities, ensuring thus the necessary consistency between training supply and labour demand.

According to the article no.350 from the new law on national education no.1/2011, lifelong career guidance and counseling represents all services and activities that assist people of any age and at any time to make choices in education, training or work and manage their careers. Counseling and career guidance is carried out by units and educational institutions, universities, training institutions, employment services, labour and youth services.

In the present law, counseling and guidance include the following activities:
a) information about career, 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 curricular area "counseling and guidance";

- c) career counseling that helps people clarify their goals and aspirations, understand their own educational profile, to make informed decisions, to be responsible for their actions, to manage their career transition process at different times;
- d) employment counseling, which helps people to clarify their immediate goals in hiring, learn about the skills necessary to seek and obtain a job;

The Romanian system of information, guidance and counseling services is composed by several networks, centers or services, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, 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 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) specializing in counseling and guidance, psychotherapy, management and school administration. Attending post-graduate courses in Guidance and Counseling 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. It undertakes research in the field, designs working tools that meet counselors' professional needs, organizes short-term information/training programs for counselors working in the information, guidance and counseling network.

The Educational and Vocational Guidance Department within the Institute of Educational Sciences developed the following projects:

- **Monitoring system of graduates in the perspective of lifelong counseling-2007**-that aims to identify the counseling emphasis on career decision making and on perceptions of graduates in relation to lifelong learning and also to shape a monitoring system of graduated from the perspective of lifelong counseling and guidance.
- **Analysis of lifelong counseling needs-2006**-study on initial training programs counselors (university, master, postgraduate) in Romania and EU;
- **Education for social-professional insertion of pupils. Compendium of methods and techniques used in career counseling-2005-2005**-aims to indentify the relevant methods for career guidance;
- **Counselor training program in pre-university education-2006**;
- **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;
- **GIRC-Guidance Innovation Relay Centres-2005-2007**;
- **Euroguidance 1999-present**-aims to promote the European dimension in guidance and counseling and provide information on mobility;
- **GIANT-Guidance Innovative Actions and New Tools-2008-2010**;

Among the main measures and initiatives that facilitate cooperation between education and employment sectors in the area of lifelong guidance presented also in the National Reform Programme 2011-2013, we can mention:

- **the transition from unemployment or inactivity to employment:** during the period 2011-2013, the package of measures concerning the labour stimulation focuses on supporting the 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;
- **Reform of the legal framework on employment stimulation:**the modification and completion to the Law no 76/2002 on unemployment insurance system and the employment stimulation addresses the development of the 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 the informal and non-formal system; grading the financial support to the unpaid unemployed persons during the participation at the continuous vocational training (CVT) programmes; more flexible conditions for subsidizing the CVT programmes have been organized by the employers; the access of the unpaid unemployed persons to the mobility bonuses; the reduction of 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 are funded projects aiming at facilitating the insertion of unemployed people on 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 on integrated programmes. The integrated employment programmes include a comprehensive set of measures aimed at developing individual capacity for searching a job and employment (*vocational counselling and guidance*, personal motivation, vocational and entrepreneurial skills development), and facilitating the insertion on the labour market (labour mediation, setting up a business, etc.).
- During the period 2011-2013, the National Agency for 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 the 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. 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 agency employees to new forms of organization and management, due to legislative changes, by vocational training of the 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 personalized services to 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 customized employment services. The project budget is RON 18.5 million;

- **CAMPION** - *Autonomous and modern training centres by implementing a new organization*. The project aims to modernize and improve the institutional capacity of the 8 regional vocational training structures of the agency (Vocational Training Regional Centres for Adults) to become more competitive in providing quality services tailored to the market demands. At the same time, there will be agreed protocols and co-operation agreements with companies, other national and international training centres, and the 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 the unemployed people. The project budget is RON 20.9 million.

- **Improving the vocational skills of the labour force:** During the period 2011-2013, MMFPS, MECTS, 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 the labour market evolution.
- **Increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and ensure long term sustainability of the rural areas:** 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 the persons living in the rural area in entrepreneurship and non-agricultural fields*, as well as integrating the inactive persons on the labour market, including those who earned their living from the subsistence farming. Until 2013, it is estimated that 135,500 persons from rural areas are to participate to the integrated programmes dedicated to developing human resources and employment.
- **Link with Europe 2020 flagship initiatives:** according to “**An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs**” flagship initiative, 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 on 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.

9.2 Target groups and modes of delivery

The main target groups of guidance and counseling services are unemployed, persons who leave in the rural area, young people, persons belonging to vulnerable groups (the Roma people, disabled persons, young people aged under 18 years leaving the institutional child care system, persons benefiting by the minimum guaranteed income, homeless, and people living in remote communities).

As we said before, through the European Social Fund (SOP HRD) many projects aiming at facilitating the insertion of unemployed people on the labour market, especially those with a precarious situation (long-term unemployed) will be funded during the period 2011-2013. By the end of 2013, it is estimated that a total of 59,000 long term unemployed will participate on integrated programs (*vocational counseling and guidance*, personal motivation, vocational and entrepreneurial skills development) that will facilitate the insertion on the labour market (labour mediation, setting up a business, etc.).

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 the persons living in the rural area in entrepreneurship and non-agricultural fields*, as well as integrating the inactive persons on the labour market, including those who earned their living from the subsistence farming. Until 2013, it is estimated that 135,500 persons from rural areas are to participate to the integrated programmes dedicated to developing human resources and employment.

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 on the labour market*.

In this way it is aimed at developing specific programmes for (re)integration on the labour market of persons belonging to vulnerable groups and training programmes dedicated to acquire basic skills and qualifications. The programmes address the following categories of persons: the Roma people, disabled persons, young people aged under 18 years leaving the institutional child care system, persons benefiting by the minimum guaranteed income, homeless, and people living in remote communities. During the period 2011-2013, it is estimated to be set up 500 structures of social economy and 10,000 jobs within these structures of social economy, and 150,000 people will participate in training/ (re)training programmes for vulnerable groups.

As a national quality assurance mechanism we can mention the national strategy for quality assurance in education that is implemented by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university education (ARACIP-Agentia Romana pentru Asigurarea Calitatii in Invatamantul Preuniversitar).

This agency is responsible for:

- External evaluation of quality of education offered by pre-university schools;
- Licensing, accreditation and evaluation of pre-university schools.

The purpose of 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 was established a similar agency, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS- Agentia Romana pentru Asigurarea Calitatii in Invatamantul Superior). Thus, in order to ensure the quality assurance in education, we have two agencies-ARACIP and ARACIS.

The key Indicators for Quality Assurance are:

1. Share of VET providers who applies quality assurance systems;

2. Investments in teachers' and trainers' training;
3. Participation rate to VET programs;
4. Graduation rate of VET programs;
5. Placement rate after the completion of training programs;
6. Usage of skills acquired by training programs;
7. Unemployment rate;
8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups;
9. Need training identification mechanism;
10. Schemes to promote access to VET;

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 level 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, higher education both in formal and informal contexts from the lifelong learning perspective.

The Article 355 from law no.1/2011 stipulates the fact that the national quality assurance system of permanent education includes 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 national reference point for quality assurance in education and training, coordinates the harmonization of quality assurance in education and training.

9.3 Guidance and counselling personnel

The specialists in the Ministry of Labor network offering information, guidance and counseling 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 specialized in Career Counseling.

Nevertheless, one of the main problems confronted by decision makers regarding information, guidance and counseling policies is the lack of adequate pre-service training in counseling and guidance provided in Romanian universities. As stated above, students in psychology and educational sciences, sociology and social work faculties attend counseling and guidance training modules. It is however not necessary to have a Master degree in Counselling and Guidance in order to become counselors 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 counselors, 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.

Theme 10: Financing: investment in human resources

10.1 VET financing policy

For the interval 2011-13 active employment measures and other related labour-market incentives have focused on supporting job seekers in order to improve their skills through counselling programmes and vocational training. The modification and completion on the Law no 76/2002 on employment insurance system and employment stimulation stipulates the introduction of the following elements: providing free services to assess the skills acquired in the formal and non-formal system; grading the financial support to unpaid persons during the participation at the continuous vocational training (CVT) programmes, more flexibility conditions for subsidizing the CVT programmes have been organized by employers; the access of the unpaid unemployed persons to the mobility bonuses. The draft law will be promoted under the Parliamentary procedure during 2011.

During 2011 - 2013, the National Agency for Employment will implement the active employment measures from a budget of 793, 674 thousands RON. In the year 2011, the Employment Programme provides the inclusion in the active employment measures of 908,780 persons, out of which 20% young people, 40% women and 10% old workers (persons over 50 years old). By the measure provided by the programme, it is foreseen to be employed 324, 000 persons, out of which 20% young persons, 43% women and 12% persons over 50.

Also, through the European Social Fund (SOP HRD, Priority Axis 5) are funded projects aiming to facilitate the insertion on the labour market, especially of those in long-term unemployment. By the end of 2013, are expected 59,000 long term unemployed to participate in the programme. The integrated employment programmes contains a set of measures aimed at developing individual capacity for finding a job (vocational counselling and guidance, personal motivation, vocational skill development).

10.2 Funding for initial vocational education and training

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, Youth and Sports 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 period 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 IVET. 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 under-funded 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 specially 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.

10.3 Funding for continuing vocational education and training, and adult learning

10.3.1 Public funding schemes and mechanisms to finance CVET

According to the National Reform Programme 2011 - 2013 a key measure in reaching the employment rate target of 70% in 2020 is to improve the vocational skills of the workers.

There are two types of schemes for CVT financing:

a) Direct financing:

- Employers own funds (Commercial societies, national companies, autonomous national administrations, may cover staff training costs, Institutions financed from extra budgetary 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.

b) Indirect financing:

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

By the end of 2013, 45,124 persons will receive free training thru the *National Training Plan for 2011-2013*, financed by the Unemployment Insurance Budget.

During the period 2011 – 2013, the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) is implementing projects funded under the European Social Fund through SOP HRD (priority Axis 4):

- MedForm – the project aims to adapt the agency employees to new forms of organization and management due to legislative changes, by vocational training of the staff to meet the new requirement;

- Proself - PROMoting SELF-service services - the project aims to render more modern and flexible the system of providing employment services;
- 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.
- CAMPION – Autonomous and modern training centers by implementing a new organization. The project aims to modernize and improve the institutional capacity of the 8 regional vocational training structures of the agency (Vocational Training Regional Centers 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 centers, and the collaborative networks will be set up.
- ECOP – Performance-oriented continuous training dedicated to the professionals involved in the unemployment. It aims at increasing the level of professional, social, civic and communicational skills of the personnel involved in training the unemployed people.
- COMPROF - Increasing the level of professional skills for ANOFM staff in order to provide personalized services to unemployed, vulnerable groups and jobseekers.

10.3.2 Public-private cost-sharing

10.3.3 Collective (employer, employee) investment to finance CVET

10.3.4 Reaching the groups at risk through funding schemes and mechanisms

The National Strategy on equal opportunities between women and men 2010 - 2012 and the General Action Plan for the strategy implementation were endorsed by the GD No. 237/2010. The general goal is to improve the implementation of the gender equality policies for all national policies and programmes. From the labour market perspective two objectives are important:

- close gender pay gap - organize conferences at national level concerning the role of policies to reduce wage gap between genders, in partnership with trade union organizations, representatives of business area;
- encourage family and professional life reconciliation - organise campaigns to inform father about the importance of getting involved in the education of their children; publication about the importance of reconciliation between family and work etc.

The total budget for implementing the above objectives is RON 0.039 million.

Through the *National Training Plan for 2011-2013*, 50% of the persons that will receive training are women and 18% are workers over 45 years old.

By implementing the Employment Programme, out of the total number of persons that are expected to find a job, 20% are young people younger than 25 years, 43% women and around 12% workers over 50 years old.

Another action line mentioned in the *National Reform Programme 2011-2013*, focuses on increasing the quality of employment persons living in the rural area, youth and women. In order to increase the quality of employment in rural areas, Romania finances the vocational training and business set up by persons living in rural area. Between 2011 - 2013, The European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development finances the vocational training of 14,287

persons, investments carried out by 8,766 young farmers and the creation of around 20, 000 new jobs.

10.4 Funding for training for the unemployed

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:

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

In order to facilitate the transition from unemployment or inactivity to employment, Romania takes into consideration to develop new active employment measures and to adapt their implementation to the labour market needs. In the year 2011, by implementing the Employment Programme, it is expected to be employed 324, 000 persons.

During the period 2011 – 2013, the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) is implementing *Call center PES* project funded under the ESF through SOP HRD. The stated aim of the project is to increasing the quality and efficiency of services offered by the implementation of “call centers”. The project aims at developing opportunities for vocational guidance/training/development and socio-professional integration on the labour market of jobseekers by developing an innovative system for providing the information.

Abbreviations

- **CNDIPT** National Centre for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (RO: Centrul Național de Dezvoltare a Învățământului Profesional și Tehnic)
- **MMFPS** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (RO: Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale)
- **MECTS** Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (RO: Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului și Sportului)
- **CNCFPA** The National Adult Training and Qualification Board (RO: Consiliu National al Calificărilor și al Formării Profesionale a Adulților)
- **ANOFM** The National Employment Agency (RO: Agenția Natională 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 National 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 IVET

- 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

Main laws regulating the provision of CVET

- 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
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Agentia 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

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

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

Centrul Național de Dezvoltare a Învățământului Profesional și Tehnic (National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development): www.tvet.ro

Centrul Național de Evaluare și Evaluare (<http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c862/>)

Centrul Național de Formare a Personalului din Învățământul Preuniversitar (The National Centre for School Teacher Training): <http://www.cnfp.ro>

Consiliul Național de Formare Profesională a Adulților (The National Adult Training Board): 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

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

Agentia Nationala de Ocupare a Fortei de Munca(National Agency for Employment): www.anofm.ro