

**NEW PRIORITIES FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS PART OF THE STRATEGY FOR
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ET 2020)**

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Abstract

Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') enshrine the essential role the education and training play in addressing the current and future challenges Europe and its citizens are facing, and at the same time they confirm Member States' responsibilities for their own education systems.

The main purpose of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States so that the European Union can achieve its goal of becoming a world-leading knowledge-based economy.

Within 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, New priorities for European cooperation in education and training have been established, declined in concrete issues, of which, for higher education, we can retain for example: <Higher education systems should boost the knowledge economy and respond to society's needs>.

Through New priorities for European cooperation in education and training, the Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020 aims to correct the identified issues in the area of reference, through strategic objectives, the directions of action and the specific actions it foresees, and then, according to estimates, by 2020, the share of Romanian labour force with a high level of qualification should increase significantly.

The strategy responds to the strategic objectives for the 2010-2020 decade, with a focus on strengthening training systems to make them more attractive, relevant, career-oriented, innovative, accessible and flexible, tailored to the needs of the labour market.

The international commitments that Romania has taken under the Europe 2020 Strategy, correlated with the recommendations of the ET 2020 Strategic Framework, are also found at the basis of the legislative

instruments regulating the Structure of the accredited private higher education institutions (...) the "Athenaeum" University of Bucharest is part of.

Keywords: *Education and training, European cooperation, New priorities, Strategy in Romania, Strategic objectives, "Athenaeum" University of Bucharest.*

JEL classification codes: *K - Law and Economics/ K0 - General*

Preliminaries

Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), emphasizes that: education and training have a crucial role to play in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens, and efficient investment in human capital through education and training systems is an essential component of Europe's strategy to deliver the high levels of sustainable, knowledge-based growth and jobs.¹

At the same time, the Council of the European Union recognizes that it fully respects Member States' responsibilities for their own education systems.

By 2020, the main purpose of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States aimed at ensuring:

- „a) the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;
- b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue”.²

In a global perspective, by providing education, training and attractive research opportunities, the European Union will be able to achieve its objective of becoming a world-leading knowledge economy.

The Council of the European Union also points out that lifelong learning should be seen as a fundamental principle for the whole framework, covering learning in all contexts - „whether formal, non-formal

¹ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), 2009/C 119/02, Official Journal of the European Union, available on the website: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN), accessed on 21.07.2017.

² Idem.

or informal - and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning”.¹

For the period 2010-2020, European cooperation in education and training should be established in the context of a strategic framework - „the framework should address the following four strategic objectives:

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
4. Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training”.²

1. New priorities for European cooperation in education and training

Within 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), *New priorities for European cooperation in education and training* have been established as follows:³

“1). Relevant and high-quality knowledge, skills and competences developed throughout lifelong learning, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, innovation, active citizenship and well-being;

2). Inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences;

3). Open and innovative education and training, including by fully embracing the digital era;

4). Strong support for teachers, trainers, school leaders and other educational staff;

5). Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning and labour mobility;

6). Sustainable investment, quality and efficiency of education and training systems”.

The new priority areas are declined into *concrete issues*, for further work up to 2020, of which, for higher education, we (selectively) keep in mind the following:⁴

¹ Idem.

² Idem.

³ 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), *New priorities for European cooperation in education and training*, (2015/C 417/04), Official Journal of the European Union, available on the website: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015XG1215\(02\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015XG1215(02)&from=EN), accessed on 21.07.2017.

⁴ Idem, Annex - Priority areas for European cooperation in education and training (extract).

- = “Promoting the relevance of higher education to the labour market and society, including through better intelligence and anticipation about labour market needs and outcomes, e.g. tracking the career of graduates, encouraging the development of curricula, more work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between institutions and employers;
- = Promoting civic, intercultural, and social competences, mutual understanding and respect, and ownership of democratic values and fundamental rights at all levels of education and training;
- = Increasing synergies between education, research and innovation activities, with a sustainable growth perspective, building on developments in higher education;
- = Raising the attractiveness, for both genders, and the status of the teaching profession;
- = Developing strategic partnerships and joint courses, in particular through increasing internationalisation of higher education and vocational education and training;
- = Exploring the potential of the Investment Plan for Europe in the area of education and training, including by promoting funding models attracting private actors and capital”.

The 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission also shows that: „Member States will select, in accordance with national priorities, those areas and issues for work and cooperation in which they wish to participate”.

2. The Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020

In this European context, the Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020, approved by the Decision of the Romanian Government no. 317/2016,¹ proposes a coherent approach to initial training and ongoing training leading to the development of an accessible, attractive, competitive training system relevant for labour market demands, addressed to participants in lifelong learning.

The Strategy approaches in an integrated manner initial and continuing education and training and is complementary to the National

¹ The Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020, approved by the Decision of the Romanian Government no. 317/2016, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 347 bis of 06.05.2016.

Lifelong Learning Strategy 2015-2020¹ and the Strategy on reducing early school leaving in Romania².

The Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020 contains at Chap. III - Analysis of the current framework for the organization and functioning of training³, Forecasts of Labour Force Demand and Supply at the Horizon of 2025, the CEDEFOP Preliminary Study in 2015⁴ for the 2025 horizon, which highlights the following trends (point 39 of the Strategy):

a) employment is expected to increase slightly, but will remain below the level of 2008 prior to the crisis;

b) the highest increases in employment will be in the distribution and transport sector;

c) the largest employment opportunities, around 47%, will be for workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing, almost eight times higher than the 6% forecast for these occupations for the European Union as a whole (point 41 of the Strategy);

d) the highly skilled labour force will reach 39%, compared to 26.6% in 2013;

e) the increase in the number of jobs in Romania by 2025 is expected to be in the same sectors that have grown over the period 2008 - 2013 - services, distribution and transport and non-commercial services - the majority state sector, but in a slower pace than in the period immediately following the economic crisis.

According to CEDEFOP forecasts, between 2015 and 2025, the slow growth in employment and the aging of the labour force show that the demand for replacement in Romania is expected to provide almost all employment opportunities (point 40 of the Strategy).

The labour force in Romania is becoming increasingly qualified due to the fact that more elderly, less qualified people leave the labour market and more young people with higher education enter the labour market (point 43 of the Strategy):

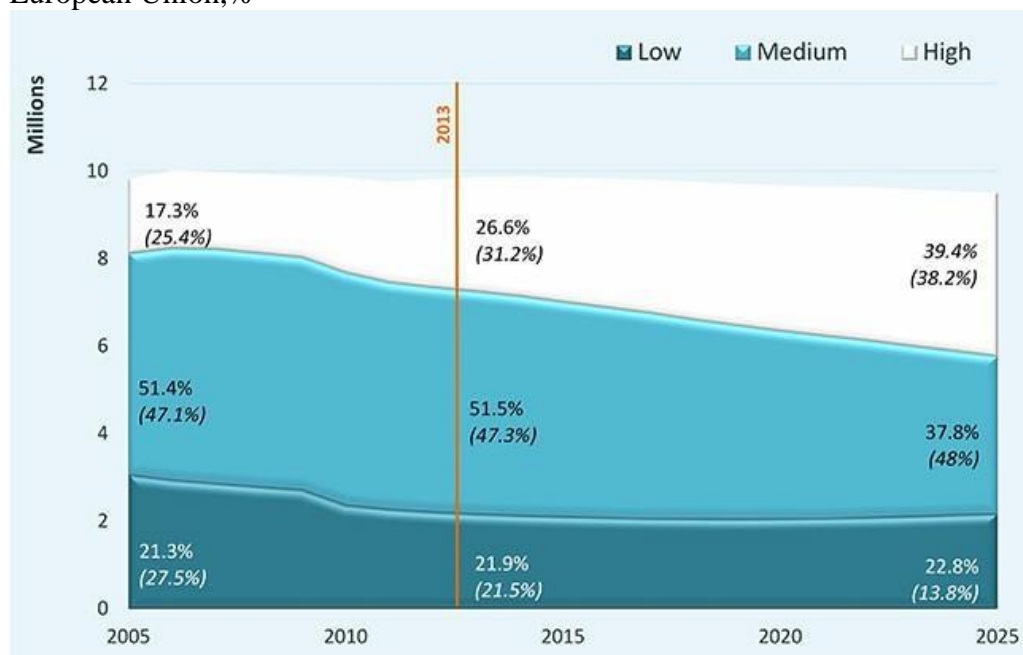
¹ National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2015-2020, approved by Decision of the Romanian Government no. 418/2015, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 448 bis of 23.06.2015.

² The Strategy on reducing early school leaving in Romania, approved by the Decision of the Romanian Government no. 417/2015, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 439 bis of 19.06.2015.

³ Study conducted in January 2014 by the National Institute for Scientific Research in the Field of Labour and Social Protection INCSMPS within the research and development project no. 3/21.11.2013 "Investment Incentive Models in Continuous Training at Firm Level" concluded with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly.

⁴ Cedefop - Romania Country forecasts Skill supply and demand up to 2025.

Labour market trends by skills, 2005-2025, Romania and the European Union,%



Data source: CEDEFOP - Romania Country forecasts - Skill supply and demand up to 2025

By 2025, the share of Romania's highly skilled labour force should increase to 39.4%, compared with 26.6% in 2013 and 17.3% in 2005.

Persons with average skill levels in 2025 will account for 37.8% of the labour force, compared to 51.5% in 2013.

The share of those with low or no skill is projected to remain at around 22% in 2025.

According to CEDEFOP's projections, by 2020, around 50% of the 30-34 year-old labour force in Romania will be highly skilled, higher than the EU target of 40%.

Based on the current trends, around 60% of the 30-34-year-old labour force in Romania will be highly skilled by 2025.

In these circumstances, the Strategy for Education and Training in Romania will have to ensure the continuation of the processes of training modernization, of connecting it to the needs of a European labour market and of responding to the priorities of national economic and social development (point 44 of the Strategy).

The education and training strategy establishes in Chapter V - Strategic Objectives and Action Directions for Training 2016-2020, as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: Improving the relevance of training systems for the labour market, having as strategic goal:

a) to increase the employment rate of young people aged 20-34, not included in education and training, with ISCED 3 and 4 education levels at 63% by 2020 compared to 57.2% in 2014¹;

Strategic Objective 2: To increase participation and facilitate access to training programs, with the strategic goals of:

a) increasing the share of students in technological secondary education and vocational education to 60% in 2020 compared to 49.8% in 2014²,

b) increasing adult participation rates in lifelong learning programs to 10% in 2020, from 1.5% in 2014³;

Strategic Objective 3: To improve the quality of vocational training, with the strategic goals of:

a) reducing school drop-out rates in technological secondary education and vocational education to 2% in 2020, from 4.2% in 2014⁴,

b) increasing the share of technological secondary education graduates declared successful in the baccalaureate exam to 60% in 2020, from 45% in 2014⁵,

c) increasing adult participation rates in lifelong learning programs to 10% in 2020, from 1.5% in 2014;

Strategic Objective 4: Development of national and international innovation and cooperation in the field of vocational training, with the strategic goals of:

a) increasing the total number of students involved in innovation and entrepreneurship growth programs to 50,000 in 2020, from 40,000 in 2014⁶,

b) increasing the total number of students involved in international mobility programs to 4,600 in 2020, from 2,800 in 2014.⁷

The Substantiation Note⁸ of Government Decision no. 317/2016, in Section 2 - The reason for the issuance of the present legislative instruments, point II, presents the results of the analysis regarding the evolution of the indicators, compared to the European average and the

¹ Eurostat, http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_ro.htm, Education and Training Monitor 2015.

² Idem.

³ Idem.

⁴ Internal data National Center for Development of Vocational and Technical Education.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Available on website: <http://gov.ro/ro/print?modul=subpagina&link=nota-de-fundamentare-hg-nr-317-27-04-2016>, accessed on 27.07.2017.

targets assumed by Romania for 2020, which were the basis of the adoption of the Strategy, from which we (selectively) render the following:

- the rate of early school leaving in Romania (18.1% in 2014, compared to the European average of 11.2%) is one of the highest in Europe, moving away from the national target of 11.3% for 2020;

- the reduced impact of career guidance services offered to secondary school students, which would make a significant contribution to informing and raising the awareness on the native abilities of students both by them and by the family and teachers;

- the employment rate of graduates aged between 20 and 34, at the latest 3 years after graduation, decreased after 2009; on the entirety of education levels, with a graduate employment rate of 66.2% in 2014, Romania is below the European average of 76.2% and away from the 82% target proposed at European level for 2020;

- in the aggregate of the active population aged between 20 and 64, the employment rate in Romania was 65.7% in 2014 (compared to the European average of 69.2%), with no significant progress in the analysed period against the 70% target, assumed at national level for 2020;

- the adult participation rate in lifelong learning programs was 1.5% in 2014, well below the European level of 10.5% and the 12% target proposed by Romania for 2020;

- the absence of company-sponsored training activities for 41% of employees over 40 and with low skills.

The forecasting research, "Proposals for measures and models to encourage continuous vocational training and expected effects - based on a foresight exercise with employers and managers" (carried out in 2013 by the National Institute for Scientific Research in the Field of Labour and Social Protection), among employers and managers in Romania, revealed that: on the one hand, in 2013 all employers considered the training of employees as important and with benefits, mainly in terms of increasing labour productivity, adapting products/services to market requirements and employee motivation at work; on the other hand, employers/managers complained of lack of own funds for professional training courses, lack of information or the difficulty of accessing funds for such activities (...).¹

The Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020 aims to correct the problems identified in the field of reference, through the strategic objectives, the directions of action and the specific actions it provides, in Chapter VI - Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy, which includes the administrative indicators, responsible institutions/structures and defined deadlines.

¹ Idem.

3. Structure, fields and specializations/study programs for “Athenaeum” University in Bucharest, in the academic year 2017/2018

The nomenclature of fields and specializations/academic studies programs and of the structure of higher education institutions for the academic year 2017-2018, approved by the Decision of the Government of Romania no. 140/2017¹, Annex no. 1, provides in the Fundamental Field - Social Sciences:

Branch of science - Administrative Sciences, Doctoral/ Master’s Degree Fields - Administrative Sciences, Bachelor’s Degree Fields - Administrative Sciences, Specialization - Public Administration/ European Administration/ Managerial Assistance and Secretariat/ Local Police/ Public Health Services and Policies/ Leadership in the Public Sector (in English).

At the same time, Government Decision no. 140/2017 provides in Annex no. 3 - The structure of the accredited private higher education institutions, the undergraduate study fields and the specializations/ study programs accredited or authorized to operate temporarily, the geographical locations where they are conducted, the number of transferable credits for each academic study program, the form of education and the language of teaching, as well as the maximum number of students who can be enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018, at point 10, for the “Athenaeum” University of Bucharest, no. 2: Faculty of Public Administration, Bachelor’s Degree Field - Administrative Sciences, Specialization/ Bachelor’s Degree Program - Public Administration, Accreditation (A), Form of education - Full time, Maximum number of students who can be enrolled - 50.

Also, Decision of the Government of Romania no. 117/2017 on the accredited Master’s study fields and programs and the maximum number of students who can be enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018² provides in Annex no. 2 - Master’s study fields and programs, the geographical locations where they are conducted, the number of transferable study credits for each academic study program, the form of education or the language of instruction, as well as the maximum number of students who may be enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018, within the accredited private higher education institutions, at point 10, for “Athenaeum” University of Bucharest, no. 1: Master’s Degree Field - Administrative Sciences, Name of Master’s Degree Program - European Administration. Public Institutions and Policies/ Executive Power and Public Administration, Geographic Location

¹ Decision of the Government of Romania no. 140/2017, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 230 of 04.04.2017.

² Decision of the Government of Romania no. 117/2017, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 218 of 30.03.2017.

- Bucharest, Teaching Language - Romanian, Form of Education - Full-time, Maximum number of students who can be enrolled - 50.

It is worth mentioning that, both in the content of the Substantiation Note¹ of Government Decision no. 140/2017, as well as in the content of the Substantiation Note² of Government Decision no. 117/2017, in Section 2 - The reason for the issuance of the present legislative instrument, point 1. The description of the present situation it is confirmed that: the provisions of these legislative instruments observe the international commitments that Romania has taken under the Europe 2020 Strategy and are correlated with the recommendations of the ET 2020 Strategic Cooperation Framework for Education and Training.

Conclusions

The development of the Strategy for Education and Training in Romanian for the period 2016-2020 was carried out in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which promotes smart growth, achievable through major investments in sustainable education, research and innovation, inclusive growth, with a focus on creating jobs and reducing poverty.

Given that the Member States will select, in accordance with national priorities, those areas and issues for work and cooperation in which they wish to participate and the Strategy for Education and Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020 provides for:

- on the one hand, in the Strategic Objective 1 - Improving the relevance of the vocational training systems for the labour market, par. a) Strategic target - Increasing the employment rate of young people aged between 20 and 34, not included in education and training,

- on the other hand, in the Strategic Objective 2 - Increasing participation and facilitating access to vocational training programs and in the Strategic Objective 3 - Improving the quality of vocational training, par. b) and par. c) a common strategic target - Increasing adult participation rate in lifelong learning programs, we advocate for the increase of the employment rate in parallel, including for young people included in certain education and training programs.³

¹ Available on the website: <http://gov.ro/ro/print?modul=subpagina&link=nota-de-fundamentare-hg-nr-140-16-03-2017>, accessed on 27.05.2017.

² Available on the website: <http://gov.ro/ro/print?modul=subpagina&link=nota-de-fundamentare-hg-nr-117-16-03-2017>, accessed on 27.05.2017.

³ All the more so, in a symmetrical way: The Strategy for Education and Training stipulates at point 58, in order to achieve the Strategic Objective 1 - Improving the relevance of education and training systems for the labour market, the next direction of action - 4. Improving **learning at the work place** in vocational training.

At the same time, in the Strategic Objective 4 - Development of national and international innovation and cooperation in the field of vocational training, par. b) having as strategic objective - Increasing the total number of students involved in international mobility programs, we advocate for correlative development of some national programs for their subsequent attraction on the Romanian internal labour market.¹

Against the issues raised in this paper, it can be concluded that the international commitments that Romania has taken under the Europe 2020 Strategy and the recommendations of the ET 2020 Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training are reflected in the content of the current national framework which regulates the organization and functioning of the education and training system.

In the same European context, regulations have been adopted such as those concerning the Structure of accredited private higher education institutions (...) the "Athenaeum" University of Bucharest is part of.

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2. Romanian legislation

Decision of the Government of Romania no. 140/2017 regarding the approval of the Nomenclature of fields and specializations/academic study programs and of the structure of higher education

¹ In the context where: The Strategy for Education and Training provides at point 58 for the fulfilment of the Strategic Objective 4 - Development of national and international innovation and cooperation in the field of vocational training, the next line of action - 18. Extending mutual learning and the exchange of good practices, in order to provide the premises for participation in an inclusive European labour market.

institutions for the academic year 2017-2018, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 230 of 04.04.2017.

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