

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13862686

## **„EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA” – ASPECTS REGARDING THE ROMANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Abstract:** *“Higher education” represents an important dimension of the “European Education Area,” holding a key role within population-centred policies regarding the development of a holistic approach to education, as established in the documents developed at the level of the European Union. Considering the EU-level target according that “The share of 25-34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45% by 2030,” the analysis of the comparative aspects related to the evolution of higher education, at the level of the member states of the European Union, reveals a constant increase in the share of people having higher education degrees, suggesting that the EU will exceed the objective for 2030 by a considerable margin. In this context, the Report on the condition of higher education in Romania 2022-2023, developed and published by the Ministry of Education, constitutes a complex analysis of the Romanian university education system, rendering a series of relevant aspects regarding the developments and perspectives outlined in the reference fields and as a whole. The rapid adaptation to global challenges requires new approaches of cooperation and mobility, and the Romanian universities have now the opportunity to connect with higher education institutions in the EU and outside it. The mentioned report includes Part I – “Analysis of the supply and demand of the higher education system”, Part II – “Relevant actions and outcomes obtained in the academic year 2022-2023”, and Part III – “Directions for development of higher education 2024.” These actions are drawn in accordance with the new Higher Education Law no. 199/2023 and with the strategic objectives of the “Educated Romania” Project, as well as with the requirements of education beneficiaries. The issue of “increasing the percentage of higher education graduates, in accordance with the provisions of the Europe 2020 Strategy” was analyzed by the Court of Accounts of Romania, as early as 2015, as part of a performance audit mission. Starting from the premise that the increase in the quality and competitiveness of education generates well-being, the need for studies to underlie adequate public policies that respond to current needs and challenges has been emphasized.*

**Keywords:** *European Education Area, sustainable collaboration, mobility, Romanian Higher Education, European indicators*

**JEL Classification System:** *K30 General*

## **1. Introductory Aspects: “European Education Area” - Relevant documents developed at the level of the European Union**

“*The European Education Area*” was grounded in decades of collaboration, in the context provided by “*The Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and training (ET 2020)*”.

“*The Council Conclusions on European Teacher and Trainers for the Future of May (2020)*” have confirmed the need to provide additional support to teachers for the development of their skills and careers, considering “*the role of teachers as cornerstones of the European Education Area*” (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2024).

In “*The Commission’s Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025*” (European Commission, 2020), having “*the key role of teachers*” in view, relevant actions were proposed for the training of competent and motivated teachers and were included in “*The plan to launch Erasmus+ Teacher Academies*”.

“*The Commission’s Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)*” (European Commission, 2021a) establishes the need for all teachers to have the skills to use technology effectively and creatively so that all learners develop the digital skills they need to learn and work “*in an ever more digitalised world*”.

“*The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies*” promotes “*sustainable collaboration*” and “*mobility (virtual, physical and blended)*”, in the field of initial and continuing professional education and training of teaching staff, the results being transferred in the framework of **the policy-making process in the field of pedagogical education at European and national level**, in order to achieve “*The European Education Area*” and the main objective, respectively to “*enhance the European dimension and internationalisation of teacher education*”.

“*Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025*” refers to both early childhood education and higher education, research and adult education, which hold “*a key role*” within the population-centred policies needed to develop “*a holistic approach to education and training*” (European Commission, 2020).

“The Commission proposes to consolidate ongoing efforts and further develop the **European Education Area along six dimensions**”:

„1. **Quality**

2. **Inclusion and gender equality**

3. **Green and digital transitions**

4. **Teachers and trainers**

5. **Higher education**: The European higher education systems should aim at:

- Closer and deeper cooperation between higher education institutions,...
- A policy framework across borders that allows for seamless transnational cooperation, ...,
- Higher education institutions as central actors of the “knowledge square”: education, research, innovation and service to society, ...,
- Automatic recognition of qualifications and study periods abroad...,
- A stronger focus on specialised education programmes in advanced digital skills, ...,

6. **Geopolitical dimension**: The change in the global order (e.g., the rise of China, retreat of the US from the multilateral order) calls for strengthening European international cooperation, including in education” (European Commission, 2020, pp. 6-13).

## 2. Comparative aspects regarding the evolution of higher education at the level of the EU member states

✓ **Education and Training Monitor 2023 - Higher education (European Union, 2023, pp. 52-64)**

Tertiary educational attainment - EU-level 2030 target: „**The share of 25-34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45% by 2030.**”

At the level of the European Union, a **steady increase in the proportion of people with higher education** is estimated, so that the EU will exceed the 2030 target by a considerable margin, already exceeding 45% around 2025. Between 2021 and 2022, **most European countries saw an increase in the tertiary education graduation rate** of 0.5 percentage points or more (13 countries), although there were also EU countries where the graduation rate decreased of more than 0.5 percentage points (5 countries: Slovenia, Denmark, Hungary, Luxembourg, and Portugal).<sup>1</sup>

The 2023 edition of the *Dashboard* on mobility in higher education shows that **progress has been made in the development and implementation**

**of policies conducive to educational mobility**, but there are still areas for improvement in all education systems in the EU.<sup>2</sup> At least half of education systems in the EU meet all or most of the criteria for the indicators in the *Dashboard*, with the exception of *support for disadvantaged learners*.

The mobility of credits financed within the framework of EU programmes involved the **majority of mobile credit graduates at bachelor's and master's level studies** (52.8%). EU-funded programmes supported more than 80% of mobile credit graduates in 16 EU countries.

There are only four countries where less than 50% of mobile credit graduates took part in EU-funded programmes: the Netherlands (40.0%), Denmark (37.8%), France (37.5%) and Sweden (37.0%).

In **2021**, there were more than 305,000 mobile graduates from tertiary education programmes at bachelor's and master's level in the EU. **The number of mobile university graduates in EU countries increased by 23.3%** in the last 5 years, and **the number of graduates who completed a full cycle in a country other than their country of origin constituted 8.4% of the total graduates at the time of reporting** of these education levels in the EU (an increase of 1.3 percentage points compared to **2017**).

From **2017 to 2021**, the **share of bachelor's, master's and internal mobility master's graduates increased in all but five of the EU countries**.

In relation to the number of graduates in their education systems, Luxembourg (55.39%), Austria (21.2%) and the Netherlands (18,8%) have the greatest share.

In absolute numbers, France (78,593), Germany (53,250) and the Netherlands (32,096) host the most mobile graduates.

Thus, **the proportion of graduates who obtained a full degree in a country other than their country of origin, known as degree mobility, continued to increase**, and the large number of non-EU graduates (representing 71.0% of total degree mobility) is proof of **the attractiveness of the EU as a study destination**.<sup>3</sup>

✓ **At the OECD level**, the issue is addressed through assessments, surveys and comparative analyses of educational policies developed and implemented in different countries, including regarding *student performance and teacher training* (OECD iLibrary, 2020).

✓ **The European Union cooperates with EU Member States** to support higher education to develop and contribute to Europe's resilience and recovery (European Commission, 2021).

**Higher education has an essential role:**

- „in achieving the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), in synergy with the European Higher Education Area
- in shaping sustainable and resilient economies, and in making our society greener, more inclusive and more digital
- in providing highly skilled Europeans with excellent prospects for employment, and engaged citizens participating in democratic life - 80% of recent tertiary graduates in the EU gain employment in less than 3 months after graduating” (European Commission, 2021b).

### **3. Aspects concerning the condition of higher education in Romania - developments and perspectives – *The Report of the Ministry of Education (2022-2023)***

Starting from 2005, the Ministry of Education developed and published an Annual Report for the monitoring and evaluation of the condition of the higher education system in Romania, in order to ensure the foundation of educational policies. *The report on the condition of higher education in Romania 2022-2023*, (2022–2023 Report), represents a complex x-ray of Romanian higher education, in the reference academic year, necessary for the operationalization of the changes introduced by the new *Higher Education Law nr. 199/2023 (2023)* Entered into force in September 2023, the law allows the start of the necessary reforms within the university education system, provided for in the “*Educated Romania*” Project (Ministry of Education 2022–2023), a project that responds to global challenges (green and digital transition, climate change, demographic developments, the emergence and intensification of the use of artificial intelligence, media influences, the needs of social inclusion and combating discrimination, etc.) (Government of Romania, Ministry of Education, 2023).

The vision of the “*Educated Romania*” Project seeks that, by the year **2030**, Romanian higher education become a fair and quality one for all students, a system that prioritizes *the needs of the student*, in which *good governance, ethics* and *integrity* are “*fundamental values*”. In this context, in order to rapidly adapt to a changing world, Romanian universities can connect with higher education institutions in the EU and outside it, with the need of “*new approaches, cooperation and mobility*”.

The principles of student-centred higher education, provided for in the *Higher Education Law no. 199/2023*, mainly aims at: (1) *sustained interaction between students and teachers*; (2) *collaboration and dialogue among members of the academic community*; (3) *active learning, empowering students to develop*

*critical thinking; (4) continuous improvement of progressive learning based on summative assessments; (5) effective learning by realistically setting the time needed for teaching, individual study and assessment; (6) communicating and clarifying expectations - expected learning outcomes - as well as evaluation criteria; etc.*

In **Part I – “Analysis of the supply and demand of the higher education system”**, the **2022 - 2023 Report** contains statistical data on the developments recorded in recent years at the level of the higher education system in Romania, from which we reproduce some relevant aspects (2022–2023 Report, quoted docs., pp. 12 -51).

✓ **Access and participation**

Demographic trends in recent years have highlighted **the decline of the resident population of higher education age**.<sup>4</sup> In the last two university years, **the total number of students enrolled in higher education has decreased**, both in state and private education. In the **2022/2023** academic year, **538,720 students** (88.3% in state higher education institutions and 11.7% in private education institutions) were enrolled in the higher education system (for all study cycles).<sup>5</sup>

• **Cycle I – Bachelor’s university studies:**

In the **2022/2023** academic year, **410,181 students were enrolled in bachelor’s programmes, down by over 5.6 thousand students compared to the previous year** (87% of students in state education and 13% in private education). There are **fundamental fields of study with a large number of students** (*Business, administration and law, Engineering, manufacturing and construction, Health and social care*) and **others with a small number** (*Educational sciences, Services and Natural Sciences, Mathematics and statistics*). The maximum enrolment capacity in the first year was 132,215 places (89.9% in state institutions and 11.1% in private ones). In private education, the field of *Business, administration and law* is overrepresented (55.6% of all students were enrolled in specializations in this field).

• **Cycle II – Master’s university studies:**

In the **2022/2023** academic year, **the master’s degree cycle included 102,975 students, down by over 9 thousand compared to the previous year** (91.4% of them were included in state education and only 8.6% in private education). The number of students was **higher in certain core fields of study** (*Business, Administration and Law, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction*) and **very low in others** (*Health and Social Care, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary Sciences, Educational Sciences*). Almost

60% of students in private master's programmes were enrolled in *Business, Administration and Law*, compared to just over 20% in state education. At the level of **2022/2023**, **3,476 people attended in postgraduate programmes**, of which **almost two thirds were enrolled in the field of *Educational Sciences***.

- **Cycle III - University doctoral studies:**

In the **2022/2023** academic year, **21,803 people were enrolled in doctoral university studies**, compared to **22,240** people enrolled in the **2021/2022** period, **down compared to the previous year** (by 437 people).<sup>6</sup> The highest percentages of PhD students were registered in the fields of *Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction* (27%) and *Health and Social Care* (22%), and the **lowest in *Educational Sciences*** (1%), *Services* (2%) and *Information and Communications Technologies* (4%).<sup>7</sup>

- ✓ **Pass rate in undergraduate university education** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., pct. 1.3.1.)

In recent university years, **the pass rate in undergraduate university education has declined**. In the **2021/2022** academic year, **the pass rate was 85.2%**. Compared to the previous year, **the share of students who passed decreased** and the share of those declared repeaters, with an unfinished situation, with interruption of studies or with abandonment during the academic year, increased (14.8%).<sup>8</sup> In the reference period, **the highest values of the passing rate were recorded in the fields of: *Educational Sciences*** (91.5%) and *Health and Social Care* (94.8%), and the lowest in the fields of *Engineering, Manufacturing and Constructions* (80.9%) and *Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics* (81%).<sup>9</sup>

- ✓ **Graduates of higher education** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., pct. 1.3.2.)

After a relatively constant increase in recent years, at the end of the academic year **2021/2022** a number of 125,580 people **graduated from higher education with a degree**, the value being **lower than the previous year**, (131,534 people), **in all study cycles** (bachelor's, master's, doctoral, postgraduate programmes).<sup>10-</sup>

- ✓ **Graduates of Bachelor's university education**

The analysis of the distribution of Bachelor's university education graduates (with or without a bachelor's degree) by the fundamental fields of study highlights: high shares, throughout the analysed period, in the fields of *Business, Administration And Law* (25-30%), *Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction* (16-19%) and *Health And Social Care* (12-15%); **reduced shares (3-5%) at the level of *Educational Sciences*, *Services*, *Agriculture*, *Forestry*, *Fish Farming And Veterinary Sciences*, *Natural Sciences*, *Mathematics and Statistics***.<sup>11</sup>

✓ **Graduates with a Master's university degree**

The end of the **2021/2022** academic year saw a drop in numbers (38,457 graduates). The analysis of the distribution of graduates with a master's degree by the fundamental fields of study highlights: the largest shares in the fields of *Business, Administration and Law and Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction*, the lowest shares in the fields of *Agriculture, Forestry, Fish Farming and Veterinary Sciences and Health And Social Care*.<sup>12</sup>

✓ **Graduates with a doctoral and postdoctoral university degree**

At the end of the **2021/2022** academic year, **the number of people who obtained doctoral and postdoctoral university degrees was decreasing compared to the previous year**. Out of 2,263 graduates: most PhD degrees were obtained in the fields of *Arts and Humanities* (20.2%), *Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction* (18.6%) and *Health and Social Care* (18.6%), and **the least in the fields of Educational Sciences (1.6%), Information and Communication Technologies (2.3%) and Services (3.8%)**.<sup>13</sup>

✓ **Human resources in higher education** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., section 1.4.)

In the academic year **2022/2023**, **the number of employees in higher education was 51,048 people, in a slight increase compared to the previous year**, (over 90% of the total teaching staff teach in state higher education and only 10% in private education, and over half is in the 40-54 age range)<sup>14</sup>.

✓ **The number of students assigned to a teaching staff member** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., section 1.4.3.)

In the academic year **2022/2023**, **the ratio between the number of students and that of teaching staff was 15.4, decreasing compared to the previous year, and the number of students per teaching staff was higher in private education (21.7), compared to state education (14.8)**.<sup>15</sup>

✓ **European indicators**

**The graduation rate of tertiary education in Romania is low**, and the number of students is decreasing. In **2022, 24.7% of Romanians aged between 25 and 34 had a tertiary education degree, compared to the EU average of 42%**. The figure remains low due to generally low participation in higher education, high dropout rates from tertiary education and, in part, emigration. The most recent data available shows that between 2011 and 2021, the number of students enrolled in a bachelor's programme has fallen by more than 20%, including due to demographic factors. At the same time, early school leaving, low baccalaureate pass rates and a high rate of students who do not take the baccalaureate exam limit the number of young people who could enrol in higher education.



**Part II of the 2022-2023 Report – “Relevant actions and results achieved in the academic year 2022/2023”** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., pp. 52–78), to achieve the objectives assumed by the “*Educated Romania*” Project, covers aspects such as:

1. “**Ensuring the normative framework of the higher education system**”, in the 2022/2023 academic year, 89 normative acts were developed, regarding the organization and operation of the higher education system.

2. “**Participation in forms of higher education**” – “*Reviews and support studies for the foundation of public policies for higher education*”, from which we exemplify:

Within the Project POCU – “*Quality in higher education: internationalization and databases for Romanian education*” - implemented by UEFISCDI and ME (the Project POCU, 2022), studies and reviews were carried out that focused on the issue of access to higher education, including the definition and use of an instrument for measuring dropout in Romanian higher education, **the dropout rate being measured for the first time.**

**In Part III of the 2022-2023 Report – “Directions for the development of higher education 2024”** (2022-2023 Report, quoted docs., pp. 79-84), it is stated that these directions are drawn in accordance with the *Higher Education Law no. 199/2023* and in accordance with the strategic objectives of the “*Educated Romania*” Project, as well as with the requirements of the beneficiaries of education, from which we selectively reproduce the following:

**1. „Increasing participation in university education”**

- increasing material/financial support for students from disadvantaged groups,

- the development of dual-type higher education, reconnecting the economic environment with the university environment,

- multiplication of analyses and studies specific to higher education (such as monitoring the professional insertion of graduates in the labour market);

**2. “Increasing participation in lifelong learning”**

- the implementation of the Global Convention for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, adopted in Paris on 25.11.2019 and ratified by Romania through Law no. 164/2021 (2021);

**3. “The internationalization of higher education in Romania”**

- the development of periodic studies and analyses to monitor the degree of internationalization of Romanian higher education,

- accelerating the digitization of Erasmus+ mobility administration,

- the establishment of a new programme aimed at training Romanian specialists in key fields, at prestigious European institutions;

**4. “Increasing the capacity of university management to implement national policies”**

- the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the insertion of graduates on the labour market,

- monitoring, evaluating and improving the infrastructure and the capacity of universities to implement various national policies;

**5. “Increasing university autonomy in terms of the use of own funds and human resources policies”**

- implementing the principles of good governance, ethics and academic integrity, to increase the trust of the general public and international partners;

**6. “The quality of doctoral studies and the consolidation of an ethical climate in the university environment”**

- intensifying the support offered by universities to PhD students, to encourage their originality,

- harmonization of university ethics codes with developments at the level of the *European Higher Education Area* (European Commission, 2024),

- expanding the obligation to attend ethics and academic integrity courses in all academic study cycles;

**7. “Supporting partnerships, opening up to society”**

- supporting exchanges of experience and good practices, in order to support university representation and affirmation on a national and international level;

**8. “Developing a digital ecosystem for university education”**

- the digitization of educational processes in higher education, including the training and development of advanced digital skills for teachers and students,

- the development of projects regarding the digitization of universities, financed from PNRR,

- the correlation of data collection tools with the National Institute of Statistics and the operationalization of IT systems for higher education.

#### **4. Expert opinions expressed in other reports/studies/reviews, in relation to the issue of higher education in Romania**

The problems faced by the Romanian higher education have been a constant concern of the specialists and with various topics were approached in the publicly expressed opinions, such as: “*The quality of the students, the level of instruction*”, “*Desynchronization between the study programmes and the requirements of the labour market*”, “*Avoidance of the teaching profession*”

by graduates”, “Involvement of technology in education and research”, “Bureaucratization of education”, “Financing of education and research”, “Youth migration, loss of human resources”, etc. (Badea, n.d.)

Specialized circles estimated about the **academic year 2022/2023** that “...it is prefigured to be twice as complicated, because an overlap of crises - financial, energetic, social, legislative is taking shape”, and rendered aspects such as: “*Outlook for fierce competition in the university education market*”, “*The number of teaching staff in higher education continues to decline*”, “*Higher education quality and universities’ rush for students*” (Gheorghiu, 2023). At the same time, the **Ministry of Education** (2021-2022) published the *Report on the condition of higher education in Romania 2021-2022* the aspects of its content being commented on in the approved media, in the sense that: in the last decade, the graduation rate of higher education (aged between 25-34 years) has not significantly improved, **a long-term stagnation trend** being recorded, the low levels of higher education graduation rates being determined by causes such as high early school leaving rates, low baccalaureate pass rates and **low levels of participation in higher education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds**.

“*Equality of access and opportunity remains a significant challenge, with a particularly low rate of completion of tertiary education in rural areas*” (Tanase, 2023). As early as **2015, the Romanian Court of Accounts** (2015) analysed, as part of a performance audit mission, the issue of “*increasing the percentage of higher education graduates, in accordance with the provisions of the Europe 2020 Strategy*”, over a period of 5 years (2011-2015), and the Synthesis of the Report drawn up as a result of this mission presented numerous elements and important assessments for the state and evolution of this phenomenon, from which we continue to capture some aspects.

Fierce competition on the higher education services market will force universities to reform and increase the quality of educational services provided (The Romanian Court of Accounts, 2015, p. 5). One of the basic pillars on which the *Europe - 2020 Strategy* is built is education, however not the one reduced to statistical measurements, but that education that, through quality and competitiveness, generates knowledge, skills, employability, productivity and finally **well-being** (The Romanian Court of Accounts, 2015, p. 12).

The contraction of higher education will be considerable, and the competition on the educational services market will be fierce, a situation that can represent a chance for Romanian higher education **to increase the quality of university training** (The Romanian Court of Accounts, 2015, p. 25).

Romania has lost a substantial part of its highly skilled workforce and the process is unlikely to ease in the future. The emigration of the labour force relieved but also destructured the market, and some areas began to experience an acute shortage of highly qualified labour. In this context, the problem of carrying out studies to inventory the specializations most vulnerable to emigration and those in which a significant internal restructuring is recorded, so that they can be considered for the **foundation of differentiated financing policies**, is becoming more and more acute (The Romanian Court of Accounts, 2015, p. 66).

## Conclusions

Higher education occupies a key position in the service of society and the economy. In the context in which EU member states have set the objective that, **by 2030, at least 45% of people between the ages of 25 and 34 will obtain a higher education degree, a constant increase in the share of persons with higher education** is estimated at the EU level.

Evidence of the **EU's attractiveness as a study destination** is the large number of graduates from outside the EU, with an increasing share of graduates who have obtained a full degree in a foreign country, known as **degree mobility**. Although **progress has been made in the implementation of educational mobility-friendly policies**, there are still areas for improvement in all EU education systems, with **support for disadvantaged learners** still needed. Relevant data regarding the developments and perspectives of Romanian higher education can be found in the *Report on the condition of higher education in Romania 2022 - 2023*, prepared by the Ministry of Education.

*Higher Education Law no. 199/2023* allows the start of the necessary reforms within the university education system, provided for in the "Educated Romania" Project, so that, by 2030, Romanian higher education become a fair and high-quality one for all students. Demographic trends in recent years highlight **the decrease of the resident population of higher education age, and the total number of students enrolled in Romanian higher education is decreasing**. Looking at **university bachelor's and master's studies**, at the level of **2022/2023**, there were **fundamental fields of study with a large number of students** (*Business, Administration and Law*) and **others with a small number** (*Educational Sciences*), while in **postgraduate programmes, almost two-thirds of the students were enrolled in the field of Educational Sciences**. Also, the number of people enrolled in **doctoral university studies was decreasing compared to the previous year**, in the academic year **2022/2023** the lowest percentage of PhD students being recorded in the field of *Educational Sciences* (1%).

**The pass rate in bachelor's university education has decreased** in recent academic years, during which **the field of *Educational Sciences* recorded high values of the pass rate** (91.5% in the 2021/2022 academic year). With regard to the **distribution of bachelor's university education graduates** (with or without a bachelor's degree) on the fundamental fields of study, **low shares were highlighted in the field of *Educational Sciences* (3 - 5% in the period 2014 - 2022).**

At the end of the 2021/2022 academic year, **the number of people who graduated from higher education with a degree was decreasing compared to the previous year, for all study cycles** (bachelor's, master's, doctoral, postgraduate programmes), and **the fewest doctoral degrees were obtained in the field of *Educational Sciences* (1.6%).**

Looking at **human resources in higher education**, at the level of 2022/2023, **the number of employees was slightly increasing compared to the previous year** (more than 90% of the total teaching staff teaches in state higher education). **The ratio between the number of students and that of teaching staff was decreasing compared to the previous year, the number of students per teaching staff being higher in private education (21.7), compared to state education (14.8),** which can lead to a decrease in the quality of the educational act in private education.

**European indicators show that the graduation rate of tertiary education in Romania is low, and the number of students is decreasing,** due to generally low participation in higher education, high dropout rates from tertiary and part-time education, due to emigration and demographic factors.

**The results obtained in the academic year 2022/2023,** in order to achieve the objectives assumed by the "*Educated Romania*" Project, were based on relevant actions such as **ensuring the normative framework of the higher education system**, through the elaboration of 89 normative acts, as well as numerous analyses and support studies for the **foundation of public policies for higher education**, the dropout rate being the first to be measured.

**The directions for the development of higher education in 2024** were drawn in accordance with the *Higher Education Law*, in accordance with the strategic objectives of the "*Educated Romania*" Project and with the requirements of the beneficiaries of education, aiming among others: **increasing participation in university education and forms of education throughout life, the internationalization of higher education in Romania**, increasing university autonomy and the ability to use financial and human resources, increasing the quality of doctoral studies and **consolidating an ethical climate in the university environment, developing a digital ecosystem for university education**, etc.

In the **Report of the Romanian Court of Accounts (2015)** it was estimated that: on the one hand, the higher education services market will force universities to reform and increase **the quality of the educational services** provided, due to the considerable contraction of higher education and increased competition, and on the other hand, **Romania has lost a substantial part of its highly qualified labour force, and the process is difficult to mitigate in the future**, as studies are needed to show the specializations most vulnerable to emigration, in order to be considered for the **foundation of some** adequately differentiated **funding policies**.

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## Endnotes

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