
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

ROMANIA





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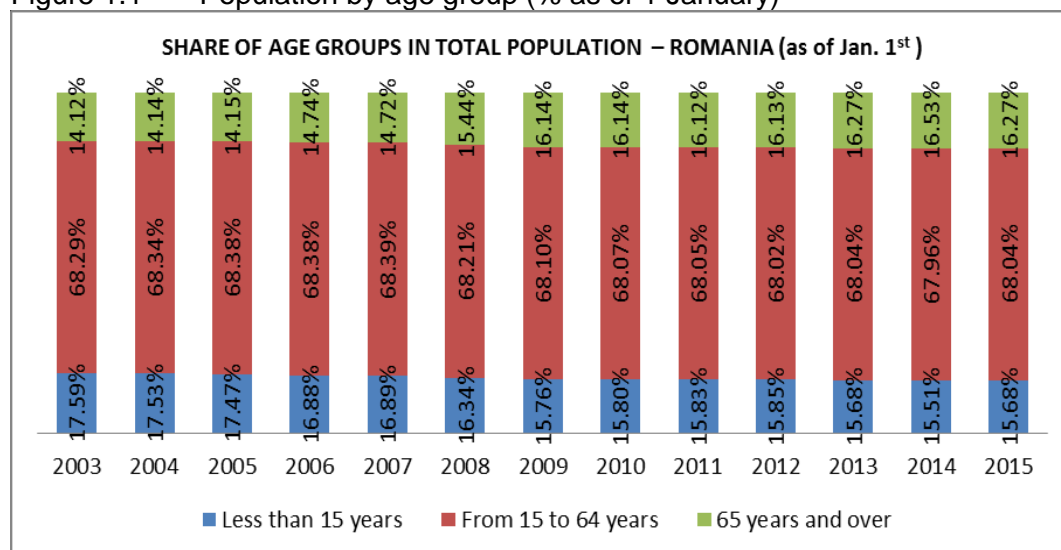
CHAPTER 1: EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING VET

1.1. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In January 2015, Romania's population was 19 870 647. From the total population, 48.9% were men and 51.1% women. Between 2000 and 2015 the population has decreased by 11.5%, caused equally by natural population decrease and emigration.

Between 2000 and 2015, population aged less than 15 decreased by more than one million, with very important consequences for the education and training system. Population aged 15-64 decreased by approximately 1.9 million people. More specifically, vocational education and training (VET) learners age population (10-14) decreased by more than 691 thousand persons, while the population aged 15 to 19 decreased by more than 603 thousand persons. The elderly population (65+) has increased reaching approximately 3.3 million at the beginning of 2015 (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Population by age group (% as of 1 January)



Source: Eurostat (demo_pjanbroad)

According to the National Institute of Statistics the resident population in rural areas was about 9.1 million people in 2015 which represents 46.2 % of the population. During the 2003-15 period the population residing in rural areas decreased by more than one million people. For the age group 15-19 the decline was more prominent in urban areas than in rural areas, reaching close values in 2015 (498 223 in urban areas vs. 583 080 in rural areas).

According to Eurostat data, the old-age dependency ratio (the percentage ratio between population with 65 years or over and population aged 15-64) has

risen from 19.3% in 2000 to 25.2% in 2015). Thus, the median age of population increased from 34.4 years to 41 years.

Population forecast data up to 2080 (Europop 2013) shows that the ageing process will continue for the next twenty years: Romania's population is expected to drop by more than 3.5 million people by the year 2080, falling to 16.3 million people. On a shorter time-horizon, by 2020, total population is expected to decrease by 260 000 persons (see Annex 1, Table A.1.).

Population ageing will also have consequences on the education and training system. On a shorter-time horizon, by 2020, population aged 14 is expected to decrease by more than 5 300 persons.

Reduced number of students has generated a process of merging of schools and, in some cases even the closure of some of them. In such cases schools from smaller communities merge with schools in larger communities. The needs of the adjacent communities are addressed as transportation is made available for students residing outside the community where the remaining schools are based. Funding for transportation (subsidized transportation cost) is the responsibility of local authorities (local budgets).

Between 2000 and 2014 the number of permanent emigrants ⁽¹⁾ increased, amounting, for the indicated period to a total of 184 019 people. Of those, 11 912 were people aged between 15 and 19 years old. The number of temporary emigrants ⁽²⁾ has been declining in the period 2008-13, but remained at high levels (172 871 persons in 2014 vs. 302 796 persons in 2008). The number of temporary emigrants from the age group 15-19 also was decreasing from 20 542 in 2008 to 9 503 in 2014. Emigration of the population aged between 15 and 19 also affected education and training system.

In the same period the number of immigrants amounted to 178 661 persons, of which 9 058 young people between 15 and 19 years. It is noted that, in the analysed period the total number of permanent immigrants increased from 11 024 persons to 36 644, exceeding the number of permanent emigrants. The number of permanent immigrants aged between 15 and 19 years old has registered fluctuations between a minimum of 196 people and a maximum of 1 355 people in the analysed period (see Annex 1, Figure A.1.). It should be noted that the number of immigrants was growing in the analysed period. This requires a series of adjustments of the initial and continuing VET systems for increasing

(1) Permanent emigrants are the persons, Romanian citizen, who establish their permanent residence abroad.

(2) Temporary emigrants are the persons, Romanian citizen, who emigrate abroad for a period of at least 12 months.

their capacity to adapt to specific needs of different immigrant groups and their socio-economic integration.

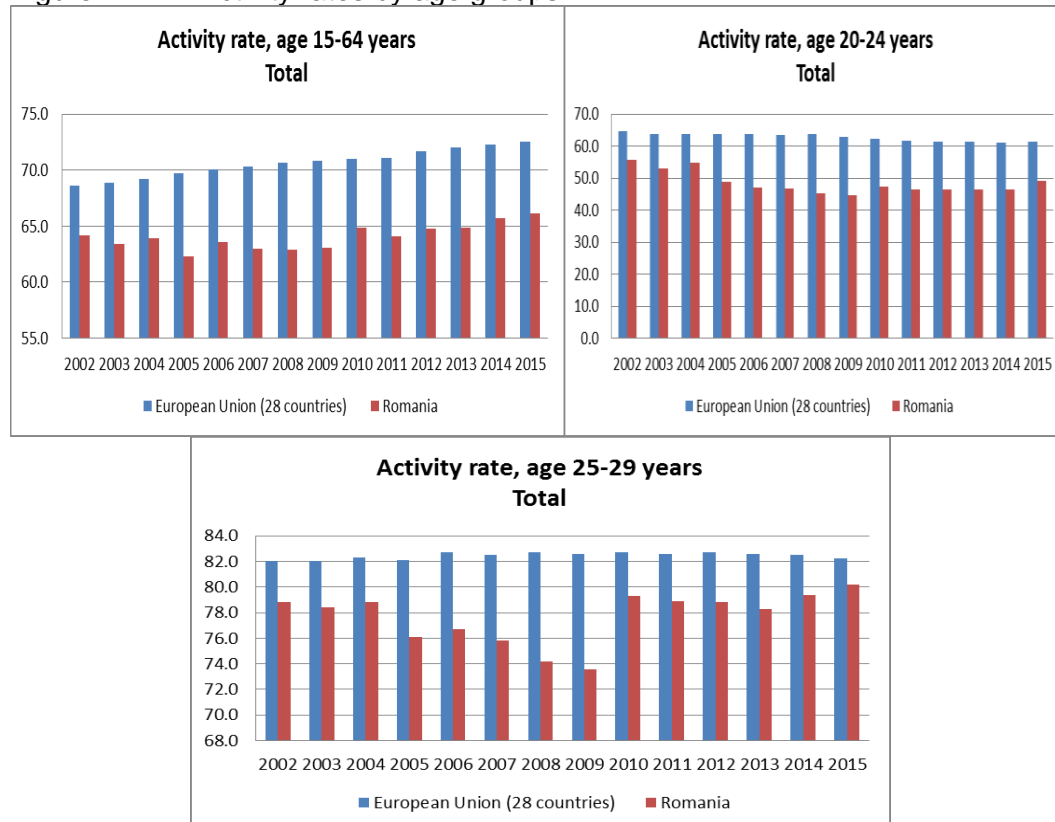
1.2. LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

1.2.1 ACTIVE POPULATION

Romania's active population (age group 15 to 64 years old) continuously decreased during 2001-15 from 10.4 million people to 8.8 million people.

Comparison of the activity rate between EU 28 and Romania (Figure 1.2) shows that Romania is below the EU 28 average values, all over the period 2002-15 and at all age groups. Moreover, the gap was increased from 4.4 pp in 2002 (68.6% EU 28, 64.2% Romania) to 6.4 pp in 2015 (72.5% EU 28, 66.1% Romania). In the first quarter of 2016, the activity rate for the age group 15-64 years old was of 64.2%. The rate of activity in Romania in 2015 for the age group 20-24 was more than 12 percentage points below the EU average (61.3% in EU 28 vs. 49.2% in Romania), decreased from 55.7% in 2002 to 49.2% in 2015 (42.5% in the first quarter of 2016). In the age group 25-29 the gap is lower (82.2% in EU 28 vs. 80.2% in Romania in 2015). In the first quarter of 2016, the activity rate for the age group 25-29 was 77.6%.

Figure 2.2 Activity rates by age groups



Source: Eurostat [lfsa_argan]

Regarding the activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 by gender; a significant disparity is noticed. The activity rate for males is 18.6 percentage points higher than the activity rate for females in 2015. Also, the employment rate for men in Romania is below the European average by only 3 percentage points while for women the difference is 10.1 percentage points. In the first quarter of 2016, the activity rate was of 77.1% for males and 58.2% for females. In 2015, for the age group between 25 and 29, the activity rate for men was higher than the EU 28 average by 2.1 percentage points while for women it was lower by 6.8 percentage points (see Annex 1, Figure A.2.).

1.2.2 EMPLOYMENT

The employment rate of the population aged between 20 and 64 in Romania in 2015 was 66% (compared to the EU average of 70%), with no significant progress in the analysed period (Table 1.1). In the first quarter of 2016, the employment rate was 64.5% (20-64 years). The national target set for 2020 is 70%.

Table 1.1. Employment rate, 20-64 years old, during the period 2010-2015

GEO/ TIME	2002	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Target 2020
EU28	66.7	67.9	70.3	69	68.6	68.6	68.4	68.4	69.2	70	75
Romania	63.3	63.6	64.4	63.5	64.8	63.8	64.8	64.7	65.7	66	70

Source: Eurostat (t2020_10)

Employment rates show very different situations by age groups. For the age group 20-24 the employment rate stands for the entire period 2002-15 below the EU 28 average (in the year 2015 it was 39.6%, 10 percentage points below the EU average of 49.6%). For the age group 25-29 and the age group 30-34, employment rates in the last years have been very close to the EU 28 average (e.g. 72.1% at the age group 25-29 in 2015 vs. 72 the EU 28 average and 78% at the age group 30-34 in 2015 vs. 77.7 the EU 28 average) (see Annex 1, Figure A.3.).

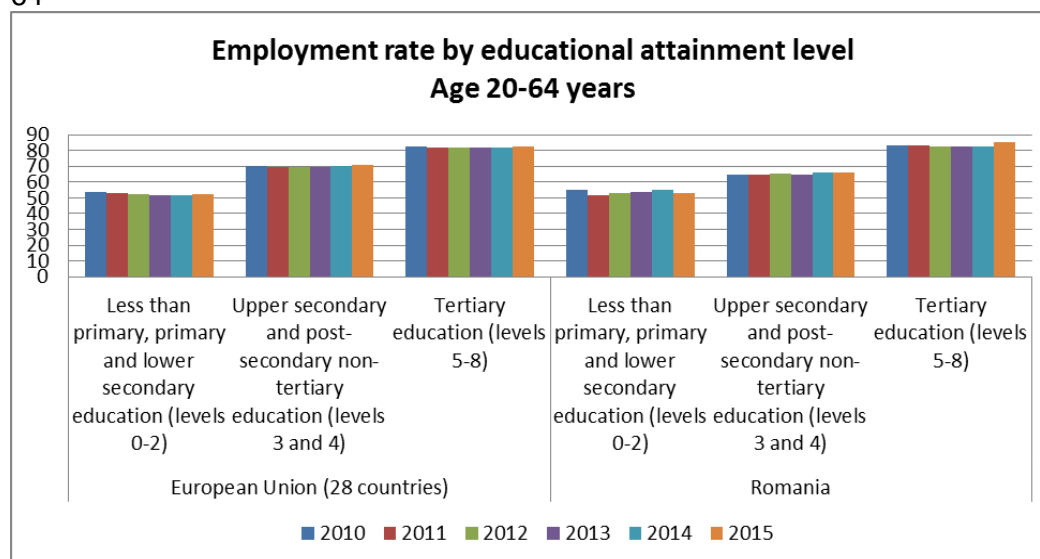
Evolution of employment rates by sex, for the age group 20-64, shows an increasing trend in the last 4 years for both men and women. However a significant gap between employment rates of men and that of women remains. Thus, while the employment rate for men in 2015 was 74.7%, i.e. more than one percentage point follow EU average, the employment rate for women was 57.2%, i.e. seven percentage points below the EU average. In 2015, for the age group 20-24, the employment rate for men has been 46.8% and 31.7% for women.

For men in the age groups 25-29 and 30-34, the last five years the employment rate was higher than the European average. For women, in the same age groups, in the last 5 years, the employment rates were close to European averages. In 2015, for the age group 30-34 the employment rate was lower than European average (68.8% vs. 70.7% EU 28 average) (see Annex 1, Figure A.4.).

Comparative analysis between Romania and EU 28 (Figure 1.3) shows that the employment rates in the age group 20-64 are similar for the educational attainment levels ISCED 0-2 (EU28 52.6%, Romania 53.3% in 2015) and 5-8 (EU28 82.7%, Romania 85.3% in 2015). The employment rate in Romania for the ISCED 3-4 group, in 2015, was below the EU average by 4.7 percentage points.

Since 2006, the national employment rate for the ISCED 5-8 group is descending, except for 2015 when it registers a slight increase (from 82.5% to 85.3% in 2015, an 85.7% in the first quarter of 2016). For the ISCED 0-2 group, a decline of the employment rate is recorded in 2015 as against 2014, from 55% to 53.3% (48.5% in the first quarter of 2016).

Figure 3.3 Employment rates by educational attainment level, age group 20-64



Source: Eurostat [lfsa_ergaed]

Regarding employment rate of graduates of educational levels ISCED 3-8 in 2015, Romania with 68.1% ranks below the European average of 76.9% and away from the target proposed at European level for 2020 (82%). In the first quarter of 2016 the rate was of 64.9%.

The employment rate of graduates aged between 20 and 34 years, from 1 to 3 years after graduation (Table 1.2), decreased after 2009, except for 2015

(68%). The employment rate of graduates with upper secondary education attainment level (ISCED 3-4) was 59.8% in 2015 versus 57.2% in 2014. The employment rate of young people with tertiary attainment level (ISCED 5-8) has registered an increase in 2015 to 77.1% from 74.2% in 2014.

Table 1.2. Employment rates of young people, 20-34 years old, not in education and training, by educational attainment level, from 1 to 3 years since completion of highest level of education

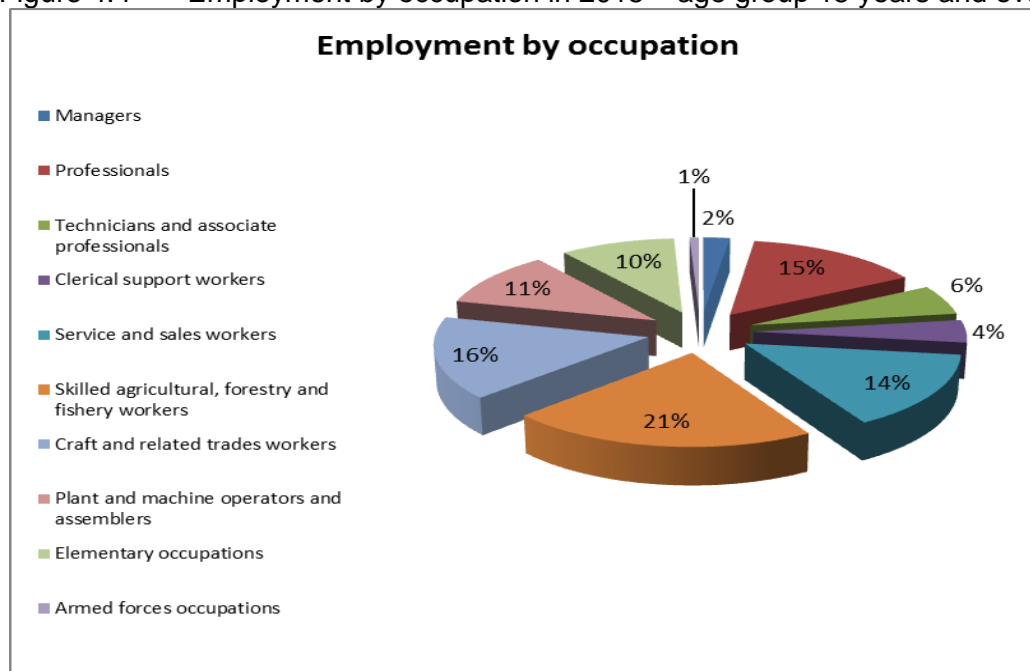
GEO/TIME	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ISCED levels 3-8										
EU 28	78.9	80.8	82.0	78.3	77.4	77.0	75.9	75.4	76.0	76.9
Romania	74.7	79.3	84.8	77.6	71.2	70.8	70.2	67.2	66.2	68.1
ISCED levels 3 and 4										
EU 28	73.7	75.5	77.0	72.6	72.0	71.2	69.7	69.4	70.7	70.8
Romania	64.8	70.7	77.1	69.1	60.8	58.9	59.3	55.0	57.2	59.8
ISCED Levels 5-8										
EU 28	84.3	86.1	86.9	83.8	82.6	82.5	81.5	80.8	80.5	81.9
Romania	86.4	89.0	92.9	85.7	82.5	81.4	79.1	77.2	74.2	77.1
Target 82.0%										

Source: Eurostat [edat_ifse_24]

Analysis of employment by professional status in 2015 shows that the skilled non-manual workers (i.e. managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerical support workers) represented more than a quarter of employed population. Still, employment rates of technicians and associate professionals dropped from 8.9% in 2010 to 5.9% in 2014 and 6% in 2015 (Figure 1.4). Persons with elementary occupations represented 10% of employed population (decreased from 11.6% in 2010) and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers represented 21% of employed population (from 25% in 2010).

In the same period (2010-15) an increasing trend was registered for professionals, service and sales workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers (see Annex 1, Figure A.5.).

Figure 4.4 Employment by occupation in 2015 – age group 15 years and over



Source: Eurostat [lfsa_egais]

1.2.3. UNEMPLOYMENT

During the period 2004-08 unemployment rates registered an important decrease followed a period of growth until 2011. Since 2011, they returned to a decreasing trend. Throughout the period 2002-15 the unemployment rate in Romania was below the EU 28 average for the age groups 15-64 years, 20-24 and 25-29. This is mainly due to (under)employment in the agricultural sector (i.e. subsistence farming), a lower activity rate due to the increased education enrolment of school-age population, and migration for employment abroad. The 2015 total unemployment rate is 6.8% compared to 7.1% in 2013. It is noteworthy that unemployment in Romania in 2015 is more than three percentage points below the EU 28 average (6.8% in Romania vs. 9.4% EU28).

In terms of unemployment by level of education, the age group 15-64 recorded the highest value at the ISCED levels 0-2 followed by levels 3-4 and levels 5-8 (Table 1.3). It is significant that while at ISCED levels 0-2 and 3-4 the unemployment rate increased, at 5-8 levels there was a decrease in unemployment in 2015.

Table 1.3. Unemployment rates by educational attainment level, for the age group 15-64

GEO/ TIME	ISCED levels	2002	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28	0-2	11.6	12.1	11.5	14.8	16.1	16.7	18.6	19.7	19.0	17.9
	3-4	9.6	9.3	6.5	8.4	9.0	9.0	9.7	10.1	9.5	8.8
	5-8	4.8	5.0	3.8	5.0	5.4	5.6	6.1	6.5	6.2	5.7
Romania	0-2	7.6	8.0	8.6	8.9	6.9	8.5	7.9	7.9	7.7	9.1
	3-4	10.0	8.1	6.0	7.3	8.0	7.9	7.4	7.8	7.2	7.3
	5-8	4.1	3.9	2.7	4.4	4.8	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.9	4.1

Source: Eurostat [lfsa_urgaed]

Much higher unemployment rates were recorded for the age group 15-24 recorded in all levels of education attainment (Table 1.4), compared to the age group 15-64. It is noteworthy that the group ISCED 5-8 has recorded the highest unemployment rate while at group ISCED 0-2 was the lowest unemployment rate (23.2% at levels 5-8 vs. 19.9% at levels 0-2, in 2015). In the first quarter of 2016, the unemployment rate for ISCED level 0-2 was 18.8%, for ISCED level 3-4 23.1% and for ISCED level 5-8 24.6%.

Also, much higher unemployment were recorded for the age group 25-29 recorded rates in all levels of education attainment (Table 1.5) compared to the age group 15-64, but lower than the age group 15-24. Moreover, the unemployment rate at ISCED group 0-2 levels was higher than the rates from groups 3-4 and 5-8 ISCED levels. In the first quarter of 2016, the unemployment rate for ISCED level 0-2 was 12%, for ISCED level 3-4 11.7% and for ISCED level 5-8 9.1%. This shows that, for people aged 15-24, the labour market is oriented slightly more towards people with 3-4 ISCED education level, and for people aged 25-29 to those with work experience and mainly with 5-8 ISCED education. Still, for ISCED 3-4 graduates, unemployment level for the age group 25-29 is significantly lower than for the age group 15-24.

Table 1.4. Unemployment rates by educational attainment level, age group 15 to 24

GEO/ TIME	ISCED levels	2002	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28	0-2	19.9	21.8	21.3	26.2	27.6	28.8	31.0	31.5	30.3	28.0
	3-4	17.9	17.5	13.0	17.1	18.3	18.9	20.4	21.0	19.9	18.1
	5-8	12.5	14.3	11.7	15.5	16.3	16.9	18.1	18.9	16.5	15.4
Romania	0-2	18.2	16.3	20.3	19.4	16.2	19.4	17.0	17.2	18.7	19.9
	3-4	25.0	22.5	17.5	20.9	24.7	25.6	25.0	25.9	25.4	22.4
	5-8	19.8	22.1	20.4	24.9	27.9	28.3	26.6	31.3	33.2	23.2

Source: Eurostat [lfsa_urgaed]

Table 1.5. Unemployment rates by educational attainment level, age group 25 to 29

GEO/ TIME	ISCED levels	2002	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28	0-2	16.1	16.6	16.0	21.6	23.7	24.3	26.8	28.5	26.9	25.9
	3-4	10.9	10.8	7.7	10.4	11.3	11.4	12.6	13.2	12.2	11.2
	5-8	8.0	8.0	5.9	8.0	9.0	9.2	10.2	10.8	10.5	9.2
Romania	0-2	8.5	9.6	10.4	13.0	12.2	12.1	11.9	11.3	12.6	12.1
	3-4	9.4	8.7	6.7	7.9	8.9	9.6	10.0	10.2	8.7	9.9
	5-8	6.8	7.5	4.1	6.1	9.0	8.0	9.9	10.7	12.1	9.2

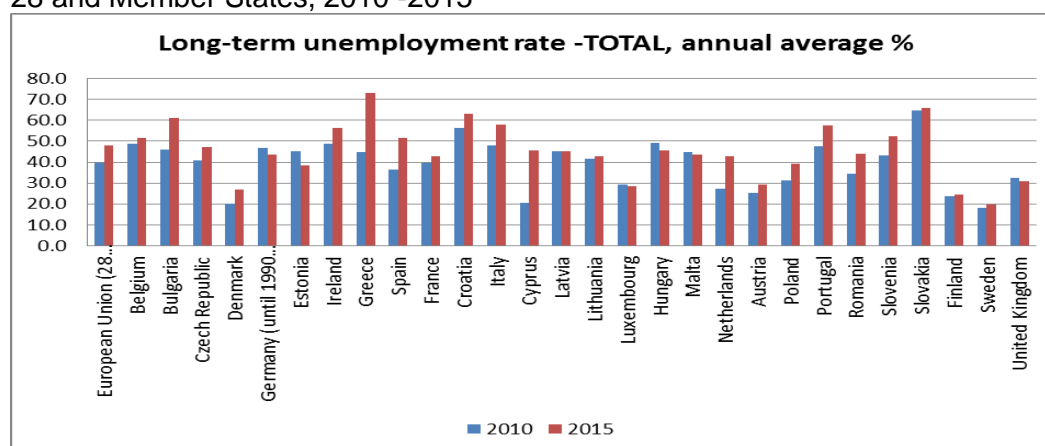
Source: Eurostat [lfsa_urgaed]

When analysing the unemployment rate by gender and level of education, it is found that at the age group 15-64, female unemployment rate is lower than the rate for men at ISCED levels 0-2 and 3-4 but slightly higher at 5-8. At the age group 15-24, female unemployment rate is higher than the rate for men for ISCED levels 0-2 and 3-4 and lower in ISCED levels 5-8. This may suggest that, regarding employment, in the case of young people the principle of gender equality is not sufficiently respected.

1.2.4. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Between 2010 and 2015 the long-term unemployment rate in the EU-28 has increased from 3.8% to 4.5%. In Romania, the indicator has also recorded an increase from 2.4% to 3% (Figure 1.5).

Figure 5.5 Long-term unemployment rates in % of the active population, EU-28 and Member States, 2010 -2015



Source: Eurostat [une_ltu_a]

The evolution of the long-term unemployed in the total active population indicates a decrease in the period 2002-08 followed by an increase in the period

2009-15, both at EU 28 level and Romania. It is worth mentioning that during 2002-08, long-term unemployment in Romania was higher than in the EU 28 and in the period 2009-15 was below the EU 28 average, both as share of the total active population and of all unemployment, for both men and women. Evolution of long-term unemployment in all the analysed period shows that although long-term unemployment among women was higher than among men, in the case of very long-term unemployment situation between men and women is reversed.

In the case of young people (age group 15-24), long-term unemployment as a percentage of the total unemployment in Romania recorded small fluctuations during 2002-06, followed by a continuous decrease around 50% during 2006-09, to 29.5%. In 2009-2012 another increase to 41.6% was registered followed by a decrease in the next two years 2013 and 2014, by more than 5 percentage points to 36.4% and an increase to 37.2% in 2015. Long-term unemployment among young people (age group 15-24) in Romania was higher compared to the EU average in the entire analysed period. Long-term unemployment affects men and young people more than other groups on the labour market (see Annex 1, Figure A.6., and Figure A.7.).

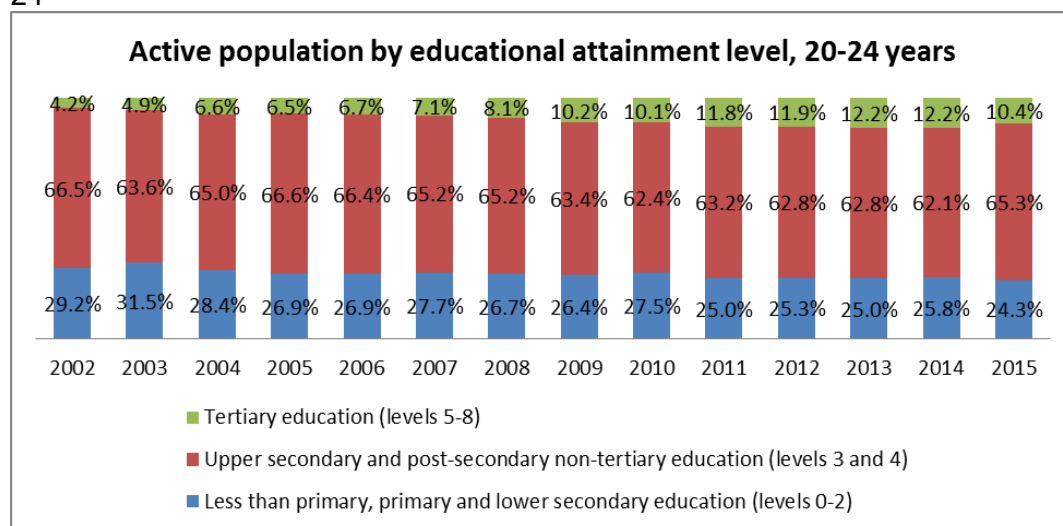
1.3. QUALIFICATION LEVEL OF THE POPULATION

An important change to the structure of levels of education attainment for the active population aged between 15 and 64 is worth mentioning. The share of population with tertiary education increased from 10.7% in 2002 to 20.2% in 2015, and the share of active population with level of education less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2) dropped from 25.7% in 2003 to 22.9% in 2015, although still maintained at high values. This change was more prominent for females as their share of those with levels of education 5-8 increased from 9.9% in 2001 to 24.2% in 2015, while for males the increase was from 10.2% to 17.3% (see Annex 1, Figure A.8. and Figure A.9.).

Regarding young active population aged between 20 and 24, the share of those with tertiary education increased from 4.2% in 2002 to 10.4% in 2015, partly at the expense of those with upper secondary and post-secondary education that dropped from 66.5% in 2002 to 62.1% in 2014 to rise again at 65.3% in 2015. The share of young people with ISCED 0-2 is maintained at a high percentage, around 25% in the last 4 years, but has dropped considerably from 29.2% in 2002. Female population aged 20 to 24 registered a more pronounced increase (from 6.2% in 2002 to 15.4% in 2015) in the share of those with ISCED level 5-8 compared to the male population (from 2.6% in 2002 to 7.2% in 2015). However, it appears that during the last four years the share of the

female active population with education level ISCED 5-8 in the age group 20-24 decreased continuously (see Figure 1.6 below and Annex 1, Figure A.10).

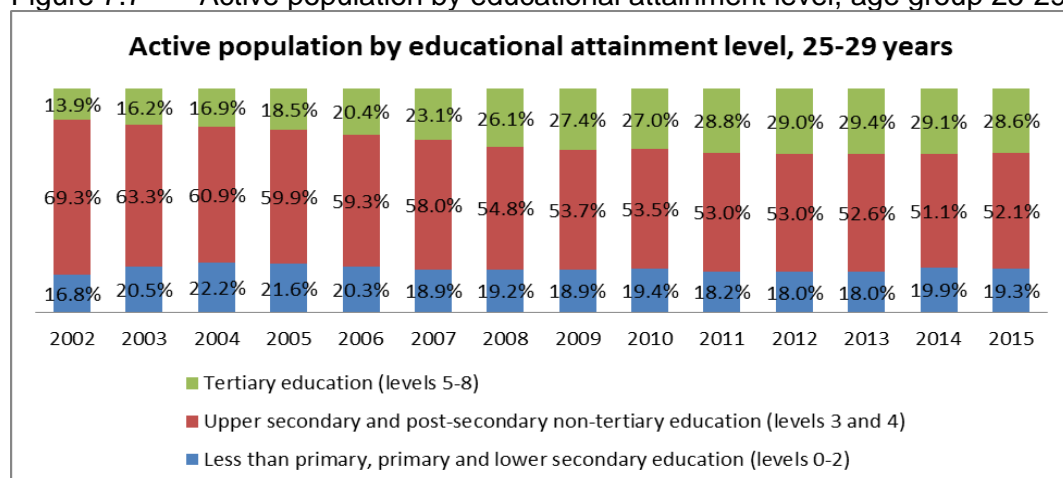
Figure 6.6 Active population by educational attainment level – age group 20-24



Source: Eurostat [lfsa_aged]

The age group 25-29 is more representative of the changed structure by level of education of the young people in the active population. Within this age group, 28.6% of young people in 2015 have tertiary education attainment level (from 13.9% in 2002) and only 19.3% with less than primary, primary and lower secondary education. For females the increase was more prominent (from 18.9% in 2002 to 37.2% in 2015). However the total share of those with ISCED levels 0-2 increased during the analysed period from 16.8% to 19.3% (see Figure 1.7 below and Annex 1, Figure A.11).

Figure 7.7 Active population by educational attainment level, age group 25-29



Source: Eurostat [lfsa_aged]

Early school leaving negatively affects the quality and competitiveness of the human capital. The early school leaving rate decreased from 23.0% in 2002 to 17.3% in 2013 (Table 1.6). Still, in 2014 and 2015 it recorded an increase, up to 19.1% in 2015. The rate of early leavers from education and training for males was higher than the rate for females by one percentage point in 2014 (19.5% for males vs. 18.5% for females).

Table 1.6. Early leavers from education and training, 2002-2015

GEO/ TIME	2002	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Target 2020
EU28	17	15.7	14.6	14.2	13.9	13.4	12.7	11.9	11.2	11.0	10
Romania	23	19.6	15.9	16.6	19.3	18.1	17.8	17.3	18.1	19.1	11.3

NB: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training during the last four weeks preceding the survey.

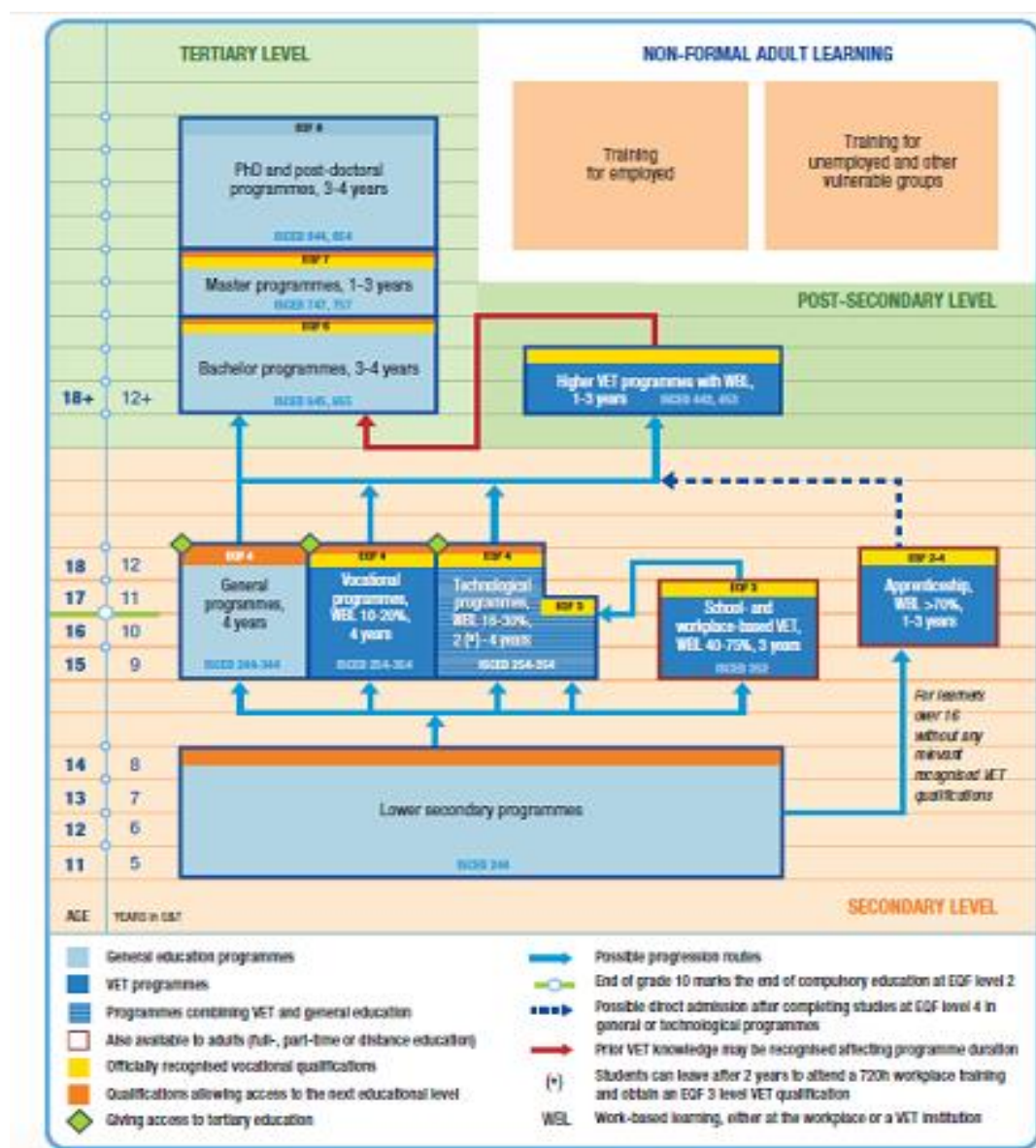
Source: Eurostat (t2020_40)

Adults' participation in education and training did not register significant progress in the period 2000-14, fluctuating between 0.9% in 2000 and 1.3% in 2015.

CHAPTER 2: PROVIDING VET IN A LIFELONG PERSPECTIVE

2.1. CHART OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Figure 2.1 Chart of the national education and training system



Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Romania

2.2. GOVERNMENT-REGULATED VET PROVISION

The main vocational education and training (VET) opportunities leading to formally recognised qualifications in Romania are:

- (a) initial VET (IVET), including upper secondary technological programmes, 'school- and work-based VET' programmes and post-secondary programmes (see section 2.2.1.1) and
- (b) continuing VET (CVET), as part of adult education(see section 2.3.1).

2.2.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The National Law of Education no.1/2011 with its latest revisions and updates (until 2014) provides the general legal framework and describes the general objectives, aims, principles, structure, organization and functioning of the education system in Romania. The general legal framework has been subject of frequent updates. The latest updates include:

- (a) the extension of compulsory education to 11 years in total, by introducing the preparatory grade (grade 0 before primary education) and extending the length of compulsory studies from the 8th, later to 9th and presently to the 10th grade; and
- (b) the professionalization of the teaching career by introducing the Master of Arts for the teaching profession.

Extension of compulsory education had two pursuits:

- (a) ensuring that young people can benefit from education and training and develop their personal, psychological and competences profile until the age of 15-16, which corresponds to the legal minimum age requirements to enter the labour market (with reduced work-load); and
- (b) decreasing the school drop-out rate.

The National Law of Education is complemented by a set of strategic documents in the context of the National Reform Programme elaborated in line with European recommendations in all sectors.

1. The National strategy on reducing early school leaving (ESL) (adopted by Government decision no. 417/03 June 2015).

The main objective of the strategy is to help reduce the ESL rate from 17.6% in 2013 to 11.3% in 2020 through measures for prevention, intervention and compensation targeted at early school leavers who want to continue their studies. The strategy adopts four main directions: ensuring and increasing access to education and quality education for all children, ensuring completion of compulsory education by all children, re-integrating early school leavers into the education system, and developing the appropriate institutional system for reintegrating early leavers.

The main objective related to VET is to improve attractiveness, inclusion, quality and relevance of initial VET through updated and revised curricula.

The ESL Strategy emphasises the necessity to ensure completion of compulsory education by all children by three main actions:

- (a) giving access to flexible, permeable and qualitative learning routes. This can be pursued through updated curricula, continuing teacher training, relevance of qualifications to labour market needs;
- (b) establishing certain instruments of early detection and prevention of school leaving as well enforcing, extending and tailoring counselling services; and
- (c) promoting student-centred remedial education programmes in schools ('School after school' programme).

The Strategy promotes the acquisition of key competences that ensures personal, professional development and easier labour market access. Second chance programmes are also envisaged for all levels of education including for IVET route at national level with the support of school county inspectorates.

2. The VET Strategy for 2016-20 (adopted by Government decision no. 317/27 April 2016)

The VET Strategy includes four main objectives:

- (a) increasing VET relevance to labour market needs;
- (b) increasing participation and facilitating access to VET programmes;
- (c) improving VET quality;
- (d) developing innovation and national and international cooperation in VET.

The strategy was complemented by a specific action plan that includes:

- (a) updating instruments describing the occupations, qualifications, curricula and curricular auxiliaries across levels of qualifications through the National Qualification Framework (NQF), for better articulating subsystems, facilitating VET mobility and improving the relevance to labour market needs. In this respect CVET curricula will be developed / updated on the basis of revised occupational standards, according to their relevance for the labour market, mainly for the green economy and national development priority sectors. This measure is complemented by the provisions in the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for 2015-20 (see point 3 below) concerning the link between the Romanian Classification of Occupations (*Clasificarea ocupațiilor din Romania – COR*) with the NQF by updating/reviewing most standards (2000 to 3000 standards);
- (b) developing / reviewing current IVET curricula fundamentals: qualifications, training standards, curricula, syllabi, curricula auxiliaries, on the basis of their relevance to the labour market, mainly for the green economy and national development priority sectors;

- (c) developing mechanisms for anticipating skills required by the labour market and for defining job profiles, in order to develop / review qualifications in terms of knowledge, learning outcomes and skills relevant to the labour market needs; and for adapting curricula to labour market needs and trends. Key competences will be included in curricula to promote better access to the labour market;
- (d) strengthening existing and creating new flexible mechanisms for recognition and validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal context. This will be achieved through the revision of the existing specific methodology, the development of system-level quality assurance mechanisms for the recognition and validation of learning outcomes, and the appropriate training of relevant staff (approx. 1 000 persons). The extensive implementation of the recognition and validation will also be a valuable instrument to ensure that key competences acquired in other context than formal one, once recognised and validated, can help the individual better integrate into real work-based contexts.

3. The National strategy for Lifelong learning for 2015-20 (adopted by Government decision no. 418/03 June 2015)

The LLL Strategy is structured on three main pillars:

- (a) access and incentives to participation: access and participation to lifelong learning should be increased for all;
- (b) quality and relevance: lifelong learning should be relevant to individual and labour market needs; and
- (c) partnerships for better information: lifelong learning should be developed in close collaboration with social partners and all relevant stakeholders.

These strategies were elaborated in joint cooperation with VET-related institutions in order to support and reach common, national goals and objectives also in accordance with the general recommendations and objectives of the 2020 Strategy.

In June 2016 the National Centre for Technical Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) and the Ministry of Education launched a public debate referring to the opportunity of introducing dual initial VET in the present context, as an answer to employers' demands by increasing their participation and the work-based training share.

2.2.1.1. Pre-university education

2.2.1.1.1 Pre-university education - general framework

According to the National Education Law (no. 1/2011), the national pre-university educational system includes the following levels:

- (a) early education (0-6 years), including the ante-preschool level (0-3 years) and pre-school education (3-6 years);
- (b) primary education (grades 0-4);
- (c) secondary education, which includes:
 - (i) the lower secondary education (grades 5-8);
 - (ii) the upper secondary education, which can be:
 - I. high school programmes (grades 9-12/13) (see 2.2.1.1.2.a) granting access to higher education:
 - 1. general programmes (sciences and humanities),
 - 2. programmes with work-based learning (WBL) component of 10-20% of the total programme (military, theological, sports, artistic, and pedagogic qualifications) – these programmes are referred to as ‘vocational’ in the national context, but are not actually considered to be part of IVET (see 2.2.1.1.2),
 - 3. technological programmes with a WBL component of 16-30%, providing qualifications in three areas: technical professions, services, natural resources and environmental protection – these programmes are considered as part of IVET.
 - II. ‘school- and work-based VET’ programmes (*învăţământ profesional*) (see 2.2.1.1.2.b), which include:
 - 1. 3-year ‘school- and work-based VET’ programmes, after the completion of the 8th grade with WBL share varying between 20 and 70%,
 - 2. 2-year ‘school- and work-based VET’ programmes, after the completion of the 9th grade (offered from the 2012-13 until the 2015-16 school year),
 - 3. 6-month practical traineeships, after the completion of the 10th grade attended in a technological programme (offered mostly through second-chance programmes).
- (d) tertiary non-university education, which includes post-secondary IVET programmes (see 2.2.1.1.2.c)

General compulsory education is based on an 11-year education system and includes preparatory class, primary, lower secondary education and first two grades of upper secondary education (grades 9 and 10).

Persons from minorities have the right to study in their mother tongue at all levels, types and forms of school education. Special education is provided for all levels for people with special educational needs or other educational requirements set by the Minister of Education, differentiated by type and degree of special needs identified. Schools, by decision of the School Board, may expand their activities with students after classes, through programmes referred to as 'School after school'. Private and confessional education is organised in non-profit educational institutions, at all levels and forms, according to current legislation.

After completing lower secondary education (*gimnaziu*), students can continue their studies in upper secondary education, including enrolling to VET i.e. either a technological programme or a 'school- and work-based VET' programme. Admission is based on each pupil portfolio including: graduating diploma, personal transcript (*foaie matricola*) and results of national evaluation exams taken individually at the end of the 8th grade. The national evaluation consists of written examinations in Romanian language and literature, mother language (if different from Romanian) and mathematics.

VET graduates (i.e. from the technological programme or 'school- and work-based VET' programme) who have acquired formal, non-formal or informal vocational competences can undergo a qualification certification exam organised by the school. Graduates passing the certification exam acquire a qualification certificate and a supplement certificate, according to Europass provisions.

Graduates from 'school- and work-based VET' programmes, that are successful in the professional qualification certification exam, also receive a compulsory education certificate and can attend the higher cycle of upper secondary education (grades 11th and 12th) of school-based programmes.

Graduates of any upper secondary education programmes, including VET graduates from technological schools or graduates of 'school- and work-based VET' programmes only after graduating from the higher cycle of school-based programmes, can enrol in:

- (a) a tertiary non-university programme (*postliceu*) as post-secondary education or
- (b) higher education provided they take and pass the national baccalaureate examination receive a baccalaureate diploma, which entitles them to access higher education. (for the organisation of the baccalaureate examination see Annex 2).

2.2.1.1.2 Initial VET pathways: access requirements, balance between school and work-based learning, qualifications

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) is organized and operates under the National Education Law no. 1/2011 and includes:

- (a) upper secondary technological programmes (*liceu tehnologic*) (lower cycle: 9th and 10th grades, higher cycle: 11th and 12th grades).

They last 4 years (or 5 years for full-time education with evening classes) and are available after the completion of the 8th grade. Upon successful completion graduates can acquire a qualification certificate at level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) / European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (technician). Graduates also receive a graduation diploma, the school transcript, part of the educational portfolio attesting the completion of high school studies and giving graduates the right to access tertiary non-university programmes, as well the right to attend the baccalaureate examination. Examples of qualifications offered include:

- Mechanics – Industrial design technician;
- Mechatronics and Informatics – Mechatronics technician;
- Electronics – Computing technical operator;
- Constructions, installation, architecture and systematization – Construction technician, plumbing technician, drawing technician designer;
- Wood industry – Furniture designer;
- Agricultural and alimentary – Agronomist technician, floriculturist technician;
- Environmental protection – Meteorologist technician, environmental protection technician;
- Tourism – Banqueting organizer, hotel technician, gastronomy technician;
- Textile and skins – Textile technician;
- Text and image processing – Polygraphic production technician;
- Economics – technician in administration.

- (b) upper secondary ‘school- and work-based VET’ programmes (‘professional training’ programmes - *învățământ profesional*) are available after the completion of the 8th or 9th grade and last two or three years.

Upon successful completion graduates can acquire a qualification certificate at level 3 NQF/EQF (skilled worker). Studies are free of charge if completed until the age of 18 years. ‘School - and work-based programme’ is the pathway providing IVET in close cooperation with companies. To ensure alignment of state-funded VET provision with labour market needs, prior to the approval of the number of students funded by governmental funds, every school

is required to submit to the School inspectorates' framework contracts with companies that will provide workplace to students (based on the Order of the Ministry of Education no. 3539/14.03.2012). These framework contracts establish clear responsibilities for both school representatives and their partner companies concerning:

- students' training during the workplace learning component (practical training);
- technical and human resources to be provided by the company, that are necessary for students' training and their certification exams.

The share of work-based learning (practical training in schools' laboratories or in companies) is significant:

- for the 2-year 'school- and work-based VET' programme (starting after the 9th grade):
 - In the 1st year, WBL represents 60% of the total number of hours, including 6 weeks in the company;
 - In the 2nd year, WBL represents 75% of the total number of hours, including 5 weeks in the company;
- for the 3-year 'school- and work-based VET' programme (starting after the 8th grade):
 - in the 1st year, WBL represents 20% of the total number of hours, including 5 weeks in the company;
 - In the 2nd year, WBL represents 60% of the total number of hours, including 9 weeks in the company;
 - In the 3^d year, WBL represents 72% of the total number of hours, including 10 weeks in the company;

The National Centre for TVET Development (www.tvet.ro and <http://www.alegetidrumul.ro/>) and the platform 'Choose your path!' ('*Alege-ți drumul!*') promote the 'school- and work-based VET' programmes.

The two-year 'school- and work-based VET' programme was introduced for the period 2012-16 (based on Minister Order no.3168/03.02.2012) and was implemented starting with the school year 2012-13, after the 9th grade for grades 10 and 11. The school year 2015-16 was the last one organised under this form for those students enrolled in 2014.

In 2014 new updates of the National Law on Education introduced the three-year 'school- and work-based VET' programme, (approved by Minister Order no.3136/20.02.2014), which was organised since the school year 2014-15, for graduates of the 8th grade. The programme is also open to graduates of 9th grades from previous generations if students are willing to re-enter education. Its duration is from 9th to 11th grade. It was continued in 2015 and 2016.

After completing their studies, learners undertake a qualification certification exam which is organized by their school that allows them to acquire a professional qualification at level 3 of the NQF/EQF. After completing the programme, students also acquire a compulsory education certificate, which allows them to continue their studies in high school (grades 11-12th) if they wish to obtain the baccalaureate diploma and continue in higher education (see Annex 2).

In 2013-14, 12 693 places were offered by 481 schools in 74 qualifications based on 1 878 partnerships with employers. In 2014-15, 651 school units have offered the programmes and have established partnerships agreements with 2 664 employers for more than 35 740 students for 79 qualifications. In 2015-16, there were 34 984 young students enrolled in 'school-and work-based VET' programmes. Examples of qualifications offered include:

- Mechanics – Welder, miller, roller, locksmith, tinman, car mechanic;
- Mechatronics and Informatics – Fine mechanic worker;
- Electronics – Electronics worker;
- Constructions, installation, architecture and systematization – Carpenter, plumber;
- Agricultural and alimentary – Farmer, pisciculturist, animal husbandry;
- Tourism – Baker, pastry maker, hotels worker;
- Textile and skins – Spinner, weaver;
- Text and image processing – Printing worker.

(c) post-secondary VET and foremen education through tertiary non-university programmes (*postliceu*). They last for one to three years after completion of upper secondary education (with or without baccalaureate diploma).

Upon successful completion graduates can acquire a qualification certificate at level 5 of the NQF/EQF (technician). Curricula may be offered on a regular basis or be especially arranged to meet the needs of specific employers.

Post-secondary VET programmes provide an opportunity for advanced vocational training for the graduates of upper secondary schools (including those who do not hold the baccalaureate diploma). Examples of qualifications offered through post- secondary programmes include:

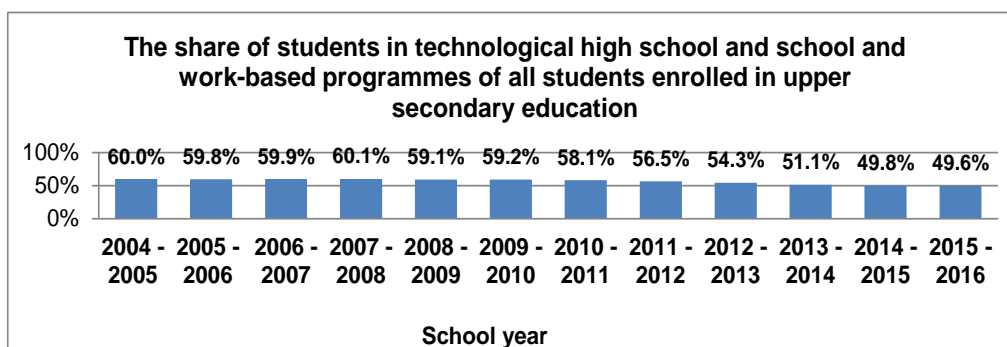
- Mechanics – Optician;
- Mechatronics and Informatics – Local networks and communication administrator, analyst programmer;
- Electronics – Automation equipment technician, infrastructure of telecommunication networks technician;
- Constructions, installation, architecture and systematization – Constructions topographer, constructions and architecture designer, treasurer expert in science of commodities for constructions materials and

installations, renovation and building repair designer, constructions entrepreneur;

- Transport – Inventory assistant in transport, railroad agent, waterside / harbour operator
- Wood industry – Gauger - taskmaster in wood industry, restaurateur of (pipe) organ and handcrafted carpentry;
- Agricultural and alimentary – Mountain agritourism technician;
- Environmental protection – Meteorologist technician, environmental protection technician;
- Services – Interior decoration designer, cosmetician, stylist, librarian, private detective;
- Tourism – Tourism agent – guide, inventory assistant in accommodation and alimentation units, events organizer;
- Textile and skins – Creator, costume designer;
- Text and image processing – Audio-video processing operator, techno editor, cameramen - photo reporter, publicity designer, publicity editor, image and communication expert, image editor;
- Economic – Commercial agent, inventory assistant, bank clerk, fiscal agent, broker, customs agent.

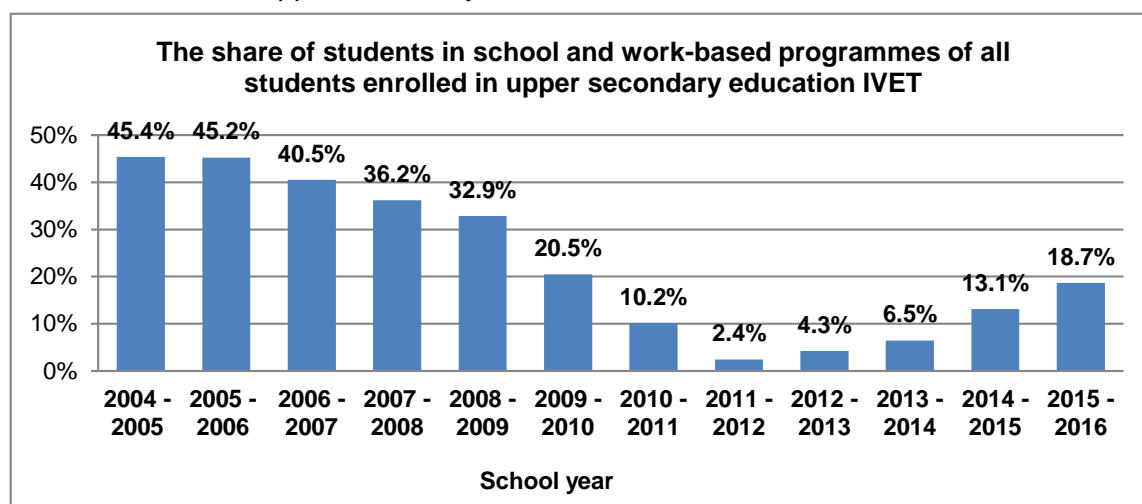
The share of students in upper secondary VET (technological education programmes and 'school- and work-based VET' programmes) of all students enrolled in upper secondary education registered a decrease in the 2004-15 period (dropped from around 60% in the period 2004-08 to 49.8% in 2015). This decrease is due, among other reasons, to the political decision to reduce the enrolment plan for 'school- and work-based VET' programmes and frequent changes of National Education Law, which since 2011 has introduced various forms of access to vocational schools. A significant increase was noticed in the number of students enrolled in 'school- and work-based VET' programmes after returning in 2014-15 to the three-year programmes that admit students after completion of lower secondary education (after 8th grade): from 12 000 students in the 2011-12 school year, representing 2.4% of all students enrolled in upper secondary IVET, to more than 68 000 in the 2015-16 school year, representing 18.7% of all students enrolled in upper secondary IVET.

Figure 2.2. Share of students in technological and 'school- and work-based VET' programmes of all students enrolled in upper secondary education



Source: National Institute of Statistics

Figure 2.3. Share of students in 'school- and work-based VET' programmes of all students enrolled in upper secondary VET



Source: National Institute of Statistics

Regarding overall enrolment rates, since 2005 an increase is registered for age groups 11-14 (from 81.6% in 2005 to 90.8% in 2015) and 19-23 (from 51.8% in 2006 to 90.8% in 2015), while both groups reached their highest figures between 2009 and 2011. Enrolment rates for the 15-18 age group have slightly deteriorated from 81.6% in 2006 to 80.2% in 2015, despite a high of 88.8% in 2010.

2.2.1.2 Higher education system

The higher education system in Romania has a three-cycle structure, following the Bologna system: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate (at levels 6, 7 and 8 of the EQF) (see Figure 2.1). Moreover, the National Education Law (Law no.1/2011) foresees post-university continuing training and personal development studies

leading to the certification of specific vocational competencies acquired during the respective study programme ⁽³⁾.

Qualifications acquired by higher education graduates are attested by the following types of diplomas: Bachelor / engineer/ medical doctor, urban planner diploma, Master diploma and PhD diploma. Competences acquired through post-university continuing training and personal development programmes are attested by certificates and other documents. All these diplomas, certificates and documents may be issued only by accredited higher education institutions for accredited study programmes and modules (programmes may have a modular organization) and are similar for the same study programme, irrespective of the modules of study. Moreover, all these diplomas and certificates are issued upon graduation of a study cycle, which means that the learning outcomes they attest correspond to the level of qualification indicated by the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education ⁽⁴⁾.

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

In 2015, the rate of tertiary educational attainment in Romania was 25.6%, far from the EU target of 40% by 2020. The national target of 26.7% can be achieved and even exceeded given the continuous annual increase from 8.9% in 2003 to 25.6% in 2015 (see Annex 3).

Traineeships for higher education graduates are foreseen by the Labour Code (Law no.52/2003 with subsequent changes) for the first six months after graduation, with the exception of professions for which special legislation provides differently (e.g. doctors and other medical personnel, lawyers, notaries). Conditions for this form of training are set by Law no.335/2013.

2.2.2 FINANCING

In 2009, the total public expenditure for education reached a high of 4.24% of GDP but dropped significantly in 2010 and 2011 due to the economic crisis that led to nationwide financial cut-down measures. More recently, the total public

⁽³⁾ See for details *Self certification report, Verification of compatibility of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*, 2011. Available at http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Relatii%20Publice/Self_certification_Report_RO_2011.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ *Self certification report, Verification of compatibility of the Romanian National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*, 2011.

expenditure on education registered a small increase from 3.4% of the GDP in 2014 to 3.54% in 2015 and 3.6% in 2016. The present National Law on Education no. 1/2011 states that 6% of GDP should go to education yearly. The 2013-16 increasing trend leads to the estimation that the target is likely to be reached by 2025.

The financing mechanism and budget for education, including VET are approved yearly by the State Budget Law and are distributed nationally (at village, town and municipality levels) by the general directions of public financing within each of county and with specific support from county school inspectorates.

The principle of financing is based on standard costs per pupil/student enrolled, depending on specific indicators such as area (rural/urban) or level of education (early, primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education) and is generally financing per capita, according to the methodology set by the Ministry of Education.

Education in Romania, at all levels, is free of charge. The state also provides basic finance for all accredited public, private and religious education, as well as for public post-secondary education. Private education is also supported through annual tuition fees paid by pupils/students, set by internal private institution rules.

2.2.3 GOVERNANCE

Most of key decisions in pre-university education, including VET are taken centrally. The Ministry of Education retains many decision-making powers applied by the 42 county school inspectorates. A line of accountability between schools, the county school inspectorates and the Ministry of Education governance represents a key vertical dimension of VET governance

Teachers employment and deployment to schools is set by specific methodology issued by the Ministry and is organised under the form of national contest with the support of the 42 county school inspectorates. Teachers obtaining the minimum standard score receive indefinite contract for a specific school, whilst the others receive fix-term contracts. Schools elaborate yearly the schooling planning with the necessary number of classes (*profiles*) and send them to the county schools inspectorates and the Ministry for approval.

Financing is ensured based on the number of pupils/students enrolled and is allocated to each school by the Ministry through the local authorities. School inspectorates work closely with the advisory consultative bodies at county and regional level (Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships - LCDSP – and Regional consortia) to propose the number of students to be enrolled based on strategic planning documents and labour market information.

The internal dimension in VET governance refers to the organisation of internal management and control within each specific school unit. There is also internal monitoring and control performed in each school with the support of specific boards (the administration board, the quality assurance committee). External monitoring is made regularly by a committee of external evaluators from the National agency for quality assurance in pre-university education and a representative of the school inspectorate checking if statutory provisions are met and quality assurance mechanisms are in place.

Finally, a horizontal dimension is reflected by the (accountability) relations between a school and its local stakeholders: employers, local authorities, parents, etc.

2.2.4 TEACHERS

In the Romanian VET system there are two main categories of teaching positions: teacher and foremen-instructor.

Requirements for VET teachers are same with general education ones. Teachers in upper secondary school, post-secondary and university education need to hold a Bachelor diploma, a 60 ETCs (European Transferable Credits) of psycho-pedagogical training and either a Masters diploma in one of the subjects included in the bachelor studies or a Masters diploma in Teaching Profession (based on the Order of Ministry of Education no. 3158/2010) ⁽⁵⁾.

Foremen-instructors must be graduates of post-secondary education and hold a psycho-pedagogical training of 30 ETCs.

Teacher insertion is facilitated through a one-year stage with the support of an experienced mentor. Beginner teachers are employed based on labour contract and enjoy all rights of fully certified teachers. The one-year stage is followed by the 'teacher-confirmation' exam. In case of failure, candidates are allowed to undertake the examination for maximum two more times within a five-year period provided that they also repeat the one-year stage. Candidates who still fail after the two additional attempts keep the statute of beginner teacher and are employed on fixed-term labour contract, affecting their financial salary.

The percentage of qualified VET teachers (vocational theoretical subjects or practical training) varied slightly between 2010 and 2015 but remain significantly high, at around 98% (see Annex 1, Figure A.13).

Continuing teacher training is a right (Law of National Education no. 1/2011 art.242) and consists of career advancement and professional

⁽⁵⁾ Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports no. 3158/2010, art. I, points 1 and 2.

development. Advancement in teacher career is ensured by acquiring the teaching degrees II and I awards. Professional development is compulsory by participation in accredited training courses (teachers have to gather minimum 90 ETCs every five years).

2.3. OTHER FORMS OF TRAINING

2.3.1. ADULT VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CONTINUING VET)

2.3.1.1 Legislative framework and general CVET provisions

Adult vocational training is regulated by the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 (modified and completed by Law 167/2013), according to which vocational competences can be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning as follows:

- (a) formal learning is provided within a programme organized by an accredited vocational training provider;
- (b) non-formal learning refers to the acquisition of competences either via regular performance of specific work activities or through self-training;
- (c) informal learning refers to the process of acquiring competences through training methods that are unstructured, unintended and non-institutionalised (non-systematic contacts within the family, society and professional environment leading however to learning outcomes and to acquiring competences).

Adult vocational training programmes may have the following objectives:

- (a) facilitate social integration of individuals in accordance with their professional aspirations and labour market needs;
- (b) train human resources capable of raising workforce competitiveness;
- (c) update individuals' knowledge and vocational competences in their main occupation, and related occupations;
- (d) help individuals obtain qualifications for a professional change, due to economic restructuring, social mobility or changes of work capacity;
- (e) help individuals acquire advanced knowledge, modern methods and procedures required to perform duties at the work place;
- (f) promote lifelong learning.

Adult vocational training programmes are organised based on the training/qualification needs of the participating adults:

- (a) initiation training programmes are focused on the acquisition of one or more competences specific for a qualification in accordance with the occupational standard or the training standard;

- (b) qualification, and re-qualification programmes (at level 3 of the NQF);
- (c) training programmes leading to the acquisition of a set of vocational competences that will allow a person to carry out activities specific for one or more occupations;
- (d) improvement/development and specialisation programmes.

According to the Ordinance no. 76 of August 19, 2004 (updating the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000), vocational training programmes enable participants to acquire professional competences in accordance with occupational standards or, if the case, training standards recognized at national level. The credit transfer system and accumulation of transferrable training credits certify the acquisition of new competences.

Adult vocational training activities are offered through:

- (a) courses organised by training providers,
- (b) courses organised by employers inside their institutions,
- (c) internships and specialisation,
- (d) other forms of training.

Adult vocational training is provided by legal persons/entities (private or public) as well as, in certain cases, by individuals acting as vocational training providers. Authorization of training providers is coordinated by the National Authority for Qualifications through the authorization commissions. Individuals providing teaching and training activities within the system of continuing education and training for adults are specifically classified in the Romanian Classification of Occupations (COR) as adult trainers (*formatori de adulti*). Thus they classify as a specific specialization inside the system, with their own procedure for certification. In most cases, training courses for adult trainers are organized by private training providers, which are certified for the organization of specialized trainers training courses. Certificates are provided by the National Authority for Qualifications.

The Government Decision no. 481/2015 amends the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, through improving coordination, efficiency and relevance of adult training with emphasis on:

- (a) Monitoring adults' lifelong learning participation - employers send data regarding the number of employees who received training to the technical secretariat of the authorization commission on a quarterly basis;
- (b) Linking training and retraining programmes for adults with qualifications listed in the National Register of Qualifications in Romania;
- (c) Increasing active involvement of sectoral committees, the National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ) and the Ministry of Labour in order to review the methodology for development, validation, approval and management of occupational standards so that they meet the needs of the labour market;

- (d) Increasing the role of NAQ on matters relating to coordination of the accreditation process of training providers.

CVET programmes are organized for occupations included in the Romanian Classification of Occupations (*Clasificarea ocupațiilor din Romania* - COR) or for vocational competences which are common for a set of occupations.

Based on the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, adult vocational training may be financed from:

- (a) employers/enterprise own funds;
- (b) unemployment insurance fund;
- (c) sponsorship, donations, and external sources;
- (d) co-financing from the EU's structural and cohesion instruments, on the basis of the recent the unemployment insurance act (law no.76/2002 as modified via law no.250/2013) and the amended apprenticeship act (2013).

2.3.1.2 CVET offered through the National plan for vocational training

Each year the Ministry of Labour through the National agency for employment (NAE) develops a National plan for vocational training based on the analysis of vacancies and the identification of jobs in high demand and the use of county employment agency data base regarding job-seekers.

According to the National plan for vocational training, 2 395 programmes of initiation, (re) qualification, specialization were organized in 2015 on a free-of-charge basis (subsidized from various sources). Of this total, 62.30% were training and retraining programmes and 37.70% were initiating, improvement and specialization programmes (see 2.3.1.1. on types of training programmes). Out of the total 2 395 training programmes, 57.41% were funded from the unemployment insurance budget (1 375 programmes) and 42.59% from European structural funds (1 020 programmes). Until 30 April 2016, NAE had organized 381 programmes free of charge and 22 programmes on paid (fee) basis for other categories.

These programmes are organized by County Centres and Regional Centres operating under NAE (23 centres for vocational training of county (*judet*) employment agencies, eight regional centres of adult vocational training) and also by authorized public or private providers. In 2015, about 75% of those programmes were organized through network of centres under NAE (72% until 30 April 2016), mostly through the county (*judet*) employment agencies (approximately 90% of all NAE participants).

Starting in 2014, the National plan for vocational training introduced two new elements: the certification of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning and the provision of apprenticeship contracts and subsidies.

Participants in NAE training programmes amounted to 43 402 persons in 2015 and to 7 781 until April 2016. Table 2.1 presents the most popular programmes for 2015 and 2016 (until 30 April).

Table 2.1. Number of persons trained by field of activity registered in 2015 and beginning of 2016

Field of activity	No. of trained persons	
	January - December 2015	January - end of April 2016
Electrotechnics, electronics, automation and information technologies: - Data processing and validation operator	2 239	515
Trade: - Trade worker	3 121	576
Tourism, hotels and restaurants - Cook - Waiter	1 912 2 027	432
Construction - Plumbers for gas installations	846	-
Business professionals - Accountant	1 242	335
Administrative professionals - Human resources inspector	2 798	651

Source: Based on data received from the Ministry of Labour

Out of the total unemployed that participated in training programmes during 2015, 72.32% completed their training, but many courses continued in 2016. Out of those 29 196 unemployed persons, 6 611 persons managed to find a job later.

Table 2.2 shows that the share of female who participated in vocational training programmes in 2015 was higher than the share of men.

Table 2.2. Graduates of free of charge vocational training programmes approved in 2015

Graduates	Number of graduates
Female	17 361
Male	12 212
TOTAL	29 677

Source: Based on data received from the Ministry of Labour

In terms of age distribution of unemployed beneficiaries, 13 401 participants aged under 25, 8 352 aged 25-35, 9 330 aged 35-45 and 9 288 aged over 45. Based on a monitoring process, a total of 17 698 persons who

participated in training programmes in 2013-15 found a job in a period not exceeding 12 months from completion of training / skills assessment by the end of 2015.

2.3.1.3 Other form of support to adults

A significant share of active labour market measures refers to 'measures for employment stimulation', offered by the public employment service, such as measures providing professional information and guidance, counselling and mediation as basic measures of the public employment service. These measures include training activities leading to vocational training certificates.

As a prerequisite for implementing employment stimulation measures, the employment agencies have to draw up an individual job-matching plan for every job-seeker. Services of professional information and counselling are delivered free of charge to the job-seekers and have the following purposes:

- (a) to provide information on the labour market and the evolution of the professions;
- (b) to evaluate personality traits of beneficiaries (including self-assessment) for their professional guidance;
- (c) to develop the competences and self-confidence of the job-seekers in order to enable them to make a decision on their own career;
- (d) to train job-seekers on job-searching methods and techniques.

Professional information and counselling was carried out in specialised centres, organised within the employment agencies, as well as in other centres and accredited public or private service suppliers, who conclude contracts with the employment agencies. In 2015, 309 303 persons found a job through these mediation services, out of which 209 784 people in permanent jobs and 99 519 people through individual labour contracts for a definite period. During January - March 2016, 64 180 persons were employed after receiving these services, out of which 43 251 people in permanent jobs and 20 929 people through individual labour contracts for a definite period.

Subsidies for employers represent another form to facilitate employment of young and adults and stimulate companies that hire persons from a disadvantaged category (with disabilities, Roma people, persons over 45 years old etc.) but do not include training activities.

Labour market participation of young people at risk of social marginalization or without family is also promoted (according to Law 116/2002 to prevent social exclusion updated in 2013 and Law 260/2013 updating Law 76/2002 regarding the system of unemployment insurance). Law 116/2002 defines young people at risk of social exclusion as persons between 16-26 years,

registered at the National/County Employment Agency, and fitting in one of the following categories:

- (a) registered in the child protection system or come from this system,
- (b) have disabilities,
- (c) do not have a family or their family cannot provide for their living,
- (d) have children,
- (e) have finished an imprisonment punishment, or
- (f) are victims of human trafficking.

Under these provisions, the National agency for employment takes signs a solidarity agreement with the young person and offers:

- (a) personalized social support by a PES vocational counsellor;
- (b) information and mediation with employers;
- (c) subsidies for insertion employers that hire young people at risk of social marginalization.

The solidarity agreement is signed for a period of up to three years (up to one year if the young person is below 26 years old when the contract of solidarity is signed). Insertion employers receive monthly for each young person employed, an amount equal to the basic salary, until the expiry of the contract of solidarity. Under this measure, 372 young people were employed by the end of 2015 and 45 were employed from January until March 2016.

2.3.2. APPRENTICESHIP

In the national context, apprenticeship is not considered as part of IVET. A special law on apprenticeship has been mandated by the Labour Code since 2003. The current act adopted in 2005 (Law no.279/2005; last amendments of May 2013) has seen a rather slow application. One reason for this at the very beginning was the legal requirements for enterprises deriving from apprenticeship contracts ⁽⁶⁾ (which have been defined as a special type of labour contracts involving both work as well as vocational training at the workplace).

⁽⁶⁾ According to the special law that regulates the institution of apprenticeship in Romania, namely the Apprenticeship Act of 2005 (Law no.279/2005), apprenticeship is 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, those entitled to apprenticeship are the individuals aged 16-25, 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 or 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 enterprises can engage into apprenticeship contracts provided that they do have the

Apprenticeship is organised for persons that want to work and to obtain a qualification (young that dropped out from school, NEETs, unemployed, long-term unemployed, adults). There is no upper age limit for enrolment, but there is a minimum age limit of 16 years old, the legal working age.

Employers must sign a contract for training services with an authorised training provider, which includes providing professional training and organising exams for graduation upon completion of the apprenticeship contract. The contract for training services is concluded for the same period as the apprenticeship contract.

Training periods alternate with working time allocated for the tasks specified in the job description; the practical training of the apprentice is performed under the guidance and supervision of the trainer of training provider. The apprenticeship programme includes theoretical and practical long-term training (one to three years), resulting in qualifications at NQF/EQF levels 2-4. The assessment and certification is made in accordance with the legal provisions in force on adult training and the apprentice gets a nationally recognized formal certificate.

The employer can sign a contract with the Public Employment Service to receive a monthly sum of 1 125 lei (equivalent 250 euro) for each apprentice from the unemployment insurance budget, for the entire duration of the apprenticeship contract.

The National plan for vocational training (Section 2.3.1.2) includes also an annex regarding apprenticeship that is monitored together with the training courses. Only around 100 apprenticeship contracts were signed in 2012, raised to 340 contracts in 2014. The Ministry of Labour introduced some changes (May 2013) to the apprenticeship act to encourage employers' engagement, aiming at:

- a) increasing available funding for employers engaging in apprenticeship - apart from funds available from the unemployment insurance fund, ESF funds may be now accessed so as to complement funding;
- b) ensuring that training for the apprentices is provided by certified training providers at least for the theoretical part of the training;

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 programme for the occupation for which they do wish to organize apprenticeship. The apprentice is considered a full time employee, 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. The requirement for employers to provide housing and accommodation for apprentices if they were unable to shuttle between home and work was dropped as it was judged as burdensome by the business community.

c) ensuring thus that all apprentices receive nationally recognized qualification certificates.

Despite the intention to attract more companies, 129 apprenticeship contracts have been concluded in 2015 and 63 apprenticeship contracts have been concluded during January-April 2016.

A pilot project on the 'Impact assessment of apprenticeship law and formulate recommendations for improvement of implementation', conducted between August 2014 and September 2015 revealed that flexible minimum duration of apprenticeship training and increased subsidies for employers are needed ⁽⁷⁾. Increase in the subsidy refers to the amount which is given to the employer who enters into a contract of apprenticeship with an apprentice from the Unemployment insurance budget. The grant will be given throughout the course of the apprenticeship contract. Grants to employers are foreseen if the employer wishes to offer the apprentice a contract of indefinite duration upon graduation, thus enabling small and medium size companies to retain skilled workforce.

In the context of high youth unemployment, in 2015 funding of apprenticeship programmes was included in actions under the Operational Programme Human Capital 2014-20.

To reduce youth unemployment, especially of NEETs, based on the EU Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013, the Ministry of Labour developed and implemented the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2014-15. This plan introduced key reforms and initiatives designed to create the appropriate framework for youth employment including through apprenticeship schemes. Young people who have benefited of apprenticeships have also benefited of guidance and career counselling services. The new Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for 2016-20 again includes measures to promote apprenticeships.

2.3.3. OTHER FORMS OF TRAINING

Since 2000, the 'Second Chance' programme addresses the marginalization and social and professional exclusion of young people who dropped out from compulsory education without acquiring the minimal competence needed for obtaining a job (according to the prescriptions of the Ministry of Education Order

(7) Within a SOPHRD project implemented by the Prime Minister Chancellery together with the World Bank experts 'Developing the capacity of ministries to develop economic and financial analyzes to support policy formulation process relevant to programming and implementation of Structural Instruments', one of the main component was the development of three pilot impact assessments that can support policy.

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: helping learners completing compulsory studies and obtaining certain qualifications. The organization of this programme is part of a package of concrete measures regarding the completion of compulsory education, and improving chances for social and professional integration of young people. It is based on a partnership among several institutions: educational units, public administration, social partners and non-governmental organizations.

CHAPTER 3: SHAPING VET QUALIFICATIONS

3.1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF VET QUALIFICATIONS

In Romania, IVET qualifications (technological programmes, 'school- and work-based VET' programmes and post-secondary VET) are delivered based on the training standards, which are developed in close cooperation with the social partners and are validated by the Sectoral Committees. All IVET qualifications and their duration are registered in the National Qualification Register and are approved by law.

A training standard is a document which describes the learning outcomes that participants in a technological programme or in a 'school- and work-based VET' programme should acquire and be able to demonstrate. The training standard is based on the relevant occupational standards in force and is the regulating document with the most important role in designing VET curricula. It also stands as general basis for the assessment of learning outcomes and the award of a qualification certificate.

An IVET training standard is structured as follows:

- (a) introduction;
- (b) competences that constitute the basis of the training standard and which are previously identified as necessary for the qualification/s in the national qualification standards (in case they are missing, the recommendations of the sectoral committees, company representatives or other interested representatives can be considered);
- (c) units of learning outcomes corresponding to competences identified for each occupation and their corresponding assessment standards;
- (d) learning outcomes specific to other subjects (Maths, maternal language, sciences etc.) necessary for acquiring of a qualification and practicing an occupation.

Schools are involved in the process of designing qualifications only through the development of a specific part of curricula, the locally developed curricula (LDC).

3.2. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET

At national level, the Law No. 87/ 2006 on quality assurance (QA) of education created the legal institutional framework for developing and implementing quality assurance mechanisms in education, at system and provider level. The Law sets a series of basic principles that are applicable for all levels of pre-university

(including IVET) and higher education: focusing on learning outcomes, promoting quality improvement, protecting education beneficiaries (first of all students), giving importance to the internal evaluation process (self-assessment) of providers.

By law, each VET provider has to set up a Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee, responsible for preparing and implementing a School Action Plan – SAP (a strategic planning document with a 5 years perspective and yearly operational plans), for coordinating the self-assessment process. The self-assessment of VET providers and of VET programmes is performed on the basis of a set of quality descriptors (input, process and output), grouped in seven areas, several of which have a direct effect on the content of training (LDC) and the qualifications acquired:

- (a) Quality management: the management develops the mission, vision and values of the organization following consultative processes; the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance develops the quality manual (the sum of all policies and procedures, strategic and operational plans and documentation regarding quality assurance) and monitors the implementation of the procedures.
- (b) Management responsibilities: the management gets actively involved in quality assurance of learning programmes; partnerships with stakeholders are developed and maintained; relevant information is collected, stored, analysed regularly and communicated to stakeholders; there is an effective financial management.
- (c) Resource management (physical and human): the organization provides students with a safe and supportive environment; learning facilities are properly equipped and meet the collective and individual needs of students; resources, teaching methods and related premises allow the access and active participation of all students; staff is employed according to clear criteria (minimum standards regarding qualifications and experience) of recruitment and selection; the organization defines job descriptions; evaluation of staff performance is transparent; there is a staff policy, that includes induction procedure and continuing training programmes.
- (d) Design, development and revision of training programmes: the organization is continuously concerned with the improvement of training programmes, to meet the needs of students and staff (internal stakeholders) and of employers and the community (external stakeholders); the training programmes are student centred.
- (e) Teaching, training and learning: the organization provides equal access to learning programmes and supports all students, preventing any form of discrimination; students receive complete information about the training

provision and benefit from effective counselling and career guidance; student rights and responsibilities are clearly defined; student-centred teaching and training methods are mainly used; students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning process.

- (f) Assessment and certification of learning: the organization develops and uses effective processes of assessment and monitoring of learning, in order to support student progress; teachers participate regularly in activities of assessment standardisation; assessment and certification meet national standards and legislation requirements
- (g) Evaluation and improvement of quality: performance of the organisation is evaluated and monitored; following identification of weaknesses through the evaluation process, improvement measures are developed; these are implemented and monitored, as part of a new cycle of quality assurance.

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education (ARACIP) and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) were set up and are responsible for the authorisation, accreditation and external evaluation of all education and training providers.

For IVET providers, ARACIP is responsible for:

- (a) authorization and accreditation - certifying that an IVET provider and its VET programmes meet predetermined standards. Both authorisation and accreditation standards are approved by Governmental Decisions and include requirements related to the institutional capacity (administrative and managerial structures, logistics, human resources), educational effectiveness (content of study programmes, learning outcomes, scientific or pedagogical activity of teachers, financial activity) and quality management (strategies and procedures for quality assurance, procedures concerning the design, monitoring and review of study programmes and activities). Accreditation is compulsory for each training programme, on the basis of the QA provisions and provisions set in the National Law on Education. Accreditation is granted by order of the Ministry of Education, based on the approval of ARACIP. Applicants are required to go through two successive stages:
 - *provisional authorization*, that grants the right to offer education and training programmes;
 - *accreditation*, that also grants the right to organize graduation / certification exams and to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education.
- (b) the external evaluation of VET providers and programmes - a multi-criteria assessment of the extent to which a VET provider and its programmes meet the quality standards. It is carried out by independent experts, under the coordination of ARACIP, every 5 years.

School inspectorates are responsible for the external monitoring of IVET programmes, offering guidance and support to IVET providers in the QA process:

- (a) for the quality control aiming to verify the fulfilment of the quality requirements, and of the proposals for quality improvement measures;
- (b) for the validation of VET providers self-assessment reports; and
- (c) for the approval of VET providers improvement plans.

Furthermore, monitoring of the quality of vocational certification exams is carried out to ensure objectivity of the examination process and relevance of the certification examination outcomes to graduates actual degree of achievement of vocational competences.

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. It is an inter-institutional coordination structure with the role of applying the European and national measures for quality assurance in vocational education and training in a coherent way. GNAC includes experts from national institutions who have certain attributions regarding QA for initial and continuing VET: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, ARACIP, the National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ), and the NCTVETD.

3.3. MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES TO ANTICIPATE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

In 2000, the NCTVETD with the support of a number of institutions and experts and with the approval of the Ministry of Education developed a model for strategic planning of VET supply to improve the relevance of IVET provision to the forecasted needs of the labour market. The first tools supporting the strategic planning of VET supply were delivered in 2004.

The model deals with relevance of VET offer from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, on two dimensions. The geographical dimension is referring to VET supply distribution at national, regional, county and local community level and it is mainly aimed at decreasing the skills and qualifications shortage. The sectoral dimension takes into consideration the educational supply through qualifications and associated skills, at the level of economic sectors and it is aimed at decreasing the gap between the skills and qualifications demand and IVET supply. The two dimensions, are complemented by micro-level planning, resulting in the development of the local component of the curriculum

that contributes to both the decrease of skills shortage and to the increase of the match between labour market demand and skills supply.

The model combines top-down and bottom-up decision-making. The decision on planning belongs to the county level, which collects information through desk-research and monitoring of the local labour market as well as on the capacity of school units.

The model also takes into consideration the time horizon for enrolment. VET outcomes are measurable only after significant periods of time, longer than two years, which impose an early anticipation of labour market demand.

The model is based on three core elements:

- (a) complementary collective action of institutional stakeholders (employers, professional associations, employees/trade unions, public administration, relevant government organisations and also other organisations of civil society) spread across more decision-making layers, respectively: national, regional, county and local level;
- (b) undertaking responsibility for definition of targets and actions, within the participatory planning process, based on a common institutional interest;
- (c) drafting strategic planning documents, based on prospective research meant to ensure early anticipation of VET needs.

The following strategic planning documents for VET supply aim at improving the match between the technical and vocational education offer and the social-economic development needs at the corresponding level with a 2020 perspective:

- (a) The Regional Education Action Plan (REAP) – carried out at regional level;
- (b) The Local Education Action Plan (LEAP) – carried out at county level;
- (c) The School Action Plan (SAP) – carried out by the school unit at the local community level.

REAP, LEAP and SAP are updated and reviewed periodically, thus increasing both coherence between the regional, county and local planning layers and comparability of documents produced at the same level of planning across the country. Monitoring and evaluation of REAP, LEAP and SAP implementation are carried out based on a general framework provided by a relevant Handbook.

Advisory structures organized at local, sectoral, regional, county and local level contribute to the following problems/questions:

- (a) what types of qualifications can be achieved through the VET system?
- (b) what competences may VET graduates develop?
- (c) how many graduates in different qualifications are needed to ensure alignment of initial VET supply with forecasted labour market demand?
- (d) where is the enrolment for a specific qualification organised?

The first two issues are addressed by Sectoral Committees. The next two questions are on the agenda of:

- (a) Regional Consortia - advisory structures that aim at improving the relevance and the quality of the VET system at national and regional level;
- (b) Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships - advisory structures that aim at improving the relevance and the quality of the VET system at county level, for the support of school inspectorates. The LCDSPs include representatives of local authorities, County Employment Agency, employer's associations, trade unions, school inspectorates, NGOs;
- (c) Schools Management Boards.

In 2015, the general framework for Regional consortia and LCDSPs (active since 2002) was updated (Order of the Minister of Education no. 4456/08.07.2015).

The latest forecasting study was conducted in 2011 with the support of the ESF through the SOPHRD, within the project 'Linking initial VET provision with labour market demands', implemented by the NCTVETD. This study compiles a forecast survey ⁽⁸⁾ regarding labour market for anticipating VET supply with the horizon of 2013 and 2020, and the 2011 Enterprise Survey on short term labour demand (6-12 months). Both components of the study were conducted by the National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Conditions, partner in the project mentioned above.

The Enterprise Survey conducted in 2011 provided information based on the data collected from 3 836 companies. This analysis focused on two main dimensions: past and future developments of the enterprise activities and problems of skills demand and supply mismatch, with a focus on young graduates. Thus, the analysis focused on the structure and evolution of the number of employees at company level, on the recruitment practices and problems, on the skills and labour shortages, recruitment of young graduates, employees likely to retire in the next 12 months etc. The outcomes of these exercises have been used by decision makers to set up the IVET offer (number of IVET places for students for different sectors and in different regions).

⁽⁸⁾ The methodology for the forecasting study built upon a combination of projection methods and techniques based on panel econometric models and analytical methods, as there was a need for a high level of detailing the results of estimations, because there were no relevant statistical data at the disaggregation level requested by the projection. Mention should be made that the forecast methodology is similar to the one used by Cambridge Econometrics in the forecast model used by CEDEFOP, and it includes some innovative approaches generated by the much higher level of information detail requested.

CHAPTER 4: PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1 EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING AND CAREER GUIDANCE

According to the article no. 350 Law no.1/2011, lifelong career guidance and counselling includes all services and activities assisting individuals irrespective of their age and at any time to make choices in education, training or work and to manage their careers. Counselling and career guidance can be carried out by educational institutions, universities, training institutions, employment services, and labour and youth services.

According to the legal definition, counselling and guidance include the following activities:

- (a) information about careers, which refers to all information necessary to plan for, obtain and keep a job;
- (a) education regarding careers, in educational institutions under the course of 'counselling and guidance';
- (b) career counselling that helps people clarify their goals and aspirations, understand their own educational profile, make informed decisions, be responsible for their actions, and manage their career transition process at different times;
- (c) employment counselling, which helps people to clarify their immediate professional goals, and learn about the skills necessary to seek and obtain a job.

Two main strands of guidance and counselling are available. The first one is based in the education system (university and pre-university levels) and the second one is embedded into the administrative structures of the labour market (basically the public employment services but also services offered by other providers including CVET providers).

Regarding guidance through the school system, the national education law stipulates for:

- (d) primary education counselling provided by teachers in cooperation with parents and school psychologists;
- (e) lower and upper secondary education guidance and counselling provided mainly by pedagogical assistance offices, organized in schools with more than 800 pupils (schools with fewer than 800 pupils may receive counselling from the pedagogical assistance offices of larger schools); and
- (f) higher education guidance and counselling provided by career guidance and counselling centres of universities facilitating the socio-professional transition of graduates from education to the labour market.

Guidance and counselling have also been included amongst the activities of the teaching staff with assessment criteria attached.

There is a growing awareness about the importance to develop certain competences in both the lower and upper secondary education within teaching disciplines which can contribute to the personal development of students. Guidance and counselling plays an important role in developing Career management skills as transversal skills needed by young pupils in lower secondary education, therefore guidance and counselling activities are included in the core curriculum for secondary education, including VET as a discipline by itself. Career guidance and counselling related-activities are also integrated in schools with the support of other teaching disciplines in grades 7-8 (lower secondary education) and in the first grades of upper secondary education.

Under the public employment agency, the county (*judet*) agencies for employment are also responsible for guidance/counselling, especially for disadvantaged groups (such: older workers, young graduates, former convicts, individuals belonging to certain ethnic minorities, e.g. the Roma, the long-term unemployed). They offer information about training and job opportunities, aiming at alignment between training supply and labour demand.

The Romanian system of information, guidance and counselling services currently consists of several networks, centres or services, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour. All finance is provided by the state budget.

The majority of the staff employed by the specialized institutions of the Ministry of Education (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 or sociologist, trained through university courses offered by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences and the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work. Many graduates of these programmes also followed post-graduate training modules (Advanced Studies or Master degrees) specializing in counselling and guidance, psychotherapy, management and school administration. Attending post-graduate courses in guidance and counselling is not a pre-requisite of obtaining a counsellor position in pre-university education.

By the Order no. 3370 (03.09.1998) of the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Educational Sciences through its Educational and Vocational Guidance Department is appointed as the methodological authority for guidance and counselling and as representative in the Euroguidance network (since 1999).

In 2015, Euroguidance Romania (EG RO) participated in several activities and focused on promoting the European dimension in lifelong guidance with the

aim of strengthening the European cooperation and contributing to the development of the Romanian guidance and counselling community. The EG RO supported the Romanian services of guidance and counselling by providing specific information, methodologies and examples of good practice through events, training courses and publications. It also organised the 'Academia exchange Creative approaches in career guidance and counselling' in April 2015 and the international conference 'Education and creativity for a knowledge based society' ⁽⁹⁾. The EG RO participated and contributed to workshops and presentations at national and international level which were attended by guidance counsellors, researchers, teachers, students. Members of the EG RO have written in 2015 publications on various themes related to guidance and counselling.

Key activities to be organised by the EG RO in 2016 include:

- (a) Training of school counsellors ('Self Kit' programme) with the purpose of developing the socio-emotional skills in children. The programme will last 89 hours, it will be accredited and will entail three types of activities: face to face training, three weekends; tutorial activities and individual tasks monitored;
- (b) Organising a regional seminar with directors of county counselling centres, as a platform for information and practice exchange, and also of dissemination of European policies in the field of guidance;
- (c) Publishing the book *Teacher-parent communication in schools from disadvantaged areas*, promoting the results of a training programme, which is the end result of a three years research of the Institute of Educational Sciences from Romania. The book describes the training programme delivered in 2015 to teachers from four schools on the topic of basic counselling skills, used as tools in the communication with parents, and the results of these trainings;
- (d) Translating into Romanian and publishing in electronic format of an ELGPN tool: 'Designing and Implementing Policies Related to Career Management Skills (CMS)';
- (e) Participating in the new European Commission led-working group on lifelong guidance policies (the follow-up of the ELGPN) which will be established in 2016. One ELGPN publication will be translated into Romanian language and disseminated during different events (national conference, educational fairs etc.).

⁽⁹⁾ <http://www.euroguidance.ise.ro/conferinta-nationala-2015.html>;
<http://www.nbcc.ro/en/noutati/International-Conference-Education-and-Creativity-for-a-Knowledge-Based-Society-THEORY-AND-PRACTICE-IN-COUNSELING.html>

Within the IVET system, the NCTVETD contributes to the increase of awareness of young students and their parents through career guidance and counselling activities. Specific activities are organised as part of the 'Job Orientation - training in businesses and schools' (JOBS) project developed by the Centre for International Projects in Education of the Zurich University of Teacher Education in cooperation with the Romanian Ministry of Education and the NCTVETD, in partnership with the University of Bucharest. It is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Romanian Government through the Ministry of Education.

Its main objective is to train pupils enrolled in the last years of lower secondary education and the first years of technological high school or in 'school- and work-based VET' programmes to make well-informed decisions when choosing a VET pathway or continuing their studies in higher education. The target groups included also teachers and companies involved in VET who need to answer the challenges raised by the continuously changing labour market needs. Therefore the project focused on developing transversal competences targeting mainly the development of skills for life and career success.

The novelty in the approach to teaching consists in using student-centred methods such as task-based learning, which places students in the centre of their own learning process by asking them clear tasks such as to identify, explore, ask questions, find answers, give solutions and seize and understand the interrelations between life and work roles, work opportunities and career building processes.

Initially the project was piloted in two schools from one county in the Central region of the country then it was extended to 16 schools during 2012-14. During this period 7 learning materials and a toolbox for students and teachers and a teacher training programme were developed and are available on <http://www.jobsproject.ro/en/>. The project was extended to other regions reaching 133 schools by the end of 2015. In the school year 2016-17 it will be implemented in other 41 schools from a new region. So far, over 400 teachers and 4 000 students from 133 lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools (technologic and 'school- and work-based VET' programmes) benefitted from the JOBS programme and additional 141 teachers will be trained in 2016-17. In May 2016, the first JOBS Competition was organised.

4.2. INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION IN VET AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Several measures for young people are taken by the Ministry of Education, some of which in cooperation with other national authorities:

- (a) the 'Professional Scholarship' is a national social programme open to all students enrolled in 'school- and work-based VET' programmes consisting of a monthly financial support (200 RON / approx.50€). Pupils enrolled in 'school- and work-based VET' programmes cannot benefit simultaneously of the 'professional scholarship' and the financial support granted to pupils within other general, vocational or technologic programmes. However participating companies may offer additional scholarships, transport from school to the place where practical training takes places, or meals, based on their internal procedures and resources. The most prominent companies which provided such scholarships are: Schaeffler (250), Stabilus (90), Contitech (62), Praktiker (54), Automobile Dacia(52), Polipol Mobila (51), Azur (51);
- (b) the 'high school money' programme is a national social protection programme providing monthly financial support for pupils enrolled in upper secondary education (grades 9-12th) (180RON/approx. 50€) including VET (technological) programmes;
- (c) other types of scholarships: for foreign pupils and students, for students, etc.;
- (d) 'Euro200' is a national programme that supports students, including VET ones and students with limited financial means to purchase computers and develop ICT skills. The 'Euro 200' has been implemented since 2004, under Law no. 269/2004, granting financial aid based on social criteria;
- (e) state allowance for children going to school, including VET ones is doubled (Law no.61/1993 updated in 2015) since June 2015;
- (f) 50% discount for national local transportation (by bus, train) for pupils and students (till the age of 26).

All costs for companies involved in the work-based learning of IVET students are tax-deductible according to relevant legislation.

The Ministry of Labour implements a comprehensive array of measures designed so as to promote and support participation in VET and better labour market access:

- (a) services of professional information and counselling are delivered free of charge to the job-seekers (see 2.3.1);
- (b) measures for the transition from unemployment or inactivity to employment, focused on improving employability of individuals (personalised career information and counselling programmes, vocational training programmes and individual entrepreneurship stimulation) as well as stimulating mobility by offering mobility incentive packages that are tied to the social reference indicator set in 2011 at RON 500 (EUR approx. 111);
- (c) reform of the employment legal framework. Modification and completion of the Law no. 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and

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 introduces the following elements: providing free services to assess the skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning; grading the financial support to unemployed persons during their participation in CVET programmes; allowing more flexible conditions for subsidizing CVET programmes organised by employers; improving the access to mobility bonuses for unemployed persons; and reducing taxation for companies that hire unemployed persons and persons belonging to vulnerable groups.

(d) active employment measures: during 2015 the National Agency for Employment (NAE) implemented projects with European Social Fund support through the SOPHRD:

4. The project for the 'Development of active employment measures, stimulation of entrepreneurship initiative of individuals and labour market placement in South East, North East, South Muntenia and Bucharest Ilfov regions' was implemented by the County Agency for Employment (CAE) in Bacău. The project proposed tailored actions to facilitate the transition from school or inactivity to the labour market, such as vocational guidance and counselling, increase of professional competences, stimulation of entrepreneurship, job placements.
2. The project 'FACTOR! – be active in your own city!' was implemented by CAE Bihor to increase the employment rate for inactive persons, jobseekers and the unemployed, including long-term unemployed, in the North West and North East regions. The main actions included vocational training and validation of competences gained in non-formal and informal learning.
3. The project 'Development of a positive attitude' was implemented by CAE Braila to develop the human resources and to capitalize the potential labour force from the rural area through active measures for sustainable employment and promote equal opportunities on labour market.

In accordance with the Europe 2020 flagship initiative 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs', the government will undertake the necessary steps for the implementation of the flexicurity concept and of measures increasing chances of integrating persons of disadvantaged groups, women and young people in the labour market. Moreover, the NQF will be completed, the Romanian Classification of Occupations (COR) 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 planning education and training offer. 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.

Romania plans to set up the appropriate framework to facilitate the access and participation in the labour market of persons belonging to vulnerable groups. The goal is to develop 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 will address the Roma people, disabled persons, young people aged under 18 leaving the institutional child care system, persons benefiting from the minimum guaranteed income, the homeless, and people living in remote communities.

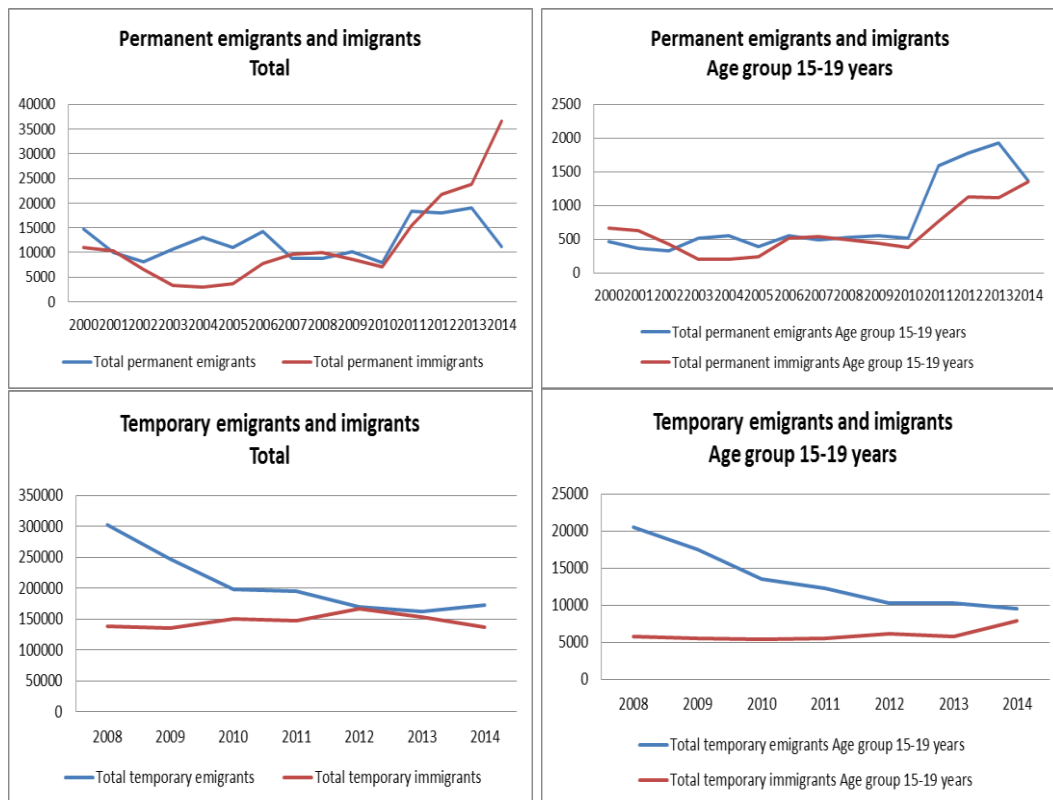
ANNEX 1

Table A.1. Population projection until 2080

Year/Age	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070	2080
Total population	19,909,323	19,686,804	19,003,562	18,458,698	17,973,992	17,440,757	16,812,947	16,338,339
14 years	221,243	215,896	207,660	190,249	184,118	182,870	176,124	170,468
15 years	219,729	209,652	209,039	191,630	184,174	183,233	177,052	170,920

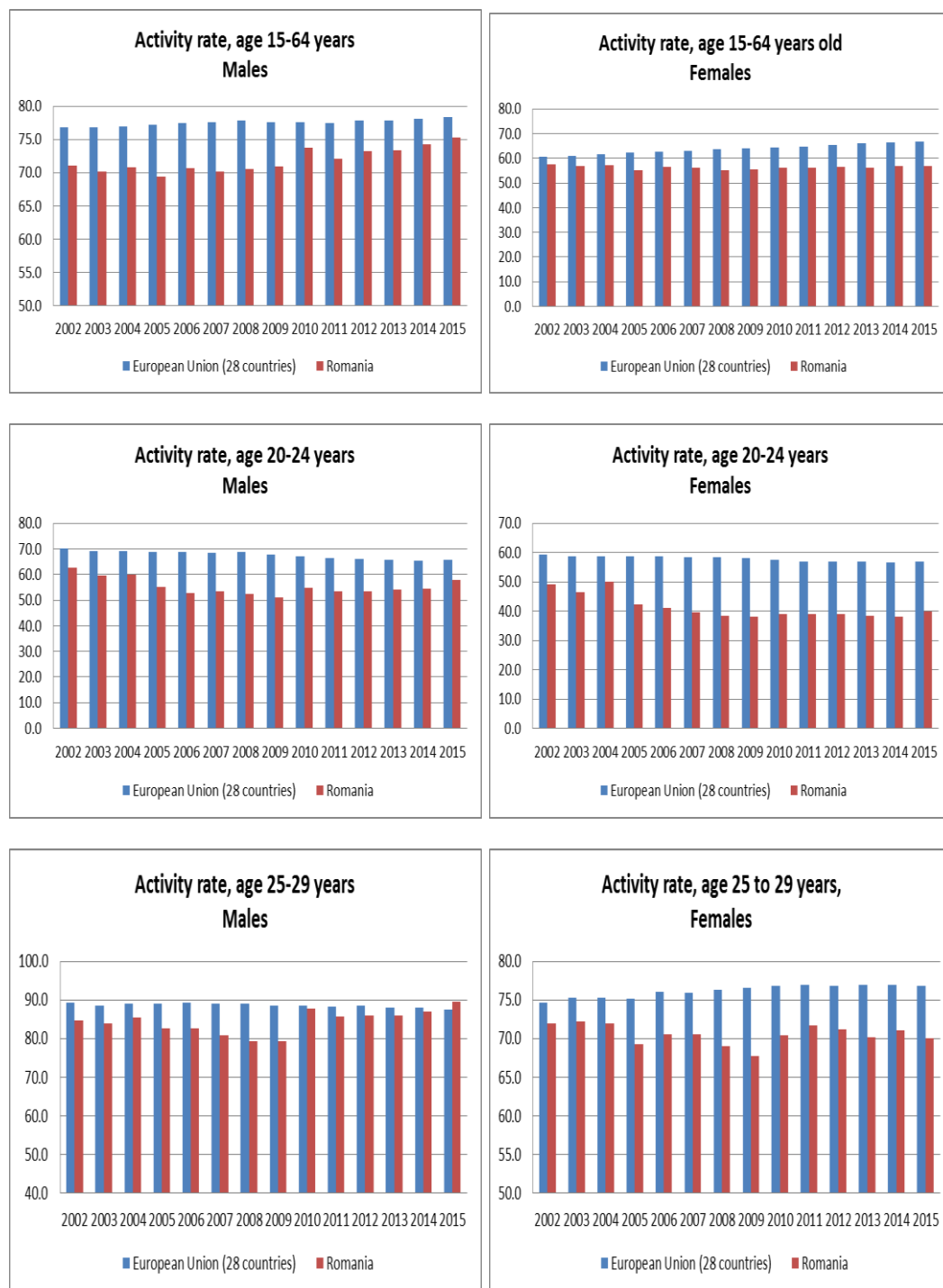
Source: Eurostat, EUROPOP2013 Population projection (proj_13npms)

Figure A.1. Permanent and temporary emigrants and immigrants by age groups



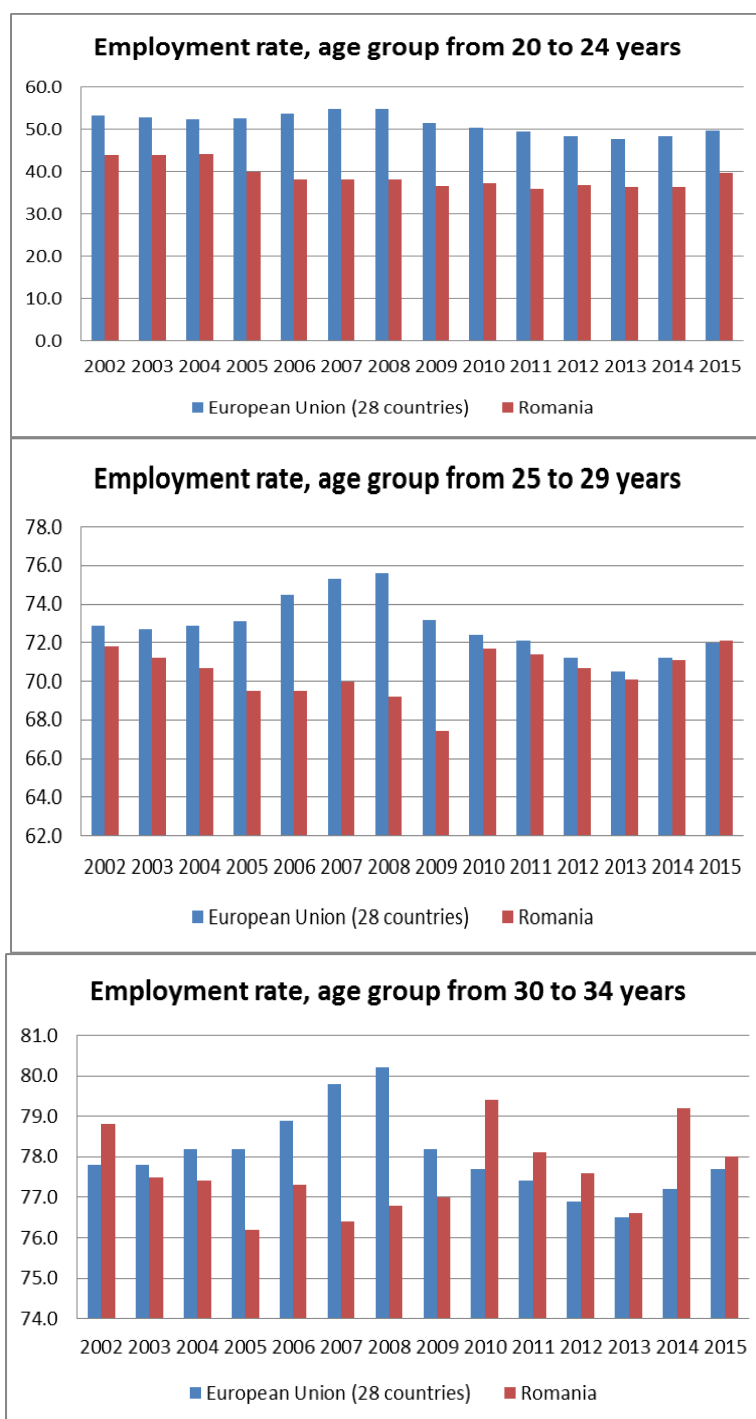
Source: National Institute of Statistics, data base TEMPO – On line series

Figure A.2. Activity rates by age groups and sex



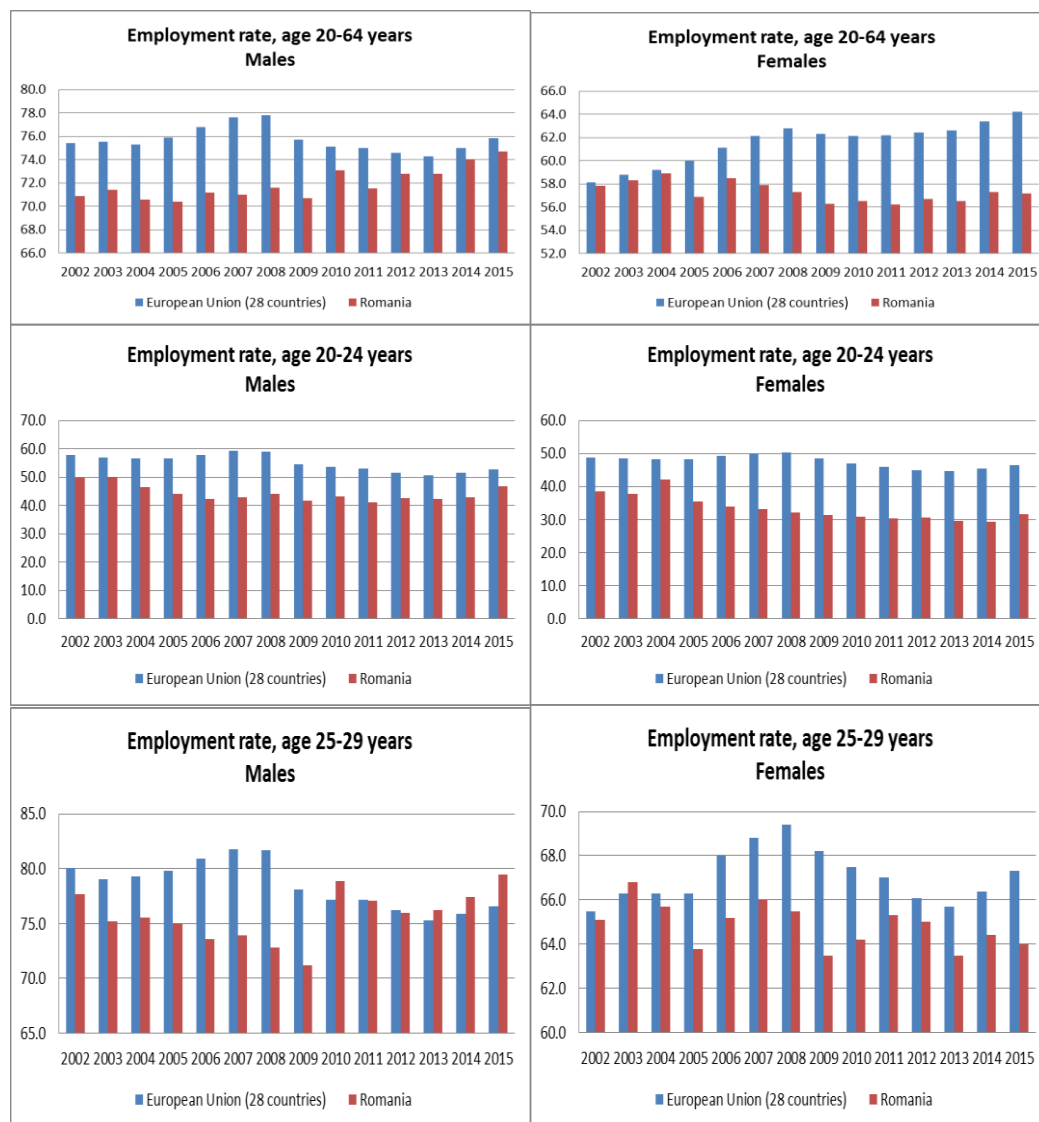
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_argan]

Figure A.3. Employment rates by age groups



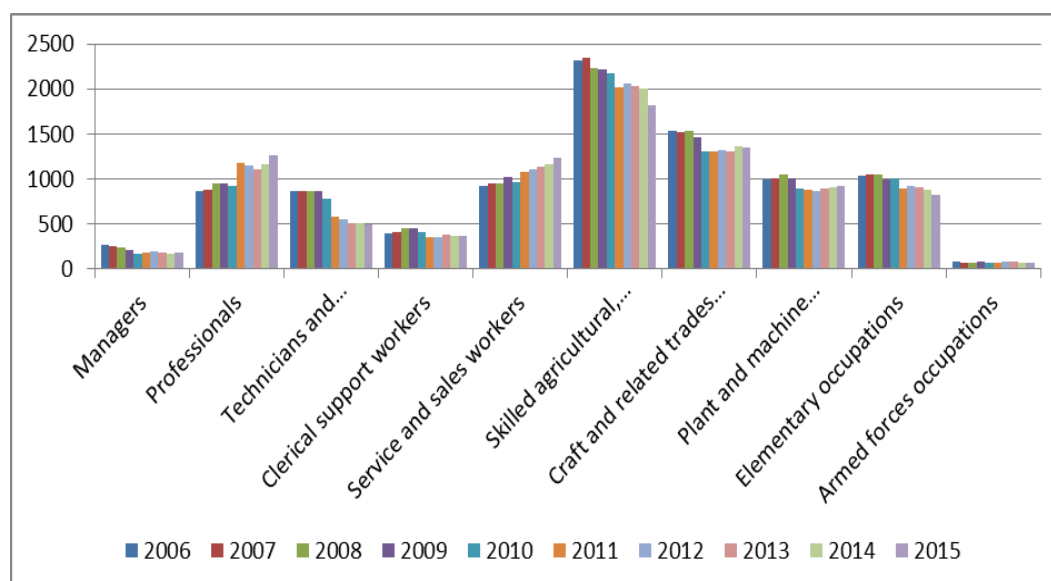
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_ergan]

Figure A.4. Employment rates by age groups and sex



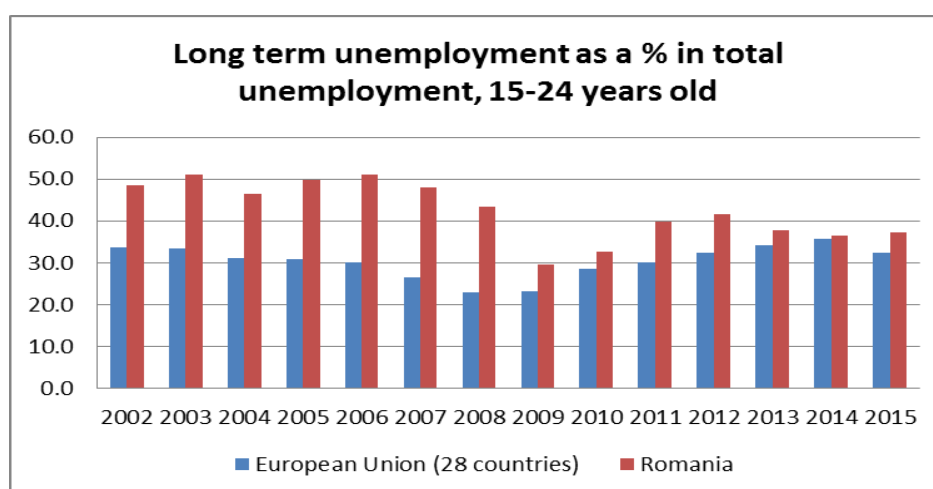
Source: EUROSTAT [Ifsa_ergan]

Figure A.5. Employment by occupation in 2005 – 2015 – age group 15 years and over



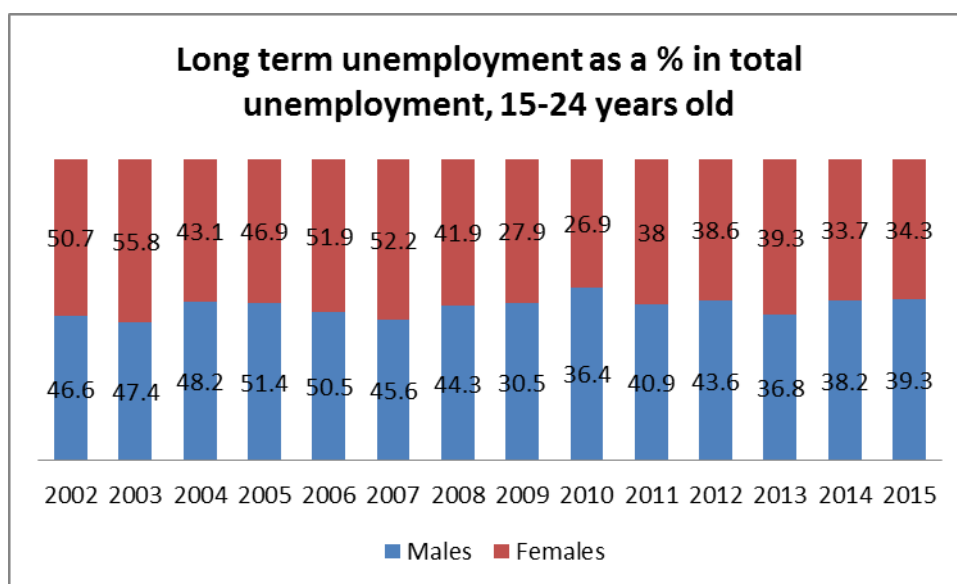
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_egais]

Figure A.61. Long-term unemployment rates of the total unemployment, age group 15 to 24 years old, EU-28 and Romania, 2002 – 2015



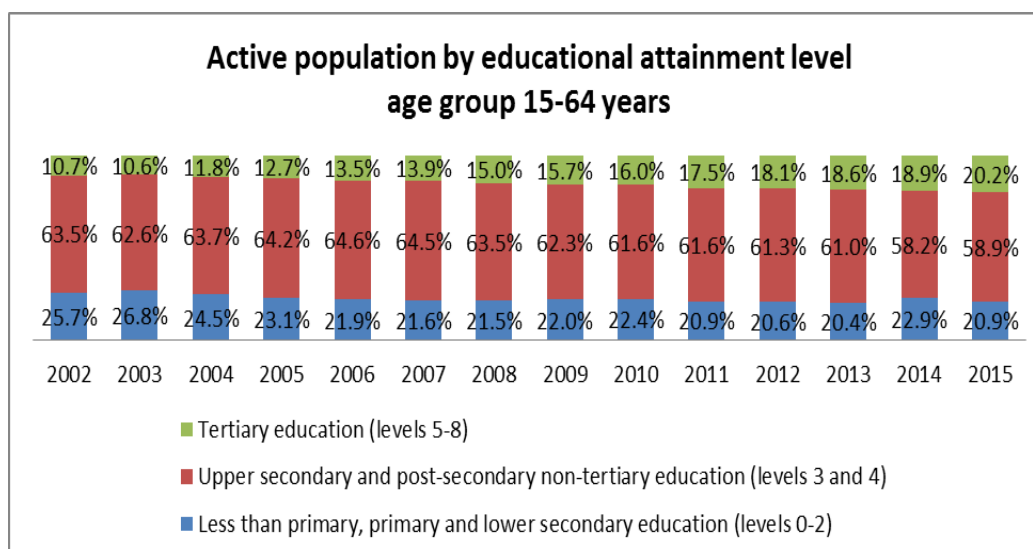
Source: Eurostat [lfsa_upgan]

Figure A.7. Long-term unemployment rates of the total unemployment, sex and age group 15 to 24 years old, in Romania, 2002 – 2015



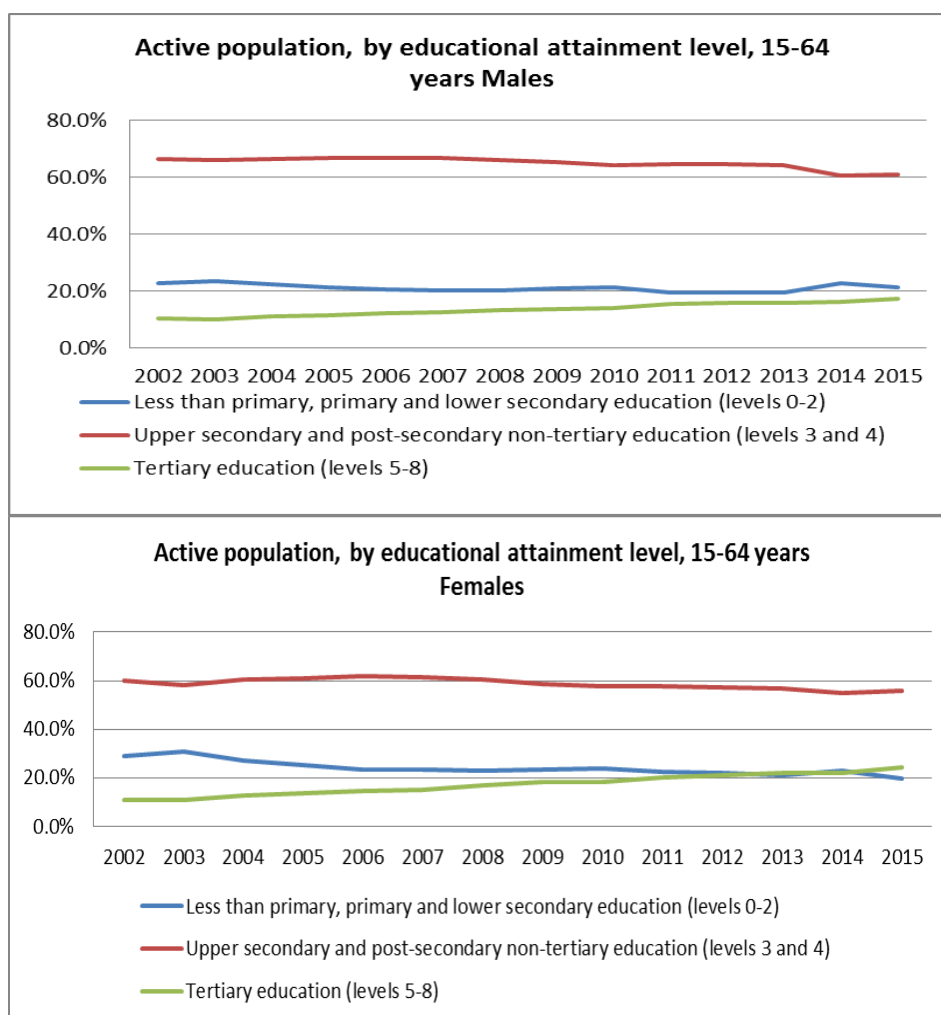
Source: Eurostat [lfsa_upgan]

Figure A.8. Active population by educational attainment level – age group 15-64



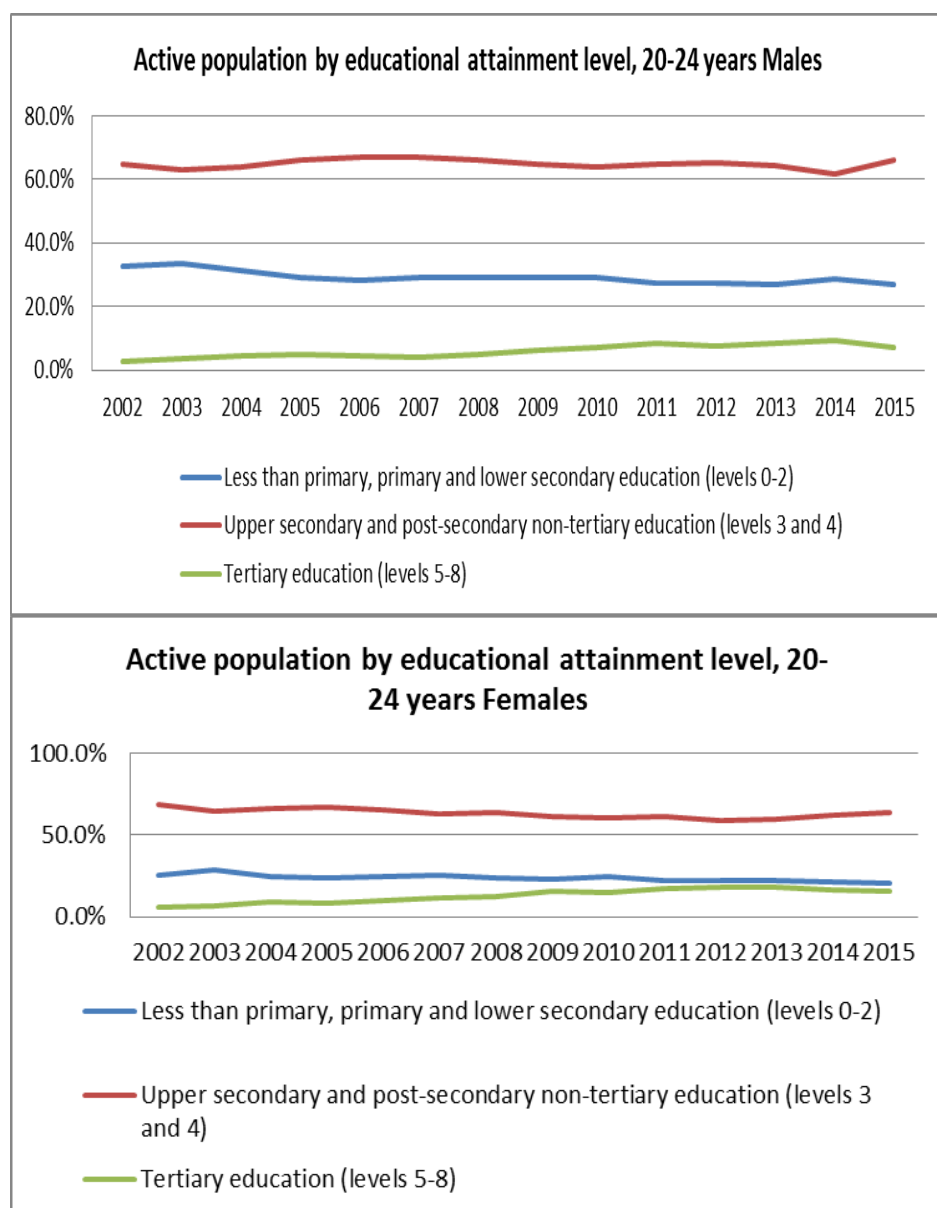
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_agaed]

Figure A.9. Active population by sex and educational attainment level – age group 15-64 years



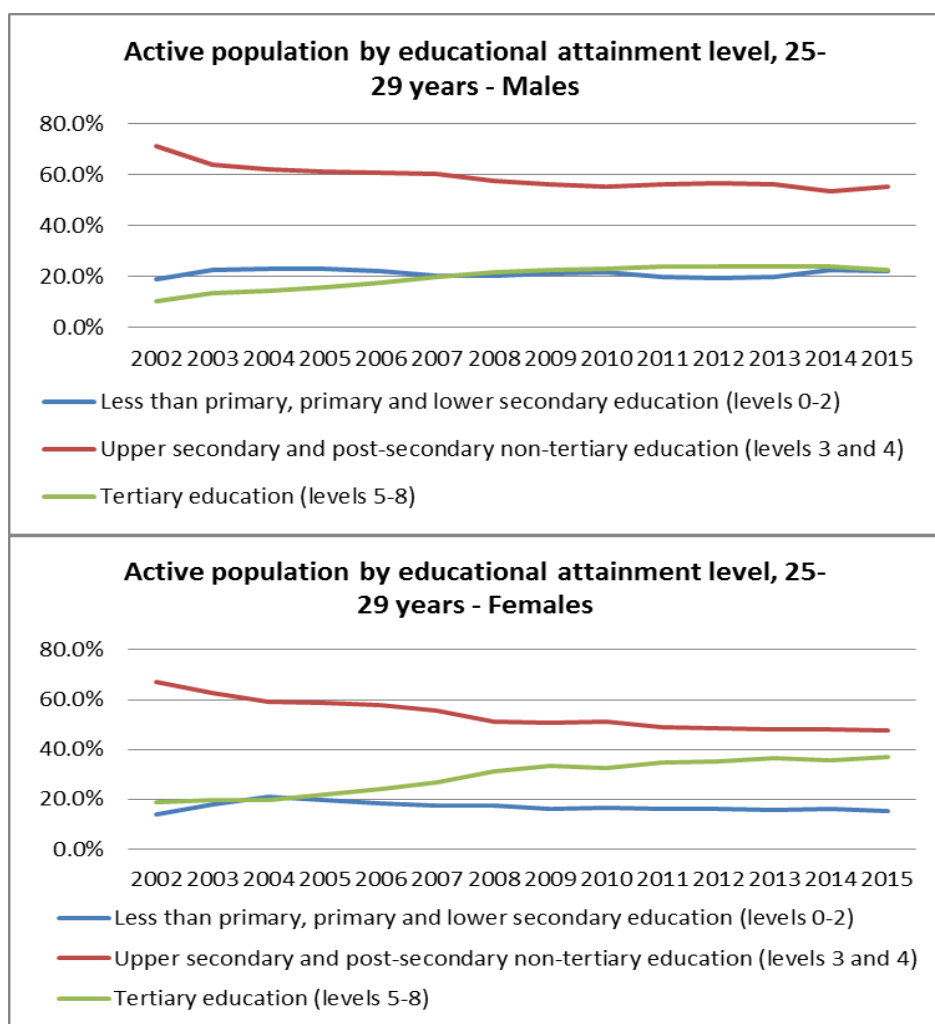
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_aged]

Figure A.10. Active population by sex and educational attainment level – age group 20-24



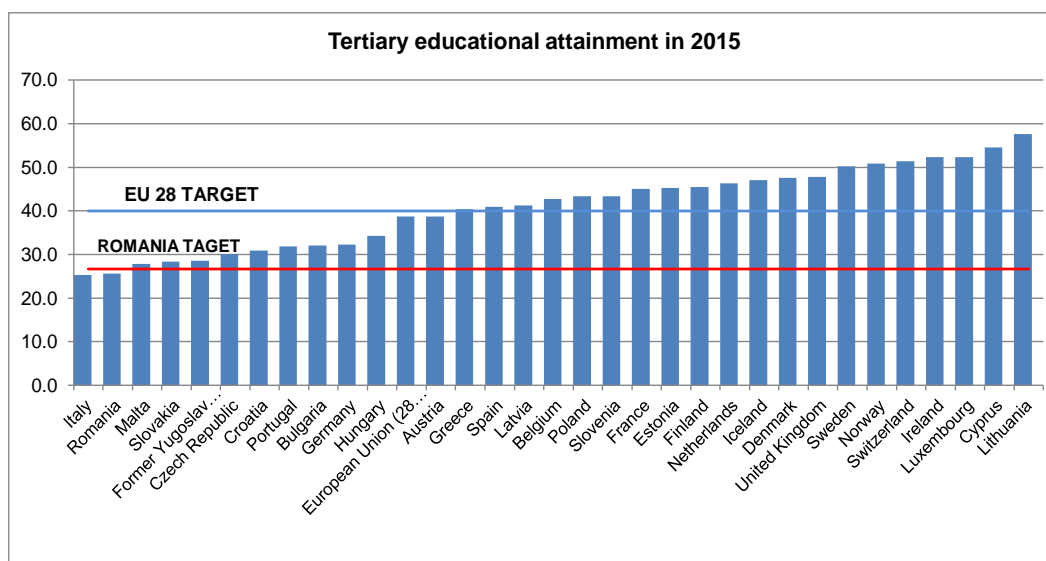
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_aged]

Figure A.11. Active population by sex and educational attainment level in 2015 – age group 25-29



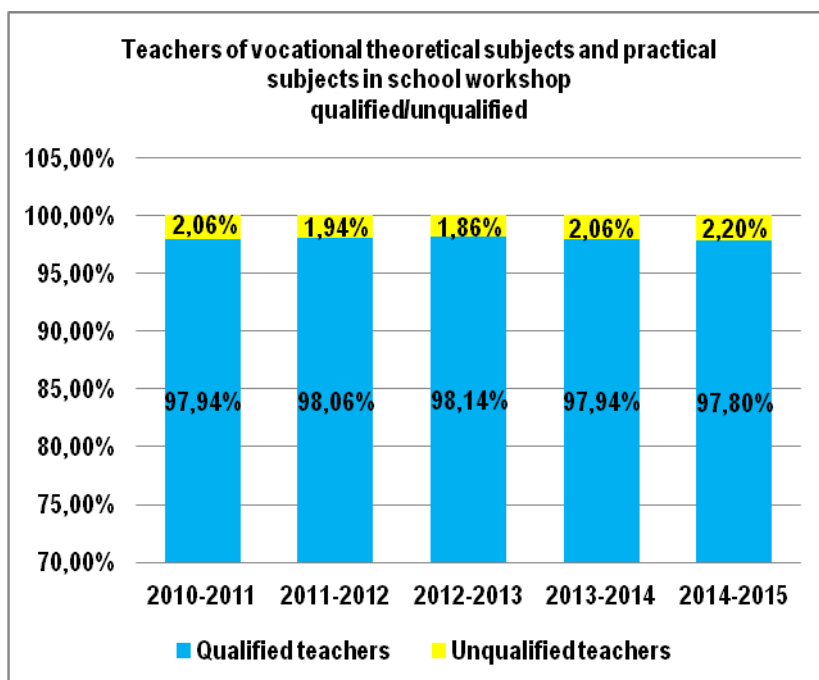
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa_aged]

Figure A.12. Tertiary educational attainment in 2015



Source: EUROSTAT (t2020_41)

Figure A.13. Percentage of qualified VET teachers



ANNEX 2

The national baccalaureate examination includes:

a. Oral tests for the

- evaluation of the oral linguistic communication skills in the Romanian language;
- evaluation of the oral linguistic communication skills in the maternal language, for pupils who have studied in a language of the national minorities in high school;
- evaluation of the ability to communicate in an international language studied in high school; the result of this evaluation is expressed by the competence level corresponding to the common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The pupils who, throughout pre-university education, obtain internationally recognized foreign language certificates, are entitled to the recognition and validation of the results obtained at such examinations, upon request and according to a methodology approved by order of the Minister of Education;

b. Practical test for the evaluation of the digital competences; the result of the evaluation is expressed by the competence level, as compared to the recognized European standards used in this area. Pupils who, throughout the pre-university education, pass internationally recognized tests for the certification of their computer skills, are entitled to the recognition and validation of the results obtained at such examinations, upon request and according to a methodology approved by order of the Minister of Education.

c. Written tests for the evaluation of the knowledge, skills and competences in:

- Romanian language and literature (common test for all pupils from all programmes, qualifications and specializations);
- maternal language and literature – a common test for all pupils from all programmes, qualifications and specializations, who have studied in a language of the national minorities;
- mathematics;
- physics or chemistry or biology for IVET graduates of technical and natural resources programmes; economics or geography for IVET graduates of services programmes.

ANNEX 3

National Agency for Employment training programmes

Between January - December 2015, 43 402 persons were included in the training programme organized by the National Agency for Employment, as follows:

- 40 371 unemployed registered with the county (*judet*) employment offices;
- 632 individuals entitled to free of charge training (outside the main category of registered unemployed)
- 427 prisoners and 205 individuals from the rural areas below a certain income threshold;
- 2 086 individuals on paid (fee) basis;
- 184 beneficiaries of free of charge services of evaluation of competences gained through non-formal or informal learning;
- 129 individuals included in apprenticeship programmes.

Between January - April 2016, 7 871 persons were included in the training programme organized by National Agency for Employment, as follows:

- 6 910 unemployed registered with the county (*judet*) employment offices;
- 125 individuals entitled to free of charge training (outside the main category of registered unemployed): 111 prisoners and 14 individuals from the rural areas below a certain income threshold;
- 773 individuals on paid (fee) basis;
- 63 individuals included in apprenticeship programmes.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARACIP	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in pre-university education
ARACIS	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
CAE	County Agencies for Employment
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
EG RO	Euroguidance Romania
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESL	Early school leaving
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNAC	National Group for Quality Assurance
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
JOBS	'Job Orientation - training in businesses and schools' project
LCDSP	Local committees for the development of social partnership
LDC	Locally developed curricula
LEAP	Local education action plan
LLL	Lifelong learning
NAE	National agency for employment
NAQ	National Qualifications Authority
NCVTETD	National Centre for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality assurance
REAP	Regional education action plan
SAP	School action plan
SOPDHR	Sectoral Operational Programme for the Development of Human Resources
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning

MAIN LAWS REGULATING THE PROVISION OF VET

- Law no. 84/1995
- Adult Training Law is adopted (375/2002)
- The law of quality assurance in education was approved (Law no. 87/2006)
- The Law no 1/2011 on national Education
- Romanian Labour code Law no 40/2011
- Government Ordinance no 129/2000 of adult vocational training, modified through the Law no 375/2002, and the government ordinance 76/2004
- Law no 76/2002
- Law no 107/2004
- Law no 580/2004
- GO No. 129/2000
- Law no. 279/2005
- GD no. 875/2005
- Order no. 701/2003
- Law no 1/2011
- Law no. 53/2003
- Law no. 40/2011
- Law no. 132/1999
- OG no. 129/2000
- OG no. 76/2004
- HG no. 522/2003
- HG no. 887/2004
- HG no. 1829/2004
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no 353/5.202/2003
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 80/3.328/2005
- Order of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 501/5.253/2003
- Law no. 279/2005
- Government ordinance no.129/2000

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WEB-SITES CONSULTED

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

Agentia Națională Pentru Calificările din Învățământul Superior și Parteneriat cu Mediul Economic și Social (National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social) <http://www.acpart.ro>

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

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

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

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

Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului și Sportului (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports): www.edu.ro