

# **Romania National Report**

**London, 2007**

## A. Background information on your Higher Education system

### Details

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### Main achievements since Bergen

#### 1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.

The higher education structural reform in Romania taking place at the moment aims to increase the mobility of the students, improve their chances on the labour market, reduce the number of university specializations and increase the participation in masters' and doctoral programmes.

The comprehensive legislative package presented in the following pages brings closer the Romanian universities to the European Higher Education Area:

Romania has made major steps towards the European Higher Education Area by reorganizing the entire spectrum of university programs. A new higher education structure has been adopted by the **Law 288/2004 on the organization of university studies, providing the legislative framework for the introduction of the three cycles, Bachelor, Masters' and Doctoral studies**, according to the Bologna objectives. The Law came into force in the 2005/2006 academic year and the first generation of Bachelor students will graduate in 2008/2009.

Through the **Government Decision 1175/2006** a new structure of the first cycle (Bachelor) by fields of study in accordance with the principles of Bologna process was enacted. The decision provides **15 general fields of study** and the correspondent specializations and is applicable in all public and private higher education institutions. By reducing the number of study fields we allow a better coordination between the study programmes supply of Romanian higher education institutions and that specific to higher education systems within the future EHEA.

The Minister Order no. 3235/2005 concerning **the organization of the first cycle (bachelor) of university studies** ensure that the reform of the education curricula of the first cycle programmes within the same field of study includes the clear definition of the knowledge and skills acquired by the graduate, different from those acquired through the masters' and doctorate cycles.

The Governmental Decision no. 404/2006 concerning the organization of the Master degree and the Government Decision no. 567/2005 defining the main objective of the doctoral programmes constitute the legislative framework defining **the structure of the second and third cycle**.

**Since Bergen a special attention was paid to the development of the post-doctorate programmes** in Romanian higher education. Introduced through **Minister Order No. 3861/2005**, these are two-year advanced research programmes and their aim is to train outstanding researchers through the involvement of young PhDs in sciences. The provisions increase the attractiveness of research opportunities in Romania and their relevance to young doctors in sciences in terms of career development, attracting Romanian young doctors in science working abroad back in country. The activities specific to these programmes are basic and advanced research activities, mobility, development of the research and management programme infrastructure.

The Minister Order No. 3617/16.03.2005 **generalises the application of ECTS** in the Romanian universities. ECTS was in place since 1998 but it was used mostly for the mobility schemes with the foreign partners. This new order stipulates a general use of ECTS which stimulates students in their mobility inside the same HEI and/or between programmes offered by various Romanian universities, similar to the mobility freedom promoted by ECTS across the borders of the country. The universities will establish their own rules concerning the passage from one year to another in terms of number of ECTS which has to be accumulated by a student in order to enrol in the next year of study.

The Minister Order No. 4868/2006 concerning **the implementation of the Diploma Supplement** for certifying the graduation of one study cycle stipulates that all HEIs will issue, free of charge, the **Diploma Supplement**, starting from the 2005-2006 academic year.

One of the main achievements for the Romanian higher education with a view of becoming an active and attractive part of the future European Higher Education System was the adoption of the Law 87/2006 which approved the Emergency Government Ordinance no. 75/2005 on quality **assurance in education**. This law has a trans-sectoral approach of quality assurance by covering all the providers of educational services in Romania. **The Law on quality assurance in education** includes:

- The methodology for quality assurance in education;
- Quality assurance at institutional level;
- External assessment of quality education;
- Institutional arrangements involved in quality assurance.

The Law also provides the establishment of the **Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** is an independent public institution with competencies in accreditation, academic evaluation and quality assurance.

We are aware that Bologna objectives mean not only adopting the necessary legislative changes, but also enhancing the institutional autonomy and accountability and ensuring adequate funding for higher education and a reliable quality culture in each higher education institution.

## National organisation

### 2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

- *whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries*

Higher education in Romania is offered in both public and private higher education institutions. **All higher education institutions are coordinated/report to the Ministry of Education and Research.** Under the authority of the ministry there are agencies that play a very important role in fields such as financing and scientific research or partnerships with social and economic environment.

- **The National Council for Higher Education Financing**
- **The National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education**
- **National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership between Universities and Socio-Economic Environment (ACPART)**

- *how funds are allocated to HEIs*

The state budget ensures most of the financial resources for higher education and research, respectively 5% of GDP in 2007, with a view to increase it to 6% by 2008.

Basic financing of universities is provided according to **the number of equivalent students** and to other **quality indices** set by the MEdC; they lie on the proposals made by the National Financing Council for Higher Education.

**The quality indices quota in the financing formula increased from 5 to 20% in 2006**, the other 80% being represented by the number of equivalent students. It is expected for the next year that this quota change in favour of the quality indices to 40%.

**In 2006, 400 millions euro, in addition to the yearly budget**, were allocated to universities for infrastructure modernisation (student halls rebuilding, laboratories, technological platforms etc). For establishment of laboratories and technological platforms, the sums were allocated on a competitive basis, for university projects.

Aside from the budgetary resources, universities may mobilize additional sources of revenue within legal terms. The funds coming from the state budget represent 65-80% of the whole budget. The rest are funds coming from fees, research contracts, services and other types of activities.

A distinct research fund is allocated to higher education from the aggregate research budget. According to the law, funding for research by university is allocated on competitive criteria, and depends on national priorities, and past or expected performance.

Private universities use self-funding. After their accreditation they are entitled to receive funds from the state budget.

- *areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.*

**University autonomy is fully guaranteed by the provisions of Romania's Constitution**, art.32 (6) and those of the **Education Law no.84/1995** (Section 7), reedited, with all the later changes and additions.

It relies on the right of the university community to its own leadership/selfgoverning and

on its right to benefit from academic freedom without any political or religious intrusion. It also relies on its right to assume a set of *competencies and obligations* in accordance with the national strategic directions set for the development of higher education, stipulated by the law.

### **3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.**

#### **In Romania, at the present there are:**

- 56 state accredited higher education institutions (49 civilian state higher education institutions and 7 military universities),
- 29 private accredited higher education institutions,
- 28 private accredited higher education institutions authorized to function provisory,
- 6 postuniversity academic schools.

#### **Types of higher education institutions in Romania:**

**Academies** are higher education institutions that prepare their graduates in a certain specific domain (economy, music etc.).

**Polytechnic Universities** train students for technical domains of study.

*the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution*

Private higher education is an alternative to public education. It is subject to an accreditation process. Accredited private institutions may obtain state support.

**All legal acts apply in the same extend to public and private higher education institutions.**

## **Partnership**

### **4. Describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.**

There is a **Bologna promoters national team**, organised on 3 fields of expertise: ECTS, Quality Assurance and the three cycle system. The members of the team have participated in European seminars and conferences, regional workshops with the participation of representatives of all Romanian HEIs), have produced information materials concerning the developments of the Bologna process (in particular on quality assurance, recognition, curricular reform), and have organised study visits in order to support with counselling the universities least advances in implementing the objectives of Bologna process.

In order to ensure the broad consensus on the higher education system structural, in designing and implementing the legislative framework, the Ministry of Education involved various think-tanks, the National Rectors' Council, the National Council for Educational Reform, representatives of the students' bodies and of the trade unions active in the sectors of education.

The main forum for discussing the structural changes in the Romanian higher education and the new legislative proposals is the National University Rectors Conference, with

the participation of all HEIs' rectors and policy makers.

In case of specific issues on Bologna process, thematic working groups can be established at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Research.

Students unions are very committed to the objectives of Bologna process and the success of the reform in Romania. They are partners of the Ministry of Education and Research, participating in a monthly meeting with the representatives of the Ministry and discussing the main issues regarding the student support system in Romania and the restructuring of the degree system in order to increase the students' employability.

Social partners are also involved in consultations on new legislative proposals. The Commission for Social Dialogue meets regularly and involves all kind of social partners (trade unions, education syndicates, research syndicates etc.). Civil society initiates often debates on the structural changes in education and participates actively to the consultations.

#### **5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.**

The participation of students in the governing bodies of the higher education institution (councils, Senate) in order to make decisions that affect the entire academic community is established at 25% from the total number of members of the respective bodies.

The university senate includes representatives of departments, researchers and students. The quota of participation of the university community members is established by the functioning charter of the forum, taking care to ensure the members are representatives on fields of studies. The teaching and research staff have an absolute majority and the number of students representing 25% of the members.

#### **6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.**

The Law 376/2004 concerning the award of **private sholarships** provides a legislative framework for students to find extra funding for their studies. **Potential employers** can offer students a scholarship and, by the amnedment from november 2005 to the law, it is possible for students to work during the period of the award of the scholarship. It is a very good opportunity for students to benefit from extra funding and in the same time to establish **a first contact with the labour market**, with its requirements and standards.

The National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership between Universities and Socio-Economic Environment (ACPART) is the specific body whose mission is to promote the partnerships between higher education institutions and the social and economic environment.

## B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

### Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)
<p><b>Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle</b></p> <p><b>7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.</b></p> <p>All university programs have been restructured according to the Bologna process. The first cycle is now implemented since 2005-2006 academic year. The former first cycle programs (long term university studies and short term university studies) are still in place but they are being replaced gradually by bachelor programs. In 2008 all programs will be Bachelor programs. The Governmental Decision no. 404/2006 concerning the organization of the Master degree reorganized the second cycle programs. All master diplomas give access to doctorate degree programs.</p>
( Eurydice )
<p><b>Stage of implementation of the third cycle</b></p> <p><b>8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.</b></p> <p><b>The doctoral programmes were restructured and are now regulated by a new legislative framework.</b> The Government Decision no. 567/2005 defines the main objective of the doctoral programmes as the <i>development of the knowledge through original scientific research</i>.</p> <p>In Romania, there are <b>two types of doctoral programmes: scientific doctorate and professional doctorate</b>. The first one is based on creation and advanced scientific research and the second one on research-scientific analysis of its own professional performance (art and sport).</p> <p>The law provides <b>a length of 3 years for a doctoral programme</b>, which can be, in special situations, extended with 1 or 2 years, corresponding to a number of 180 ECTS credits.</p> <p><b>All doctoral programmes have two main components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>a programme based on advanced university studies</b></li><li>• <b>a programme of scientific research.</b></li></ul> <p>Doctoral qualifications will be part of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The doctoral programmes are already defined in terms of knowledge, competences and abilities, which makes easier their inclusion in the NQFHE.</p> <p>Doctoral programmes can be organised by HEIs agreed by the Ministry of Education and Research, on the basis of the <b>periodic assessment of their institutional capacity to provide an integrated environment for advanced education and research</b>, at national and international level.</p>

**The assessments of the doctoral programmes takes place every 5years** at institutional level, for each field, on the basis of criteria and methodologies approved by Minister of Education and Research Order, and are conducted by a commission of experts. On the basis of this evaluation, the **National Council for Titles, Diplomas and University Certificates** proposes to the Minister of Education and Research to award to that higher education institution the right to organise doctoral programmes.

Doctoral programmes are evaluated according to the internal and external quality assurance procedures. The National Council for Titles, Diplomas and University Certificates elaborates an **external assessment report**, which will be presented to the Minister of Education and Research who can decide, in case of non-compliance with the quality assurance standards, to retire the right of the institution to organise this kind of programmes.

HEIs are encouraged by law to promote interdisciplinary doctoral university studies.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

### Access<sup>1</sup> to the next cycle

#### **9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.**

The new structure of Romanian higher education ensures the full access of students from the first cycle (bachelor) to the second (master) and from the second cycle to the third.

As the first generation of graduates of the first Bologna cycle will come in place in 2008, the access from one cycle to another is still ensured according to the former conditions.

So, at the present, **there are three kinds of bachelor programs but only two of them** (Bachelor study programs and long term university studies - which will be entirely replaced by the Bachelor programs in 2008), both of **ISCED 5A level, give full access to a Master degree**. Short term university studies, the third type of undergraduate program (3 years of study, ISCED 5B) is still in place, having just 3 year students, but it does not organise anymore admission exams, being replaced gradually by Bachelor programs. The students graduating short term university studies obtain a graduate certificate which does not give access to a Master degree. For this, they need an additional year of study and a Bachelor graduation exam.

**The Master degree gives full access to Doctorate**. There are some types of postgraduate diplomas, which are not organised according to the Bologna second cycle, which give access to Doctorate. Still, if in 2004, the access to the Doctorate was possible with a Bachelor degree (which had 4 or 5 years of study), now it is compulsory to have a Master degree in order to be enrolled in a Doctorate program.

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<sup>1</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.



## **Implementation of national qualifications framework**

### **10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>2</sup>.**

By the Government Decision no. 1357/2005 the National Agency for Partnership between Universities and Socio-Economic Environment became National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership between Universities and Socio-Economic Environment (ACPART), public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research.

The main missions of ACPART as national authority for the qualifications in higher education are:

- The definition, implementation and updating of the National Framework for Qualifications in Higher Education including the development, recognition and certification of the qualifications on the basis of the competences acquired by the beneficiaries of the higher education system;
- The analysis of the compatibility of the curricula of the fundamental areas of higher education with national qualifications framework benchmarks.

The national qualifications framework in higher education (NQFHE) will have three levels of qualification, each level having attached a set of descriptors. These will be general descriptions of each level in terms of knowledge, competences and abilities.

ACPART, supported by working groups established on fields of study, will elaborate the definition for the correspondent qualifications. In the same way, will be identified the categories of titles/qualifications awarded by higher education institutions.

Periodic consultations will be organised at national level with the different categories of organisms interested in defining the university qualifications on fields of study.

The working group *Consultative Council for Qualifications in Higher Education (CCQHE)*, composed by experts in the qualifications field, representatives of different fields of study and university management, as well as social partners (sectorial committees, syndicates, professional associations etc.) and some specialized commissions created at the level of ACPART will meet regularly in order to validate the results in elaborating the NQFHE.

ACPART has in progress several projects for the development of a qualifications framework in higher education in Romania: Europortic, Phare Project – for the selection of university consortia, Competis, Calex, Socrates Minerva Project.

#### **Current situation:**

- A. ACPART is about to finalise the development of a coherent strategy** presenting also an operative plan of actions regarding the qualifications issue (2006-2009).
- B. The elaboration and publication of the Glossary of key terms** in order to propose a common terminology for the qualifications framework policy makers and users;
- C. The development of the National Qualifications Register for Higher**

<sup>2</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

**Education** which is fundamental to the process of recognition and validation of the degrees issued by the higher education institutions from Romania.

**11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?**

The universities are in process of reforming their study programmes in order to ensure a student-based education. Each university has set up a **Career Counselling Centre**, to support students to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the implementation of Bologna process. The students will be supported in the decision making process regarding their educational pathway by these university centres for counselling and professional guidance.

The structure of Romanian higher education on 3 main cycles is based on reorganisation of study programmes content by identifying and defining general knowledge and competences, as well as specific professional abilities in order to answer to the needs of the labour market.

**Quality assurance**

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

**National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>3</sup>**

**12. To what extent is your national system of QA already in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?**

The quality assurance and the accreditation proceedings are priorities of the Romanian higher education system. For this purpose, the following aspects have been referred to:

- the evaluation and accreditation committees: they have already been functioning for several years and they have helped the maintaining of professional standards; what is to be noted is that they are responsible for the private universities system, too;
- the periodic accreditation system: it ensures the long term quality, but it also verifies how the higher education institutions manage to develop and to correlate their educational provision with the market requirements;
- initiatives for new evaluation systems (external evaluation on a peer assessment basis); they represent an additional step forward; the first external audits are to take place soon.

In Romania, the issue of quality assurance has received a new, stronger, impetus, in 2005 by establishing a quality assurance legal framework in accordance with the European recommendations in the field.

Consequently, there have been adopted

- the Order of Minister no. 3928/April 2005 – implementation of the **internal quality assurance mechanisms in universities** (following the recommendations of the EU, as well as the commitments endorsed within the Bologna process),

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

- Government Decision no. 1257/2005 regarding the approval of the Regulation for organizing and functioning of the **Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** (ARACIS).
- *The Emergency Government Ordinance no. 75/2005 on quality assurance in education* regulates the quality assurance of education and its provisions are applied to all providers of education.
- **The Law 87/10 April 2006** approved the Emergency Government Ordinance no. 75/2005 on quality assurance in education. This law has a trans-sectoral approach of quality assurance by covering all the providers of educational services in Romania.

**The Law on quality assurance in education** includes:

- The methodology for quality assurance in education;
- Quality assurance at institutional level;
- External assessment of quality education;
- Institutional arrangements involved in quality assurance.

The law on quality assurance in education aims, *inter alia*,

- to increase quality education,
- to provide reliable and coherent information on the quality of educational services,
- to protect the interest of the beneficiaries,
- to develop a quality culture among the providers of education services,
- to carry out trans-institutional assessment of university programmes with a view to ensure differentiated funding based on the quality of the programmes,
- to offer a complementary support for educational policies and strategies.

Quality assessment is carried out through a series of transparent actions of designing, planning and implementing educational programmes which comply with quality standards.

Quality education is ensured through the following means:

- effective planning and achievement of quality learning outcomes,
- monitoring of outcomes,
- self-evaluation,
- external evaluation of outcomes and
- Continuous improvement of learning outcomes.

The mechanisms for quality assurance and assessment in education are mainly focused on the learning outcomes and their application is based on the qualifications awarded. The national framework of qualifications must be compatible with the European one so as to facilitate recognition of degrees and mobility of workers.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### **Stage of development of external quality assurance system**

#### **13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.**

External evaluation of quality will be carried out in Romania by two bodies:

- **Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education**
- **Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education.**

**The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** is an autonomous public institution with competencies in accreditation and external quality assessment.

As regards quality assurance and evaluation, **the Agency establishes and revises periodically the national standards and performance indicators for higher education**. All documents elaborated by ARACIS are based on the European standards and procedures agreed by the ministers of education in Bergen.

It collaborates with other institutions to develop and promote policies and strategies for quality education, provides transparently its own procedures and mechanisms for external quality evaluation, has the right to use international experts and provides its own register of evaluators.

In order to inform the stakeholders, the Agency:

- Makes public the reports of external evaluations,
- Evaluates on the Ministry of Education and Research request the quality of higher education institutions and programmes,
- Publishes a Memorandum on its activity every year, and
- Provides every four years an analysis of the quality of the entire higher education system.

The Agency will be functioning based on its own funds coming from contracts with the Ministry of Education and Research, HEIs from Romania and abroad, or other institutions or bodies, accreditation and external evaluation fees, external non-reimbursable funds, donations, sponsorship, other sources.

Romanian HEIs may ask for external evaluation of the quality of their educational services to be carried out by any agency recorded in the future European register of quality assurance agencies in higher education.

The law will be implemented from 2006 – 2007 academic year and will apply to the whole education system.

The Minister Order 3928/April 2005 on the quality educational services in higher education institutions aims at ensuring the continuous improvements in terms of quality of the educational services, both for students and other beneficiaries of initial and continuous training. *It provides the establishment and the development of internal quality control mechanisms by each HEI and their own internal quality assurance system by the end of the academic year 2004 – 2005 and to apply it from 2005 – 2006*, different according to cycle and study programme.

According to the Law, each HEI has already established a **Committee for quality assurance and evaluation**. The committee must have among its members representatives of the main stakeholders and of student bodies. HEIs have also to elaborate institutional *Guidelines for quality assurance*.

Annually they have to elaborate Institutional Reports on internal assessment of quality assurance which are forwarded to the Ministry of Education and Research. These reports are published on the universities' web sites. ARACIS elaborates each 3 years system analysis of the quality in higher education in Romania.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

#### **Level of student participation**

**14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality assurance system.**

Students are represented in quality assurance organisms both at national level (National Agency) as consultative members in the National Council (2 students from a total of 15 members) and institutional level in the university quality assurance commission.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### **Level of international participation**

#### **15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.**

ARACIS will establish according to the law a portfolio of experts, Romanian and European. The board of ARACIS is composed from Romanian experts, mainly universities' representatives and students' representatives. For the external assessment of ARACIS European experts will be called.

As first European objective, ARACIS aims at accomplishing all conditions for its affiliation to the European Register of Agencies for quality assurance in higher education, contributing to the achievement of European higher education area in 2010.

ARACIS is in process of becoming a ENQA full member.

### **Recognition of degrees and study periods**

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

### **Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement**

#### **16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.**

Since 2005, the Diploma Supplement is delivered **free of charge** by all Romanian HEIs for all university studies leading to the „Diploma de Licență” (Bachelor Degree) and to a Masters' Degree.

The Diploma Supplement is **provided in Romanian and in a foreign language (mainly English)**, in order to ensure a transparent description of Romanian higher education system and to facilitate the international comparability of the titles, degrees and certificates that can be awarded in the Romanian higher education system.

The Diploma Supplement model is based on the Diploma Supplement pattern issued by the European Commission, Council of the Europe and CEPES-UNESCO experts.

The Diploma Supplement comprises eight compulsory sections:

- Section 1: Information identifying the holder of the qualification,
- Section 2: Information identifying the qualification,
- Section 3: Information on the level of the qualification,
- Section 4: Information on the contents and results gained,
- Section 5: Information on the function of the qualification,
- Section 6: Additional information,
- Section 7: Certification of the Supplement,
- Section 8: Information on the national education system-in English only.

**The deliverance of the Diploma Supplement is automatically and compulsory and is generalised for all HEIs, covering 100% of the graduates.**

(Scorecard)

## **National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention**

**17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>4</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.**

**The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been ratified in Romania by the Law no. 172/1998, which contains the Convention's provisions.**

At the moment, the draft of the Higher Education Law is submitted to a public consultation and it is published on the Ministry of Education and Research website [www.edu.ro](http://www.edu.ro). Up to now, the Education Act nr. 84/1995 includes the provisions regarding the primary, secondary and higher education.

The National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas is the Romanian member of NARIC-ENIC Networks. It has been founded by the Government Decision no. 49/1999 and has been reorganized by the Ministry of Education and Research Act no. 5820/2006, which simplifies the recognition procedures.

The National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas is fully operational since 1999.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

## **Stage of implementation of ECTS**

**18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country.**

ECTS is in place in Romania HEIs since 1997 and has been generalised by the Minister Order No. 3617/16.03.2005. It works on the basis of the general rule which provides 60 ECTS for workload necessary to 1 academic year and 30 ECTS for 1 academic semester. ECTS credits are attached to each subject (compulsory, optional and facultative subject). The „Licența”(Bachelor) and the Master thesis can be, also, rewarded with up to 10 ECTS.

The allocation of ECTS credits for each subject takes in consideration each kind of study activity required by the specific subject or in relation to the total workload necessary to complete a full year of study.

Each higher education institution annually elaborates and publishes a comprehensive informational portfolio as a **Study Guide** for its own students, which comprises information on: the university structure, the academic year calendar, the application procedure, the educational plan, the period(s) in each semester or academic year when options can be made for the optional and facultative subjects, courses.

The **Study Guide** can be issued, also, in a foreign language of wide international use and is distributed free of charge to the students and to the professors. It is made public on the university web site at least two weeks before the academic year starts.

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

**19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>5</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.**

**A National Plan for the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications** has been elaborated and it contains the main activities and procedures in place and some of the planned actions for the future.

## **Lifelong Learning**

(Scorecard)

### **Recognition of prior learning**

**20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.**

**At the present there are in place specific procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal prior learning.**

**The common Order of Education and Labour Minister no. 4543/468 from 23 august 2004 provides the procedural guidelines for the evaluation and certification of professional competences acquired in other contexts than the formal one.**

The assessment process of professional competences acquired in other contexts than the formal one is independent of the vocational training process and is based on occupational and professional training standards.

There are some principles as basis for the assessment process of professional competences acquired in other contexts than the formal one:

1. validity (competence evidence for the activities described in the occupational standard);
2. credibility (the use of the same methods leading always at the same result);
3. impartiality (no private interest);
4. flexibility (adapted to the needs of the candidates and the particularities of the work place);
5. confidentiality of the result;
6. simplicity (easy to understand and to be applied).

**On demand of the individual, this kind of competences is evaluated by evaluation centers for professional competences.**

**The National Council for Adult Vocational Training** authorizes and monitors the evaluation centers for professional competences and certifies the professional competences evaluators.

At the present are functioning 31 centres for the evaluation and recognition of prior learning, which are assessing 61 occupations and qualifications ([www.cnfpa.ro](http://www.cnfpa.ro)).

The individuals declared competent following the evaluation process receive a certificate of professional competences, for those units which declared them competent.

**There are also provisions at the university level for the recognition of certain courses taken to other institutions and which are included in the study programme by using ECTS.**

<sup>5</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

**21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.**

The number of study programmes which allow students to choose from a wide range of optional courses increased. Students can choose a modular pathway of study and within the same module, from a wide range of disciplines. Once chosen the module, they still can choose a certain amount of courses from a different module.

There are also provisions at the university level for the recognition of certain courses taken to other institutions and which are included in the study programme by using ECTS (university transferability).

Romanian HEIs organise also summer schools which allow students, by participating in, to accumulate a certain amount of ECTS credits.

Universities can decide to recognise partially or in its integrity a period of study abroad, in order to increase the flexibility of the learning pathways.

Concerning the access requirements, the universities are fully autonomous to establish their own conditions.

Flexibility can be observed also in courses delivery. There are online courses put at the disposal of the students.

## **Joint degrees**

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### **Establishment and recognition of joint degrees**

**22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.**

**The Government Decision no. 1424/2006** stipulates the organisation of integrated university study programs by two or more universities, which leads to a joint degree.

According to Romanian legislation, these programs can be organised **for all the 3 cycles of university studies** (bachelor, master, doctorate).

One of the conditions of organising an integrated study program is to be established for a specialisation recognised in the partner countries. For the recognition of a joint degree, all partner universities have to be recognised as an accredited HEI in their own countries.

There are 3 types of integrated study programs:

- common programmes between 2 or more accredited HEIs in Romanian or abroad;
- university extensions abroad and study programs organised abroad by Romanian accredited HEIs in cooperation with foreign universities;
- “franchise” programs

In our country, joint degrees are most commonly awarded in economics/business, engineering, law and management.

The joint degrees are automatically recognised by the partner institutions via the National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas.



## C. Current issues in Higher Education

### Higher education and research

**23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.**

**The higher education system is integrated, as a distinct and most important component, in the R&D and innovation system.**

**The National Authority for Scientific Research – NASR**, represents the Government's specialized body with the mission to formulate, apply, coordinate and monitor the implementation, and assess the impact of R&D and innovation policies, with the aim to promote the development of activities in these fields and their scientific and technical integration at international level.

The National Authority for Scientific Research was established in July 2005, in the coordination of the **Ministry of Education and Research (MER)**.

The other body with responsibilities in university research is the **National Council for Research in Higher Education Institutions (CNCSIS)**

- includes representatives of the scientific community in universities
- is organized in 6 commissions specialized by S&T domains

**One of the priorities of the NASR is to strengthen and develop collaboration between R&D units and institutions, universities and enterprises**, with a special view to:

- support and accelerate the process of technological alignment and integration of enterprises, according to the technical requirements and regulations of the European Union;
- increase the capacity to diffuse and develop advanced technologies in economy, in order to determine a raise of the share of medium and high technology products, competitive at international level.

The Excellence in Research Programme (**CEEX**) run by NASR identified excellence poles in higher education research. Launched in 2005, as main tool for preparing Romanian research environment to the new FP7 running in 2007/2013, promote the partnerships between universities and industry, through RDI projects in high technology fields.

CEEX ensures at the present:

- *the development of 57 postdoctoral programmes (54 in universities and 3 in research institutes).*
- 191 research projects for young researchers which have involved *794 PhD students, master students and PhD holders*, all aged under 35 years;
- Projects for postdoctoral programmes (41 postdoctoral students)
- The return in Romania of 23 PhDs with doctoral or postdoctoral studies abroad;
- Transversal mobility projects for 17 young PhD students;

The publication in 2006 of the White Charter of RDI in Romania is dedicated to accredited universities and to the national RD institutes.

The new legal framework for Doctoral and Postdoctoral programmes is also a very important step in supporting the improvement of university research.

**24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?**

Please see section 23.

## The social dimension

### **25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.**

The main objective of Romanian student support system is to create the necessary conditions to increase the access to higher education for socially underprivileged young people (especially for those coming from countryside) and to support the best students throughout their studies.

28% of total number of students receive a scholarship (excellence scholarship, study scholarship, social grant and research grant).

There are a wide range of scholarships available for students and financed by the Romanian government:

**Study grants.** The study grants are awarded on the basis of school record and less to the financial situation. In certain cases, these criteria can be matched.

**Social grants.** Social grants are awarded on demand, on the basis of the financial situation of the student, of his/her family or of his/her legal tutors.

**Scholarships for countryside students.** This grant is awarded on the basis of a contract between the student and the Ministry of Education and Research by which the student commit him/herself to teach in a countryside located education institution that specialty in which he/she has been trained, for a period of time at least equal to the period in which they received this scholarship.

#### **Excellence scholarships**

**Scholarships for national or international Olympic students.** This grant is awarded to those students having received awards or prizes in national or international contests during the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and who decide to continue their studies in Romanian higher education institutions.

**Research grants.** From the Ministry of Education and Research budget, a maximum of 100 research grants are offered each year to young PhD students (younger than 35) upon a projects' contest.

The students can apply at the beginning of each academic year for a subsidized place in the student halls. From 304 student halls, 184 have been improved and rebuilding.

All students from public HEIs benefit from subsidized expenses with public and local transport, support with health services and from support for acquisition of PCs, free of charge health services, help with travelling expenses etc.

### **26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.**

Universities set up counselling centres for guidance. Students have access to a wide range of scholarships, according to their economic situation or to their study performance.

In January 2007 the first national survey **EUROSTUDENT 2006** on socio-economic conditions of students enrolled in Romanian public HEIs will be launched.

The study will constitute a very important source of information on how the student support system currently in place is functioning and solving problems.

## Mobility

**27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.**

In the latest years, the obstacles relating to visa, cart credits, accommodation were gradually eliminated and the mobility of the Romanian students has improved. Also, the study periods are recognized at university level by the university Senate decision.

The adaptation of the Romanian higher education to Bologna Process and implementing the EUROPASS documents will improve the attractiveness of our universities, leading to an increase in the number of incoming students in the next few years.

Also, the Law no.316/2006, stipulates the right of the EU citizens to have equal access to all the forms and levels of Romanian higher education, especially in what concerns tuition fees amount, on the same conditions as those provided by law for Romanian citizens. This will come in force from the date of Romania's accession to the EU, the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007.

The student mobility within Erasmus increased as following:

2004-2005: 3134, 2005-2006: 3261.

For the 2007-2008, Romania will not benefit from the PHARE funds, but the budget for the new integrated program Lifelong learning will increase compared with the Socrates programs budget.

**28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.**

In the case of Romania, the best example of portability is the regional portability of social support for mobile students within the regional exchange program CEEPUS. It is based on a multilateral agreement between participating countries and has as objective the promotion of university networks.

The financing of the activities of this program is realized on the basis of reciprocity:

- The transport expenses are supported by the home country, while the host country is awarding a monthly scholarship according to its national legislation.

Another example of portability, Erasmus students studying abroad and enrolled in Romanian HEIs can beneficiate during their stay abroad of study or performance grants awarded by the Romanian government, but this is different depending on the higher education institution.

**29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.**

The staff mobility has been improved in accordance with to new challenges of the European Higher Education.

## The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

### **30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.**

Romania has concluded bilateral Conventions with the non EU countries in the field of: recognition of studies, exchange students, research, exchange teachers, which promote the Romanian Higher Education, in accordance with the Bologna Process. The Romanian students benefit from study scholarships abroad, in the world wide. The implementation of the Bologna Process improves the attractiveness of the EHEA in Romania.

Also, the international conferences organized in Romania in the field of higher education promote the EHEA purposes and benefits to all participants from entire world.

## Future challenges

### **31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.**

The main challenges for Romanian Higher Education are the following:

- the establishment of the NQF, based on the learning outcomes and described in terms of knowledge-competences-skills;
- the separation of the HEIs: HEIs for education, HEIs for research, HEIs for education and research,
- the passage from teaching to learning based education paradigm;
- the assessment of all the HEIs and of all the study programs;
- increase the funding for higher education, allocated in accordance with their quality;
- the portability of the grants;
- the training of the trainers;
- the establishment of the of Sustainable Development Education Strategy.