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REFERNET ROMÂNIA
ROMANIA

A bridge to the future
European policy for vocational education and training
2002-10
National policy report- Romania



National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection
INCSMPS Bucharest

"This report is one of a set of European country reports on VET policy development prepared within Cedefop's ReferNet network. ReferNet is a European network of national networks providing information and analysis on national VET to Cedefop and disseminating information on European VET and Cedefop work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. The report has been produced by ReferNet Romania as a contribution to Cedefop's fourth policy report which reviews progress in VET towards the policy goals of the Copenhagen process. The opinions expressed in this national report are not necessarily those of Cedefop."

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Overview

This *National VET Policy Report* forms part of the Cedefop ReferNet 2010 work plan. It provides information on Romanian progress in VET in the framework of the Copenhagen process. The information is presented through three questionnaires prepared by Cedefop in consultation with other stakeholders (DGVs, European social partners, the European Commission, the ETF, the Enlarged Coordination Group Policy Reporting and ReferNet).

The report is structured around the following themes:

Theme 1 – Socioeconomic challenges for future VET policy development;

Theme 2 – Economic crisis – VET policies as recovery measures;

Theme 3 – Impact and implications of the joint work on European principles and tools;

Theme 4 – Strengthening links between VET and the labour market;

Theme 5 – Addressing equity, social inclusion and active citizenship;

Theme 6 – Quality, excellence and attractiveness of VET;

Theme 7 – Enhancing creativity and innovation;

Theme 8 – Financing VET.

Theme 9 – Progress in modernising European VET systems in the Copenhagen process and priorities for future cooperation;

The introductory chapter of this report deals with socio-economic aspects and aspects of labour market relevance, the background of which aims to enhance understanding of national policy design.

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MACROECONOMIC STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Romanian economy has continued its slide into the recession with its second quarter result being the worst in a decade, with the fall of the GDP being a horrific -8.5% on the year early. The third quarter for which preliminary data have been recently released by the National Institute of Statistics (see Press Release at www.insse.ro – no.231/nov.13.2009) does look only a notch better, with the slump as against the corresponding quarter of the last year quarter being only -7.1%. As such, estimates made by the correspondent earlier this and which were fed to the Country Desk upon request are seeing confirmation. Accordingly we can anticipate that a modest recovery might commence with the second or rather with the third quarter of 2010, pending nevertheless on a more vigorous rebound of the world economy as well as on a more aggressive policy to revive domestic demand. Sadly it has to be said that the current arrangements with the IMF are not conducive to that so, whatever movement of recovery might occur it has to be looked upon with the maximum possible caution.

Table no.1 - Main economic and labour market aggregates – ROMANIA Q.2&3 2009

No.	Indicator	Value for the current quarter		Value for previous quarter		Value for corresponding quarter of previous year	
		Q2.09	Q3.09	Q1.09	Q2.09	Q2.08	Q3.08
		1	GDP%	-8.7	-7.1	-6.4	-8.7
2	CPI%*	6.08	4.98	6.77	6.08	8.56	8.12
3	Unemployment rate (national definition)* (%)	5,83	6,6	5.26	5,83	3.83	3.8
4	Unemployment rate (harmonized definition)* (%)	6.3	n. a.	6.9	-	5.4	5.6
5	Exchange rate:						
	1. RON/EUR						
	2. RON/USD	4.1923	4.1947	4.2662	4.1923	3,6528	3,5771
		3.0788	2.9542	3.2776	3.0788	2,3375	2,3831
6	Vacancy rate**	0.89	n. a.	1.27	-	2.02	2.06
7	Employment rate (15-64)**	59.2	n. a.	57.4	-	59.7	60.5
8	Activity rate (15-64)**	63.4	n. a.	61.8	-	63.5	64.2
9	Gross Average Wage (RON)**	1868.66	n. a.	1890.66	-	1749.33	1887.33

* Simple average value for the quarter;

** Latest figures available from the NIS.

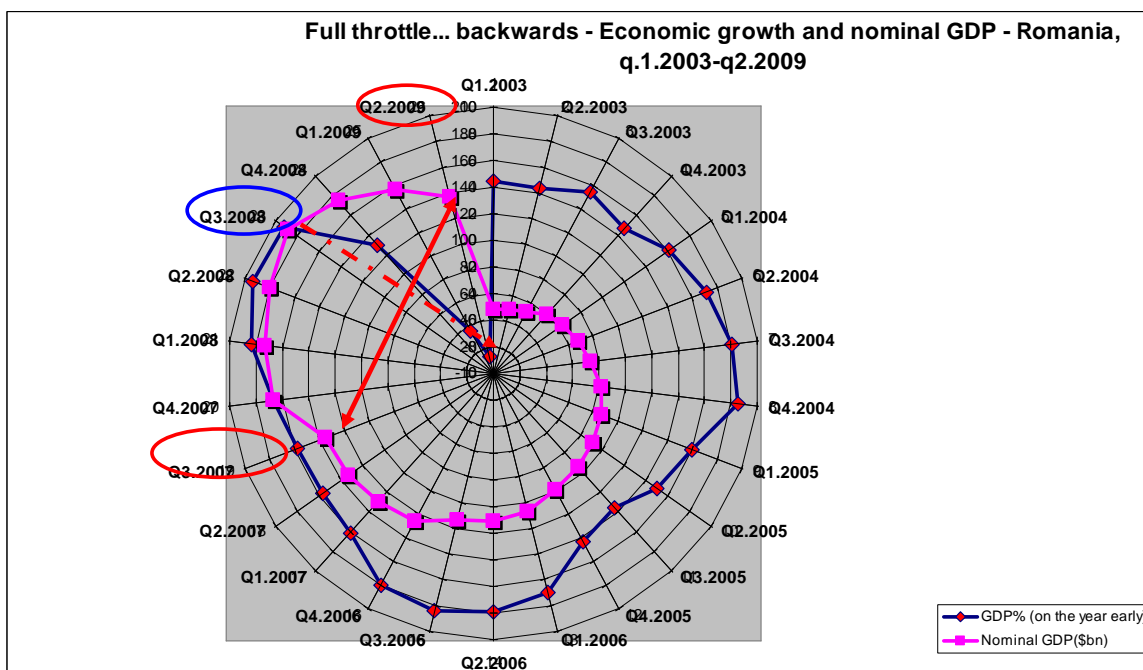
n. a. = not available;

The state of the public finances has rapidly deteriorated with the projected deficit being now practically equal if not larger than the one ran by the C.P. Tariceanu government at the end of last year, thus well exceeding the threshold of 5% of the GDP and heading towards an equivalent of 7% of the broadest measure of output.

Policies pursued throughout the year have helped in creating such an imbalance as, during the first half of the year, in the urge of securing what was a doubtfully necessary external financing, the

Government squeezed consumption to a minimum possible thus adding to the woes of an economy already hard hit by the collapse of its export markets in the first three months of the year. Following the successful conclusion of the agreements and under the spell of what was more than an evident effect of “money illusion”, the Government has subsequently opened its purse which, it has not been afterwards able to close. Consequently, while not managing in anyway to revive growth the Government has nonetheless managed to get into debt to levels unprecedented. As most of the revenue sources have been either stifled or forced into submersion throughout the first half of the year, it is difficult to see how, even given what could be called a mildly favourable world economic climate, will any Government manage to revive growth, keep the books in balance and avoid a sharp depreciation of the RON in the months to come.

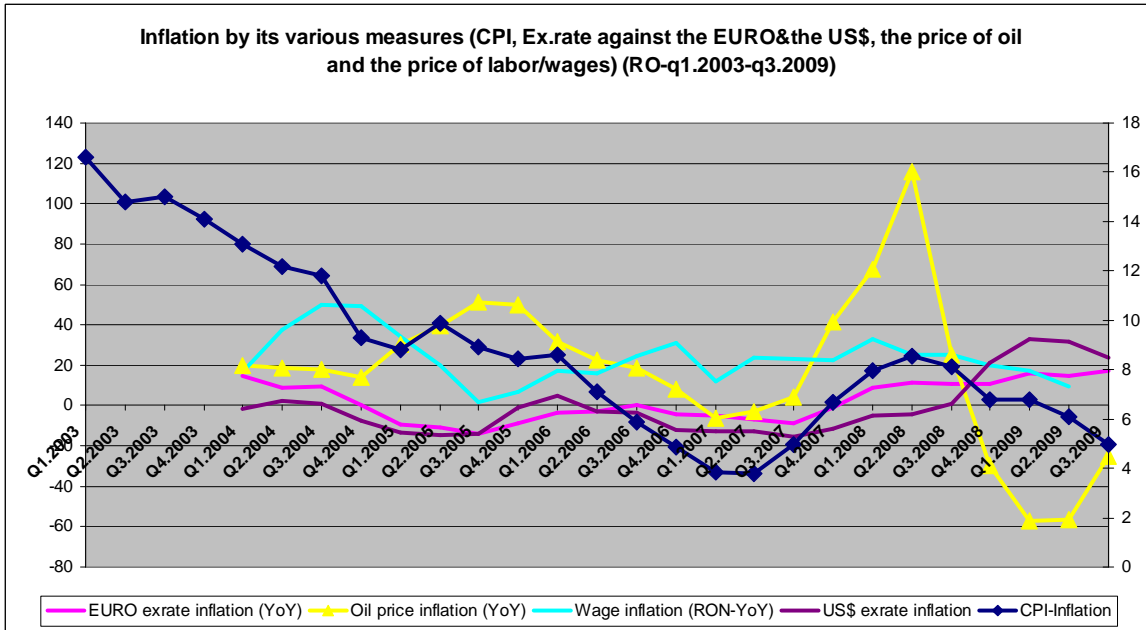
Chart no.1



Source: NIS, NBR, processed by Dr. C. Ghinararu;

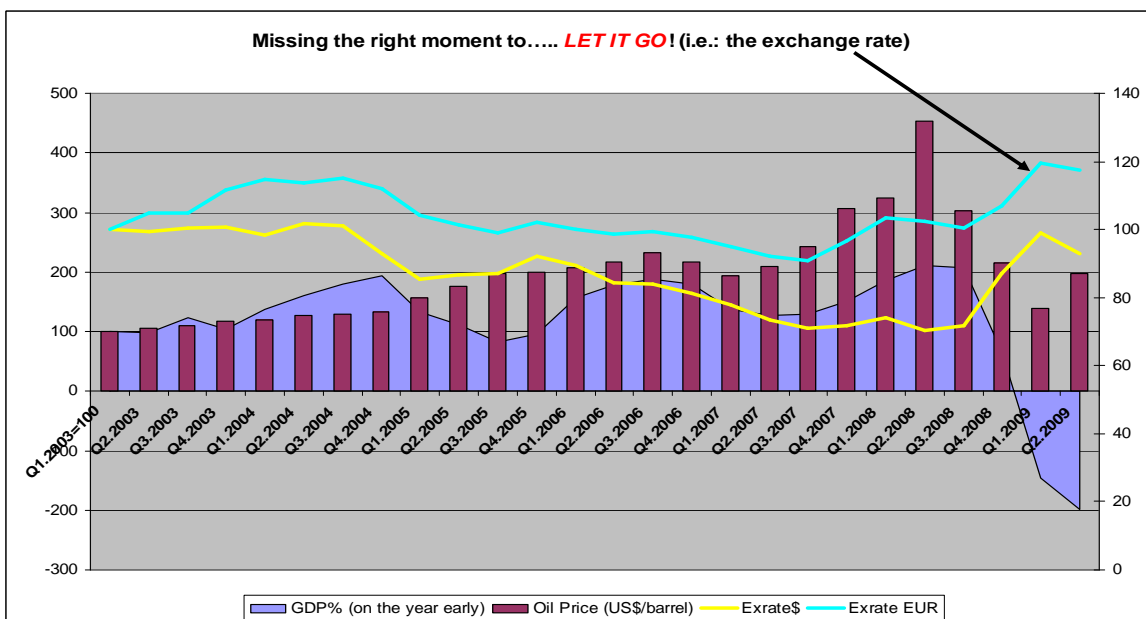
Given the sharp contraction of domestic demand, inflationary pressures, which, were building rather high by mid last year, even if counting only the imperfect measure of the CPI, have receded and done so sharply. Both the second and the third quarter of the year have witnessed a marked slow-down of price increases on the year early, with the CPI inflation (the rate of inflation) going down quarter after quarter from a high of 8.12% in the year to the third quarter of 2008 to half of this value (4.98%) in the year to the third quarter of 2009. Latest data released by the NIS show for the year to October 2009 CPI inflation down to 4.30%, which makes the target of the National Bank for this year pretty much *in-reach*, not of course that this would matter much for an economy in tatters.

Chart no.2



While deflation has not set in with the exception of food prices throughout the summer months of July and August and even this only on a month to month basis, it goes without saying that the disinflation move prevailing for the whole of the year has received a helping hand from oil prices which have languished at what have been *all-time lows* for almost the whole of the 28 quarters period tracked so far in our analyses. The subsiding pressures from what we have called oil-price inflation coupled with an exchange rate for the stability of which, the Government and strangely enough to other advise, or maybe not, the National Bank, have been willing to sacrifice growth, have rendered prices less prone to upward movements and volatility until the start of the third quarter. With its start, while by the measure of the consumer prices it remains still subdued and falling, by its other measures, the oil price and the exchange rate, it looks like creeping back. Worse, it might even come back through its traditional consumer prices channel, if prices to utilities start growing again, partly in response to delayed depreciation of the RON.

Chart no.3

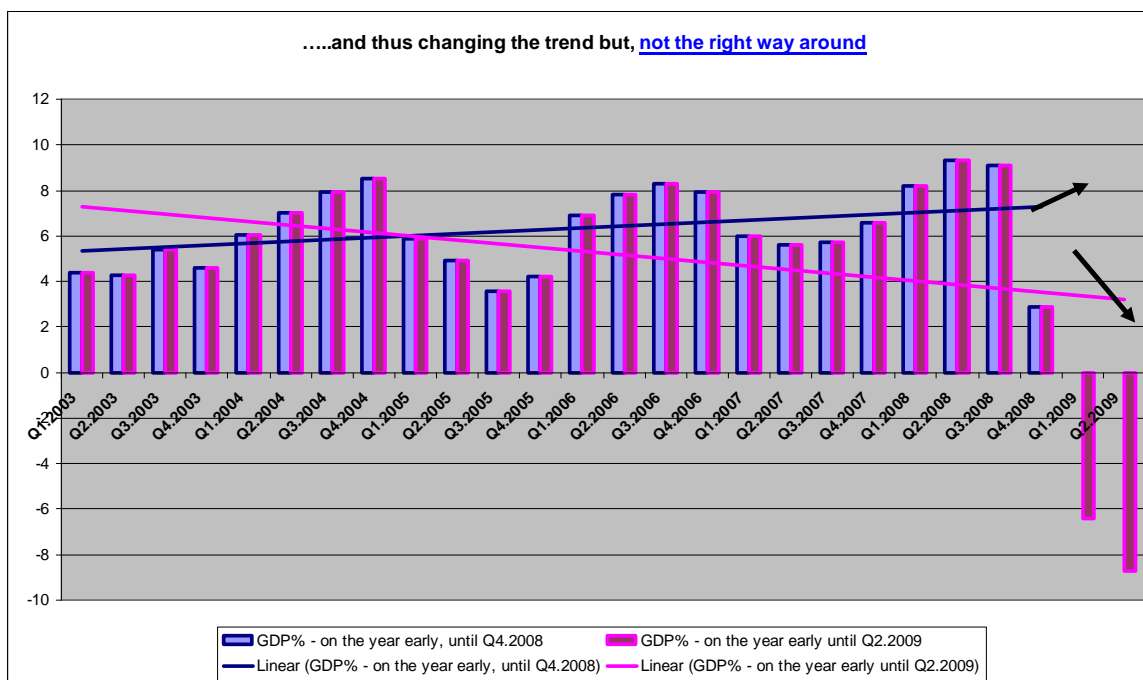


On the other hand however, inflation as measured by the variations of the price of labour (wage-inflation) also went downwards, as salaries have suffered a dramatic setback both in the private as well as in the public sector with further hammering to come, especially for the public sector which throughout the months of November and December will be forced into a eight-days unpaid leave. If we are putting together the naked facts then, the currency already looks shaky and will soon enough turn indefensible; oil prices are on the rise thus choking some of the demand but meanwhile they are not high enough so as to turn the tide for the national oil industry.

Add to this falling wages and one will see that prospects for a swift recovery in 2010 remain dim. If the national currency will accelerate its depreciation in the months to come, which is a possibility given both the amount of propping it received this year as well as the fact that investors themselves are banking and will push for such a course then, on the background of both in real and even in nominal terms falling wages, purchasing power will take a decisive blow. This will dent the capacity of the domestic market to sustain recovery leaving everything to the mercy of external markets.

If Governments in developed economies will withdraw the various stimuli and scrap some of the more than generous old-cars replacement schemes that helped so much the domestic automotive industry this year then, it is our firm view that growth will stay negative for most of the first three quarters of the next year. All in all, in such a scenario, the Romanian economy might be back in terms of its nominal GDP to the levels of 2005 or even 2004(3), if worst hits.

Chart no.4



By both of its measures unemployment simply surged, once again confirming forecasts we have made as early as the end of 2007. In the span of 12 months registered unemployment rate simply doubled from a low of around 3.8% in mid-2008 to a high of more than 6.6% for the same quarter of this year. As we are writing these lines the National Agency for Employment, the country's PES, has announced for the month of October'09 unemployment rate at 7.1% (see at www.anofm.ro-statistics, a value this aggregate measure has not seen since the last quarter of 2003. By its other measure, the harmonized rate, usually more sluggish in its responsiveness to market moves, latest validated data released by the NIS for the second quarter of this year show a value of 6.3%, a little

bit higher than for the same quarter of 2008, but a notch lower than the one for the first quarter of 2009.

Employment and vacancy rates however have bore the brunt of the recessionary move which as said before, shows little sign of abating, at least in our view. While aggregates like the employment rate, the activity rate as well as corresponding measures for the working age population seem to be holding steady both in relation to the same quarter of 2008 as well as with the first quarter of this year thus giving the impression that not much has been moving in spite of the crisis, it is as usual the structure that shows the whole debacle unfolding or worse maybe, still waiting in the wings. Industry has seen its share of total employment battered both at national and regional level. After holding steady at around 30% of total employment and even going beyond this threshold for a few quarters in a row between the beginning of 2007 and the end of 2008, it has again fallen to around 29%, a value it did not see again, as in the case of registered unemployment, since the corresponding period of 2003. Services held a little bit steadier and of course agriculture did not even budge as most of its employment is household production for its own final consumption oriented but this is just the beginning. As it is known, most of Romania's industries are export-oriented while most of its services cater for the domestic market. With exports slumping dramatically during the first two quarters of the year and only selectively picking up afterwards, workers had to be shed. As this wave of unemployment started to feed through the channels of the market it depressed domestic demand thus contributing to the disinflation process we have examined before. However, at least until the second quarter of the year, for which data are available, the level of unemployment which at the time was around 20% lower than currently (mid-end of 4th quarter) did not seem to have made its effect on the demand for services and thus it left employment virtually untouched or even growing here and there. It is however our opinion that given the figures provided by the NAE on registered unemployment, whose movement seem to follow far much closer the cycle, starting with the third and even more with the fourth quarter of the year we will witness the full hammering of service sector employment due to the drop in demand caused by the labour force shedding that battered industry. As such, one would expect a further round of demand swamping which, together with the one stemming from the reduction in the purchasing power of the public employees which make a significant part of the more affluent urbanites, will most probably more than hinder a return to positive growth rates, any time sooner than the last quarter of 2010 and even then, shyly. What one could mostly expect is that world economy and especially Euro-zone economy will pick rather more convincingly and that stimuli in the large developed economy will not be withdrawn so soon a fact which, would give the Romanian economy some room for export and that would probably lead to lower negative growth rates thus actually arresting practically the decline but short of anything more.

In early 2008, annual inflation continued growth manifested since the second part of 2007, situating itself in July at a level of 9.04%. Starting in August was noted, nevertheless, a change of trend in the evolution, so that annual inflation has reached the end of December to 6.3%.

To mitigate the annual rate of inflation contributed, especially, the development of food commodity prices, which were located with 0.28 percentage points below the overall annual rate of price, 6.02% respectively. Evolution more modest than the overall inflation was recorded for the first time in September, during the first 8 months increased food commodity prices remain at higher levels to the total increase in prices. In early, foodstuffs became group product group with the key contributor in increasing inflation. This is because, in addition to the large share in the consumption basket (37,5%), adverse climatic conditions of the previous year affecting not only the production of vegetables and fruit, and cereal, but also a base effect, i.e. very low prices in early 2007.

If non-food prices, the annualized their increase (5,96%) was by 2.36 percentage points above the same period of previous year. The largest increases recorded in late 2008 were on cigarettes (13, 73%) and the group of electricity, gas and central heating, which was by 5.53 percentage points above the average non-food prices, due to rise in this group with 11.49%. In this group there were 22.01% increase in gas, by 10.1% to 4.51% heat and electricity.

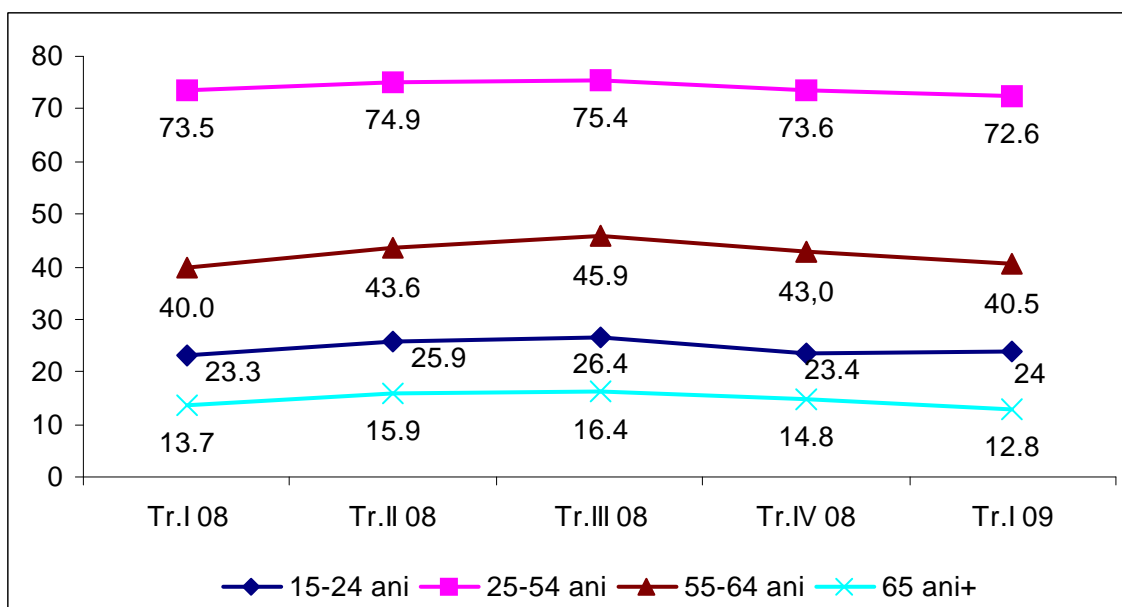
As the charges for services, their increase (7,71%) was 0.84 percentage points lower than the same period of previous year. Large increases were recorded in water, sewerage and sanitation (12,55%), postal services (11,65%), hygiene services and cosmetic (9,3%) and urban transport (8,19%).

Another factor was inflation pressure on the exchange rate to, starting in the second half of 2007 has repositioned the path of nominal depreciation. Under these conditions, prices of imported products are negatively affected, as the price of products connected to the European currency managed or the U.S. dollar for gas.

Therefore, macroeconomic policy mix applied was oriented towards return on a downward trend of inflation. In late 2008, inflation reached 6.3%, while the annual average stands at 7.85%.

In the first two months of 2009, annual inflation has shown continued growth since 2008, lies in February to a level of 6.89%. From March noted, however, a change of trend in evolution, so that annual inflation reached 4.96% in late August 2009. Thus, to end above the inflation rate came in August to 2.87% from 4.19% the previous year. As a result the average monthly increase of consumer prices (0.4%) within 8 months was 0.1 percentage points lower than that recorded during the same period of last year.

Chart no.5. Evolution of employment rate of population 15 years and over



Source: INS

Unemployment rate (ILO) has shown a downward trend, the level of 5.8% since 2008 which is below that recorded in 2007 (6.4%). If young people (15-24 years) unemployment rate was 18.6% in 2008 compared to 20.1% in 2007. Long-term unemployment rate recorded in 2008 level of 2.4%, with 0.8 pp less than in 2007.

Following the economic crisis in the second quarter of 2009, the employment situation has worsened over the second quarter of 2008; employment rate of working age population fell by 0.5 percentage points, and unemployment reached 6.3%.

Number of unemployed registered in the records of the National Agency for Employment has shown a decreasing trend in 2008, except the last months, so that the end of December the number of registered unemployed was 403.4 thousand persons and the unemployment rate of 4.4%.

In late September 2009, registered unemployed was 625.1 thousand persons, up by about 225 thousand people from December 2008. Registered unemployment rate rose in August 2009 to 6.9%.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

❖ *Full employment, quality and social inclusion (Guideline No.17)*

The Unitary Salary Law for the Public (read budget financed) Sector has been finally adopted by the Government after heated debates by assuming responsibility in front of the Parliament in mid-September. It was the last act of the PSD-PDL government coalition before its acrimonious fallout at the beginning of October

Key policy aims – to drastically reduce public spending and especially public spending on salaries so as to contribute to a general reduction of salaries as a share of the GDP from the equivalent of 9% in 2009 to roughly 6% in 2015. More to the point the aim of the law is to contribute to a general reduction of the budget deficit and thus maintain investors' confidence; the law is part of the rather opaque agreement of the Emil Boc government with the IMF;

Legislative Status: adopted – application starting from Jan.1st 2010;

Positions of social partners – total rejection of the law; Most of the unions have staged mass protests throughout the months of autumn against a law which, true to say, maybe was necessary but has been cobbled in a haste, creates more damage than it is worth and it is clearly short-sighted and thus prone to reversibility. It is a case point for the rather discomfoting but nonetheless true statement that in most of Central Europe, crisis will be made worst by sheer incompetence. One has to say though, to the credit of the Government that social partners have taken an active part in the elaboration of the law. The very fact that they have seen its flaws only at the end is another matter and points once again to the above!

Preliminary assessment of the development against:

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the short term

Reduce public spending and thus keep the budget deficit inside the limits agreed with the international donors. The law will fail to do that. In spite of its application and of the dramatic fall in living standard that will generate for millions of employees its effects will be predictable: income from taxation on consumption will fall and thus the hole into the public purse will only get bigger; the vicious circle of recession will be further fomented. The confidence of the investors which, the trimming of the budget deficit was supposed to re-assure will be dented again. Thus job creation which the law was supposed to foster by releasing the tax pressure on the private sector will falter;

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the long term

Reduce salaries as a share of the GDP from 9.4% in 2009 to around 6% in 2010. If the law will manage that it might as well herald catastrophe. As we have seen before, Romania's GDP has already shrunk almost to the level of 2005. A further year of negative growth, which is more than likely, although probably at less than this year's rates, will get it back to the levels of 2003. Romania's problem is not that of having a too big domestic market with a high purchasing power but of having a far too small domestic market with still low purchasing power due precisely to low salaries. Its vulnerability did not come from the fact that it was a too large importer but from the fact that it was much too dependent on exports to the developed parts of Europe. If purchasing power will continue to fall then, the reliance on foreign markets will only increase and thus the economy will be rendered even more vulnerable. All of our three scenarios have pointed to the fact that even if the world economy will bounce back convincingly in 2010, the Romanian economy will be still in the negative and this is precisely because domestic demand, which had just started to pick up in 2005-08, has been again stifled.

❖ ***Investment in human resources and lifelong learning (Guideline No.24).The new law on Reform in Public Education.***

Key policy aims: To further modernize the education system and improve its overall efficiency and effectiveness thus contributing to a better trained, more productive and pro-active labour force;

Legislative Status: Adopted by Parliament after Government assumed responsibility, jointly with the Law for the reorganization of public administration and the one on the unitary salary system for the public (i.e.: budget financed) sector

Positions of social partners: Partial acceptance; Position have been less antagonistic than in the case of the previous two acts;

Preliminary assessment of the development against:

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the short term

Reduce the reliance on knowledge accumulation and make a shift towards a competence based education.

The baccalaureate exam will thus suffer major changes as some of its tests like the foreign languages one and the computer abilities one will become more practice oriented. Moreover pupils will be able to skip the tests if they bring proof that an equivalent test proving the acquiring of the same competences has been passed. Alternative forms of education will be thus encouraged in a move which, in theory at least will make a break with the excessive rigidity of the past. However, one has to say that clearing too much the curricula might also lead to generations that are in possession of a far to poor stock of general knowledge to acquire any kind of competences and thus they will be in need of further training which would mean actually more spending, most probably coming from public sources. Therefore developments have to be watched closely.

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the long term

Improve the provision of education and education-related services; increase the involvement of parents and local communities.

Only 60% of the curricula will be now decided at national level, the rest will be the prerogative of schools, parents, local communities etc. 20% will become optional. It is

though hard to see how this will happen given the low involvement in the school process in most of the communities and the fact that centralization of the system has a very long tradition. It would have been better first to streamline the system and reduce its hypertrophy and then get to sophistications. People want first to see that their money are well spent and that they truly have a stake and a say. If this will happen and especially if parents (i.e.: actually the main taxpayers!) will truly start having a say in the actual running of schools then and only then the reform would be judged as successful.

Labour supply and making work pay (Guideline No.18).Unitary Pension Law

Key policy aims: reduce expenditures with pensions by phasing out so called “special pensions” and “phasing-in” contributions for all participants into the publicly administrated pension schemes

Legislative Status: proposed but not adopted due to a vote of non-confidence that led to the Government’s resignation;

Positions of social partners: Partial acceptance. The generalization of the contribution principle widely accepted but the move from indexation with salaries to indexation with prices rejected given the already very low replacement level of pensions and this in spite of their recent increase through the recalculation process as well as to the fact that they are practically entirely contribution based.

Preliminary assessment of the development against:

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the short term

Eliminate special entitlements and phase-in contributions for all participants in publicly administrated pension schemes

The achievement of this objective would be commendable. If the system is based on contributions nobody should be exempted and nobody, even if marginal in number categories should enjoy privileges. However, entitlements and rights once acquired are and have to be protected by law, as this cannot provide for the past but only and only for the future. Therefore, the attempt to recalculate pensions of special categories, established in the past, under past laws and norms has to be regarded as a shameful attempt to infringe of basic human rights, generating insecurity and practically sapping confidence in the public pensions system which, should be a paragon of macroeconomic and social stability. As such, the law will need careful examination and its intended swift passage would have been more than counterproductive.

➤ Criteria for the measure to succeed in the long term

Enhance sustainability and robustness of the public pension scheme while maintaining the adequacy of pensions. Broadening of the contribution base will for surely serve the purpose though one has to take into account that all those special categories do not count much in numbers and once the unitary salary law applied, their contribution base will get severely capped. So, not much gain from here. The fact that contribution based has been hiked hastily at the beginning of the year, so as to plug to growing gap opened by reckless, though widely applauded at their times, trimmings of contribution rates, has served a little but its ill-timing has done more damage than it was worth. The main issue here remains actually the completely perverse provision of the carve-down of the contribution rates in favour of the privately administrated private pension funds. If this provision will not be abolished no broadening of the contribution base and no increase of the contribution rates will manage to

plug the gap. The adequacy of the pensions will be thus threatened both by the indexation mechanisms that moves them further away from their contribution base (which are salaries and not consumer prices!) as well as by a constant deficit in the financing of the public pension scheme.

THEME 1: SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE VET POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Impact of globalisation on VET

Globalization is a reality of the contemporary world. It has among others, an important economic dimension given by: the extension of the international economic trade and economic cooperation; the creation of some good and services global markets; the creation of some global power centers; the apparition and the development of some forms of economic integration.

The term globalisation is generally used to describe an increasing internationalisation of markets for goods and services, the means of production, financial systems, competition, corporations, technology and industries¹.

In turn, this gives rise to increased mobility of capital, faster propagation of technological innovations and an increasing interdependency and uniformity of national markets.

The main phases of globalisation are:

- Increase in trade flows (mobility of goods and services)
- Mobility of capital
- Mobility of people and skills
- Borderless diffusion of knowledge
- Borderless production chains.

1.2 Impact of technological progress on VET

¹ OECD, dictionary of terms.

Title of policy/ measure : Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market(I 2008-IV 2008)

(a) Rationale: Increasing the capacity of answering/adapting the professional and technical education to the requirements of the labour market.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Increasing the capacity of answering/adapting the professional and technical education to the requirements of the labour market.

(c) Description of measure:

a) Upgrading labour market studies at regional level;

b) Reviewing and updating the Regional Action Plans for Education(PRAI);

c) Study on socio-professional insertion of VET graduates for the region Bucharest-Ilfov and for Galati County;

d) Elaborating the curriculum for higher professional and technical education based on the standards of professional training validated by the sectoral committees.

(d) Target groups: students, scholars.

(e) Status of implementation: Decision process concluded.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: regional level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved:

Monitoring consists of monthly progress reports on the work of CNDIPT-UIP.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

a) and b) The 8 regional action plans in the field of vocational and technical education (REAPs) were revised (according to the main findings and conclusions of the 8 labour market regional studies);

c) 2 pilot studies concerning the socio-professional insertion of VET graduates for the region Bucharest-Ilfov and also for Galati County were developed. The next PRAI review, carried out on the basis of the two pilot studies has to be performed by 31st of November 2008

d) Curriculum for TVET was developed for 37 professional qualifications (post-high school education) which were revised and approved through OMECT 5173/29.08.2008. The curriculum development was based by the vocational training standards validated by Sectoral committees.

(b) Indicators of success:

8 PRAI reviewed and updated;

2 studies on socio professional insertion of VET graduates (Region Bucharest-Ilfov and Galati County);

Curriculum for 40 professional qualifications for VET validated by the sectoral committees approved by OM;

Curriculum for 8 professional qualifications adapted CISCONetAcad

- (c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

The continuous training of teachers

The capacity of achieved learning system to respond to the rapid changes of the labour market, together with the assurance of quality in education, are critically dependent on the quality and the level of qualification of the human resources employed in education and on the initial and continuous vocational training. Improving the teachers' qualifications and competences has continued to represent a priority in 2008 for MECT, as part of the quality assurance in education. Actions targeting the improvement of teachers' qualifications and competences together with the actions targeting the reform of national curriculum framework (defined as priority objective for the next period which will benefit of the ESF funding) represent the starting point for implementing comprehensive reforms in primary and secondary education.

In 2008, it was continued the implementing of the Phare ESC 2005 and 2006 grant schemes "*Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel*" which support the training of teachers and school principals from high-schools in rural areas; financing contracts were signed for 18 projects aiming at training 1,670 teachers from 77 high-schools in rural areas. Under Phare 2006 "*Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel*", a TA project started and aims to develop the monitoring system of the accredited continuous training programmes; it also seeks to conduct the impact assessment of the continuous training programmes for the direct beneficiaries (teachers and principals) and indirect beneficiaries (students, school, community etc.). The conclusions of this impact assessment will be used for adopting measures to improve the methodological framework and programs for continuous training of teachers.

Regarding the TVET teachers' training, under TVET 2005 Phare, in 2008, 1,274 TVET teachers were trained, as follows: 227 teachers in the field of quality assurance, 340 teachers in the field of participative management; 232 teachers in the field of qualifications development/review and curriculum development, 169 teachers in the field of the development of learning materials, 93 teachers in the field of developing learning modules for students with special educational needs, 17 teachers in the field of distance learning; 196 quality monitors and school inspectors, of which 170 persons performed monitoring activities of the graduation/ certification exams in 256 examination centres to which were circumscribed the TVET schools previously included in TVET 2004-2006 Phare.

The "*Continuous training for teachers*" programme has continued in 2008; under this program there were trained the following staff: 6,089 teachers from the management and control personnel in pre-university education (49% of the management personnel) and 243,527 teachers took part in training programmes (18,306 teachers in tenure and didactic degrees programmes, 19,884 teachers in regulate training programmes with 90 compulsory credits gathered at graduation, 16,831 teachers in MECT priority programmes, 188,236 teachers in continuous training programmes developed the County Teachers' Training Centres).

Title of policy/ measure: Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools(I 2008-IV 2008)

(a) Rationale:

Improving teachers' qualifications and competences to ensure quality in education.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets:
Improving teachers' qualifications and competences to ensure quality in education.

(c) Description of measure:

- 1) Professional training of teachers and management personnel in high schools from the rural areas according to the identified organizational and individual needs (Phare 2005 and 2006 Grant Schemes).
- 2) Completing the occupational analysis and study of the jobs dynamics in order to support the restructuring measures of the continuous teacher training system.
- 3) Training of teachers, principals and deputy principals from the professional and technical education.
- 4) Implementing the programme "Continuous training for teachers". The end of these actions, with the help of structural instruments is stipulated for 2010-2011.

(d) Target groups (teachers, principals).

(e) Status of implementation: realized.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to improve the training process of teachers and principals.

(c) Key actors involved:

a) The implementation is carried out by The National Pre-university Personnel Training Centre (CNFP)-MECT. Monitoring is carried-out through monitoring reports of the projects (mentioned in the specific procedure manuals co-financed by Phare programmes) elaborated by CNFP – PIU Phare.

b) Monitoring is carried-out by The National Pre-university Personnel Training Centre (CNFP) - by projects monitoring reports (according to the SOP HRD procedures).

c) Monitoring is carried-out by NCTVET – PIU Phare by monthly activity progress reports.

d) Monitoring is carried-out on the basis of annual reports of General Human Resources Management Directorate - MECT.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

- 1) In the Phare 2005 and 2006 Grants Schemes "Developing the continuous training of pre-university

personnel” there were signed financing contracts for 18 projects aiming at training 1670 teachers from 77 high schools in rural areas. Under Phare 2006, a TA project started and aims to develop the monitoring system of the accredited continuous training programmes; it also aims to conduct the impact analysis of the continuous training programmes for the direct beneficiaries (teachers and principals) and indirect beneficiaries (students, school, community etc.).

2) The occupational analysis and the study regarding the jobs dynamics are financed from FSE and will start in the fourth term of 2008.

3) Until 30th September 2008, there were trained 1274 persons in the target groups :

- 567 teachers in the field of quality assurance and participative management;

- 511 teachers in the field of qualifications development/review and curriculum development, development of learning materials and modules for students with special educational needs and distance learning;

- 196 quality monitors and school inspectors.

4) In 2007-2008 school year, 6089 teachers from the management and control personnel in pre-university education (49% of the management personnel) and 243.527 teachers took part in training programmes (18.306 teachers in tenure and didactic degrees programmes, 19.884 teachers in periodical training programmes who obtained at graduation 90 credits, 16,831 teachers in MECT priority programmes, 188,236 teachers in continuous training programmes developed the County Teachers' Training Centres.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure: The human resources development in continuous vocational training system by developing and supporting programs for the vocational training of private and public provider trainers, in order to increase quality in the area(EPC-FORMATOR)- (2009-2012)

(a) Rationale: human resources development in continuous vocational training system by developing and supporting programs for the vocational training of private and public provider trainers, in order to increase quality in the area.

(d) Objectives/measurable targets:

-quality assurance in vocational training through the development of „blended learning” programs for 1240 persons, e-learning programs for 1760 persons.

- Supporting the development of institutional development of private and public, including also the personnel development, by organizing of a minimum 600 evaluation processes of trainer professional competences.
- Improving trainers' qualifications.
- Developing the carrier opportunities for trainers.

(c) Description of measure:

(d) Target groups (private and public trainers).

(e) Status of implementation: implementation on going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to improve the training process of teachers and principals.

(e) Key actors involved:

Beneficiary: National Council of Adult Vocational Training (NCAVT).

National Partner: S.C. Computer Training Center S.A.

Transnational Partner: Techniki Ekpedeftiki Vocational Training Center - Greece

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

- Criteria and tools for selecting the target group.
- e-learning platform and operational "database" loaded with relevant data
- training programme and prepared/printed training materials.
- Selected target group: 3000 persons, of which 1240 for blended learning training and 1760 self-study e-learning training.
- 62 training sessions organized in 8 regional centers.
- Assessment of a minimum 600 evaluating processes of relevant professional skills (as. S.O.) of trainers occupation.
- Training methodology, trainer's guide.
- User guide and e-learning platform and database management.
- Best practice guide of dissemination of project results.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

This is part of a larger national policy aiming to improve the training process of teachers and principals.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

1.3 Impact of demographic change and international migration on VET

Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate

The Romanian authorities continued the implementation of information and counselling measures for jobseekers with a view to ensure a sustainable insertion on the labour market. Through its *Employment Programme*, PES supported the employment of 235,990 persons out of 421,342 persons who participated in active employment services in the first semester of 2008. Special programmes to promote the employment of vulnerable groups have been implemented, as well. In the first semester of 2008, 8,079 Roma ethnics, 603 disabled people, 115 young people at risk of social marginalisation, 34 foreigners, and 24 persons released from detention succeeded to be hired.

Under the programme *From school, to professional life, towards career*, 1,392 information and counselling sessions for students in pre-university education were organized in the first semester of 2008, as compared to the total of 1,782 sessions organized during the entire year 2008. By implementing targeted active employment measures, 47,268 young persons were employed during the first half of 2008.

As regards the undeclared work, the Labour Inspection controlled over 99,000 employers during October 2007 – September 2008, out of which 5,916 employers were found using labour force without legal forms. Following the campaigns against illegal work, 9,352 individual labour contracts were concluded and registered at the territorial labour inspectorates for persons identified as working illegally.

In order to create a legal framework adapted to the current context of the Romanian labour market the Romanian Government will draft the *Law on migration*. The *Strategy on labour force migration on short and medium-term* will be developed and correlate different sectoral policies in order to obtain maximum benefits in managing migration, as well.

Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees activity

Performing the role of national authority for qualifications, the National Vocational Training Board implemented activities for strengthening the sectoral committees and training their members, especially through multi-annual Phare project - *Establishment of the National Authority for Qualifications*.

Four sectoral committees (machinery, fine mechanics, equipments; constructions; food, beverages and tobacco; and tourism, hotels, restaurants) were involved in the implementation of methodological framework in order to create occupational standards and qualifications. During the reporting period, the last occupational standards and qualifications associated with these economic activities were completed and validated by the sectoral committees. The implementation of the methodological framework continues in other 15 economic sectors.

The sectoral committees' representatives participated in training sessions for ESF – SOP HRD multipliers, on the theme *Correlation between Life Long Learning and the Labour Market*, held in May 2008. Also, the Romanian authorities cooperate with sectoral committees for drafting qualification analyses of vocational qualification nomenclatures provided in pre-university education and for validation of occupational standards at sectoral and trans-sectoral level.

On September 30, 2008, 42 competence evaluation and certification centers and 2342 authorized training providers were operational. The available occupational standards were 475.

Strengthening the sectoral committees' role, a draft law amending the Law no 132/1999, republished, on setting up, organisation and functioning of the National Vocational Training Board

was submitted to public debate. The legislative changes aimed to set up the National Authority for Qualifications, while the main task is to correlate the national qualification levels to the European Qualification Framework. During 2008, a public debate was organized for the draft *Law on continuous vocational training*, a piece of legislation initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection and submitted to social partners and relevant public institutions for discussion.

Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes

The Short and medium-term strategy for continuous vocational training 2005-2010 (approved by GD no 875/2005) seeks gradually increase of participants in the training process.

One of the aims is to increase constantly the number of unemployed people participating in continuous training programmes, organized by National Agency for Employment by its own vocational training centers or other training providers. For 2008, the planned number of persons participating in vocational training is 55,150, out of which 44,059 unemployed people. In the first semester of 2008, 22,868 persons participated in training courses, out of which 20,577 unemployed people.

Most of the vocational training programmes (67%) were organized by the training centre network, belonging to the National Agency for Employment (22 county adult vocational training centres and 6 regional adult training centres). In June 2008, the vocational training centres were authorized to provide 481 vocational training programmes for 123 occupations.

3. Title of policy/ measure: Continuous Vocational Training programs for the unemployed people (I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)

(a) Rationale: Adaptation of unemployed people to labour market dynamics. Increasing the participation of unemployed people to vocational training courses and facilitating a sustainable insertion on the labour market.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets:

-to increase constantly the number of unemployed people participating in continuous training programmes, organized by National Agency for Employment by its own vocational training centers or other training providers.

- Assuring the access to vocational training for unemployed people registered in the databases of Public Employment Services.

(c) Description of measure:

(d) Target groups (unemployed people).

(e) Status of implementation: adopted.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(b) Key actors involved:

Monthly monitoring of the registered unemployment rate undertaken by Public Employment Service and reported to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection monitors the implementation of the Employment Plan and Vocational Training Plan every semester.

The Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme carries out the evaluation, within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection

3. Evaluation:.

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

Results recorded in the first semester of 2008 following the implementation of the Vocational Training Programme by the Public Employment Service:

- participation rate of the unemployed people to CVT programmes - 6% (the annual target is 15%);
- 22,868 participants in CVT programmes;
- 10,959 jobseekers employed after graduation of CVT programmes.

Unemployed people participation rate in CVT programmes depending on age, education and residence criteria:

- unemployed people under 25 years - 15.27%;
- unemployed people over 25 years - 10.27%;
- unemployed people over 50 years - 2.72%;
- unemployed people with primary, secondary and vocational training education level - 6.26%;
- unemployed people with high – school education level or vocational education level - 21.26%;
- unemployed people with university education level - 11.86%;
- unemployed people from rural areas - 6.68%;
- unemployed people from urban areas - 11.78%.

(b) Indicators of success:

- Number of unemployed participating in vocational training programmes;
- Rate of unemployed participating in vocational training programmes;

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Providing clients tailored employment measures

According to the socio-professional characteristics of the registered persons, ANOFM implemented personalized measures for employment increasing, so that a person benefited from one or more services, in order to be integrated or reintegrated on the labour market.

Until June 30, 2008, as a result of implementing the *Employment Programme*, 235,990 persons were employed, out of the 421,342 persons participating in the programme. Following the attending vocational training courses 10,959 persons were employed, in the first half of 2008.

In the first semester of 2008, a number of 320,136 people took benefits from the vocational information and counselling services. Also, 183,834 people were employed through employment mediation services, and 10,760 people by means of job fairs. These services targeted specifically the categories of people having problems of insertion on the labour market.

In view of preventing long-term unemployment and stimulating unemployed persons to take-up employment before the end of period receiving unemployment benefits, allowances were granted for 10,677 unemployed persons, in the first semester of 2008. This measure proved to be more efficient for persons belonging to the groups aged over 35 years.

In the first half of 2008, 1,542 people were employed by providing mobility incentives as a result of getting a job in a town situated 50 km far from their residence place, or as a consequence of relocation.

The unemployment rate among persons older than 45 years, or single providers of monoparental families continues to be one of the most important issues of the labour market. By the end of the first semester of 2008, 7,764 persons from this target group took-up employment through job subsidizing measures. Stimulating the employers in view of hiring persons having up to 3 years before retirement, 157 persons from this category took-up employment in first semester 2008.

By applying active measures for the social inclusion of disabled people able to work, 603 people were employed, out of which 141 in subsidized jobs, and 134 by information and counselling services, in the first quarter 2008,

PES supports the communities, which are the most affected by unemployment, by implementing the programmes for temporary employment of unemployed people in local development services. In the first half of 2008, 24,954 people were placed, out of which 8,427 were employed for a period of at least 6 months.

In the first semester 2008, 222 people were assisted through support and counselling services on starting-up a business or becoming self-employed. Also, in the first half of 2008, implementing the

Programme granting low interest loans in order to create new jobs, 420 people succeeded to be employed.

Special measures to activating social vulnerable groups and persons in rural areas

In the first half of 2008, out of the 235,990 people employed as a result of the implementation of active measures, 8,250 adults were long-term unemployed; 2,354 were young long-term unemployed; 8,079 Roma people, 603 persons with disabilities; 115 young people leaving the state child protection system, 34 foreign citizens, 24 persons released from detention; 1 immigrant and 1 refugee. From residential point of view, 127,972 people were from urban areas and 108,018 persons belonged to rural areas, the share being of 54.22%, namely 45.77%. Depending on gender, 92,422 were women and 143,568 men, the share being of 39.16%, namely 60.83%.

In the first semester of 2008, the action called *Caravan on employment in rural areas* was continued, 1924 municipalities (out of the 2851 municipalities in rural areas in official statistics) were included in the programme. 29,713 people were participating in the caravan, and 11,961 people were newly registered in the database. 18,371 people were counselled, and 4780 persons were employed.

In order to increase the employment rate in rural areas or urban localities with difficult social reinsertion as a result of economic restructuring, PES included in the *Employment Programme a Specific Programme for disadvantaged rural and urban areas*. In the first half of 2008, following the implementation of this programme, for 140 villages and 25 municipalities with high unemployment rates, 5967 people, namely 11,504 people were employed.

Measures to attract the Romanian citizens working abroad

Labor migration has a significant impact on reducing unemployment rate in Romania, but generates imbalances in the domestic labor market for certain occupations and activity sectors. The estimations of National Agency of Employment shown a labor deficit of approximately 53,000 job vacancies declared by employers, particularly in construction, clothing, services and healthcare sectors.

Starting from 2007, the Romanian Government initiated measures to encourage the return and integration of Romanian migrant workers. These efforts targeted both their reinsertion on the Romanian labor market, as well as the educational, cultural and social issues.

In accordance with the *Plan of measures for returning the Romanian citizens working abroad* (GD no 187/2008), the national authorities organized and implemented specific actions in the main countries and geographical areas where large communities of Romanians are living:

- Job fair for Romanians living in Italy, held in Rome on 23 February 2008, attending approximately 1,000 persons interested in Romanian job offers;
- Information campaign and job fair for Romanians living in Spain, held in Castellon de la Plana on April 12-13, 2008, attending around 1,300 people;
- Information campaign and job fair for Romanians living in Italy, held in Turin on 21 June 2008, attending around 400 people;
- Information campaign and job fair for Romanians living in Spain, held in Alcala de Henares on 28 June 2008, attending around 600 people.

Romanian authorities took steps to draft a *Law on migration* that will create a legal framework adapted to the current context of the labour market in Romania, as well as *the Strategy on labour migration on medium and long-term*. The Strategy will correlate different elements of sectoral policy in order to achieve benefits in managing this phenomenon.

In this respect, two project fiches were approved for funding under ESF by Operational Program for Development of Administrative Capacity - *Development of institutional capacity for formulating public policies and strategic planning in the field of labour force migration and Increase of institutional capacity to provide public information services for Romanian migrant citizens.*

1.4 Impact of greening of economy on VET

Although no particular labour market policies have been directed towards greening or greener jobs, a large share of the active measures promoted by the PES have somewhat supported the move from industry to services. The mobility incentives as well as the incentives given to employers to train their employees (50% of the training costs for a maximum of 20% of an enterprises' employees, once per year), as well as the apprenticeship law, all have been directed towards workers dislocated from restructured, polluting industry, while aiming at retraining them for cleaner jobs in services. Unfortunately, up until recently, not much has been done so as to train those that moved out from the cities into the rural areas so as convert subsistence farming into eco-farming.

It is important though to mention that Romania has taken steps so as to create at least the basis of a skills/occupational demand anticipation system. As early as 2003, the National Labour Research Institute has undertaken several enterprise investigations with the aim of early identifying the rapidly changing demand for skills. Such investigations have been repeated though with sometimes diverging objectives in 2004-05, 2006 and 2008. Moreover, in 2006 a more audacious step has been made with the enterprise investigation being doubled by an attempt to create at least in a nutshell, a system of occupational monographs. The study has been made available to the Sector Committees, functioning in an advisory position to the National Adult Training Board, now fully recognised as public tripartite bodies, entrusted with the elaboration of occupational standards.

Finally, Romania, through the National Labour Research Institute, is actively involved in the anticipation exercise currently financed by the CEDEFOP aiming to produce a mid-term (2025) forecast of the demand and supply of skills in Europe.

Several projects funded by the ESF are aiming, if not explicitly at greening and green jobs, at least at bettering the capacity of the Romanian relevant authorities and enterprises to chart the developments of the demand and supply of skills in what will be an ever more integrated Single Market, revolving around flexicurity and green, smart growth. As such, the SAPERE project which brings together the Romanian National Agency for Employment (NAE) and a host of Italian partners aims at bettering the capacity of the Romanian PES to anticipate changes on the labour market and thus constantly update its toolkit of active policies. The MEDIT project which brings together the NAE and the Italia LAVORO arm of the Italian Ministry of Labour attempts to find a mechanism for an improved regulation of the flow of workers between Romania and Italy,. Finally the recently started FLEXICOVERY project initiated by the National Labour Research Institute attempts to bring the core concept of flexicurity into the daily practice of Romanian enterprises.

Greening the economy and thus giving an impetus to the creation of jobs in green or greener sectors of the economy must be seen not as a luxury but as a necessity. Romania has missed more than half a century of normal development and thus has scarce resources to mobilise for such a goal. The current model of development which has seen their swift change into very open excessively service oriented economies seems to have failed the basic test of a random exogenous shock. Therefore, something has to be done so as to better prepare them, while in the meantime ensure that they can close the development gap with their more developed counterparts in the Union. For this, the main priorities have to be growth, jobs and incomes. Greening might be of course an option which faintly

seems to make some headway in the Romanian strategy. But given the current production apparatus, more greening than currently already is, would actually mean complete economic wipe-out. Public resources to come into support are meagre, even taking into account the stream of EU funds. Accordingly, the basic contribution will come in this direction from energy related policies, where Romania strongly promotes the low-carbon solution of nuclear energy, clustered around what is the safest and most modern installation of its type in Central Europe (the Cernavoda plant), as well as the strategic project of the NABUCCO gas pipeline. Both initiatives will have a strong impact on the economy and the labour market, spurring both jobs and growth.

Current labour market policies are not directly aimed at greening. Given the current crisis and the pressing need to resume growth and job generation, it hard to believe that, at least in the initial phase, somebody would cherry pick job creation. However, as significant sources are available via the ESF as well as other structural and cohesion instruments, it would be more than advised to channel those resources where jobs are genuinely created at the level of enterprises and local communities. The perspective of large mining projects such as the Rosia Montana gold mine (supposedly the largest in Europe if the decision to open it not overturned due to environmental reasons) must be actually not shunned on narrow “*environmentalistic*” grounds, but, on the contrary, harnessed so as to produce a pilot case, whereby the exploitation of natural resources that fosters growth also brings in a strong component of environmental rehabilitation, thus spurring not only “green jobs” but also the generation of “green-oriented” know-how. Acquiring such know-how in an area where natural resources are almost depleted in Europe and then making good use of it on a market basis would prove actually far much smarter than simply selling “hot air” (emissions certificates of which Romania now has aplenty) to developed nations.

Given its current level of development and the state of its economic structure, Romania has done more than its fair share in terms of greening, even considering that this fair share was the result of restructuring, rather than of a conscious drive towards economy and labour market greening. Perspectives are however difficult to gauge for such an economy, which has witnessed a series of random exogenous shocks of unprecedented magnitude throughout the last half a century. Greening would be more than difficult, given the current context and it would entail the loss of the remaining industrial base. However, the shock of massive unemployment has been avoided in the Romanian labour market mainly due to the buffer of subsistence agriculture and, later on, due to intense migration flows towards the older Member States. None of these might be available to such a large extent in the future. The most urgent of priorities for Romanian therefore is to re-start the engine of growth and resume job generation. If this will entail also greening so much the better, but no one can bet on it.

1.5 Other challenges for VET

In future VET in Romania will have to enhance its links with the business sector. As the process of strengthening the qualification framework as well as the activity of the sector committees is stepped up more incentives have to be created for companies to intake VET-related projects. In this sense one needs to adjust some of the public programs that aim at increasing investment in VET inside companies. The Government’s initiative to cover 50% of the training programs inside companies for a maximum of 20% of the employees as well as the most recent initiative providing companies with incentives to hire from the ranks of the unemployed will have to be streamlined so as to attract business even in times of crisis.

Another top priority is apprenticeship. Up to now progress has been modest in this field but recent developments have been more encouraging. However, the body of regulation is not sufficiently promoted. In the meantime, one has to acknowledge that for Romanian companies engaging in apprenticeship is still rather an expensive option.

Romania will also have to capitalize on its most important of gains that of having as system which allows for the recognition of even non-formally acquired qualifications. Sector committees, which have recently been given a more than formal status will have to mobilize their own professional communities, building thus on the acquired capital of skills of their employees and formalize it via structured VET programs.

Finally developing the nascent schemes on anticipating skill needs including via the use of structural and cohesion instruments both on their econometric as well as on their enterprise investigation dimension can be considered as top priority. Involving social partners and mobilizing resources via sector committees will bring a necessary plus by increasing the relevance of what are know mere academic exercises.

THEME 2: ECONOMIC CRISIS–VET POLICIES AS RECOVERY MEASURES

2.1 Initiatives for recovery

The major common consequences in education, VET and employment in time of crisis are:

- Rise in unemployment-recently laid off people (in the third quarter -Eurostat)
- Increase in short time work-fixed term contracts
- Decrease in apprenticeships due to firms closing down, shortages of in-firm training places.

At the end of the first quarter of 2009, the activity rate for working age population (15-64 years) was 61.8% and it reaches the value of 65 % in third quarter of 2009.

The employment rate was 50% in the first quarter of 2008, and it reaches the value of 49.6 in the first quarter of 2009 and about 52.3% at the end of the third quarter of 2009.

The unemployment rate (ILO) was 6.3% in the first quarter of 2008 and it has increased to about 6.8% at the end of the third quarter of 2009.

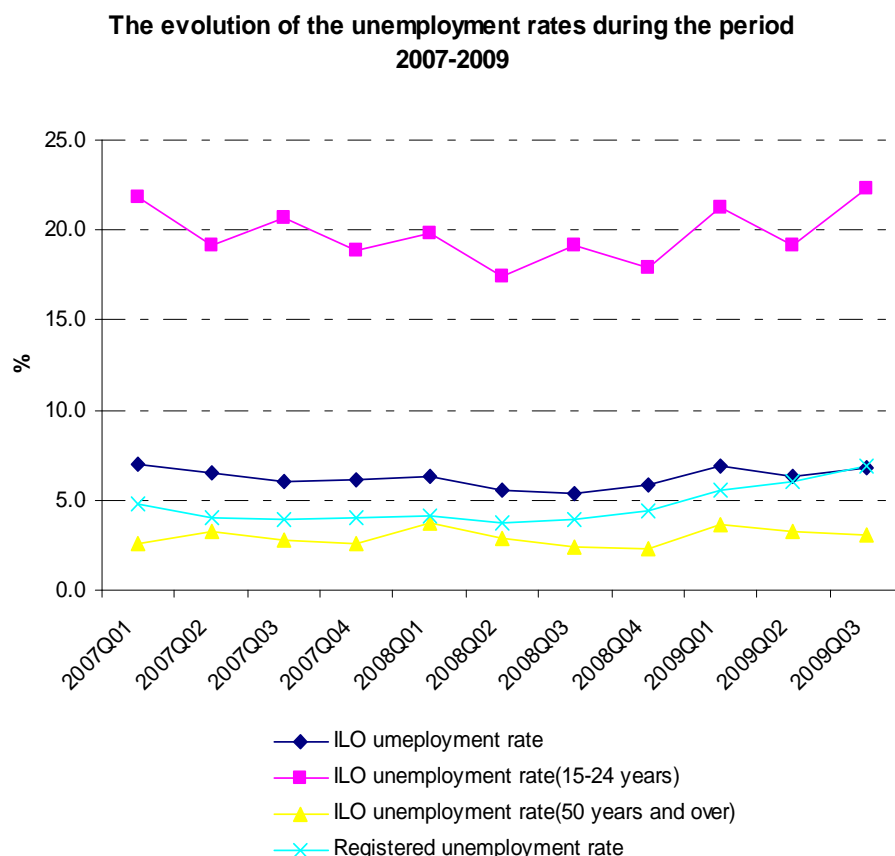
In the first quarter of 2009, the active population of Romania was 9704.6 thousand, out of which 9038.5 thousand employed and 666.1 thousand unemployed (ILO). In the third quarter of 2009, the active population of Romania reaches the value of 10226.1 thousand, out of which 9527.1 thousand are employed and 698.9 thousand are unemployed (ILO).

Chart no.6.



Source: NIS

Chart. No.7.



Source: NIS, Romanian National Bank

Unemployment rate (ILO) shown a constant decreasing trend, the level of 6.3% in the first quarter of 2008 was below the one registered in the second quarter of 2007 (6.5%), and less than the one indicated in the first semester of 2007 (7%). It increases to about 6.8% in the third quarter of 2009.

In case of youth (15-24 years), (ILO) unemployment rate decreased during the period 2007-2008, the level in the first quarter of 2008 was 19.8%, against 21.8% in the first quarter of 2007, while the youth unemployment rate at the end of 2008 was 17.9%. It increased constantly during the year of 2009, registering about 22.3% at the end of the year.

At the end of the 2008, the unemployment rate for older persons was 2.3% and it increased to 3.1 at the end of the third quarter of 2009.

The registered unemployment rate has increased from about 3.7% at the end of the second quarter of 2008 to 6.9% at the end of 2009.

The main orientations regarding education and VET are:

- invest more and more efficiently in human capital
- make education and training more responsive to current and future labour market requirements through anticipation of skill needs and promotion of key competences
- Promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

The main measures regarding VET that contribute to recovery from crisis are:

Developing the continuous vocational training system

The network of vocational training centres of Public Employment Service has been extended, so that 22 county centres and 6 regional centres for vocational training are currently operational.

Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate

This measure is discussed above in section 1.3.

Improving the educational system

In order to reach the objective of enhancing the relevance of education and vocational training to the labour market requirements, the measures undertaken focused on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and superior (university) education. Under TVET 2005 Phare Programme, several actions were funded aiming to increase Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) capacity to respond to the labour market requirements. Thus, VET offer is based on specific planning tools: Regional/Local Educational Action Plan (REAPs and LEAPs) which are, at their turn, based on early anticipation of the demand for vocational training and the redefinition of the content and proposes of learning, through the involvement of employers in the Sectoral Committee. As regards university education, there have been continued both the actions targeting the development of qualifications, and those targeting the development of the legal and methodological framework in order to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework of in Higher Education.

The system educational and training capability to answer to rapid changes on the labour market together with the assurance of quality in education, both are critically dependent on the quality and the level of qualification of the human resources employed in the initial educational and lifelong vocational training system. Improving the teachers' qualifications and competencies continues to represent a MECT priority as a component of quality assurance in education and it has been supported by "Continuous training for teaches" programme and by Phare ESC 2005 and 2006 "Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel" grant schemes.

Strengthening the administrative capacity of National Council for Adult Vocational Training of Extension of active life (CNFPA)

The multi-annual Phare project – Establishment of the National Authority for Qualifications aimed at setting-up a national qualification system for initial and continuous vocational training, with the participation of social partners by sectoral committees.

The main results of the project are: development of a methodology for competence and skill certification, development of common quality assurance principles and mechanisms for education and vocational training system and development of National Qualifications Register database.

On the 1st of August 2007, Phare 2005 project started in order to be finalized on November 30, 2008. The main activities to be carried out are: applying the methodologies in order to elaborate 15 qualifications for each of the 10 selected sectors, and developing the database and IT portal for the National Qualifications Register.

On the 1st of April 2008, Phare 2006 project started (16 month implementation period). The project aims to review the methodological framework developed under Phare 2004 project, following the results achieved by piloting it in 14 activity sectors. The sustainability of 2004-2006 Phare projects will be ensured by implementing two projects funded under European Social Fund by Sectoral Operational Program for Human Resource Development (HRD SOP), namely Quality assurance in continuous vocational training and Implementation and validation of National Qualification Framework in Romania – From qualifications to continuous vocational training programmes.

Strengthening the sector committees' role

Strengthening the sector committees' role, a draft law amending the Law no 132/1999, republished, on setting up, organization and functioning of the National Vocational Training Board was submitted to public debate. The legislative changes aimed to set up the National Authority for Qualifications, while the main task is to correlate the national qualification levels to the European Qualification Framework. During 2008, a public debate was organized for the draft Law on continuous vocational training, a piece of legislation initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection and submitted to social partners and relevant public institutions for discussion.

It is important to mention that until March 2009, the Sectoral committees for vocational training will have the statute of institutions of public utility. Please note the publication of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 28/2009 on the regulation of certain social protection measures. Among the measures established by the Ordinance: the extension of the period during which unemployment benefits are granted, the employer's and employees' exemption from the payment of social insurance contributions throughout the temporary interruption of the activity, ***the regulation of sector committees as social dialogue institutions of public utility, by which it is ensured the participation of social partners to the continuous vocational training improvement.***

According with this ordinance, the financing of sector committees is ensured from:

- a) State budget, for the coverage of expenditures related to the functioning of technical secretariat, from the budget of Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, from The National Council for Adult Vocational Training budget;
- b) revenues from services provided (validation of occupational standards, based on tariffs established by the Ministry of Labor)
- c) revenues from services provided for the validation of qualifications and vocational training standards, in accordance with tariffs established by the Ministry of Education
- d) (Other revenues from service provisions, fees, sponsorships, donations, etc).

Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes described in detail in section 1.3.

Scholarships for pupils from rural area

Giving scholarships for the pupils from rural area selected by performances, in order to continue studies. The Government have adopt the 448/229 government decision regarding the amount of "Romanian Government" scholarship. It has also been approved the 594/2009 government decision regarding the scholarship "Money for high school" for 155.000 scholars from families with incomes under 200 RON/member.

Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons

According with the purviews of the law 76/2002 regarding the unemployment security system and the labour force employment stimulation, in present, the vocational training for the own employees is sustained from the unemployment security budget(art.481: the employers that organizes for their own employees vocational training programmes on basis on the annual plan of vocational training, can receive an amount representing 50% of the expenditures with vocational training services organized for at most 20% of employed personnel).

In the case of unemployed persons, the participation of vocational training programmes is sustained from unemployment security budget in 100% of cases (art.66 (1)).

Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes.

Faze I: launching state aid schemes for active measures for employment, vocational training, health and workplace safety at 31 march 2009, with a financial allowance of 145 Meuro.

Faze II: launching strategic grant projects for continuous vocational training, transition from school to active life, employment measures programmes for unemployed persons and for inactive persons from rural area at 24 April 2009, with a financial allowance of 545 Meuro.

Faze III: launching strategic projects, investments in educational and vocational training system, adaptability of enterprises and employees, modernizing the public employment system and promoting social inclusion at 9 may 2009, with a financial allowance of 625 Meuro.

Minimis aid Scheme “Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities’ development”

The order no.56/2010 regarding the modification of minimis aid scheme(adopted in 2008 by order of National Employment Agency) foresees the allowance of subsidies for employment of about 101.450 unemployed persons registered at the county employment agencies or in Bucharest, regardless if they receive unemployment benefits or not.

The scheme has started in 2008 and it ends in 2012, in function of the allocated funds for this.

The budget for the whole period of the scheme is about 320.795 thousands RON, from the unemployment security budget.

Improving the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement

Giving the fact that opportunities for implementing the structural and cohesion funds and national funds for economic development do exist, increasing SMEs capacity to participate to public procurement mainly aims at: ensuring a greater transparency in promoting the public procurement opportunities; reducing the level of conditions imposed to SMEs - conditions that may be sometimes irrelevant or disproportioned when compared to the object of the contract to be awarded.

At present, for promoting the public procurement opportunities, even in case of small size contracts, the contracting authorities initiate competitive awarding procedures of contracts through

the Electronic System of Public procurement (SEAP), namely the portal **www.e-licitatie.ro**. Therefore, during the first 3 quarters of 2008, 80,000 information notices were published on the portal, out of which approximately 65,000 notices referring to the awarded contracts by SMEs, namely contracts for providing services and supply under 75,000 Euro and contracts for works less than 500,000 Euro.

Between March 15 and September 15, 2008, the operator of SEAP – ASSI - developed and implemented a series of new functionalities for eLicitatie – **www.e-licitatie.ro** users. That meant, the integral application of the open procedure, with the possibility of organizing the final phase based on the “lowest price” award criterion; the implementation of the technical functionalities needed for initiating and developing the restricted procedures, with the possibility of organizing the final phase of the electronic auction on the “lowest price” award criterion; the request for quotation based on “the most economically advantageous tender” criterion, using entirely electronic means, as final phase for off-line contract award procedures or on-line request for quotation, open procedure, restricted procedure developed on-line; the revision of the newest CPVs (Common Procurement Vocabulary) codes. Until September 15, 2008, SEAP, in his quality of OJS e-Sender was able to respond to the newest requirements and to assure the electronic transmission of notices to the OJEU with the new CPV codes.

The national legislation encourages the division of public procurement contracts into small lots size and regulates the qualification conditions regarding the capacities of economic operators’ to a minimum level, which is not disproportionate regarding the size of each lot.

By the end of the year, the authorities foresee to develop and implement new functionalities for awarding public procurement contracts, if the contracting authority initiated the awarding contracts for services or contracts for works divided into small lots.

In addition to national legislation implementation, in order to reach the objective of increasing SMEs capacity to participate in public procurement and also, to respond to the country specific recommendations, authorities initiated specific activities for the evaluation of SME participation to public procurement. For this purpose, a working group was set up and rendered operational, which is composed by representatives of MIMMCTPL and ANRMAP. The Working Group will evaluate the level of SME participation in public procurement contracts and will identify the difficulties they are confronted with.

Besides the SME consultation regarding public procurement procedures within the Consultative Committee for SME Development, in the next period it will be created a dedicated session on SME portal for notifying the abusive/irregular administrative practices **www.business-entrepreneur.ro/esimplu.ro** , which will allow to asses the level of SME participation into public procurement and the success rate of their participation.

The evaluation criteria of SME participation to the awarding public procurement contracts will be based on the following indicators: share of the SMEs from the total number of participants; share of contracts awarded by SMEs from total contracts; the total value of awarded contracts by SMEs from the total volume of public procurement contracts awarded. These indicators will be available starting from second quarter of 2009.

Developing the management system of labour migration

In order to create a legal framework adapted to the current context of the Romanian labour market the Romanian Government will draft the *Law on migration*. The *Strategy on labour force migration*

on short and medium-term will be developed and correlate different sector policies in order to obtain maximum benefits in managing migration, as well.

Romanian authorities took steps to draft a *Law on migration* that will create a legal framework adapted to the current context of the labour market in Romania, as well as *the Strategy on labour migration on medium and long-term*. The Strategy will correlate different elements of sectoral policy in order to achieve benefits in managing this phenomenon.

In this respect, two project fiches were approved for funding under ESF by Operational Program for Development of Administrative Capacity - *Development of institutional capacity for formulating public policies and strategic planning in the field of labour force migration and Increase of institutional capacity to provide public information services for Romanian migrant citizens*.

Title of policy/ measure : Ensuring the access to education for disadvantaged groups(I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)

(a) Rationale: Facilitating the access to education for persons belonging to disadvantaged groups, mainly for those belonging to the Roma community and training of teachers for an inclusive education.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets:

- improve their school performance by: Improving the conditions of pre-school education of disadvantaged groups;
- Stimulating the success of children from disadvantaged groups in compulsory education (prevention of dropout) and improve school success rate;
- stimulate the enrollment in second chance programmes at the primary and secondary level. The project involves technical assistance to support the MER in the implementation of the grant scheme addressed to school inspectorates for implementing county strategies for improved access to education for disadvantaged groups.

(c) Description of measure:

(1) Phare 2005 grant schemes "Equal access to education for disadvantaged groups" for:

- programmes for school remedial and improved access to education (such as: The second chance education, Summer kindergarten, School after school or extra-school/optional activities) for people from disadvantaged groups;
- distance education programmes for young people from the Roma communities who want to become school-teachers; the establishment and operation of the resource centres for inclusive education;
- training programmes for teachers, directors, deputy directors and inspectors (in order to elaborate county strategies for improving the access to education for disadvantaged groups and desegregation plans) and school mediators.

(2) Training teachers, methodology-specializing teachers (for the *Romany (i.e.: gipsy)* language) and school mediators to facilitate the access to education for the Roma community.

(d) Target groups (young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, people with migrant background and ethnic minorities, young people from Roma communities, people with low skill levels, teachers, directors, deputy directors and inspectors, school mediators).

- (e) Status of implementation: implemented all over the country

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

- (a) Level of operation: national level
- (b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming at the societal integration of the Roma community (communities), a group considered as suffering of multiple disadvantages.
- (c) Key actors involved:
- 1) The projects progress reports are centralized by MECT - General Directorate for Secondary-School Education Management- Phare PIU.
 - 2) Monitoring is based on annual reports of MECT –General Directorate for Education in Minorities languages.

3. Evaluation:

- (a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

During the reporting period, special actions aimed at Roma employment were taken; (Caravan of employment, job fairs, Special programme for communities with large numbers of ethnic Roma), focusing on professional reintegration of Roma individuals.

In the first half of 2008, the results were the following:

- 3,351 persons were employed, while emphasis was put on client-tailored actions to stimulate employment;
- Within the *Caravan of employment* project, developed in towns with significant Roma communities, 17,257 people of Roma ethnic participated, out of which 7,633 were women; 10,549 persons were counselled; 5,470 persons were included in unemployment database, out of which 2,394 were women, and 1,317 people were employed, out of which 463 were women;
- Following the *job fairs* dedicated to Roma persons:
 - job markets were organized in 73 towns of 37 counties;
 - 650 companies participated, out of which 18 with Roma ethnic managers and 22 insertion employers;
 - 9,487 jobs were offered;
 - 4,262 persons of Roma ethnics participated;
 - 244 of Roma ethnics were employed;
 - main branches of activity related to jobs in which Roma ethnics were employed are: public administration and defence, social insurance in the public domain - 86 persons, constructions - 42 persons, agriculture, hunting and related services - 23 persons, clothing manufacturing -13 persons, food industry - 13 persons, civil engineering works – 7 persons.

- (c) Indicators of success:

- Number of teachers, directors, inspectors and mediators trained
- Number of persons listed in the IDD programme to become teachers;

- Number of persons assisted in „second-chance” programmes;

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

Is part of a wider set of policies aiming at facilitating the access of the Roma on the labour market and the improvement of their level of skills and knowledge

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure: Continuous Vocational Training programs for the unemployed people (I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)

(a) **Rationale:** Adaptation of unemployed people to labour market dynamics. Increasing the participation of unemployed people to vocational training courses and facilitating a sustainable insertion on the labour market.

(b) **Objectives/measurable targets:**

-to increase constantly the number of unemployed people participating in continuous training programmes, organized by National Agency for Employment by its own vocational training centers or other training providers.

- Assuring the access to vocational training for unemployed people registered in the databases of Public Employment Services.

(c) **Description of measure:**

(d) **Target groups (unemployed people).**

(e) **Status of implementation: adopted.**

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) **Level of operation: national level**

(b) **Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming at ensure vocational training for unemployed people.**

(d) **Key actors involved:**

Monthly monitoring of the registered unemployment rate undertaken by Public Employment Service and reported to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection monitors the implementation of the Employment Plan and Vocational Training Plan every semester.

The Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme carries out the evaluation, within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

Results recorded in the first semester of 2008 following the implementation of the Vocational Training Programme by the Public Employment Service:

- Participation rate of the unemployed people to CVT programmes - 6% (the annual target is 15%);
- 22,868 participants in CVT programmes;
- 10,959 jobseekers employed after graduation of CVT programmes.

Unemployed people participation rate in CVT programmes depending on age, education and residence criteria:

- unemployed people under 25 years - 15.27%;
- unemployed people over 25 years - 10.27%;
- unemployed people over 50 years - 2.72%;
- unemployed people with primary, secondary and vocational training education level - 6.26%;
- unemployed people with high – school education level or vocational education level - 21.26%;
- unemployed people with university education level - 11.86%;
- unemployed people from rural areas - 6.68%;
- unemployed people from urban areas - 11.78%.

(c) Indicators of success:

- Number of unemployed participating in vocational training programmes;
- Rate of unemployed participating in vocational training programmes;

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies. Is part of a wider set of policies aiming to ensure vocational training for unemployed people.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure: Increasing the participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures (III quarter 2008-IV quarter 2009)

(a) Rationale:

Ensuring the access to employment stimulation measures so that it will be fulfilled the European level commitment that every unemployed young person would be offered a job, apprenticeship or training or other measure to increase the employability during the first 4 months of unemployment, by 2010.

(c) Objectives/measurable targets:

Ensuring the access to employment stimulation measures so that it will be fulfilled the European level commitment that every unemployed young person would be offered a job, apprenticeship or training or other measure to increase the employability during the first 4 months of unemployment, by 2010.

(d) Description of measure:

Assuring the access to employment stimulation measures in order to reach by 2010 the target to offer to every young unemployed a new start in the form of job, apprenticeship, training, or other employability measure within the first 4 months of unemployment.

The programme „From school to employment, to career" finances counselling and awareness campaign on the opportunities and risks existing in the labour market.

(d) Target groups (young unemployed people).

(e) Status of implementation: implementation on going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to ensure participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures.

(e) Key actors involved:

Monthly monitoring of the registered unemployment rate undertaken by Public Employment Service and reported to Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

Monitoring the implementation of the Employment Plan and Vocational Training Plan is done by Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection every semester. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme within MMFES.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

In the first semester of 2008 they obtained the following results:

- 1392 activities of information and counselling for pupils in pre-university education were delivered;
 - 74,666 young people were included in the active measures programmes, out of which 47,268 were employed;
 - 4,514 unemployed under 25 years participated in training programmes.
- In the first semester of 2008, the ILO unemployment rate of young people (15-24 years) was of 18.6%.

Indicators of success:

- Number of young unemployed participating in employment stimulation measures;
- Rate of young unemployed participating in employment stimulation measures;

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

Is part of a wider set of policies aiming to ensure participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures;

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools (I 2008-IV 2008) presented in section 1.2.

Title of policy/ measure: Improving the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement contracts(III 2008-IV 2009)

(a) Rationale:

Stimulate the increase of SMEs' competitiveness.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets:

Stimulate the increase of SMEs' competitiveness.

(c) Description of measure:

1. Establishing and making operational the "Working Group for Assessing the SMEs participation to the public procurement" composed of MIMMCTPL and ANRMAP representatives (deadline 31.07.2008);
2. Establishing the criteria and the assessing mechanism for the SMEs participation to the public procurement (deadline 30.09.2008);
3. SMEs consultation carried in order to improve the public procurement procedures – within the "Consultative Committee for SMEs Developing" and on-line by creating a dedicated section on the website: www.business-entrepreneur.ro/esimplu.ro (deadline 31.12.2008);

4. Biannual assessment of the level of SMEs participation to the public procurement process (deadline 28.02.2009);

5. Designing the required

- (d) Target groups (employees, SME).
- (e) Status of implementation: implementation on going

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

- (a) Level of operation: national level
- (b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to improve the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement.

(c) Key actors involved:

General Directorate for SMEs and Cooperatives within MIMMCTPL acting in close cooperation with General Directorate for Monitoring and Operational Development in National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring of Public Procurement (ANRMAP) will elaborate implementation biannual progress reports.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

In the first 3 quarters of 2008, on the website **www.e-licitatie.ro** were published over 80,000 information notices, from which 65,000 were referring to contracts awarded by SMEs.

1. In June 2008 was set up and operationalised the working group for the evaluation of SME participation to the public procurement contracts. The WG comprises representatives of the MIMMCTPL and ANRMAP.

2. In July 2008, the criteria and the monitoring method to assess the level of participation of SMEs to the public procurement will be based on the following established indicators:

share of the SMEs from the total number of participants; - number of contracts awarded to SMEs from total contracts; the total value of contracts awarded to SMEs from the total volume of public procurement contracts in the reference period.

(b) Indicators of success:

Scoreboard regarding the SME participation to public procurement

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

This is part of a wider set of policies aiming to improve participation rate of SMEs to public procurement procedures.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

THEME 3: IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE JOINT WORK ON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS

3.1 Impact of joint work on European principles and tools on national LLL policies and practices and VET developments

The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning as well as the Commission's Communication on Lifelong Learning had an impact on policies in education and training in Romania. Romanian experts participate in working groups as part of the Work Programme on the Concrete Objectives.

At national level, the two ministries in charge – the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection – are responsible for developing the policies and strategies for initial and continuing vocational training. The two ministries cooperate with other national institutions.

National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education: The centre is responsible for: developing the VET curriculum and the system of evaluation and certification, the scientific coordination of IVET development programmes, and developing social partnerships at national and regional levels.

National Agency for Employment: It organises and coordinates employment and vocational training activities on the labour market and implements active measures to combat unemployment.

National Adult Training Board (NATB): Initially established as a tripartite body with an advisory role in vocational training for adults, according to the new law on vocational training for adults, it has now extended its responsibilities and has become the authority empowered to evaluate and accredit training providers.

Council for Occupational Standards and Certification (COSC): A tripartite body responsible for developing a new system of evaluation and certification of vocational competencies; the COSC technical unit is recommended to become a part of the NCVTA.

At regional level the following structures are in charge of implementing vocational education and training policies:

- County School Inspectorates;
- County Employment Agencies (with 15 CVT centres);
- Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnership in Vocational Training (tripartite body: local authorities, trade unions and employers' associations).

Involvement of social partners

Social partners participate in all levels of decision-making (national, regional and local). These include:

- proposing legislative regulations;
- designing the VET curriculum;
- designing occupations and specialisations for VET schools;

- participating in skills examination and certification of VET graduates;
- developing continuing training programmes;
- promoting programmes to combat social exclusion and regional development.

Improving the educational system

In order to reach the objective of enhancing the relevance of education and vocational training to the labour market requirements, the measures undertaken focused on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and superior (university) education. Under TVET 2005 Phare Programme, several actions were funded aiming to increase Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) capacity to respond to the labour market requirements. Thus, VET offer is based on specific planning tools: Regional/Local Educational Action Plan (REAPs and LEAPs) which are, at their turn, based on early anticipation of the demand for vocational training and the redefinition of the content and proposes of learning, through the involvement of employers in the Sectoral Committee. As regards university education, there have been continued both the actions targeting the development of qualifications, and those targeting the development of the legal and methodological framework in order to develop and implement the *National Qualifications Framework of in Higher Education*.

The system educational and training capability to answer to rapid changes on the labour market together with the assurance of quality in education, both are critically dependent on the quality and the level of qualification of the human resources employed in the initial educational and lifelong vocational training system. Improving the teachers' qualifications and competencies continues to represent a MECT priority as a component of quality assurance in education and it has been supported by "*Continuous training for teachers*" programme and by Phare ESC 2005 and 2006 "*Developing the continuous training of pre-university personnel*" grant schemes.

According with the National Reform Plan 2007-2010 objectives, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MECT) focused on one of the most important priorities: promoting lifelong learning.

With respect to the aim of **modernizing education and initial and lifelong vocational training**, the Romanian Government had the initiative of preparing the legislative package for primary and secondary school education. The legislative proposal, prepared since the third quarter of 2007, included a wide range of provisions for restructuring the primary and secondary education, regulating early schooling, financing the primary and secondary education, redefining the institutional tasks for a better management of the educational system within the framework of decentralization, etc. Consultations with social partners took place until the end of 2007, while the public consultation on the legislative package went on during the year 2008 and it ended in the fourth quarter of 2008. It is expected that the legislative proposal to be introduced to Parliament for debates and adoption.

The main measures taken in order to quantify the impact of joint work on European principles and tools on national LLL policies and practices and VET developments are mentioned below:

- ***Strengthening the administrative capacity of National Council for Adult Vocational Training of Extension of active life (CNFPA)- Establishment of the National Authority for Qualifications*** described in section 2.1.

- ***Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees' activity*** presented in section 1.3.
- ***Promoting lifelong learning***

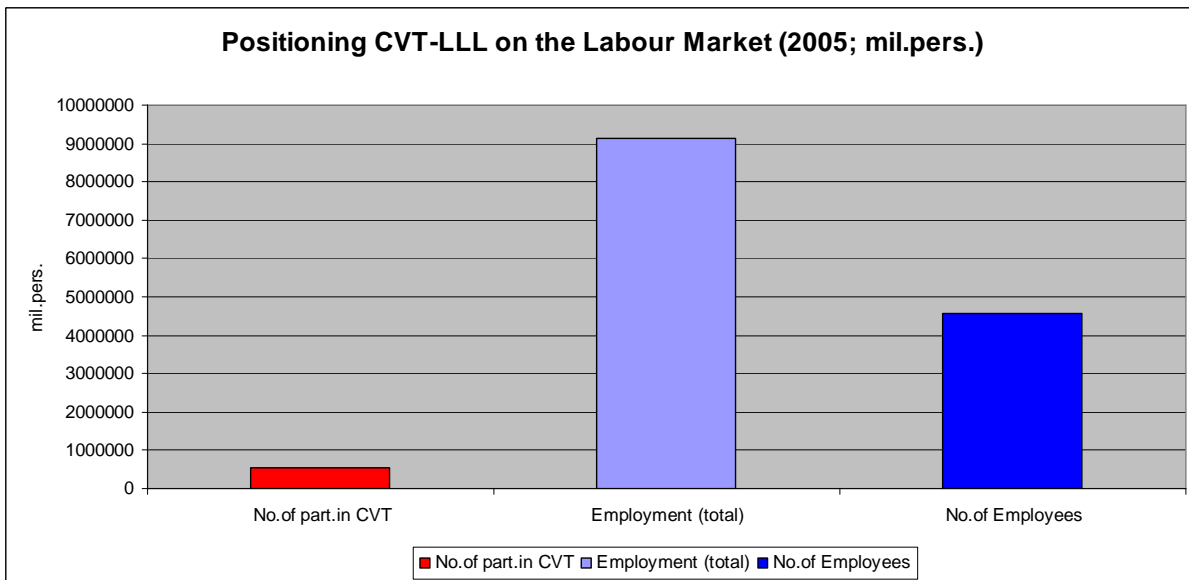
According to the EC Report *Progress Towards Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training*, there are huge gaps regarding the adults participation to lifelong education and training in EU MS: the figures present the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain as having the highest participation rates (over 20%) while in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania this value reach only 2%, four times less than the EU average. Since, in the case of these three countries, the progress made compared with the year 2000 has been very modest, the reports which monitor the progress on Lisbon objectives stress the importance of promoting new policies in this field. These circumstances given, and in order to support of the aim to promote Lifelong Learning (LLL), MECT envisages the upgrade of the legal framework on continuous education (in partnership with MMFES); in this respect, MECT initiated the actions needed for the operationalisation of the inter-ministerial working group to draft the *Strategy for lifelong learning*. There have been started the procedures for the working group' setting-up and formalizing. At the same time, MECT initiated a strategic project through SOP HRD for the training and development of the lifelong learning facilitators. The project aims at creating virtual communities on lifelong learning programmes in school which are to ensure good practice exchange, sharing participants' experiences, creating sustainable partnerships in the field of lifelong learning at local and regional levels, and piloting lifelong learning centres, on the basis of *lifelong learning partnerships*, at which will attend regional and local institutions and other stakeholders.

Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in Lifelong Learning, taking account of age and gender

While data on enterprises show a clear progress in the involvement of what are the main actors of the market in the process of human resources development via the provision of specialized, directed training, with an increase of a staggering 30 percentage points as against the values of 1999, when only 11% of the Romanian enterprises were able to offer some form of training and thereby involve their employees in what is the main form of life-long learning, so have things progressed when taking into discussion the overall participation of the population, of the occupied population and of the employees in the various forms of life-long learning.

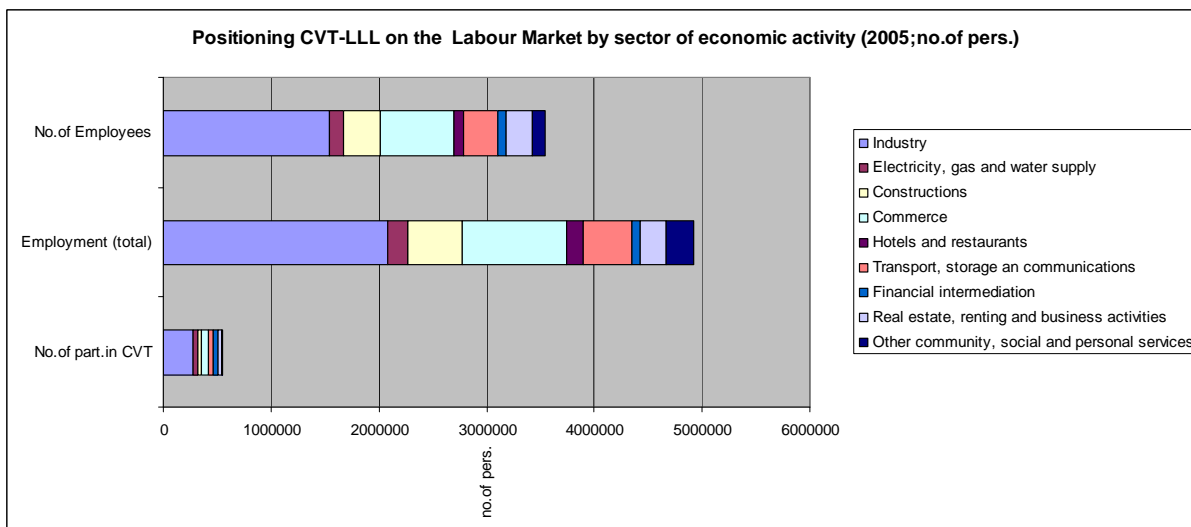
Chart No. 8²

² Charts are based on National Institute of Statistics (NIS) of Romania data, processed by Dr. Catalin Ghinararu;



As such and in contrast with figures that are unfortunately still circulated and which depict a situation from the beginning of the decade when only a dismal 1.5-1.6% of the total population aged 25 years or more was taking part in a form of life-long learning, newly released figures that compiling results of the above-mentioned investigation show that currently the equivalent of 3.28% of this age group in total population are in a way or another involved in a form of life-long learning. Of we are further compiling these figures so as to account for the participation of workers aged 25 years or more in a form of life-long leaning that we will witness a quite significant participation which stands currently (2005) at 6.12%. Therefore, it seems that a vibrant economy has all but swept of its feet a sector that was still until a few years ago just a stagnant backwater of the economy. Furthermore if we are to look at the participation to various forms of CVT and LLL of the salary employees or simply of the employees we will notice that their share is climbing up strongly to around 9.3% of their total which is estimated by the Romanian LFS (AMIGO) at around 5 million out of a total employment (occupied population) of 9.14 million. Now, if we are taking this last mentioned aggregate at looking into its structure so as to see the share of participants in various forms of LLL and CVT as % of the total numbers we will spot a figure that is as high 6.04%. As such, only when counting for the total of Romania's population and for all of its age groups, participation in LLL and CVT stands to a low of 2.55% but this final measure has little significance if any for any analytical, assessorial or forecasting approach.

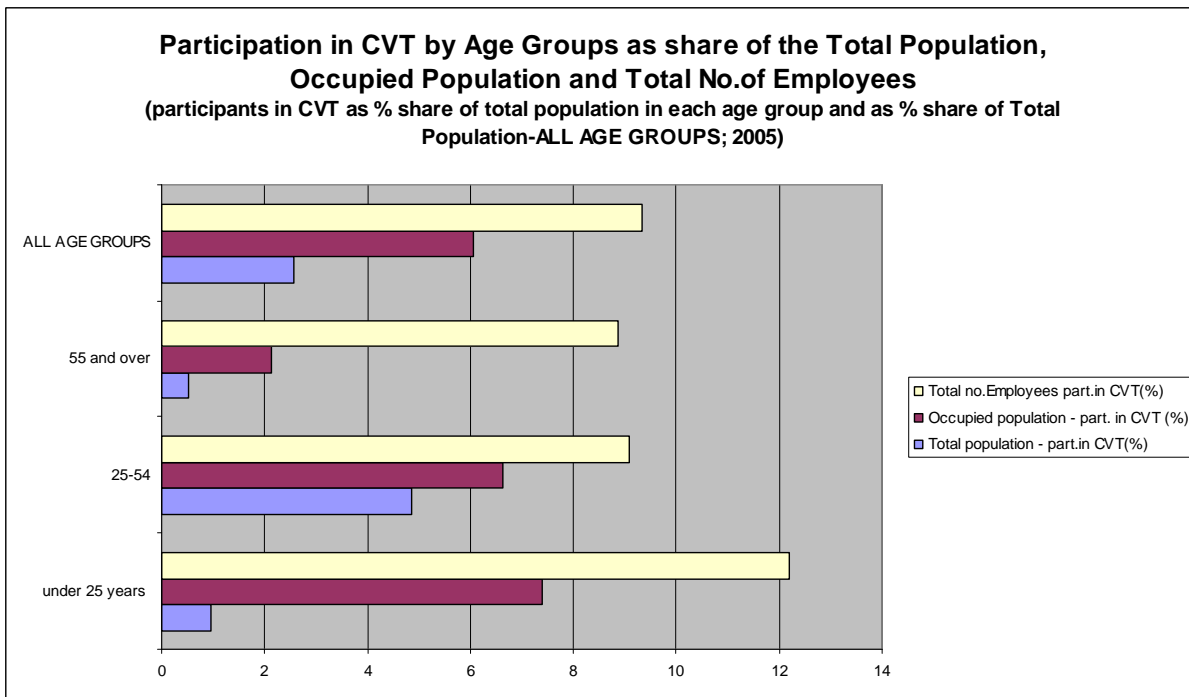
Chart No.9.



Therefore and looking from this point view it seems wholly possible for the Romanian Government to reach its self-assumed objective of having by 2010 a rate of participation in LLL of 7% for the population aged between 25-64. In fact if we look at the results made available by the same investigation we will see that the rate of participation in various forms of LLL and CVT as it is still hard to distinguish between them still in Romania, with the CVT remaining as being said still LLL's main component, then we will witness rate of participation for the 25-54 years of age of 4.8% when calculated for the country's total population, climbing to 6.63% when applying the absolute numbers at the figures for total employment and further high to 9.085 when counting their participation in CVT-LLL as share of total number of salary employees in this age group.

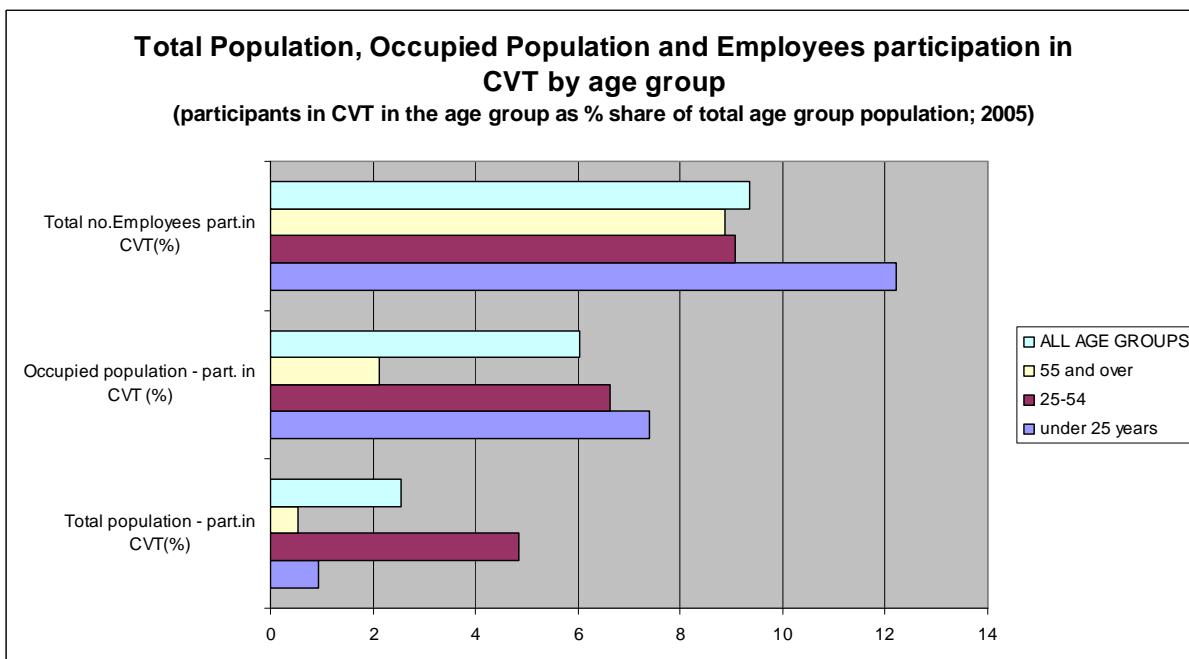
The age structure of LLL-CVT participation reveals its clear tilt towards the younger generations, especially towards the ones below the age of 25 in the workforce which have, true, an insignificant rate of participation (0.9%) in such forms learning and training when applying their absolute figures of participation to the total of population in this age group, as most of them are not yet active on the labour market being increasingly enrolled in the education process, with an increasing share going into higher education, but which simply jumps to 7.4% when applying the same numbers to figures for total employment in the same age group and to 12.2% when counting them as share of the total number of wage employees in their age group.

Chart No.10.



The lowest participation is, ubiquitously, recorded by older workers which only score a 0.5% share of participants in LLL and CVT when applying the absolute numbers to the total of population in this age group, climbing slightly 2.135 when counting their share as of total employment in their age group but nonetheless making a jump to 8.87% when performing the ratio with the total number of salary employees in the group. Therefore, one could say that age is not an obstacle in LLL and CVT participation especially if one is a salary employee. However, it seem that if not, then things change dramatically for the worse as the almost 7 pp. difference between the share of participants in LLL-CVT calculated as a ratio to total employment and the share of participants in LLL-CVT calculated as a ratio of the number of employees clearly shows.

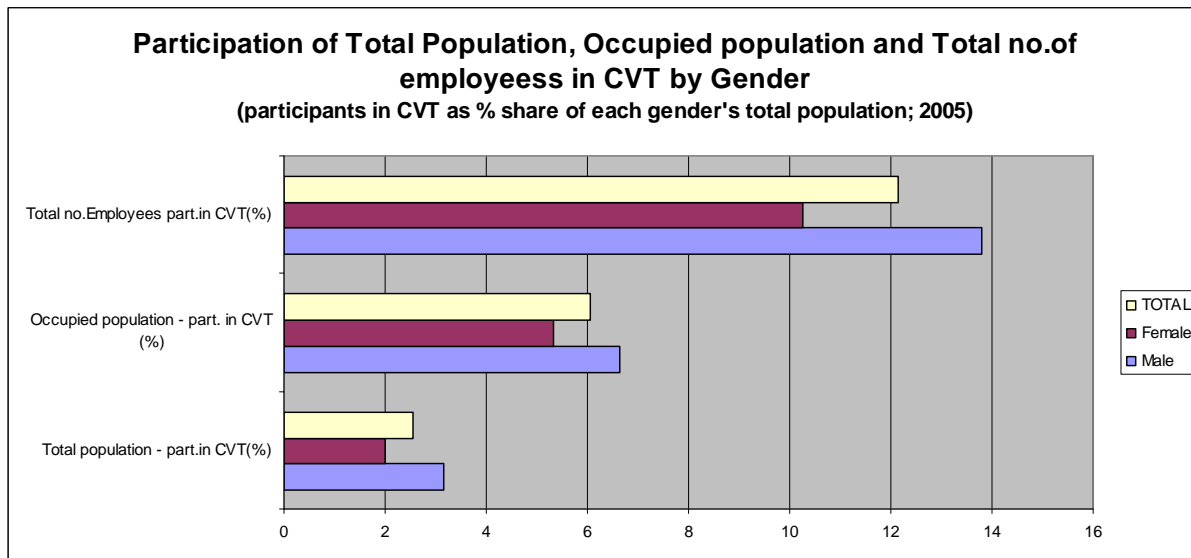
Chart No.11



When looking on gender we will see that while women are half a million more numerous in the total population of the country, their participation in CVT-LLL activities is nonetheless far

lower than that of their male counterparts. As ratio of the total population male participants in CVT-LLL make 3.16%, while women only 1.95%. However, when computing the same ratio for total of the occupied population we will see the two ratios coming close together with the share of occupied men involved in a certain form of CVT-LLL being slightly above 6% while for the same category is just a notch lower at 5.3%. The difference however widens again getting to an approx. 3 pp when calculating the ratio for the total number of wage employees, where share of male participants in CVT-LLL in the total for this population stands at 13.8% while the same percentage for women is at around a lower 10%.

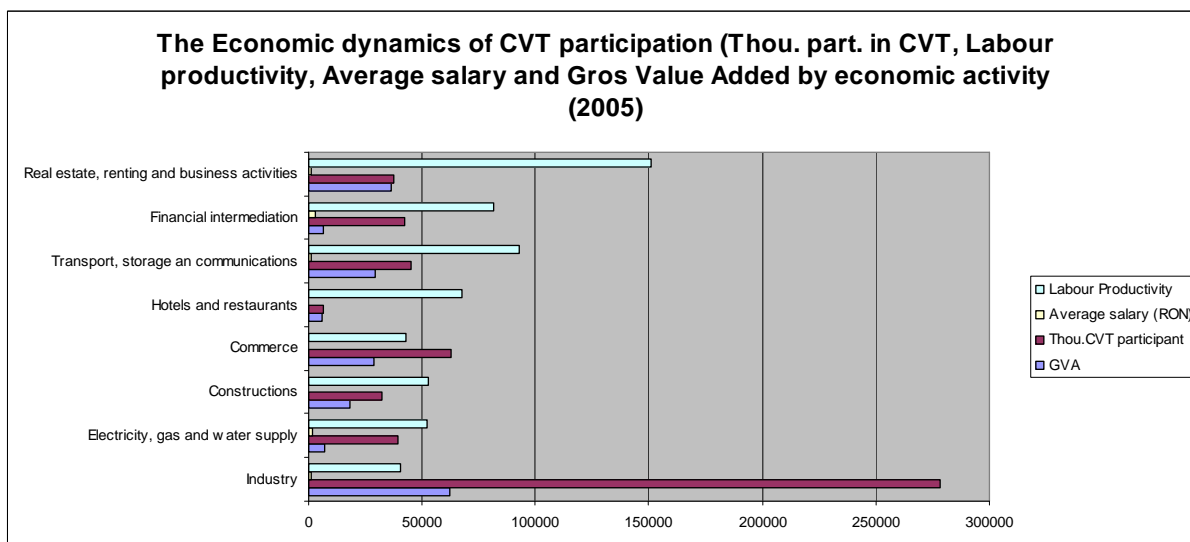
Chart No.12.



Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

If at the beginning of the decade, the first ever investigation on CVT and LLL in the Romanian enterprises was still marking the issues of the cost of training as the main obstacle for enterprises in offering training to their employees, the current investigating does no longer rank his motivation a the first one, although it is worth noting that out of the 26.1 thousand enterprises that did not offer any type of CVT-LLL to their employees and which together make 59.7% of the total number of enterprises that have been the focus of investigation, around half, have still indicated the high cost of training as the main hurdle. A significant share of these companies is unfortunately constituted by companies in the textile and footwear industries which tend to employ a rather larger than the average number of women and out of which 61.6% for the leather industry and respectively 56.6% for the textile industry have not been able to offer any form of training and LLL due to the impossibility of meeting the associated cost. The fact that such companies still make a significant part of the national economy and that by the very nature of their activity have low profit margins which do not allow them to invest in training and LLL for their participants not only points to a significant obstacle in the access to LLL for a significant number of workers but also to one of the causes of the s-called labour shortage that currently confronts this industry at a rate that is even higher than the one for the booming construction sector. With an average salary below the national average and with no perspectives of advancement through training and LLL it is no wonder that workers do shun these sectors and prefer the path of migration abroad even when associated with undeclared work and thus expulsion in destination countries to a professional dead-end at home.

Chart No.13.



However, it is to be mentioned on the bright side of the things that, enterprises having provided some form of CVT-LLL to their employees and especially the one third that has offered the classical-type courses and for which, obviously enough, such statistics become therefore possible, 94.9% have offered some form of special courses to low qualified or even unqualified workers. This is therefore the vulnerable group that has received the most of attention and that is for sure courtesy to the booming activity in construction and infrastructure works, both labour hungry sectors, which also feel more than a pinch the labour drainage inflicted by migration.

As for other vulnerable categories, like minorities or individuals with disabilities, they do not seem to make the focus, even for the entrepreneurs that offer training and LLL, not even for the relative minority that chooses to offer the classic and more expensive form of training courses. Out of the 12.1 thousand enterprises that have offered training courses to their employees only 1.1%, have offered a form of special training or LLL for minorities, with the *Rroma* being the main target, the same being valid for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, these two groups remain the most at a disadvantage on the labour market with their access to CVT and LLL practically blocked.

Out of the 26.1 thousand enterprises which have not offered any form of CVT to their employees, more than 84% have declared the “current level of knowledge and skills of their employees” as the main reason for doing so. While this might not be the case of course as skill gaps and skill shortages are now chief amongst the complains of the Romanian business community, it nevertheless serves as to illustrates that the perception according to which school or university sufficiently prepare workforce for the challenges of the world of work and thereby for a long period of time after the completion of the studies no further training or formalized learning is need, still prevails to a large extent. This also explains why Initial Vocational Training which can qualify more as Life Long Learning than CVT itself, has been offered only by 1.8% of the total number of enterprises investigated all of them being from among the ones that have also offered CVT. In itself this points to the fact that new-entrants on the labour market to which initial vocational training is usually addressed are another group facing additional difficulties in its access to LLL.

As outlined by the National Reform Program 2007-13 submitted this late summer to the European Commission, the Government of Romania is fully committed to the aims and objectives of the

Revised Lisbon Strategy for Growth, Jobs and Better Regulation and thus has assumed the strategic goal of a 7% rate of participation in life-long learning for the population between the ages of 25 and 64 to be attained by 2010 at the latest. This goal has been enshrined into the National Short and Medium Term Strategy for Continuous Vocational Training.

As a result of this strategic commitment, the entire institutional framework that relates to LLL and CVT will undergo a thorough overhaul between 2007 and 2009 with the National Adult Training Board (NATB) in its capacity of National Authority for Qualifications witnessing its role and functions enhanced.

Special attention will receive relations, which, in what is a widely considered as BEST PRACTICE to be followed and multiplied are already playing a pivotal role in fostering enterprise vocational training and LLL. Via the Sector Committees that involve members from both employer's organizations as well as from trade unions and which operate under the aegis of the NATB, the social partners are directly involved not only in the continuous development of the national system of qualifications but also in the day to day accreditation and evaluation process of the vocational training providers. The high share of enterprises that have entrusted their CVT programmes to private vocational training providers and which according to NIS investigation results, has amounted for 2005, the investigation's reference year, to 57.7% of the total number of enterprises that provided some form of training stands as tangible proof of the success of the system and of its potential for future development, via what is practically a form of self-regulation only loosely involving the state.

In the meantime the Ministry of Education aims at reducing further the number of early school leavers which acts in itself as a further hindrance to CVT and LLL participation. Accordingly a 15% reduction in the early school-leave rate for compulsory education has been assumed for 2010, together with the aim of increasing by 10% the rate of access to upper-secondary education for children and youngsters from disadvantaged groups and a rise of 15% of the integration rate of children with special needs into the regular education/school system.

A lot more attention has to be given to ALMPs which, in their current mix are obsolete and unable to meet the demands of a continuously and fast changing labour market. The very fact that the host of subsidies, including those dedicated to enterprise-based training, have been accessed, out of the total number of enterprises that have engaged in CVT activities, only by a dismal 7.9%, while a staggering 92.1% has not, tells the whole of the story.

In the meantime, great hopes are attached to the intervention of the ESF, which as mentioned earlier is supposed to make an important contribution to the development of LLL and CVT, especially at enterprise level. One full PA (Priority Axis) of the SOP-HRD (The Sector Operational Programme – Human Resources Development) is aimed fully at the development of Life Long Learning and the betterment of it's the links between process circumscribed to it and the needs of the labour market. Amongst the targets set to be attained by 2015 are:

- 15,000 students assisted in their transition from university to active life;
- 2,500 new qualifications developed in the frame of the partnership arrangements that have been described above;
- A share of 20% of the total number of enterprises providing CVT (N.B.: as seen from our paper this objective has already been achieved);
- A 10% participation rate of the adult population aged 25-64 in CVT with an intermediate target of 7% in 2010, more likely to be achieved earlier;
- A share of 85% of adults at or above the age of 22 having achieved at least upper secondary education and many others.

To cater for these ample tasks ahead PA-2, under which most of these action fall in the frame of the SOP HRD has a total allocation of 991,397,184 million EURO, coming both from the EU allocation as well as from the national contributions foreseen. Its allocation amounts actually to a 24.2% share of the total amount allocated to the SOP HRD, which itself with its notch above 4 billion EURO total allocation makes up an approx. 23% of the total amount foreseen to be allocated under the umbrella of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. If well used, these funds could make quite a contribution to overall development of human resources with special regard to the enhancement of the sustainability of the whole process.

Therefore if we would express the amounts allocated for PA-2 in terms of GDP equivalent at the current nominal value of this macro-aggregate which is of approx. 100 billion EURO, then we would come up with the equivalent 0.99% of the current GDP. This would add to the annual pace of GDP% an estimated 0.04 percentage points, presuming a constant rate of growth of around 5% annually, something that would be hard to neglect for much needed HR-Development in a climate that smacks of a world economic downturn.

Lifelong Learning Programme – LLP

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) continues the previous programmes SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI. The programme starts in 2007 and ends in 2013, the total budget are about 6970 Meuro. The LLP has been approved by European Parliament at 15 November 2006 and has been published in European Union Official Monitor at 24 November. The LLP aims to reinforce changes, cooperation and mobility between educational and vocational training systems of European Union. The main objective of this programme is to contribute, by promoting lifelong learning, to the development of European Union, as advanced society based on knowledge, with sustainable economic growth, with more workplaces and with better social cohesion.

From quantitative point of view, LLP aims the following targets:

- 3 000 000 scholars involved in Comenius projects during the period 2007-2013;
- 3 000 000 Erasmus students until 2012;
- 80 000 mobility (scholars, workers, young graduates) Leonardo da Vinci per year until 2013;
- 7000 mobility/year in Grundtvig adult education programme until 2013;

The ERASMUS and LEONARDO DA VINCI programs first addressed to higher education (academic study mobility) and the second addressed to vocational training keep the name and became sectoral programs of LLP, who includes also eLearning program, Europass initiative and other actions in the field of education and vocational training. Erasmus-Mundus program will be incorporated in the Integrated Program beginning with the year of 2009.

The components of LLP program are the following:

- 4 sectoral programs

COMENIUS: Preuniversity education

Vocational training of didactic personnel from Preuniversity education
Comenius assistants(future teachers from any field)
Scholar partnership projects

ERASMUS: Higher education

Students mobility
Teachers mobility
Intensive programs
Intensive language courses (EILC)

LEONARDO DA VINCI: Vocational training

Students mobility
Teachers mobility

GRUNDTVIG: Adult education

Continuous vocational training for personnel implied in adults' education
Learning partnerships

Transversal Program:

Development of policies in the education and vocational training area(including Europass portfolio)
Languages learning
Using new information technologies and communication in education
Dissemination and valorising

In the LLP program is also included Jean Monnet program used to sustain legal activities related to the European integration and to the European institutions and organizations in the field of education and vocational training.

Jean Monnet Program:

Jean Monnet action
European institutions support
European associations support

Assuring quality in education and enhancing the relevance of education and initial vocational training to meet labour market requirements

Under this priority, in 2008, the actions undertaken by MECT aimed to:

- Accelerate the implementing of the measures to increase the relevance of the university education to the labour market requirements, as part of the Bologna process' implementation;
- Increase the capacity of TVET to respond/ adapt to the labour market requirements;
- Improve the teachers and trainers' qualifications;
- Extend the use of ICT in education.

With respect to the increase of the relevance of university education to the labour market needs, the goal set up by MECT – to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in higher education by the end of 2010 – represents a reform measure contributing to the increase universities capacity to deliver qualifications in line with the needs of the labour market and knowledge based society.

With respect to the development of the legal framework regulating the implementing of the NQF in higher education, following the debates with relevant partners, the legal proposal on the approval of the methodology for developing NQF in higher education was drafted in 2008; this proposal is on the way to be approved by MECT and it will make the subject of government inter-institutional approval. This legal act will represent the core legislation for implementing NQF in education in line with the Bologna Process and EQF requirements. A number of 33 university qualifications were, thus, developed: 16 university qualifications were validated in 2007 through Phare TVET 2004 and 17 qualifications are on the way of being finalized and validated through Phare TVET 2005 (deadline: 30th of October 2008). These qualifications represent an experimental basis for the validation of the NQF in higher education methodology (the proposal is on the way of being approved); they will be integrated later in NQF in higher education. The informatics application will be financed in SOP HRD (the Priority Axis 1, the main intervention field 2. “Quality in higher education”) starting with the fourth quarter of 2008.

Progress was made in implementing the Bologna process, in the sense of the adoption and enforcing of GD no 890/2008 on the qualifications and titles awarded to bachelor graduates registered in the first university year in 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008; this legislative act regulates the titles awarded to graduates to ensure the implementation requirements for the Diploma Supplement in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process.

With respect to the increase of the TVET capacity to respond to the labour market needs, in 2008, 2 strategic actions were undertaken:

The strategic participative planning of the educational offer, based on specific instruments that fully valorise early anticipation of the demand for vocational training (Regional Action Plans for development of TVET – REAPs, Local Action Plans for development of TVET – LEAPs, School Action Plans - SAPs);

The redefinition of the content and purposes of learning, through the involvement/ participation of employers in the Sectoral Committees.

The increase of the TVET capacity to respond to the labour market needs was supported under TVET 2005 Phare programme under which the following actions were supported: the review and update of REAPs and LEAPs, as planning tools for the TVET educational offer, and the redefinition of the content and purposes of learning, on the basis of the vocational education standards validated by the Sectoral Committees.

The system used for the redefinition of the TVET learning content and purposes allows the employers’ validation of professional competences, which are specific to a particular occupation and to a particular qualification, and it will lead to an increased correlation between the study programs and the needs of the labour market, thus facilitating the graduates’ insertion on the labour market. The actions planned for TVET in 2008 were completed: the 8 regional action plans in the field of vocational and technical education (REAPs) were revised according to the main findings and conclusions of the 8 labour market regional studies; two pilot studies concerning the socio-professional insertion of VET graduates for the region Bucharest-Ilfov and also for Galati County were developed and will be used for the next REAPs review; the curriculum for TVET was developed for a number of 37 professional qualifications (post-high school education) on the basis of the vocational education standards validated by the Sectoral Committees; the 37 professional qualifications were revised and approved through MECT Order no 5173/29.08.2008.

Developing the national position on flexicurity pathway

In November 2007, the first debate on flexicurity took place within the National Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training of Labour Force, rendered operationally by Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. The Observatory members are representatives of relevant public institutions for labour and social affairs, national level employers' organizations and trade unions, business environment and academics, as well as non-governmental organizations.

Also, in early 2008, successive tripartite discussions were held with the purpose to ensure a better functioning of the labour market. As measures taken in order to optimize the legislation and the institutional framework were among others: ensuring a legislative framework favorable to participation in lifelong learning and developing the National Authority for Qualifications, including the organization, operation and financial framework of the sectoral committees.

Priority policy areas agreed by the social partners upon the implementation of flexicurity pathway are: lifelong learning and development of active labour market policies.

According to social partners' proposals, the short and medium-term policy initiatives of the Romanian Government should target the following:

Increased access to quality lifelong learning systems, with emphasis on providing the skills required by the labour market, development of tools for long-term forecast of occupations and skills; and strengthening the system of career information and counselling in schools and public employment services;

Implementation of more targeted active labour market policies, by carrying out impact assessment of active measures; drafting new active measures and new activation schemes for disadvantaged groups;

Strengthening the institutional capacity of Public Employment Service for developing its function of active inclusion (for reducing the inactivity rate);

Ensuring an administrative system favourable to the business environment (simplification of administrative procedures, a public administration favourable to business development, including the setting-up single contact points); European Social Fund, Priority Axis no 3 of the Sectoral Operational Program for Development of Human Resources, supports the increase of workers and enterprises adaptability, in order to provide more opportunities for participating in a modern, flexible and inclusive labour market.

Essential feature for developing an integrated approach of all flexicurity elements is a more efficient administrative system of labour and social affairs. Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection is promoting an institutional and informational reform based on a strategic document to be approved by the Romanian Government. The draft strategy sets up the following priorities: creating an integrated IT system for MMFES and institutions under its supervision or authority; amending the existing legislation for simplifying the procedures. The flexicurity issues are critical for achieving a balance in terms of rights and duties of employers and employees. The social dialogue and collective bargaining are essential tools in development and implementation of any type of labour market reform.

of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements(I 2009-I 2012)

(a) Rationale: the growing importance of higher education for the requirements of labour market.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education by transposing qualifications in continuous vocational training programs in order to test their validity, in accordance with the labour market needs.

The specific objectives of this project are:

1. Reinforcing the institutional capacity of National Qualifications Framework and the 4 sectoral committees for implementing and validating the national qualifications framework.

2. Developing and implementing specific instruments in order to ensure quality at the level of vocational training providers.

3. Developing, implementing and validating training programs for 12 qualifications selected from those developed within the 2004 and 2005 Phare projects.

4. Developing specific instruments for validating previous learning and evaluating selected qualifications.

(c) Description of measure:

a) Developing and implementing the legislative framework regulating the national qualifications framework in higher education with the consultation of social partners;

b) Developing/testing/ reviewing a number of 50 qualifications in the economic, social, political sciences and engineering for bachelor and master cycles;

c) Developing customized IT supporting the development and management of the development of the National Registry of Higher Education Qualifications (RNCIS).

(d) Target groups:

(e) Status of implementation: implementation on going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved:

The implementation is carried-out by The National Agency for Higher Education Qualifications and the partnership with the socio-economical environment.

Monitoring is carried out through evaluation reports of the Council of Higher Education Qualifications, the annual reports of ACPART in accordance with the methodology of monitoring and evaluation specific to Phare 2004 and Phare 2005 and the Specific methodology specified by the HG 890/2008.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

a) The legislative act on approving the methodology of the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) is on the way of being approved by MECT and it will be subject to government inter-institutional approval.

Title of policy/ measure : Developing a strategy for lifelong learning(II 2008-IV 2008)

(a) Rationale: developing a strategy for lifelong learning.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Rendering operational the working group for drafting the Strategy of lifelong learning, under the coordination of MECT, in collaboration with social partners. The strategy will emphasize on low-skilled labour force.

Elaborating the Strategy for lifelong learning and approving it by the Government, through memorandum.

(c) Target groups: school education students

(d) Status of implementation: adopted

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved: MECT in partnership with MMFES.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

- Normative act establishing the working group;

- Strategy for lifelong learning adopted by the Romanian Government

- Reports of the working group – Educational Policies Directorate

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

Is part of a wider set of policies aiming to develop a strategy for lifelong learning.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure : Drafting and adopting the flexicurity pathway(II 2008-III 2008)

(a) **Rationale:** Identify the flexicurity pathway in order to implement the concept and principles of flexicurity in a manner adapted to the Romanian labour market specificity, in cooperation with the social partners.

(b) **Objectives/measurable targets:** Identify the flexicurity pathway in order to implement the concept and principles of flexicurity in a manner adapted to the Romanian labour market specificity, in cooperation with the social partners.

(c) **Target groups:** employees

(d) **Status of implementation:** announced.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) **Level of operation:** national level

(b) **Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?**

(c) **Key actors involved:** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, National Institute of Scientific Research in the field of Labour and Social Protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

In November 2007, the first debate on flexicurity was organised within the National Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training (part of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection). In the beginning of 2008, successive tripartite discussions were held in order to ensure the better functioning of the labour market, measures to optimise the legislation and the institutional framework were proposed and approved.

In March 2008, the National Institute of Scientific Research in the field of Labour and Social Protection organized the annual scientific session on flexicurity.

The priority policy areas in the context of applying the flexicurity principles are life long learning and active labour market policies, the social dialogue and collective bargaining being recognized as essential tools for designing and implementing the labour market reforms.


(c) **Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.**

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

One of many projects implemented by TEHNE regards lifelong learning network:

Ref. # 4	Project title		EULLEARN – The European Lifelong Learning Network					
Name of legal entity	Country	Overall project value (EUR)	Proportion carried out by legal entity (%)	No of staff provided	Name of client	Origin of funding	Dates (start/end)	Name of partners if any
 Centre for Innovation and Development in Education	Romania	P.D	100%	4	European Commission	Socrates Erasmus TN, DG EAC	2003-2006	100 partner institutions in 31 countries, coordinated by ISM University of Management and Economics, Lithuania
Detailed description of project						Type of services provided		
<p>EULLearn is a European Thematic Network under Socrates Institutional Contract, set up in response to the Commission's Communication "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality". The traditional systems must be transformed to become much more open and flexible for the learners to have individual pathways of learning that match their needs and interests, and, thus, to take the genuine advantage of equal opportunities in the course their lives.</p> <p>The Overall Objective: EULLearn aspires to identify coherent strategies and practical measures to foster university lifelong learning. It aims at more cohesive and economical use of existing instruments and resources.</p>						<p>This Thematic Network supports the exchange of good practices and experiences and the identification of common problems, ideas and priorities through the work of three Targeted Thematic Groups (EULLearn TTGs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTG A - LLL Methods and Environments, Common Core References, Lifelong Learning Materials • TTG B - National University Lifelong Learning Networks and European Co-operation • TTG C - Accreditation in LLL, Tuning, APEL and ECATS in LLL <p>More information about EULLearn Thematic Network can be found at: www.eullearn.net</p>		

3.2 Promoting geographical mobility of learners/apprentices and teachers/trainers in VET

Presently, depending on the country, between 0.5 to 1.5 % of young people in initial vocational training have a mobility experience during their vocational training courses. The general objective is to significantly increase this percentage and to achieve the outcome that a mobility period in VET becomes a norm rather than an exception.

A specific form of training within initial vocational training are apprenticeships or alternate training schemes. Apprenticeship training refers to a structured plan of learning divided between the workplace and the vocational school or training centre. They are also called “work-linked training” or “alternate vocational training schemes”, because the training alternates between school and workplace. A further characteristic of apprenticeship is the existence of a contractual relation between the workplace, i.e the enterprise, and the individual.

This form of work-based training has the advantage of having a close link to the labour market needs, but implies that mobility is often more difficult to organise.

The activities carried out under the specific budget line which was created on the initiative of MEP Mrs. Catherine Guy-Quint since 2005 had the objective to identify the obstacles and to find possible solutions to reduce these obstacles. The Conference held in Bordeaux on 27 November 2008 with the title "Apprentices: Paths of European Mobility" take stock of the outcomes of the activities and discuss how concrete implementation can be achieved. Discussion focus on the possibilities to set up sustainable support structures of quality to organise the recognition of the

mobility periods, to increase the visibility of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and last but not least on complementary funding from other sources such as the ESF, national or regional funds.

Together with Comenius (school education), Erasmus (higher education) and Grundtvig (adult education), Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) is an integral component of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, with an overarching priority to reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goals of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

The LdV programme represents the largest single source of funding for mobility in the area of vocational training, specifically in initial VET. Other sources of funding exist at national, bi-national or multinational level, but it is not possible to establish reliable statistics of their activity. The same can be said of company-funded schemes.

Not less than 60% of funding granted within the LdV programme is used to finance mobility, and more specifically the strand 'young persons in initial vocational training': However with 51 000 young people in initial training funded in 2007, the coverage of the programme remains low compared to the total number of persons in IVET (1 % on average). Nevertheless it has to be pointed out that the numbers of IVET participants in LdV mobility have steadily increased since the year 2000, mainly due to growing budgets for the programme,

The report of the high level Experts Group on Mobility, which was endorsed by the Council conclusions on Youth mobility, advocates a significant increase of learner mobility in Europe. This is an objective which will need the support of all involved: the Commission, national authorities, regional or local communities and stakeholders. Mobility in VET has an important role in this respect.

The action "Preparatory visits" is a component of Lifelong learning Program. This action confers financial aid to Romanian eligible institutions for making visits in similar institutions from any participant country to the lifelong learning program, in order to initiate future European cooperation projects within the program (2007-2013).

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training has organised various preparatory visits using different programs:

Erasmus:

- **Lifelong training - an international bridge between educational institutions and the world of work;** 7 - 10 December 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- **Intercultural Learning;** 12 - 15 November 2008, Antalya, Turkey
- **Content and Language Integrated Learning;** 10 - 14 December 2008, Palma De Mallorca, Spain

Leonardo da Vinci:

- **Engaging Ethnic Minorities in Lifelong Learning and Employment;** 01 - 04 October 2008, Chester, UK

Grundtvig:

- **Learning Partnerships Prison Education;** 03 - 07 November 2008, Lisbon, Portugal

The main measures taken to promote geographical mobility of learners/apprentices and teachers/trainers in VET are the following:

- ***The continuous training of teachers***, described in detail in section 1.2. through which 6,089 teachers from the management and control personnel in pre-university education (49% of the management personnel) and 243,527 teachers took part in training programmes (18,306 teachers in tenure and didactic degrees programmes, 19,884 teachers in regulate training programmes with 90 compulsory credits gathered at graduation, 16,831 teachers in MECT priority programmes, 188,236 teachers in continuous training programmes developed the County Teachers' Training Centres).
- ***Minimis aid Scheme "Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities' development"*** presented in section 2.1.
- ***Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes*** presented in section 2.1.
- **Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools (I 2008-IV 2008)** presented in section 2.1.

THEME 4: STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN VET AND THE LABOUR MARKET

4.1 Identifying and anticipating skill needs

It is important though to mention that Romania has taken steps so as to create at least the basis of a skills/occupational demand anticipation system. As early as 2003, the National Labour Research Institute has undertaken several enterprise investigations with the aim of early identifying the rapidly changing demand for skills. Such investigations have been repeated though with sometimes diverging objectives in 2004-05, 2006 and 2008. Moreover, in 2006 a more audacious step has been made with the enterprise investigation being doubled by an attempt to create at least in a nutshell, a system of occupational monographs. The study has been made available to the Sector Committees, functioning in an advisory position to the National Adult Training Board, now fully recognised as public tripartite bodies, entrusted with the elaboration of occupational standards.

Finally, Romania, through the National Labour Research Institute, is actively involved in the anticipation exercise currently financed by the CEDEFOP aiming to produce a mid-term (2025) forecast of the demand and supply of skills in Europe.

Several projects funded by the ESF are aiming, bettering the capacity of the Romanian relevant authorities and enterprises to chart the developments of the demand and supply of skills in what will be an ever more integrated Single Market, revolving around flexicurity and green, smart growth. As such, the SAPERE project which brings together the Romanian National Agency for Employment (NAE) and a host of Italian partners aims at bettering the capacity of the Romanian PES to anticipate changes on the labour market and thus constantly update its toolkit of active policies. The MEDIT project which brings together the NAE and the Italia LAVORO arm of the Italian Ministry of Labour attempts to find a mechanism for an improved regulation of the flow of workers between Romania and Italy,. Finally the recently started FLEXICOVERY project initiated by the National Labour Research Institute attempts to bring the core concept of flexicurity into the daily practice of Romanian enterprises.

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

- National Agency for Employment;
- Council for Occupational Standards and Certification (COSC);
- National Centre for the Development of Professional and Technical Education;
- National Centre for Leonardo da Vinci Vocational Training Programme (projects run with European partners).

At the regional level, Employment County Agencies and School Inspectorates are in charge of the elaboration of periodical studies on training needs analysis. Based on these studies and through collaboration with employers, the following are estimated:

- the school network, specialisations and profiles offered by the IVET system;
- the continuing vocational training (CVT) offer.

Among the most important measures taken to strength the links between VET and the labour market we can mentioned:

- **Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-I 2012)** - a detailed description is provided in section 3.1.
- ***Extending the exercise of firms/ simulated enterprises network***

The exercise firms (in case of pre-university education)/ simulated enterprise (in case of university education) represent a modern learning method which aims at developing pupils and students' entrepreneurial skills by simulating the internal and external processes which are being developed within a firm. The number of exercise firms increased from 117 in the 2002/2003 school year to 890 firms in the 2007/2008 school year.

In 2008, the legal framework regulating "exercise firm"/ "simulated enterprise" was improved by the endorsement of the MECT Order no 5109/2088 which regulates in an unitary manner the concept of simulated enterprise framework at superior education level. The enforcement of this order' provisions, starting with the school/ university year 2008/2009 assures a better coherence regarding the use of this learning method in primary, secondary and superior education levels. The skills obtained through "exercise firm"/ "simulated enterprise" can shorten the new employees/accommodation stage to the working place, which is to the benefit of both the future employees and employers.

- **Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees activity** presented in section 1.3.
- ***ICT in education***

The measures implemented by MECT for extending the use of ICT in education focused, during 2008, to ensure proper endowments needed in school units. Thus, by the end of third quarter of 2008, there were concluded contracts for the supply of 8,191 IT labs in primary and secondary education. At present, the labs are being installed at the beneficiary schools and the users are being trained (deadlines: IV/2008 and I/2009, respectively).

- **Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market (I 2008-IV 2008)** presented in section 1.2.

Title of policy/ measure :Development of tools and methodologies for analysing and anticipating the labour market changes(III 2008-IV 2009)

(a) Rationale: Adaptation of the training offer to the requirements of the labour market.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Adaptation of the training offer to the requirements of the labour market.

(c) Description of measure:

- Analysis of short-term deficit of labour force in the field of construction industry / adaptation of the vocational training offer to the labour market demand in this sector;

- Anticipation of labour market changes - Increasing the capacity of the Public Employment Service to anticipate short and medium term evolutions on the labour market at local, regional and national level.

- Forecasting the labour market: *Anticipating the labour market changing* project aims to develop and implement a diagnosis model for certain companies, number of jobs, job description, training needs.

(d) Target groups:

(e) Status of implementation: Implementation on-going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved: Monitoring is done on the basis of reports submitted to the Management Authority SOP HRD. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for ESF Evaluation within the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

(g) Indicators of success:

No of analysis and forecasts on labour market in the construction sector

No of employment agencies upheld;

No of instruments measuring the deficit and qualification analysis;

No of manuals/ handbooks for measuring the deficit and qualification analysis;

No of analysis and forecasts on labour market;

No of awareness campaigns co-financed.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure :Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES) (I 2007-IV 2009)

(a) **Rationale:** Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counselling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(b) **Objectives/measurable targets:** Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counselling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(c) **Description of measure:**

a) Training of the PES employees in order to be able to deliver personalised and quality employment services;

b) Specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors.

(d) **Target groups:** jobseekers, employers.

(e) **Status of implementation:** Implementation on-going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) **Level of operation:** national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) **Key actors involved:**

a) Monitoring is based on the activity reports submitted by the Public Employment Service to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

b) Monitoring is done based on the reports submitted to the Management Authority SOP HRD. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for ESF Evaluation within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) **Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:**

a) 1,082 employees were trained in the programmes organised by the PES in the first semester of 2008, and 550 employees were trained through the PES Staff Vocational Training Centre;

b) The project for the specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors (financed under ESF by

SOP HRD) is in the final contracting phase.

(h) Indicators of success:

No of staff trained;

No of persons attending study-visits;

No of studies and researches aimed at data collection on vocational training needs for SPO staff;

No of professional training strategies for its domestic personnel and training programmes, developed, and implemented;

Share of trained staff attested and certified;

Share of SPO staff attending the training courses;

Share of SPO staff that previously assessed the training needs as being adequate to the current demand for competences.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title: Anticipating/Forecasting the need for vocational education and training and skills in seven out of the eight Development Regions of ROMANIA (2003-05)

Purpose: To substantiate the Local and Regional Vocational Education and Training Plans, the frame of the Phare-VET Initiative, administrated and implemented by the Ministry of Education; The forecasting exercise has been contracted by the Ministry of Education, via competitive tender, to the National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection; The entire approach has also involved a cooperative exercise with the Local and Regional Action Groups for VET which have been constituted in the frame of the Phare-VET initiative by the Ministry of Education and which were duly incorporating the main local and regional stakeholders;

Scope (time horizon; national/regional levels; sectors/occupations; skills demand/supply...)

Beginning and end of the activity: The initial project was only aimed at regional level and given the absence from the project of the Bucharest and Ilfov region, which alone concentrates 10% of the country's population and has a large contribution to GDP formation, could not have been extended nationwide. The forecast was spanning in time up to 2010, later to be extended to 2013. Given the sparse data that were available at the time, the forecast however managed to go down not only to sector level but to branch and even to major groups of occupations, although nothing further could have been done so as to forecast the demand for vocational training and from hereon the demand for skills at the level of specific occupations. However, the project supplied enough data so as to substantiate the planning activity of the local and regional action groups for VET, which have been further integrated into the country's VET strategy as it is mentioned now into the NRP. One of the aims was also to train the members of the local and regional action groups into using the methodology and subsequently develop their own more detailed forecasts at regional and local

level, as it was supposed that they will be far more able to get accurate data disaggregated to an extent far beyond the obtained in a more nation-wide type of exercise. However, this component did not work.

Methodological approach (forecasting/foresight; focus on low/high skills, general/specific skills, labour market demand/supply...) – The idea was initially to anticipate (short and medium term) the demand for VET but it then obviously developed into forecasting the demand for skills as it was clear for everybody that nothing with regard to VET could have been done without this. Therefore, the methodological approach has developed itself into an amalgamation of two strands: (1) one that has been rooted into macro-economic modelling, using as a base a crude version of the Macbeth model and of some of the modelling techniques employed by the ROA (Netherlands) and which was supposed to give the broad trends, with the anchor variable being labour productivity, which is considered to be a function of both domestic and foreign direct investment in the economy, considered as the basic exogenous variables; (2) the second strand consist of a large scale investigation, a survey actually based on the use of a structured questionnaire, administrated to companies, on a representative sample of 2,400 companies nationwide (except for toe regions of Bucharest and Ilfov). This sample which has included only companies with more than four employees, has been complemented with a so-called additional module for the SMEs so as to enable the forecast exercise to reveal aspects that are peculiar to this type of enterprises and which has included a number of 244 SME, considered here as being those companies employing less than 10 individuals.

The entire exercise has been aiming at forecasting both supply and demand for skills, with the macro-economic strand concentrating on projecting the broad trends in relation to the demand for skills, as they would be derived from the projection of the broad macro-economic and labour market trends (three alternative scenarios have been thus developed here), while the field or enterprise investigation, so as to use the consecrated term for this type of research, aiming at the same target but in a more qualitative, detailed and nuanced way. The two strands are supposed to complement and validate each other, a fact which they actually did, with the results of the macro-economic approach being validated by the field data and vice-versa.

For the supply side, an additional module has been designed so as to forecast demographic and schooling related variables, with a breakdown on education (i.e.: vocational education and training) profiles. This module makes use of simple trend equations and heavily relies on forecasts made available by the National Commission for Prognosis as well as on population and school-age population provided by the National Institute for Statistics of Romania (NIS).

Title: Forecasting the demand for skills and national level and the elaboration of monograph occupational profiles for 150 occupations so as to highlight changes in the occupation profiles throughout the Plan to Market and EU Accession period in Romania and thus substantiate decision making process in the Ministry of Labour

Purpose: The purpose of the whole exercise which has been launched by the Ministry of Labour this time in late 2005 and which has benefited also from the co-financing of the World Bank using sums from the “Social Sector Development Loan-ROMANIA”, was to map the demand for skills at national level now and to highlight changes in the occupation profiles so as to substantiate the Ministry’s of Labour related policies as well as to produce something that would serve as methodological reference for the future, thus enabling the whole exercise to be undertaken on a rather more regular basis, with particular reference to the skills demand anticipation module; The contract has been awarded via competitive procedure to the National Scientific Research Institute in the filed of Labour and Social Protection as the only national organization having developed capacities in the field which has for this once worked in cooperation with one of Romania’s largest and best-known statistical and market investigation companies, the CURS s.a., with this latter partner concentrating mostly on the monographic occupational profiles studies;

Scope (time horizon; national/regional levels; sectors/occupations; skills demand/supply...) While the first two approaches have been rather more regional focused, this has been the single most important national approach. It has focused on two major strands. First the forecasting of the demand for skills using for that the methodology already employed in the previously presented exercise and of which the Institute is the proprietor. The supply side forecast already produced for the previous exercise was to be taken as such given the short time-span in between the two exercises and no distinct was to be produced. The forecasting interval was to be extended to 2013, taking thus into consideration the time-horizon of the National Development Plan. The enterprise survey was to be of course resumed, with further module attached to it so as to allow for the elaboration of the monograph occupational profiles. Forecasts were to be produced for branches of economic activity and major occupational groups;

Methodological approach (forecasting/foresight; focus on low/high skills, general/specific skills, labour market demand/supply...) The methodological approach already explained above has been employed, with the sole difference that it has now been employed at national level and therefore the investigation component was so designed so as to ensure national representation. The novelty were of course the 150 occupational profiles, which have been selected so as to ensure a fair mix of “breakthrough occupations”, meaning by this novel occupations that have developed and emerged on the market during the last decade or so, “occupations in transformation”, or in other words occupations that have suffered profound changes as a result of developments during the last decade or so and finally occupations that are on the verge of extinction. The exercise on occupational profiles, which has been carried out through an additional module to the survey has produced more than interesting results, being practically a one of its kind in Romania.

Other relevant information: Results of the forecasting component have been published by the Institute together with the Ministry of Labour and a national seminar has been held in Bucharest in late 2005, attended by the then Minister of Labour as well as by other officials;

Occupational profiles though have been only published in an electronic format (CD) and made available in limited number, their intended audience being the Sector Committees of the National Adult Training Board, the body that also acts as National Authority for Qualifications under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education.

Title: Joint Seminar of the CEDEFOP, the National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education of Romania (the VET Unit), on the investigation and anticipation of the demand for skills via enterprise surveys (June 2007, Bucharest)

Purpose: To raise awareness and network between experts and organizations having expertise in the specific technique of investigating demand for skills via enterprise survey; To find ways and means towards an eventual Pan-European initiative on the issue;

Scope (time horizon; national/regional levels; sectors/occupations; skills demand/supply...) The seminar lasted for one and a half day and included presentations of the various methodological approaches on use throughout the Union, experiences gained so far as well as discussions on the ways and means to go forward toward a Europe-wide methodological approach;

Methodological approach (forecasting/foresight; focus on low/high skills, general/specific skills, labour market demand/supply...) Focus on enterprise survey type methodologies, commonalities and difference at European level;

Other relevant information: The conference had a follow-up this year in may, when another seminar has been organized in cooperation with the OECD, on the same issue and having in view the Commission’s forthcoming *New Skills for New Jobs Initiative*; The National Scientific Research Institute in the field of Labour and Social Protection of Romania as co-organizer of the first meeting and as a national organization with expertise on the issue has been duly present and presented its views on the matter;

4.2 Integrating skill needs of the labour market into VET provision

Among the most important measures taken to integrate skill needs of labour market into VET provision it can be pointed out the following:

- **Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market (I 2008-IV 2008)** described in detail in section 1.2.
- **Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes** presented in section 2.1.
- **Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes** presented in section 1.3.
- **Continuous Vocational Training programs for the unemployed people (I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)** described in section 2.1.
- **Increasing the participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures (III quarter 2008-IV quarter 2009)** presented in section 2.1.

4.3 Involving labour market actors in VET

In order to involve the main labour market actors in vocational education training it can be mentioned the following measures:

- **Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees' activity** presented in section 1.3.
- **Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons** presented in section 2.1.
- **Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes** presented in section 2.1.
- **Minimis aid Scheme "Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities' development"** presented in section 2.1.
- **Improving the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement** described in section 2.1.
- **Development of Public Employment Service. Strengthening the administrative capacity at national, regional and local level**

In order to strengthen its institutional capacity, 1,082 employees of Public Employment Service attended training courses organized by National Agency for Employment. In the first half of 2008, the Training Center Rasnov organized training programmes and specialized courses, so that 550 employees from the central and local level benefited of training courses.

Public Employment Services (PES) set up 8 centres for counselling and mediation of disabled persons in order to develop the services provided to these persons. The project was extended up to

12 other counselling and mediation centres, and now they are in the final phase of equipping and furniture providing, as well as staff training. Starting from January 1st, 2009 it follows to be functional, so that PES will have a network of 20 counselling and mediation centers for disabled persons.

Strengthening PES capacity to meet the new requirements of the labour market is a major objective, particularly by providing active employment measures, especially vocational training programmes dedicated to unemployed people, also by improving PES staff competences. In this respect, 8 projects funded under the European Social Fund by HRD SOP are in the final phase of contracting. The total value of projects amounts 30.74 MEuro.

The projects envisage to:

- Increase the PES capacity to perform labour market analysis;
- Forecast the short and medium-term evolutions of the labour market at local/regional/national level;
- Promote SELF-services;
- Carry out short-term analysis of labour force shortages in the field of constructions in Bucharest-Ilfov and South-Muntenia regions;
- Increase the vocational competence level of PES staff in order to provide specialized services for jobseekers, including unemployed persons and vulnerable groups;
- Provide special training to vocational guidance counsellors;
- Develop a model of trans-national cooperation in order to support Romanian workers returning from Italy;
- Develop specific tools to increase the employment rate of rural population (awareness campaigns on the opportunities to start-up a business and to develop entrepreneurial skills).

Title of policy/ measure :Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES) (I 2007-IV 2009)

(a) Rationale: Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counselling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counselling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(c) Description of measure:

a) Training of the PES employees in order to be able to deliver personalised and quality employment services;

b) Specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors.

(d) Target groups: jobseekers, employers.

(e) Status of implementation: Implementation on-going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved:

a) Monitoring is based on the activity reports submitted by the Public Employment Service to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

b) Monitoring is done based on the reports submitted to the Management Authority SOP HRD. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for ESF Evaluation within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

a) 1,082 employees were trained in the programmes organised by the PES in the first semester of 2008, and 550 employees were trained through the PES Staff Vocational Training Centre;

b) The project for the specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors (financed under ESF by SOP HRD) is in the final contracting phase.

(i) Indicators of success:

No of staff trained;

No of persons attending study-visits;

No of studies and researches aimed at data collection on vocational training needs for SPO staff;

No of professional training strategies for its domestic personnel and training programmes, developed, and implemented;

Share of trained staff attested and certified;

Share of SPO staff attending the training courses;

Share of SPO staff that previously assessed the training needs as being adequate to the current demand for competences.

- (c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

- **Providing clients tailored employment measures** presented in section 1.3.
- **Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-I 2012)** - a detailed description is provided in section 3.1.

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training (ANPCDEFP) has organised various preparatory visits using different programs:

Comenius:

- **Contact Seminar for School Partnerships involving pupils with disabilities;** 25 - 28 September 2008, Mayschoss, Germany
- **The discovery of the professional world : a tool for pupil's guidance;** 12 - 16 November 2008, Bordeaux, France
- **Partnerships for the development of the sustainable school;** 25 - 28 2008, November Athens, Greece
- **Regional Partnerships;** 28 - 31 October 2007, Sandanski, Bulgaria

Leonardo da Vinci:

- **Vet Schools- Smes Partnerships With The Aim To Facilitate The Young People's Insertion In The Labour Market;** 24 - 28 September 2008, Sinaia, Romania
- **Bridge between VET and SME's;** 16 - 20 September 2008, Priekuli, Latvia and Estonia

4.4 Promoting workplace learning

In order to promote workplace learning the main measures are considered:

- **Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate** presented in section 1.3.
- **Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees' activity** presented in section 1.3.
- **Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons** presented in section 2.1.
- **Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes** presented in section 2.1.
- **Improving the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement** described in section 2.1.
- **Money for business-the last chance**


The Romanian companies must take advantage of the last chance that they have it in this year to access unrefundable funds for the training of their own employees. Starting with 4 February 2010, Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACSI) has published the informative schedule of projects launching at the level of all operational programs for the year 2010.

According to this schedule, in the year 2010 it will not launch anymore any financing line devoted to companies. Therefore, state aid schemes and minimis aid schemes launched in 2009 are the last chance on which the companies can take advantage in order to access unrefundable funds in human resources field.

Within this scheme, have been developed more than 40 projects for small and medium enterprises and large companies. From these, more the 25 have been evaluated and approved, receiving an unrefundable European financing of about 4.5 Meuro.

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training (ANPCDEFP) has organised a preparatory visit under the Leonardo da Vinci program intituled "**Learning at the workplace**" 15 - 17 October 2008, Bonn, Germany.

The TEHNE institution carried out the following project in the period 2006-2009:

Ref. # 13		Project title				Elearning.Romania		
Name of legal entity	Country	Overall project value (EUR)	Proportion carried out by legal entity (%)	No of staff provided	Name of client	Origin of funding	Dates (start/end)	Name of partners if any
 Centre for Innovation and Development in Education	Romania	P.D	100%	14	N/A	TEHNE – Centre for Innovation and Development in Education	2006-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bucharest • National Foundation for Community Development • AIFACTOR
Detailed description of project						Type of services provided		
<p>The Elearning.Romania project is focused on presenting an overall picture of the current state-of-the-art of in the usage and penetration of ICT in the education system in Romania. In portraying the picture, specific efforts are paid not only in verifying the existing situation/scenario but also in identifying the expectations, prerequisites and needs of the education system actors and beneficiaries as well as values, concerns, fears and tensions which are influencing the real innovation and development process.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to promote and support innovative practices in education through the development of a significant opinion stream, common for all the main stakeholders' representatives in the field of Computer-Assisted Instruction.</p> <p>This aim is operationalised through the two main objectives: organisation of a national conference and publication of a significant yearly monograph on elearning and ICT in education.</p>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly workshops on Elearning and Computer-Assisted Instruction • Publishing periodical issues on Elearning in Romania • Disseminating reports, relevant projects' outputs, announcements, publications on Elearning 		

THEME 5: ADDRESSING EQUITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

5.1 Addressing equity in VET

“Educational equity is the outcome of fundamental education laws and policies, guaranteeing a fair treatment and access to resources and programs for all students, as well as outreach for parental involvement”. (Washington State Human Rights Commission).

The standards system for educational equity comprises: the political frame, the educational environment, the pre-service and in-service teachers’ training, the teaching and assessment practices, the evaluation of personnel and curricular materials, the individualized educational planning, the allocation of financial resources, the standard based educational reform.

In Romania, education is national priority. Romanian citizen have equal access rights to all educational levels and forms, regardless their social or material condition, sex, race, nationality, political or religious beliefs. (1995, 2005 Public Education Act).

The Romanian educational system focuses following main aspects: creating a national well-balanced educational net, changing the institutional bodies for the initial and further vocational training, decentralizing the system of managing and funding the public education, assuring education quality, implementing the governmental social programs as well as its strategy for rural education.

Human resources for education are trained in public or private universities (4 – 6 years studies) and their compulsory continuous training takes place every 5 years, or on demand. There are 61 accredited teacher training providers.

Romanian curricular policies and education contents aim to focus on students’ needs, to ensure the consistency of the curriculum with the society and labour market needs, to develop key competencies (set up by Lisbon Process - 2000), to harmonize Romanian and international education standards, to ensure the social relevance of the teaching-learning process. The frame for the national curriculum comprises: the compulsory core curriculum, the compulsory, but differentiated curriculum, according to profiles and specializations, as well as the individualized school-based curriculum.

The Ministry of Education promotes active classroom practices, the implementation of a contextualized curriculum, the development of an authenticable students’ organizational culture, competence-based assessment practices and the real commitment in the counselling activity.

School personnel were usually evaluated on national specific standards, agreed with the representative trade unions. Romania recently adopted the Law on Quality, focused on the internal and external evaluation process at all levels, according to the reference standards.

Ethnic minorities, students with special educational needs or disadvantaged groups benefit of individualized educational conditions: education in mother’s language, appropriate educational services and special national programs.

Since 2004, Romania is implementing the education decentralization process, meaning: the decentralizing of funds allocation, of the planning process and of the budget execution. Romanian Government is financing social programs and co-financing international programs. Social programs: Students’ Transport, School Furniture and Teaching Material, School Supplies,

food Supplement, EUR 200, Informatics Educational System. Beneficiary: about 25% of school population. International programs: PHARE TVET (2001 - 2006), project for rural Education (2003 - 2009), Rehabilitation of School Buildings (2000 - 2009), Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups (2004 - 2006), Education for Information in Rural Deprived Area (2002 – 2007).

In concordance with the European criteria, Romania set up specific evaluation standards, for the educational system, for the educational process and for the educational units. The National System of Education Indicators is compatible with all European indicators: expenditure for education, human resources, participation in education, internal efficiency of the system, students' results and the results of education on labour market.

Romanian Education Ministry considers that a real reform of the education system is possible with the essential support of the economic frame.

The main measures taken are:

- **Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES)**

In order to strengthen its institutional capacity, 1,082 employees of Public Employment Service attended training courses organized by National Agency for Employment. In the first half of 2008, the Training Center Rasnov organized training programmes and specialized courses, so that 550 employees from the central and local level benefited of training courses.

Public Employment Services (PES) set up 8 centers for counselling and mediation of disabled persons in order to develop the services provided to these persons. The project was extended up to 12 other counselling and mediation centers, and now they are in the final phase of equipping and furniture providing, as well as staff training. Starting from January 1st, 2009 it follows to be functional, so that PES will have a network of 20 counselling and mediation centers for disabled persons.

Strengthening PES capacity to meet the new requirements of the labour market is a major objective, particularly by providing active employment measures, especially vocational training programmes dedicated to unemployed people, also by improving PES staff competences. In this respect, 8 projects funded under the European Social Fund by HRD SOP are in the final phase of contracting. The total value of projects amounts 30.74 MEuro.

The projects envisage to:

- Increase the PES capacity to perform labour market analysis;
 - Forecast the short and medium-term evolutions of the labour market at local/regional/national level;
 - Promote SELF-services;
 - Carry out short-term analysis of labour force shortages in the field of constructions in Bucharest-Ilfov and South-Muntenia regions;
 - Increase the vocational competence level of PES staff in order to provide specialized services for jobseekers, including unemployed persons and vulnerable groups;
 - Provide special training to vocational guidance counsellors;
 - Develop a model of trans-national cooperation in order to support Romanian workers returning from Italy;
 - Develop specific tools to increase the employment rate of rural population (awareness campaigns on the opportunities to start-up a business and to develop entrepreneurial skills).
- **Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate** presented in section 1.3.
 - **Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees' activity** presented in section 1.3.
 - **Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes** presented in section 1.3.
 - **Providing clients tailored employment measures** described in section 1.3.
 - **Ensuring the access to education for disadvantaged groups (I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)** presented in section 2.1.
 - **Special measures to activating social vulnerable groups and persons in rural areas** presented in section 1.3.
 - **Ensuring equal access to education and early school leaving prevention**

Early school leaving (ESL) negatively affects the early school leavers' employability, their participation to the labour market and their lifelong learning options. The disadvantaged groups (Roma, rural and poor communities) are the most exposed ones to ESL phenomena. In order to address this issue, specific measures have been taken and implemented in rural and disadvantaged areas targeting both security in exploiting school infrastructure, improving school comfort, hygienic and sanitary conditions and the elimination of educational disadvantages existing for the students enrolled in the above mentioned schools.

With respect to this aim, MECT developed specific programs and projects targeting:

- Disadvantaged target groups (including Roma community) with the aim of ensuring equal access to education (measures of access to education) and correcting/reducing negative effects associated to ESL and school drop outs ("second chance education" type programmes);
- Education levels with most significant impact on long term prevention and reducing of the school drop out rate and early school leaving – ESL (most actions focused on early education);

- Ensuring proper learning conditions (e.g. actions in the field of rehabilitation and modernization of educational infrastructure);
- Drafting and implementing, within a coherent and systematic framework of the annual action plans for ESL prevention and combating.

The implementation of actions undertaken within Phare 2004 Programme “*Access to education for disadvantaged groups*” ended in 2007 but the good practices continued and mainstreamed in 2008, through the Phare 2005 Grant Scheme “*Access to education for disadvantaged groups*”. Phare 2005 programme provides support for the implementation of the County School Inspectorates’ educational strategies for improving the condition of the Roma community and for the “second chance” type programmes in primary and lower secondary education. The Phare 2005 programme targets consist in: a 15% diminution of the school drop out in compulsory education; a 10% increase of the access to upper secondary education for students from disadvantaged groups; a 15% increase of the integration rate of the pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the mainstream education; a 20% increase of the reintegration rate of early school leavers in the compulsory education etc.

The Phare 2005 Programme implementation is on-going since 2007 while its actions have been implemented in 34 counties (19 counties selected for participation in Phare 2005 “*Access to education for disadvantaged groups*”, to which 15 counties previously selected in Phare 2003 program were added); it is expected that the Phare 2005 programme to be fully implemented by the end of 2008. The actions undertaken during the reporting period targeted the following: programmes for remedial education and improving access to education, programmes for distance learning for young people from Roma communities who intend to become tutors, programmes for teachers’ training in selected education units, programmes for training school mediators, etc. The evaluation and monitoring report for Phare 2005 “*Access to education for disadvantaged groups*” will be presented to the public in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The goal of facilitating the access to **education for the children from Roma communities** was also supported *by the actions/programs for training teachers, methodology-specialized teachers (for Romany language) as well as for school mediators*. During the first three quarters of 2008, a number of 1,050 teachers were included and trained in training programmes, against the envisaged target of 2,000 persons estimated to be trained by the end of this year.

Also, in 2008, there were organised over 280 **summer kindergartens** which aimed to contribute to an increase access to education for Roma children and preparing them for enrolment to primary education (first grade) and to extend the training facilities available for the Roma pre-school children who did not attend the early education within summer kindergartens; over 5,400 Roma children took benefits from this measure. The summer kindergartens initiative will be continued by the project “*Toți la grădiniță, toți în clasa I*” (“*All enrolled kindergarten, all enrolled in first grade*”) funded by ESF. Besides this programme, MECT also implemented actions for correcting ESL/school drop out through the “*Second chance education*” programme which offered to the target group the opportunity to graduate compulsory education and to obtaining professional/vocational qualification of first level. At present, the “*Second chance education*” programme, comprising 2 components (for primary education and for lower secondary education), is implemented in 216 schools from 27 counties for over 10,000 trainees.

For ensuring social protection to all pupils, in particular for students from rural areas, MECT initiated 2 projects, funded through ESF, namely: “*Promoting the extra-curricular and extra-school inclusive educational offer on a healthy lifestyle and active citizenship for the children coming from disadvantaged (mainly rural) communities in the primary and secondary education in Romania*”

and “*The second chance in education*” project. These projects include actions for employing young persons from Roma community (as non-qualified teachers and/or under qualification teachers) for teaching additional Romany curriculum (Romany language and/or Roma history and traditions, up to 3-4 teaching hours/week).

The development of **early education** contributes to the diminution of educational gap for disadvantaged groups, to the creation of specific conditions to increase access to education and to cut ESL rate. Thus, in 2008, the implementation of the two projects - “*Reform of early education*” and “*Inclusive early education*” - previously announced by MECT (2007), has started. **Progress made in 2008** consisted in: development of the early education curriculum for children of 0-6/7 years and the initiation of the procedures for its approval by MECT Order, aiming to support its implementing in the education system starting with the year 2009; development of the curriculum and the training modules for the human resources employed in early education, for parents and school mentors, all addressing the system weaknesses related to lack of qualified personnel in early education and of a relevant curriculum adapted to the early education development needs, completed with the need for early education reform as a measure meant to contribute to the development of qualified personnel. The activities and outputs of the two projects are fully correlated: thus, the training of the personnel in the “*Reform of early education*” project also includes modules for curricular empowerment of the teaching personnel in order to fully support the implementation of the early education curriculum, developed under the “*Inclusive early education*” project. In addition, progress was made as a number of 124 persons from kindergartens and County School Inspectorates staff management were trained for developing institutional capacity of these institutions to draft projects in order to access structural funds to support early education development.

With the purpose to ensure proper learning conditions and access to education, during 2008, a set of specific projects and programs targeting the **school infrastructure and facilities’ rehabilitation, modernization and equipping**, in particular in rural and disadvantaged areas, were developed.

To this end, in the case of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the implementation of the *TVET 2004-2006 Phare programme* has continued. In 2008, under the component for the rehabilitation of TVET infrastructure and equipping, there checked in and signed for the following works: 36 school units from rural areas were rehabilitated (out of the total objective of 43 school units); rehabilitation/ construction of school workshops in 2 schools units were executed; the first stage of equipping the 4 units with maintenance and fixing equipment in the automotive field was finalized; 11 lots with basic equipment for 150 units, out of which 50 units in the rural areas, were contracted, while the delivery and personnel training is expected to be completed by the end of October 2008. Under the same programme, rehabilitation and equipping works for TVET school units from urban areas were performed (e.g. 87 TVET schools rehabilitated).

In case of the *rehabilitation of the school infrastructure programme* (PRIS) previously initiated by MECT, with external loans and Romanian Government funding, the progress made in 2008 consisted of: 156 school units rehabilitated and equipped with furniture; for another 137 units, the rehabilitation and their endowment with furniture equipment will be finalized by the end of 2008.

MDLPL through the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) is sustaining the efforts of the MECT in order to rehabilitate the infrastructure and to improve the schools’ endowment in rural and disadvantaged areas. Local authorities from rural areas can also apply for the financing of such projects. The total value of all primary and secondary educational infrastructure projects in rural, disadvantaged and urban areas is estimated at 36.45 MEuro, out of which 27.47 MEuro from the

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Taking into account the fact that this intervention field of the ROP covers both the urban and the rural environment, it is estimated that about 8-10% of this value will be represented by projects coming from the rural and disadvantaged areas. The call for proposal for this field of intervention was launched on the 28th February 2008. Up to the present moment, a number of 24 projects were submitted, out of which 4 are situated in the rural area, amounting to a total value of 2.9 MEuro, out of which 2.4 MEuro of the ERDF. These projects are at different evaluation stages. In the case of these projects we estimate that, by the end of 2009, there will be made payments amounting to 0.8 MEuro.

The drafting and implementing, in a consistent and systematic manner, of the Annual Action Plans for preventing and correcting school drop out/ESL are needed since ESL rate (in the case of 18-24 aged young students) in Romania continues to remain high as compared to other EU Member States. In 2007, the ESL rate was 19.2% unlike other MS where the indicator was lower: Slovenia - 4.3%, Poland - 5.0%, Czech Republic - 5.5%, EU-27 - 14.8%. Moreover, the drop out rate (calculated on the basis of "input-output" method), has increased in 2007, in case of the primary and lower secondary education, as a whole, and for each level as well. Consequently the indicator increased over 3 times for I-VIII grade (from 0.6% in 2000/2001 to 2.0% in 2007/2008), by 3 times in primary education (from 0.6% in 2000/2001 to 1.7% in 2007/2008) and 4 times in lower secondary education from (0.6% in 2000/2001 to 2.3% in 2007/2008). The ascending trend of the school drop-out rate by age, and in particular of the school drop out during the reference period (2000/2001 - 2007/2008), might be determined, additional to individual, family and school factors, by the magnitude of the labour force migration (children follow their parents who work abroad and even if they continues to study abroad, they are no longer included in Romanian statistics on education).

The main conclusions of the studies on ESL, school drop outs as well as the causes which generate this phenomenon are synthesized in a special section of the Report "*The State of Education 2008*" which will be presented in the fourth quarter of this year. Based on these conclusions, the *Annual Action Plan* is currently elaborated by a group of experts of MECT and by the Science of Education Institute, under the coordination of MECT specialised departments.

2. Title of policy/ measure: Drafting and implementing the Annual Action Plan for preventing early school leaving. Ensuring equal access to education and early school leaving prevention

(II quarter 2008-IV quarter 2009)

(a) **Rationale:** Identifying the causes (social, educational) which lead to early school leaving and planning the solutions to fight against this phenomenon.

(b) **Objectives/measurable targets:**

- Disadvantaged target groups (including Roma community) with the aim of ensuring equal access to education (measures of access to education) and correcting/reducing negative effects associated to ESL and school drop outs ("second chance education" type programmes);
- Education levels with most significant impact on long term prevention and reducing of the school drop out rate and early school leaving – ESL (most actions focused on early education);
- Ensuring proper learning conditions (e.g. actions in the field of rehabilitation and modernization of educational infrastructure);

- Drafting and implementing, within a coherent and systematic framework of the annual action plans for ESL prevention and combating.

(c) Description of measure:

1) Reviewing, upgrading, extending and integrating the studies/research studies carried-out so far (break down by level of education and target groups) for identifying the causes (social, educational) underpinning of early school leaving.

2) Elaborating Annual Action Plan to reduce the phenomenon of early school leaving in 2008-2009 school year with the consultation of social partners. The Plan will include specific targets (rural and urban area) for early school leaving.

(d) Target groups (young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, people with migrant background and ethnic minorities, young people from Roma communities, people with low skill levels).

(e) Status of implementation: in implementation.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(d) Key actors involved:

Monitoring is carried out based on the reports from the groups of experts involved in drafting the study and of the annual reports monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan drafted by MECT.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

1) The conclusions of the studies on early school leaving and the causes which generate this phenomenon are synthesized in a special section of the Report "The Status of Education 2008" which will be presented in the fourth quarter this year;

2) The Annual Action Plan is currently being elaborated by a group of experts of MECT and by the Science of Education Institute, under the coordination of MECT specialised departments.

(b) Indicators of success: Study published; Annual Action Plan adopted.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

- **Providing an easy transition of young people from school to labour market**

In the second quarter of 2008, the youth unemployment rate was 17.4%, and the youth employment rate was 25.9%.

In the first half of 2008, 74,666 youths were included in programmes of active measures, while the number of employed people was 47,268. By the end of the first semester of 2008, the number of unemployed people under the age of 25 attending vocational training programmes was 4514.

ANOFM implements the programme - *From school, to professional life, towards career*, which addressed the future graduates of pre-university education. In the first semester of 2008, 1,392 awareness and counselling sessions were carried out for students in pre-university education (students in terminal grades), when compared to 1,782 sessions held throughout the year 2007.

Also we can mention here as measure “the increase of the participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures (QIII 2008-QIV2009) presented in section 2.1.

- **Measures to attract the Romanian citizens working abroad** described in section 1.3.

5.2 Support services for groups at risk

Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES)

In order to strengthen its institutional capacity, 1,082 employees of Public Employment Service attended training courses organized by National Agency for Employment. In the first half of 2008, the Training Center Rasnov organized training programmes and specialized courses, so that 550 employees from the central and local level benefited of training courses.

Public Employment Services (PES) set up 8 centers for counselling and mediation of disabled persons in order to develop the services provided to these persons. The project was extended up to 12 other counselling and mediation centers, and now they are in the final phase of equipping and furniture providing, as well as staff training. Starting from January 1st, 2009 it follows to be functional, so that PES will have a network of 20 counselling and mediation centers for disabled persons.

Strengthening PES capacity to meet the new requirements of the labour market is a major objective, particularly by providing active employment measures, especially vocational training programmes dedicated to unemployed people, also by improving PES staff competences. In this respect, 8 projects funded under the European Social Fund by HRD SOP are in the final phase of contracting. The total value of projects amounts 30.74 MEuro.

The projects envisage to:

- Increase the PES capacity to perform labour market analysis;
- Forecast the short and medium-term evolutions of the labour market at local/regional/national level;
- Promote SELF-services;
- Carry out short-term analysis of labour force shortages in the field of constructions in Bucharest-Ilfov and South-Muntenia regions;
- Increase the vocational competence level of PES staff in order to provide specialized services for jobseekers, including unemployed persons and vulnerable groups;
- Provide special training to vocational guidance counsellors;
- Develop a model of trans-national cooperation in order to support Romanian workers returning from Italy;
- Develop specific tools to increase the employment rate of rural population (awareness campaigns on the opportunities to start-up a business and to develop entrepreneurial skills).

Title of policy/ measure :Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES) (I 2007-IV 2009)

(a) Rationale: Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counseling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Improving PES capacity to provide employment services, counselling and vocational training to meet the needs of jobseekers (including persons belonging to vulnerable social groups) and the demands from employers.

(c) Description of measure:

a) Training of the PES employees in order to be able to deliver personalised and quality employment services;

b) Specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors.

(d) Target groups: jobseekers, employers.

(e) Status of implementation: Implementation on-going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(c) Key actors involved:

a) Monitoring is based on the activity reports submitted by the Public Employment Service to the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for Labour Force Strategies and Programme within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

b) Monitoring is done based on the reports submitted to the Management Authority SOP HRD. The evaluation is carried out by the Directorate for ESF Evaluation within Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

a) 1,082 employees were trained in the programmes organised by the PES in the first semester of 2008, and 550 employees were trained through the PES Staff Vocational Training Centre;

b) The project for the specialization of the vocational guidance counsellors (financed under ESF by SOP HRD) is in the final contracting phase.

(j) Indicators of success:

No of staff trained;

No of persons attending study-visits;

No of studies and researches aimed at data collection on vocational training needs for SPO staff;

No of professional training strategies for its domestic personnel and training programmes, developed, and implemented;

Share of trained staff attested and certified;

Share of SPO staff attending the training courses;

Share of SPO staff that previously assessed the training needs as being adequate to the current demand for competences.

- (c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

- (a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.
- (b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

- **Providing clients tailored employment measures** described in section 1.3.
- **Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes** presented in section 1.3.
- **Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate** presented in section 1.3.
- **Special measures to activating social vulnerable groups and persons in rural areas** presented in section 1.3.
- **Ensuring the access to education for disadvantaged groups (I quarter 2008-IV quarter 2008)** presented in section 2.1.
- **Initiatives for social inclusion of Roma people**

During the reporting period, special actions aimed at Roma employment were taken; (Caravan of employment, job fairs, Special programme for communities with large numbers of ethnic Roma), focusing on professional reintegration of Roma individuals.

In the first half of 2008, the results were the following:

- 3,351 persons were employed, while emphasis was put on client-tailored actions to stimulate employment;
- Within the *Caravan of employment* project, developed in towns with significant Roma communities, 17,257 people of Roma ethnic participated, out of which 7,633 were women; 10,549 persons were counselled; 5,470 persons were included in unemployment database, out of which 2,394 were women, and 1,317 people were employed, out of which 463 were women;
- Following the *job fairs* dedicated to Roma persons:
 - job markets were organized in 73 towns of 37 counties;

- 650 companies participated, out of which 18 with Roma ethnic managers and 22 insertion employers;
- 9,487 jobs were offered;
- 4,262 persons of Roma ethnics participated;
- 244 of Roma ethnics were employed;
- main branches of activity related to jobs in which Roma ethnics were employed are: public administration and defence, social insurance in the public domain - 86 persons, constructions - 42 persons, agriculture, hunting and related services - 23 persons, clothing manufacturing -13 persons, food industry - 13 persons, civil engineering works – 7 persons.

5.3 Active citizenship

- **Ensuring equal access to education and early school leaving prevention** presented in section 5.1.

2. Title of policy/ measure: Drafting and implementing the Annual Action Plan for preventing early school leaving. Ensuring equal access to education and early school leaving prevention

(II quarter 2008-IV quarter 2009)

(a) **Rationale:** Identifying the causes (social, educational) which lead to early school leaving and planning the solutions to fight against this phenomenon.

(b) **Objectives/measurable targets:**

- Disadvantaged target groups (including Roma community) with the aim of ensuring equal access to education (measures of access to education) and correcting/reducing negative effects associated to ESL and school drop outs (“second chance education” type programmes);
- Education levels with most significant impact on long term prevention and reducing of the school drop out rate and early school leaving – ESL (most actions focused on early education);
- Ensuring proper learning conditions (e.g. actions in the field of rehabilitation and modernization of educational infrastructure);
- Drafting and implementing, within a coherent and systematic framework of the annual action plans for ESL prevention and combating.

(c) **Description of measure:**

1) Reviewing, upgrading, extending and integrating the studies/research studies carried-out so far (break down by level of education and target groups) for identifying the causes (social, educational) underpinning of early school leaving.

2) Elaborating Annual Action Plan to reduce the phenomenon of early school leaving in 2008-2009 school year with the consultation of social partners. The Plan will include specific targets (rural and urban area) for early school leaving.

(d) **Target groups** (young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, people with

migrant background and ethnic minorities, young people from Roma communities, people with low skill levels).

(e) Status of implementation: in implementation.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach?

(k) Key actors involved:

Monitoring is carried out based on the reports from the groups of experts involved in drafting the study and of the annual reports monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan drafted by MECT.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

1) The conclusions of the studies on early school leaving and the causes which generate this phenomenon are synthesized in a special section of the Report “The Status of Education 2008” which will be presented in the fourth quarter this year;

2) The Annual Action Plan is currently being elaborated by a group of experts of MECT and by the Science of Education Institute, under the coordination of MECT specialised departments.

(b) Indicators of success: Study published; Annual Action Plan adopted.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.


(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

- **The continuous training of teachers** described in detail in section 1.2.

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training (ANPCDEFP) has organised a preparatory visit under the Leonardo da Vinci program intituled “**Active citizenship: learn, feel and act**” 08 - 12 October 2008, Vilnius, Lithuania.

One of the many projects of TEHNE is intutuled: Take Part too- Active Global citizenship.TEHNE - Centre for Development and Innovation in Education is a non-profit organization, aiming to support educational initiatives through projects and programs covering areas of non-formal education, curriculum development, education for democratic citizenship, education through ICTs, elearning, lifelong learning, and in-service teacher training.

Ref. # 2	Project title		Take Part Too - Active Global Citizenship					
Name of legal entity	Country	Overall project value (EUR)	Proportion carried out by legal entity (%)	No of staff provided	Name of client	Origin of funding	Dates (start/end)	Name of partners if any
 Centre for Innovation and Development in Education	Romania, UK, Denmark	P.D	16%	11	European Commission	Socrates Minerva, DG EAC	2005-2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Education Centre (UK) • Intuitive Media UK • The National Innovative Centre of General Education (DK) • The Institute for Education Sciences (RO) • Story Factory (DK) • The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DK)
Detailed description of project						Type of services provided		

The main aim of the TPT project is to empower young people from different European countries to play an active and responsible role as democratic European citizens in the rapidly changing context of our modern learning societies.

This aim is supported by the following objectives:

- To provide young people the opportunity to take active and responsible roles in our multicultural societies by creating an ICT based platform for collaboration, exchanging opinions and decision-making on local and global issues.
- To encourage young people from 14 to 18 years old to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need as adult members of our global and multicultural society.
- To promote democratic processes and positive attitudes toward cultural, social, ethnic and religious diversity by using simulation activities on topics such as human rights, poverty, gender, migration, inclusion, sustainable development and conflict resolution.
- To provide an efficient computer mediated tool for teachers of 14-18 years old learners involved in the project, for complementing their activities in the field of citizenship education and across the curriculum.
- To explore the possibilities and limitations of ICT in relation to inclusion and the development of democracy and active global citizenship.

The virtual context provided by the platform developed within the project has an impact on enhancing the opportunities for 14 to 18 year old learners to exercise their global citizenship. The young people in the project will look together at ways of defining issues and problems that Europe is facing today, as well as working together to find out the best solutions offered by the democratic process. The simulation activities that are run through the Internet within the project will enrich teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. That helps them in using innovative strategies to meet the common intended goals in education for global citizenship. The content of the simulation activities stimulates cross-curricular approaches, using and complementing the resources offered by other areas of study, and calls for close cooperation between teachers as well as pupils.

Take Part Too is a web based simulation game that combines facts and fiction off-line and on-line. It provides a proactive way of using knowledge. It consists of a universe of three existing countries and a 'fictional' or virtual Youth Council. The Youth Council consists of all the participants from the three classes. A number of parallel games can take place at the same time. It is possible for the players in one game to follow the proceedings in other games.

THEME 6: QUALITY, EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

6.1 Improving the quality of VET

“Romania is building a culture of quality assurance in institutions through supporting IVET school networks.”

The quality of technical vocational education and training (TVET), in the Romanian education system, is defined as the totality of characteristics of a learning programme and of its provider, through which the expectations of the beneficiaries and the quality standards are met (QA in education Law).

Law No 375/2002 introduces the European system of transferable credits. The law also stipulates the conditions for accrediting CVT programmes, based on minimum quality standards for training provisions.

The measures taken at European level in this field have inspired the developments in Romania, determining in 2003 the experimental implementation of new QA elements at provider level, the school unit.

In Romania, the general framework for quality assurance in education, applicable for all levels of preuniversity (including TVET) and higher education is set up by the Quality Assurance (QA) in Education Law (2006). The National Quality Assurance Framework in TVET fully complies with the provisions of the QA in Education Law and with the methodologies and instruments developed by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP), adding the specific requirements of initial vocational training.

The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardized arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

The IVET sector in Romania is slowly developing a “culture of change” as it moves from an extremely centralized to a de-centralized system based on self evaluation and responsibility for quality assurance. The quality assurance framework sets out national expectations, and requiring training providers to be accountable through their annual self-assessment process and report is part of this process of decentralization.

In the majority of VET schools quality assurance processes have begun to be implemented. This has been supported through the appointment of quality assurance commissioners who have worked with school management teams to involve all staff in the development of the quality assurance system. Developing the culture of quality assurance takes time, and encouraging schools to be more open to the needs of earners, employers and communities requires sustained support and commitment at the system level.

One way of supporting this changing culture has been the promotion and support of IVET school networks. At present, all IVET schools are associated with a network which supports cooperative activities in relation to monitoring, collecting evidence, staff training, peer learning and peer review activities. The process has progressively expanded to cover:

- in 2004, 122 IVET schools assisted by an EU – funded project;
- In 2005, the networks extended to cover 150 rural schools in a Phare TVET project;

In 2006, all (1376) TVET schools were part of an assisted schools network.

The National Centre for TVET Development (CNDIPT) ensures the particularization of the national framework to the specific requirements of the TVET system and assists the TVET providers and the school inspectorates in the institutional building process.

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP) coordinates the following processes:

- Authorization and accreditation - certifying that a TVET provider and its training programmes have met predetermined standards. Accreditation is compulsory for each training programme, on the basis of the QA in Education Law. Accreditation is granted by order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, based on the approval of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, by complying with the accreditation procedure of the QA in Education Law.

Accreditation requires going through two successive stages:

- *provisional authorization*, that grants the right to carry out the education process and to organize the admission to education and training programmes, as the case may be;
- *accreditation*, that also grants the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research, and to organize graduation / certification exams.
 - external evaluation of TVET providers' and programmes' quality - the multi-criteria examination of the extent to which a TVET provider and its programmes meet the quality standards; it is carried out by independent experts, under the coordination of ARACIP, every 5 years.

The National Group for Quality Assurance, 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.

The National Group for Quality Assurance (GNAC) is an inter-institutional coordination structure with the role of applying in a coherent way the European and national measures for quality assurance in vocational education and training. The National Group for Quality Assurance includes experts of national institutions who have certain attributions regarding QA for initial and continuing VET: *the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, the Romanian Agency for QA in Pre-university Education, the National Adult Training Board, the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development, the National Centre for Staff Training in Pre – university Education.*

In the field of quality assurance, the National Council of Adult Vocational Training have organised several regional seminars:

- The European Framework of quality assurance in the field of education and vocational training.
- Quality assurance in continuous vocational training.

- For a better school!
- The quality assurance methodology in technical and vocational training- auto evaluation.
- Also the project PROQAVET has as purpose developing a collection of 24 good practices of applying CQAF and who are already successfully implemented in 4 countries of EU (Austria, Romania, Finland, Greece) and who can constituted a model for VET providers.

A proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQARF) was adopted by the Commission on 9 April 2008. It is designed to support Member States in promoting and monitoring quality improvement in VET at different levels. It provides a common basis for further development of quality principles, reference criteria and indicators.

EQARF (established on 18 June 2009) makes special reference to the participation in VET by disadvantaged groups. The participation rate of such groups has a prominent place in two of the ten 'Indicators' selected in the Framework for assessing quality in VET. The purpose of this part of the policy is to 'target support to increase access to VET for disadvantaged groups' and to 'support adapted training provision' for such groups. Disabled people are specifically mentioned among the examples of types of disadvantage.

Romanian institutional and legislative progresses in the field of Quality Assurance in VET

- 2004- Prime minister decision to nominate the National Qualifications Authority
- 2005-Establishing the first sectoral committees
- 2005-Establishing ARACIP
- 2006-Law of Quality in Education
- 2006-The adoption of National Qualifications Framework
- 2006-The foundation of GNAC-Quality Assurance National Group
- 2007-Project – Change of law package regarding adult vocational training, related to CQAF and EQF

Assuring quality in education and enhancing the relevance of education and initial vocational training to meet labour market requirements

Under this priority, in 2008, the actions undertaken by MECT aimed to:

- ❖ accelerate the implementing of the measures to increase the relevance of the university education to the labour market requirements, as part of the Bologna process' implementation;
- ❖ Increase the capacity of TVET to respond/ adapt to the labour market requirements;
 - Improve the teachers and trainers' qualifications;
 - Extend the use of ICT in education.

With respect to the increase of the relevance of university education to the labour market needs, the goal set up by MECT – to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in higher education by the end of 2010 – represents a reform measure contributing to the increase universities capacity to deliver qualifications in line with the needs of the labour market and knowledge based society.

With respect to the development of the legal framework regulating the implementing of the NQF in higher education, following the debates with relevant partners, the legal proposal on the approval of the methodology for developing NQF in higher education was drafted in 2008. This legal act will represent the core legislation for implementing NQF in education in line with the

Bologna Process and EQF requirements. A number of 33 university qualifications were, thus, developed: 16 university qualifications were validated in 2007 through Phare TVET 2004 and 17 qualifications are on the way of being finalized and validated through Phare TVET 2005 (deadline: 30th of October 2008). These qualifications represent an experimental basis for the validation of the NQF in higher education methodology; they will be integrated later in NQF in higher education.

Progress was made in implementing the Bologna process, in the sense of the adoption and enforcing of GD no 890/2008 on the qualifications and titles awarded to bachelor graduates registered in the first university year in 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008; this legislative act regulates the titles awarded to graduates to ensure the implementation requirements for the Diploma Supplement in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process.

With respect to the increase of the TVET capacity to respond to the labour market needs, in 2008, 2 strategic actions were undertaken:

The strategic participative planning of the educational offer, based on specific instruments that fully valorise early anticipation of the demand for vocational training (Regional Action Plans for development of TVET – REAPs, Local Action Plans for development of TVET – LEAPs, School Action Plans - SAPs);

The increase of the TVET capacity to respond to the labour market needs was supported under TVET 2005 Phare programme under which the following actions were supported: the review and update of REAPs and LEAPs, as planning tools for the TVET educational offer, and the redefinition of the content and purposes of learning, on the basis of the vocational education standards validated by the Sectoral Committees.

The system used for the redefinition of the TVET learning content and purposes allows the employers' validation of professional competences, which are specific to a particular occupation and to a particular qualification, and it will lead to an increased correlation between the study programs and the needs of the labour market, thus facilitating the graduates' insertion on the labour market. The actions planned for TVET in 2008 were completed: the 8 regional action plans in the field of vocational and technical education (REAPs) were revised according to the main findings and conclusions of the 8 labour market regional studies; two pilot studies concerning the socio-professional insertion of VET graduates for the region Bucharest-Ilfov and also for Galati County were developed and will be used for the next REAPs review; the curriculum for TVET was developed for a number of 37 professional qualifications (post-high school education) on the basis of the vocational education standards validated by the Sectoral Committees; the 37 professional qualifications were revised and approved through MECT Order no 5173/29.08.2008.

6.2 Promoting excellence in VET

Centres of vocational excellence in Romania are:

- The German-Romanian Foundation Sibiu
- The German-Romanian Foundation Arad
- The German-Romanian Foundation Timisoara

The Romanian-German Foundation in Sibiu is a non-profit, apolitical and non-governmental organization. The foundation's objectives are professional training in electrical engineering and support for business development. The RGF was founded in December 1992 as a result of intergovernmental agreement between the Romanian and German Governments. Within the same project, supported with the assistance of the Company for Organization, Planning and Training - [GOPA](#), other similar organizations were founded: the Foundation in Vladimirescu, Arad - specialized in wood processing and the Foundation in Timisoara, specialized in constructions.

The German-Romanian Foundation was founded in December 1992 as a result of intergovernmental agreement between the Romanian and German Governments.

The foundation's objectives are:

- Promotion of vocational education;
- Promotion of educational programs for post-graduated.
- supporting the SME
- supporting the unemployed in their professional and social reinstatement

The German-Romanian Foundation is an authorized supplier for professional formation of adults in accordance with decree no. 19/2000. The foundation is member of the European Association of the Professional Formation Centers (EVBB). The association has members in over 18 European countries, and more than 1000 professional coaching centers as partners. The association's objective is, in first line, the promotion of high quality professional coaching.

German-Romanian foundation Arad is a centre of adult vocational training having the main objective of activity the vocational training of adults. The foundation was founded in 1992, together with Timisoara and Sibiu foundations, as a result of intergovernmental agreement between the Romanian and German Governments.

German-Romanian foundation Timisoara was founded in 20 April 1992, following the protocol signed at Romanian-German intergovernmental level. In 25 May 1993, take place the inauguration of the Vocational Training and improvement Centre.

The main goals of this foundation are:

- to promote and develop vocations in the field of constructions in Romania
- to support the reintegration of the Romanian emigrants returned to the country.

The target groups of the German Romanian foundation Timisoara are:

- unemployed people 18-45 years old;
- SME (small and medium-sized enterprises);
- repatriated people;
- young middle- and high school graduates.

The foundation is member of the European Association of the Professional Formation Centers (EVBB), of Private Education Promotion League in Romania, and of EBSA "European Building and Services Association".

The main realizations of the foundation are:

- 869 organized courses
- 13.197 participants and graduates (3981 unemployed)
- 90% of the unemployed graduates vocationally reintegrated
- 5 new firms founded by graduates
- 4 financially supported firms (SMEs)
- collaboration with the Timis County Labor and Social Solidarity, the Timis County Agency for Labour Occupation and with state and private educational institutions;
- 105 collaborating firms in Romania
- 18 collaborating firms abroad

6.3 Higher level qualifications in VET

As main actions in the field of higher level qualifications in VET we can mentioned:

- **Strengthening the administrative capacity of National Council for Adult Vocational Training of Extension of active life (CNFPA)- Establishment of the National Authority for Qualifications-** a detailed description is provided in section 2.1.
- **Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-I 2012) -** a detailed description is provided in section 3.1.
- **The continuous training of teachers** described in detail in section 1.2.

6.4 Improving horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems

Programmes and pathways (horizontal and vertical permeability)

Permeability from vocational to academic strands was ensured by:

- giving vocational education (schools) graduates the possibility to continue their studies in high school through the system of transferable credits;
- enabling graduates of university colleges (with a diploma) to continue their studies in long-term higher education, by sitting for an examination in the initial or connected study profile.

Students who pass the exam are enrolled in the third year of long-term higher education.

6.5 Teachers and trainers

Among the most important measures regarding the teachers and trainers are:

- **Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market (I 2008-IV 2008)** mentioned also in section 1.2.
- **Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees' activity** presented in section 1.3.
- **Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons** presented in section 2.1. as measure of recovering from crisis.
- **Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes** mentioned in section 2.1.
- **Improving the participation rate of SMEs to public procurement** described in detail in section 2.1.
- **The training of teachers** also mentioned in section 1.2.

THEME 7: ENHANCING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

7.1 Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET

TEHNE - Centre for Development and Innovation in Education is a non-profit organization, aiming to support educational initiatives through projects and programs covering areas of non-formal education, curriculum development, education for democratic citizenship, education through ICTs, elearning, lifelong learning, and in-service teacher training.

TEHNE is the one of the most important non-governmental organisation active in the field of education, providing expertise and quality services. It has promoted internal high professional standards and procedures.

As an independent organisation, without political purposes, TEHNE promotes the European principles and values in the field of education through innovative approaches and technologies.

The expertise of TEHNE as an active Romanian NGO in the field of education is built through the experience of experts' boards, involved by TEHNE in its educational programs - researchers, academics, practitioners, combining different types of expertise: from grass-root level to decision-making.

High-level experience of TEHNE is reflected by the partnerships with different types of institutions - governmental, non-governmental, private and public – and by the activities undertaken, developed in line with national and international needs and trends:

- **ICT based education and elearning:** distance education, evaluation of elearning programs and projects, computer-assisted learning methodology development, online learning environments
- **Citizenship education:** democratic citizenship, intercultural education, peace and human rights education
- **School and community development:** school development planning, leadership, school and community link, community development facilitation
- **Education policies:** policy analysis, design, implementation and evaluation
- **Teacher training and trainers training:** training needs assessment, training programs' design and implementation, curriculum development
- **Education for disadvantaged children:** access to education and culture for disadvantaged pupils (pupils living in rural areas, in poor families, isolated communities etc.)
- **Evaluation of social and educational programmes, projects and materials:** evaluation design and implementation, meta-evaluation, evaluation tools development
- **Education research:** development of research methodology and instruments, implementation and reporting.

Entrepreneurship in VET

At least nine countries (Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Spain and the UK) also report that between 90% and 100% of vocational education students participate in entrepreneurship programmes at some point during their vocational education path. However these figures are only indicative, while programmes and activities included in the above data may differ greatly in intensity and effectiveness.

In any case, even in some of the above-mentioned countries there is a perceived gap in the entrepreneurship training offered. Therefore, despite some encouraging data, it appears that the uptake and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in European vocational schools are still far from being fully satisfactory.

Approximately half of the countries taking part report that specialist training for self-employment is fully integrated in all entrepreneurship courses. In other cases the objective of entrepreneurship education is broader, aiming rather to develop soft entrepreneurial skills and including training for self-employment only in some specific fields of study.

A partial lack of competence of teachers of entrepreneurship is in many cases perceived as a problem, at least as regards their practical experience of entrepreneurship if not their theoretical knowledge. Improvement is greatly needed in this area. Most countries report that some training courses on entrepreneurship are offered to teachers, but few offer a systematic approach.

There seem to be no major administrative obstacles to cooperation between schools and enterprises, and this type of cooperation is generally well established. Also, the vast majority of countries report that it is not too difficult for schools to find entrepreneurs and businesspeople who will come to the classroom. A positive outcome will depend normally on the proactive initiative of the school or the teacher. So this is not perceived as a major problem in most cases. It can be however difficult to ensure the participation of small and micro enterprises.

Non-profit organizations (NGOs) play an important role in organizing entrepreneurship education in VET schools, especially by offering programmes based on practical experience and working on projects. They have normally close links with the business world, and often receive some form of support from public authorities.

In Romania, entrepreneurship is included in secondary school technical and vocational education and training as follows:

- in commercial, business and tourism schools the study of entrepreneurship through training firms is compulsory in upper secondary education;
- economics and applied economics are compulsory subjects in all fields of training;
- the competences: team work; problem solving; and ICT, together with an introduction to business, are compulsory for all training programmes in VET.

Programmes provided by commerce, business and tourism schools include compulsory training modules focused on business start-up and self-employment, using the training firm method. In 2007/2008, 890 training firms were registered with the Romanian Coordination Centre for Training Firms, involving an estimated 25 000 students from 146 vocational schools. In other fields such as agriculture, engineering, the food industry, and transport, specific entrepreneurship activities are organised as part of the 20 % of the curriculum developed at local level, in partnership between schools and local enterprises. In postsecondary education, training programmes and specific entrepreneurship activities are provided as part of the compulsory curriculum only for commerce, business and tourism training.

Providing teachers with adequate competences to teach entrepreneurship is seen as a major challenge. There seems to be a deficit of specific skills among teachers.

In **Romania**, the Ministry of Education Research and Innovation and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture cooperated on training 500 teachers in using the 'Practice Firm' method with their students. Starting in 2008, and with the support of the European Social Fund, another 600 teachers from 280 VET schools are being trained in using innovative learning methods and developing teaching and learning materials for entrepreneurship education.

Among the principal measures taken in order to enhance creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET we can mention:

- **Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements (II 2008-I 2012)** – discussed above in section 3.1.

- **Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market (I 2008-IV 2008)** presented in section 1.2.
- **Developing a strategy for lifelong learning (II 2008-IV 2008)** presented in section 3.1.

The action “Preparatory visits” is a component of Lifelong learning Program. This action confers financial aid to Romanian eligible institutions for making visits in similar institutions from any participant country to the lifelong learning program, in order to initiate future European cooperation projects within the program (2007-2013).

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training has organized various preparatory visits using different programs:

Comenius:

- Creativity and innovation in Comenius partnerships; 01 - 05 October 2008, Warsaw, Poland

Grundtvig:

- Quality in Education: Awakening and Reinforcing Creativity and Innovation; 03 - 07 december 2008, Qawra, Malta
- Creativity and Innovation in Adult Education; 06 - 09 november 2008, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Sense of initiative in adult education: to turn creative and innovative ideas into action; 01 - 05 october 2008, Ischia, Italy

7.2 Improving quality of teaching

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training has organised various preparatory visits using Comenius program: Intercultural Learning; 12 - 15 November 2008, Antalya, Turkey.

In order to improve quality of teaching the main measure taken is related to the elaboration of school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market (I 2008-IV 2008) presented in section 1.2.

7.3 Innovation-friendly institutions

ICT in education

The measures implemented by MECT for **extending the use of ICT** in education focused, during 2008, to ensure proper endowments needed in school units. Thus, by the end of third quarter of 2008, there were concluded contracts for the supply of 8,191 IT labs in primary and secondary education. At present, the labs are being installed at the beneficiary schools and the users are being trained (deadlines: IV/2008 and I/2009, respectively);

Extending the exercise of firms/ simulated enterprises network

The exercise firms (in case of pre-university education)/ simulated enterprise (in case of university education) represent a modern learning method which aims at developing pupils and students’ entrepreneurial skills by simulating the internal and external processes which are being developed

within a firm. The number of exercise firms increased from 117 in the 2002/2003 school year to 890 firms in the 2007/2008 school year.

In 2008, the legal framework regulating “exercise firm”/ “simulated enterprise” was improved by the endorsement of the MECT Order no 5109/2088 which regulates in an unitary manner the concept of simulated enterprise framework at superior education level. The enforcement of this order’ provisions, starting with the school/ university year 2008/2009 assures a better coherence regarding the use of this learning method in primary, secondary and superior education levels. The skills obtained through “exercise firm”/ “simulated enterprise” can shorten the new employees/accommodation stage to the working place, which is to the benefit of both the future employees and employers.

Title of policy/ measure: Rehabilitation of the infrastructure facilities and improving the endowment of educational units in rural and disadvantaged areas(II 2007-IV 2009)

(a) Rationale: Ensuring the proper teaching conditions in the vocational and technical education and in the pre-university education in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas.

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Ensuring the proper teaching conditions in the vocational and technical education and in the pre-university education in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas.

(c) Description of measure:

Rehabilitation and equipping the TVET school units:

- a) Rehabilitation/ construction of training workshops for 43 units in rural areas;
- b) Rehabilitation /construction of training workshops for 7 units in rural areas;
- c) Rehabilitation/ construction of campus - type facilities and providing equipment for 4 units in the field of automotive education;
- d) Rehabilitation/ construction of campus buildings type and providing equipment for 11 units in the field of agriculture education;
- e) Basic training equipment for 50 units in rural areas;
- f) Specialized equipment for 50 units in rural areas;
- g) Equipment for distance learning for 16 units and a national centre;
- h) Rehabilitation, modernization, development and equipping of pre-university educational infrastructure in the rural, urban and disadvantaged areas; rehabilitation, modernization of compulsory education buildings, equipping them with didactical material and IT equipment.

(d) Target groups (scholars, teachers).

(e) Status of implementation: Implementation on- going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to improve teaching conditions in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas.

© Key actors involved:

a) MDLPL and ADR: Monitoring is carried out on the basis of the meetings of the regional Project Implementing Unities, the reports drawn by the Technical Assistance and the letters of acceptance.

b) – d) MECT, County School Inspectorates and the local authorities: Monitoring is based on: the contracts between the school and the suppliers; the analysis of the temporary acceptance certificates signed by the school; County School Inspectorates reports and MECT visits;

e) – g) MDLPL with the support of MECT-NCTVET: Monitoring is carried out based on the meetings of the regional Project Implementing Unities, the reports drawn by the Technical Assistance and the letters of acceptance.

h) Monitoring of the programme targeting the rehabilitation of the educational infrastructure is carried out on the basis of the County School Inspectorates reports and MECT visits – Education Infrastructure Rehabilitation Directorate.

Monitoring of those projects financed through ROP represents:

weekly reports of centralized Intermediate Bodies- Managing Authority for ROP-MDLPL.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

For the vocational and technical education the rehabilitation and/or endowment works were delivered as follows:

a) Completion of the rehabilitation works for 36 school units in the rural areas; in the case of 7 school units from rural areas the workings are delayed but measures are taken to be finalised works by the end of 2008;

b) Completion of rehabilitation works for school workshops in 2 schools units; for another 5 school units, the rehabilitation works are in progress but delayed as planned since there is no sufficient funding for them to be finalized by the end of 2008. Moreover rehabilitation/construction workings of school workshops were achieved for one school unit from urban areas;

c) The first stage of equipping the 4 units with maintenance and fixing equipment in the automotive field was finalized;

d) Designing and execution workings on going;

e) 11 lots with basic equipment were contracted for 150 units, out of which 50 units in the rural areas;

f) The call for proposals for the equipment required for specialized training was held in 150 school units out of which 50 units from rural areas. The contracts for 13 lots are currently being signed. For one lot, the public procurement procedure is in progress;

g) All the equipment for distance learning is being delivered and assembled;

h) In 2008, in the MECT programme of rehabilitation of the infrastructure (PRIS) 156 school units were rehabilitated and equipped with furniture. For another 137 units, the rehabilitation and their

endowment with furniture equipment will be finalized.

As for the rehabilitation, modernization and equipping of pre-university units through ROP (administrated by MDLPL), on 3rd of October 2008, 14 projects on pre-university infrastructure (in rural, urban and disadvantaged areas) were on their way to being evaluated and selected.

(b) Indicators of success:

- Reception of the rehabilitated infrastructure/No. of rehabilitated infrastructures;
- Installing equipment and staff training/No. of the units equipped;
- Installing equipment and staff training/No. of trained experts;

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

Title of policy/ measure: Developing the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students(I 2008-IV 2008)

(a) Rationale: Developing the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students

(b) Objectives/measurable targets: Developing the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students.

(c) Description of measure:

The usage of “exercise firms”/“simulated enterprise” interactive method of learning provides:

- Teachers’ training;
- Extension of exercise firms/ simulated enterprise network

(d) Target groups (pupils, students).

(e) Status of implementation: Implementation on- going.

2. Policy/measure operation and delivery:

(a) Level of operation: national level

(b) Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger (education/ training/ employment/ social) policy approach? This is part of a broader approach aiming to develop the entrepreneurial spirit of pupils and students

© Key actors involved:

MECT(CNDIPT) ensures the monitoring on the basis of bi-annual report of ROCT.

3. Evaluation:

(a) Assessment of effectiveness, efficiency or impact:

(b) Indicators of success:

- No of teachers trained in the use of exercise firms / simulated enterprise method;
- No of exercise firms / simulated enterprise registered into the national network.

(c) Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies.

4. Conclusions:

(a) Obstacles encountered (what did not work and why?); measures (planned) to overcome them.

(b) What issues remain to be addressed?

5. Source, legend

The continuous training of teachers was already discussed in the above sections.

7.4 Encouraging partnership

In 2008, the national agency for community programmes in the field of education and vocational training has organised various preparatory visits using different programs:

Comenius:

- Partnerships for the development of the sustainable school; 25 - 28 November 2008, Athens, Greece
- Regional Partnerships; 28 - 31 October 2007, Sandusky, Bulgaria

Leonardo da Vinci:

- Vet Schools- Smes Partnerships With The Aim To Facilitate The Young People's Insertion In The Labour Market; 24 - 28 September 2008, Sinaia, Romania
- Bridge Between Vet And Sme's; 16 - 20 September 2008, Priekuli, Latvia and Estonia
- Transnational Networkings in the Area of International Cooperation in VET; 20 - 21 Noiember 2008, Izmir, Turkey
- Intercultural Dialogue - The Role of Adult Education in Promoting a Multicultural Society; 05 - 09 november 2008, Helsinki, Finland

- **Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons** presented in section 2.1.
- **Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes,** presented in section 2.1.
- **Minimis aid Scheme “Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities’ development”** presented in detail in section 2.1.

THEME 8: FINANCING VET

8.1 Improving efficiency, equity, levels of VET funding

In Romania, the continuous vocational training system has been organized as a network of national, local and sectoral structures of the authorities in charge. On the legal and institutional sides, the tripartite vocational training system of Romania is on a par with the rest of Europe. The system, however, does not operate at maximum potential for lack of financial resources.

In the new internal labour market context, with a labour force deficit, both employers and trade unions have all the reasons, therefore, to increase their effort to allocate funds and also to access funds, including the European Social Fund.

Main features of the National Continuous Vocational Training system

According to the Labour Code, art. 189, vocational training may be provided to employees in any of the following forms: 'a) attendance of training courses organized by employers or by suppliers of vocational training services; b) vocational on-the-job training for new-entrants to a position or work place; c) probationary and post-graduate training in Romania and abroad; d) on-the-job vocational training; e) coaching; f) other forms of training agreed upon between employer and employee.'

Employers of more than 20 employees are bound by law to prepare and provide, every year, in agreement with the trade union or the employees' representatives, vocational training schemes, which are attached to the collective agreement at company level, as an integral part thereof.

Employers are also supposed to create the appropriate conditions for all their employees to take part in vocational training programmes, as follows: a) at least once every 2 years, if they employ 21 or more employees; b) at least once every 3 years, if they employ 21 or less employees. The related training expenses are borne by employers.

When the employer fails to comply with the obligation to provide the funds for the vocational training of an employee, such employee is entitled to a paid leave of up to 10 working days or up to 80 working hours, for vocational training purposes.

Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, regarding the vocational training of adults sets forth that adults have a right to enjoy social protection of vocational training, 'with no discrimination on account of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, political or religious affiliation.'

The same ordinance expressly provides:

- the obligation of all employers to take 'appropriate measures in order to put in place the requisite conditions for their employees to enjoy access to vocational training', and
- the right of 'job seekers to attend the free vocational training programmes provided by the National Agency for Employment ([Agenția Națională de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă, ANOFM](#)) or by other, duly licensed, providers of vocational training services.'

In Romania, the continuous vocational training system has been organized as a network of national, local and sectoral structures of the authorities in charge.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social protection (Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale, MMFPS), in cooperation with the ministries and other relevant bodies, elaborates the policies and strategies for the continuous vocational training. MMFPS closely cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport (Ministerul Educației, Cercetării Tineretului și Sportului, [MECT](#)) in order to articulate the correspondence between the initial and the continuous vocational training

The National Council for the Vocational Training of Adults (Consiliul Național pentru Formarea Profesională a Adulților, [CNFPA](#)), which is also the national authority for the classification of professions (a tripartite body) discharges a multitude of tasks: develops and implements, with the assistance of the sectoral committees (also tripartite), the methodological basis (including the instruments) for the assessment of competency, based on an occupational analysis for each specific sector; elaborates the occupational standards, and the qualification standards; validates the qualifications; elaborates the national register of occupations; certifies the levels of competence and qualification; ensures the quality of the continuous vocational training system; coordinates the licensing of providers of vocational training services.

ANOFM, also a tripartite body, carries out the active measures for the stimulation of employment, including vocational counseling, guidance, and training, and allocates the requisite financial resources from the unemployment fund.

Vocational training programmes are organized by the county employment agencies, through their own vocational training centers, through the regional vocational training centers for adults, and through duly licensed providers of vocational training services, all being available mainly to job seekers, but also to employees, and other, interested, individuals.

The task of private or state-owned vocational training services providers is to organize, implement and evaluate vocational training programmes, which must satisfy the competence needs of companies and individual clients.

The only data available relates to the vocational training courses organized by ANOFM.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total participants	93,786	99,644	140,256	75,209	59,780	65,031
Unemployed (% of total participants)	29.5	19.6	21.4	48.5	88.8	86.0
Total graduates	66,645	67,114	83,215	52,800	37,859	54,906
Successful applicants (% of total graduates)	15.9	23.9	17.3	21.9	43.0	45.2

Source: The Statistic Yearbook of Romania, National Institute of Statistics (*Institutul Național de Statistică, INS*), Bucharest, 2007.

The funding of the CVT system

The expenditures covered from the unemployment fund, for the vocational training and retraining of unemployed persons rose from € 9.4 million in 2001, € 11.3 million in 2002, € 14.7 million in 2003, € 16.6 million in 2004 to € 15.4 million in 2005; the per capita expenditure for the unemployed person was, on the average, € 345, € 574, € 485, € 457, and € 291, respectively.

The 2006 – 2008 short and medium term Strategy for continuous vocational training, enacted through Government Decision no. 875/2005 states that: ‘Continuous vocational training (CVT) is not properly supported in the manufacturing industry, with the exception of the big corporations, particularly the multinational ones.’

The poll conducted in 2000 regarding continuous vocational training in industrial establishments revealed that, in 1999, Romanian companies had allocated only 0.5% of the personnel costs to continuous vocational training. In 2006, the funds invested by business corporations in CVT went further down to 0.3% of the total labour costs (INS).

A May 2004 exploratory survey on the demand for CVT, made by the National Labour and Social Protection Research Institute (Institutul Național de Cercetare în Domeniul Muncii și Protecției Sociale, [INCSMPS](#)) in two regions of Romania, North-West and South-West, in two economic sectors, construction and tourism, under the PHARE Twinning Programme RO 02/IB/SO/03 ‘Support for MMFES for CVT’, revealed interesting aspects regarding the funds allocated by employers to vocational training:

- Investment in training as a tool for improving the competitiveness level of the company is, in most cases, rather low in Romania;
- Only 1/4 of the companies have organised training programmes over the past three years. Companies regard training investment as expenditure, rather than an investment in human resources.
- No official data exist in respect of the individuals who funded their own training needs. Individually funded attendance of CVT courses is minimal due to unaffordable costs and due to the lack of a system of incentives or extra deductible costs for the persons who are willing to pay for their own training out of pocket.
- The presence of public incentives to support private investment in CVT.

The Tax Code has provisions meant to encourage vocational training:

- ‘Vocational training activities performed by any entity, irrespective of such entity’ ownership status, shall by value added tax exempt’;
- ‘For the determination of the taxable income, the expenses incurred by an employer for the vocational training and professional upgrading of its staff shall be deemed deductible’;
- ‘For income earned from free lance activities, tax payers may also deduct from their and their employees’ earnings the amounts expended for the participation in congresses and other events of a professional nature.’
- The unemployment fund provides the free funds for the vocational training of job seekers and disfavoured persons.

In addition to these categories of persons, the unemployment fund also provides funding for 50% of the vocational/professional training of maximum 20% of the employees of a company. Such vocational/professional training programmes are devised to prevent unemployment, and the companies have to meet a number of requirements to qualify for them.

The role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in the CVT system

In Romania, social partners, i.e. employer organisations and trade unions, have important tasks with regard to CVT. The role they are expected to play is equally important at all levels: national, sectoral, and company.

Social dialogue started its important contribution to the vocational training of adults in 1999, when CNFPA was established as an advisory tripartite body, bringing together representatives of the government, the employer organisations and trade unions, and called to assist in the elaboration of policies and strategies for the CVT.

Since 2003, the CNFPA has been vested with decision powers towards ensuring the quality of the vocational training system, and providing evaluation of vocational competence. The same year, the legal basis was created for CNFPA to absorb another tripartite body, the Council for Occupational Standards and Accreditation (Consiliul pentru Standarde Ocupaționale și Acreditare, [COSA](#)).

In 2004, CNFPA was promoted to the rank of national authority for vocational qualification standards, in charge of elaborating a transparent set of qualification standards in the continuous vocational training system.

CNFPA has set up committees for the following sectors: agriculture, fish breeding, fishing; environmental protection; geology, mining, energy; chemistry, petrochemistry; electrical engineering, automation, electronics; ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, refractory products; machine-building, fine mechanics, measuring equipment and instruments; forestry and wood-working, pulp and paper; building materials, cement industry, glassware and fine ceramics; civil engineering; food, beverage, and tobacco industries; textile, garment, skin-dressing and footwear industries; transport; information technology, communications and postal services; mass-media, publishing and printing; trade; administration and public services; tourism, catering; education and vocational training, research and design; sports; health, hygiene, and social services; culture, handicraft, and traditional crafts.

These sectoral vocational boards have the task to define and validate qualification levels in each sector, including trades and professions proposed by other institutions. For this purpose, the boards must identify vocational requirements, elaborate occupational standards, set up the national register of occupations, create the framework curricula for various professions, elaborate uniform procedures for the certification of skills and competencies, and elaborate harmonised principles and mechanisms aimed at ensuring the quality of vocational training.

At county and Bucharest city levels, by a decision of the CNFPA, licensing boards have been set up to certify providers of vocational training services. These boards are tripartite structures that may take decisions only if the representatives of trade unions and employer organisations are present.

Collective Bargaining on CVT

The workers covered by collective bargaining on CVT (number of workers, coverage rates), specifying the type of the relevant collective agreements (intersectoral, regional/territorial, sectoral, professional, company).

Considering the scope of Chapter 7 (Vocational training) of the national collective agreement for 2007-2010, we can assess that collective bargaining at national level fully covers (100%) the CVT for persons with a status of employees.

In Romania, in 2007, 4.7 million persons are employees out of a total employment of 8.5 million. In agriculture, for example only 133,000 persons are employees out of a total employment of 2.5 million.

The collective agreements at company level reflects, for the first time, the provisions of the national collective agreement regarding continuous vocational training that were included as an effect of the amendments brought to the Labour Code in 2005 and 2006.

The contract stipulates that the signatories (the trade unions and the employer organisations of national coverage) agree to:

- ‘fully grant the support requested by the CNFPA to the elaboration of the occupational standards system based on competence and skills, as listed in the national occupations registry. The system shall be used for the assessment and certification of the employees’ skills;’
- ‘grant full support to the establishment of the sectoral committees for vocational training.’

The contract also sets forth that ‘during period in which they attend vocational training courses funded by their employers, the employees shall enjoy the rights provided for them under the applicable collective agreements, equivalent to the normal working time’ and that ‘the vocational training plan agreed upon by the parties shall be part of the applicable collective agreement’.

The workplaces involved in collectively-agreed CVT initiatives (number of workplaces, percentages), specifying the type of the relevant collective agreements (intersectoral, regional/territorial, sectoral, professional, company).

As a complement to the CVT initiatives bargained and agreed upon collectively in the national collective agreement, the tripartite sectoral vocational training committees may bring important contributions.

The main role of these committees is to define and validate occupations in each sector, their tasks being to: identify competence requirements, elaborate occupational standards, set up and maintain the national register of occupations, draw up the framework curricula for vocational training, create harmonised procedures for the certification of skills and competencies, and elaborate the harmonised principles and mechanisms to ensure the quality of vocational training.

In 2008, the sectoral vocational training boards are already operational in: agriculture, fish breeding, and fishing; environmental protection; geology, mining, and energy; chemistry, and petrochemistry; electrical engineering, automation, and electronics; ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, and refractory products; machine-building, fine mechanics, and measuring equipment and instruments; forestry, woodworking, and pulp and paper; building materials, cement industry, glassware and fine ceramics; civil engineering; food, beverage, and tobacco industries; textile, garment, skin-dressing and footwear industries; transport; information technology, communications and postal services; mass-media, publishing and printing; trade; administration and public services; tourism, catering; education and vocational training, research and design; sports; health, hygiene, social services; culture, handicraft, and traditional crafts.

The beneficiaries of CVT initiatives regulated by collective bargaining: all employees or specific groups (like women, unemployed, part-timers, fixed-term workers, temporary agency workers, full-timers, older workers, new recruits, managers, white-collars, blue-collars, low-qualified, young, apprentices/trainees, immigrants).

In general, collective bargaining in Romania mostly cater for the persons working under an individual employment contract, as employees.

The vocational training aspects related to other types of labour-active persons (unemployed, other job seekers, etc.) are taken care of by ANOFM.

The national collective agreement for 2007-2010 provides that: ‘for the elaboration of the vocational training programmes, employers and trade unions shall lay down the requisite measures to encourage and support the inclusion of women in such programmes.’

The type of CVT initiatives introduced by collective bargaining: on the job/off the job, courses, workshops, training leave, training plans, specific actions, etc. The training content of CVT initiatives introduced by collective bargaining: high/low skills, general/specific skills, etc.

In 2006, for example, the sectoral committee for health and social services received from General Confederation of the Romanian Industrial Employers 1903 (Uniunea Generală a Industriaşilor din România 1903, [UGIR 1903](#)) proposals for the definition of skills in the area of social assistance occupations, and for the training of acoustic technicians, and audio-prosthetic technicians.

During the period 2003-2006, two of the five national trade union confederations, the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Romania Frăția (Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor Libere din România Frăția, [CNSLR Frăția](#)) and the National Trade Union Block (Blocul Național Sindical, [BNS](#)), took part in the development of the Significant Agreement 1 project, with the support of the MATRA programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the Dutch trade union confederations [FNV](#) and [FNV Bondgenoten](#).

Under the same project, the trade unions and employer organisations in the naval and aeronautic sectors set up two bipartite expert centres for vocational training, their purpose being to find the ways and means to adjust the vocational training system to the actual needs of the companies and workers in the two sectors.

In 2007, trade unions and employer organisations in the metal working industry and the government bodies in charge of vocational training decided to continue their cooperation under a new, Significant Agreements 2 project, developed with the aid of the Dutch Ministry of Education. The aim of this new project is to introduce the vocational training facilities of the metal industry to modern vocational training standards.

The partners to this project, conducted over a period of 20 months, between March 2007 and August 2008, propounded to achieve the following targets: put in place a duly licensed authority to deal with occupational standards; obtain recognition for the occupational profiles of four main occupations in the metal industry; to select and describe the occupations as the projects rolls on; elaborate the curricula for four vocational training courses; base the curricula on the occupational profiles and occupational standards approved in the previous stage; set up a pilot training centre for two target groups: workers in ten companies, and trainers in five vocational training centres; train eight counsellors to promote vocational training in the metal working industry; lay the institutional bases for a permanent cooperation between [Regio College](#) of the Netherlands, and one or more training centres in Romania.

The employer organisations whose opinions were sought found this project a new step towards a training system apt to match the employers’ needs and the demand of the labour market with the school curricula.

The compensation of time spent on CVT initiatives introduced by collective bargaining: paid vs. non-paid.

The national collective agreement for 2007-2010 spells out that: ‘during period in which they attend vocational training courses funded by their employers, the employees shall enjoy the rights provided for them under the applicable collective agreements, equivalent to the normal working time’ and that ‘the vocational training plan agreed upon by the parties shall be part of the applicable collective agreement’.

The integration in the national CVT system of CVT initiatives introduced by collective bargaining: (i) the accreditation/certification of learning processes (awarded/non awarded and the link with relevant bodies/institutions); (ii) certification of learning outcomes (certified/non certified - please specify type of certification and the link with relevant bodies/institutions).

At national level, and with the aid CNFPA, social partners take part, directly, in the elaboration of strategies for the vocational training of adults. Since 2003, CNFPA has also performed as a decision maker in quality matters regarding vocational training and evaluation of skills.

At sectoral level, social partners’ membership in the sector committees enables their involvement in the process of defining and validating occupation-related requirements for each sector.

At county and Bucharest city levels, licensing boards were set up by a CNFPA decision, to certify providers of vocational training services. These licensing boards are tripartite structures that may take decisions only if the representatives of the trade unions and employer organisations are present.

By the end of 2006, a number of 1,865 certified providers of such services had been enrolled in the national register of certified providers of vocational training services. They have been recognized as qualified to organise 5,400 educational programmes (of which 3,881 programmes for skilled workers, 465 programmes for basic training, 698 refresher programmes, 356 programmes for highly skilled labour), as against only 1,200 in 2005.

The introduction of an ‘individual right’ to training by collective bargaining and how this right is ensured.

The national collective agreement for 2007-2010 states that ‘the parties agree upon vocational training as being necessary and compulsory for all types of employees’; ‘the parties agreed to render support to their members for them to be able to develop, at sector level, their own vocational training schemes based on partnerships that should also include the necessary back-up to projects aimed at accessing the required funding.’

At the initiative of the trade unions, and following the 2005 amendments to the Labour Code: ‘employers shall secure the participation in vocational training and refresher courses of all employees, as follows: a) at least once every two years, if they employ 21 or more persons; b) at least once every three years, if they employ 21 or less persons. The related training expenses shall be borne by employers.’

When the employer fails to comply with the obligation to provide the funds for the vocational training of an employee, such employee ‘is entitled to a paid leave of up to 10 working days or up to 80 working hours, for vocational training purposes.’

The presence and characteristics of joint committees to monitor and follow up the CVT initiatives introduced by collective bargaining.

The Builders' Social Fund (Casa Socială a Constructorilor, [CASOC](#)), a non-profit organisation, was established and exists as a bipartite body for the trade unions and employer organisations in the civil engineering and building materials sector, and provides vocational training to the workers in this sector through the Vocational Institute of Builders (Casa de Meserii a Constructorilor, [CMC](#)).

The Harbour School of Constanta (Fundatia Școala Portuară din Constanța, FSPC), established as a foundation, is the fruit of the cooperation between the National Federation of Harbour Unions of Romania (Federația Națională a Sindicatelor Portuare din România, FNSP) and the Trade Union of Dock Workers ([Havnearbejdernes Fællesforbund](#)). Initially, the foundation benefited from the support of the Danish Government. At present, this school is an example of cooperation between intra-sectoral trade unions and employer organisations, in this case, the harbours.

Another initiative is the European Training Foundation ([ETF](#)) project titled 'Support for the active involvement of social partners in the strengthening of sectoral committees', which provides vocational training to the members of sectoral committees in the sectors of machine-building, and food industry, and stimulates the activity of the two sectoral committees in the area of occupational upgrading.

8.2 Use of Lifelong Learning Programme funds

According to the EC Report *Progress Towards Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training*, there are huge gaps regarding the adults participation to lifelong education and training in EU MS: the figures present the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain as having the highest participation rates (over 20%) while in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania this value reach only 2%, four times less than the EU average. Since, in the case of these three countries, the progress made compared with the year 2000 has been very modest, the reports which monitor the progress on Lisbon objectives stress the importance of promoting new policies in this field. These circumstances given, and in order to support of the aim to promote Lifelong Learning (LLL), MECT envisages the upgrade of the legal framework on continuous education (in partnership with MMFES); in this respect, MECT initiated the actions needed for the operationalisation of the inter-ministerial working group to draft the *Strategy for lifelong learning*. There have been started the procedures for the working group' setting-up and formalizing. At the same time, MECT initiated a strategic project through SOP HRD for the training and development of the lifelong learning facilitators. The project aims at creating virtual communities on lifelong learning programmes in school which are to ensure good practice exchange, sharing participants' experiences, creating sustainable partnerships in the field of lifelong learning at local and regional levels, and piloting lifelong learning centres, on the basis of *lifelong learning partnerships*, at which will attend regional and local institutions and other stakeholders.

Lifelong Learning Programme – LLP

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) continues the previous programmes SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI. The programme starts in 2007 and ends in 2013, the total budget are about 6970 Meuro. The LLP has been approved by European Parliament at 15 November 2006 and has been published in European Union Official Monitor at 24 November. The LLP aims to reinforce changes, cooperation and mobility between educational and vocational training systems of

European Union. The main objective of this programme is to contribute, by promoting lifelong learning, to the development of European Union, as advanced society based on knowledge, with sustainable economic growth, with more workplaces and with better social cohesion.

From quantitative point of view, LLP aims the following targets:

- 3 000 000 scholars involved in Comenius projects during the period 2007-2013;
- 3 000 000 Erasmus students until 2012;
- 80 000 mobility (scholars, workers, young graduates) Leonardo da Vinci per year until 2013;
- 7000 mobility/year in Grundtvig adult education programme until 2013;

The ERASMUS and LEONARDO DA VINCI programs first addressed to higher education (academic study mobility) and the second addressed to vocational training keep the name and became sectoral programs of LLP, who includes also eLearning program, Europass initiative and other actions in the field of education and vocational training. Erasmus-Mundus program will be incorporated in the Integrated Program beginning with the year of 2009.

The components of LLP program are the following:

- 4 sectoral programs

COMENIUS: Preuniversity education

Vocational training of didactic personnel from Preuniversity education
Comenius assistants(future teachers from any field)
Scholar partnership projects

ERASMUS: Higher education

Students mobility
Teachers mobility
Intensive programs
Intensive language courses (EILC)

LEONARDO DA VINCI: Vocational training

Students mobility
Teachers mobility

GRUNDTVIG: Adult education

Continuous vocational training for personnel implied in adults' education
Learning partnerships

Transversal Program:

Development of policies in the education and vocational training area(including Europass portfolio)
Languages learning
Using new information technologies and communication in education
Dissemination and valorising

In the LLP program is also included Jean Monnet program used to sustain legal activities related to the European integration and to the European institutions and organizations in the field of education and vocational training.

Jean Monnet Program:

Jean Monnet action
European institutions support
European associations support

8.3 Use of other EU funds

The role of the European Social Fund

In Romania, the first two programmes financed from the European Social Fund, i.e. the Sectoral Operational Plan for the Development of Human Resources (SOPDHR), and the SOP for the Development of Administrative Capacity (SOPDAC), were launched on 15 February 2008.

SOPDHR consists of six priority axes, of which the following two are specifically dedicated to continuous training: (1) education and professional upgrading aimed at supporting economic growth and the development of a knowledge-based society, which purpose to create the adequate conditions for 15,000 persons – students and young researchers – to take up PhD and post-PhD research programmes; (2) correlation of life-long learning with the labour market, which is designed to put in place the conditions for some 360,000 persons to attend vocational training and re-training, in order to enhance adaptability to working environment of both employees and businesses.

The Minister of Labour said that ‘This is just the beginning. There will be more such initiatives, so that soon the entire programme will be fully operational, and, if everything goes on smoothly, and as planned, we will be investing almost € 4.25 billion within the next seven years, in programmes for the development of vocational competence of approximately 1,650,000 persons.’

8.4 Improving VET governance

Vocational training is one of the major topics on the social partners’ agenda. On 5 February 2008, the trade unions submitted to the government a proposal for subsidies to be allocated from the unemployment fund for on-the-job training, and for a supplemental amount to the ANOFM’s budget for vocational training policies, arguing that, with the current budget, ANOFM cannot provide for the vocational training of more than 3,000-4,000 employees, while the demand is for some 2 million workers.

The president of National Trade Union Confederation Cartel Alfa (Confederația Națională Sindicală Cartel Alfa, [Cartel Alfa](#)), Bogdan Hossu, stated that the representatives of the government, trade unions, and employer organisations had several rounds of discussions on the reform of the labour market, and that the stress was laid on the importance of vocational training. He mentioned that one of the proposals was the issuance of ‘education coupons’, by the ministry of labour, to be spent for vocational training purposes.

The trade unions also proposed that the law be amended to the effect that the employers should have the right to train their employees on the job, and issue qualification certificates. Trade unions claim that almost half of the current number of employees would require vocational adjustment training.

The labour force deficit that has affected the Romanian labour market due to emigration in the past years of skilled labour in most of Romania's economic sectors to other EU Member States renders vocational training extremely topical.

Vocational training is critical for employers, particularly in dynamic sectors like construction, transport, and information technology, which find their expansion plans hampered by the shortage of skilled labour.

On the legal and institutional sides, the vocational training system of Romania is on a par with the rest of Europe. The system, however, does not operate at maximum speed for lack of financial resources. Both employers and trade unions have all the reasons, therefore, to increase their effort to access community funds, including the European Social Fund.

THEME 9: PROGRESS IN MODERNISING EUROPEAN VET SYSTEMS IN THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COOPERATION

9.1 Impact of European cooperation in VET on development of national VET policies

The Copenhagen process was developed within the perspective of lifelong learning, and aims to encourage individuals to make use of the wide range of vocational learning opportunities available, for example at school, in higher education, at the workplace, or through private courses. The lifelong learning tools should enable users to link and build on learning acquired at various times, and in both formal and non-formal contexts.

There is a review of the process every two years, the first of which took place in Maastricht in December 2004 and the second in Helsinki in December 2006. The latest review resulted in the adoption of the Bordeaux Communiqué on 26 November 2008.

Four proposed priority areas of Copenhagen process are:

1. Implementing the tools and schemes for promoting cooperation in the field of vocational education and training (VET) at national and European level
2. Heightening the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training systems
3. Improving the links between VET and the labour market
4. Strengthening European cooperation arrangements

The most important changes tackled in order to implement priorities of the Copenhagen process:

- Developing and implementing the National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education (CNCIS) in view of better correlating the higher education with the labour market requirements
- Developing a strategy for lifelong learning
- Elaborating school plans and the curriculum in higher professional and technical education based on the requirements of the labour market
- Development of tools and methodologies for analysing and anticipating the labour market changes
- Training teachers and principals/deputy principals within primary and secondary schools
- Increasing the employment and social inclusion rate
- Strengthening the social partnership by supporting sectoral committees activity
- Increasing the unemployed access to continuous vocational training programmes
- Ensuring equal access to education and early school leaving prevention
- Providing an easy transition of young people from school to labour market
- Special measures to activating social vulnerable groups and persons in rural areas
- Measures to attract the Romanian citizens working abroad
- *Sustaining continuous vocational training with 50%-for employees and unemployed persons*
- *Giving financial aid (from European Social Fund) for the companies who engage unemployed persons or for vocational training programmes.*
- *Minimis aid Scheme “Temporary labour force employment of unemployed persons for local communities’ development”*
- Increasing the participation of young unemployed people in the employment measures

- *Assuring quality in education and enhancing the relevance of education and initial vocational training to meet labour market requirements*
- *Extending the exercise of firms/ simulated enterprises network*
- Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES)

9.2 Governance, cooperation and ownership of the different actors in the Copenhagen process at European level

9.3 External dimension of European cooperation in VET

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