

## SECTION: SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

### MODERN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN ROMANIAN EDUCATION

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#### *Abstract*

*In this paper I aimed to outline an analysis of the current educational policies developed by the Ministry of National Education applied at the level of pre-university and university education in Romania. The present research captures aspects regarding the modern educational policies elaborated to be applied at the level of the Romanian education, the way of their implementation and the results obtained. The research will be carried out at national level in the period 2016-2019. In the research I used the observation method based on the description of policies developed by MEN. Secondly, we analyzed the reports on the state of Romanian education and outlined the positive and negative aspects regarding the state of education in our country. The results highlight that, MEN continues the reforms in the field of education and training, in order to ensure an education adapted to the demands of the labor market, centered on personal and social development, with a positive impact on preventing and combating early school leaving and school dropout. MEN continues to carry out annual social programs in order to support students from disadvantaged areas, by creating conditions for providing equal opportunities for education for students from high risk groups.*

**Keywords:** education, Romania, educational policies, vocational training, school dropout.

**JEL classification:** I29, I25.

#### **Introduction**

The general definition of educational policies refers to the leadership of the process of change and innovations in the educational system, representing options materialized in official documents. In the specialized literature several criteria for classifying the types of educational policies can be identified [1]. Thus, the following types appear: positive educational policy, which responds to a given problem, or negative, which eliminates the effects of certain actions; explicit educational policy, which formulates predetermined or implicit codes that do not formulate, but are based on unwritten codes, not explained by regulations; normative policy, which establishes conditions and criteria, or procedural that establishes procedures, modes of action; public policies belonging to the state and nonpublic policies belonging to civil society; centralized policies, which are coordinated and implemented by a superior forum, a central institution, or decentralized, which are carried out at each level, domain, geographical area through responsibility and other institutions, local, local [2]. In general, the content of the educational policy aims to organize the education system, the functioning of the institutions at all levels, the financing of the education, the evaluation, the management, the curriculum, the selection, the training, the improvement and the promotion of the teaching staff. In the specific case, in order to ensure the connection and continuity between higher education cycles from the perspective of the qualifications framework, several basic dimensions have been identified: educational and institutional policies, qualifications and finalities, education plans, training contents, training process, internships. [3]. For higher education, the educational and institutional policies, the subject addressed in this article, results from the university's mission which is based on three pillars: training - capable and responsible specialists, with critical thinking, leadership skills and understanding of problems related to the progress of society; research - fundamental and applied in exact, experimental, social and humanities sciences; contribution to the development of the society - center of value formation, accumulation and dissemination of the values of human culture and civilization, elaboration of public policy proposals, technological innovation.

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## **Chapter 1. Educational policies in pre-university education in Romania**

"Education is everything you see and hear" said great patriot Nicolae Iorga. Education can be regarded as a strategic development factor. Education has been and remains an area of major interest, always being on the public agenda. Education starts at birth and continues throughout life through the accumulation of knowledge. In all areas of society, the pace of change, the magnitude of them, as well as the absolute unpredictability of the problems that humanity faces require the development and cultivation of skills and abilities that allow the one who is subject to the challenges to be capable of permanent adaptation. The Internet, computers, tablets, smartphones, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, commercial, educational or social sites have transformed the culture and economy of the entire world. The world is shaped by the mother intelligence through the ideas developed through culture, through scientific and technical creation, through the human capacity to understand, interpret and create the world in which we live. Education must be: captivating, continuous and coherent. Addictive can become for the schoolchildren through contact with the real world, centered on "doing" in full agreement with "knowing", to motivate and interest the student and the student in the learning process. It continues by maintaining the interest and motivation throughout the schooling, from the primary cycle to the completion of higher education. Consistent with the vision to deliver a consistent message at national level, to ensure an integrated approach, with infrastructure based on modern technologies at all levels of education and to have an entrepreneurial approach focusing on creativity and innovation. Education must stimulate and ensure continuity of approaches through relevant extracurricular and interdisciplinary activities [16].

Implementing the principle of equal opportunities in education, improving educational performance, skills and competences of all children and young people, through access to a quality, relevant and inclusive education system are the key to economic growth and prosperity. Under the conditions of a sharp demographic decline, the reduction of school dropout, which has reached worrying and increasing levels, education has become an extremely important factor for Romania's sustainable development, allowing the potential of each child to be exploited. Creating new jobs, increasing employment, especially among young people, so that they can have a fulfilled professional and personal life, can only be achieved through education anchored in the realities of the labor market, which, in addition to their skills. professional, emphasizes the entrepreneurial spirit and socio-emotional competences, as well as by promoting lifelong learning. Last but not least, we envisage increasing the international prestige of Romania, by capitalizing on the potential of the field of education and research, for example, by supporting young people who can perform, but also by internationalizing Romanian universities. It is absolutely necessary to increase the budget allocations, as the importance of the fields of education and scientific research, for the development of modern Romania, so that the proposed objectives can be achieved. The efficiency of the interventions, in terms of both the results obtained and the resources invested, can only be achieved by developing integrated public policies between education, health and social.

### **1.1. Curriculum policies**

The revised variants of the Framework Plan for theoretical high school education have been completed. The Master Plans have been approved, especially moderate and mild intellectual disabilities, severe, profound, severe, associated intellectual disabilities, visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, locomotor disabilities and educational framework plans for school units and affiliated classes within detention centers. , schools and penitentiaries. The new high school curricula will contain elements to combat segregation, discrimination and gender-based violence. School programs for grades V-VIII, approved by OMEN no.

3393/2017, applies progressively from the 2017-2018 school year. The Institute of Education Sciences coordinated the elaboration of the school syllabus for the optional discipline Harmony and corporeal expressivity in sports, the 5th-8th grades, proposed for the national offer of optional. For the 2018-2019 school year, textbooks for grades I-VI were printed and distributed in 63 disciplines, as well as the related translations in the languages of national minorities. The manuals have been uploaded in pdf format, on [www.manuale.edu.ro](http://www.manuale.edu.ro). For the first time, people with hearing disabilities have digital textbooks tailored to their needs. In November 2017, MEN started the implementation of the relevant non-competitive CRED project between MFE and MEN. The project implementation period is four years. The project will revise the curriculum for primary and secondary education, train 55,000 teachers, create educational resources to support them. Currently, the training activities of teachers at national level are in full swing. The CRED project will develop framework plans and methodology for the "Second Chance" program - primary and secondary education [15].

### **1.2. The quality of the educational act**

In 2018, the project "Quality and equity for performance in rural schools" was started. The purpose of this project is to reduce the dropout in the secondary schools in the rural areas and to motivate the teachers who will spend hours, hourly, in these schools. The budget allocated to this project is 220 million Euro, for Phase I. The expected results are: 200,000 scholarships worth 2,000 lei each, to the students who have promoted the semester, have less than 10 absences / semester and have an income per member of family less than 600 lei, endowment of 1,300 gymnasium schools with educational packages for laboratories, maps, sports materials, cultural-artistic packages, endowment with furniture and computer technology, were allocated EUR 24,000 / school unit for endowments, reduced significantly the bureaucracy in the pre-university education units reduced the minimum number of procedures by 65% and the minimum number of forms by 70%. Through OMEN no. 4371/2018 was approved the methodology of exploitation of the SIIIR for the activities of pre-university education. SIIIR is functional, but the MEN will consider the possibility of introducing in this system the data on the students receiving financial support through the EURO 200, High School Money and Vocational Scholarship programs, in order to monitor the efficiency of these programs from the perspective of reducing school dropout [15].

Regarding the increase of the quality of the pre-university education, it is estimated that in the first quarter of 2019, the approval of the draft GD on the standards of authorization of provisional functioning and accreditation. The new standards simplify the activity of internal and external evaluation of the quality of education through: reorienting the activity of improving the quality towards the essential aspects, using the data and documents already existing in the educational institution, computerizing the activity of internal and external evaluation. Specific standards have been identified for: high school, vocational and technological education, vocational, post-high school, pre-preschool / preschool education, special and special education functioning within the re-education centers / penitentiaries / detention centers. ARACIP is carrying out an extensive evaluation process of pre-university educational institutions in the country. Nearly 600 schools were evaluated, and in 2018, ARACIP will continue the evaluation according to the allocated funds. Between January and September 2018, ARACIP authorized / accredited and externally evaluated 365 schools and set, for the first time, the maximum capacity of schooling of the pre-university education units [15].

### **1.3. Social programs**

MEN continues to implement annual social programs to support students from disadvantaged areas:

**Table no. 1 Social programs implemented in Romania**

Program	Beneficiaries	Year
School supplies	337.001	2018-2019
High School Money	33.057	2018-2019
Professional scholarship	85.000	2018-2019
Euro 200	2771	2018-2019
Hot meal for students	23.455	2018-2019

Source: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu>

Through these programs are created conditions for ensuring equal educational opportunities for students from high risk groups. These programs support students and families with a modest financial situation, giving them the opportunity to pursue a higher education.

#### **1.4. The ROSE project for secondary education**

In order to stimulate the graduates of the upper secondary education for the continuation of the studies in the tertiary education, it is continued the implementation of the subsidy scheme for the high schools within the Project on the Romanian secondary education - ROSE. The ROSE project is financed by a loan from the IBRD and targets interventions at the level of high schools and faculties and systemic interventions at the level of pre-university education. Activities include funding for high-performing high schools, through a grant scheme, to reduce the dropout rate, increase the graduation rate and improve the performance at the baccalaureate exam. The high schools carry out remedial activities, guidance, counseling and professional guidance, coaching and development of socio-emotional skills, extracurricular activities, information and minor renovation work, interior design of school buildings and acquisition of goods [15].

## **Chapter 2. Educational policies in university education**

### **2.1. Internationalization**

The internationalization of education is a complex concept, being viewed differently by researchers, institutional leaders, actors and organizations at regional, national and global levels. Internationalization should not be seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a way of developing the quality of higher education.

Jane Knight defined the internationalization of education as „a process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension in the purpose, functions and delivery of university education” [5]. De Wit updated Knight's definition of internationalization of education: the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension in the mission, functions and the way of providing secondary or higher education services, with the aim of increasing the quality of education and research for all students and staff, as well as to make a significant contribution to society [3].

According to Knight, internationalization has two main components, namely internationalization abroad, dealt with extensively in this chapter, namely internationalization at home, which is the subject of the next chapter. For each of the two components of internationalization, the activities through which they manifest themselves will be analyzed [14].

The National Agency for Community Programs in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (ANPCDEFP), with the support of the Center for Educational Policies (CPEDu), has published the impact study on the theme „Internationalization of universities in Romania through the programs of the European Union for education and training”.

In recent years, internationalization has become a significant indicator for the quality of higher education. One of the most visible components of the process of internationalization in

higher education is represented by the European programs of education and training, especially the mobility programs organized within Erasmus. Here we find several activities such as individual study mobility, placement, staff mobility, transnational projects, working visits, institutional partnerships, etc.

The main results of the study show that: the choice of Romanian students to spend a period of academic mobility abroad is influenced by the level of Erasmus scholarships awarded and by the lack of national co-financing in mobility options. Thus, they remain among the fewest mobile students on the continent, despite some progress in the relative rate of participation in study mobility. The mobility options of the students have been reoriented in recent years to Eastern and Southern Europe. At the level of universities, the largest number of students left in mobility come from large universities such as Univ. Alexandru Ioan Cuza from Iasi, Univ. Babeş-Bolyai from Cluj, University of Bucharest, Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest. However, when we compare the number of mobile students to the total number of students enrolled, the most performing universities are: Cluj Napoca University of Art and Design, Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy, George Enescu Iaşi University of Arts or University „1 December 1918” Alba Iulia. Among the most common problems faced by Romanian students are the lack of additional financial support, the relatively small purchasing power resulting from the transfer of incomes or savings from Romania to many other European states and the problems caused by the recognition of studies. In this regard, the study recommends facilitating student mobility by organizing national programs for co-financing mobility schemes, as well as increasing equity in student mobility. As for the foreign students who choose to come to Romania, they remain significantly less than the Romanian students who choose to go to other states. Although there is an increasing trend in the participation of foreign students in study mobility in Romania, it is important to intensify the efforts to attract students from other European states.

The mobility of the academic staff in the period 2007-2013 has increased significantly, Romania being in third place in the European Union in terms of increasing the rate of external mobility of the teachers. The impact of the mobility provided by the universities was positive, by modernizing the curriculum and increasing the number of partnerships with higher education institutions in other countries. At the same time, the number of teachers from Western, North and North-West Europe interested in coming to Romania through mobility programs has decreased considerably, as new efforts are needed to facilitate mobility and integrated cooperation both in the educational area and in the field of research.

Mobility programs, both for teachers and students, have had a major impact on universities at institutional level, in particular by facilitating access to academic and scientific communication networks and through new opportunities for institutional development. The study recommends a better adaptation of institutions in terms of interaction with students and staff from other countries, by extending the range of services and courses offered in English or other languages of international circulation and continuing institutional branding efforts. Analyzing the direct impact of the program on the degree of institutional internationalization, the study concludes that it contributed to the creation of a framework of activities that led to a wider European opening of the Romanian universities. Also, the new way of organizing European programs in the area of education and training under the umbrella of Erasmus + has been positively appreciated by higher education institutions, paving the way for new opportunities for partnership and collaboration at European level [13].

### **2.3. Funding**

The financing strategy of higher education is, under the conditions of university autonomy, one of the main tools for implementing the governmental policies regarding national education. Both the funds allocated from the state budget and those from the extra-

budgetary or from other sources are, according to the law, own revenues of the universities. Funding from public funds of state higher education institutions is made from the MEN budget and has three main directions: the basic financing covers the main expenses related to the didactic process and is allocated through grants of multiannual studies, following priority areas of study that ensure sustainable development and The competitive financing of the company, the complementary financing covers several aspects related to the didactic process, grants for accommodation and meals, funds for endowments, investments and capital repairs and funds for scientific research, additional funding is granted to stimulate the excellence of institutions and curricula, both from within the state and private universities. The financing methodology is carried out by MEN using mainly the methodological proposals elaborated by CNFIS. The effective allocation of budgetary allocations to universities is made by the MEN, based on contracts concluded with higher education institutions [12]. The consolidation and validation of the supporting information, the elaboration of the electronic applications and their use for the calculation itself, as well as the elaboration of the documentation related to the proposals regarding the annual and monthly allocations of the funds from the budget to the higher education institutions are realized by the F.I.S. of UEFISCDI, under the guidance of CNFIS. In the current activity are used a series of online tools for the collection, management and analysis of statistical data, developed in-house, essential for improving the capacity of the higher education system: Integrated Educational Register (REI), Unique Matriculation Register (RMU) - component part of REI, Students, Graduates and Labor Market (SAPM), National Platform for the Collection of Statistical Data for Higher Education (ANS), Study in Romania (SiR) [14].

The REI platform ensures interoperability between the existing management systems in the education sector - pre-university education, university education and lifelong learning - as well as with the related management systems, through a cloud solution, in order to track the educational and professional path of a person [14].

The RMU platform ensures the integrated management of the data regarding the students of the state and private universities in Romania, for all the university years and for all the cycles of studies, constituting a sustained initiative of collection and centralization in order to make the administrative activity more efficient and to improve the capacity to base institutional strategies and national policies in the field [14].

The SAPM platform supports the development of institutional mechanisms within the Romanian universities by providing access to questionnaire generation tools for periodically implementing studies on the professional insertion of higher education graduates [14].

The ANS platform represents an integrated information system, developed in a modular manner, compatible with data collection systems at European level, dedicated to higher education in Romania, which gathers the main statistical data on higher education accessible to all interested actors.

The Study in Romania platform promotes Romanian higher education globally, contributing to attracting national and international students in study programs from the educational offer of Romanian universities [14].

## **Conclusions**

The analysis of the theoretical approaches, of the practical experiences and of the current situation with reference to the educational policies in the context of the need to adapt the vocational training to the demands of the labor market allows us to find that there are some discontinuities and non-adjustments between them and the current and prospective demands of the labor market.

In conclusion, it is necessary to perfect and develop educational policies in these areas, but also to capitalize on the opportunities that broad partnerships with the economic environment and civil society

can offer. I should mention that a number of areas of educational policies to be set up for clear educational purposes in terms of competences / standards, orientation of vocational training to economic, social, cultural issues, implementation of mechanisms for selecting the most relevant to be debated Good candidates, focusing more on stimulating the student's thinking than on the ability to accumulate information, reviewing / adjusting the specializations at the National Qualifications Framework, directing the scientific research towards solving the social, economic, cultural problems of the country. The available statistical data describe a system of higher education, from an institutional point of view, in the face of significant challenges: increasing the number of students, the geographical concentration of IIS, the competition between public and private IIS in a relatively small space. The proof is the numerous faculties in the structure of an IIS, faculties which in turn carry out countless study programs. The mere assertion of some concepts or principles will not cause a significant change at the institutional level. Establishing by normative acts a "mission" of IIS will not solve the problem of diversity of contents, but will determine an even greater degree of conformity and similarities between IIS.

Following the analysis I propose some suggestions for improvement regarding the internationalization of universities, namely: creating more international opportunities, more foreign professors to teach within universities, partnerships between renowned universities abroad and those in Romania, more courses in English , more diversity (suggested by the presence of several international students), promotion of international programs and opportunities, professionalization of teachers on teaching English and other languages, development of MOOCs and online courses, development of events in which students participated in mobility or successful people, to share the experience gained (examples of good practice), to supplement the staff working in the international relations departments and to create a "buddhist" system and system ”.

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