



European
Commission



Education and Training Monitor 2014

Romania

1. Key indicators and benchmarks

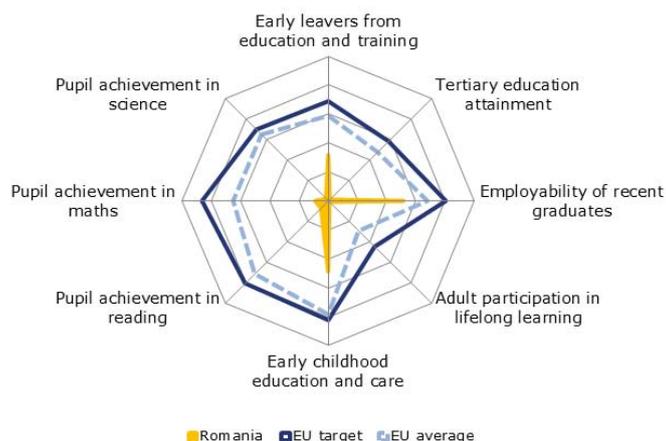
		Romania		Trend	EU28 average		Europe 2020 target / Benchmark	
		2010	2013		2010	2013		
<i>Europe 2020 headline target</i>								
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)		18.4%	17.3%	▼	13.9%	12.0%	EU target: 10% National target: 11.3%	
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)		18.1%	22.8%	▲	33.6%	36.9%	EU target: 40% National target: 26.7%	
<i>ET 2020 Benchmarks</i>								
3. Early childhood education and care (4-years-old until the starting age of compulsory education)		88.0% ⁰⁹	85.5% ¹²	▼	92.1% ⁰⁹	93.9% ¹²	95%	
4. Basic skills		Reading	40.4% ⁰⁹	37.3% ¹²	▼	19.7% ⁰⁹	17.8% ¹²	15%
Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)		Mathematics	47.0% ⁰⁹	40.8% ¹²	▼	22.3% ⁰⁹	22.1% ¹²	15%
		Science	41.4% ⁰⁹	37.3% ¹²	▼	17.8% ⁰⁹	16.6% ¹²	15%
5. Learning mobility		Initial vocational training (IVET)	0.2%	0.3% ¹²	▲	0.6%	0.7% ¹²	
		Higher Education	-	0.2% ¹²	:	-	1.2% ¹²	
		a. Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programmes as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3						
		b. Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country						
		c. Inbound international degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country	1.3%	2.4% ¹²	▲	6.0%	6.9% ¹²	
6. Employment rate of recent graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year		ISCED 3-6	71.2%	66.8%	▼	77.4%	75.5%	82%
		ISCED 3-4	61.3%	55.5%	▼	72.1%	69.5%	
		ISCED 5-6	81.9%	76.2%	▼	82.7%	80.9%	
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			1.3%	2.0%	▲	9.1%	10.5% ^b	15%
<i>Other ET 2020 Indicators</i>								
8. Investment in education and training		a. General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	3.3%	3.0% ¹²	▼	5.5%	5.3% ¹²	
		b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€ 1,717	€ 1,551 ¹¹	▼	€6,063.74 ^e	€6,297.16 ^{11, e}
			ISCED 3-4	€ 1,723	€ 1,540 ¹¹	▼	€7,022.35 ^e	€6,650.87 ^{11, e}
			ISCED 5-6	€ 3,033	€ 3,255 ¹¹	▲	€9,764.30 ^e	€9,474.80 ^{11, e}
9. Transversal competences		Digital competences	a. Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school	:	37.8% ¹¹	:	60.7% ⁰⁷	64.7% ¹¹
			b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills ¹	9.0% ⁰⁹	8.0% ¹²	▼	25.0% ⁰⁹	26.0% ¹²
		Problem solving in technology rich environments	c. Low achievers (no or insuff. computer experience) ²	:	:	:	:	16.9% ^{12, EU17}
			d. High achievers (PIAAC level 2 and above)	:	:	:	:	33.2% ^{12, EU13}
		Entrepreneurial competences	e. Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business	:	46.0%	:	:	42.3% ^{a, EU18}
		Foreign language skills	f. ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language ³	:	:	:	:	43.5% ^{11, EU13}
			g. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages	94.7%	95.4% ¹²	▲	60.6%	63.0% ¹¹
10. Basic skills of adults		Literacy	Low achievers (< PIAAC proficiency level 2)	:	:	:	:	19.9% ^{12, EU17}
			High achievers (PIAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	:	:	:	43.3% ^{12, EU17}
		Numeracy	Low achievers (< PIAAC proficiency level 2)	:	:	:	:	23.6% ^{12, EU17}
			High achievers (PIAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	:	:	:	40.9% ^{12, EU17}
11. Skills for future labour market		High qualification			+23.5%			+12.4%
		Medium qualification			-0.1%			+2.1%
		Low qualification			-14.1%			-13.2%
12. Teachers		a. Teachers aged >50 teaching in public and private at ISCED 2-3 - as % of total teachers teaching in ISCED 2-3 ⁴	30.3%	29.0% ¹²	▼	:	:	:
		b. Percentage of teachers who undertook some professional development activities in the previous 12 months	:	83.3%	:	:	:	84.6% ^{EU19}
13. Vocational education and training		Percentage of vocational students at ISCED 3	63.8%	61.9% ¹²	▼	50.1%	50.4% ¹²	

Source: Cedefop: 11 / EAC: 5ab / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 9f / Eurostat (COFOG): 8a / Eurostat (ISS): 9b / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 5, 8b, 9g, 12a, 13 / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 9e / IEA TIMSS: 9a / OECD (PIAAC): 9cd, 10 / OECD (PISA): 4 / OECD (TALIS): 12b

Notes: ⁰⁷ =2007, ⁰⁸ =2008, ⁰⁹ =2009, ¹⁰ =2010, ¹¹ =2011, ¹² =2012, a= unweighted average, b= break, e= estimate, p= provisional.

¹= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities. Caution is advised when interpreting comparability over time, due to developments in the implementation of questions related to computer skills, ²= results cover people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test, ³= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, ⁴= in some Member States, ISCED 3 includes level 4 (CZ, EE, ES, IE, NL, FI, UK), while in others (IT, LU, NL) only public institutions figures are reported.

Figure: Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG Education and Culture calculations, based on data from Eurostat (LFS 2013 and UOE 2012) and OECD (PISA 2012). Note: all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

Romania's tertiary attainment rate rose consistently by at least one percentage point a year between 2010 and 2013. In contrast, the availability of vocational education and training, its relevance to the labour market and business involvement in work-based learning and apprenticeships remain low. Important skills mismatches persist for tertiary graduates and the link between business and academia remains weak, as shown by a high unemployment rate and many university graduates working in professions for which they have not been trained or in jobs requiring lower levels of qualification. Participation in lifelong learning activities continues to be among the lowest in the EU. The early school leaving rate, affecting Roma people in particular, is still one of the highest in the EU and is now higher than it was before 2010.

The 2014 European Semester country-specific recommendations (CSR) on education and training focus on:

- (i) increasing the quality and access to vocational education and training (VET), apprenticeships, tertiary education and of lifelong learning and adapt them to labour market needs;
- (ii) ensuring better access to early childhood education and care;
- (iii) increasing school attendance and reducing early school leaving (including for Roma), through a partnership approach and a robust monitoring mechanism.

3. Improving resource efficiency and effectiveness

3.1 Investment in education

General government expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP is the lowest in the EU by a substantial margin and has fallen steadily since the onset of the crisis, reaching 3% in 2012¹. According to Romania's 2014-2017 Convergence Programme, total public expenditure increased to 3.3% of GDP in 2013 and is expected to stay at that level until 2020.

Schools in disadvantaged communities have limited resources and usually fail to implement any additional support activities addressed for students at risk of dropping out. They can cover only their basic needs (administrative costs and teachers' salaries) and have insufficient resources for such initiatives.

Investment has decreased in a number of areas, including early childhood care and education, basic skills and early leavers from education and training².

¹ Eurostat data

² Eurostat data

3.2 A focus on teachers

The 2013 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)³ produced the following main findings for Romania:

- Appraisal is universal (according to school leaders) and only 3% of teachers have never received feedback in their current school (as against an EU average of 17%). A high proportion of teachers feel they can motivate students who show little interest in school work (89% as compared with a 71% EU average). Moreover, a relatively high proportion of teachers think the teaching profession is valued in society (35% as compared with an EU average of 18%).
- The proportions of teachers taking part in a formal induction programme in their first regular post (51%) and undertaking some professional development activities in the last 12 months (83%) are close to the EU average. Only 26% of teachers use ICT for students' projects or class work (the EU average is 34%).
- The high proportion of teachers working in school where school leaders report a shortage of qualified staff (58%, as compared with a 36% EU average) suggests a potential area of challenge.

Universities train future lower secondary teachers through an optional pedagogical module alongside students' main subject specialisation. Teaching is not a financially attractive profession in Romania and students generally add the module to give themselves another option on the labour market. The module is very theory based and quality varies widely from across universities, depending on their ability to attract professional trainers with relevant experience in modern teaching methods.

Initial training for future primary teachers is delivered by post high school colleges and lasts three years. It does not pay enough attention to specific topics such as the integration of children with special needs, the inclusion of the Roma minority or dealing with pupils' learning difficulties.

A European Social Fund project carried out in the context of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) tests involved training in which teachers were presented with a range of examples of good practice in maths, science and reading, and invited to adapt, develop and contextualise new problems to ensure more effective learning. The teachers implemented new approaches in their classes while being coached online.

4. Increasing employability

4.1 Work-based learning, apprenticeships and adult learning

The participation of upper secondary students in vocational education and training remains above the EU average (61.9% as against 50.4% in 2012)⁴. However, VET students' labour market transition depends on the final national examination (baccalaureate) and VET high schools have the lowest pass rate (38% as compared to with 76% in general education in 2013). Also, their dropout rate was 5.3% in 2012, as compared with only 2.1% in general upper-secondary education.⁵

According to Romania's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, the employment rate among young people with upper-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4) was 29.4% in 2012, as against 43.5% for the EU-28 as a whole. The proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) was 16.8%, 0.4 percentage points down from 2011 (17.2%) and was 3.6 percentage points above the EU average. The NEET rate for young women was higher: 18.6%, as compared with 13.5% in the EU-28.

As regards the participation of adults aged 25-64 in lifelong learning (LLL), Romania has not made significant progress in recent years. The 2013 rate of 2%⁶ is the second lowest in the EU and falls significantly short of the EU average (10.4%). Adults', in particular women's, participation in LLL is very low, especially among those with lower qualification and from rural areas.

Government Ordinance No. 117/2013 created the legal framework for a new VET strand in the education system. The new three year' VET courses will be starting with the 2014-15 school year, with curricula covering the

³ <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm>

⁴ Eurostat data

⁵ This means that 26.185 VET students didn't finish their studies, National Institute of Statistics

⁶ Eurostat data

learning objectives and involving teaching hours that correspond to high school grades IX and X. This was necessary for the VET strand to be considered part of the compulsory education system and to allow students graduating from the schools to continue their education in grades XI and XII of high school. Unfortunately, the curriculum is still overloaded, with a high proportion of theory-based learning, and no specific regulations on work-based learning have been introduced.

The work-based learning vocational training scheme launched in 2012 did not attract many students. Also availability depends on the level of interest among companies, which is quite low, especially in view of the economic and financial crisis. Counselling and guidance are a challenge (as is the case with the general education strand).

Romania will implement the 2014-15 Youth Guarantee, which will provide young people with a reasonable variety of opportunities to find a job or to benefit from better job placement services, including via the introduction of a mandatory component of guidance in line with the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013. The Guarantee will place a greater emphasis on initiatives that combine employment with training thus allowing young people to hone the skills they have acquired through their initial education and develop new skills through apprenticeships and traineeships.

Planned policy initiatives will foster the development of apprenticeship for graduates of secondary and vocational initial education and traineeship for graduates of tertiary education. The plan is to involve stakeholders in providing services and a wider range of interests in drawing up and implementing reforms and initiatives. Monitoring and assessment mechanisms are also foreseen. Challenges to implementation of the Youth Guarantee include insufficient administrative capacity, lack of a wide range of activation measures and of training and education for young people, and limited private sector involvement in apprenticeships, dual training initiatives, and traineeships for university graduates.

Both supply and demand barriers are currently influencing LLL development, including a lack of flexible and relevant training programmes based on social partnership and limited access to systems of prior learning validation and certification. An LLL strategy being developed with the assistance of the World Bank, which should be adopted by the end of 2014 will focus on incentives for LLL participation and access, strengthening the relevance of initial VET in general and improving partnership among all stakeholders in LLL.

4.2 Modernising and internationalising higher education

Romania's tertiary attainment rate is the second-lowest in the EU (22.8% in 2013 for 30-34 year-olds, with women slightly outperforming men). It rose consistently by at least one percentage point a year between 2010 and 2013, edging closer to the 2020 national target of 26.7%.⁷ Recent data point to a negative prognosis with gross enrolment and graduation rates falling significantly in the last three years, jeopardising achievement of the target. In the 2012-13 academic year, only 31% of young people aged 19-23 were enrolled in higher education, as compared with 53.3% in 2007. As in other educational sectors, the gross enrolment rate in higher education hides a growing gap between urban and rural areas: 43.4% of students from urban areas, but only 16% of those from rural areas.⁸

The relevance of university education for the labour market is a major concern. Degrees are insufficiently aligned with the needs of employers and labour market demands, and this mismatch has increased in recent years. According to Romania's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, the employment rate among university graduates aged between 15-24 was 39.7% in 2012 and has been falling in the past few years, in particular for women.

Guidance and counselling services are still underdeveloped at this level of education and students face serious career shifts after graduation, most getting a job in areas others than those in which they were actually trained for; or accepting jobs requiring lower qualifications.

Other important challenges relate to the low proportion of higher education teachers involved in scientific research, and the limited cooperation between academia and the private sector in innovation areas. The internationalisation of Romanian universities is also a slow process, with few active partnerships with foreign universities.

In line with the Council's 2013 country specific recommendations, efforts have been made to implement new institutional mechanisms in higher education to advance the reforms started in 2011.

⁷ Eurostat data
⁸ National Institute of Statistics

Romania has implemented several strategic projects in higher education, that are geared to increasing institutional and management capacity at both university and system level. Work under the strategic "Graduates and the work market" project, aimed at providing a comprehensive database on graduates from higher education and their employment status one year on, is being taken forward in 2014/15 under a new strategic project with largely the same objectives. The focus is on developing a methodology for recording and analysing higher education graduates transition to the labour market to inform future policy-making. Analyses and reports are being made available to universities directly, so that (in accordance with university autonomy and strategic development), they can adjust their educational programmes. The project also aims to integrate the information and knowledge gained from the National Registry of Higher Education Students.

'Informed public policies for higher education', a second strategic project, records information on students' educational trajectory, from first enrolment in higher education institutions to final graduation. Concluded in May 2014, the primary objective was to set up a body - the National Council for Statistics and Prognosis for Higher Education - and provide it with the data and tools it needs to function. The Council now has at its disposal an integrated database system, collecting data from all universities on a single platform.

4.3 Transversal competences, skills relevance and learning mobility, new ways of teaching and technologies

A CEDEFOP study⁹ on skills mismatches in Europe shows that only a third of Romanian workers have skills that matching their current job. 39.8% are over-skilled, while only 13.5% are under-skilled. This is reflected in the low rate of Romanian companies facing difficulties in recruiting staff for skilled jobs; 30%, as compared with 36% at EU level. On the other hand, over 11% declared difficulties in recruiting staff for unskilled jobs; the EU average is 10%. CEDEFOP forecasts that employment in high qualification jobs in Romania will grow faster than the EU average to 2020, while employment in medium-qualification jobs is expected to fall faster than the average.

A National Qualifications Framework has been completed and adopted by Government Decision (GD 918/2013). It will cover all national qualifications sub-systems, adjacent instruments (qualifications registries) and institutions with responsibilities in the area of education and training.

According to data from the National Authority for Qualifications, 146 assessment centres had been authorised by 2013 and 49 900 people had had their competencies assessed and certified, including about 21 900 people in 2010-2013 alone. There are centres in 25 of the 41 Romanian counties, with a highly uneven geographical distribution (most are in the Bucharest- Ilfov region). Although the number of people requiring certificates based on informal and non-formal learning increased significantly in the last three years, access to integrative validation services remains a challenge; especially in the case of disadvantaged groups such as low skilled workers and the rural population. The uneven geographical spread of the centres and a lack of awareness among beneficiaries are significant barriers to greater participation in validation processes. Validation services are focused on formal qualifications - there are only a few examples of learning outcomes from experiences such as voluntary work being validated.

In 2011, Romania registered the highest proportion in Europe (61%) of 16-74 year-olds with no computer skills. Only around four in 10 adults have some computer skills, and only around one in 10 has high skills.¹⁰ According to a study on ICT in education, the availability of computers is considerably less than the EU average at all educational levels, with 10 to 17 students having to share a computer in schools. Computers tend to be installed in special labs rather than in classrooms to be used during the lessons. Another major problem is the very low number of computers in schools connected to the internet, as compared to the situation in other EU countries. The new law on national education made ICT a compulsory subject starting with lower secondary education. As from 2012, ICT is also an optional subject in the national curriculum for primary education. Using ICT in education and training has been a priority for teacher training programmes and large-scale ICT infrastructure has recently been set up in Romania.

There is not yet a specific or coherent policy to foster entrepreneurial skills in education and training in Romania, but specific measures have been taken at national level to address initial and ongoing training. Entrepreneurial education is a new subject introduced in the national lower and upper secondary education curriculum and there is some C-VET provision on developing entrepreneurial skills for adults.

⁹ Skill mismatch. The role of the enterprise 2012 http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5521_en.PDF

¹⁰ Survey of schools: ICT in education. Country profile: Romania, 2012
<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/Romania%20country%20profile.pdf>

5. Tackling inequalities

5.1 Starting strong: improving early childhood education and care and tackling early school leaving

The early school leaving rate remains well above the EU average (17.3% as against 12% in 2013). According to the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma survey (2011), the rate among Roma people is almost twice as high as that among non-Roma. The rate is three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas. A strategy on early school leaving is being developed with the assistance of the World Bank.

According to Romania's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, almost 90% of unregistered unemployed Roma have a low level of education. Over half of all Roma people still lack the minimum compulsory level of education. 82.4% of Roma children attend school, while 6.9% had dropped out at the time the data were collected, and 8.9% have never been enrolled in the education system. 85.7% of the parents whose children have dropped out cite poverty-related factors (lack of resources for the costs associated with education, or a need for the child to take part in income-generating activities for the household) and only 14% said it was because education was not important. Parents who have never enrolled their children in school point to a lack of resources or a need for the children to contribute to income-generating activities or help look after younger siblings.

The 2012-20 Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian Roma minority citizens promotes a set of integrated policies in education, employment, health, housing, culture and social infrastructure. The following specific national programmes of material and financial support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have been continued:

- the 'Money for school program' (a program of financial support for poor students to continue their studies at secondary level);
- the 'Euro 200' program (program to support poor students to purchase computers); and
- the 'Croissant and milk' program.

A significant number of other programmes to ensure equal access to various levels of study have been continued, for example setting aside a certain number of places each year in secondary and tertiary education specifically designed for students from low income backgrounds and young Roma.

A recent (2012) study conducted by the Roma Education Fund in Romania found a correlation between Roma children feeling positive in school and their tendency to continue education at a higher level. Students who are not happy at school are twice as likely as those enjoying school to drop out of the system early. The National Agency for Quality Assurance is currently revising its quality indicators to give more weight to the well-being of the child.

Romania has one of the lowest proportions of 4-6 years enrolled in preschool education: 85.5% in 2012, well below the EU-28 average of 93.9%.¹¹ The gross enrolment rate for 3-6 years old children improved significantly from 74.7% in 2005-06 to 78.4% in 2011-12. In 2012-13, there was a spike as a result of the introduction of the 'preparatory class' in the primary education system, encouraging parents to bring their children to kindergarten before starting school. This structural change has a direct impact on the calculation of the gross enrolment rate in pre-school education, adjusting the theoretical age range from 3-6 year olds to 3-5 years. Gross enrolment for the new (3-5 year old) age group reached 90% in 2012-13. The gap between urban and rural access to kindergarten is discernible: in rural areas, 86.7% of children between 3-5 years olds attend preschool education while in urban areas the figure is 93.2%.¹²

5.2 Basic skills of students

The 2012 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)¹³ survey on the maths, science and reading skills of 15 year-olds revealed that Romania fall far short of the EU average, 37.3% are low achievers in reading (EU average: 17.8%), 40.8% in maths (EU average: 22.1%) and 37.3% in science (EU average: 16.6%).

PISA 2012 also shows big disparities in learning outcomes between students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds. 15 year-olds in the bottom 20% of the scale scored an average of 404 in maths, as compared with 506 on average among those in the top 20%. For reading, the gap is even wider (392 average for the bottom 20% and 496 for the top 20%).

¹¹ Eurostat data

Law on National Education no. 1/2011 strengthened a competence based curriculum in order to address quality issues in education. Transversal approaches under the curriculum and new transversal assessment tests have recently been implemented.

¹² National Institute of Statistics

¹³ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>