European Commission

Education and Training Monitor 2013

Romania

Education and Training

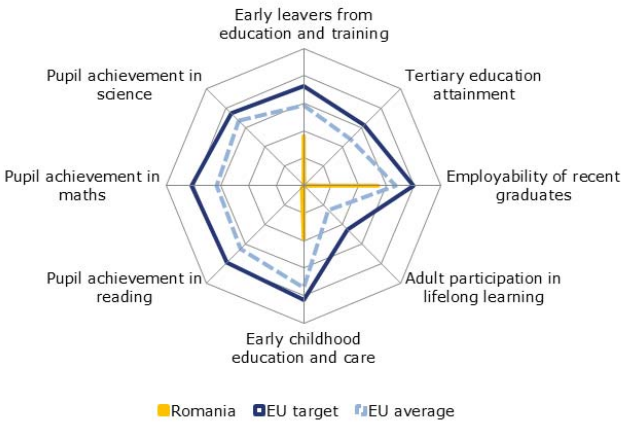
1. Key indicators and benchmarks

Europe 2020 headline targets			Romania 2009	Romania 2012	EU average 2009	EU average 2012	Europe 2020 target / Benchmark
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)			16.6%	17.4%	14.2% EU28	12.7% EU28	**EU target: 10%** National target: 11.3%
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)			16.8%	21.8%	32.1% EU28	35.7% EU28	**EU target: 40%** National target: 26.7%
ET 2020 Benchmarks							
3. Early childhood education and care (4 years old - year before start of compulsory primary)			82.3%	82.0% 11	91.7%	93.2% 11	**95%**
4. Basic skills Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)	Reading		40.4%	:	19.6%	:	**15%**
	Mathematics		47.0%	:	22.2%	:	**15%**
	Science		41.4%	:	17.7%	:	**15%**
5. Learning mobility	Initial vocational training (IVET)	**a.** Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programs as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3	0.2%	0.3% 11	0.6%	0.7% 11	
	Higher Education	**b.** Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country		0.2% 11		1.1% 11	
		c. Inbound degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country		1.8% 11		7.0% 11	
6. Employment rate of graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year			77.6%	69.4%	78.3%	75.7%	**82%**
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			1.5%	1.4%	9.3%	9.0%	**15%**
Proposed ET 2020 benchmark							
8. Foreign languages skills	**a.** ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language[1]		:	:	:	43.5% 11	
	b. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages		96.0%	95.5% 11	58.6%	60.8% 10	
Other ET 2020 Indicators							
9. Investment in education and training	**a.** General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)		4.1%	4.1% 11	5.5%	5.3% 11	
	b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€ 2,221 08	€ 1,674 10	€ 5,732 08	€ 6,021 10	
		ISCED 3-4	€ 2,106 08	€ 1,680 10	€ 6,964 08	€ 7,123 10	
		ISCED 5-6	€ 3,673 08	€ 2,956 10	€ 9,309 08	€ 9,168 10	
10. 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[2]		9.0%	8.0%	25.0%	26.0%	
11. Entrepreneurial competences	Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business		27.0%	38.0%	42.3% a	42.0% a	
12. Vocational education and training	Share of vocational students at ISCED 3		63.7%	63.1% 11	49.6%	50.3% 11	
13. Skills for future labour markets Projected change in employment 2010-2020 in %	High qualification		:	23.1%	:	19.1% EU28	
	Medium qualification		:	-1.8%	:	4.6% EU28	
	Low qualification		:	-11.5%	:	-20.2% EU28	
14. Low-skilled adults	Literacy		:	:	:	19.9% EU17	
	Numeracy		:	:	:	23.6% EU17	
	Problem solving in technology rich environments[3]		:	:	:	26.9% EU13	

Source: Cedefop: 13 / EAC: 10a,b / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 8a / Eurostat (Government finance statistics): 9a / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (ISS): 10b / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 8b, 9b, 10c, 12 / IEA TIMSS: 10a / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 11 / OECD (PIAAC): 14 / OECD (PISA): 4

Notes: 07 =2007, 08 =2008, 09 =2009, 10 =2010, 11 =2011, e= estimate, a= unweighted average b= break, p= provisional
Number of countries included in EU average: PISA=25, Entrepreneurship=18, Language skills=13, ICT/Computers at school=13, others: EU27
[1]= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, [2]= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities, [3]= Results cover people with scores below level 1 as well as people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test

Figure 1. Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG EAC calculations on the basis of data from Eurostat (LFS 2012 and UOE 2011) and OECD (PISA 2009). *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 faces a major challenge in raising the quality of education and training. The new education law adopted in 2011 is a major reform of the entire education system, setting a long term agenda for upgrading the quality of education at all levels. In order to be an effective and successful reform, implementation needs to be continued, with building up of administrative capacity and evidence-based policymaking at both central and local level.

Early school leaving is significantly above the EU average. Problems persist especially in rural areas and for Roma people. Access to quality and affordable early childhood education and care remains problematic. Mismatches between skills and labour market demand are characteristic of a large proportion of vocational and tertiary education programmes, with the poor level of vocational skills being a specific challenge. The high unemployment rate among tertiary graduates and the rate of over-qualification make a further alignment of tertiary education with the labour market a high priority.

The country-specific recommendation (CSR) on education and training in the 2013 European Semester thus recommends to speed up the education reform, including the building up of administrative capacity at both central and local level, and evaluate the impact of the reforms. Furthermore it is proposed to step up reforms in vocational education and training, further align tertiary education with the needs of the labour market and improve access for disadvantaged people and implement a national strategy on early school leaving focusing on better access to quality early childhood education, including for Roma children.

3. Investing in skills and qualifications

Investing in education and training in a context of economic crisis

General government expenditure on education as a share of GDP in Romania is well below the EU average (4.1% vs. 5.3% in 2011) and is the third-lowest in the EU. The education budget has decreased considerably in the last three years, becoming one of the smallest in the EU. This low level of expenditure is reflected at the primary and secondary levels where it was the lowest in the EU in 2010, and at tertiary level where it was significantly lower than the EU average. At pre-primary level expenditure was however higher than the EU average. This issue is aggravated by the low absorption of EU Funds in the education sector.

Skills

According to the OECD PISA tests there has been an improvement from 2006 to 2009 in pupil achievement in reading, maths and science. However Romania still remains with 41.4% of low achievers the worst performer in science, and with 40.4% and 47.0% in reading and maths respectively the second worst performer in the EU.

At 8% in 2012 Romania has the lowest share of individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills. The average level of foreign languages learnt per pupil at ISCED level 2 in Romania has been constant over the last years and is above the EU average. Upgrading of skills is a big challenge that Romania is going to face, especially in the perspective of future economic changes which will have an impact on the labour market. According to CEDEFOP skill forecasts, Romania will register a deficit of medium and high level skills in 2020.

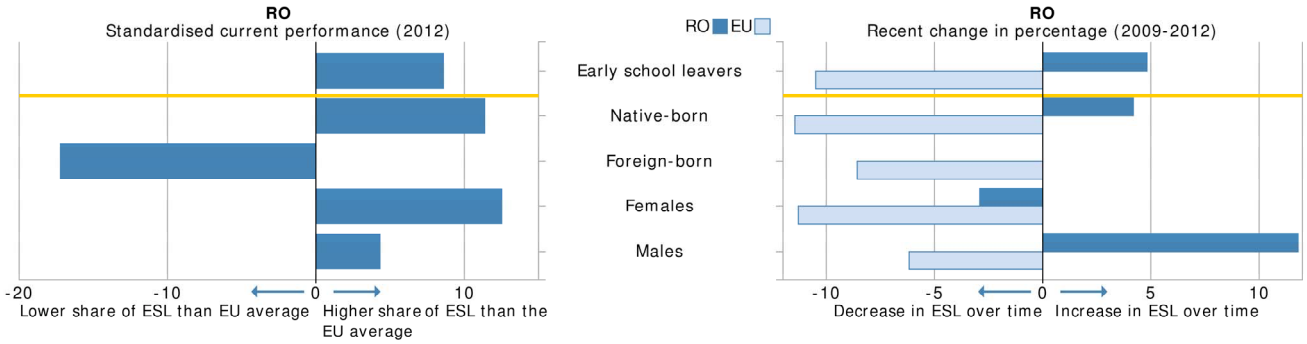
Romania has developed a comprehensive learning outcomes-based national qualifications framework. This brings together nationally recognised qualifications from both initial and continuing VET, apprenticeship at the workplace, general and higher education, and helps integrate the validation of non-formal learning into the

national qualification system. The National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education which describes 573 qualifications in terms of competences is related to the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education will be integrated in the National Qualifications Framework which is being elaborated.

4. Tackling early school leaving and raising the bar in school education

Early school leaving (ESL) is a significant challenge; at 17.4% in 2012, the Romanian ESL rate is well above both the EU average of 12.7%. The national target of 11.3% for 2020 will be difficult to attain without major efforts. Problems persist especially in rural and remote areas and for the Roma. Romania also lacks an adequate data collection mechanism regarding early school leavers; a comprehensive strategy, to be finalised by end 2013, could help in this regard.

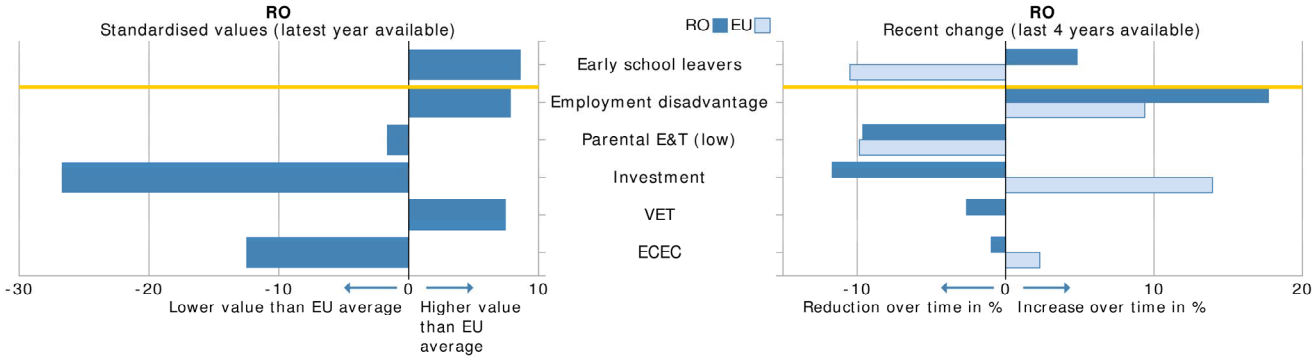
Figure 2. Early leavers from education and training: sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* ESL = early school leaving. See Annex 2 for further information.

The JAF sub-indicators show a very low level of investment which has been decreasing further. Likewise early childhood care and education is low and decreasing as well.

Figure 3. Early leavers from education and training: sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

To prevent and combat ESL and to support re-enrolment in school, yearly social support programmes are provided which are conceived to assist students from disadvantaged areas - i.e. *School supplies*, *Money for High-school*, *Euro 200*, the *Croissant and milk* programme and programmes designed to ensure the transportation of students and pupils, i.e. *Reimbursement of travel expenses* and *School shuttles.* Through the *Law on National Education*, programmes with direct implications on preventing and combating ESL, namely *School after School*, *Second Chance* and *Functional Literacy* are foreseen.

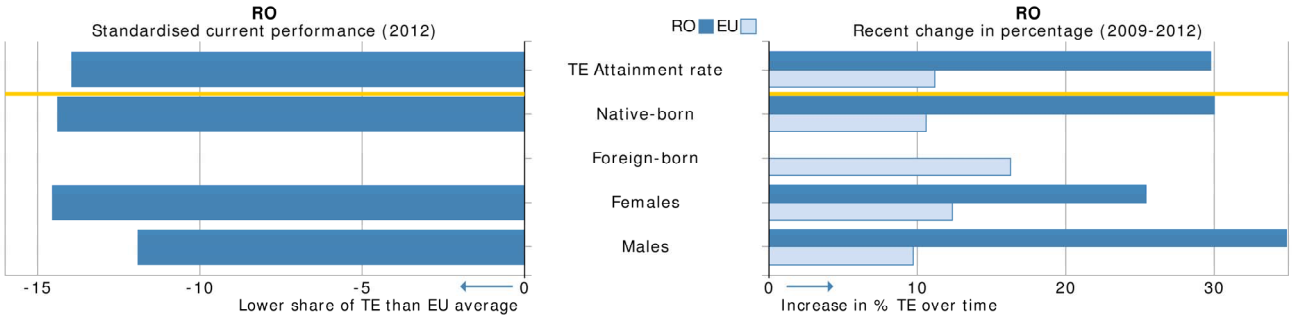
Efforts are being made in reforming early education and an agreement on the preparatory class was reached in January 2013. The preparatory class for children aged 6 is maintained within the compulsory primary education. At the beginning of the school year 2012-2013, implementation of some priority actions for the entire primary and secondary education levels was started, aiming at increasing access of all children to quality education and raising school attainment rate. Schools were notified to apply initial assessment tests for students at the beginning of the school year and to take remedy actions conceived to foster school attainment. A framework programme to county school inspectorates to be detailed at local level (i.e. county, school and teacher levels) was issued and is designed to improve the results of national evaluation exams.

5. Encouraging participation in tertiary education and modernising higher education

Although tertiary education has been expanding rapidly in the past years with 21.8% in 2012, approaching the attainment of the 2020 national target of 26.7%, the participation rate in Romania is still among the lowest in

Europe (around 14 percentage points below the EU average). There is a significant mismatch between the education offer of universities and the labour market needs which is visible in the unemployment rates (particularly high among university graduates).

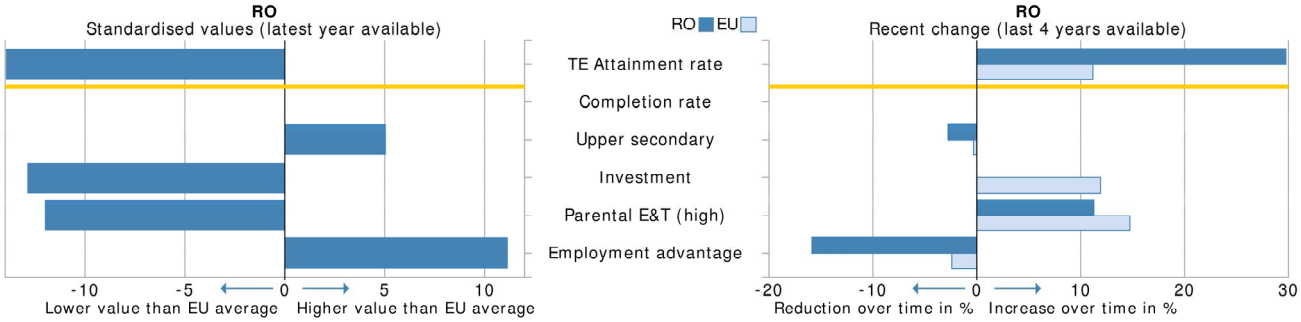
Figure 4. Tertiary education attainment: sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* TE = tertiary education. See Annex 2 for further information.

The JAF sub-indicators highlight the low level of investment which is further decreasing and that upper secondary is much more prevalent than tertiary attainment (although the latter has been increasing). The employment advantage of tertiary attainment is strong but has been decreasing considerably.

Figure 5. Tertiary education attainment: sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

The new education law adopted in 2011 is a step forward in strengthening quality in higher education and the new university ranking allows a more strategic use of funding in supporting quality. The reform also overhauls the management of higher education institutions and raises requirements for the organisation of masters and doctoral courses.

Attracting more students from lower income families in higher education, particularly from rural areas, remains an important challenge. Recent surveys found considerable differences between Roma and non-Roma in Romania, with less than 10% of the Roma household members aged 20 to 24 being reported to have completed general or vocational upper-secondary education, compared to more than 60% of non-Roma.

In order to monitor the higher-education graduates' insertion on labour market – the *National Study of Monitoring the Labour Market Insertion of Higher Education Graduates* also known as *University Graduates and Labour Market – Romanian Tracer Study* is being implemented, and a *National Forecast and Statistics Council in Higher Education* was founded and its internal regulations were approved.

Social scholarships and programmes for students through which the state supports students' transportation, meals and accommodation are offered; 564 distinct vacancies for Roma candidates were foreseen in state universities in the 2012-2013 academic year.

6. Facilitating the transition from education to work and reshaping vocational training

To address youth unemployment, the Romanian government amended the law on apprenticeships in the workplace, implemented measures to monitor the insertion of higher education graduates on the labour market, as well as measures for job subsidising and training for young people. Information campaigns were also carried out in educational establishments.

The authorities are currently preparing the National Jobs Plan focused on the situation of youth in order to translate the main actions mentioned in the Youth Opportunities Initiative and the Youth Employment Package

(in particular the implementation of the Youth Guarantee). However, the effectiveness of the Plan may benefit from better coordination and partnership across policy fields for ensuring quality jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships and an improved cooperation between schools/universities, enterprises and employment agencies, including through practical training in companies.

Quality issues and skills mismatches with labour market demand affect a large share of vocational and tertiary education. The main challenge in increasing the supply of skills remains the underfinancing of the sector. In the school year 2012-2013 there was the re-launch of the 2 years Vocational Education and Training (VET) system based on contracts concluded with business enterprises/public bodies, the latter providing internships for VET students. The students are granted monthly scholarships (approx. 45 Euro/student). Roughly 12,500 students are enrolled in the current VET school year.

7. Upgrading skills through lifelong learning

Adult participation in lifelong learning remains stagnant at very low levels, registering a significant gap compared to EU average (1.4% vs. 9% in 2012). Participation rates are particularly low among low skilled adults. With regard to lifelong learning and the issue of skills mismatch, Romania also lacks an adequate skills forecasting system which could provide better guidance to individuals and industry as to the future needs of the labour market.

Efforts are being made to re-launch the development of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy by means of an EU funded project for which the terms of references are currently being elaborated. The strategy will be elaborated by January 2014.