

## Training Situation of Elders from Romania in Post-Accession Period to EU

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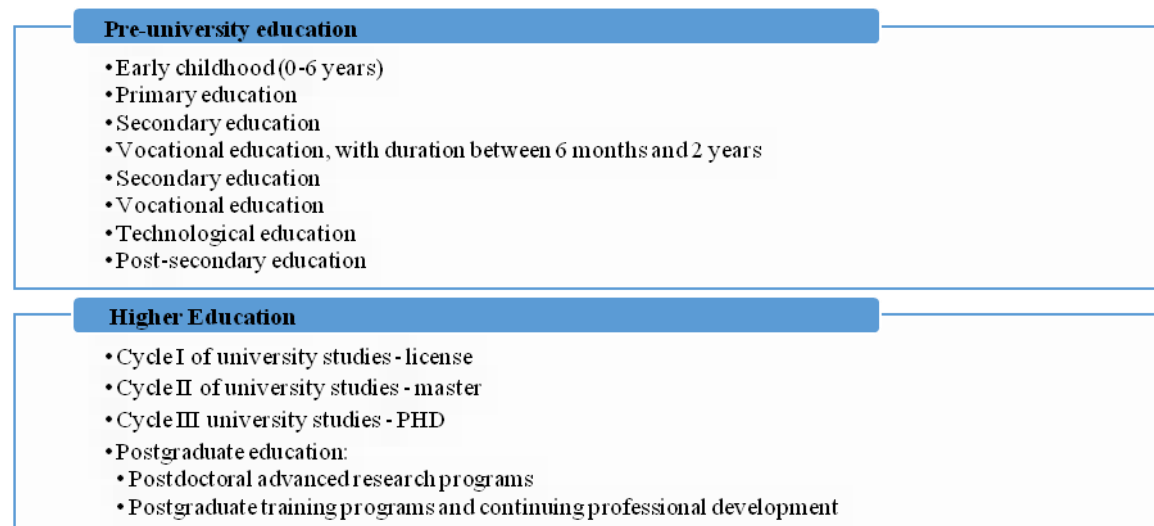
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**Abstract :** The present paper presents the situation of continuous formation of elders as an important strategy of the EU and Member States, based on Romanian example. The period 2007-2014 has been for Romania a period of challenges and efforts in the field of lifelong learning and vocational education and training in order to achieve the goals set by EC and to align with other Member States. We will also compares the situation from Romania and other EU countries, underlying the disparities between them.

**Key words:** Lifelong learning, training, elder, formation

### I. INTRODUCTION

In Romania, organizing training programs can be made by various specialized institutions such as public and private education institutions accredited under the national education law (according to Law no. 1/2011), authorized training providers (according to GD 129/2000), training companies, organizations and foundations. National Education Act provides the framework to exercise, under the Romanian state’s authority, the fundamental right to lifelong education. The law regulates the structure, functions, organization and functioning of the state, private and denominational national education system (see Figure 1). Employees of an organization, depending on their level of preparation, may follow secondary, vocational, technological and postgraduate education. Vocational education, secondary education and university are organized for qualifications and specializations established by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, in accordance with the National Register of Qualifications (Law no. 1/2011, art. 23).



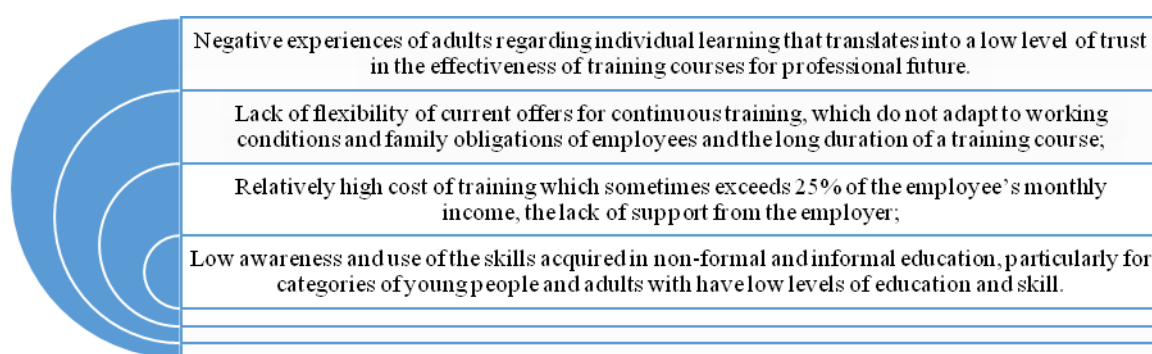
**Figure 1: The national education system of Romania**

Source: Adapted from Education Law no.1 / 2011

Government Decision no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training, as amended, provides the legal framework for the authorization of training programs in Romania. The methodology is implemented by the National Authority for Qualifications, under the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elders and the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research. The authorisation must be requested by training organizations (private companies, non-governmental organizations, universities, etc. - any organization legally established in Romania) who wish to organize training programs finalized with qualification or graduation certificates with national and European recognition.

## II. ELDERS TRAINING IN PERIOD 2007-2014

According to the Ministry of National Education[5], in 2007-2011, Romania has made significant progress on the participation of adults with the aged between 25-64 in lifelong learning, the indicator recorded a slight increase from 1.3% in 2007 to 1.6% 2011. Along with Bulgaria (1.2%), Romania occupies the last positions among EU countries related to this indicator. In these circumstances, Romania is still far from the EU target for projected 2020, to reach the point of 15%. A survey conducted by the Observatory for Lifelong Learning Development in 2011, identifies a number of conclusions about the disparities in participation in continuing education in Romania, like negative experiences of adults related to personal learning, which translates into a low level of confidence in the effectiveness of training courses for professional future. The lowest share of participation in continuing education were registered in people with low levels of education and vocational qualifications of those working in small companies with less than 10 employees and those aged over 40 years. The investigation also reports the discrepancies by residence and sex. The participation rates in training in rural areas are lower than in urban areas and higher for women compared to males. The survey also identifies the most important barriers to participation in training: financial incentives limited to the individual but also for the employer, informing limited population of offers of training, lack of flexibility for existing trainings, limited access to the system of recognition and validation of informal and non-formal competences.



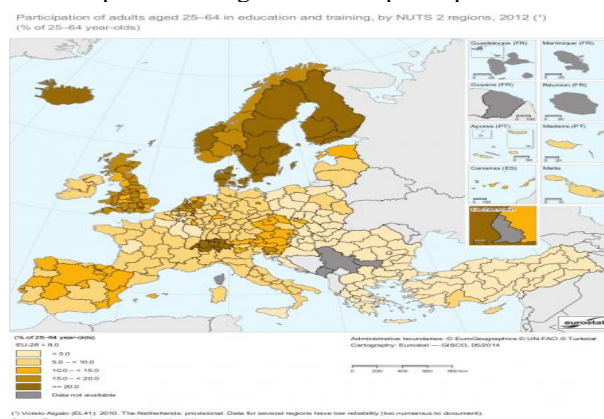
**Figure 2: Barriers to participation in lifelong education**

Source: Ministry of National Education, *Analysis on Education and Training Needs in Romania*, 2013, pg.21

In 2011, Romania has set national targets for all the Europe 2020 objectives and has prepared a draft of the National Reform Programme 2011-2013. NRP grants to education and training an important role in the priority objectives for reforms by 2013 and correlates national targets with the general framework promoted by the new National Education Law no. 1/2011[4].

The Map 1, elaborated by EUROSTAT, shows information on the share of people with the age between 25 and 64 years who participated in educational activities and training in 2012. These statistics concerns persons who reported that during a period of four weeks preceding the survey on which the data were compiled, received some form of education or training. The information collected covers all forms of education and training, whether they are relevant to the current job or possible future job of the respondent. In 2012, the overall share of people aged between 25 and 64 years in the EU-28 who received some form of education or training was 9.0%.

The regions of Denmark reported the highest rates of participation in education activities and training.



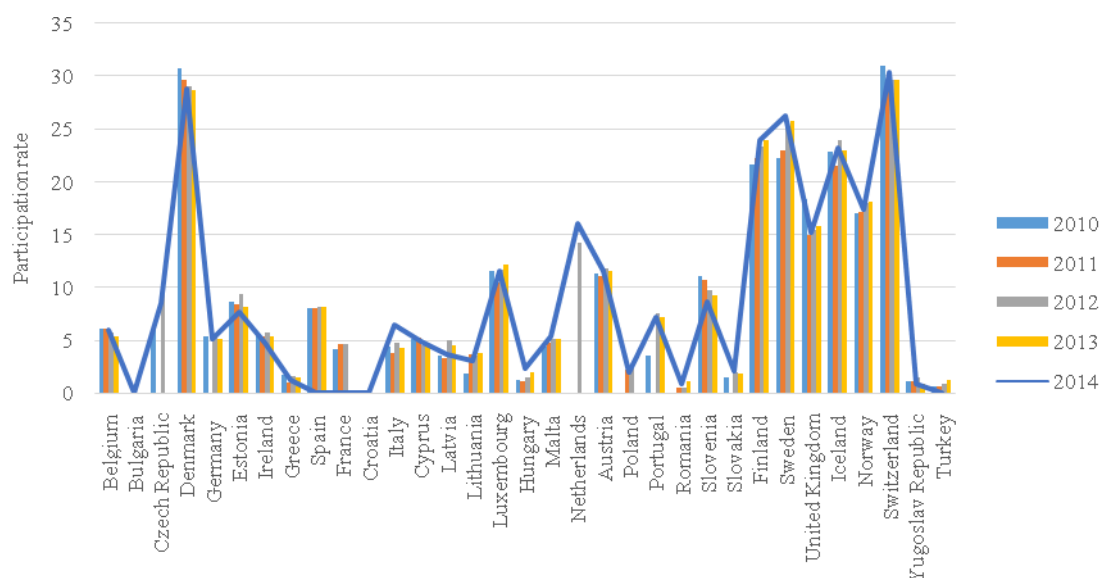
**Map 1. Participation of adults aged 25-64 in education and training, by NUTS 2 regions, 2012**

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

In the 18 NUTS 2 regions from EU (out of 266 regions for which data are available), 20% or more of people aged between 25 and 64 years participated in activities of education or training in 2012. Four of the five NUTS 2 regions in Denmark occupied the top places in the rankings, while the fifth region ranked eighth in terms of the percentage of participation. The percentage of people aged 25 to 64 who participated in education or training activities in the regions of Denmark was between 27.8% and 35.4%, the highest turnout was recorded in region - Capital Hovedstaden. Along with the regions in Denmark, there was also a trend towards greater participation in educational activities and training in the Nordic Member States, neighbouring Finland and Sweden, which included 13 other regions, where at least a fifth of people aged between 25 and 64 years participated in education and training activities in 2012. The following percentages of participation - just below 20% - were recorded mainly in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (although the percentages were lower in Northern Ireland) and in Vienna (Austria) and Zahodna Slovenija (Slovenia).

In 58 regions in the EU-28, less than 5% of people aged between 25 and 64 years participated in education and training activities in 2012. These regions are located mainly in Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Hungary and Romania - all regions in these countries have recorded percentages below 5% - each of the regions of Slovakia, except for the capital Bratislavský kraj and all regions of Poland, but three of them have also reported that less than 5% of people aged between 25 and 64 years participated in education and training activities. The lowest level of participation (0.9%) was registered in the Bulgarian region tsentralen Severen[1].

In Graph 1, we can see the data published by EUROSTAT, for the period 2013-2014, where we can analyse the trends registered by all European country related to lifelong learning of population aged 45 to 54 years.



**Graph 1. Participation rate in education and training**  
Source: Processing after data published by EUROSTAT

We can see the biggest rate of participation is in Switzerland (with 30.4%) and Denmark (with 28.8%), Romania being at the bottom of the classification (with 0.8%). Although in Romania, in the past 10 years, have been made huge investments in lifelong learning, by implementing diverse European and national project, sustained financially through Sectoral Operational Program Development of Human Resources, Erasmus, Grundvig, Jean Monnet, etc., yet Romania registered a reduced participation rate in education and training for people aged 45-54 years, that of 0.8%. In addition, this fact is disconcerting, because according to the Romanian Labour Code, all employers have to involve their employees in training programs at least every two years.

### III. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF ELDERS' TRAINING

We want to mention two initiatives from Romania regarding the formation of elder people. One of the projects is ELLAN - European Later Life Active Network, financed through Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.

The project is an initiative to promote the European cooperation between the 25 countries involved in the project. The main aim of the project is to develop an agreed Core European Competences Framework for working with older people, based on exchange of innovation and good practices to the ageing population and to the educational preparation of those that work with older people.

At the present level, all European countries have their own system related to lifelong learning, especially that of adults continuous formation, the project trying to develop an agreed Core European Competences Framework for working with older people. The Framework will be used for curricula development and improvement.

The consortium conducted analyses of competencies required of personnel working with older people from the viewpoint of literature, research, professionals, students and older people themselves. The results are exploited in the development of higher educational curricula, as well as the promotion of a more positive vision of working with older people through national and European networks.

The European Competences Framework, along with best practice in teaching will improve the quality of education for health and social care professionals and positively influence their motivation to work with older people. University Stefan cel Mare of Suceava, partner in this project will successfully implement and disseminate the results of this project. Thus, the impact of this project ELLAN consists of better education, enhanced mobility of personnel and improved older people's care in Europe.

Another initiative is the project „Accessible Tourism Promoter for Small and Medium Enterprises” - ATP4SME, implemented by six partners from Germany, Spain, Poland and Romania, financed through Erasmus+ (contract 2014-1-DE02-KA202-001557). The main topic of the project is the subject of „accessibility”, which gained a real interest for the policies in business and public field. Of interest for us, is the training in the field of accessible tourism for SMEs, the partnership trying to transfer the experience and good practices from Brandenburg region (Germany) to other countries.

Within the project has been realised a Qualification Framework, based on the current situation from the involved countries, in order to create Accessible Tourism Promoters, trained to gather a fundamental knowledge about the terms and tasks that come with accessibility, and encouraged to care for themselves to stay up to date about current news, updates, regulations, regulatory reforms and changes in their region, country and also in the EU. The course will provide an on-line Moodle platform and forum for internal communication.

After the Accessible Tourism Promoters training, SMEs will be accompanied by the mentor, while putting the training results into practice. In this context, Accessible Tourism Promoters have the chance and are encouraged to exchange their experience by taking part in moderated discussions and using the communication and learning platform for this purpose, as virtual classroom for the Accessible Tourism Promoters training. This long and intense involvement of the SMEs enhances the acceptance and the long-term implementation within the company.

These projects, among others, are in impulse for Romania to develop its national education system, state and private, in order to align its educational offer to international tendencies and to produce highly competent trainees.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Even if Romanian law obliges the employer to specialize / improve their employees by participating in training programs at least one in two years, this situation is far from the ideal. In the same time, they prefer to train young employees, because of their long-term involvement, although elder people represent a more stable attitude toward involvement and dedication to the work and organisation, in general.

The actual trends of population aging have to be an impetus to all fields, economic, financial, educational, research, etc., and for the governmental and non-governmental organisations, interpreted not only negatively, but also as an opportunity of prevention and development, in the same time. In this sense, the education must be the first logical step to involve all stakeholders in the trail of development and success.

#### References:

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