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GENERAL DIVISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

COUNTRY REPORT

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Dynamics of the higher education system

After the fall of the totalitarian regime, Romania entered a complex transition to market economy and democracy. This process affected every domains from society to economy, culture and politics. Reform in the field of higher education began right after 1989 and aimed initially at eliminating courses that had become obsolete in view of the new option and, during a second more extensive phase, building a coherent legal frame that could ensure a more effective higher education.

The **Constitution of Romania**, adopted in 1991, is the foundation of the entire legislation in the field. It is currently under debate by Parliament in order to make it better adapted to the new evolutions at national, European and world level. The specific legislation, regulating higher education in Romania is represented by three organic laws: **the Law on Education** (Law 84/1995), with its further modifications and supplements, the **Statute of teaching staff** (Law 28/1997), with its further modifications and supplements, as well as the **Law of accreditation of higher education institutions and recognition of diplomas** (Law 88/1993), with its further modifications and supplements. There is also the Law no. 60/2002 on the right of private higher education graduates to hold their graduation examinations at accredited state-owned higher education institutions, the Law no. 62/2002 for the approval of the Government Ordinance no. 60/1998 on the creation of Romanian university extensions abroad, Emergency Ordinances, Ordinances and Decisions of the Government of Romania, orders of the minister of education, research and youth.

Pursuant to these legal documents, the activity of higher education has become more and more coherent, based upon the progressive increase of university autonomy and accountability, decentralization of activities, and support to research and technological innovation..

Recent changes that have occurred in the Romanian and European higher education system are grounded on the options of continental countries, **expressed in the Bologna Declaration**, to achieve a unique European space in this field by the year 2010. The implementation of these recommendations generated two ideas: one obvious up to the year 2000, which meant a sudden change and an immediate application of these recommendations and another starting in the year 2001, when *it was decided to carry on a process based primarily on the participation of universities*. The creation of a pro-Bologna attitude at the level of education institutions, through the organization of debates, workshops, the inclusion of universities in an experimental network, *that began within the MATRA programme, financed by the Dutch Government*, followed by the dissemination of the results obtained.

Today, as a result of this strategy, resistance to such changes is quite moderate, the environment for a direct implementation of measures capable of consciously adapting the system to the mutations taking place at European level has already been created. Moreover, all actions carried on from 1999 to the present date aimed at the creation of a pro-quality culture and behaviour, in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration and of later documents, adopted at the level of the continent.

In a synthetic overview, the main changes that have occurred in the higher education system are the following:

- *Definition of long-term and short-term programmes*, at the same time, a clear distinction was made between Universities and University Colleges, the latter

having an independent functioning or, most of the time, being integrated to universities;

- *Making study programmes more flexible*, by offering optional elective paths, and by gradually increasing the individual time of study;
- *Setting national standards* for temporary authorization and institutional accreditation
- *Internal and external evaluation of study programmes* in view of temporary authorization and accreditation by the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (created in 1993 and subordinated to the Parliament of Romania), as well as periodical evaluation;
- *Introduction of the transferable credit system*, evaluating students' participation in education activities and encouraging their mobility;
- *Switch to global financing* using the number of students as a main indicator ; the introduction of complex quality indicators leading to a ranking of universities according to their performance, encouraging through financing the most dynamic and effective higher education institutions;
- *The possibility for public universities to enroll students with tuition fees*, public universities have an enrolment quota supported by budget and approved every year by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MECT);
- *Diversification of the scholarship system*, supporting students with social problems but also eminent students;

A draft for a **first Law on higher education** was elaborated in 2002 and presented to universities for debate. Its final form is due in 2003 and will be implemented after its approval by Government and Parliament.

Changes that have occurred globally in the education system have been strongly influenced by the increasing number of public and private higher education institutions. In 2000-2001, there were 133 civil universities and 8 military institution in the higher education institutions network in Romania, compared to the 30 higher education institutions existing in 1989. Out of the 133 civil higher education institutions, 49 (not counting military institutions) belong to public higher education, while the other 84 are private. According to their field, the public higher education institutions may be grouped as shown in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Grouping universities according to their dominant field

No.	Field	Number
1.	Technical	7
2.	Medical	6
3.	Agronomic and veterinary medicine	4
4.	Humanities	5
5.	Artistic	7
6.	Economic	1
7.	Sport	1
8.	Military	8
9.	Combined	19

Private higher education institutions have generally a humanistic structure, with specializations mainly in the economic, legal, philological and theological fields.

Through laws of individual creation, 20 private universities have been institutionally accredited in the years 2002 and 2003, in all the regions of the country, but mainly in Bucharest (9). The network of private higher education institutions has been strongly restructured after the liquidation of 33 such institutions, due to the violation of quality standards of the education

process, as well as to the defective mode of organization and organization of study programmes. As a result, the higher education network has today 100 civil institutions and 8 military institutions.

In Romania, there is long-term and short-term higher education and this structure can be found in most fields (Table 2).

Table 2. Types of higher education, duration and mode of finalization of studies

No.	Type	Duration	Field	Finalization of studies
1.	Short-term (university college)	3 years	All	Graduation examination
2.	Long-term	4 years	Socio-humanistic Economic Artistic Sportive	License examination
		5 years	Technical Agricultural	Diploma examination
		6 years	Medicine Veterinary medicine	License examination
Architecture	Diploma examination			

The existence of the two distinct forms of education is an **extremely favourable premise for the implementation of cycles stipulated in the Bologna Declaration**. Short-term education, present in all the fields of university education, and which is destined to train graduates with a great capacity of insertion on the labour market, can easily be transformed into a first cycle, granting the graduates the title of Bachelor. Furthermore, this form is open, graduates from short-term education can carry on their studies in the long-term form after passing the examinations for the make-up programmes and the recognition of the credits obtained.

In both forms of higher education, **entrance** is made either through an entrance contest consisting of two examinations, to which the average from the baccalaureate can be added with a variable weight, or *based upon results from the pre-university education*. The methodology of admission is set by each university, according to university autonomy, on the basis of general criteria elaborated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. Only secondary-school graduates with a baccalaureate diploma may contest admission.

The finalization of studies can be organized only by accredited higher education institutions. The graduation, license or diploma examination consists of two examinations:

- evaluation of fundamental and specialization knowledge;
- presentation of the graduation paper, of the license paper or the diploma project.

The content of each examination is set by the organizing institution.

The main forms of **postgraduate education** are represented by DEA, master's, postgraduate academic studies, doctorate, postgraduate specialist courses, specific forms of postgraduate medical education. The policy of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth in the field has aimed at reducing dramatically the accent put on DEA studies and an increase of the weight of master's, which has become the predominant form. At the same time, the focus on part-time doctorate has switched to a more significant enrolment quota for full-time doctoral studies.

Globally, the forms of postgraduate education existent so far in universities are:

- *DEA* aims at enriching the knowledge in the field of the long-term university field. Their duration is 2-3 semesters and they are finalized by a dissertation and granted a DEA diploma.

- *Master's* aims at extending competence to several fields of long-term university fields of specialization. This type of postgraduate courses can be attended by graduates with diplomas from long-term university studies, irrespective of profile or specialization. Their duration is 3-4 semesters and they are finalized by a dissertation and granted a master's diploma.
- *Postgraduate academic studies* are carried on in postgraduate institutions of academic studies, organized by independent institutions in Romania or abroad. Their purpose is to extend and improve the long-term university training. Postgraduate academic studies are finalized by a *Dissertation* and graduates receive a *Diploma of Postgraduate Academic Studies*.
- *Doctoral programmes* constitutes a higher education and research form carried on in higher education institutions that organize doctorate studies. It is organized by *Fields of Doctorate*. The Doctorate is finalized by a *Doctorate thesis* and graduates receive the scientific title of *Doctor*, respectively, the *Doctor Diploma*. The doctorate is organized in higher education institutions and in scientific research institutions – according to the law – approved by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, upon proposal by the National Council for the Attestation of Academic Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (C.N.A.T.D.C.U.), on the basis of the accreditation criteria regulated for this purpose, named *Institutions organizing Doctoral Studies (I.O.D.)*. Each I.O.D. elaborates its own Regulations for the organization and carrying on of doctorate studies, according to the law, which are approved by the university Senate/I.O.D. Scientific Council. Tenure, associate or consulting professors or senior researchers of rank 1 with a doctor's degree may be *Directors of doctoral programmes*. The quality of *Director of doctoral programmes* is conferred by order of the Minister of Education and Research upon proposal by a I.O.D. and with the nominal approval by the C.N.A.T.D.C.U., based upon evaluation criteria elaborated to this effect.

Other types of postgraduate studies are specialist courses or further training courses, specific forms of postgraduate medical education finalized, as the case may be, by diplomas or graduation certificates.

The Bologna Declaration – the fundamental charter of change in Romanian higher education

Changes occurring today in Romanian higher education aim at the creation of a pro-Bologna university environment, as well as at the implementation with maximum efficiency of recommendations issued from the Declaration signed in 1999 by the ministers of education from the European countries. The agreed objectives for the creation of a European space for higher education are also the objectives of today's university restructuring and modernization.

Higher education structure by cycles.

One of the main objectives is the structuring of higher education by cycles and its subsequent organization. Discussions that occurred within the National Council of Rectors, during various workshops have shown a general consensus regarding the switch to this structure, most probably starting with the academic year 2004/2005.

Thus, are individualized:

- the first cycle, amounting to 180-240 credit points, finalized by a **title of Bachelor**;
- the second cycle, amounting to 120-60 credit points, finalized by a **title of Master**;

Aside from the two cycles, we could note a third cycle, represented by doctoral studies and finalized by the granting of the title of **doctor in science**. All candidates for the title of doctor will be graduates of master's study programmes or its equivalent.

If it is almost unanimously considered that such a structure would not be beneficial for the medical field and for the field of architecture; in the case of engineering sciences, many of the actors in the field support the adoption of integrated study programmes, with a duration of 5 years and finalized by the title of master, with a total of at least 300 credits.

At the level of higher education institutions there is debate with regard to the pertinence of the diploma obtained after the first cycle on the national and European labour market, and the possibility to introduce a professional master's or a one year professional specialization training in view of a rapid insertion on the labour field of the Bachelor degree holders.

In the field of arts, there is great difficulty for holders of a title of Master in Arts to follow a doctoral programme. Opinions are quite divided, since the reality of the facts has shown that such programmes resulting in a title of doctor are possible in some artistic fields but quite difficult in other fields, dealing with performance, choreography, etc.

For medical education, the first two integrated university cycles are followed by residency (with a maximum duration of 7 years), following which graduates obtain the attestation in view of carrying on the profession of medical doctor. Simultaneously or afterwards, these students may follow a doctoral programme finalized by the granting of the title of doctor in medical sciences, respectively, in dentistry.

- the third cycle, the doctorate activity, finalized by the granting of the **title of doctor in science**, for which only master's graduates are eligible.

Status of the implementation of the Diploma Supplement

Romania has signed the Lisboa Convention, April 1997, on recognition of qualifications obtained in the higher education and has ratified this document through Law no. 172/02.10.1998. Section IX, art. IX.3 stipulates the promotion of the Administrative appendix to the diploma, namely the Diploma Supplement.

Having regard to the Lisboa Convention, the joint Declaration of the European ministers of education in Bologna on July 19, 1999, the recommendations of the Council of Ministers of the EU from May 6, 1996, as well as those of the European Commission and UNESCO on transparency in view of academic and professional recognition, the Minister's Order (no.3659/20.04.2000) introduced, upon request, the administrative appendix to the diploma, the unique European model. Based upon this order, any graduate may require the emission of the Diploma Supplement and each accredited university has at its disposal the required form and instructions for filling the form.

The transferable credit system

The organization of the education process using the transferable credit system has begun during the 1998/1999 academic year. This mode of organization makes possible the use of an analytical evaluation system of the time and effort necessary to carry on activities composing the education process. Moreover, it has advantages both for the mode of organization and its management, and for its validation with the education process in other universities in Romania and abroad.

Granting the credit points attributed for one subject is conditioned by successfully passing this subject. The minimum passing grade is 5, on a scale from 1 to 10, and, once obtained, the student is granted the number of credit units attributed to the subject. Successfully passed subjects are recognized in any case. In the case of *DEA* and *Master's* – the finalization is through a *Dissertation*, where the minimum passing grade is 6,00.

Starting with the academic year 1998/1999, universities offer distance education. Students enrolled in this form of training have the same education plan as those from day

courses. Exceptionally, for the students enrolled in the distance education system, the accumulation of the *120 credit points* corresponds to the first and second year of study and, respectively the third and fourth years of study and a minimum 6,00 grade average ; it can be achieved in three years, provided that a minimum *40 credit points* is obtained at the end of each academic year.

The maximum number of *transferable credit points in ECTS* is set by the Council of each faculty. If a student follows study periods in other universities/faculties (domestic and/or abroad), according to the regulations set by each Teaching Board, the credits obtained will be recognized by the home faculty.

Within short-term (3 years for day-courses) and long-term university education programmes (4-6 years, day courses), the volume of activities organized by education is assessed by credits, and the quality of the results is assessed by grades/ratings.

The total number of credits associated to a university education programme, set by government decision (HG nr.693/2003), is 180, 240, 300 or 360, corresponding to the duration of studies, 3, 4, 5 or 6 years – day courses, and respectively, one year more for night courses, with reduced frequency or distance education. Thus, a year of day course study has an average of 60 credits.

At this stage, there are several activities carried on with a view to improving education plans in order to ensure a full compatibility of the national credit system with the European transferable credit system (ECTS).

Higher education quality assurance

The system of higher education quality assurance is undergoing a process of clarification and finalization.

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth is financing CALISRO, a research programme on the quality of higher education in Romania, which constitutes the basis for the structuring bodies responsible for ensuring quality at the level of institutions and at national level. Thus, each higher education institution is responsible for ensuring quality for all activities and at all levels, in agreement with the standards of reference, which are being updated.

Each higher education institution has created or is finalizing its own, internal system of quality management. The quality management system within the higher education institution has as its objective the internal processes for assuring quality, including self-evaluation at every level, in agreement with the standards of reference, including the requirements of the systems of external evaluation of quality.

The National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (CNEAA) functions since 1993 in agreement with the Law on education no. 84/1995, republished and Law no. 88/1993 on the accreditation of higher education institutions and the recognition of diplomas, republished. Aside from the CNEAA there are commissions for the external evaluation of higher education institutions in view of a temporary functioning authorization and of a later accreditation. Up until now, the Council has been responsible according to the law for assuring the quality of higher education, and this was one of its well defined missions.

Due to the fact that up until now the CNEAA has focussed mainly the activity of evaluation in view of temporary authorization and accreditation, the assurance of the quality of current education processes, of research and management have been slightly neglected. In order to revitalize preoccupations in view of the creation of systems of quality in the higher education, a comprehensive pro-quality action has been promoted since 2001. This action was also supported by the MATRA programme. The main idea of the Ministry of Education, Research

and Youth was that a real policy for assuring quality cannot be implemented without a pro-quality culture, without concrete actions promoted from lower to higher level.

Following the results obtained also by the CALISRO research programme, a normative act is under preparation, an act related to the creation of a national system on the assurance of quality of higher education, through the creation of a national structure in the field in charge of managing the whole process. Basically, it will define the general framework, promote advanced European systems of quality assurance, disseminate the best practices in the country and abroad. The newly created structure will cooperate with higher education institutions in Romania and abroad, as well as with other European institutions, in order to support the efforts of assuring quality of higher education in Romania at the level of EU requirements.

International student mobility

Romanian universities are adapting rather rapidly to more efficient forms of international co-operation. We can mention:

- Trans-frontier student exchanges between various higher education institutions, for short-term study visits or practical activities, on the basis of bilateral agreements;
- International student mobility based upon institutional agreements or the affiliation to various university networks, with the recognition of the study periods by use of compatible transferable credit systems;
- Involvement of Romanian university departments or teachers in the offering of transnational higher education including joint training programs, programs typical to virtual universities, to other types of institutions involved in e-learning etc.
- Teaching staff exchange in the field of education and research, in order to cover an existing need in the field at the host university or to offer aid in the development of new syllabi, new support for learning, new technologies of teaching and learning etc;
- The creation of programs for granting joint degrees on the basis of an agreement between a Romanian university and a foreign university, with the observance of the rules existing in each one of the participating countries.

Student and teaching staff exchange programs were set beginning with 1991 within the TEMPUS program between Romanian universities and universities in EU countries.

Starting with the academic year 1990/1991, several Romanian universities have offered complete study programs in foreign languages like English, French and German, along with the education in Romanian. The teaching staff and the support material for learning have been prepared with technical assistance from partner universities in Great Britain, France or Germany and with financial support from the TEMPUS program.

A synthetic overview of the actual status of mobility within the TEMPUS projects shows a massive participation of teaching staff and students (Table 3).

Table 3. Number of mobilities in the Tempus program (1991-1997)

Participants in the mobility program	Number
Teaching staff from Romania	6806
Teaching staff coming to Romania	4749
Students from Romania	5040
Foreign students coming to Romania	802
Total participants	17397

The National Office for Student Grants Abroad was created in January 1998. It manages grants through which the Government of Romania supports Romanian students, in order to study abroad for relatively short periods of time (2 to 10 months). Grants are financed by the budget managed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. Furthermore, the Office manages grants set through bilateral agreements in the field of higher education.

Higher education institutions in Romania have been involved in SOCRATES and LEONARDO da VINCI programs starting 1997. After 1998, over 9,000 students were granted mobilities within the ERASMUS program. During the academic year 2002/2003 45 universities participated in ERASMUS activities, involving approximately 2,400 students (Table 4). At the same time, a significant number of students from various EU countries have studied in Romania (Table 5).

Table no.4. Dynamics of participants in the Erasmus Program

	Number of institutions	Number of students	Number of teaching staff
1998-1999	30	1250	958
1999-2000	32	1497	1044
2000-2001	40	2000	1897
2001-2002	45	2110	2020
2002-2003	45	2400	-
Total	-	9257	

Table no. 5. Dynamics and structure of foreign students coming to Romania through the ERASMUS program, by countries (1998-2002).

Year/Country	BE	DE	GR	ES	FR	IR	IT	NL	AT	PT	FI	SE	UK
1998/1999	112	240	16	69	62	3	132	63	27	37	10	12	61
1999/2000	143	300	25	84	118	11	183	69	32	61	23	36	88
2000/2001	126	345	27	76	161	8	209	63	28	76	21	26	82
2001/2002	127	297	61	187	694	13	253	60	28	78	18	34	76

In the case of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, universities have promoted mainly pilot projects or mobility projects, and have shown a constant interest for the quality of professional training specifically in the technical field and the correlation with essential features of the European labour market.

The Black Sea Universities network was created in 1997 upon a Romanian initiative in order to develop co-operation among universities from member states of the Economic Co-operation of the Black Sea area, in the field of education, science and culture. Today, this network, whose permanent Secretariat is at Constanta (and which has the support of the Government of Romania through the Government's Decision 196/2003) include over 60 member universities.

Starting with 1998 Romanian universities have taken part in projects developed within the CEEPUS Programme (Central European Exchange for University Students Programme). This programme supports universities to create networks consisting of at least three universities from various countries in order to promote student mobility for full academic studies, master's and doctorate programmes, as well as to promote exchanges between teaching staff and researchers. After 1998, over 1500 students and teaching staff have been involved in such exchange programmes. During the 2002/2003 academic year, 16 universities have taken part in 18 such networks.

Foreign students who wish to study in Romania are admitted in higher education institutions provided that they pay tuition fees, without entrance contest, if they prove to have the qualification necessary for access to higher education in their home country. Before starting the programmes, they must take Romanian language classes. Aside from the study programmes in Romanian, there are increasingly more programmes offered in foreign languages, especially in English. If a foreign student has started a programme in his/her home country or in another country he/she may continue it in Romania, after recognition of his/her diplomas and after an analysis of the segment of programme followed.

The National Council for Recognition of Diplomas, a structure affiliated to the networks ENIC/NARIC, functions within the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and it is in charge of the recognition of diplomas.

The European dimension of the Romanian higher education

The reform of Romanian higher education, awaited by Romanian young people and imposed after 1989 by the transition from centralized economy to market economy, represented the construction of a higher education system as compatible as possible with the European educational space. Basically, this coordinate means the introduction of the general European model in the Romanian higher education, as a way of ensuring interaction between Romanian and European academic milieus.

The promotion of the European dimension of higher education was possible through an intense cooperation and direct international contacts between Romanian universities and European institutions, international organizations and bodies. The implementation of European programmes has had positive effects on academic structures and curricula, as well as on the new vision of the mission of higher education, including the means of fulfilling this mission.

The efforts of making the Romanian system compatible with the European ones included the elaboration of the List of fields and reference specializations (promoted by Government Decision no. 1336/2001 and updated by Government's Decision no. 682/2003), which increased the area of competence of graduates, ensured a better insertion of universities in the social, economic and cultural life, and eliminated some deficiencies in the process of authorization/accreditation.

The European dimension of higher education in Romania was promoted by foreign languages study programmes (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian or Russian). These programmes are mandatory in all universities at university level. Both Romanian and foreign students studying in Romania can attend these courses.

Government's Decision no. 41/2002 encourages the organization, within specializations accredited in Romanian language, of activities in foreign languages, including complementary study programmes or study directions, with the approval of the senate of the higher education institutions.

Departments of foreign languages were created, at university level in many technical, medical, exact sciences or humanistic universities. Young Romanians as well as young people from abroad study in those departments.

The training of teachers for teaching foreign languages in universities and their further-training was ensured through the participation in international programmes of the « teacher training » type. The teaching staff perfected in their own field of activity through international programmes, as well as university managers who faced a new type of university management, which ensures transparency and efficiency to higher education.

Mandatory foreign language tests were included for the degree/diploma examination, for admission to doctoral post-graduate studies and various research programmes.

Students and young academics from the Romanian higher education are encouraged to participate in post-graduate programmes, such as masters and joint doctorate degrees with foreign universities or with international research programmes.

Students take part in summer training and Olympiads, international contests and festivals, and show the level of training, the diversity and quality of higher education programmes.

Diplomas emitted by universities are, upon request of the beneficiary, written in one of the foreign languages. The introduction of the *Diploma Supplement* is a mechanism of implementation of the Lisboa Convention, promoted by Romania.

The social dimension of higher education

The state budget ensures most of the financial resources for university higher education and research, respectively 4% of the gross domestic product (as stipulated in the Law on education no. 84/1995).

Aside from the budgetary resources, universities may mobilize additional sources of revenue within legal terms. Higher education is allocated a distinct research fund from the aggregate research budget. According to the law, funding for research by university is allocated on competitive criteria, and depends on national priorities, and past or expected performance.

The funds allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth are utilized for basic and complementary financing, for investments in objectives, for funds for student scholarships, as well as for their social security. The level of funds allocated in 1999 from the state budget was 1.700 billion lei (110 million USD), and in 2003, it was 5.400 billion lei (160 million US dollars).

Students at graduate and postgraduate level, including those enrolled in doctoral studies, benefit from the 75.000 places supported every year from the budget, and approximately 25% of the students are granted scholarships from the state. Within the structure of these scholarships : 5% performance scholarships, 25% merit scholarships, granted for outstanding results ; 30/40% scholarships ; 30/40% scholarships for social support.

The reconsideration of the scholarship granting system lead to a slight increase of the number of scholarships for social support and merit scholarships, with a significant modification of study scholarships.

Furthermore, students may receive scholarships on the basis of contracts signed with economic agents and other legal and natural persons, as well as study loans extended by banks on such terms as the law provides. In practice, the latter is at its beginning, and Romanian banks have not been too sensitive to existing requests so far.

In order to train specialists in the rural area, students from rural areas are stimulated by granting 1000 scholarships per year (Government's Decision no. 1020/11.10.2001), each scholarship has a quantum that exceeds the average study scholarship.

Some students from underprivileged families, enrolled with tuition fees may be granted exemption or reduction of such fees, upon decision by the university senates.

General eligibility criteria for scholarship are decided by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family. The specific criteria for performance, merit, study and social support scholarships are determined by the university senates. These scholarships are subject to indexation. The minimal quantum of students' scholarship shall cover the accommodation and meal expenditure. In order to support young doctorate students (up to 35 years-old), in view of reducing the process of « brain drain », Government's Decision no. 1004/17.09.2002 grants every year 100 specific grants allowing them an additional funding equal to minimum wage (2 million lei).

Complementary funding conferred to universities by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth consists of stipends for accommodation and meal expenditure, funds allocated based upon priorities and specific norms for equipment and other expenses for investments and capital repairs, funds allocated on a competitive basis for university scientific research.

Every year, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth confers scholarships for university and postgraduate study trips abroad on a competitive basis.

Universities shall meet the food, accommodation and transport costs incurred by the students' practical activities that are concentrated outside the university center.

Students benefit, as well, by free summer and winter camps, free medical and psychological assistance in State/owned polyclinics and hospitals, as well as by half the regular fare rate on the local public transportation network and on the domestic motor, railway and naval transportation network, during the whole calendar year.

Orphan students or those who have resided in orphanages benefit by free fares on the transportation categories mentioned above.

Students enrolled in state as well as private education institutions benefit by half the regular fare rates to museums, concerts, theatres, operas, films, other cultural and sports events organized by public institutions.

The representativeness of students in the university senates is ensured by law and the university charter.

Life long learning

Education and training – two essential, priority concepts for the EU countries, are also priorities and main fields of interest in Romania.

In Romania, carrying on lifelong learning programmes supposed the elaboration of a new legislation, of efficient policies and strategies, dynamics which involved numerous actors: young people, as well as older people, a population with professions that had become obsolete after 1989, unemployed people, but also education institutions, schools, universities, economic agents, commercial companies, foundations, associations, various social partners.

The concept has become operational after the apparition of the legal frame, namely the Law on Education no. 88/1995, with further modifications and supplements, which stipulates at its chapter section IV that legal or natural persons may organize, together with education units or institutions or separately, adult qualification, further-training or professional reconversion courses. These training courses grant certificates of professional competence recognized on the labour market.

The law stipulates facilities for those who follow further-training courses for professional training, namely the right to standard salary, for those issued from public institutions and the payment of housing, per diem and transport, for those who take courses in other localities than that of their domicile.

For the training of adults the same law stipulates the possibility of organizing institutions and networks of open or distance education, that make use of modern communication and information technologies. The provisions of the law apply in all universities in Romania.

Priorities for implementing the recommendations from the Declaration of Bologna

As a European country, Romania is very receptive to all changes occurring in the education system in the continent and promotes all necessary measures in order to harmonize the legislation in the field, to create the unique European space for higher education. Considering the progresses already made, we envisage the following for the stage immediately following the meeting of the ministers of education in Berlin:

- the elaboration of a comprehensive legislation that would encourage university autonomy, as well as increased accountability at this level ; in this respect, debate on the draft of the law on higher education will be resumed and submitted to Parliament in the first half of next year;
- the structuring of higher education in cycles, finalized by degrees (bachelor), dissertation (master) and doctorate thesis;
- the multiplication of efforts in view of ensuring quality particularly with higher education institutions and through a national organism, in the context of European evolutions;
- a full operationalization, at national and international, of transferable credit systems;
- the support of student and teacher mobility through Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci programs, as well as through an active participation to the TEMPUS III program;
- the participation of Romania in programs and actions aiming at the internationalization of higher education.

Following the meeting in Berlin, Romania will review these priorities, adding other priorities, according to the decisions that will be adopted and will proceed to a more systematic schedule for their implementation.