

## Legislative Changes and Contemporary Trends in Human Resources Training in Education

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**Abstract:** *At European level, the changes that have occurred in recent years have generated a unified approach at least in regards with the teachers' training, which brought about changes in the Romanian educational system as well. Therefore, all syllabi regarding the training of future teachers were brought under regulation in order to function only at the level of higher education, regardless of the specialization conferred by the diploma. At the same time, the desire to align national standards to the international ones in the teacher training field has generated a phenomenon contrary to the university's autonomy policy, all higher education institutions choosing their own management of the psycho-pedagogical studies syllabus, without changing the specific curriculum imposed by the Ministry. All these legislative changes would have been considered major changes unless the enactment of the National Education Law no. 1 of 2011, which brings the most profound and comprehensive restructuring of the education system in the last 20 years. Reforming initiatives are being implemented and will be supplemented by other measures and their effects will be noticed in time, when the expected increase in the quality of education will be conclusive.*

**Key words:** *legislative changes, society based knowledge, training human resources.*

Human resources training in education have always been acknowledged as a major component of the education systems, which entailed in the course of the time an increasing tendency to centralize at national level forms of selection of future teachers, as well as curricula and syllabi. At European level, the changes that have occurred in recent years have generated a unified approach at least in regards with the teachers' training, which brought about changes in the Romanian educational system as well. Therefore, all syllabi regarding the training of future teachers were brought under regulation in order to function only at the level of higher education, regardless of the specialization conferred by the diploma. At the same time, the desire to align national standards to the international ones in the teacher training field has generated a phenomenon contrary to the university's autonomy policy, all higher education institutions choosing their own management of the psycho-pedagogical studies syllabus, without changing the specific curriculum imposed by the Ministry. In this article we will instance some of the official regulations as European and national landmarks, which, thus, produced such changes and generated new trends in human resources training.

The knowledge-based society has brought about world-wide changes in the approach of cultural, socio-economic and educational policies. The conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon<sup>3</sup> on the 23<sup>rd</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2000 represent one of the most important documents adopted internationally in regards with the global recognition of the importance of human resources investment for European progress in the educated economy which led to the requirement forwarded to the Member States in order to carry measures that dispose of the obstacles encumbering the mobility of the teaching staff and the promotion of quality training. Objective 1.1 of the program "Education and professional training 2010" emphasizes the need to attract qualified and motivated people towards the teaching profession, to identify the specific skills they need in order to meet the ever-changing demands of the society, to ensure proper conditions for supporting teachers through pre-service and in-service training, as well as to attract people with professional experience in other areas towards education and training.

The global action at European level continued systematically in the years following the Lisbon Convention and was based on a series of programmatic documents such as "The Council Revolution on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 on lifelong learning", which invited Member States to improve education and training of teachers involved in lifelong learning in order to acquire the skills they need in the knowledge-based society. On the same lines enters the series of reports designed to assess the progress of member countries, such as:

- “The interim common report of the Council and Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2004 regarding the progress in the accomplishment of the Lisbon objectives in education and training field”, which gives priority to the development of common European principles that regard the competences and qualifications needed by teachers in order to fulfill their ever-changing role in the knowledge-based society.
- “The interim common report of the Council and Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2006 regarding the implementation of the working program “Education and Professional Training 2010” which states that the investment in training teachers and trainers, as well as the consolidation of the education and training units are of paramount importance for improving the efficiency of education and training.

In addition to this, in 2006 we partake of the Conclusions of the Council and Representatives of the Member States called together within the Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 regarding the efficiency and equity in education and training, when it was stated the fact that the motivation, skills and competences of teachers, trainers, other teaching staff, counseling and welfare services members as well as the managers of the schools are crucial to achieving high quality results in learning and that the efforts of the teaching staff should be accompanied by continuous professional development. As a result, the European Parliament and European Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 regarding the establishment of an action program for lifelong learning adopted the Decision 1720/2006/EC, which includes specific goals to improve the quality and European dimension of the teaching staff and supports the mobility of the teaching staff. The attention of these official bodies turned towards the teacher training curriculum knowledge, skills and attitudes that people need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social integration and employment, and which through their transversal nature include a more successful collaboration and teamwork among teachers, as well as a teaching approach which is not limited by traditional boundaries between disciplines, being established by the European Parliament and Council Recommendation on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2006 regarding the fundamental competences for lifelong learning.

The professional development of the teaching staff and trainers is continued in two series of Conclusions at the European Council: on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 regarding a coherent framework of indicators and reference criteria so as to monitor the progress towards accomplishing the Lisbon objectives in education and training, and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2007 Council attended by the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, whose Conclusions focused on improving the quality of teachers training and it was agreed to spare no efforts in order to ensure that throughout their careers, teachers are supported and encouraged to continue to update their knowledge, skills and expertise as needed, as well as to provide teachers with management positions access to high-quality training in school management.

Another official factor generating policies and changes at international level in the field of human resources training in education is the Economic and Social Committee, which considering the overall development of member countries issued in 2007 the “Opinion regarding the improvement of teacher training quality COM (2007) 392” which considers that the main objective of education is to train free, quizzical, citizens, autonomous, able to contribute to the development of the society they live in and who have the necessary competences in order to meet new challenges, fully aware of the fact that they are part of cultural heritage and share common values, and that the world they live in does not end with themselves and therefore they have the duty to preserve it for future generations. It is also emphasized the essential role of teachers in achieving the above mentioned objective, in that they are those who have the mission to pass on knowledge, and, in addition to this, those who interact with young people in a society where family structure has changed and functions in compliance with new paradigms. However, the Economic and Social Committee pays particular attention to new teaching strategies that can and should be developed in the context of the mutations that occur globally, solutions to new problems caused by family structure changes, which takes new forms of organization, methods of integrating teachers in-service training in the lifelong education process, and ways making the teaching profession more

attractive to young people, especially in regards to wages and benefits. On the same line of approach we can also mention the European Economic and Social Opinion regarding the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training - COM (2008) 179 - 2008/0069 ( COD), Brussels, October 23, 2008.

The analysis of the international official authorities meetings purports that the involvement of the political factor and the intention expressed at the highest level regarding the mobility of young teachers as part of the objective of ensuring the quality of the teaching staff training which requires cooperation in order to provide entrants structured syllabi to support them at the beginning of their careers, to improve the range and quality of the in-service professional development programs and the level of participation in these programs, as well as the optimizing of the selection and training of school managers. The statement of the political authorities is expressed in the Council Conclusions on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 regarding the professional development of teaching staff and school managers (2009 / C 302/04), published in the Official Journal of the European Union in 12.12. 2009, which send a clear message in this regard: “although European education systems differ in many ways, they share the need to attract and hold down the best teachers and school managers in order to ensure better quality educational outcomes”.

As a European Member State and having collaborated in the field of research and education with international official institutions, Romania has been actively involved in the enacting of the above mentioned conventions, committing at the political level to implement the reforming directions of the education system and to support the knowledge-based society and economy. The enacted documents and measures are numerous and their comprehensive approach is not feasible in any article. Therefore, we will mention selectively a few such moments significant for their impact and relevance in the field of human resources training in education:

- The establishment of the National Centre for Recognition and Validation of Diplomas – NCRVD (G.D. 49/1999) as competent authority in Romania for academic recognition and validation of studies completed abroad by Romanian citizens in accordance with the Lisbon Convention and bilateral recognition agreements. Presently, it functions as an executive in MECTS – The Department for Recognition and Validation of Diplomas, and since February 2011 there was established National Council for the Recognition of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (OM 3759/2011);
- The appropriation of the “Short and medium term strategy for professional in-service training in Romania” by GD 875/28 July 2005, where the in-service training educational approach is considered an objective necessity imposed by the transition to a knowledge-based society and economy;
- The introduction of the Bologna system in the Romanian higher education, after the date of the academic year 2005-2006 with the enactment of the teacher training exclusively through university studies;
- The prevalence of the application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in Romanian universities, which, although used in higher education institutions in Romania since 1997, was generalized by O.M.Ed.C. 3617/16.03.2005;
- The adoption of the “National Strategy in the field of research, development and innovation for 2007-2013, in the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 by the Romanian Government through which was forwarded the achievement of the objectives assumed through the Lisbon Agenda, namely the transformation of the field Research Development and Innovation (RDI) into an engine of growth and employment. In addition to this, due to an increase in public spending on research - development to 1% of GDP in 2010, the Strategy proposed an appropriate enlistment in the field of private investment, as well as an impact on knowledge, competitiveness of Romanian economy and social quality.
- The establishment of the Presidential Commission for the analysis and policy issuing in education and research, that presented in a report released on the 12th of July 2007 entitled

“Romania of Education, Romania of research” the system diagnosis and the proposed solutions for the identified problems. Based on the report and subsequent public discussions, there was developed the National Pact for Education, signed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 by leaders of all parliamentary parties and later by the Romanian Academy, as well as by other representatives of trade and students unions, parents association, other NGOs interested in issues regarding the education and research in Romania. This Strategy aims at developing education and research during 2009 - 2015 and is based on two types of approaches: one of valuation, and another of major political commitment.

- The issuing of the Diploma Supplement as mandatory document, drawn up bilingually (Romanian and a language widely spoken), for Bologna graduate promotions, as an instrument which provides a standardized description of the type and level of skills, content, institutional context, status of the university studies graduated by the diploma holder, as well as the skills provided by the program of study and the number of credits for each subject of study (OMECT no. 5289/2008).

The national strategic directions of development and adaptation to European requirements generated a multitude of legal regulations among which there are distinguished through the major impact on the education system and reconfiguration of the teaching profession, the Law regarding quality education assurance no. 87/2006, which created the official framework for the just assessment of the educational process according to European standards and performance criteria. As a result, there have established multiple official bodies with responsibilities in the accreditation of institutions providing education and professional training ARACIP and ARACIS – to provide quality education, CNFP - to ensure the quality and diversity of the in-service training for teachers in secondary education, CNFPA –for the foundation and promotion of policies and professional training strategies for adults, ACPART – with an important role in the modernization of the higher education qualifications system.

All these legislative changes would have been considered major changes unless the enactment of the National Education Law no. 1 of 2011, which brings the most profound and comprehensive restructuring of the education system in the last 20 years. Reforming initiatives are being implemented and will be supplemented by other measures and their effects will be noticed in time, when the expected increase in the quality of education will be conclusive. There will be necessary come corrections and additions in regard to official decisions, the progressive enforcement of the enacted measures setting down inherent dysfunctions.

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