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## Higher education reform in Romania. Present and perspective

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### Abstract

The Lisbon Diary become famous for her pursues objective, transforming the European economy in the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of a sustainable economic growth, with more and better places of work, and with greater social cohesion. To reach this objective, the countries from UE must coordinate their efforts for the adaptation of an ambitious program to modernize the educational system. The fundamentals of educational reform in Europe, were released a year before the Lisbon Treaty, with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration. Romania is participating in the Bologna Process since its launch in 1999. From then until now, it was adopted a comprehensive framework for the education system to align the requirements of different initiatives at European level, to increase mobility of students and labor market opportunities, to reduce the number of university specializations and increase participation in masters and doctoral programs. Through Law number 1/2011 propose a major reform in the entire Romanian education system, with major implications for higher education. Comparing the European systems with the Romanian system and the new university legislative brought to the system by Law number 1 / 2011 in Romania, we will highlight what's new in this field and the shortcomings of this system.

*Keywords: University education, reform, Romania, perspectiv, higher education;*

### 1. General aspects

The Romanian education system is in changing and also is improving on several areas and levels, in accordance with the changes from economic, social, political and cultural order of society.

The university has in this process a fundamental role, a mission of first degree importance as a pillar of educational system reform, like an axis to build a society based on knowledge.

The university education, with all of her structures, with all of her internal process, covers a process of conceptual and organization transformation, promoting a new paradigm of academic education, able to respond to dynamic of society in continues reform. Regarding the special conditions in which the reform is done-the alerting

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globalization, the accelerating technical-science evolution, the informatics revolution-, also her area of action, structure and the continuing studies, the harmonization of cycle and programs, the scientific resource, the criteria of appreciation the qualities of programs of studies and the results of theme, the economical crises, we must admit that the higher educational reform is done as a continuing process, a dynamic process of permanent adaptation of economical and social realities in continuing changing.

The bases of reform in educational area, at European level, have been put an year ago, in Lisbon, through the adaptation of Statement from Bologna (19 July 1999), signed by the ministers charged with superior education from 29 states, including Romania.

The principal objective of Bologna process is the one to create a European space for the superior education, based on international cooperation and academic exchanges, a European space attractive for the European students and teachers, also for the students and teachers all around the world.

Creating these European space of higher education it was followed the facilitation of students, graduates and personal from higher education to a better mobility, the preparation of students for their careers and life like an active citizens of a democratic society, and the support for their personal development and an open access of a fine quality of higher education. The third priorities from Bologna process are: the input of higher education system of three cycles (license, master degree, doctorate), education quality assurance and the recognition of qualifying and the period of studies.

## **2. The problems of Romanian higher education**

Even if, at the level of intention and arrangements, the things are written in a positive trend, the reform of Romanian higher university has a lot of difficulties, which are braking her walking ahead in the rhythm of other European states.

The research and uncertainty which plane over the institutional system, the quality in education, which remain still, in many institutes, a wish, a desideratum, the unrealistic education offers, the nonperforming programs of studies, the sporadic scientific research despite the investment in the last time, the absence of the Romanian universities from the big international rankings are realities that must be overcome.

The difficulties in the way of European development of Romanian higher university hang on of an administrative, political and legislative side, either originate in mentality, either are the causes by the objective evolution, external from the reform process.

First of all, from the reform of Romanian higher education it lacked a coherent legislative frame, build on a clear strategy regarding the mission, the purpose and objectives of the educational system.

Beyond the lack of the unitary legislative frame, their been created different normative paper with contradictory regulation, which led, in spite the initiatory intention, to confusion and incoherent regulations, creating even inequity in some parts of the system and impede the realization of a quality teaching.

The Romanian superior university, in both dimension- state and private- need a legislative and modern administrative frame, efficient, competitive, with European essence, which will create an environment good for development and to transform it into a system of high quality in education and excellence in research, creativity, innovation, performance and competitive au European and world wide level .

## **3. The implementation of the teaching reform in Romanian university**

The reform in Romanian university is concentrate, especial, on the transposition in practice of the objectives formulated in The Bologna Declaration regarding the creation of an European space of higher education, and the application of The Convention from Lisbon (proposed in common by UNESCO and The European Council in the year 2000) regarding the recognize of European qualifying.

The premises of these changing have been given by the Law number 288/2004 regarding the organization of university studies and The Decision of Government regarding the studies organization of university license.

Relaying on Bologna Process and administrative paper indicate upper, the superior university system from Romania passed through major changes, starting with the university year of 2005-2006.

The main objectives pursued and achieved in part were: decentralization and giving more autonomy to universities, assuring in the same time the coherence of the superior teaching system and the function of these system in a perfect articulate way; increase accountability for the educational offer and adapt it to developments in both knowledge, and to the changing needs of society; European harmonization of the Romanian higher education by: promoting European cooperation in quality assurance in education;

- transparency and comparability of studies completed in Romanian universities, compared with those offered by European Union member states;- introducing a system based on two main cycles (bachelor / bachelor + masters and doctorate);- widespread application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the adoption of measures to facilitate mobility of students and academics.

To support the development of education (be it academic or professional training), better mobility and labor market integration of European citizens, The European Union has created a number of tools such as: the European Qualifications Framework for training, aims to interconnect national qualifications systems, facilitating the hiring or enrolling citizens in other European studies; Euro pass helps understanding and recognition of qualifications and competences throughout Europe; European Credit Transfer System creates a basis for formal recognition for study periods. Moreover, for the period 2007 2013, The European Commission has integrated its initiatives in education and training under a single umbrella program of lifelong learning.

This program enables European citizens, regardless of their age, to enjoy the learning opportunities throughout Europe. The program has several components: four sub programs - Comenius for schools, Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training, Grundtvig for adult education, a transversal program to ensure getting the best results and the Jean Monnet, to support activities related to European integration and European institutions and organizations in education.

#### **4. The news brought by Law no. 1 / 2011, Law of National Education in Romania**

Given the poor results in Romanian education reform in general and the university in particular, Law no. 1/2011 National Education Act, legislation that aims to reform the whole education system in Romania.

A major novelty of this bill to the field of higher education refers to the organization of education university on three cycles, such as: license, school masters and doctoral school.

Another novelty is the classification of universities in several segments, namely: education and advanced research universities, universities of education and scientific research, education and creative arts universities, universities focused on education. Depending on the classification of each institution in one of the four segments will approve any or all of the Bologna cycles (bachelor, master, doctorate).

Among the major problems of the Law no. 1 / 2011 that were reported by universities in Romania, have the following issues:

1. immediate and irrational law will lead to inability to continue teaching and research, and unable to achieve the objectives assumed by Romania in front of the European Union;

2. need to change the law, emergency, to ensure the functionality of the education system;

3. are brought numerous attacks of university autonomy, which will generate negative effects on system operation by recentralization of decisions; creating a very difficult situation in universities by professors retire at the age of 65, with loss of holders on the one hand, removal and blocking competition for vacancies, on the other hand.

4. the classification and hierarchy of universities and study programs with no previous training and competence without analysis, without any criteria, standards and procedures are unenforceable and unrealistic laws this provision, which will generate insecurity among students, regarding on their study.

5. the incredibility and illegitimacy of national higher education system by legislating discrimination based on age;

6. ignoring the role of universities with small, important for students with poor financial possibilities, but also the development of localities in which they work;

7. promotion artificial and forced, in an attempt to compensate for human resources performance required to retirement; In addition, immediate mandatory retirement raises important questions about the continuity of programs of study, given that, by applying the new law would have to retire around 2000 by academics;

8. drastic reduction of the absorption of European funds, own revenues and international collaborations carried out by universities, following the retirement of leaders of research teams and a doctorate;

9. property acquisition by the state universities in the private property of the state, and universities lack the necessary clarifications on private property is the deviation from the principles enshrined in the Constitution, which guarantees the right to property;

10. by the way in which law distributes responsibilities for management structures, the University Senate, Board of Directors and, in particular, the powers of appointment Prorectors, deans by the rector, prerequisites of leadership that generates unrelated to university autonomy, guaranteed by the Constitution, with democracy and academic freedom.

## 5. Conclusion

Romania is elaborating a national strategy of permanent educational integration. National documents of education politics in the area of education, continuing formation and employment from the latest years include through priorities the principles of permanent education.

From a legal perspective, Romania has an extensive legislative framework in education and research. The main legal document in this respect is the law no. 1 / 2011 of National Education, but it is supplemented by several Government Decisions, and Order. Among them, the Government Decision no. 22/2007 for the approval of institutional evaluation for authorization, accreditation and periodic assessment of providers of education, Government Decision no. 475/2007 on the approval of the National Research and Innovation II, for the period 2007-2013, as amended and supplemented, Government Ordinance no. 57/2002 on scientific research and technological development, approved by Law no. 324/2003 or GEO. 75/2005 on quality assurance in education, as amended and supplemented.

Law no. 1/2011, without prior development of appropriate methodology, cause major difficulties in the functioning of university education in Romania. The first clarification is considering that, in order to apply current law, requires the development of about 55 Government Decision of 33 regulatory, and institutional level up to these decisions.

Correlation of current education law cannot be corrected only by the same power laws (laws, ordinances emergency). Any delay in drafting the necessary regulations and correct existing errors in the education law will make it impossible for them.

The Salzburg II recommendation underline, on one side that „doctoral education is highly individual and by definition original”, and on the other side that „doctoral education must be developed by autonomous and accountable institutions taking responsibility to cultivate the research mindset. Institutions need flexible regulation to create special structures and instruments and continue advancing European doctoral education.”

The new law prevents universities from Romania to implement these recommendations in the development of European doctoral studies, imposing a binding framework are rigid, the role of key decision makers and Government assigned the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The new collective measures of the doctorate (Ph.D. dissolution to form without frequency mandatory retirement doctoral leaders in 65 years, leading to cessation of activity doctorate 70 years, limiting the number of doctoral 8) do not take into account the specific situation of higher education institutions are restrictions that will have immediate negative consequences.

It is registered in Romania, that in the last 10 years, a spectacular increase in the number of students, especially in higher education. However, it is necessary an adaptation of higher education with greater labour market. This adaptation is achieved including the development, currently the National research projects and monitoring labour market insertion of graduates of higher education or school register unique public and private universities in Romania. The projects listed are a way to control of diplomas and monitoring of participation at this level of education.

At the same time, to develop a National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education (CNCSIS) were described 573 qualifications and methodology has been developed, pending approval for implementation CNCSIS. Another measure for the purpose of adapting the education system to labor market was the creation of a European Social Fund co-financed by Human Resources Development Operational Program 2007-2013, which houses the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education.

It was also established National Authority for Qualification (NAQ) by organizing the National Council of Qualifications and Vocational Training of Adults (NCQVTA) and Executive Unit and the National Council of Qualifications and Vocational Training of Adults (EUNCQVTA).

Reported at these trends and demands from European market, regarding the correlation of education with labor market, the new law of education does not bring coherent measures, that contribute and encourage these activity. The indicate measures upper are more in the institutional level, or are measures created at European level from with Romanian benefit.

The problem of correlation from university teaching with the labor market remain still an unresolved problem, which is one the verge of amplification by the new economic context determined by economical crises.

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