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CONVERGENT DISCOURSES. Exploring the Contexts of Communication

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureş, 2016

ISBN: 978-606-8624-17-4

UNIVERSITIES – STRONG CENTERS FOR ADULT TRAINING

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Abstract: In the report of the International Commission for Education in the XXI century, chapter 6 to UNESCO says: "Besides the fact that universities are preparing a large number of young people either for research or for specific professions requiring a specialization, universities must continue to be the main source of a growing number of individuals who find their curiosity in a way to give meaning to their existence, to be able to slake the thirst for knowledge ""¹

Thus universities must become powerful centers of education and adult training centers specializing in evaluating professional skills obtained in other learning contexts than formal counseling, vocational guidance and career of students and people looking for a job . It is important that universities continue to create diversified training programs addressed to former graduates in order to enable them to return to the university education system. Given the fact that competition in the field of adult training is very high and the quality of training is increasingly lower, universities can become a strong competitor with programs adapted to qualitative and diversified market needs and adult training.

Keywords: education; universtiesi; adul professional training; quality;

1. Policies and legislation in the field of training

According to the subsidiarity principle enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, education and training policies are decided by each Member State of the European Union.

In Europe 2020, dedicated to inclusive growth, were stipulated in particular education policies and training. Thus, the European Union plays a prominent role in supporting and complementing their efforts to improve and modernize them.

With regard to education, training and learning throughout life in Europe: a quarter of all pupils have poor reading competences, one in seven young people leave education and training too early. Around 50% of them reach medium qualifications level but this is not enough to meet market needs. Less than one in three of the population aged between 25 and 34 have a university degree, compared with 40% in the US and over 50% in Japan. According to the Shanghai index, only two European universities are in the world's top 20 universities.²

¹Jacques Delors, *Comoara Lăuntrică, Raportul UNESCO al Comisiei Internaționale Pentru Educație în secolul XXI*, Ed. Polirom, București, 2000, pag.112.

²Comunicarea Comisiei, Europa 2020, O strategie europeană pentru o creștere inteligentă, ecologică și favorabilă incluziunii, Bruxelles, 2010, pag.14;

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)

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The recommendation of the EU Council of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme of Romania for 2014 states: there remain important inconsistencies between the skills of graduates of tertiary education, and the link between business and academia remains weak, as indicated by high unemployment and that many university graduates find jobs in professions which do not correspond either to their preparation or are below their skill level. Participation in lifelong learning continues to be among the lowest in the Union.³

The following are some of the strategic documents defining the strategic planning for education and training throughout life:

- Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020);
 - Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 "Youth on the Move - promoting the learning mobility of young people" (2011 / C 199/01);
 - Bruges Communiqué on stepping up European cooperation in education and training during the period 2011-2020;
 - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes";
 - Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on education and training in Europe 2020 - education and training contribution to recovery, growth and job creation 2012 / C 393/02;
 - Council Recommendation of July 8, 2014 on Romania's National Reform Programme for 2014 that includes a Council opinion on Romania's convergence program for 2014;
 - Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011 / C 372/01);
 - National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania Horizons 2013-2020-2030;
 - National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2014 - 2020;
 - National Strategy for Competitiveness 2014-2020;
 - Integrated Strategy for Human Resource Development of lifelong learning perspective 2009-2020;⁴
- Furthermore, I will mention part of the legislative framework in Romania, on adult training:
- a) Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training, republished;
 - b) Resolution no. 481/2015 amending and supplementing the Methodological Norms for the application of Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training, approved by Government Decision no. 522/2003;
 - c) Resolution no. 567/2015 amending Government Decision no. 918/2013 approving the National Qualifications Framework;
 - d) Law no. 279/2005, regarding apprenticeship at work, republished;

³RECOMANDAREA CONSILIULUI privind Programul național de reformă al României pentru 2014 și care include un aviz al Consiliului privind Programul de convergență al României pentru 2014, iulie 2014, pag 3;

⁴Strategia educației și formării profesionale din România pentru perioada 2016-2020, pag 43-44;

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)

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- e) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 49/2014 on the establishment of measures in education, scientific research and amending certain legislative acts;
- f) Order no. 5613/2015 approving the model used in the completion certificate of completion programs for postgraduate continuing education;
- g) Order no. 5160/2015 on the organization of graduate programs and continuing education by accredited higher education institutions;
- h) National Education Law. 1/2011, as amended and supplemented.

According to Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training, republished, continuous training is conducted by:

- a) skill training programs, teaching, perfection, specialization organized by the training providers authorized by law, respectively, workplace training organized by employers for their staff;
- b) assessment of skills acquired in other ways than formal, through assessment centers skills obtained in other ways than formal ones authorized by law.

Professional skills are acquired within formal, non-formal and informal, for the purposes of Government Ordinance no. 129/2000, republished and are defined as follows:

- a) formal way means attending a program organized by a training provider;
- b) non-formalway means practicing specific activities directly to work or self-training;
- c) informal way means non-institutionalized training, unstructured and unintentional - unsystematic contact with different sources of socio-educational field, family, society or work environment.

In Romania, the regulations in the field of CVT are implemented through the following institutions: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, the County Agencies for Payments and Social Inspection, National Agency for Employment and county agencies subordinates, National Authority for Qualifications by Directorate of Adult Training, Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research.

National Authority for Qualifications (ANC) is a public institution with legal personality, a specialized body to the Ministry of National Education, the legal functioning of the ANC being regulated by Government Decision no. 556 of 25 May 2011 on the organization and functioning of the National Authority for Qualifications, published in the Official Gazette no. 435 of 22 June 2011 and by Ministerial Order no. 5428 of 21 September 2011 through which were approved the Rules of organization and functioning of the National Authority for Qualifications. In this institution function Department for the Adult Training Service Providers Authorization Training, Department for Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, Services Relations, Employment and Directorate Qualifications Strategy, Methodology and Informatization.

I mention that this institution fails to provide to vocational training providers most appropriate information, relevant legislation with the latest changes in the order of its appearance, clear

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methodologies on the work of training providers, or an updated national register of qualifications work - which is not developed yet.

Another public institution with responsibilities in adult training is the National Agency for Employment, exercising their functions through the County Agencies and the one from Bucharest. National Agency for Employment (NAE) has subordinated Agency Bucharest, 41 county agencies (within which operates 70 local agencies and 141 workstations), eight county centers for training the unemployed, eight regional centers for adult vocational training, as well as the National Centre for training Personnel Rasnov.

As a novelty is the reinstatement of National Administration Institute (INA), a public institution of national interest, with legal personality, a specialized body of central public administration, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, by merging vocational training in public administration professional training of civil servants from the National Agency of civil servants and regional training centers for local government.

This institution was abolished in 2009 because of large irregularities in the management of revenue and traffic diplomas. It remains to be seen whether the reinstatement INA training of civil servants and contractual staff will rise to a higher level of services quality than those of other authorized training providers. I believe that the interests are different, to monopolize training services, in which are involved large sums of money, removing from the market private training providers measure will lead to bankruptcy of many training providers authorized under the laws in force.

I consider important to mention that higher education institutions entitled thereto may be associated with the National Administration Institute to organize master's and doctoral programs in public administration and graduate programs training and continuous professional development in law.

Education and training strategy in Romania for the period 2016-2020

The need to increase and support adult education and training comes from a variety of reasons. In a changing world, people need to adapt their qualifications and skills in a labor market becoming more dynamic. In this respect, better educated adults increase their chances of employment or maintaining employment. Education among adults in the coming decades will gain importance increasingly higher, especially that period will likely be extended, possibly requiring continuous phase of formal and non-formal learning.

In the Strategy of education and training in Romania for the period 2016-2020 is mentioned: Education and training of young people and adults have the main purpose skills training, understood as a whole multifunctional and transferable knowledge, skills / attitudes needed to:

- a) personal fulfillment and development by achieving their goals in life, according to the interests and aspirations of each and desire to learn throughout life;
- b) social integration and active citizen participation in society;

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)

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c) filling a job and participating in the operation and development of a sustainable economy;
 d) forming a concept of life, based on scientific and humanistic values, on national and universal culture and fostering intercultural dialogue;

e) a culture of dignity, tolerance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
 f) growing sensitivity towards human problems, moral and civic values and respect for nature and the natural, social and cultural environment.⁵

Some of the issues identified in adult training strategy mentioned in vocational education and training in Romania for the period 2016-2020:

- The rate of adult participation in training programs throughout life was in 2014, 1.5%, well below the European average of 10.5% and far from the target of 12% proposed by Romania for 2020.
- Statistical data emphasizes the relatively small investments by enterprises in Romania for continuous training of the total cost of labor, finding no training activities sponsored by companies for 41% of employees aged 40 years and with a level low skills, this rate increased to 50% for those aged between 18 and 24 years and a low level of education and skills.
- The rate of participation in lifelong learning decreases with age. Thus in 2014 the rate was 3.7% in the age group 25-34 and only 0.3% in the age group 55-64 years. At none of the age groups have been made significant progress in the period under review.
- By level of education, we find that the rate of participation in lifelong learning is the higher the level of education is higher. Thus, in 2014, the participation rate in lifelong learning was 3% for people with tertiary level education compared to only 0.3% for those with lower secondary education level, primary or no education.⁶
- Lack of a national regulatory framework, implementation and quality assurance of education and training at system level.
- The lack of a national system for collecting and analyzing data on continuing vocational training;
- Lack of a statistical database on internal quality assurance at the level of authorized training providers;
- The need to develop and provide programs of continuing professional development of trainers, assessors programs, committees review and assessment of their skills.
- Need to develop standards for equipment for suppliers of initial training / continuing against the standards related to the qualification;

⁵Strategia educației și formării profesionale din România pentru perioada 2016-2020, pag 9;

⁶Idem, pag 14;

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- Lack of an adequate system of tax incentives that meet the needs of adults who have the status of employees and insufficient incentives for participation in training programs of all people of working age;
- Lack of methodology in recognizing of learning outcomes achieved in informal and non-formal system level;
- Lack of a mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and systematic review of the quality of training at the system level, including collecting and analyzing information on the degree of satisfaction of direct and indirect beneficiaries of vocational training programs.
- Low capacity of many training providers to access European funds, lack of facilities of this type;

In the following I will present some factors that will influence adults to participate in continuous training programs:

- Adapting to all changes and developments related to the profession at the workplace;
- Acquisition of new specific skills necessary to reorganization of companies, public institutions, in the context of the current economic and financial crisis and its correlation with the labor market;
- Obtain a new qualification which would allow to find easier a job if you lose it, even in an EU country;
- The possibility of career advancement and higher earnings to salary.

In the analysis of education and training strategy in Romania for the period 2016-2020, there is no reference to the universities as training providers. I believe that universities are providing training for adults, and some are powerful centers with a higher quality level than against other providers of public or private vocational training.

Aspects of quality of adult training

Recent studies in Europe show that adult learning sector is very diverse. This diversity can be seen by many target groups, variety of courses needed to cover all the training needs of adults and number of specialists, trainers should have a minimum number of key skills.

In Romania lately is fashionable to own a certified trainer, certificate which is obtained easily in most training centers, even if the person does not have anything to do with teaching, training, knowledge, skills, vocation and skills needed for professional training of adults.

In the European Union, to strengthen policies on adult learning, for improving governance and provision of services of quality are proposed five lines of action: *analysis in all Member States the effects of reforms in all sectors of education and training of adults ; increased opportunities for adults to achieve a qualification superior to what previously had; acceleration skills assessment and*

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skills obtained in other ways than formal; improving monitoring of the adult learning sector; review and improve all regulations for learning among adults.

Unfortunately, there is no data on the contributions of individuals to its own vocational training, currently there is no integrated, network management of a database (statistical indicators and information), or tracking mechanisms systematic and integrative supply and demand for training at national, regional, local, on trades, professions, categories of knowledge, skills so that nationally have no idea about the real dimensions of supply and demand for training services (FPC), nor for the quality, efficiency and impact.

I propose, in this case, that all institutions accredited as training providers to compile statistical reports following the model of the National Employment Agency Employment.

Current requirements of the labor market, economic and financial pressures have led to a diversification of universities both in terms of their diversity and financial arrangements. In addition to the powers and functions universities perform today, through their status of centers with institutional autonomy, can achieve partnerships with businesses, public institutions, other organizations and can offers other opportunities for adults through centers and specialized departments in this regard .

RNCIS - National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education

National Qualifications Register for Higher Education (RNCIS) is part of the National Qualifications Register (RNC) together with the National Register of Professional Qualifications (RNCP) and is a tool to determine the qualifications structure, ensure national recognition and international compatibility and comparability qualifications acquired through higher education system and to introduce a qualification of the labor market, according to the National Register of qualifications and the European qualifications framework. By entering RNCIS qualifications can be recognized and related all learning outcomes achieved in the higher education system and ensures consistency of qualifications and awards issued. RNCIS entry qualifications is a necessary authorization / accreditation of programs of study offered by higher education institutions authorized by law for that purpose, to demonstrate the link between qualifications and labor market requirements.⁷

Higher education institutions according to the Order nr.5204 / 2014 were required to register in NQRHE free information on the qualifications of Bachelor and Master level. According to statistics presented by the National Qualifications Authority (NCA) critical situation is as follows: number of universities included in NQRHE: 49; number of faculties entered in RNCIS: 275.

Most deals are listed by "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", respectively 248, and the fewer are at the University "Ioan Slavici" Timișoara, "Transilvania" University of Brasov, with one skill. The total number of qualifications entered is 2222.

⁷Ordinul nr. 5204/2014 privind aprobarea Metodologiei de înscriere și înregistrare a calificărilor din învățământul superior în Registrul Național al Calificărilor din Învățământul Superior (RNCIS);

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)

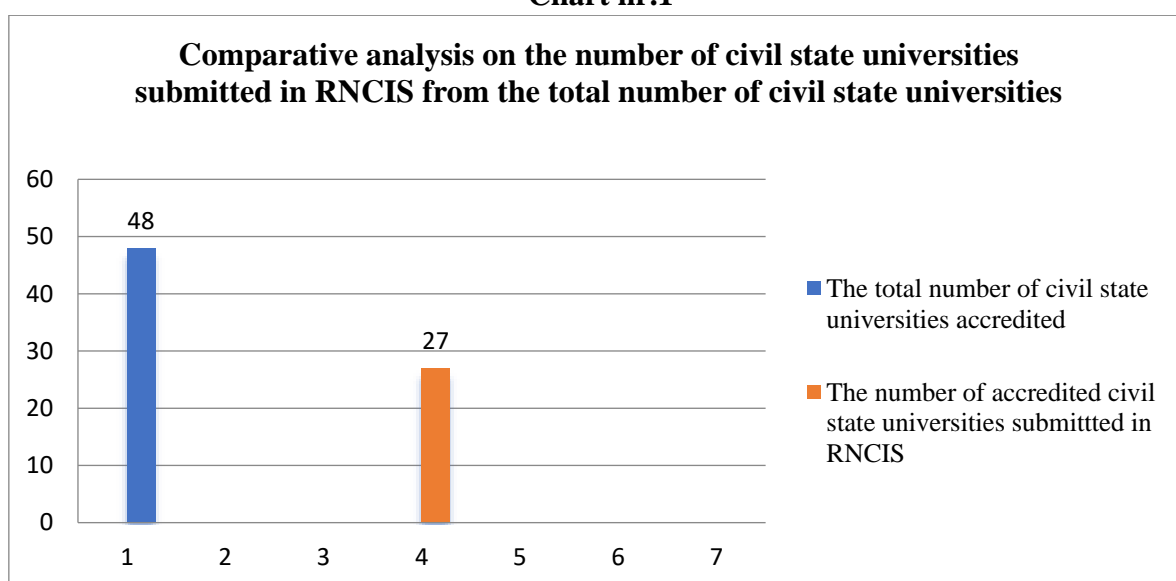
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The number of universities included in the total state universities RNCIS in Romania is as follows: Nr.total institutions of civil higher education in Romania: 48. Number of institutions of civil higher education in Romania entered in RNCIS: 27.

Chart nr.1



Source: National Qualifications Authority, Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, own processing

Analyzing the data presented results that only a percentage of 56.25% of state were recorded in NQRHE. Analyzing the number of higher education institutions registered in RNCIS military are found a number of 3 institutions in a total of four institutions. Not included National Academy of Intelligence "Michael the Brave" in Bucharest. Regarding the number of accredited private higher education institutions situation is in Chart 2

:

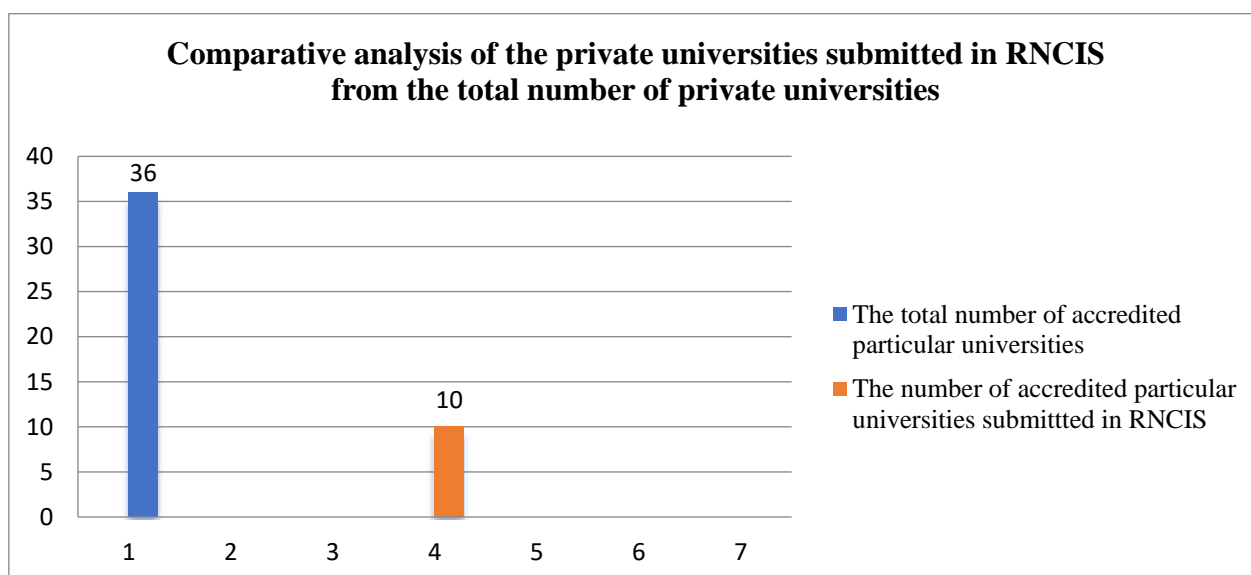
Chart nr. 2

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)

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Source: National Qualifications Authority, Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, own processing

Analyzing the data presented above that of all accredited private universities only a percentage of 27.77% were enrolled in NQRHE. Accredited private universities was not interested because the enrollment in RNCIS is not considered useful, practical and important requirement.

Conclusions

I mention few of the tasks of universities in the current context for them to maintain their status as initial and continuing training at university level for personal development and fulfillment of life, employability and meeting the needs of the individual competence of the socio-economic environment:

- opening of the universities to socio-economic environment and involvement in local communities; increasing confidence regarding the social function of a university by developing closer links with the labor market as;
- opening up universities for the broad masses of the population, not only by the best or elite; construction and development of closer relations between university and school education;
- developing their marketing strategies to attract students based on operational plans, prospects and their aspirations for medium and long term;
- reducing the gap between universities materialistic goals (development of infrastructure, material resources, equipment laboratories) and civic purposes of the university organization to nurture the soul and mind of young people for the fulfillment of lived life;
- improving the quality of universities by developing tools, procedures about quality and their implementation by specialized and functional departments, increase accountability and

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ownership of quality by all participants in the educational process, teachers, students, management, administrative and operational staff;

- conduct market research to identify the needs of adult training, consultancy and training.

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