

Section I
**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES
AND STRATEGIES SECTION**

REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

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*„The state should ensure regional development policies in line
with the objectives of the European Union”
– Romanian Constitution art. 135 al. 2d.*

Abstract:

Often worded, the competence of coordination and stimulating the development in a larger scale, is the most visible prerogative of regional level and relates to territorial dimension (in the present context we are talking about territories of 30,000 km²) and population (on average about 2.5 million people). The fulfillment of this goal must be preceded by a series of public policies and strategies specific to the region, but obviously with references and localization in the national strategies that should meet the general framework in which the regional level should be able to carry out their initiatives depending on specific priorities, competitive advantages, population requirements, local possibilities, etc. and of course taking into account European regional development, the way the territorial administrative entities work and act at European level and the need for complex activities of European countries, generally, during this period.

Key words: *sustainable development, schools, 2020 Europe*

JEL Classification: I25

1. Introduction

Starting with the debate about regionalization, in Romania talks were resumed on a range of tasks that would be assigned to this level of administrative organization and the financial support these administrative units should have in order to lead out their duties.

„Europe is going through a period of transformation. The crisis has wiped out years of economic and social progress and highlighted structural weaknesses in Europe's economy. Meanwhile, the world is moving fast and long-term challenges (globalization, pressure on resources, aging) are increasing. Europe can succeed if it acts collectively, as a Union. We need a strategy that will allow us to emerge stronger from the crisis and turn the EU in a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth “says the “ Europe 2020 Strategy “. (European Commission, 2010a, European Commission, 2008, 2010)

In this context, we consider we should look at the efforts at regional level, where boundaries become wider and more permissive, action power sensitively increases and the access to an European and even global level noticeable easier to achieve with superior effects.

Which may, however, be the directions where the regions efforts may focus now? E.U. proposes, in 2020 Strategy, three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on growth and innovation;
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more efficient economy in terms of resource use, greener and more competitive;
- Inclusive growth: promoting an economy with a high rate of employment to ensure social and territorial cohesion.

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Also the E.U. Commission proposes the following main objectives:

- 75% of the population aged between 20 and 64 have a job;
 - 3% of EU G.D.P. - should be invested in research – development; the target of spending 3% of G.D.P. to research and development has been resumed in 2020 Europe Lisbon Strategy. (Tilford, S. 2010)
 - The rate of early school leavers should be reduced below 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation to have higher education;
 - The number of people at risk of poverty to be reduced by 20 million.
- These objectives must be translated into national targets and trajectories.

2. Strategies and public policies for the regional development

A very important objective is to increase the percentage of population aged 30-34 having completed higher education from 31% to at least 40% by 2020, taking into account that education plays a key role in employment and competitiveness by increasing employment opportunities and long-term promotion (Gros & Roth, 2008).

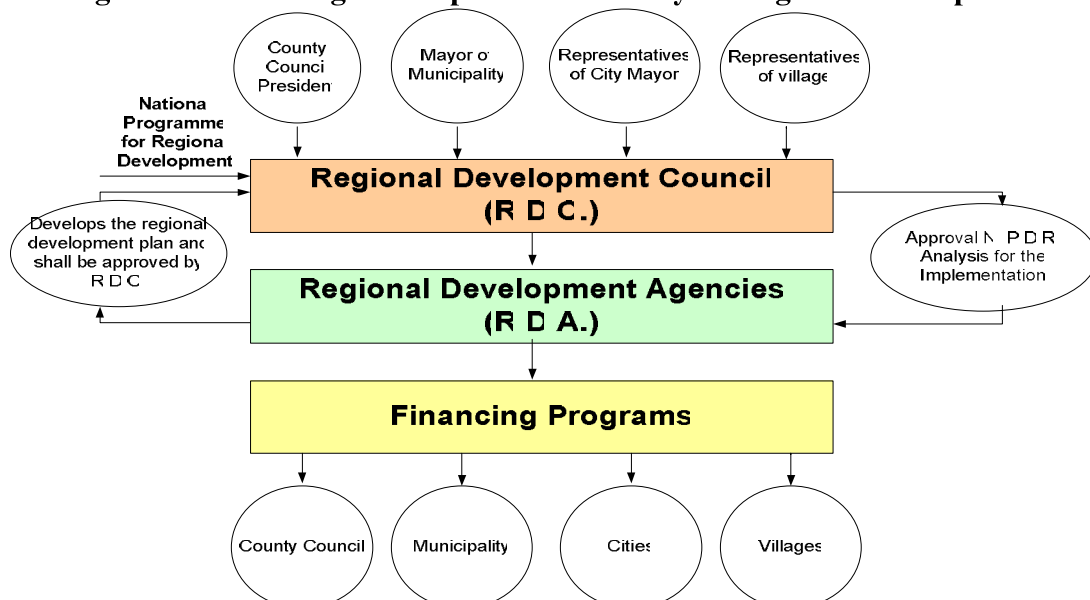
In this context the National Reform Programme (N.R.P.), adopted in Romania for the period 2011-2013, is the framework for the development and implementation of Romania's economic development policies according with EU policies. Priorities of the N.R.P. aim to achieve a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, with high levels of labor employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Among the objectives listed in N.R.P. are included:

- Resumption of economic growth and creation of new jobs;
- Protecting the population groups most affected by the economic crisis;
- Ensure long-term sustainability of public finances and restructure and streamline public administration;
- The implementation of priority reforms in the short and medium term and specific measures to achieve national objectives set in the context of Europe 2020.

Overall N.R.P. aims to boost competitiveness, productivity and growth potential of Romania, social and territorial cohesion and economic convergence, all contributing to reduce the gaps between Romania and Romanian regions and other regions and countries of Europe.

Figure no. 1. Strategies and policies necessary for regional development



The current division of the territory of Romania in the so-called "development regions" by its very name indicates, the role for which they were "created" these entities, the main activity which they have to perform is to generate development strategies supported by the Regional Development Plans (R.D.P.) according to the priorities established under the Regional Development Council (R.D.C.) and implemented by the Regional Development Agencies (R.D.A.).

As shown, institutional we created regional, even if not under an administrative regime, the required framework to establish strategies and public policies needed to develop that territory. Especially since these programming documents are due to summation of public policy at local and county level and includes major projects that the local governments cannot coherently "assemble" following duties and limited funds at their disposal.

The development of R.D.P. is a dynamic process that is modified every year to adapt to the constantly changing socio-economic environment. Thus a comparison of the priorities of the R.D.P. 2010 and 2013 may show a number of interesting things for what has happened in the S-E region in three years.

Table no. 1. 2010 and 2013 Regional Development Plans

R.D.P. 2010	R.D.P. 2013
1. Create favorable conditions for the development of the institutional environment	1. Integrated sustainable urban development
2. Development of the regional transport network	2. Development of regional transport infrastructure
3. Promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources	3. Improving the competitiveness of the regional economy, in the context of promoting smart economic specialization
4. Modernizing rural economy	4. Improving the tourism quality at regional level
5. Developing a skilled workforce to respond to labor market needs in order to maintain and create quality jobs	5. Environmental conservation and protection
6. Improving the performance of education and training system	6. Improving energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources
7. Promoting social inclusion through the development of social services, health services and through sport and culture	7. Improving quality in education, health and social inclusion
8. Protection and development of natural heritage and promoting environmental policies	8. Better use of resources in rural areas and the modernization of the rural economy
9. Integrated sustainable urban development	9. Improving human resources at the regional level in the context of smart regional specialization
10. Improving administrative capacity	10. Promoting cross-border and interregional cooperation

We thereby see that the sustainable and integrated urban development has a greater attention in 2013, the city and especially the major municipalities are seen as centers of development, poles from which to radiate development and to be included in the main economic and cultural activities of the area.

Also we can see that from the target priority "creation of favorable environment for investment climate" has continued in 2013 to "improve the competitiveness of the regional economy in the context of promoting smart economic specialization" which obviously means really a quantum leap in the way of action and vision of public authorities about their place and role in regional development.

It is worth mentioning that since the "modernization of the rural economy", in 2013 we are talking about "better use of resources in rural areas and modernization of the rural economy."

If some priorities remain virtually in the same form away for 3 years, but evidence of their importance and the fact that time has failed to achieve the expected results (improving

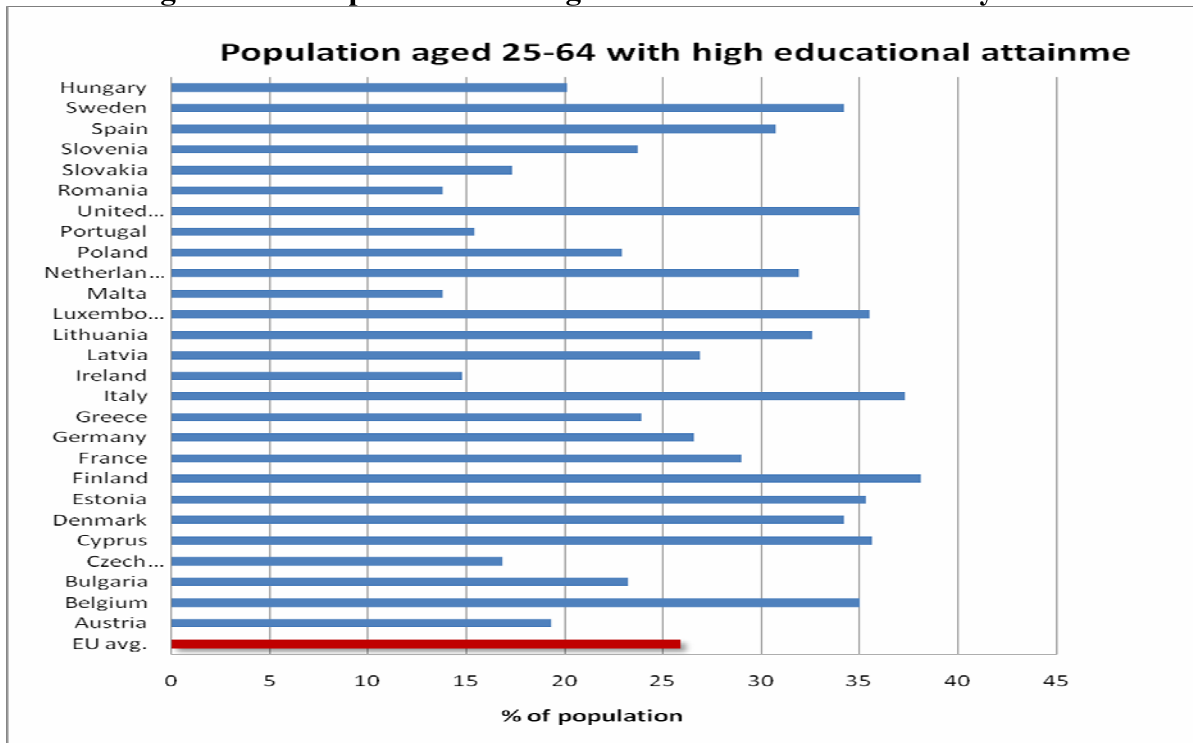
energy efficiency and use of renewable resources, the development of regional transport infrastructure) is observed to occur entirely new priorities as "cross-border and interregional cooperation" new evidence which the regional dimension tends to assume as a result of regional cooperation realities both inside and outside Romania in the following the border and as a result relations between European regions and counties of Romania.

Looking closely, however, at the 10 priorities we cannot fail to notice the inclusion in their names, explicitly or implicitly, a desire to emphasize the quality of work and performance that must accompany. Competitiveness, sustainable integrated development, specialization, smart economy, quality of tourism, improvement of energy efficiency, renewable resources, better use of resources, promotion, etc. are keywords that appear along the way and say that priorities are actually the very essence that these requirements reflect.

2. Improving performance in education for a smart growth

An economy based on smart growth can be achieved only by and through education taken to the next level, innovative and capable of meeting short-term needs of the society and especially those in the medium and long term.

Figure no. 2. Population with higher education between 25-64 years



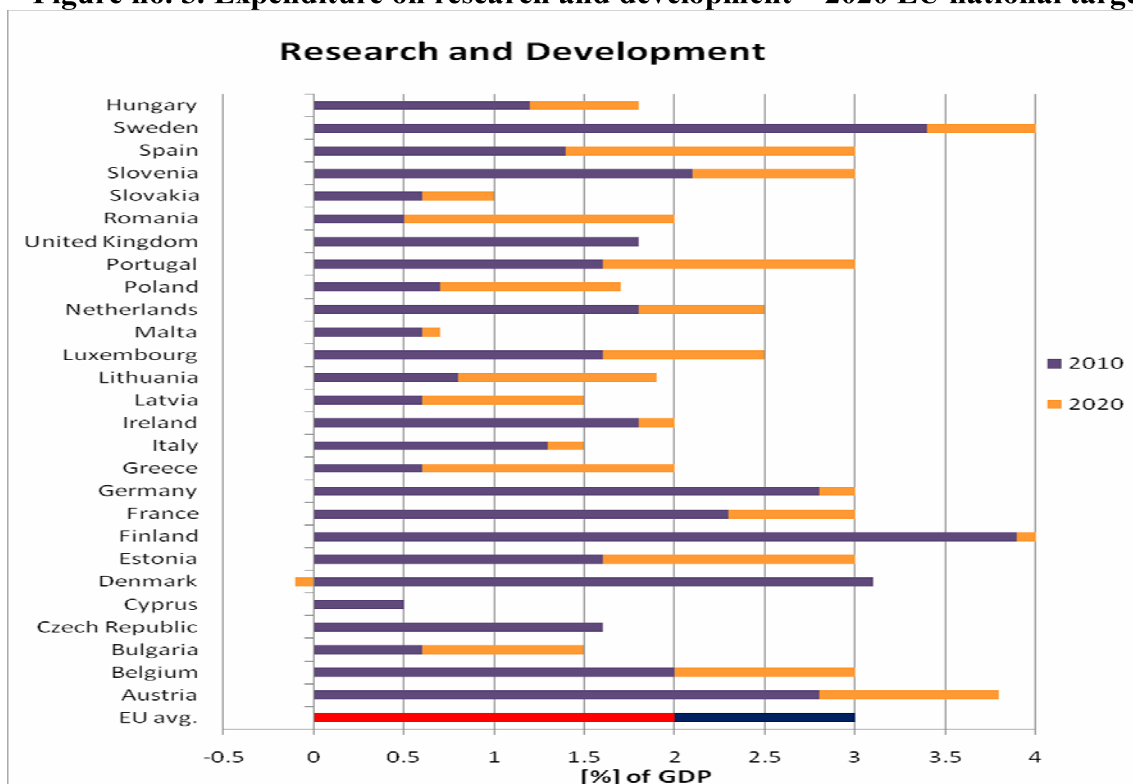
Therefore, in 2010 and 2013 R.D.P talks about improving performance in education and training, associating in 2013 education with the health and social inclusion and improving the human resources at the regional level in the context of smart regional specialization.

"Smart growth means strengthening knowledge and innovation as drivers of our future growth. For this it is necessary to improve the quality of our education systems to strengthen research performance, promoting innovation and knowledge transfer, to fully use information and communication technologies and ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into new products and services that generate growth, quality jobs and help address challenges facing society "says the 2020 Europe strategy.

An analysis for the European level shows that a quarter of all pupils have poor reading skills, one in seven young people leave school early, 50% reach medium qualifications level, one third of Europeans have a university degree compared to 40% in the U.S. and 50% in Japan. Also within the EU are important discrepancies particularly if we look at the situation of university studies. (European Commission, 2012a)

A natural appearing result is that research and development expenses in Europe stands at less than 2% of GDP compared with 2.6% in the U.S. and 3.4% in Japan and here with large differences between EU. And obviously a great impact on future developments and strategies in a world where globalization is not to the advantage of those who remain behind. (European Commission, 2012b)

Figure no. 3. Expenditure on research and development – 2020 EU national target



This is why an analysis of concerns, role and actions of local authorities in education, where already have a number of tasks, we appreciate that it can be enlightening for future actions at a regional level.

From this point of view R.D.P. propose specific aim to improve quality in education "increase the rate of public participation in the education and training adapted to the new requirements of the labor market and infrastructure and improved facilities." (National Reform Programme 2011-2013, 2010)

Regarded as a key component of the structure of services, particularly in urban and rural areas as pooled, education, intensive development is vital to regional and local competitiveness. Moreover orientation 9 of the Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States of the EU is aimed at "improving the performance of education and training at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education." In this context, Member States should ensure an improvement in the functioning of the education system to raise the level of competence and meet the needs of the labor market which is in constant transformation. (Regional Development Plan of South-Eastern Europe, 2013)

3. Analysis of the educational system

A summary analysis by region of the situation of schools in the education system in Romania is as follows:

Table no. 2. Analysis of the situation of schools in the educational system in Romania

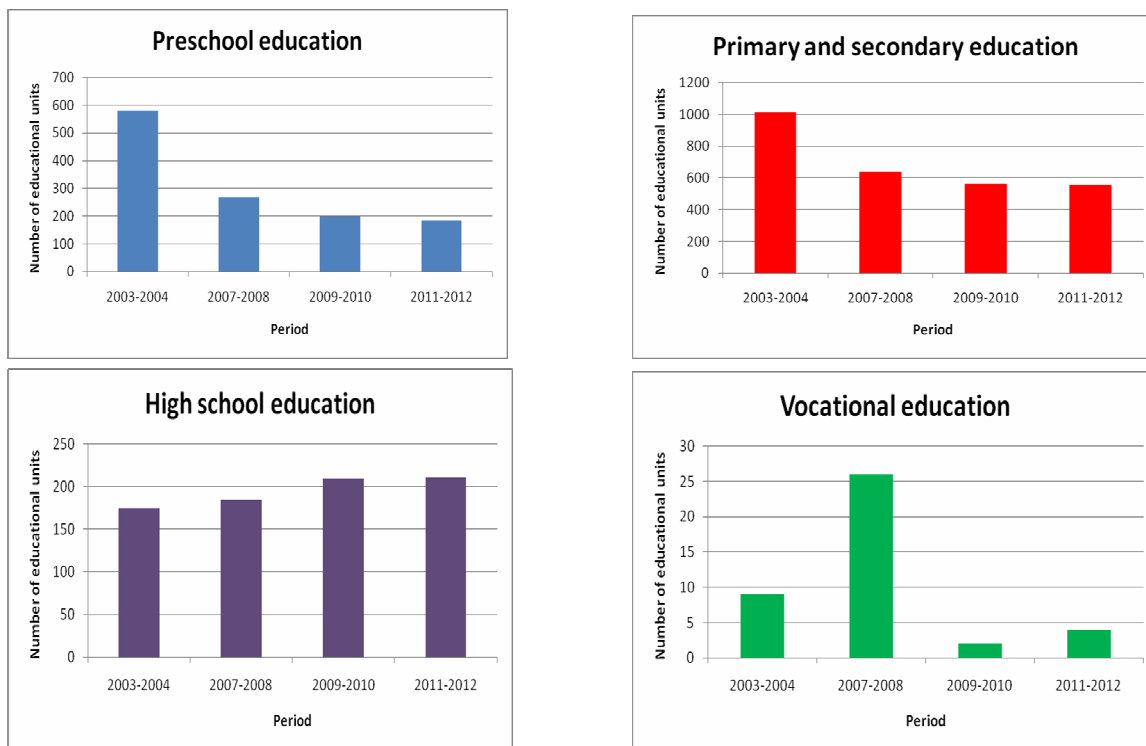
Region	Pre-school	Primary and secondary	High school	Professional	Post high school	Foremen	Higher education	Faculties
Romania (total)	1,367	4,022	1,615	6	86	0	108	614
North-East	156	710	260	1	17	0	15	75
South Muntenia	145	684	216	1	12	0	4	36
West	136	315	166	1	4	0	14	71
Center	239	545	213	0	12	0	13	76
Bucharest-Ilfov	232	227	134	0	4	0	35	171
South-West Oltenia	96	476	160	0	8	0	4	36
South-East	173	528	209	3	12	0	7	53
Brăila County	29	69	24	2	1	0	0	3
Buzău County	19	101	34	1	4	0	0	2
Constanta County	69	99	68	0	4	0	5	28
Galati County	41	114	39	0	3	0	2	18
Tulcea County	5	55	20	0	1	0	0	0
Vrancea County	10	90	24	0	3	0	0	2

Without necessarily considering, the amount as the most relevant item in question, we must notice discrepancies between the number of high school educational institutions and vocational ones.

Although the small number of schools with professional profile can be attributed to technological high schools it is obvious that theorizing Romanian high schools it's a mass occurrence. This and amid plummeting employment in industry but also because of a general approach to triad parents - teachers - students, a phenomenon about we will discuss.

A nationally analysis of the evolution in the last ten years of the number of schools shows a continuous decrease (38.12%). Each region should establish their own strategies in this regard because there are different developments of the situation in each region and in each county. It is noteworthy that statistical analysis such number of scholar units/100.000 people may become irrelevant when discussing remote areas (Danube Delta, the mountains of Vrancea and Buzau) can give reasonable signals about the need of merging some school units and the impact of this measure in the area or can be an important part in making a decision when analyzing a new investment in education in a particular city or an area of municipality, depending on the demographic trend in that territory.

Figure no. 4. Evolution of regional schools by the level of education



It should be noted that in the medium term (4-5 years) and especially long-term, the demographic trend is one descending.

A parallel on the fields of study that practically reveals the situation of the school population by age shows that in preschool we have a drop of 63.73%.

Even though the high school level has increased by 14.54%, even if we speak of the impact of "class 0" and the transition to school level we cannot see that in the medium and long term we will have serious problems in administrating the space that become available. Therefore, it requires serious analysis and measures by which these spaces can be developed for all preferred alternative activities in school – educational activities like the after - school, children's clubs, spaces for NGOs Sites with cultural and educational activities, activities for children with special performances or disabled, etc.

It should be taken into consideration trends of career choices by students. Their options tend not to target the so-called jobs. That is why the offers for mechanical, construction, agriculture, electrical and food industry are not be found among the options of the eighth grade graduates.

It will also be kept in mind that, due to the economic crisis and the drop in income parents the tendency to come to the big cities drops down, especially those with modest education results remain close to the locality in which they reside, no matter what educational opportunities these can provide. As will be considered, the impact of school consolidation with the low income of some parents, on school dropout. For although today the region is below the figure of 10% the situation may deteriorate very quickly.

Of course the question is whether a series of choices for students are so because they are made by the teachers we have. If every year we don't have candidates to complete all the enrolment places, why do we have nature science specialization classes to 5-6 high schools? Same thing if we talk about tourism or economic profile. How much tourism can be done in a county like Braila, Ialomita, Calarasi, etc? What insights can a class of forestry have in an agricultural county that in 2011 had no class in the agriculture profile? Where to get wood for some graduates of profile classes "manufacture of wooden products" that we have for years.

What future awaits the graduates of several classes, year after year of social sciences? And the questions could go on. (Appendix 1).

Therefore, a much better correlation, in line with market requirements at regional level, of these schools guidance should be a priority for the system. A regional LEAP, a regional direction of education, with a broader vision on both the educational system and the economic development strategy in the field, a review of workforce needs in the medium and long term are essential to the future of the region and that those who today are in primary and secondary schools to be included in future citizens with jobs and stable incomes in the region.

In terms of university studies the regional level may also exert an important influence. There is in every major city, every county the desire to have a university. Private education intervention made this possible and some state universities have opened branches. Thus in the 2011-2012 academic year in the S-E region are faculties with more than 12,000 students and 200 teachers. Although we can have quantitative information on the evolution of the number of higher education institutions in Romania and in the region we believe that this is not the most important element in the analysis and development of the lines of action for the future.

Table no. 3. The evolution of the faculties in South Eastern region by counties during 2000/2001 - 2011/2012

Regions	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2006-2007	2008 - 2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Romania	696	729	742	754	742	770	755	631	629	614
South East region	48	53	55	58	60	66	65	54	54	53
Brăila	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Buzău	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	1	2
Constanța	28	30	31	32	33	32	32	30	29	28
Galați	14	15	16	17	19	24	24	19	19	18
Tulcea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vrancea	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	2

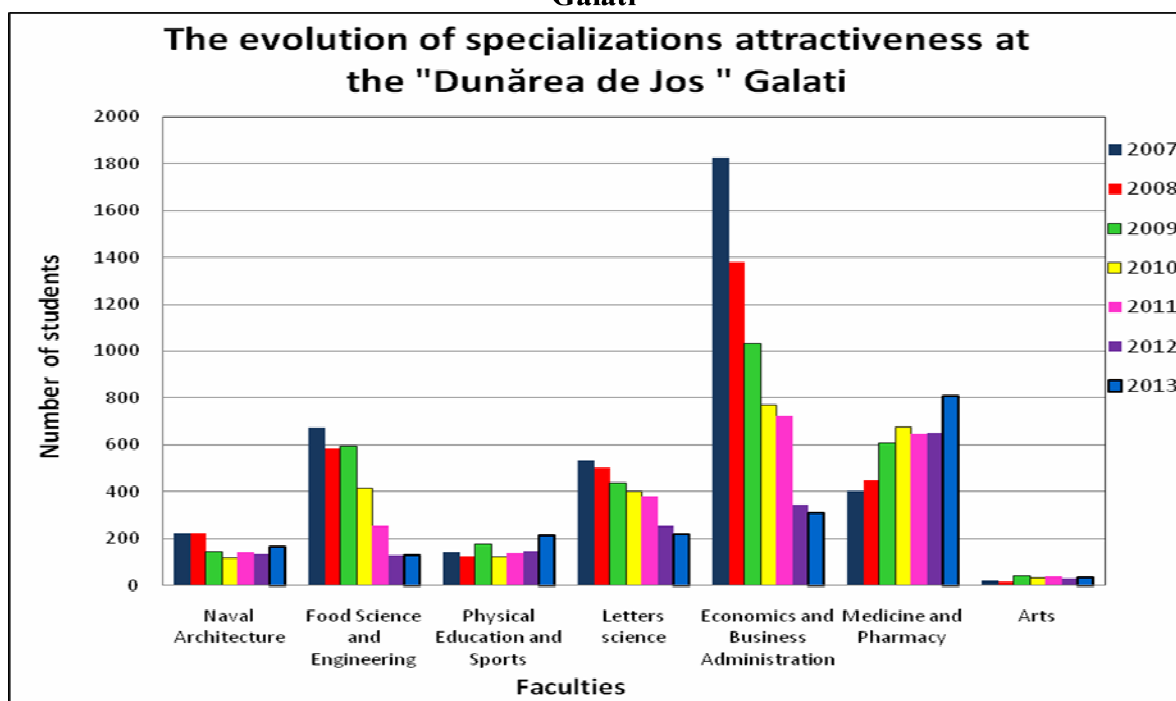
Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania, NIS, Bucharest - 2012 edition

We have a wide offer but here too public policies should aim at a longer time horizon. What will require the regional, national and European market over 5-15 years? To what extent do we offer high school graduates "package" solutions of training - employment? What is the practical training that students receive during their studies and how they adapt to labor market conditions after graduation? These are only a few of the questions that public policies in education at national and regional level should respond.

For taking one example, at the "Dunarea de Jos" University from Galati the evolution of specializations offered attractiveness to 14,000 students showing some stability to some of them (physical education, art, boats) and a decrease (letters science, food engineering, economics) or a sharp rise in others (medical and pharmacy).

If this is the trend, with the certainty for the future environment, but especially for the one over 10 to 15 years from now measures should be taken now to meet market requirements. Because after all, even if there is an assessment of the offer, the training request, with all the arguments underlying, is what will determine the future development of the university system.

Figure no. 5 The evolution of specializations attractiveness at the "Dunarea de Jos" Galati



Source: <https://www.admitere.ugal.ro>

Analyzing the economic and social situation in the EU, the EU Commission proposed to the European Parliament and Council a report "the concentration of resources on a limited number of important areas such as employment (especially for young people), training and education, social inclusion, innovation and an open economy to the inclusion of ICT infrastructure and digital development measures "(European Commission, 2013)

This proposal comes as a continuation to the message sent by the European Council in March 2012 which said that "the five targets set for 2020 remain fully relevant and will guide further the actions of the Member States and the Union to promote employment, improve the conditions for innovation, research and development, improving education and promoting social inclusion "(European Council, 2012)

Conclusions

Under these conditions, creating a stable and predictable legal framework in line with European standards enabling concerted action at local, regional and national level is a priority in Romania.

Flexibilisation of decision, subsidiarity and proximity to the territorial analysis and decisions relating to primary and secondary schools and a new vision regarding the high school level with a focus on educational and vocational guidance and an offer in connection with the present realities, especially with the future well-reasoned and supported arguments against different categories of graduates are regional priorities.

Certainly we have to realize that it is important to invest in infrastructure, upgrading the facilities to the European requirements. It is important to know for whom and in what to invest to get out of the past and to truly find ourselves in the common European future.

It requires a concentration of public and private high education in major universities, strong both by the number of students and teachers and the quality of education that can be supported by a growing economy and benefiting from financial support considerably both for training and development.

A system of fundamental and applied scientific research both in universities and specialized institutions that can be supported but are also self-supporting through their own work, will lead to a development of the area in turn interested in supporting this work.

And perhaps not least openness at all levels and the development of coherent public policies, not only assembled by summing but also by coordinating regional efforts will result in taking the best decisions to make the education a truly pillar of future development.

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Appendix 1

High School /College	Specialization	Total number for student's admission	Available no. for student's admission	Candidates admitted	The first mark	The last mark
"C. Brancoveanu" Technological High School Brăila	Textile industry and leather goods	29	28	1	7.09	7.09
Technological High School Insuratei	Textile industry and leather goods	29	0	29	7.38	5.64
Technological High School Insuratei	Electro mechanics	29	0	29	8.06	6.14
"C. Brancoveanu" Technological High School Brăila	Electro mechanics	29	29	0	0	0
"C.D.Nenitescu" Technical College Brăila	Mechanics	29	24	5	8.28	5.04
Theoretical High School "G. Valsan" Faurei	Mechanics	58	6	52	7.94	4.49
"GH.K.Constantinescu" Technological High School Brăila	Tourism and Food	29	27	2	8.02	5.86
"N.Oncescu" Technological High School Ianca	Tourism and Food	29	1	28	8.53	4.89
Technological High School "Grigore Moisil Brăila	Electronics automations	29	28	1	6.82	6.82
"P.Istrati" Tehnical College Brăila	Electronics automations	29	24	5	7.02	5.23
"C.D.Nenitescu" Tehnical College Brăila	Electronics automations	29	27	2	7.38	5.14
"P.Istrati" Tehnical College Brăila	Electric	29	23	6	7.76	4.69
"Grigore Moisil" Technological High School Brăila	Electric	29	25	4	5.54	4.67
"GH.M. Murgoci" National College Brăila	Mathematics and Computer Science / Bilingual	29	0	29	10	9.78
"GH.M. Murgoci" National College Brăila	Mathematics informatics	58	0	58	9.98	9.56
"GH.M. Murgoci" National College Brăila	Natural Sciences	58	0	58	10	9.53
"GH.M. Murgoci" National College Brăila	Social Sciences	29	0	29	9.86	9.45
"GH.M. Murgoci" National College Brăila	Philology / Bilingual	29	0	29	9.99	9.23
"Nicolae Iorga" Theoretical High School Brăila	Social Sciences	29	0	29	9.66	9.19
"Nicolae Iorga" Theoretical High School Brăila	Natural Sciences	29	0	29	9.9	9.16
"Nicolae Balcescu" National College Brăila	Mathematics informatics	87	0	87	10	9.1

High School /College	Specialization	Total number for student's admission	Available no. for student's admission	Candidates admitted	The first mark	The last mark
"Nicolae Balcescu" National College Brăila	Social Sciences	29	0	29	9.57	9.05
"Nicolae Balcescu" National College Brăila	Natural Sciences	58	0	58	9.9	8.97
"Nicolae Balcescu" National College Brăila	Mathematics and Computer Science / Bilingual	29	5	24	9.97	8.96
"Nicolae Iorga" Theoretical High School Brăila	Mathematics informatics	87	0	87	9.99	8.73
"D.P.Perpessicius" Pedagogical High School Brăila	Social Sciences	29	0	29	9.75	8.67
"D.P.Perpessicius" Pedagogical High School Brăila	Natural Sciences	29	0	29	9.16	8.5
"Ana Aslan" National College Brăila	Natural Sciences	87	0	87	9.77	8.38
"D.P.Perpessicius" Pedagogical High School Brăila	Philology	29	0	29	9.6	8.38
"Panait Cerna" Theoretical High School Brăila	Natural Sciences	29	0	29	9.49	8.1
"Panait Cerna" Theoretical High School Brăila	Social Sciences	58	0	58	9.15	8.04
"Nicolae Iorga" Theoretical High School Brăila	Philology / Bilingual	29	0	29	9.77	8
Technological High School Insuratei	Philology	29	0	29	9.57	7.99
"Panait Cerna" Theoretical High School Brăila	Philology	29	0	29	9.26	7.96
"Panait Cerna" Theoretical High School Brăila	Mathematics informatics	58	0	58	8.75	7.69
"G. Valsan" Theoretical High School Faurei	Philology	29	0	29	9.62	7.47
"C. Angelescu " Theoretical High School Ianca	Philology	29	0	29	9.11	7.34
Technological High School Insuratei	Natural Sciences	29	0	29	9.59	7.28
"G. Valsan" Theoretical High School Faurei	Mathematics informatics	29	0	29	9.9	7.23
"C. Brancusi" Technological High School Brăila	Forestry	29	28	1	7.22	7.22
"Mihail Sebastian" Theoretical High School Brăila	Social Sciences	58	0	58	8.74	7.14

High School /College	Specialization	Total number for student's admission	Available no. for student's admission	Candidates admitted	The first mark	The last mark
"Ion Ghica" Economical College Brăila	Tourism and Food	58	0	58	9.54	7.07
"C. Angelescu " Theoretical High School Ianca	Natural Sciences	29	0	29	9.81	6.72
"Mihail Sebastian" Theoretical High School Brăila	Philology	29	0	29	7.94	6.41
Technological High School Insuratei	Trade	29	0	29	7.93	6.36
"C. Brancusi" Technological High School Brăila	Manufacture of wood	29	26	3	7.53	6.23
"A.Saligny" Technological High School Brăila	Natural Sciences	29	19	10	7.87	6.07
"C.D.Nenitescu" Technical College Brăila	Food industry	29	25	4	7.42	5.94
"C. Brancusi" Technological High School Brăila	Environmental protection	29	25	4	7.06	5.92
"A.Saligny" Technological High School Brăila	Electronics automations	29	12	17	8.8	5.88
C. Angelescu " Theoretical High School " Ianca	Mathematics informatics	29	12		9.76	5.8
"Mihail Sebastian" Theoretical High School Brăila	Natural Sciences	58	4	54	8.31	5.5
"E.Nicolau" Technical College Brăila	Buildings, installations and the public works	58	54	4	6.32	5.43
"Ion Ghica" Economical College Brăila	Economic	116	18	98	8.68	5.38
"Grigore Moisil" Technological High School Brăila	Economic	29	27	2	7.54	5.19
"C. Brancoveanu" Technological High School Brăila	Mechanics	29	28	1	5.12	5.12
"GH.K.Constantinescu" Technological High School Brăila	Economic	29	28	1	4.96	4.96
"E.Nicolau" Technical College Brăila	Tourism and Food	29	0	29	7.81	4.93
"A.Saligny" Technological High School Brăila	Mechanics	87	46	41	7.69	4.93
"N.Oncescu" Technological High School Ianca	Mechanics	29	20	9	7.2	4.8

High School /College	Specialization	Total number for student`s admission	Available no. for student`s admission	Candidates admitted	The first mark	The last mark
"N.Oncescu" Technological High School Ianca	Agriculture	29	26	3	5.69	4.74
"Ion Ghica" Economical College Brăila	Trade	87	34	53	8.7	4.73
"E.Nicolau" Technical College Brăila	Food industry	29	23	6	6.93	4.63
"C.D.Nenitescu" Technical College Brăila	Environmental protection	29	24	5	7.76	4.4
"GH.K.Constantinescu" Brăila Technological High School	Aesthetics and hygiene of the human body	29		14	7.31	4.39
"GH.K.Constantinescu" Brăila Technological High School	Agriculture	116	81		8.17	4.31
"C.D.Nenitescu" Technical College Brăila	Tourism and Food	29	6	23	7.66	4.3
"P.Istrati" Technical College Brăila	Mechanics	116	68	48	8.45	3.96
"M.Basarab" Technological High School	Food industry	29	15	14	7.86	3.96

Source: Ministry of Education and Research, Romania.