

## *Short Communication*

# **The chances of performance in Romanian education in future years 2014-2021**

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The Congress of Education from 14 to 15 June, 2013 marked the direct confirmation of Romania's intentions to approach the European standard at which it aims to achieve in 2020. The Ministry of National Education assumes ambitious goals in order to achieve the strategic European targets, with a lag of maximum two percent for criteria, such as: the rate of leaving early the educational cycle for young children over 14 years, the rate of enrollment under 5-6 years in preschools, the percentage of young people up to 34 years old who attend a tertiary education or people involved in the process of self-education or continuing education and last but not least, the quality of education, methodologically assessed at age of 15. The achievement of these objectives can meet some big obstacles revealed by some trends resulting from the analysis data provided in the Congress of Education. We mention that there are only positions of strategic targets which still ranks with Bulgaria on the last places in Europe and overcoming this handicap would require efforts and institutional materials that are not covered in our social and economic conditions. Also noteworthy are strategic targets that can be reached in real terms and we refer, for example, to the increasing coefficient of young tertiary education graduates, although the number of those who get the Baccalaureate remains low. Overlapping European strategic objectives for 2020 with Romanian ones is also jeopardized by the manifestation of unfavorable phenomena that are not specific: high rates of school abandonment, large educational potential differences between rural and urban areas, the resilience of traditions and outdated and unproductive concepts, the background of the economic crisis and the drop in the gross birth rate and the exodus of the skilled labor force to the more developed countries. Under these conditions, in the hope of deviating Romanian education towards a system of forms without a fund, the article concludes with the necessity of rethinking programmable targets and objectives by the end of this decade to pursue pragmatic goals easier to achieve. And this also depends on finding concrete resources.

**Key words:** Education, educational reform, education system, strategic targets.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The recent Congress of Education from 14 - 15th of June 2013 in Bucharest was meant to correctly fit the status of implementation in the educational reform in our country within the European context and to trace the main programming objectives for the years 2014-2020.

Of course, the previsions on various directions of development in the education system are currently only natural options and goals whose achievement depends on their inclusion in the decisions and programs of the Ministry of National Education, which in turn is conditioned by allocated government resources.

Education Congress aims primarily to highlight the need to correlate national strategy Europe with 2020 targets covering three basic principles: the development of economy based on knowledge and innovation, competitiveness and sustainable growth through efficient use of environmental resources and social inclusive growth which ensures a high employment and social

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cohesion.

As a novelty, the Congress of Education has brought to light the importance of musical and artistic education in general in the formation and intellectual development of the younger generation.

Among European strategic targets for 2020 there were discussed the following: Balica (2013a)

1. Reducing early school leaving rate from a European perspective which should be below 10% and in the Romanian educational programming should reach 11.3%. As we know, early school leaving rate represents the percentage of young people between 18-24 years old, who have ceased their studies in the gymnasium; in the year 2011 in Romania it was 17.5% higher compared to 2009 (16.3% ) and in European average it was 13.5%. Thus, in Europe it is indicated a reduction of 3.5% and we assume for the same period a decrease of 6.2% in terms of opposing trends of lowering this rate.

No doubt this is a challenge that we are committed with a little too much optimism without taking into account our own socio-economic conditions. Although the consequences of school non-participation also affect young people's chances of realizing, material constraints lead especially to those in the rural or ethnic Roma to leave school and engage in work (even seasonally), knowing well that many of those with Higher education do not find a job or need to emigrate.

In Europe the situation is almost the opposite: in 2009, 52% of young people who left early the school found themselves unemployed or were excluded from the labor market, as a whole, youth unemployment currently stands for 20.06%. In our country, a more serious problem is that many of the teenagers who are 15 years olds complete only the primary school, and in this matter it can intervene legally, taking into account that the main culprits of early school leaving are parents, who should be instructed, but also by a system of fines or withholding of child benefit for the children who do not finish the 10 years of compulsory education.

Another disturbing conclusion is that the share of young people between 15 and 24 years old who do not study but are inactive in the labor market increased from year to year reaching 22.5% in 2011.

In this situation it is necessary to achieve ambitious goal in order to reduce the rate of early school leaving up to 11.3%, the Ministry of Education will have to use complex methods of propaganda and education systems supported by permanent financial leverage.

2. Increasing the participation rate in tertiary education of young people between 30-34 years old is another European strategic target which is expected that the percentage of young people who have completed tertiary education across Europe to be 40% and of 33.6% in 2010 . For Romania, as this percentage stood at 18.1%

in 2010, it envisaged an increase of up to 26.7%, which would meet the demand for highly qualified staff with higher education at that time. Balica (2013a)

3. The percentage of the active population involved in learning and professional training (15-64 years old) should reach in the year 2020 at least 15% at the European level and, for Romania, 10%. This strategic target is also obviously exaggerated for our country, where in 2011 the percentage of adults training was only 1.6% compared to 8.9% in Europe. Balica (2013b)

In Romania, it should be made a huge jump of 8.4% recovery in a very short time and on the background of a weaker tradition in this direction and, especially, in the current economic crisis which leads the employees to save their money and time resources and employers to avoid risky capital investment in staff training, preferring „ad hoc” qualification at work.

To bypass this handicap in the near future it would be required either additional funds from the state or the compulsory modification of the school grids according to the stage of participation in the continuous training or implementing more stringent legislation on test conditions and recruitment competitions on various jobs.

It would be welcomed even a sensitization of employers through certain advantages that may be offered for the involvement in the continuing education.

4. Another strategic target for 2020 Europe is 95% of children between 4-6 years old (or 5 depending on school age) to be enrolled in preschool education. This objective which situated the European level in 2010 with 10% higher than that from Romania (EU-92, 3%, Romania 82.1%) would not be so difficult to achieve if a downward trend was not observed in 2008 when 82.8% of preschool children were enrolled in kindergarten.

No doubt that this phenomenon is based in the first place on the effects of the crisis and on material causes of decreasing in purchasing power of the national currency and rising unemployment that promote child remaining in the care of one parent.

More worrying seems the gap between the levels of participation in early childhood education in urban and rural areas. For example, in urban areas in 2000-2001, there were 88% of children who were 6 years old and in 2011-2012 - 93.8%. However, in rural areas in 2001-2002 there were 83% of kindergarten children of 6 years old and in 2011-2012 only 76.7% of them, which explains the decrease in overall population covered in early education services.

To remedy this matter, we suggest that it would be useful to rely on sources of co-financing to ease the burden for parents regarding the transport and kindergarten costs especially in rural areas. We should not neglect a certain policy of persuasion for the parents

regarding the benefits of an early education organized especially among the poor villages and among gypsies. Balica (2013b)

5. Last strategic target in Europe 2020 for pre-university studies refers itself to the basic skills of students aged 15 systematically evaluated (PISA). It is expected that the proportion of young people below the level 2 performance in reading mathematics and science to reach below 15% while the EU average in 2009 recorded 20%. Balica (2013a)

Unfortunately, in this chapter Romania is in the same year 2009 the penultimate in Europe with 40.4% overreached only by Bulgaria with 41%. This unwanted placement is due to several causes of which the main role is played by the underfunding of our education who makes it possible the shortages of equipment, school dropouts, refocusing of the best teachers to other well-paid jobs, superficiality which characterizes young employees in education, general indiscipline and more. In assessing the ability to achieve strategic targets assumed by Romania in the 2020 programs, one of the key factors that must be taken in consideration is the demographic perspective where is going to be planned and run our education compared to the European one.

For this, the index determined in assessing the population trends educator represents the gross birth rate which in Europe after a small increase up to 10.9 fell again to 10.4 in 2011, the value that it also had in 2005. Anuarul Statistică României (2012).

In Romania, this figure is more than a decade under the European level, but more worrying is that the downward trend recorded in 2009 from 10.4 to 9.2 in 2011.

Although in 2012 it was reported a slowdown in this decrease, its relative rhythm would conduct, after simple calculations, like in 10 years to reach a gross birth rate close to 0, which would have unacceptable consequences on a long term.

It hopefully remains that our country to overcome the harmful effects of the economic crisis as it has already been pointed, insinuating that it reverberates in all areas of our social life.

Another important aspect highlighted by demographic research conducted on the gross birth rate but also by other indicators such as population migration or clues about the economic outlook is to clearly differentiate what is looming between different zones and development

regions of the country.

Thus, the previsions regarding the population between 0-14 years old in 2010-2020 highlights three situations: in the West, North-West and center of the country (Transylvania) provides a more moderate reduction of the educated population while in the rest of the country, with the exception of Bucharest, it is expected to more drastic (Muntenia, Oltenia, Moldova, Dobrogea) and in Bucharest, on the contrary, the previsions indicate a growth of educated population between 0-14 years old from 290.242 in 2010, to 386.929 in 2011. The addition of nearly 100,000 children could be explained by several reasons. Anuarul Statistică României (2012).

First our capital is developing at the European level in many areas and attracts more people. Secondly, in Bucharest, we find the highest standard of living in the country, which has made possible the emergence of wealthy social strata which do not prevent families from having children due to money or material issues. Anuarul Statistică României (2012).

A third reason, which we may think would be the demographic and ethnic structure of the population who came to Bucharest searching for work and brought alongside family traditions with many children.

All these assumptions, together with inconsistencies from urban and rural education, the trends of serious dropout, absenteeism and social exclusion, should be the basis of effective programs for improving the level of education for the entire population.

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