



COUNTRY REPORT

LITERACY

IN ROMANIA

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Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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This working document reflects the point of view of literacy professionals assembled in this network. It is still a work in progress since we continue to gather and update information on literacy in Romania up to the year 2015. The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part, except for commercial purposes, provided the extract is preceded by a reference to "ELINET", followed by the date of publication of the document.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report on the state of literacy in Romania is one of a series produced in 2015 by ELINET, the European Literacy Policy Network. For the background and contextual information behind the reports see the Frame of Reference document, and for everything else to do with ELINET, including the other country reports and collections of good practice examples, visit the ELINET website: www.eli-net.eu.

1.1 Performance Data

Romania participated in PIRLS assessments of 4th graders' reading comprehension in 2001, 2006 and 2011, and in four rounds of PISA assessments of 15 year olds' reading literacy in 2000-12. This means it is possible to describe change over time in average reading proficiency, according to different characteristics of the readers.

Romania performed well below the EU average in both PIRLS and PISA. The gap between the performance in Romania and the EU average is larger in PISA than in PIRLS. Between 2001 and 2011 in PIRLS and 2000 and 2012 in PISA, the performance did not improve significantly. In PIRLS, the pupils even performed worse in 2011 than in 2001. The lack of significant growth at either level over the last decade is a cause of concern.

A substantial proportion of pupils (around 35% in both studies) can be considered as low performing readers. At best they can read simple texts, retrieve explicit information, or make straightforward inferences, but they are not able to deal with longer or more complex texts, and interpret beyond what is explicitly stated in the text.

The gap according to pupils' socioeconomic background is higher than the EU average in PIRLS. In PISA, it is similar to the EU average. However, the indices of socioeconomic background are not the same in PIRLS and PISA, so the comparison should be taken with caution. In addition, Romania has almost double the proportion of pupils with parents whose highest level of education is lower secondary or below than the average across EU countries, which makes the socioeconomic gap issue in Romania more critical than in any other EU country.

The proportions of pupils in Romania with a migrant background or who never speak the language of the test at home is so low that no valid outcomes can be reported.

In Romania, the gender gap in favour of girls is similar in PISA, and slightly higher in PIRLS, than the corresponding EU average differences. Whereas the gender gap has remained stable at grade 4, it has increased among teenagers. Teenage girls' performance improved between

2000 and 2012 in PISA, while boys' performance did not change. The proportion of low-performing girls decreased by about 10% in PISA between 2000 and 2012. During the same period, the proportion of low-performing boys increased, reaching a peak of 51% in 2009. This increase of the gender gap among teenagers between 2000 and 2012 is a concern.

There are no performance data for adults in Romania.

1.2 Pre-Primary

Available data show the existence of socioeconomic and cultural background factors which may have adverse effects on the literacy achievement of some population groups:

- a. one of the highest levels of inequality, as measured by the Gini Index (34%);
- b. a high rate of child poverty (25.5 %);
- c. a comparatively high proportion of mothers with low educational level.

Compared to the European average, Romania has low scores in important factors which constitute a supportive home environment for the fostering of children's literacy performance: parental attitude to reading, number of children's books in the home, percentage of parents who engage in literacy-relevant activities with their child before the beginning of primary school.

With a participation rate in early childhood education and care (ECEC) at age 4 of 82%, Romania does not yet reach the European benchmark of at least 95% of children between age 4 and the start of compulsory education enrolled in ECEC. PIRLS data show the high benefit of attending preschool education institutions: the average reading score of pupils in grade 4 who attended pre-primary education for 3 years or more was more than 110 points higher than that of pupils who did not. Among positive aspects, Romania has free pre-primary education.

Concerning the structural quality of ECEC, Romania is at the lower end of the distribution among European countries for the total public expenditure per child on pre-primary education, the ratio of children to teachers, and the percentage of males among preschool teachers. However, Romania is one of the few countries with a comprehensive literacy curriculum in pre-primary schools.

Regarding children "at risk", Romania belongs to the group of European countries with the highest prevalence of children with low birth weight and/or severe prematurity (percentage of live births with a gestational age below 32 weeks).

Concerning support for children “at risk” the Law of National Education asserts that all children with special needs have a right to be supported and receive free medical, speech therapy and psychological assistance.

1.3 Primary

Romania’s mean score on the PIRLS 2011 overall reading scale is 502, compared with an EU-24 average of 535. Romania ranks 23rd of 24 EU countries. Thirty-five percent of students in Romania perform at or below the PIRLS low benchmark, compared with an EU-24 average of 20%, indicating that a large proportion of students in Romania struggle with reading. While performance on overall reading was lower in 2011 than in 2001, though not to a significant degree, some of the decline experienced between 2001 and 2006 was made up by 2011.

Students in Romania have fewer learning resources (including books) at home than on average across the EU-24, and also have access to fewer computers during reading lessons and to fewer trained reading professionals at school. More students in Romania have parents whose highest level of education is lower secondary or below (32%) compared with the EU-24 average (18%), and these students do less well on average than their counterparts across the EU-24. Higher levels of reading literacy might encourage more students to complete upper secondary education and this, in turn, could contribute to raising literacy levels among future generations of students.

Teachers in Romania hold the view that students’ engagement in reading is very high, and students also hold this view. This is something that can be built on as part of an effort to raise literacy levels.

Teachers in Romania report strong engagement in teaching reading comprehension strategies such as engaging students in locating information and identifying main ideas. While this is positive, there is a need for corroborating evidence, including information on the quality of instruction on comprehension and other aspects of reading.

There is a discrepancy in Romania between the proportion of students with low reading achievement (those performing at or below the PIRLS Low Benchmark (35%)) and the proportion regarded by teachers as being in need of remedial support (17%). This may arise because teachers know that the resources required cannot be made available. It could also suggest a need to increase teachers’ awareness of what standards students can and should be expected to achieve in reading.

The spread of reading achievement in Romania is greater than the EU-24 average, with a small proportion of students performing at an advanced level, and a large proportion performing poorly. This gap is also reflected in a higher than EU-24 average difference in reading performance between students in the top and bottom quartiles of the PIRLS

Confidence in Reading scale. This points at a need for improved equity in reading and reading-related outcomes.

Regarding initial teacher education Romania requires primary teachers to have a bachelor's degree which takes three years' study. In European comparison this is a relatively short course.

1.4 Adolescents

Since the results of the first PISA study in the year 2000, improving adolescent literacy skills is recognized as a challenge in Romania. Since then, the Romanian literacy performance has remained well below the EU-average: In comparison with the European average of 489 score points in the PISA print reading test, the mean score in Romania was 438, whereby 39 score points on the PISA reading scale correspond to an average of one school year. Reading performance has not improved significantly in the last evaluation sessions. The proportion of boys performing below PISA level 2 has even increased from 2000 (44,2%) to 2012 (46,8%) which suggests a widening gender gap. In 2012, there were clearly less girls performing below level 2 (28,1%) than in 2000 (38,6%).

As a result of ongoing reforms, Romanian policy makers have taken promising steps to strengthen literacy performance: For example, Romania has introduced in 2014 a national evaluation specifically aimed to evaluate literacy related competencies in the field of Language and Communication for the grades 2, 4 and 6. Furthermore, digital literacy was made a focal point both in initial teacher training and in continuous professional development of teachers. The most significant change, though, was the turn towards a competence-based curriculum. Even though this competence-based approach signifies a shift towards building the skills required for successfully completing the PISA tests, it has not been reflected yet in the assessment methods of the final national examination, the Bacalaureat, that still relies mainly on the reproduction of content-specific and declarative knowledge. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between what and how is taught (in accordance with the competence-based curricula) and what and how is assessed in the national examinations. This discrepancy becomes even more apparent when considering that the final examinations are the same for all students, regardless of the school track pursued previously.

The Romanian curriculum includes the subject area Language and Communication but does not explicitly mention literacy skills across age groups and subjects. Therefore, literacy issues are among the responsibilities of Romanian mother-tongue teachers and, consequently, not part of the list of subjects recommended by the Romanian ministry of education for continuous professional development programmes.

Evidence suggests that the teaching profession is not held in high esteem in Romania in terms of social prestige and financial compensation. Furthermore, rigid school inspections and annual teacher evaluations could indicate that the work of teachers as highly-qualified education experts is not regarded in a supportive atmosphere of trust.

1.5 Adults

There is no specific literacy provision for adults in Romania. Adult literacy remains invisible as a policy issue, with no coherent structure to identify or meet the literacy needs of the adult population. While Romania did not take part in PIAAC, analysis of historic PISA data suggests that many adults will struggle to meet current and future demands on their literacy skills, but a clearer picture would result from a survey of adult skills based on a nationally representative sample.

Participation of adults in learning is low in Romania, particularly among those who are most in need. There is a lack of data on the inclusion of literacy in other adult learning. Similarly, almost no evaluation data are collected about initiatives to promote or support adult literacy learning.

Some aspects of adult literacy are embedded in the Second Chance Programme (SCP), which is aimed at supporting those who have not completed compulsory education and is funded by the Government as part of the public school system. However, this programme does not meet the needs of those adults who have completed compulsory education but are lacking in literacy skills.

There is some good practice to build on. The curriculum for the Romanian language provides elements for the development of more comprehensive national curricula for adult literacy. The SCP has well-established procedures for recognition of prior learning, and assessment.

While those who teach on the SCP have no training in adult education, they are qualified school teachers. The introduction of specific provision for adult literacy would allow for the development of a professional adult literacy workforce building on the base of the SCP.

The main responsibility for policy making falls under the Ministry of Education. The law of education (no.1/2011) specifies cooperation with other ministries (labour, culture, etc.) and puts a clear focus on public-private partnership. However, despite some promising policy initiatives, there is a gap between intentions and achievement. Romania has not yet adopted a national strategy on Lifelong Learning.

2. PRE-PRIMARY

2.1 Socioeconomic and cultural background factors

In order to describe the socioeconomic and cultural factors that influence emergent literacy, several indicators were used which stem from international surveys, thus providing comparability across Europe.

Gini index

The Gini index is the most commonly used measure of inequality, and represents the income distribution of a nation's residents with values between 0 (maximum equality) and 100 (maximum inequality). In the European countries participating in ELINET, the range is from 22.6% in Norway to 35% in Spain (for an overview of European countries see table A1 in Appendix B). With 34.0 % Romania is at the higher (greater inequality) end of the distribution.

Child poverty

An indicator of child poverty is the percentage of children living in a household in which disposable income, when adjusted for family size and composition, is less than 50% of the national median income (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc10_eng.pdf). At 25.5% Romania has the highest percentage of all European countries participating in ELINET. The range is from 4.7% in Iceland to 25.5% in Romania (for an overview of European countries see table A2 in Appendix B).

Mother's education level

The PIRLS 2011 database offers information about mother's level of education referring to ISCED levels. The figures for Romania are presented below and point to a low level of education, compared with the average figures for the European countries participating in PIRLS (shown in parentheses) (for an overview of European countries see table A3 in Appendix B).

- No schooling: 4.1% (0.6%)
- ISCED 1: primary education: 9.9% (5.3%)
- ISCED 2: Lower secondary education: 26.1% (16.7 %)
- ISCED 3: Upper secondary education: 34.6% (36.1%)
- ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education: 8% (7.1 %)
- ISCED 5B: Tertiary education (first stage) with occupation orientation: 4.7% (9.5%)
- ISCED 5A: Tertiary education (first stage) with academic orientation 7.8% (13.9%)

- BEYOND: 2.8% (10.1%)
- not applicable: 2.1 % (0.9%).

Teenage mothers

For Romania no data are available (for an overview of European countries see table A4 in Appendix B).

Single parent

According to Eurostat (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&language=en&pcode=tessi190>, Fig. A 7), in Romania the percentage of children living mainly with a single parent is rather low, at 1.9%. The range for the European countries participating in ELINET is from 1.4% in Croatia to 30% in Denmark (for an overview of European countries see table A5 in Appendix B).

Migrant parents

According to PIRLS 2006 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007, Exhibit 3.12 - Students' Parents Born in Country), in Romania the proportion of children with parents born outside the country (1%) or only one parent born outside the country (3%) is rather low (for an overview about European countries see table A6 in Appendix B).

Primary language spoken at home different from language used at school

According to PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, Foy, & Drucker, 2012, p. 118, Exhibit 4.3 - Students Spoke the Language of the Test Before Starting School), the proportion of children speaking a different language at home from the one used at school is rather low in Romania, at 3.5% (for an overview of European countries see table A7 in Appendix B). However, there is a quite significant performance gap in reading competence at grade 4 between children who spoke the language of the test before starting school (mean reading score 503) and those who did not speak the language (mean reading score 462).

RELATED POLICIES

For programmes and initiatives against poverty see the "European platform against poverty and social exclusion", one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. (European Commission. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=961>. 18.02.2015)

Are there policies to help the poorest parents e.g. funds for free book distribution, breakfast clubs etc.?

N/A

2.2 Creating a supportive home learning environment

Several indicators are used, with the aim of describing the home learning environment of young children, for which data are available from international sources (PIRLS) with figures that are comparable. It is important to acknowledge that some of the PIRLS data are self-reported and may be biased by social desirability or response patterns.

Parental attitudes to reading

PIRLS 2011 used the "Parents Like Reading Scale" according to their parents' responses to seven statements about reading and how often they read for enjoyment. The figures are presented below with the percentage of students whose parents "like", "somewhat like" or "do not like" reading" as reported by PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 120, Exhibit 4.4 - Parents Like Reading).

- Like: 21.3% (European average 35.3 %)
- somewhat like: 60.8% (European average 52.6 %)
- do not like: 17.9% (European average 17.9 %).

(For an overview of European countries see table B1 in Appendix B.)

Compared to the European average, fewer pupils in Romania have parents with positive attitudes towards reading. The importance of parental attitudes to reading is shown by the fact that in Romania there are large differences in reading performance at grade 4 between children whose parents like to read (average achievement 540) and those who do not (average achievement 452).

Number of children's books in the home

The PIRLS 2011 database provides the figures below about the number of children's books in the home:

- 0-10: 38.5 % (European average 11.8%)
- 11-25: 29.0 % (European average 19.7%)
- 26-50: 19.8 % (European average 29.4%)
- 51-100: 8.3 % (European average 23.4%)
- >100: 4.4 % (European average 15.7%).

Compared to the European average (for an overview of European countries see table B2 in Appendix B) the availability of children's books in the home is rather low in Romania.

Early Literacy Activity Scale

PIRLS 2011 reports the percentage of students whose parents (often, never or almost never) engaged in literacy-relevant activities with them before the beginning of primary school (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 126, Exhibit 4.6 - Early Literacy Activities Before Beginning Primary School). Nine activities are considered: reading books, telling stories, singing songs, playing with alphabet toys, talking about things done, talking about things read, playing word games, writing letters or words, reading signs and labels aloud.

The figures for Romania on the composite score for all these activities are below (for an overview of European countries see table B3 in Appendix B):

- often: 38.3% (European average 40.7%)
- sometimes: 54.1% (European average 57.4)
- never or almost never: 7.6% (European average 1.9%).

This means that, in Romania, there are more parents (8%) who never or hardly ever engage in the nine activities, compared with the EU-24 (2%). The Early Literacy Activity Scale correlates with later reading performance in grade 4. The average reading score of pupils who were engaged often in these activities was 529, as compared with 494 and 423 respectively for those pupils who sometimes or never or almost never were engaged in these activities with their parents before the beginning of primary school. These figures demonstrate the importance of the time devoted to literacy-related activities in early childhood and their association with achievement in Grade 4.

While the Early Literacy Activity Scale is a composite score, it is of interest to look at single items. If only the category "often" is considered, the percentage of pupils in Romania whose parents engaged in literacy-related activities with them before the beginning of primary school is comparatively low compared with the European average:

- Read books to them often: 31.61% (European average 58.4 %).
- Told stories to them often: 44.6 % (European average 51. 5%).
- Sang songs to them often: 34.24 % (European average 50.6%).
- Played games involving shapes (toys and puzzles) with them often: 44.9 % (European average 63.5%).

(For more details and an overview of European countries see table B 4 – B 7 in Appendix B.)

RELATED POLICIES

Are there general parenting programmes to support parenting skills?

There are various programmes for future parents, pregnant mothers, families with children aged 0-3 years, for families with preschool-aged children, for families with children in grades

1-4, families with low income, families from various ethno-cultural backgrounds, families in rural areas, urban areas, families with children with disabilities, etc. (Cojocaru, 2011)

Are there family literacy programmes with a focus on supporting parents and carers in understanding and fostering the literacy development of their children?

The Bod Peter County Library in partnership with the Town Hall of Sf Gheorghe provides a book package for families with children under 3 years of age born after 20 April 2010. The programme aims to support children's education prior to entering the education system, supports their interest in books and reading, emphasises the importance of quality time spent by parents with their children, and calls parents' and children's attention to the services the library provides. (Bod Peter Mejei Könyvtár Biblioteca Județeană "Bod Peter". http://www.kmkt.ro/index.php?id=66_la_drum_cu_lectura. 18.02.2015)

Is there systematic cooperation among parents, day-care centres and kindergarten, and health services in reading promotion for pre-primary children?

No data

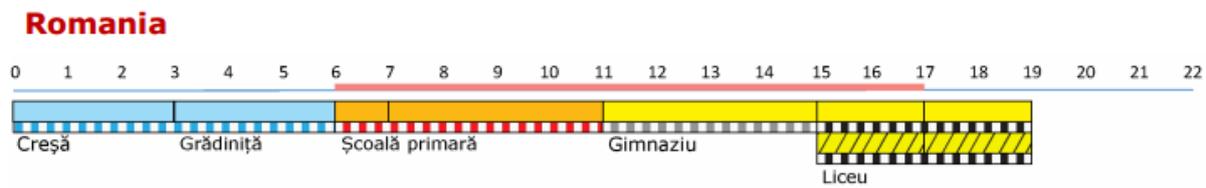
Are there programmes for introducing parents and children to libraries and bookshops?

'Servicii si programe pentru copii cu varste intre 0-14 ani: Studiu' (Biblioteca Județeană „George Barițiu” Brașov. <http://www.biblionet.ro/upload/documents/librarie/20417/pdf/142083/StudiuBrasov.pdf>. 17.02.2015) contains descriptions of a number of programmes initiated by public libraries and intended for families with children aged 0-3 years, and programmes for families with children aged 3-6 years.

2.3 Creating an enabling environment to encourage universal preschool attendance

As can be seen from figure 1 the educational system includes early education (0-6 years), including ante-preschool (0-3 years) and preschool education (3-6 years) (Law of National Education).

Figure 1: Structure of the Romanian School System



The Romanian ECEC system envisages three institutions that engage in the provision of early education: crèches, kindergarten (in Romanian: grădiniță), and daycare centres. The ante-preschool phase can be carried out in all three types of institution, while the pre-school phase is organized in kindergartens. Pre-primary institutions referred as kindergarten are public and private, and offer three types of programme: normal (providing educational activities and preparation for school and social life); prolonged (providing educational activities, preparation for school and social life, and social protection of the children (meals, supervision and rest time)); and weekly (providing educational activities, adequate preparation for school and social life, and social protection for children from socially disadvantaged areas. Parents or legally appointed guardians can enrol their children in the kindergarten of their choice from the age of 3. (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Organisation_of_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015)

Number of children attending day care and preschool institutions

According to the report *Key Data on Early Childhood* (EURYDICE, EACEA, European Commission, & Eurostat, 2014, p. 62, Fig. C1), the enrolment rate at age 4 is 82%. Romania does not yet reach the European benchmark for at least 95% of children between age 4 and the start of compulsory education participating in ECEC (for an overview of European countries see table C1 in Appendix B).

OECD Family Database (2014) offers more differentiated figures of participation rates at age 3, 4 and 5. According to 2010 statistical data, the participation rate is 86.4% for 5-year-olds, 75.8% for 4-year-olds, and 55.3% for 3-year-olds (OECD. <http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm>. 18.02.2015) (for an overview of European countries see table C2 in Appendix B).

Average duration of preschool attendance

PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 128, Exhibit 4.7) provides information about the relationship between the length of preschool education attendance and average reading score in grade 4. These are the figures:

- 3 years and more: 57% (average reading score 523)
- between 1 and 3 years: 33% (average reading score 490)
- 1 year or less: 4% (average reading score 445)

- did not attend: 6% (average reading score 412)
(For an overview of European countries s. table C3 in Appendix B.)

The benefit of preschool attendance in Romania is reflected in the large difference in reading competence at grade 4: the reading score of pupils who attended pre-primary education for 3 years and more was more than 110 points higher than that of pupils who did not attend at all.

RELATED POLICIES

Is preschool education free?

Pre-primary education is free of charge. Romania belongs to the half of the European countries where the entire period of ECEC is free. Many countries provide at least one year of free pre-primary education.

However, for children attending prolonged or weekly programmes, parents have to pay a fee which partially covers the costs of the meals and accommodation (compensation to the public subventions provided).

Are there programmes to encourage universal preschool attendance?

OvidiuRO Association pursues the mission of making high-quality early education available to every poor child in Romania so that they have a chance to become active members of society. Their flagship project Fiecare Copil in Gradinita (Every Child in Kindergarten) supports poor parents to send their children to kindergarten. In the 2013–2014 school year, OvidiuRo's Fiecare Copil in Gradinita programme operated in 40 kindergartens in 22 communities in 11 counties. Over 1300 severely disadvantaged children are attending pre-school on a regular basis as a result of the programme, which is largely funded by the Romanian corporate sector. The ultimate goal of Fiecare Copil in Gradinita is to transform it into a national, government-supported programme available to all children between 3 and 5 who live below the poverty line. (OvidiuRo. <http://www.ovid.ro/en/about-us/overview/>. 18.02.2015).

Save the Children Romania has supported a programme to promote preschool-aged children's participation in education since 1998. Their major target group is Roma children. Their activities include provision of preschool materials for kindergartens in rural areas, training preschool teachers and school mediators in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, organizing summer kindergartens to prepare children for school enrolment, setting up educational centres for Roma children, supporting families to maintain their children in the education system, etc. (Salvati Copiii. <http://salvaticopiii.ro/?id2=000200020001>. 18.02.2015).

The 2011 Law on National Education also introduced the so-called '**preparatory class**' (in Romanian: clasa pregătitoare) which is a transitional year between kindergarten and primary school. The preparatory class is meant to serve as a hybrid programme that is built on

elements of kindergarten (e.g. games and stories) while familiarising the child with the structure and working procedure of schools (for more information please see Lindeboom & Buiskool).

2.4 Structural quality of ECEC

Several indicators were used to describe aspects of the structural quality of ECEC:

Annual expenditure on pre-primary education

According to the report *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe* (EURYDICE et al., 2014, Fig. D3), the total public expenditure per child in pre-primary education as a percentage of GDP in Romania is 0.35%. The range is from 0.04% in Turkey and 0.1% in Ireland to 1.01% in Denmark (for an overview of European countries see table D1 in Appendix B).

Ratio of children to teachers in pre-primary school

According to report *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, the student/teacher ratio in pre-primary schools for children at the age of four in Romania is 17. For the other European countries (OECD, 2014a, p. 324) provides information about the student/teacher ratio in pre-primary schools (for an overview of European countries see table D2 in Appendix B). The children attending the ECEC facilities are supervised by educators or child carers. Each group of children in kindergartens has at least one educator, but in the case of prolonged or weekly programmes, multiple (usually two) educators engage with the children on a shift basis.

Percentage of males among preschool teachers

According to Pordata (2014) (Pordata.

<http://www.pordata.pt/en/Europe/Females+as+a+percentage+of+teachers+and+academic+staff+total+and+by+level+of+education-1736>. 18.02.2015), only 0.3% of the pre-primary teachers in Romania are males. The range is from 0.2% in Bulgaria and Hungary to 17.7% in France (for an overview of European countries see table D3 in Appendix B).

Preschool teachers' qualifications

The minimum required level to become a qualified teacher is Bachelor level (EURYDICE et al., 2014, p. 101).

Continuing Professional Development is a professional duty and a prerequisite for career development. In most European countries, CPD is generally considered a professional duty for staff (EURYDICE et al., 2014, pp. 104–105).

Preschool literacy curriculum

The preamble to any curriculum is important because it contextualizes the language and literacy content that follows. For Romania part of the preamble is summarized in Webgate as follows: "According to the provisions of the Law of National Education (Law 1/2011), the national early education curriculum focuses on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children and on the early correction of developmental deficiencies" (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Teaching_and_Learning_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015). Through play, exploration, experimentation and cooperation children have many opportunities for acquiring knowledge.

Does the curriculum include emergent literacy? If yes, what are the overall aims?

The guidebook for the stimulation of child development from birth to 3 years (2008) includes the domain 'Development of language and communication' with two dimensions, one of which is 'Developing the precursors of reading and writing' (p. 7), with the following benchmarks: 0-18 months: manipulate books and show interest in listening to someone reading; 19-36 months: show the ability to comment on what has been read and simulate the reading of a book; express preference for specific books and stories; identify and 'read' images. (Material orientativ pentru stimularea dezvoltării copilului de la naștere la 3 ani, 2008)

The National Curriculum for Preschool Education (3–6/7 years) (2008) includes also the domain 'Development of language and communication' with two dimensions, one of which is 'Developing the precursors of reading and writing' with the following objectives: developing interest in books; developing interest in reading; developing the capacity to identify different sounds of the language; matching abstract symbols with sounds; appreciating and using written messages, printed matter; using written and spoken messages for a variety of purposes; using various graphic symbols for communication, etc. (The National Curriculum for Preeschool Education (3-6/7 years), Institutul de Științe ale Educației, p. 27)

Oral language development and vocabulary learning and grammar

Oral language development is an educational objective in Romania. There appears to be an emphasis on both the holistic aspects of communication, such as creativity and self-expression, and the elements of language including phonetic, lexical and syntactic structures:

"The curriculum establishes the following educational objectives: *Education of the language*: development of oral communication, understanding and correct utilization of oral structures skills; education of correct phonetic, lexical and syntactic oral communication; development of creativity and self-expression in oral communication; development of the skill to understand and transmit intentions, thoughts and significances through writing" (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Teaching_and_Learning_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015).

Familiarisation of children with the language of books (e.g. reading and telling stories)

There does not appear to be any published and explicit literacy curriculum policy on familiarization of children with the language of books with the aim of getting them familiar with decontextualized language and the tighter syntax of written text.

Engaging and motivating children in literacy-related activities

The National Curriculum for Children aged 0-6/7 years (Institutul de Științe ale Educației, pp. 53–55) outlines as aims: developing interest in books; developing interest in reading; appreciating and using written messages, printed matter on a daily basis; using written and spoken messages for a variety of purposes.

Providing a literacy-rich environment

According to the curriculum for pre-primary education, children should be exposed to different types of printed materials. The aim of providing a literacy-rich environment is not stated explicitly; however see (EURYDICE, EACEA, & European Commission, 2011, p. 57).

Concepts of print

The Romanian curriculum states that the development of spoken language is a prerequisite for the acquisition of reading and writing. Children should be able to express themselves and communicate orally in order to be able to write, as well as being aware of the direction of print and that print carries the message. Grammar and syntax knowledge, vocabulary and text comprehension are prerequisites for the emergence of written language. In addition, children should be able to write their own name from memory as well as other words (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Teaching_and_Learning_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015.; EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 55).

Language awareness

Steering documents in Romania state that children should have the opportunity to develop phonemic awareness and be able to make letter-name and letter-sound correspondences. Furthermore, children should link sounds to letters, name and sound the letters of the alphabet and use knowledge of letters, sounds and words when reading. (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Teaching_and_Learning_in_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015)

RELATED POLICIES

ECEC occupies a central role in the Romanian educational system. This is particularly evident in the 2011 Law on National Education which accords strong emphasis to this phase of the educational framework (for more information please see Lindeboom & Buiskool).

Are there initiatives to measure and to ensure the quality of ECEC?

The methodology for institutional evaluation for purposes of authorization, accreditation and periodical evaluation of early childhood education units (ante-preschools) has been in force since 29 April 2013. (Ministerul Educației Naționale. <http://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gm2dsnzqg4/metodologia-de-evaluare-institutionala-in-vederea-autorizarii-acreditarii-si-evaluarii-periodice-a-furnizorilor-de-educatie-timpurie-anteprescolara-din-19032013>. 18.02.2015)

Are there initiatives to augment the proportion of males in pre-primary education?

Although, in practice, ante-preschool and pre-school educators and care-takers are almost entirely female, there are no initiatives for the promotion of gender balance in this field (Lindeboom & Buiskool, p. 65).

2.5 Ensuring participation, inclusion and equity

Children “at risk” and early support

This part of the report deals with children “at risk” (special needs) and early support. Children at risk are also those with very low birth weight and severe prematurity, factors that are associated with developmental disabilities, including reading and writing disabilities

Very low birth weight

According to PERISTAT (PERISTAT, 2010, p. 149, Fig. 7.11) the percentage of live births with a birth weight under 2500 grams in Romania was 8.0%. The range is from 3.0% in Iceland to 8.8% in Cyprus (for an overview of European countries see table E1 in Appendix B).

Severe prematurity

According to PERISTAT (2010, Figure 7.14, p.155) the percentage of live births with a gestational age <32 weeks is 1.2 % in Romania (with a range from 0.7% in Iceland to 1.4% in Hungary). The percentage of live births with a gestational age between 32 and 36 weeks was 7% (with a range from 4.5% in Lithuania to 7.5% in Hungary (for an overview of European countries see table E2 in Appendix B).

Cognitive or sensory disabilities

N/A

RELATED POLICIES

Do children with “special needs” / “children at risk” get early support?

In Art. 12 the Law of National Education of Romania states: “The State supports ante-preschoolers, preschoolers, pupils and students with social problems and needs, as well as those with special educational needs.”

Art. 83 states: “Ante-preschoolers, preschoolers and pupils from the state and private accredited/ authorized educational institutions receive free medical, speech therapy and psychological assistance in the school medical, speech therapy and psychological assistance rooms or in State polyclinics and hospitals.”

According to Eurypedia, (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Separate_Special_Education_Needs_Provision_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education#Age_Levels_and_Grouping_of_Pupils. 26.01.2015), in Romania children with special needs get support in special groups or classes within mainstream schools and in special schools. Children diagnosed as having special needs can benefit from the support of an assistant teacher.

Lindeboom & Buiskool (2013) provide the following more detailed information about Romania: “The special staff requirement for working with ‘children at risk’ encompasses the presence of psychologists or medical personnel in ECEC institutions. The presence of specialist personnel accords the ‘child at risk’ an elevated attention and personalised care. In most cases, the specialists have a separate session with the relevant children on a weekly basis. Furthermore, the ECEC institutions adopt an integrative approach towards children with disabilities or special needs. This means that educators are instructed to involve these children into the ordinary activities of the programme, and if needed, accord them special attention. As learned from the interviewed experts, this special attention can mean that one disabled child is recorded as two children in terms of time required for his/her education and care” (Lindeboom & Buiskool, pp. 64–65).

Are there screenings / assessments to identify children at risk in their language?

There is no systematic assessment of children in order to identify language development problems (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Organisation_of_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015).

UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) reports about Romania: “In the health system there is regulated a monitoring system (through the kindergarten physician or family physician) which checks if the children are fit from a medical point of view for schooling. Yet the system is not fully used.” (UNESCO International Bureau of Education. <http://www.erisee.org/downloads/2013/2/r/Early%20Childhood%20Care%20and%20Educatio>

n%20%28ECCE%29%20programmes%202006%20ENG.pdf. 18.05.2015) Children with mental or sensory disabilities are identified by psycho-medical services and are referred to special education.

Is there specialist support for children whose home language is not the language of school?

In Romania the provision for children whose home language is not the language of school constitutes part of the Special Education framework. According to Romanian legislation, the term “special educational needs” could mean, among others, ethnic minority children. With regard to support for minority students: Hungarian and Romany (Rom) languages are taught in many schools (OECD).

Romany (Rom) language constitutes a big issue for many children, especially upon their entry to school. For that reason Roma children are supported by specifically trained staff. Kindergarten activities are implemented by the teachers in both Romanian and Romani language in areas with a high percentage of Roma population. Also, according to the Romanian law, providers of pre-primary education are required to use a special curriculum for children with special needs that takes into consideration their needs and capabilities (Lindeboom & Buiskool).

Is there specialist support for children with delays in their language development?

For culturally and/or linguistically disadvantaged children, additional support is usually given by extra staff in the mainstream kindergartens and global special programmes are provided in separate settings or groups. The core part of this additional support and special programmes is the enhancement of children’s language skills (EACEA; Eurydice 2009, p. 104).

Children with special educational needs, such as those facing language development delays, can be educated in kindergartens, and those that have been identified as having difficulties assessed by a specialist diagnosis can be supported by the recruitment of an assistant teacher (EURYDICE).

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Organisation_of_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care. 26.01.2015).

Are there trained specialists for children with special needs available?

There is provision for support from educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and special education needs teachers. (EURYDICE et al., 2014, p. 109)

Children from disadvantaged groups are provided with a specialized *summer kindergarten programme*. This is a compensatory programme aimed at ensuring a good start in school for children who did not attend kindergarten. (UNESCO International Bureau of Education. <http://www.erisee.org/downloads/2013/2/r/Early%20Childhood%20Care%20and%20Education%20%28ECCE%29%20programmes%202006%20ENG.pdf>. 18.05.2015)

3. PRIMARY

Inaugurated in 2001 and conducted every 5 years, **PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)** is IEA' s assessment of pupils' reading achievement at fourth grade. The survey was administered in 35 countries in 2001, 45 education systems in 2006, and 50 in 2011. PIRLS assesses different purposes for reading (literary and informational) and different reading processes (focus and retrieve explicit information, make inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements). Both multiple choice and open-ended questions are used. Combining newly developed reading assessment passages and questions for 2011 with a selection of secure assessment passages and questions from 2001 and 2006, the study allows for measurement of changes since 2001. PIRLS 2011 also examined the national policies, curricula and practices related to literacy, and included a set of questionnaires for students, parents/caregivers, teachers, and school principals to investigate the experiences that young children have at home and school in learning to read, in particular their attitudes and motivation towards reading.

A Performance data: PIRLS

The mean score of students in fourth grade in Romania on the PIRLS 2011 overall reading scale was 502 points. This was significantly below the EU-24 average of 535 (Table 3.1). Among EU countries, just Malta (477) had a lower mean score than Romania. The performance of students in Romania was about the same across the reading purpose and reading process scales (see Appendix tables A2 to A5).

Table 3.1 Overall Performance on PIRLS 2011 – Romania and EU-24 Average

	Overall Reading	
	Mean	Rank
Romania	502	23 of
EU-24	535	24

Significant differences (relative to the EU Average) are shown in bold. Source: Appendix Table A.1

In Romania, 35% of students scored at or below the Low benchmark on the overall reading scale (Table 3.2). This was above the EU-24 average of 20%. Among EU countries, only Malta (45%) had a higher proportion of students than Romania performing at or below the Low benchmark. Seven percent of students in Romania performed at the Advanced benchmark, which was marginally below the EU-24 average of 9%. A number of ELINET countries had a marginally lower proportion of students performing at the Advanced benchmark, including Malta (4%), Belgium (French) (2%), and Norway (2%).

Table 3.2 Performance by Overall PIRLS Reading Benchmarks 2011 – Percentages of Pupils in Romania and on Average across the EU-24

	Standard Deviation	10 th Percentile	90 th Percentile	90 th -10 th
Romania	91	376	610	234
EU Avg	71	440	621	181

Source: Appendix Table A6

Romania's standard deviation on the overall reading scale was 91 points – some 20 points higher than the EU-24 average, indicating a wide spread of achievement in Romania. Among EU-24 countries, only Malta (97) had a higher standard deviation than Romania. The difference between the scores of students at the 90th and 10th percentiles in Romania – 234 points – was well above the corresponding EU-24 average of 181. This confirms that there is a wide spread of achievement in Romania.

Table 3.3: Spread of Achievement – Standard Deviation, 10th, 90th Percentiles, and Difference between 90th and 10th Percentiles on Overall Reading (2011)

	Standard Deviation	10 th Percentile	90 th Percentile	90 th -10 th
Romania	91	376	610	234
EU Avg	71	440	621	181

Significant differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table A7

In 2001, students in Romania achieved a mean score of 512 on the overall reading scale. While performance in 2011 was 10 points lower than in 2001, the difference was not statistically significant. While there was a significant drop of 22 score points between 2001 and 2006, about half of this was made up between 2006 and 2011 (though the 12-point increase did not reach statistical significance).

Table 3.4: Trends in Performance 2001-2011 (Overall Scale) – Romania and EU-24 Averages

	2001	2006	Change (2006- 2001)	2006	2011	Change (2011- 2006)	2001	2011	Change (2011- 2001)
Romania	512	490	-22	490	502	12	512	502	-10
EU	534	534	0	534	535	1	534	535	1

Significant differences in bold Source: Appendix Tables B1, B2

In 2011, girls in Romania achieved a mean score on the overall reading scale that was some 15 points higher than boys (Table 3.5). This was marginally higher than the EU-24 average of 12 points. The gender difference in favour of girls in Romania has remained stable across cycles of PIRLS.

Table 3.5: Trends in Performance by Gender 2001-2011 (Overall Scale) – Romania and EU-24

Romania			EU-24			
	Girls	Boys	Girls-Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls-Boys
2011	510	495	15	541	529	12
2006	497	483	14	541	528	13
2001	519	505	14	542	525	17

Significant differences in bold. Source: Appendix Tables C1, C2, C3

Attitudes to Reading

In Romania, the difference in mean reading scores between students in the top and bottom quartiles of the Like Reading scale (72 points) was higher than the corresponding EU average of 52, indicating a somewhat stronger association between Liking Reading and reading performance in Romania than on average across EU-24 countries (Table 3.6). The difference in reading performance among students in the top and bottom quartiles of the Confidence in Reading scale (112 points) was also well above the corresponding EU-24 average of 81 (Table 3.7).

Table 3.6: Mean Overall Reading Scores of Students in the Top and Bottom Quartiles of the PIRLS Like Reading Scale – Romania and EU-24 Average

Overall Reading			
Like Reading	Top Quartile	Bottom Quartile	Difference (Q4-Q1)
Romania	545	471	73
EU-24	563	511	52

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold Source: Appendix Table D1

Table 3.7: Mean Overall Reading Scores of Students in the Top and Bottom Quartiles of the PIRLS Confidence in Reading Scale –Romania and EU 24 Average

	Overall Reading		
Confidence in Reading	Top	Bottom	Difference (Q4-Q1)
	Quartile	Quartile	
Romania	549	437	112
EU-24	570	490	80

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table D2

Home Educational Resources and Parental Education

Thirty-one percent of pupils in Romania reported having 10 or fewer books at home. This is the highest among the EU-24, indicating a worrying shortage of resources in children’s homes (Table 3.8). The mean score of pupils in Romania with 10 or fewer books was some 108 points lower than that of pupils with more than 200 books. This difference is higher in just one EU country – Hungary – where it is 113 points.

Table 3.8: Mean Overall Reading Scores of Pupil with 0-10 books at Home, and those with More than 200 Books – Romania and EU-24 Average

Books in the Home	None or Few Books (0-10)		More than 200 Books		Mean Score Difference (More than 200 – None or few)
	Percent of Students	Mean Reading Score	Percent of Students	Mean Reading Score	
Romania	31	452	6	560	108
EU-24	11	482	12	563	82

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table E1

Pupils in Romania in the bottom quartile of the PIRLS home resources scale (based on parent reports) have a mean score that is 121 points lower than that of pupils in the top quartile (Table 3.9). This is the greatest difference among the EU-24 (where the average difference is 79 points).

Table 3.9: Percentages of Pupils in the Top and Bottom Quartiles of the Resources for Learning scale, and Corresponding Mean Overall Reading Scores – Romania and EU-24 Average

Level of Home Resources	Bottom Quartile		Top Quartile		Difference (Many - Few)
	%	Mean	%	Mean	
Romania	25	441	25	562	121
EU-24	25	495	25	573	79

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table E2

Thirty-two percent of pupils in Romania had parents whose highest level of education was lower secondary or below – well above the EU-24 average (Table 3.10). The difference in mean reading scores between pupils of parents whose highest level of education was lower secondary or below and those whose parents had completed university or higher was 131 score points – again, the highest among the EU-24. Only Bulgaria (113 points) had a difference that approached the level observed in Romania.

Table 3.10: Percentages of Parents Whose Highest Level of Education was Lower Secondary, and Percentages who Finished University or Higher– Romania and EU-24 Average

Level of Parent Education	Lower Secondary or Below		University or Higher		Difference (Univ or Higher - Lower Sec)
	%	Mean	%	Mean	
Romania	32	444	14	574	131
EU-24	18	495	30	571	76

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table G1

Language spoken at home

In Romania, 89% of pupils reported that they always spoke the language of the PIRLS test at home, while 10% reported that they did so sometimes, and just 1% never did so. The mean score difference between those who spoke the language of the test at home always and never was 102 points – some 61 points higher than the EU average difference. There is also a large and significant difference – 33 points – between those who always spoke the language of test at home and those who did so ‘sometimes’.

Table 3.11: Mean Scores of Pupils Reporting that They Always, Sometimes or Never Spoke the Language of the PIRLS Test at Home, and Associated Mean Scores – Romania and EU-24 Average

Language of the Test Spoken at Home	Always		Sometimes		Never		Difference (Always – Never)
	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	
Romania	89	508	10	475	1	406	102
EU-24	80	541	17	519	3	482	59

Statistically significant mean score differences in bold. Source: Appendix Table F3

B Policy areas

3.1 Creating a literate environment

- PIRLS 2011: Parents like Reading (see data in pre-primary section)
- Home Resources for Learning Scale (PIRLS 2011)

Thirty-one percent of students in Romania reported having 10 or fewer books at home (Table 3.8). This is the highest among the EU-24, indicating that lack of reading resources at home is a significant problem for many students in Romania). The mean score of pupils in Romania with 10 or fewer books was some 108 points lower than that of pupils with more than 200 books. This difference is higher in just one EU country – Hungary – where it is 113 points (Appendix Table E1).

Students in Romania in the bottom quartile of the PIRLS home resources scale (which is number of books at home, number of children’s books at home, a quiet room to study, Internet access, and parental education and job status) have a mean score that is 121 points lower than that of pupils in the top quartile (Table 4.9). This is the greatest difference among the EU-24 (where the difference is 79 points) and again highlights the effects of a shortage of reading-related resources in the homes of many students in Romania.

Is reading for pleasure emphasized in the intended language/reading curriculum?

According to PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia, there is little or no emphasis on reading for pleasure in the intended language/reading curriculum. Romania is among a group of 4 countries participating in PIRLS 2011 which reported little emphasis on reading for pleasure in the curriculum. Nine of the EU-24 countries in PIRLS 2011 reported that reading for pleasure was given a major emphasis and 11 countries that it had some emphasis. (Mullis, Martin, Minnich, & Drucker, K.T., Ragan, M.A., 2012, p. 36, Vol. 1, Exhibit 9)

Resources teachers use for teaching reading

Ninety-four percent of pupils in Grade 4 in Romania are taught by teachers who use textbooks as the basis of reading instruction – almost 25% above the average across EU countries. Just 11% of students in Romania are taught by teachers who use a variety of children’s books as a basis for reading instruction, compared with an EU average of 29%. According to teachers, computing software is used as a basis of reading instruction by similar proportions of pupils in Romania (3%) and on average across the EU-24 (5%), and is also used as a supplementary resource by similar proportions (45% in Romania, 47% across the EU-24 average).

Source: PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 236, Exhibit 8.12). EU averages obtained from PIRLS 2011 database (see Appendix Table H1).

Availability and use of classroom library

Based on data provided by their teachers, PIRLS shows that 69% of pupils in Romania were in classrooms which had class libraries – slightly under the corresponding EU-24 average of 73%. Just 15% of pupils in Romania had access to more than 50 books in their class libraries, compared to an EU-24 average of 29%. On the other hand, more students in Romania had access to at least three magazines in their class library (49%) than on average across EU countries (28%). Fifty-nine percent of students in Romania could spend class time in the library/reading corner – about the same proportion as on average across EU countries (60%). Across all classrooms (including those with no library), 86% of pupils in Romania had teachers who reported that they brought to a library other than the class library at least monthly, more than on average across EU-24 countries (65%).

Source: PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 240, Exhibit 8.13); EU averages from PIRLS 2011 database (see Appendix Table H2).

Creating the digital environment

According to teachers’ reports, 25% of students have a computer available for reading lessons, compared to the EU-average of 45% (Appendix Table I6).

Regarding computer activities during reading lessons, PIRLS provides figures that refer to all students, including those who do not have access to a computer during reading lessons.

The percent of students who engage in specified computer activities during reading lessons at least monthly are below:

- to look up information: 21% (EU-24 average = 39%).
- to read stories or other texts: 20% (EU-24 = 32%).
- to write stories or other texts: 17% (EU-24 = 33%).

- to develop reading skills and strategies with instructional software: 19% (EU-24 =27%).

Source: PIRLS 2011 (Mullis et al. 2012a, Exh. 8.14, p.242).

Are there regional or national campaigns to foster reading habits?

According to Eurydice (2011, p 162) there are four national campaigns in Romania:

- development of Reading Skills (Dezvoltarea competențelor de lectură)
- literature circles (Cercurile de lectură) to promote pupils' interest in reading for leisure purposes
- reading for the Third Millennium (Lectură pentru mileniul al treilea)
- development of Key Skills – A Premise to Social Inclusion (Dezvoltarea competențelor cheie – premisă a incluziunii sociale).

Source and more information: (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 182)

Public libraries

Vreau să-mi citești (I want you to read for/to me!) is a family literacy programme promoted by the Cluj County Library in partnership with non-governmental organizations.

(Facilia ziar independent de Cluj. <http://ziarulfacia.ro/proiectul-vreau-sa-mi-citesti-la-o-noua-editie/>. 18.02.2015.; Vreau să-mi citești! <http://vreausamicitesti.blogspot.ro/>. 18.02.2015)

3.2 Improving the quality of teaching

3.2.1. Literacy Curricula / Reading Instruction / National Benchmarks

Instructional time spent on language and reading, reported by principals and teachers

Pupils in Romania spend less time in school (796 hours per year) than do pupils on average across EU-24 countries (850 hours), and allocation of time to teaching the language of the PIRLS test in Romania (202 hours) is also less than on average across EU countries (241 hours), though it is in line with curriculum specifications in Romania (24%-29% of instructional time. (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 38, Exhibit 6) The average number of hours allocated to teaching reading each year in Romania (65 hours) is about the same as on average across EU countries (68), though the EU average is itself low relative to, for example, the United States and New Zealand (both 131 hours). Teachers in Romania report allocating marginally more time to teaching reading across the curriculum and in reading classes (161) than on average across EU countries (147 hours).

Source: PIRLS 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 214, Exhibit 8.4). EU averages from PIRLS 2011 database (see Appendix Table I3).

Does the country have a national curriculum specifically for reading (literacy), or is reading usually taught as part of the national language curriculum that also includes writing and other communication skills?

The national curriculum for primary schools includes the following curricular areas: language and communication, mathematics and science, social studies, arts, physical education, and technology and counselling. Within the language and communication area, students study their mother tongue. Romania does not have special curriculum for reading (and language).

Among the European countries participating in PIRLS 2011, only six countries had a national curriculum specifically for reading, namely France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, the Russian Federation, and Sweden. Reading usually is taught as part of the national language curriculum that also includes writing and other communication skills. (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 537, Vol. 2, Exhibit 5)

Do reading literacy curricula and official guidelines in primary schools – besides word recognition and fluency which are normally an element – foster use of grapheme-phoneme correspondences, not only in the first year but also in the higher grades?

The curriculum includes between four and six different indicators for word identification and knowledge of phonics during primary years (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 56, Fig. 1.2).

Do reading literacy curricula and official guidelines in primary schools include a wide range and a combination of several strategies?

According to the analysis of steering documents by Eurydice (2011) the following reading strategies are mentioned in the literacy curricula: drawing inferences, summarizing text, making connections between parts of a text, monitoring own comprehension. Not mentioned are: using background knowledge, constructing visual representations, and pupils reflecting on own reading process (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 60, Fig. 1.4).

Which activities teachers do use to develop students' reading comprehension skills?

In Romania, 92% of pupils were taught by teachers who reported that they engaged students in locating information within the text, 'every day or almost every day', while 64% were taught by teachers who reported they engaged students in identifying the main ideas of what they had read with the same frequency. Just two comprehension strategies, making predictions about what will happen in a text, and describing the style or structure of a text just read, were taught daily to fewer than 50% of pupils in Romania. While each strategy was taught more frequently on an almost daily basis in Romania than on average across EU countries, no clear evidence emerged of a link between frequency of strategy instruction and performance in Romania, or on average across EU countries, though in a few EU countries more frequent strategy instruction was associated with poorer performance (presumably because teachers engaged in strategy instruction more often with the weakest readers). It

should also be noted that frequency of comprehension strategy instruction provides no information on the effectiveness of teaching, on the suitability of the materials used, or the application of strategies by students to other texts.

Percent of students whose teachers ask them to do the following daily or almost daily:

- Compare texts read with experiences: 60% (EU avg. = 35%).
- Compare what they have read with materials in other texts: 56% (EU avg. = 22%).
- Identify main ideas of what they had read: 64% (EU avg. = 55%).
- Explain their support or understanding of what has been read: 90% (EU avg. = 62%).
- Make predictions about what will happen next in the text: 43% (EU avg. = 22%).
- Make generalizations and draw inferences: 56% (EU avg. = 36%).
- Describe the style and structure of the text: 85% (EU avg. = 59%).
- Determine the author’s perspective and intention: 53% (EU avg. = 21%).
- Locate information within the text: 92% (EU avg. = 66%).

Source: PIRLS: 2011 (Mullis et al. 2012a, Exhibit 8.8, p. 226); EU-24 averages from PIRLS 2011 database (see Appendix Table I1).

Which instructional practices do teachers use to engage students’ learning?

Almost all students in Romania (97%) were taught by teachers who reported that they encouraged all students to improve their performance in ‘every or almost every’ lesson. The corresponding EU average was 84%. Of the six engagement strategies presented to teachers in PIRLS, only one, (encouraging students to bring interesting reading materials to class), did not feature in every or in almost every lesson for at least 60% of students in Romania. In fact, Romania had the highest engagement scale score of all EU countries (11.4). This was higher than the corresponding EU average (9.9).

Table 3.12: Percentages of Pupils Whose Teachers Used Each of Six Engagement Strategies in Most Lessons, and Average Engagement Scale Score, Romania and EU Average

	% of Pupils (Every or almost every lesson)	
	Romania	EU-24 Average
Summarise what students have learned from the lesson	85	67
Relate the lesson to students’ daily lives	83	54
Use questioning to elicit reasons and explanations	91	82
Encourage all students to improve their performance	97	84
Praise students for good effort	94	88
Bring interesting materials to class	55	26
Engagement scale (average score)	11.4	9.9

PIRLS also examined engagement from the perspective of students. Table 3.13 shows that 74% of students in Romania 'agree a lot' that they like what they read about in school. This is much higher than the corresponding EU-24 average of 46%. Greater percentages of students in Romania also report higher levels of agreement with other positively-worded statements on engagement in reading lessons. One-fifth of students in Romania and on average across EU-24 countries agree a lot that they think of things not related to the lesson when they are reading. Students in Romania have the highest mean score (11.0) on a scale that measures overall student engagement in reading lessons. The average across EU countries is 9.9. A score of 10.0 or higher can be interpreted as indicating that students are 'engaged', while a score of between 7.4 and 10.5 indicates that students are 'somewhat engaged'. Hence, according to teachers and students, there are exceptionally high levels of engagement in reading lessons in Romania, both relative to other EU-24 countries, and to the EU average.

Table 3.13: Percentages of Students Who 'Agree a Lot' With Various Statements Linked to Reading Engagement and Overall Scale Average, Romania and EU Average

Statement	Romania	EU-24 average
I like what I read about in school	74	46
My teacher gives me interesting things to read	77	48
I know what my teacher expects me to do	72	60
I think of things not related to lesson	20	19
My teacher is easy to understand	71	61
I am interested in what my teacher says	80	57
My teacher gives me interesting things to do	79	52
Engagement Scale (Average)	11.0	9.9

Are there detailed standards at each grade (school years) which form the basis of assessments allowing early identification of reading difficulties?

There are no detailed standards at each grade.

Primary education teachers are responsible for assessing all students in their class. When there are students with special education needs, a visiting specialist teacher is invited to diagnose the learning difficulty.

Source: PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 539, Vol. 2)

Does the Language/Reading Curriculum prescribe assessment standards and methods?

Assessment standards and methods are prescribed by the language/reading curriculum. (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 99, Vol. 1, Exhibit 7) In half of the European countries that participated in PIRLS 2011, assessment, standards and methods are prescribed by the language/reading curriculum.

Do teachers use formative assessments?

Teachers use formative assessment. In primary education, each assessment of student performance in mother tongue is graded using qualitative descriptors (i.e. insufficient, sufficient, good, very good, and excellent), according to the curricular standards and descriptors established at the national level for reading. (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 537, Vol. 2)

3.2.2. Teacher Training

What are the entry qualifications for Initial Teacher Training?

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (EURYDICE, EACEA, & European Commission, 2013, p. 32, Fig. A 5) provides the following information:

- certificate of final examination of upper secondary education (decided at institutional level)
- performance at upper secondary level (decided at institutional level)
- a general entrance examination to tertiary education (decided at institutional level).

Are there specific selection methods for admission to initial teacher education?

In Romania – besides the general entrance requirements for entry to tertiary education – there are specific selection criteria for admission to initial teacher education. According to the Report *Key Data on teachers and School Leaders in Europe* (EURYDICE et al., 2013, p. 32, Fig. A 5), a third of all European countries (including Finland, Italy, Lithuania and Scotland) have specific selection methods such as satisfactory performance in a specific aptitude test or interviews in which candidates are asked about their motives for becoming teachers.

Each of the universities in Romania that provide bachelor programmes for initial teacher education (the graduation title is "Teacher/Professor for primary and pre-primary education") have specific entry requirements – specific aptitude tests. At the West University of Timisoara there are two performance tests:

- Musical skills – musical hearing, rhythm, singing a song chosen by the candidates (accepted or rejected after the practical test).
- Diction and communication - Reading a text at first sight, reciting 2-3 verses from a poem known by the candidate; Participation in a conversation with the evaluation committee on a specific subject: checking through dialogue the ability to be persuasive, responsive relationship with the discussion partner, the ability to build an argumentative discourse; a dictation test that will assess knowledge of the basic rules of spelling and punctuation in Romanian (written test).

Source: Admission Methodology at the West University of Timisoara (Metodologia de organizare si desfasurare a admiterii in ciclul de studii universitare de licenta)

Babes Bolyai University from Cluj has different entry requirements for initial teacher education, consisting in a written test for the following components: correct spelling, understanding of a non-literary written text, written expression and performing basic mathematical operations.

The University of Bucharest has similar requirements as the University of Timisoara (artistic and communication skills) (Universitatea din Bucuresti. <http://fpse.unibuc.ro/admitere/studii-de-licenta/probe-de-concurs>. 18.02.2015).

The "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University in Iasi also has specific aptitude tests – music and diction (Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iasi.

<http://www.psih.uaic.ro/admitere/2014/ofertaStudiiLic.htm>. 18.02.2015)

These are examples for the 4 biggest universities in the country. There are also other smaller universities that provide bachelor programmes for initial education and they all have specific selection methods (apart from the performance score at the high school national exam and other entrance examination procedures decided at university level).

What is the level of qualification for primary teachers and what is the length of the required training?

Romania requires primary teachers to have a bachelor's degree which takes three years' study. In European comparison this is a relatively short duration. Typically, primary teachers' education routes are through a four-year university bachelor's degree programme in primary education. In ten European countries – Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, France, Iceland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia – initial education for primary teachers is at master's level and usually takes five years. In recent years an increase in the minimum length of initial teacher education can be noted for many countries. (EACEA, EURYDICE, & Eurostat, 2012, p. 112, Fig. E 2)

In Romania, initial teacher education is not completed once for all with graduation from a higher education programme. In order to become a full teacher in the national schooling system, teachers have to undertake a national completion examination in education (examen national de definitivare in invatamant). Before undertaking this examination, they have the status of "beginner teacher" (profesor debutant). Teachers can take part in this exam after at least one year of teaching. This examination has two parts: 1) special class inspection carried out by the school inspectorates; 2) national written exam on a specialty discipline. If a teacher fails the first examination, he/she has the right for two more attempts within a 5-year period. Every failure means that s/he needs to undertake the whole examination process again.

Source: National Law of Education, no 1/2011 (Law of National Education)

More information about reading teachers' formal education is offered by PIRLS 2011. (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Ducker, 2011, p. 188, Exhibit 7.1) 7% of fourth grade students have teachers

who completed a Postgraduate University Degree, 30% had teachers who completed a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent but not a Postgraduate Degree, 29% had teachers who completed post-secondary education but not a Bachelor's Degree, and 34% had teachers with no further than upper secondary education. The EU-24 average for the last category is 6% (indicating that the level of qualification of teachers of reading in Romania is quite low).

Do all teachers of reading (normally classroom teachers) have training in language/literacy?

According to an analysis of guidelines for Initial Teacher Education institutions, generic skills or methodology for teaching reading is a topic in ITE (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 101, Fig. 2.5).

To what extent does initial training particularly emphasise the teaching of reading?

In PIRLS 2011, teachers reported about their areas of specialisation in their formal education and training (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 190, Exhibit 7.2). In Romania, 90% of the fourth grade students had reading teachers with an educational emphasis on language, 83% had teachers with an emphasis on pedagogy/ teaching reading, and 42% had teachers with an emphasis on reading. These figures are above the corresponding EU-24 means. On average across the EU-24, 74% of the fourth grade students had reading teachers with an educational emphasis on language, 59% had teachers with an emphasis on pedagogy/teaching reading, and 30% had teachers with an emphasis on reading (PIRLS 2011 Database).

Is tackling reading difficulties a topic in Initial Teacher Training?

Almost all universities in Romania that provide initial teacher education programmes have included in their study plans the discipline "Psychopedagogy of children with learning difficulties", part of this course being allocated to reading difficulties. In general, reading difficulties (including dyslexia) might be also studied as part of other disciplines in initial teacher education, such as "Special Education" or "Speech Therapy.

Sources:

Study plan University of Timisoara (Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara. http://www.socio.uvt.ro/st-educ/wp-content/uploads/2013/doc/Plan_Invatamant_PIPP_2013-2016.pdf. 18.02.2015)

Study plan University of Bucharest (Universitatea din Bucuresti. http://fpse.unibuc.ro/images/planinvatamant/2014-2015/Licenta/plan_pipp_lic.pdf. 18.02.2015)

Study plan Babes Bolyai University Cluj

<http://psiedu.ubbcluj.ro/psihologie-pedagogie/fise-discipline/stiinte-ale-educatiei.php>

Study plan Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iasi (Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iasi. http://www.psih.uaic.ro/activ/I_licenta/plan/Lic_seria_14_17/PIPP_IF_2014.pdf. 18.02.2015)

Is assessing pupils' reading skills a topic in Initial Teacher Training?

According to an analysis of guidelines for ITE institutions, assessing pupils' reading skills is a topic in Initial Teacher Training (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 101, Fig. 2.5).

Reading skills are as a rule understood in the narrow sense of decoding. Reading speed and expressive reading are generally in the focus, whereas comprehension is not. (Fondul Social European. <http://www.citit-scris.ro/pdf/Studiu%20de%20diagnoza-FINAL.pdf>. 18.02.2015)

Is teaching to read on-line texts a topic in Initial Teacher Training?

According to an analysis of guidelines for ITE institutions teaching to read on-line texts is not a topic in Initial Teacher Training (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 101, Fig. 2.5).

Teaching practice for prospective teachers of reading: How long is the duration of in-school placement in Initial Teacher Training?

The minimum time allotted to in-school placements during ITE in Romania is 45 hours.

There is considerable variation in Europe: For prospective primary teachers, this time ranges from 40 hours in Latvia to 900 hours in Austria. (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 102, Fig. 2.6)

Romania belongs to the eight countries which explicitly state that skills relating to the teaching of reading must be practised during in-school placements, together with Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England and Wales). (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 102, Fig. 2.6)

Is there compulsory continuing professional development (in-service training) for teachers which focuses on literacy development?

There is a requirement for all pre-university teachers in Romania to acquire every five years at least 90 credits from in-service teacher training. Accredited programmes count as the only acceptable in-service teacher training. There is no compulsory programme to take up, but literacy development is the major topic of in-service teacher training programmes such as Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking, Innovative reading-writing instruction, etc. (Fondul Social European. <http://www.citit-scris.ro/carti/brosura.pdf>. 18.02.2015)

How much time has been spent on professional development related to reading in the past two years?

In PIRLS 2011 teachers were asked how much time they had spent on professional development in reading in the past two years. In Romania, 51% of the students have teachers who spent 16 hours or more (EU-24 average: 18%), 39% had teachers who spent some time but less than 16 hours (EU-24 average 53 %), and 11% had teachers who spent no time (EU-24 average 29%) (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 196, Exhibit 7.4). These figures show a high engagement of Romanian teachers.

Are there courses for enhancing teachers' skills to deal with struggling readers?

Yes, *Innovative reading-writing instruction* is an accredited in-service teacher training programme which provides an informal literacy inventory for teachers to assess their students' reading skills and introduces strategies for remedial literacy instruction. (Asociația Lectura și Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gândirii Critice România. <http://alsdgc.ro/oferta>. 18.02.2015)

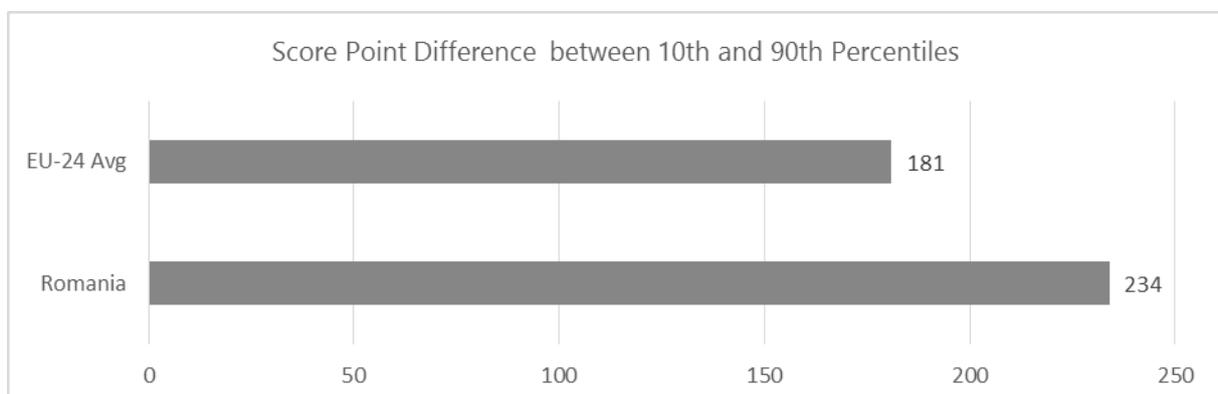
How is its quality assured?

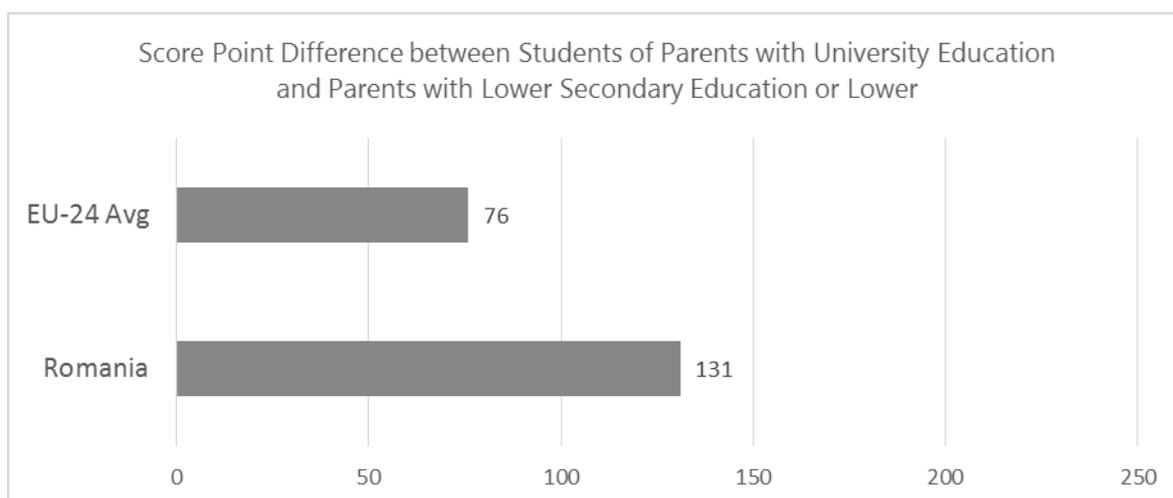
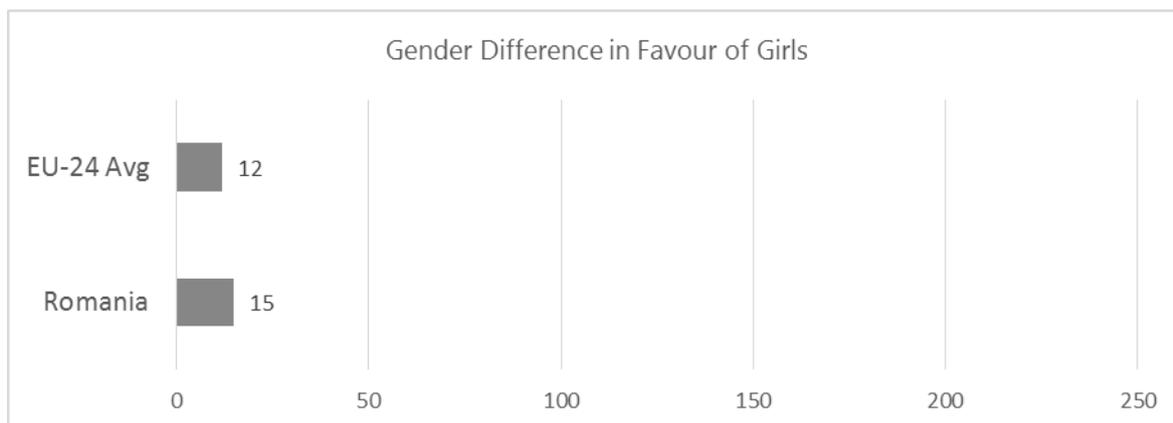
Top-level education authority assures its quality. (EURYDICE et al., 2013, p. 64, Fig. C6)

3.3 Ensuring participation, inclusion and equity

As in every European country, there are achievement gaps between different groups. As can be seen from the graph below, in grade 4 the spread in achievement between the 10th and the 90th percentiles in Romania is greater than the EU-24 average. This points to a need for improved equity in reading and reading-related outcomes. While the gender gap is relatively small (15 score points) in grade 4, there is a remarkable gap in achievement between pupils with parents of different educational levels. When interpreting this figure it is important to keep in mind that Romania has almost double the proportion of pupils with parents whose highest level of education is lower secondary or below than on average across EU countries, and these pupils perform 50 points lower on average across EU countries than pupils whose parents have similar levels of education. This finding points to a broader issue, the need to improve educational attainment in Romania, thus establishing a stronger educational base for future generations.

Facts: infograph about gaps by gender, SES and migrant status (also high and low performers, PR 10-90)





Referring to identification and support of struggling readers this part of the report deals with the following questions:

Are there regular screenings for reading competence to identify struggling readers?

According to PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia, “Primary education teachers are responsible for assessing all students in their class. When there are students with special education needs, a visiting specialist teacher is invited to diagnose the learning difficulty”. (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 539, Vol. 2)

Do all pupils receive remedial instruction when needed?

Based on a question that class teachers answered in PIRLS 2011, it is estimated that 17.4% of students in Romania are in need of remedial reading instruction. It is also estimated, again by teachers that 15.8% are in receipt of remedial reading instruction. Hence, there is a shortfall of almost 2% between those in need and those in receipt. However, if we accept that 35% of students in Grade 4 in Romania are at or below the Low PIRLS benchmark, it might be argued that too few students are identified by their teachers as being in receipt of remedial reading.

On average across EU countries, 18.1% of students in Grade 4 are identified by their teachers as being in need of remedial teaching, while 13.3% are identified as being in receipt of such teaching.

Is there a legal right for support for struggling readers?

Yes, if the children have been diagnosed as having learning difficulties. (LEGE nr. 1 din 5 ianuarie 2011 (*actualizată*))

Are successful strategies and practices for tackling reading difficulties addressed in the curricula?

Though the curriculum makes recommendations for learning strategies/activities, it does not specifically address the issue of tackling reading difficulties. For more information on the curriculum see (Institutul de Științe ale Educației)

What support is offered? Are there provisions for additional instruction time? Is that support delivered by special needs experts/ literacy experts?

PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia reports: "For children with special education needs, a visiting specialized teacher provides individual support for basic acquisition of skills, including reading competence". (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 539, Vol. 2) Special needs experts have no specific training in literacy instruction.

Methodology for organising the educational support services for children, students and young people with special educational needs in mainstream schools – 7 October 2011 (Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului și Sportului. <http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/metodologie-din-7-octombrie-2011-privind-organizarea-serviciilor-de-srijin-educational-pentru-copiii-elevii-si-tinerii-cu-cerinte-educationale-speciale-integrati-in-invatamanul-de-masa-emitent-132680.html>. 18.02.2015)

Children with special education needs who are integrated in mainstream schools are sometimes instructed separately: while their peers are learning in the classroom, the SEN children are in a different room with an SEN teacher. For more information see Phare Programmes "Access to Education for disadvantaged Groups" – Impact Study – (Ulrich, 2009)

Some non-governmental organizations provide additional instruction time for struggling children. (Fundația Desire pentru Deschidere și Reflecție Socială. http://www.desire-ro.eu/?page_id=968. 18.02.2015)

Additional staff – availability of support persons for reading

Based on teacher responses to a series of questions in PIRLS 2011, 16% of students in Romania are in classes where there is always access to specialised professionals to work with students who have reading difficulties, while 21% are in classes where there is access

sometimes (Table 3.14). The corresponding EU averages are 25% and 42% respectively, indicating a relative shortage of professional support persons in Romania. Twenty-six percent of students in Romania are in classes where there is always access to teacher aides to work with children with reading difficulties, while a further 26% are in classes where there is access sometimes. Corresponding EU averages are 13% and 34%, indicating relatively greater use of teacher aides on a more frequent basis in Romania. Access to volunteers to work with children with reading difficulties is broadly similar in Romania than on average across EU countries. This information, however, might be highly misleading. 'Access to' does not necessarily mean 'availability of'. Schools regularly have no more than one support teacher, while the need for such teachers is very high.

Table 3.14: Percentages of Students in Classrooms with Access to Additional Personal to Work with Children with Reading Difficulties, Romania and EU Average

Access to . . .	Romania			EU-24 Average		
	Always	Some-times	Never	Always	Some-times	Never
Specialised professional	17	21	62	25	43	33

According to responses provided by teachers in PIRLS 2011, 23% of students in Romania are in classes where the teacher arranges for students falling behind in reading to work with a specialised professional (e.g. a speech therapist; in Romania there are no reading specialists). The corresponding EU average is higher at 55%. Fewer teachers in Romania (26%) than on average across EU countries (37%) say that they wait for students who are falling behind in reading to mature. Almost all students in Romania and on average across EU countries are in classes where the teacher spends more time working with students who are falling behind in reading, and asks their parents to provide help. These strategies, of course, assume that teachers and parents have the requisite skills and knowledge to be effective.

Table 3.15: Percentages of Students in Classrooms Where Teachers Engage in Specified Activities to Support Students Who Begin to Fall Behind in Reading, Romania and EU Average

	Romania (Yes)	EU-24 Average (Yes)
I have students work with a specialised professional	23	55
I wait to see if performance improves with maturation	26	37
I spend more time working on reading individually with the student	98	90
I ask the parents to help the students with reading	97	97

Are there national initiatives, programmes for parents who struggle with literacy?

There are initiatives that target parents who struggle with literacy, but they come from non-governmental organizations. E.g. Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families (led by CILSDGC); Roma children and parents want to go to school (led by Roma Education Fund) (Fundatia Desire pentru Deschidere și Reflecție Socială. http://www.desire-ro.eu/?page_id=968. 18.02.2015.; Fundatia Desire pentru Deschidere și Reflecție Socială. http://www.desire-ro.eu/?page_id=968. 18.02.2015.; Literacy Cubed. Focus on Roma Families. <http://www.lit3-project.eu/>. 18.02.2015.; Roma Education Fund. <http://romaeducationfund.ro/projects/copiii-si-parintii-romi-vor-la-scoala/>. 18.02.2015)

What support is available for pupils whose home language is not the language of the school?

PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia states: “Children from a minority group study their mother tongue along with the official language (Romanian). In communities where the minority group is the majority, children study all subjects in the curriculum in their mother tongue” (Mullis, Martin, Minnich et al., 2012, p. 539, Vol. 2)

4. ADOLESCENTS

4.1. Performance

The data reported in this Performance section come from the PISA study.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) led by Oecd (<http://www.pisa.oecd.org>) **assesses the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students every three years in all Oecd countries and** in a number of partner countries.

Since 2000, PISA has been testing students in reading, mathematics and science. The OECD assessment also collects information on students' backgrounds and on practices, motivational attributes or metacognition strategies related to reading. .

The PISA tests assess different aspects of reading literacy – retrieve information, interpret, reflect and evaluate on texts, and use a variety of texts, continuous (prose) and non-continuous (texts including graphs, tables, maps...). About half of the questions are multiple-choice, the other half open-ended (short or constructed answers). Results are reported on scales defining different levels of proficiency ranging from 1 (low performing) to 6 (high performing). Level 2 is considered as the level all 15 year-olds should reach, and will enable them to participate effectively to society.

The follow-up of students who were assessed by PISA in 2000 as part of the Canadian Youth in Transition Survey has shown that students scoring below Level 2 face a disproportionately higher risk of poor post-secondary participation or low labour-market outcomes at age 19, and even more so at age 21, the latest age for which data from this longitudinal study are currently available. For example, of students who performed below Level 2 in PISA reading in 2000, over 60% had not gone on to any post-school education by the age of 21; by contrast, more than half of the students (55 %) who had performed at Level 2 as their highest level were at college or university. (Oecd, 2010, p. 52)

4.1.1 Performance and variation in reading; proportion of low and high performing readers

Romania has participated in PISA since 2000. It is therefore possible to describe the change in reading proficiency over twelve years on average, according to different characteristics of the readers.

Table 1: Reading performance in PISA 2012

	Mean	S.E.
Romania	438	(4,0)
EU-27	489	(0,6)

S.E.= standard error; Significant differences between the country and the EU average are shown in **bold**

Table 2: Trends in reading performance - PISA 2000-2012

	2000		2009		2012		Change 2000–2009		Change 2009–2012		Change 2000–2012	
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.
Romania	428	(3,5)	424	(4,1)	438	(4,0)	-3	(7,3)	13	(6,3)	10	(7,9)
EU-27	489*	(0,7)	486**	(0,6)	489***	(0,6)	-3*	(5,0)	5**	(2,7)	3*	(6,0)

Significant differences between assessment cycles in **bold** *EU21 **EU26 ***EU27

In PISA 2000, Romania performed well below the average of EU countries (- 61 score points). According to the PISA reports (OECD), a difference of 40 points is equivalent to about one year of schooling (OECD); 60 score points equals then around one year and a half of schooling. Very little evolution is observed between 2000, 2009 and 2012. A slight improvement was observed in 2012, but one should wait for PISA 2015 data in order to determine whether it is a real change or just random variation.

Table 3: Spread of achievement. Difference between 10th and 90th percentiles on the reading scale, all students and by gender – PISA 2012

	Difference 90 th –10 th for all students		Difference 90 th –10 th for girls		Difference 90 th –10 th for boys	
	Score diff.	S.E.	Score diff.	S.E.	Score diff.	S.E.
Romania	232	(5,6)	222	(8,1)	231	(6,6)
EU-27	251	(1,3)	230	(1,2)	259	(1,6)

Significant differences between the country and EU in **bold**

In comparison to the EU's average, the difference between best-performing and least performing students (90th and 10th percentiles) is relatively low in Romania, indicating a low variation in performance. In relation to the relatively low mean score, however, this signals low standards in reading performance and the need to raise reading standards throughout the student population.

Table 4: Percentage of low performing (below level 2) and high performing (levels 5 and 6) students - PISA 2012

	Below level 2		Levels 5 and 6	
	%	S.E.	%	S.E.
Romania	37,3	(1,9)	1,6	(0,4)
EU-27	19,7	(0,2)	7,0	(0,1)

Significant differences between the country and EU in **bold**

Table 5: Trends in the proportion of low performers (below level 2) in reading, all students, and by gender – PISA 2000-2012

	Proportion of students below level 2 in reading					
	All students		Girls		Boys	
	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.
2000	41,3	(1,5)	38,6	(1,9)	44,2	(2,2)
2009	40,4	(2,0)	30,4	(2,2)	50,7	(2,5)
2012	37,3	(1,9)	28,1	(1,9)	46,8	(2,3)

Significant differences between assessment cycles in **bold**

When looking at the proportion of low and top performers, one can notice that Romania suffers at the same time from a lack of very proficient readers, able to deal with complex texts and deep understanding, and has a significant proportion of low performers (37.3%), much higher than in the EU countries on average (19.7%). Unfortunately, the proportion of low performers has not decreased between 2000 and 2009.

According to the results of an on-going questionnaire run by the “Reading to Learn” Programme (the successor of BaCuLit European Literacy Programme in Romania), filled in by 215 teachers in North-East Romania, 57% of the answers blame the curriculum for the low achievement in international tests (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS), while 38% of the teachers believe that the students and the differences in the testing structure respectively are at fault. A striking number of only 12% of the teachers consider themselves as teachers responsible for the low results.

4.1.2 Gaps in reading performance according to students' background characteristics

Socio-economic status

Table 6: Difference in reading performance between the bottom and the top national quarter of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status – PISA 2009

	Difference between the bottom and the top national quarter of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status	
	Score diff.	S.E.
Romania	86	(7.4)
EU-26	93	(1.1)

The gap according to parents' socioeconomic status in Romania is close to the EU average. The gap between the quarter of more socially privileged and the quarter of less privileged students is 86 points (more than the equivalent of two years of schooling).

Gender

Table 7: Mean reading performance by gender, and gender differences – PISA 2009

	Boys		Girls		Difference (B – G)	
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Score diff.	S.E.
Romania	403	(4.6)	445	(4.3)	-43	(4.4)
EU-26	463	(0.5)	506	(0.4)	-44	(0.5)

Table 8: Trends in reading performance by gender – PISA 2000-2012

	ROMANIA				EU-27			
	Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys	
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.
2000	434	(4,2)	421	(4,3)	506*	(0,8)	473*	(0,9)
2009	445	(4,3)	403	(4,6)	507**	(0,7)	464**	(0,8)
2012	457	(4,3)	417	(4,6)	511***	(0,6)	468***	(0,8)

Significant differences between assessment cycles in **bold** *EU21 **EU26 ***EU27

In Romania, the gender gap is 43 score points, very similar to the EU average (42 score points). As in the vast majority of countries, girls significantly outperform boys. This gap of 43 points means that girls have more than one year of schooling of advance in comparison to boys.

Interestingly, the performance of girls improved between 2000 and 2012 (+23 points), while the boys' performance decreased (in 2009) and remained stable between 2000 and 2012.

Between 2000 and 2012, the proportion of low-performing girls decreased by about 10%. During the same period, the proportion of low-performing boys increased, with a peak of 50.7% in 2009. It should be highlighted that the gender gap has increased between 2000 and 2012, and it is a serious sign of alarm for policy-makers. The proportion of low-performing boys – about half of the 15-year-olds – is a serious concern in Romania.

Migration

In Romania, the percentage of students with a migrant background is extremely low (0.3%). This is far too low to compute a performance score for this group.

Table 9: Percentage of students and reading performance, by immigrant status – PISA 2009

	Native students				Students with an immigrant background (first- or second-generation)				Difference in reading performance between native and students with an immigrant background	
	Percentage of students	S.E.	Performance on the reading scale		Percentage of students	S.E.	Performance on the reading scale		Score dif.	S.E.
			Mean	S.E.			Mean	S.E.		
Romania	99.7	(0.1)	426	(4.0)	0.3	(0.1)	c	c	c	c
EU-26	91.7	(0.02)	490	(0.4)	8.3	(0.02)	452	(6.4)	38.5	(6.4)

[C](#) There are too few observations or no observation to provide reliable estimates.

Language spoken at home

Table 10: Percentage of students and reading performance, by language spoken at home – PISA 2012

	Speak test language at home				Speak another language at home				Difference in reading performance according to language spoken at home	
	Percentage of students	S.E.	Performance on the reading scale		Percentage of students	S.E.	Performance on the reading scale		Score dif.	S.E.
			Mean	S.E.			Mean	S.E.		
Romania	96.8	(0.6)	427	(4.1)	3.2	(0.6)	359	(12.8)	68	(12.7)
EU-27	86.7	(0.02)	494	(0.4)	13.3	(0.02)	441	(5.4)	54	(5.4)

In Romania, the proportion of students reporting that they speak another language at home than the language of the test is low (3%). Students who usually speak the language of the

test at home better perform than the ones who don't. The difference (68 score points) is higher than in the EU countries on average.

Engagement and metacognition

The PISA study not only assessed 15 year-olds reading literacy skills. Students were also asked in a questionnaire about their reading attitudes and metacognitive strategies. More precisely, students' enjoyment of reading and their awareness of efficient reading strategies in order to summarize a text on the one hand, to understand and remember a text on the other hand, have been investigated. Scores have been computed for these three scales, and relationships between enjoyment of reading, and metacognitive strategies on the one hand, PISA reading proficiency scores have been computed. They are reported in the following tables.

Table 11: Mean reading scores between students poorly engaged and highly engaged in reading – PISA 2009

	Low quarter		Top quarter		Difference
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Romania	408	(5,0)	462	(5,0)	54
EU-26	444	(0.8)	543	(0.8)	99

In Romania, between the students reporting that they really enjoy reading (highest quartile), and the ones who don't like reading (lowest quartile), there is a gap of 54 score points, equivalent to more than one year of schooling. Not surprisingly, students who report enjoying reading better perform in the PISA test. The difference between the more and the less engaged readers is lower in Romania than in the EU on average.

Table 12: Mean reading scores between students in the low and top quarters of understanding and remembering strategies

	Low quarter		Top quarter		Difference
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Romania	381	(5,1)	462	(4,4)	81
EU-26	433	(0.8)	531	(0.8)	98

In Romania, between the students who know well the efficient strategies how to understand and remember a text, and the ones who have a limited knowledge of that, there is a huge gap of 81 score points, equivalent to two years of schooling; in the EU on average, the gap is somewhat higher (98 score points). This huge difference reflects how closely linked are reading proficiency, and awareness of efficient reading strategies.

Table 13: Mean reading scores between students in the low and top quarters of summarizing strategies

	Low quarter		Top quarter		Difference
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Romania	374	(5,4)	463	(3,9)	89
EU-26	440	(0,8)	530	(0,7)	90

In Romania, between the students who know well the efficient strategies how to summarize a text, and the ones who have a limited knowledge of that, there is a huge gap of 89 score points; in the EU on average, the gap is similar (90 score points), and is equivalent more than two years of schooling. This huge difference reflects how closely linked are reading proficiency, and awareness of efficient reading strategies.

Romania has participated in PISA since 2000. It is therefore possible to describe the change in reading proficiency over twelve years on average, and for different profiles of readers.

In PISA 2000, Romania performed well below the average of EU countries (- 61). According to the PISA reports, a difference of 60 points is equivalent to about one year and a half of schooling. [1]

Very little evolution is observed between 2000, 2009 and 2012. A slight improvement (not significant) was observed in 2012, but one should wait for PISA 2015 data in order to determine whether it is a real change or just random variation.

In comparison to the EU average, the difference between best-performing and lowest-performing students (90th and 10th percentiles) is relatively low in Romania, indicating a high level of equity in performance. In relation to the relatively low mean score, however, this signals low standards in reading performance and the need to raise reading standards throughout the student population.

When looking at the proportion of low and top performers, one can notice that Romania suffers at the same time from a lack of very proficient readers, able to deal with complex texts and deep understanding, and has a significant proportion of low performers (37.3%), much higher than in the EU countries on average (19.7%). Unfortunately, the proportion of low performers has not decreased between 2000 and 2009.

According to the results of an on-going questionnaire run by the "Reading to Learn" Programme (the successor of BaCuLit European Literacy Programme in Romania)¹, filled in by 215 teachers in North-East Romania, 57% of the answers blame the curriculum for the low

¹ This questionnaire was issued by ELINET Management Board member Liliana Romaniuc. Since the assessment is still going on at the time of publication of this report, we can only give preliminary results.

achievement in international tests (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS), while 38% of the teachers believe that the students and the differences in the testing structure respectively are at fault. A striking number of only 12% of the teachers consider themselves as teachers responsible for the low results.

4.2 Early School Leaving and Participation

What is the rate of early school leavers?

The duration of compulsory education in Romania is currently 10 years. Children start school at the age of 6; compulsory schooling ends at 16 years (EURYDICE, 2014, p. 2).

If we consider the Eurostat indicator of students (ISCED 1-6) aged 15-24 years as a percentage of the corresponding age population, we find that in Romania 56% of 15- to 24-year-olds were in some form of education in 2011, which was below the average EU-27 value of 62%. This indicator is on a downward trend, as by 2012 its value was 54%.

In 2013, the rate of Romanian early school leavers (17%) was above the EU-28 average (12 %). In 2008, Romania has recorded the lowest percentage of early school leavers so far (15,9 %), but little improvement has been made since then. Romania aims to reduce its ESL rate to 11% by 2020 (European Commission, 2013b).

In the period 2000-2009, the proportion of students in vocational education as a percentage of all students at ISCED 3 increased significantly, reaching 64% in 2009.

What policies are there to prevent early school leaving?

In order to prevent early school leaving and/or support adolescents' engagement in secondary studies, Romania has developed a number of policies to mitigate the effect of social disadvantage on early school leaving:

- The 200 Euros and the Money for High-School programmes subsidise families with low incomes (EURYDICE, 2012, p. 102).
- The School after School programme provides remedial education activities outside regular classes (European Commission, EACEA, & EURYDICE, 2013, p. 25).

However, there is no impact evaluation of the above policies even though the European Commission recommended those in its Country-Specific Recommendation (European Commission et al., 2013, p. 84, CSR No. 5).

The 'Second Chance' programme, first tested in 1999, was created for persons aged 14 upwards who have not completed either primary or lower secondary education. The programme offers a vocational education certificate (European Commission, 2013a, p. 47). In 2005-2009, in 15 counties of Romania, 5,581 Second Chance learners were enrolled, of whom 47.5% were aged 16-25 years. Of the primary school level Second Chance learners, 38% were

aged 16-25 years, and at the lower secondary level, 57% were in the 16-25 years age group. A third of the primary school level learners are of the age group 12-16 years (Ministerul Educației Naționale, 2009, pp. 164–166).

4.3. Literacy curricula / reading instruction / National Benchmarks

Is literacy an essential part of curricula of secondary schools (incl. vocational training) across grades? Could the concept of literacy (reading and writing) be found in the national or federal curriculum for secondary level (incl. vocational training)?

Since 2000, the Romanian authorities have revised the school curriculum for secondary schools (students aged 10/11 to 18/19) repeatedly. Some of the subject curricula date from 2004, others from 2006, and yet others from 2009 (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014). In addition to the Language and Communication subject area, communication competences are mentioned in some curricula (e.g. physics, chemistry, biology, etc.). In the draft *Strategy for the reduction of early school leaving* (Ministerul Educației Naționale. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/22311>. 17.12.2014), literacy (in Romanian: alfabetizare de baza/alfabetizare functionala) is explicitly mentioned in the context of plans for substantially improving lower secondary education.

Are advanced literacy skills (in print and digital literacy) part of the national curricula in all school subjects (“content area literacy”) and grades? Is the literacy concept part of the language sector or does it have a special chapter in the curriculum?

Literacy skills – though not generally explicitly called ‘literacy’ – are part of some of the national curricula. For example, the physics curriculum for lower secondary education pursues a general competence: Communication using scientific language; and a value/attitude: interest in exploring various means of communication, including through ICT (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014). Furthermore, advanced literacy skills such as ‘translating information provided in a graphic form, including in a map, into linear text’ are among the standards to be met in geography by the end of the 12th grade (Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Tineretului. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c616/>. 17.12.2014). Similarly, by the end of the 12th grade, in physics, the students must be able to ‘decode information contained in graphic representations or tables’ (Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Tineretului. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c616/>. 17.12.2014).

The history curriculum for grades V-VIII recommends as learning strategies ‘the critical reading of different types of historical sources, use of different information sources for

presenting historical facts or processes' (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014).

Nonetheless, advanced literacy skills, in both printed and digital texts, are mostly connected to the native language teaching and learning. The concept of literacy is not a special part of the curriculum.

Is the focus of the curriculum on contents/aims or is it on the description of competences?

At secondary level, currently the curriculum is competence-based. Each subject matter curriculum targets 4-5 general competences, which are further broken down into specific competences. The general competences are targeted over a full cycle (lower secondary or upper secondary), whereas the specific competences are different for different grade levels. In general, the introductory part of each curriculum makes reference to the eight key competences recommended at the European level. Furthermore, the introduction specifies which key competence(s) the subject matter aims to develop primarily (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014).

Do the curricula allow enough time to teach and train basic literacy skills in the different subjects? Are the content area curricula "slim" enough to provide time for work on literacy?

Time for specific disciplines at each grade level is defined in Planuri cadru (Framework plans) (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014). The Ministry of Education requires that teachers plan their time at the beginning of each school year, and at the beginning of each learning unit. These plans are submitted to the department head and ultimately to the school principal for approval (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, p. 10). Hence, seemingly, time for developing literacy skills is available, and it is up to the teacher and the school staff to make use of it.

The curricula contain methodological suggestions for the teachers. For example, the Physics curriculum for grade 9 makes recommendations for the use of ICT for the purposes of increased effectiveness of learning activities and for the development of communication skills and individual learning skills within the context of the discipline (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014., Fizica, clasa a IX-a).

Are headmasters and headmistresses obliged to make literacy part of the school's profile and part of school development?

There is no specific legal provision for school management to make literacy part of the school's profile. The school principal has the right to guide and supervise the entire school staff and is directly accountable for the quality of education provided in his/her school (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, pp. 4–5).

Are there national benchmarks/standards for adolescents' literacy performance?

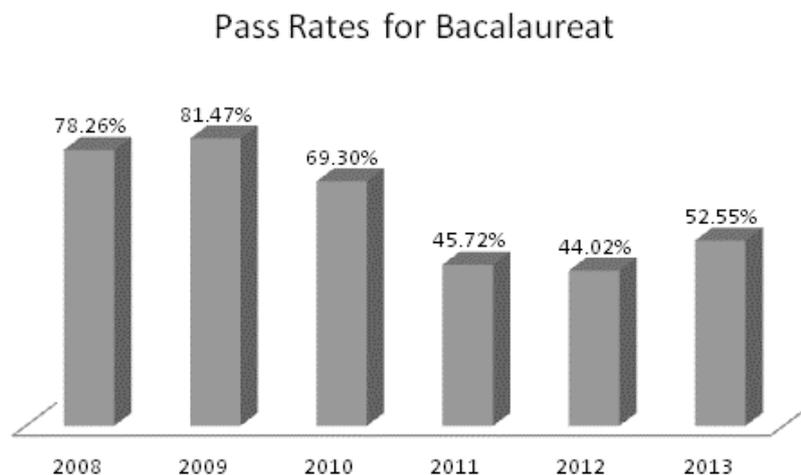
In 2003, the Serviciul National de Evaluare si Examinare (SNEE) (National Evaluation and Examination Service) produced standards for students to meet at the end of the 4th grade (age 10/11), at the end of the 8th grade (age 14/15) and at the end of the 12th grade (age 18/19), respectively (Ministerul Educatiei, Cercetării și Tineretului. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c616/>. 17.12.2014).

These standards are subject-specific. The reading and writing/literacy-related standards are described mostly in the language and communication subject area disciplines.

At which level (classroom, school, regional, national) is the adolescents' progress in literacy monitored and by whom (teachers, principals, inspectors, others)?

Adolescents take national examinations in language and literature in the 6th grade, at the end of the 8th grade and at the end of the 12th grade. For minority students, these exams are in both Romanian and their mother tongue.

The results of the national Bacalaureat examination at the end of the 12th grade (see table below) concur with the scores of the PISA tests in showing that Romanian students' level of achievement is comparatively low. Looking at the pass rates for the Bacalaureat, it can be noticed that between 2011 and 2013 around 50% of the participants did not pass the examination, which means that these students cannot consider going to university and that their professional choices are very limited.

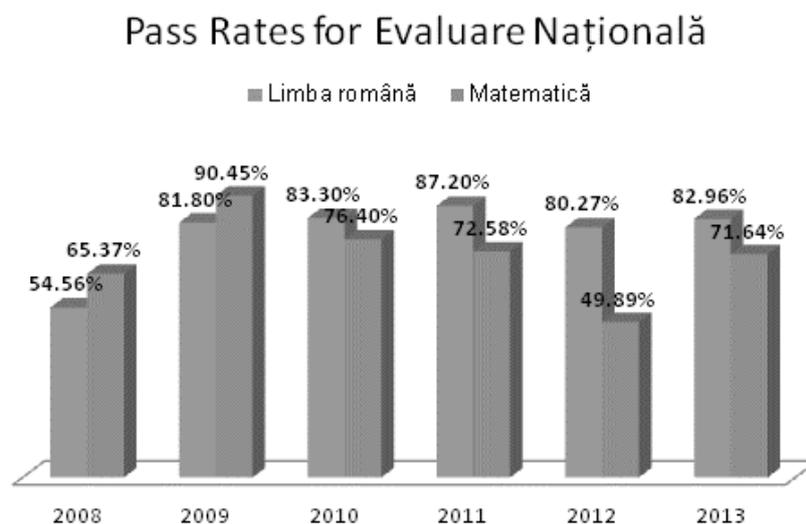


Source: (Romaniuc & Chelariu, 2013)

According to the results of an on-going questionnaire run by the "Reading to Learn" Programme (a successor of the BaCuLit European Literacy Programme in Romania), filled in by 215 teachers in North-East Romania, the main reasons for the low achievement in the Bacalaureat examination are the students (92% of the answers) and their families (52% of the answers). Only 9.5% of the teachers consider themselves responsible for the declining pass

rates, which could suggest a lack of responsibility assumed by teachers in the teaching process and the preference to blame other factors instead of analysing their teaching methods.

14% of the questioned teachers believe that the curriculum is at fault for the low achievement in the Bacalaureat examination. A gap between the curriculum and the questions in the national evaluations can be noticed when analysing the results in the examination at the end of the 8th grade, Evaluare Nationala (National Evaluation) (see the table below). Given the modern curriculum in Romanian Language and Literature and the examination topics adapted to it, students score better in this subject (results in blue) compared to Mathematics (results in orange), where there still is a big gap between the curriculum and the type of questions students are asked to answer in the Evaluare Nationala. The multiple-choice questions with one correct answer and the focus on memorised information contradict the new curriculum, which is more competence-based.



Source: (Romaniuc & Chelariu, 2013)

Since 2014, there are national evaluations also for grades 2, 4 and 6 with the aim of assessing the main competencies in the fields of Language and Communication. The evaluation tools are similar to the PISA or PIRLS models. At the date of publication of this report, the 2014 results had not yet been published.

How is adolescents' progress in reading and writing assessed?

According to the provisions of the Law of Education (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/legaldocs/14847>. 17.02.2015), Chapter V, Article 71, assessment – which pursues the objective of optimizing learning – is done based on the national evaluation standards for each discipline.

The supervision of the proper reference to the standards by the teachers is carried out through frequent school inspections. Romanian teaching professionals report that the inspectors often evaluate on very conservative standards, which makes it challenging for teachers to employ progressive and state-of-the-art teaching methods.

According to the provisions of the Law of Education (2011), Chapter V, Article 72, assessment is focused on competences, it provides genuine feedback to the students, and it underpins the individual learning plans (Legea de la A la Z. <http://legeaz.net/legea-educatiei-nationale-1-2011/art-71>. 17.12.2014). However, there is a discrepancy between the competence-based curricula and the tasks for the Bacalaureat, which are mostly content-related and rely on declarative knowledge which is not foreseen in the competence paradigm and is not taught in class.

Classroom teachers assess students on an on-going basis (assessment for learning) in all subjects, compulsory and elective. Assessment methods and instruments are: oral questioning, written papers, practical activities, reports and projects, interviews, and portfolios. Such methods and instruments are recommended in the curriculum of each subject matter (Institutul de Științe ale Educației. <http://programe.ise.ro/Actuale.aspx>. 17.12.2014).

4.4 Digital Literacy/ Multiple Literacies

Is digital literacy part of the curriculum (cf. “curricula”)?

In Romania, there is a national strategy covering training measures in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in schools. Central steering documents concerning “Competence into Mass Media” state that students and teachers should use ICT in all subjects in class and also for complementary activities (European Commission, 2013c). The documents also contain recommendations to use e-book readers, computer projectors (beamers), communication software and multimedia applications. Therefore, ICT is integrated into the curriculum of secondary education (Pérez-Tornero, 2014). As for assessments, the National Education Law of 2011 provided for the development of an examination to test digital competencies of students (use of the computer/ knowledge of ICT) at the end of secondary school (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/legaldocs/14847>. 17.02.2015). However, the steering documents do not contain any recommendations on the use of ICT in student assessment.

How are secondary students supported in acquiring digital literacy and/or supported in contributing their skills and knowledge?

According to the “Survey of Schools”, ICT is used in class as a general tool for specific tasks across all subjects. Additionally, “technology” is also mentioned as a separate subject (European Commission, 2013c, p. 4).

However, ICT-based activities are not very common, so there is a discrepancy between steering documents (curricula, technology as a subject) and general practice across all grades.

On average, ICT-based activities are planned only 'several times a month' in fact. At grade 11 vocational education, the score of frequency is the highest (2.10: more than 'several times a month' but less than 'at least once a week') (European Commission, 2013c, pp. 81–82).

The frequency of students' ICT-based activities during lessons at all grades ranges between 'never or almost never' and 'several times a month'. Only in grade 11 is ICT used 'several times a month' (European Commission, 2013b, pp. 85–86). Following the "Survey of Schools", student-centred learning settings seem to facilitate the frequency of ICT-based activities (European Commission, 2013c, pp. 87–88).

The Emedus study points towards the development of teacher training programmes to promote ICT and e-learning in lessons (Pérez-Tornero, 2014, p. 5).

What classroom resources (books, notebooks, internet...) are used to support the development of adolescents' digital literacy?

According to the "Survey of Schools" in Romania, half of the students in the 8th grade and 70% of students in the 11th grade use a school desktop computer or laptop for learning purposes 'at least weekly'. One third of grade 8 and half of grade 11 students use their own mobile phone, and nearly 10% of students in all grades use their own laptop and interactive whiteboards in lessons 'at least weekly' (European Commission, 2013c, pp. 61–63). But in grade 8 nearly one third, and in grade 11 13%, of students use a computer 'never or almost never' during classes (European Commission, 2013c, p. 64). In some Romanian schools students can use computer labs, but generally there are few computers available and there is slower/more restricted connectivity compared to the other EU countries mentioned in the Emedus Studies (Pérez-Tornero, 2014, p. 5).

4.5 Initial Teacher Training

What are the entry requirements for ITE of secondary teachers?

According to the EURYDICE 2013 study "Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe" (EURYDICE et al., 2013), enrolment in Initial Teacher Training is exclusively determined at university level. Admission to tertiary education depends on the final examination of upper secondary education (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/legaldocs/14847>. 17.02.2015., Art. 151: Bacalaureat) and can possibly be further determined by a general entrance examination. Whether such an examination actually takes place depends on three factors: the policy of the university, the free capacity of the university, and the number of students who would like to enrol.

Furthermore, there is an exam in foreign language skills for all prospective higher education students who want to pursue a master's, including prospective teachers.

What is the length of the required training of secondary teachers?

It takes 3 years for lower secondary teachers to get their teaching licence (bachelor level). Upper secondary teachers spend 5 years in total in their initial teacher education until they have obtained the master's level (EURYDICE et al., 2013). There is a teacher confirmation examination that is obligatory 2 years after the completion of the minimum training. Teachers can take this examination 3 times, in at most 5 years (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 17.12.2014).

The tests of the teacher confirmation examination consist of: a special inspection and written tests.

The special inspection is conducted on four teaching activities in the subject the teacher is teaching during that school year when this subject is one of the specialisations of their diploma(s), or in another subject that the teacher can teach.

The tests of the teacher confirmation examination assess the teacher's theoretical knowledge of their subject and the subject methodology, as well as pedagogy and elements of the psychology of education (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 17.12.2014).

Is there a curriculum for initial teacher training of secondary teachers? Are there quality standards?

The initial teacher training curricula are established by the faculties that strive to meet the national "distinct standards for each teaching position" (EURYDICE et al., 2013). These standards are defined by "competence frameworks" for teachers working at pre-primary, primary and general (lower and upper) secondary education (EURYDICE et al., 2013). However, there seems to be much emphasis on the study of subject-specific knowledge such as literature, not on competencies such as literacy.

Is "content area literacy" a compulsory constituent of initial teacher training?

Content area literacy is not a compulsory constituent of initial teacher training for all teachers. It is only part of the training of language trainers or primary school teachers, so it depends on the subject specialisation whether prospective teachers come in contact with literacy issues. In Romania, about 5% of lower secondary education teachers report that "Reading, writing and literature" was included in a subject specialisation as part of their teacher training, but they do not currently teach this subject (OECD, 2014b, p. 44).

Does this teacher training provide teaching novices with literacy teaching strategies, material based on relevant literacy research and appropriate literacy assessment techniques?

As initial teacher training is largely in the hands of universities, we cannot give general information on this question.

Does this literacy training give both a foundation in theoretical knowledge and practice in the field?

As initial teacher training is largely in the hands of universities, we cannot give general information on this question.

If so, what are the scope (time, length, aim) and the content of these modules?

As initial teacher training is largely in the hands of universities, we cannot give general information on this question.

Is digital literacy part of the teacher training (cf. “digital literacy”)?

In Romania, ICT is part of the initial education of all teachers (EURYDICE, EACEA, & European Commission). “Computer-Assisted Instruction” is a compulsory subject in Initial Teacher Training courses (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 17.12.2014). Furthermore, digital literacy is one of the main objectives of continuing professional development (CPD). For instance, the majority of the teachers have attended the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) programme in recent years.

4.6 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Is it compulsory to participate in CPD?

According to EURYPEDIA, CPD is both a right and a duty in Romania. Moreover, “CPD participation is (...) a prerequisite for career advancement and salary increases” (EACEA et al., 2012, p. 118). There is a credit point system implemented which requires fully licensed teachers to obtain a minimum of 90 credits in (each) 5 consecutive years. There are two ways of fulfilling this requirement:

- "Participation every 5 years in a training programme, with 30-90 credits and accredited by the Romanian National Centre for Teachers' In-Service Training (Centrul National pentru Formarea Personalului din Invatamantul Preuniversita)."
- "Methodological-scientific and psychopedagogical activities" (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014).

Furthermore, CPD attendance contributes positively to the personal evaluation of the teachers. Teachers are evaluated at least once a year by the headteacher and the results are discussed with the management board of the school. There is an official evaluation sheet available which contains categories such as CPD attendance or student performance, which runs the risk of "teaching to the test" because the teachers' incentive is dependent on the students' test performance.

These evaluations are very important: they can be the decisive factor in employment and teachers need at least the descriptor "very good" in the annual evaluations to be allowed to register for the examinations of the final teaching degree I which reflects the highest level of professional maturity and expertise.

Professionalization plays a great role in becoming and remaining a teacher. After confirmation as a teacher, teachers strive for the teaching degree II which is designed to reflect a "plus of professionalization" in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework of Romania. This teaching degree II is the stepping stone to teaching degree I which "means that the teacher attained a high level of professional maturity and expertise, which recommends them as a generator of good practices in the school educational environment" (EURYDICE.

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014).

Teaching degree I consists of:

- "Two current inspections
- an admission examination
- writing and presenting a methodological-scientific paper with guidance from a scientific coordinator
- a special inspection" (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014).

In order to register to take the examination for teaching degree I, the applicants must meet the conditions referring to actual teaching work of at least 4 years since the award of the teaching degree II, or at least 3 years for those teachers who got the average mark of 10 at the teaching degree II examination, and at least the descriptor “very good” at the annual evaluations, the current inspection and the school inspections in the last 2 years before registering for taking the examination (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014).

Are there incentives or sanctions to participate in CPD? If so, what kind of incentives or sanctions are there?

In order to be eligible for further steps in their teaching careers and for salary increases, CPD attendance is required. However, only the teaching degrees II and I provide eligibility for further steps in the teaching career and for salary increases (EURYDICE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014).

Is attending CPD encouraged by the employer?

Even though CPD is encouraged by the government, by making it a professional duty and a prerequisite for career advancement, CPD attendance is not much supported by the employer. For example, only 31% of teachers did not have to pay for any of their CPD programmes (OECD average: 68%) (OECD, 2014b, p. 107). Only 18% of the teachers were allowed to attend CPD measures during working hours at school (OECD average: 54%). According to the TALIS study, this degree of CPD attendance in spite of the limited support “reflect(s) a high commitment of teachers (...) to improving their effectiveness and performance” (OECD, 2014b, p. 107).

How is the quality of CPD assured?

a. *What is the time format for CPD?*

25% of the teachers spent 10 to 30 days in courses or workshops in the 12 months prior to the survey, and another 25% spent 4 to 10 days on the same activities in the reported time period (OECD, 2014b). Romanian teacher trainers report that teachers prefer short-term seminars or workshops to longer programmes, even though the number of credits depends on the training time (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, 2011, p. 11). An in-service teacher training course has to have a minimum of 10 hours; the maximum time is 270-280 hours.

b. Does CPD interlink theory and research on the one hand and practical work in the field on the other (e.g. action research)?

To be accredited by Ministry of Education, in-service teacher training providers have to allocate 30% of the training time to theory and research, 60% to practical applications, and 10% to the evaluation. (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, 2011, annexe 3).

c. What is the qualification of the trainers?

The Specialised Accreditation Commission provides the accreditation of the training of trainers (ToT) programmes and of the mentor training programmes, according to Section 1, p.7 of the *Methodology for accreditation of the in-service teacher training providers and programmes* (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, 2011). When the training programmes are accredited, the providers have to meet human resource-related requirements (e.g. documents that prove the trainer's qualifications, recognised specialisation in adult education, references about work experience as a trainer, etc.), as well as administrative and curricular requirements (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, 2011, p. 20).

Are there national standards regarding CPD?

CPD measures have to be accredited by the National Ministry of Education in Romania (Kovacs, 2010). The methodology for programme accreditation also makes reference to the monitoring of CPD programme delivery. (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, 2011, p. 21)

Were/Are there projects or campaigns that support content area literacy?

After the results of the PISA and PIRLS international assessments, the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (MERYS) introduced the "Roadmap for the 2011-2012 academic year" (Ministerul Educației și Cercetării) stating three priorities, one of which is improving literacy skills across all disciplines (Vacaretu). There are at least three projects that aim to foster literacy:

- "Reading to Learn": A programme based on the EU-sponsored BaCuLit (Basic Curriculum in Teachers' In-Service Training in Content Area Literacy in Secondary Schools) project.
- The Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) Project, initiated by the International Reading Association, funded by the Open Society Foundation, started in Romania in 1997 (Kovacs & Vacaretu).
- The adapted BaCuLit programme, prepared for accreditation by County Arad Teacher Training Centre.

Is content area literacy (CAL) part of CPD of secondary teachers of all subjects?

CPD credits can be obtained in the following fields: the teacher's subject, pedagogy, psychology of education, subject didactics, ICT, educational management (EURYDICE).

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Romania:Continuing_Professional_Development_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education. 25.11.2014). This means that literacy is not an explicit part of the CPD modules if it is not included in the subject didactics of Romanian.

However, there are some in-service teacher training providers who have accredited in-service teacher training programmes. For example, the *Critical Thinking Active Learning* in-service teacher training course, provided by the Romanian Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association, is related to some extent to CAL in secondary schools; it was accredited in 2006 (decision of the Romanian National Centre for Teachers' In-Service Training nr. 71/11.10.2006) and in 2011 (Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Science 6170/7.11.2011)

Which focus do the modules on CAL have?

It is difficult to state what various CPD programme modules focus on, as their focuses differ depending on their target groups. However, within the *Critical Thinking Active Learning* programme, the focus is on critical thinking and reading, writing, cooperative learning, lesson planning and assessment, and the Evocation-Realization of Meaning-Reflection Framework (Kovacs & Vacaretu).

Is there a national policy that encourages a whole-staff approach, meaning that it not only involves classroom teachers or teachers of mother tongue languages?

N/A.

4.7. Supporting Adolescents' Reading Engagement

Which national or federal programmes for fostering reading engagement among adolescents exist? How are they organized and funded? (See EURYDICE-report 2011, chapter 3.3 and 3.4, pp. 121ff.)

Cercuri de lectura (Reading Circles) is an action research project of ANPRO (Asociata Profesorilor de Limba si Literatura Romana. http://www.anpro.ro/html/date/2013_Le_4_argument.pdf. 17.12.2014) which has been implemented since 2004, and which aims to promote positive attitudes towards literature and the pleasure of reading. Funds are secured by ANPRO, which raises funds from a variety of sources. The Circles also publish a journal called *The Reading Circles' Journal* (Revista Cercurilor de Lectura) (Asociata Profesorilor de Limba si Literatura Romana. http://www.anpro.ro/html/index.php?pag=revista_cercuri&stanga=meniu_cercuri&dreapta=c_dreapta. 17.12.2014).

There are annual editions of the Reading Circles, and they are finalised each year with an event called Lecturiada (Readers' Olympics). In 2013-2014 academic year, Lecturiada was included in the calendar of educational projects of the Ministry of Education. However, participation in these Readers' Olympics is very much dependent on the school policy and the area where the school is located. These Olympics tend to be very competitive which is why only the best students are nominated to participate. (Ministerul Educației Naționale)

EURYDICE mentions the National Programme for the Development of Reading Skills.

Do public libraries engage in reading promotion (addressing adolescents)? Are there national guidelines and programmes (e.g. by professional library associations) which support those activities?

Public libraries do engage in promoting reading addressing adolescents. However, a study by the Goethe Institute states: "There is no official reading-support strategy that would involve both public and school libraries, but only individual projects. The groundwork for future co-operation has been laid, however." There are a number of single projects, for instance, the Octavian Goga County Library of Cluj has a special section addressing adolescents (BJC. <http://www.bjc.ro/paginaadolescentilor/index.php/ro/>. 17.02.2015). At the Valcea County library, there is a programme called Atelierul adolescentului. (Biblioteca Județeană Antim Ivireanul Vâlcea. <http://www.bjai.ro/node/1787>. 17.02.2015)

There is also a National Association of Romanian Librarians and Public Libraries (Asociata Nationala a Bibliotecarilor si Bibliotecilor Publice din Romania. <http://www.anbpr.org.ro/index.php/despre>. 17.02.2015) which has over 3500 active members, organized in 41 county-level groups. It has been active for over 20 years promoting libraries as active community organizations, with qualified staff, modern equipment and service provision, adjusted to the users' current needs (Asociata Nationala a Bibliotecarilor si Bibliotecilor Publice din Romania. <http://www.anbpr.org.ro/index.php/programe-proiecte/parteneriate>. 17.02.2015).

Is there systematic cooperation between secondary schools and families, libraries, bookstores et al in reading and writing/in literacy promotion for adolescents?

No information available.

Do schools (and other reading promotion agencies like libraries) offer attractive / diverse / gender-sensitive reading and writing resp. literacy materials and environments in print and non-print?

As an example, the Adolescents' section of the Cluj County Library provides diverse literacy materials (Biblioteca Județeană Octavian Goga Cluj. <https://www.facebook.com/SectiaPentruAdolescenti>. 17.02.2015)

"Let me Learn" (Lasati-ma sa invat) is a campaign of the Mereu Aproape Foundation. The major objective of the initiative is to set up Reading Centres in high-risk areas (especially in the countryside) and to equip school and public libraries with books. In the centres, the campaign has non-formal education activities for children aged 6-14 with reading, writing and comprehension challenges. The beneficiaries of the project are selected with support from local partners (schools, social assistance) in each community (Fundatia Mereu Aproape. <http://fundatiamereuaproape.ro/lasati-ma-sa-invat-3/>. 17.02.2015)

Do schools (and other reading promotion agencies like libraries) offer inspiring (face-to-face or virtual) spaces for reading, writing and (multimodal) communication activities among adolescents?

N/A

Are digital media / multimedia settings used for stimulating reading and writing motivation and activities of adolescents?

There is the national project by Vodafone Romania announcing that "30,000 students from 200 high schools across the country now have access to books from its 'Biblioteca digitala (Digital library)' project. This is a programme specifically for adolescents – they can download the available e-books for free. The number of schools where the service is available was due to be increased to 300 by the end of 2013. Developed in partnership with BookLand, the project currently offers access to 100 book titles. Thanks to this initiative, high-school students can download their favourite titles directly onto their mobile phones or tablets by simply scanning a QR code from the operator's digital library. Downloading files is not charged, regardless of the mobile telephony network used. This new stage of the 'Biblioteca Digitala Vodafone' project was developed by the operator in partnership with BookLand and McCann Erickson Romania."

Another programme is "Stories via Skype"/Povesti prin Skype; the programme was implemented in 2013 by the Library "St.L. Roth" Mediaş, and it was a continuation of the project Book and Computer. Within the project, 30 students, parents and grandparents read stories to other students from other libraries, via Skype. (Biblioteca Judeţeană „George Bariţiu” Braşov.

<http://www.biblionet.ro/upload/documents/librarie/20417/pdf/142083/StudiuBrasov.pdf>. 17.02.2015)

4.8 Support for Disadvantaged Adolescents/ Struggling Readers

Is there a legal right for support for struggling readers?

Yes. The law of national education (2011) in Romania states that all people with disabilities or with special educational needs have an equal right to education (Art. 12-6). Special and special-integrated education is differentiated and adapted education, and it is also considered a form of educational, social and medical support dedicated to persons with disabilities or special education needs (Art. 12-7).

Also the national curriculum (Ministry of National Education / National Curriculum Council. http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/new_nation_curric_rom-rom-enl-t06.pdf. 17.02.2015., Ch. 2.2) states a principle of equal opportunities, which aims at ensuring every student's right to a common school education within the system. The 2011 Law of National Education states (Art. 3) the principles of equity (non-discriminatory access to learning) and relevance (education responds to personal and socio-economic needs).

What support is offered? Are there provisions for additional instruction time? Is that support delivered by special needs experts/ literacy experts?

Special and special-integrated education is given to pupils free of charge (Law of National Education, Art. 48-2). Children with special educational needs integrated into local schools receive educational assistance provided by the assistance and itinerant teaching staff on a case-to-case basis (Law of National Education, Art. 51-1)

The duration of schooling for children with special educational needs may be longer depending on the degree and type of disability (Law of National Education, Art. 49-4).

In Romania, teachers often report working individually with struggling readers. Assigning extra homework is also a common way of tackling reading difficulties (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 73). Only a limited amount of pupils receive help from an additional support person (EURYDICE et al., 2011, p. 70).

Students with learning difficulties must be provided with remedial education (Law of National Education 2011, Art. 72-2).

What support is available for students whose home language is not the language of school?

In Romania, pupils belonging to national minorities have the right to study and receive instruction in their mother tongue, at all levels and forms of education with appropriate request (Law of National Education, 2011: Art. 45-1). For the pupils belonging to national minorities who attend schools with tuition in Romanian or in another language than their

mother tongue, the study of the language and the literature of their mother tongue as well as the history and traditions of the respective national minority shall be included as school subjects of the core curriculum upon request (Law of National Education, 1995: Art. 46-7).

Are adolescents whose home language is not the language of school taught alongside native speakers? Is there a focus on supporting them to access the curriculum or on developing their language skills?

See above.

What support measures are in place to specifically address the gender gap?

There are no support measures to address the gender gap.

What policy measures are there to prevent segregation of low SES and high SES students? (into different tracks, schools and so on)? What policy measures are there to support at which students' average SES is low?

Order of the Ministry of Education and Research 4839/2004 and its subsequent amendments provide for the National Social Protection programme called "Bani de liceu"(Money for Highschool) aimed at supporting low SES students to pursue upper secondary education.

4.9. Screening

Are there regular screenings for reading (& writing) competence? At what age / grades?

According to the Law of National Education, Art. 74-4 (2011), at the end of the 6th grade, students take two cross-curricular tests: one in language and communication, and one in mathematics and science. The results of these tests are used for developing individualized learning plans for the students and for their early orientation to different types of highschools ("liceu"). The results are also entered into the student's portfolio. According to the same law (Art. 74-5), at the end of the 9th grade, the students take a national examination among other disciplines in Romanian language and literature, as well as in mother tongue language and literature (those who have tuition in their mother tongue). The results of this national examination are entered into the student's portfolio, and are a part of the student's admission process to the 10th grade ("liceu"). According to Order of the Minister of Education 3753-2011, Article 74-5 of the Law of National Education is applied for students who were in the 5th grade in the 2011-2012 academic year.

How are struggling readers identified?

Struggling readers are identified by their class teachers. Each teacher decides on the way he/she identifies struggling readers. The results of the cross-curricular tests in the 6th grade

are used by class teachers for identifying struggling readers (the tests are similar to PISA tests).

5 ADULTS

5.1 Provision

What types of adult literacy provision are there? What do you consider to be adult literacy provision in your country?

There is no specific literacy provision for adults in Romania. However, some aspects of adult literacy are embedded in the teaching of Romanian language within the Second Chance Programme.

The Second Chance Programme (SCP) was first implemented in Romania in the 1999-2000 school year and was developed as part of the 2001-2006 Phare Programme, "Access to education for disadvantaged groups"². The programme was extended to the national level from the 2007-2008 school year. The aim of the programme is to support young people who have not completed compulsory education; therefore SCP is designed to be a remedial measure to the problem of early school leaving.

Until 2005-2006 the programme was implemented only for the lower secondary level; from this date it has also been implemented at primary education level.

The specific elements of the programme are: flexibility, modular curriculum, recognition of prior learning, individualised training programme depending on students' aspirations and the socio-economic development needs of the community. The programme is implemented in schools, within the formal/compulsory education system. (Copoeru, 2007)

In addition, the new law of education (no1./2011) specifies that Community Centres for Lifelong Learning should be established at the local level (by local authorities in cooperation with NGOs, employers, education institutions, etc.), where alphabetisation programmes should be provided to adults. To date there is no evidence of such centres being formally set up.

For the purposes of this report we will refer to the Second Chance Programme, where it is applicable and relevant in the context of literacy for adults.

² The Phare programme is one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Union to assist the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union.

How is adult literacy provision funded?

The Second Chance Programme is fully funded by the Government as part of the public school system.

Is there a statutory entitlement to literacy provision up to a certain level?

Yes, according to national legislation there is a free and open access for any individual who meets the enrolment requirements for a Second Chance Programme. The SCP primary level is open to all individuals who have never been enrolled in the schooling system or have not completed primary education – they need to be at least 4 years older than the age limit for completing primary education (10-11 years old); the SCP secondary level is open to learners aged 14 or above, who have not completed secondary education, including those continuing their education after completing primary education within the SCP (Copoeru, 2007).

What is the rate of participation in adult learning, workplace training, liberal adult education?

Within the period 2007-2011 Romania did not make significant progress towards adult (25-64 years) participation in lifelong learning; according to Eurostat data, there was a slight increase in participation rates from 1.3% in 2007 to 1.6% in 2011; however, although rates fell to 1.4% in 2012, the participation rate for 2013 was 2%³.

A national study (Balica, M. et al., 2010) on adult participation in continuing education and training, conducted in 2011 by the Observatory for the Development of Lifelong Learning on a nationally representative sample, found that the those who tended to be least likely to participate in adult learning were adults who were low skilled and low qualified, those who worked in companies with fewer than 10 employees and people aged over 40.

Are studies available on factors that inhibit or prevent participation in literacy education and in using literacy outside educational contexts? If yes, what are the factors?

No; no studies on the factors behind participation are available.

What progression routes are there from adult basic education courses to VET/HE courses?

Lower secondary level within the Second Chance Programme also includes a vocational training component, meaning that after completing the study programme individuals also gain a level 2 qualification certificate.

³ See

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc440&plugin=1> (accessed 10 November 2014).

Does a right to advice and guidance regarding educational opportunities exist? If yes, who provides this advice?

The Second Chance Programme states that each individual applying to or enrolled on the programme has the right to receive advice and guidance. However, there is no specific service developed for the target group, and guidance and counselling services are the responsibility of the individual school that delivers the programme. Access to information is therefore limited and relies on adults who wish to know more about the SCP making enquires at a school where the programme is delivered – there are no intermediary organisations or support structures. Those who are enrolled on the SCP do benefit from guidance and counselling, but no data are gathered on whether this guidance is provided, or not, nor on the quality of the guidance offered. In Romania there is one school counsellor for every 800 students; there is a national curriculum for the discipline “Counselling and guidance” for each of the schooling years/levels (primary and lower secondary).

5.2 Quality Monitoring

Is there an inspection service to monitor the quality of adult literacy providers (including classroom practice)?

The Second Chance Programme is part of the national school education system, therefore the same regulations apply. School inspectorates are the bodies responsible for monitoring the quality of provision.

Are there national quality standards for the quality of adult literacy providers?

There are no national quality standards for adult literacy providers.

Are there national benchmarks / standards for adult literacy performance? How are adults’ progress in reading and writing assessed / monitored?

No. Within the SCP there is no specific assessment or progress measurement of literacy, other than the usual formative and summative school assessment.

What accountability measures are in place for adult education institutions?

N/A

5.3 Literacy Curricula/ Reading Instruction

Is there a national literacy curriculum for adults? How is this linked to school curricula?

Within the Second Chance Programme there is a national curriculum for teaching the Romanian language. There is no specific linkage between SCP curricula and school curricula.

The SCP is organised in modules, with one module corresponding to each year of schooling. Within the SCP the focus is on teaching Romanian language, literature and communication.

For the primary level there are four modules:

- module 1 – A, B, C
- module 2 – Speaking and writing in Romanian
- module 3 – “Romanian language secrets”
- module 4 – “The world of books”.

For the lower secondary level there are three modules (corresponding only to the first three schooling years)

- module 1 – Communication ABC
- module 2 – Word and text
- module 3 – Text and context.

What is the accepted methodology for the teaching of literacy to adults?

N/A

How do curricula and learning materials cater for diversity of learner groups and learning needs?

N/A

Is there a specific focus on literacy in VET provision for adults?

It is not possible to identify an explicit focus on literacy in VET provision. It is possible that there are different literacy elements in VET teaching practices; however, this content is dependent on the individual provider and trainer.

5.4 Screenings/ Assessments/ Support

How are adults with literacy needs identified?

No data/information available.

How are adults’ prior literacy knowledge and skills recognized and validated?

Recognition of prior learning is one of the guiding principles of the Second Chance Programme. There are well-established procedures for assessing prior learning at both the

primary and lower secondary levels of the SCP. Assessment is possible for all levels/modules. As a general principle, adult can have their prior learning recognised both for the basic education and vocational modules.

Are there any standard tests to assess literacy needs or learning progress in literacy programmes?

No.

How are adults with dyslexia identified and supported?

No data/information available.

5.5 Special Support for Second-Language Learners/ Migrants

Is there provision for adult migrants whose home language is not the official language of the host country?

According to national law, migrants have the right to free Romanian Language courses. Provision is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (through the County School Inspectorates) and the Immigration Office, which should organise such courses in cooperation with schools, NGOs, training centres, etc. Courses are provided only by request (made to the school inspectorates or immigration offices) and are organised if at least 10 requests are submitted. The course duration is 140 hours (4 hours per week) and takes place during a schooling year (usually starting in September). Migrants can be provided with Romanian language courses only once.

In reality, rollout of these courses is very limited, largely, according to the public authorities, due to a lack of money (to pay teachers for example). However, it is quite common to have second-language courses organised by private bodies that obtain funding via different programmes (the ESF, for example).

Who pays for this provision?

See 5.1.

Does this provision employ specialist teachers?

Teachers on second-language courses are not necessarily specialists; usually they are school teachers without any specific training on how to teach adults.

Is there specialist provision for those who have poor literacy skills in their L1?

No.

Is there a separate curriculum for this type of provision?

No.

5.6 Reading Environments to Stimulate Reading Motivation

Are there schemes to promote reading for pleasure among adults?

There are no public schemes to promote reading for pleasure for adults, only private initiatives, such as projects, campaigns etc. Almost no data are collected about these initiatives.

Is there systematic cooperation with civil society – e.g. libraries, bookstores, literature institutions, theatres, media, newspapers, publishers etc. in reading promotion for adults?

There is systematic cooperation with civil society in the private initiatives referred to in section 6.1.

Are there family literacy programmes with a focus on supporting adult literacy?

There are some private family literacy initiatives.

5.7 Digital Environments/ Use of Technology in Education

Is there a digital gap? How are adults supported in acquiring digital skills / digital literacy?

There are no national programmes or initiatives to support adults in acquiring digital skills, but this support does happen to some extent through private initiatives.

Within the SCP programme, ICT appears to play an important role. At the primary education level, for modules (levels) 1 and 2 in maths and language, half of the teaching is dedicated to alphabetisation through new technologies. This means an integrated approach to language, maths and ICT content.

Which population groups are excluded from access to ICTs?

Even though Romania has very good internet coverage and one of the best internet speeds, there are still a great number of people who are excluded from access to ICTs. There are no statistics or any other official data on this matter, but it is very likely that those in rural areas face this issue, especially due to poverty.

Are there any web-based programmes for adults to improve their literacy & numeracy skills?

No.

What classroom resources (E-books, notebooks, internet, mobile phones...) are used to support the development of adults' literacy?

There are to date no official data collected on this subject, but there is a general trend in Romania for more and more teachers to use a variety of digital resources in their teaching. However, use of these resources to support literacy development may be more limited; is quite common to use this type of resources for science subjects.

5.8 Teachers

What are the professional roles within adult education?

As no specific and distinct provision for adult literacy exists in Romania, it is not possible to report on adult literacy teachers as a profession. Those who teach Romanian language within the SCP are school teachers, most of whom have no training in adult education.

What is the status / reputation of teachers and other professionals who work in adult education?

Teachers on the SCP and other teachers working in adult education have different statuses and reputations. SCP teachers share the same status as school teachers.

What are their working conditions?

SCP teachers work as full time teachers.

How do salaries compare to the national average?

Since teachers are employed in the national educational system they have the same salaries. Teachers from the SCP lower secondary level are paid by hour, as this can only be done as a supplement to their regular work, and therefore salary, as schools teachers. (Teachers in Romania have only around 18 hours of contact time in the classroom each week, leaving them time in which to schedule additional paid work.) Teachers cannot be employed only to work on the SCP.

Teachers from the SCP primary level are also usually paid by hour. Even though legislation allows for the creation of new positions as primary education teachers within the SCP, this rarely happens as it requires a careful investigation of the viability of that position, with accountability to the board of directors of the school and the written consent of the teacher concerned. It also is dependent on a teacher expressing an interest in working fully for the SCP.

What are the statutory qualification requirements?

On the Second Chance Programme, for primary education level teachers are required to have a “Bachelor in Educational Sciences – Professor/Teacher for primary education”, and for the lower secondary level, different Bachelor qualifications are required for Romanian language and literature, Foreign languages (English, French etc), Mathematics, Sciences, History, Geography, Arts, Religion, Sports, ICT etc.

The lower secondary level of the SCP includes a vocational educational component, meaning that adults who graduate also receive a level 2 qualification diploma. The type of vocational qualification depends on what the individual school decides to offer as part of the study programme. For example, if a school offers a qualification on plumbing, it means that those teachers who teach both the theory and the practice need to be qualified as plumbing foremen, engineers, etc. The same restriction applies to all for qualifications that schools might offer (construction work, tourism and services, sewing etc); there are hundreds of qualifications offered in Romanian schools at secondary level and the teachers need to be qualified in each of the subject specific areas.

What are the entry requirements for ITE?

N/A

5.9 Teacher Education

What are the statutory qualification requirements for adult literacy teachers?

See 8.1 – there is no distinct category of adult literacy teachers. Romanian language teachers from the SCP hold a Bachelor’s degree in Romanian language and literature. Not all have additional training in teaching adults (Ulrich, 2009).

Are there specialist qualification routes for adult literacy teachers?

No

What are the entry requirements for Initial Teacher Education?

N/A

Who pays for training?

N/A

Is there a curriculum for initial teacher training?

N/A

Are there compulsory (or optional) language and literacy modules in all adult education ITE?

No

What is the length of the required training?

N/A

Is there a curriculum / quality standards?

No

Is there continuous professional development (in-service training) for teachers which focuses on literacy development?

No

What is the take-up among teachers?

N/A

Who delivers this training?

N/A

How is quality assured?

N/A

5.10 Policy-Making

Who is involved in policy-making for adult literacy education?

There are no specific policies for adult literacy education. As described in this report, different adult literacy elements can be found incorporated in some initiatives, such as the Second Chance Programme or the Community Centres for Lifelong Learning (not yet implemented) that are supposed to provide remedial educational programmes in subjects such as literacy. However, it should be noted that the SCP addresses only those adults who have not completed compulsory education (whether they dropped school or never enrolled), meaning

that there are no learning opportunities for adults who have experienced compulsory education but still lack literacy skills.

How is intersectoral and interministerial cooperation promoted and coordinated?

The main responsibility for policy making falls under the Ministry of Education. The law of education (no.1/2011) specifies cooperation with other ministries (labour, culture etc.) and puts a clear focus on the public-private partnership.

What financing mechanisms exist that facilitate intersectoral cooperation?

N/A

Which policies promote for the provision of broad and varied access to adult literacy education?

N/A

How are the motivation, interests and needs of adults taken into account in the policy-making processes?

No data available

Does government promote adult literacy in its lifelong learning policy?

There is no specific promotion of adult literacy in current LLL policies. Romania has not yet adopted a national strategy on Lifelong Learning. As specified above, different literacy elements can be found in initiatives such as the SCP.

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