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**THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF TEACHERS - PRESENT
AND PERSPECTIVES IN ROMANIA**

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Abstract

The continuous training is the spring of change, of the career progress, of a quality education at European standards. The concerns for the teaching career, determining the status, roles and skills associated with the teaching profession is a prerequisite for developing a coherent system of initial and continuous training of teachers, compatible with European and national requirements. In Romania, currently training system of teachers in secondary education is organized in accordance with European strategies. The basic features that it classifies as a competitive system are: accredited training programs, skills training according to the needs of training but also with the European demands, the current curricular construction, modular organization of training programs, allocation of transferable professional credit, international mobility equivalence, accreditation of training providers for a free, competitive market.

So in 2016, the National Register of accredited providers, brings together a number of 154 accredited providers, both in public education and private sector. The main suppliers of continuing training for teachers are accredited teacher training institutes, the number of 38, 17 universities, and associations, NGOs, companies, 40 private sector. The accredited training providers offer various attractive programs in line with the training needs of teachers. Naturally the system involves adjustments in order to eliminate weaknesses, obsolete. Are considered, from this point of view, the evolution in the teaching career by teaching degrees, career advancement based on seniority criterion, the absence of flexible career progression routes or reconversion programs for the teaching career.

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1. Introduction

Education and training in Romania are under the sign of change, in relation to European strategies for a better future, for an innovative Europe, balanced, sustainable, where the citizens participate in a



democratic and active way, people have the skills and knowledge to live and work healthy and productive. The concerns for the teaching career, the determination of the status, roles and skills associated with the teaching profession is a prerequisite for developing a coherent system of initial and continuous training of teachers, compatible with the requirements of the European community and national that are also submitted to this process of change.

The deciding factors that coordinates the continuing training in Romania, focuses its responsibilities so finalities of the continuing training process, the competence profile of teachers to be in concordance with the continuing training standards, but also with the quality ones. From the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, through the Department of Continuing Education up to accredited training providers, assuming responsibility is a build up type, in order to promote quality, at the system level. The specialized Commission for accreditation (CSA), external body of Department for Continuing Education by bringing together experts it ensures quality continuing training programs in the accreditation process. There are proposed for accreditation, on the basis of scientific quality, only programs that meet standards.

2. Paper Rationale

2.1. The Actual Legislative and Ethnic Background for the Continuous Training in Romania

In Romania, currently, the continuous training system of teachers in secondary education is organized in accordance with European strategies. The basic features that it classifies as a competitive system are: the accredited training programs, skills training according to the needs of training but also with the European demands, the current curricular construction, the modular organization of training programs, the allocation of transferable professional credits, international mobility equivalence, accreditation of training providers for a free, competitive market.

The legislative framework in the system of continuous teacher training in Romania

In Romania, the educational policies and teacher training have taken effect and significance from 2011, when the entire legal system was changed and resulted in a series of topical normative documents, as follows:

a. Primary legislation:

-National Education Law no. 1/2011 amended and supplemented;

b. Secondary legislation:

-Methodology for the continuous training of teaching staff, the management, guidance and control, approved by OMECTS no. 5561/2011;

-Methodology for the accreditation and periodic evaluation of providers of training programs and the programs they offer - OMECTS no. 5564/2011;

-Methodology for the system of accumulation, recognition and equivalence of transferable professional credits - OMECTS no. 5562/2011;

-OMECTS no. 3130/2013 on the amendment OM 5564/2011;

-MEN Note no. 640/2013 on accreditation fee.

-OMECTS no. 5558/2015 regarding the programmes approval for the definitivation in education;

-Order no. 5087/2016 approving the Methodology for organizing and conducting the national examination for definitivat in education

-MO no. 4476/2016 approving the professional standards of continuous training for the teaching profession, teaching in secondary education, by level of education - preschool, primary and secondary - and on professional development stages for professional development in the teaching career - second degree, First degree, training every five years;

-OM. no. 4477/2016 approving the professional standards of continuous training for auxiliary teaching positions in secondary education school- secretary, school laboratory, pedagogic school, accompanist, on stages of continuous training - beginner and older than 5 years / experienced.

The legislative documents mentioned above provides the statutory framework under which teachers teaching career in Romania evolves, develops and improves the professional potential, towards increasing the quality of education.

2.2. Organization Forms of Continuous Training of Teachers and Career Development

The Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research is the institution that sets the objectives and coordinates the continuing education of teachers at pre-university education system, in accordance with national policies and strategies. According to the current legal framework, the main ways of organizing continuous training of teaching staff, the management, guidance and control in secondary education include (OMECTS 5561/2011, art. 76(1)):

- a) methodical-scientific and pedagogical activities conducted at school level or on groups of units or departments, methodological commissions and pedagogical circles;
- b) methodical and scientific sessions of communication, symposia, exchange of experience and educational partnerships on specialty and psych pedagogical issues;
- c) the periodic traineeships for specialized scientific information and science education;
- d) courses organized by scientific societies and others professional organizations of the teaching staff;
- e) specialized training courses methodological and pedagogical;
- f) training to acquire new skills and quality/ features, according to specific training standards;
- g) training courses for the preparation of the exams for teaching degrees;
- h) training and development courses for management, guidance and control staff, according to specific programs;
- i) training scholarships and internships study and documentation, conducted in the country and abroad;
- j) postgraduate specialization;
- k) studies of master for the teachers who graduated with a bachelor's degree four years;
- l) graduate programs;
- m) doctoral studies;
- n) the acquisition of new teaching specializations, different specialization/ specializations current

As main forms of organization of the training and development activities, flexible, subordinated to the modalities presented above, teachers can choose (OMECTS 5561/2011, art. 77):

- a) frequency courses, modular organized during school holidays, non-working days or weekdays after agreement and trade unions;

b) distance education system using e-learning platforms and electronic media, combined with orientation and assisting learning through tutoring procedures;

c) no frequency courses organized by institutions of higher education, combined with periodic consultations, participants' choices;

d) other forms of organization that combines trainers assisted learning through courses, seminars, laboratories and practical activities common to learning through independent study and independent work of participants.

(2) Master's degree programs and doctoral graduate programs, the postgraduate programs of continuous training and professional development are conducted in the educational forms for which the higher education institution obtained accreditation.

The continuous training of teaching staff, the management, guidance and control and professional retraining, based on professional standards for the teaching profession, quality standards and professional skills, aims a continuous updating of the competence profile in line with systemic trends.

Continuous training has a dual role, being both a right and an obligation, both for teachers in secondary education and for teachers, leadership, guidance and control.

2.3. The Evolution in the Teaching Career by Teaching Degrees

The career development of teachers is still carried through the teaching degrees II and I, regarded certification exams of different levels of competence achieved in the teaching career. In accordance with Article 242 (1) and (2) from the National Education Law 1/2011, as amended and supplemented, teacher continuing education includes professional development and career progression. Career development is achieved through second didactic grade and first didactic grade, certification exams of different levels of competence.

Continuous training of the teacher's staff is based on the model of the approach through skills and on the cumulative development concept of the level of competence of teachers. The level of competence targeted through the programs and activities of continuous training/ refresher is evaluated according to: a) the teachers' capacity to mobilize, combine and use independently the capacities of knowledge, skills and general skills and the professional ones in line with the national curriculum and educational needs; b) the teachers' capacity to cope with change, complex situations and crisis situations.

2.4. Continuous Training Through Accredited Training Programs

According to the Law of Education no. 1/2011, as amended and supplemented, teachers and staff management, guidance and control from the secondary education is required to undergo periodic training programs so as to accumulate with every consecutive 5 years considered from the date of passing the exam for definitivation in education, a minimum of 90 transferable professional credits. Recognition and validation of transferable professional credits in Romanian educational system aim to ensure a set of assessment criteria that is objective for teaching career evolution and its professionalization. (Păduraru, Mircea, 2009, p. 175) According to art. 2, paragraph 2) of OMECTS 5564/2011 approving the *Methodology for accreditation of training providers and the programs they offer*, a training program is a provider of educational offer, which aims to train and develop professional skills of teachers and

teachers' assistants and staff management, guidance and control staff from the secondary education in accordance with professional standards for the teaching profession, quality standards and professional competence.

The continuous training of teachers in secondary education focuses on acquiring, developing and updating skills profile. So, according to *Annex no. 1 to the methodology for accreditation of training providers and the programs they provide*, the training programs offered by accredited training providers are classified into four categories, and develop to their turn, different categories of skills.

Table 1. Categories of continuous training programs (Annex 1 to OMECTS 5564/2011)

Categories of continuous training programs	Categories of skills
1. Professional Development Programs, conf. Art. 244 paragraph (5), points a), b) and c) of Law no. 1/2011 *	a) updating and development of skills in the specialization appropriate for the teaching position occupied, as well in psycho-pedagogic and methodical domain; b) the development of the skills for development in the teaching career; c) acquiring or developing leadership skills, guidance and control.
2. Professional development programs consistent with the policies and strategies of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, conf. Art. 244 par. (5) letters e) and f) of Law no. 1/2011	a) the acquisition of complementary skills which extends the range of activities that can be performed in the current work, such as: computer assisted teaching, foreign language teaching, educational counseling and career guidance, adult education and others; b) development and upgrading of transversal competences on the interaction and communication with the social environment and pedagogical environment, taking responsibility for the organization, management and strategic performance improvement of the professional groups, and self-control and reflective analysis of their own work and others.
3. Modular programs conducted through non-disciplinary internships	The providers programs targeting other skills than those referred to in categories 1 and 2 programs
4. Special programs	The Curriculum and the skills are established for those programs by providers, in accordance with the needs analysis.

The accredited training programs are designed by accredited providers, with an appropriate curricular offer of the three categories presented. Equally, the training system is flexible for both providers and beneficiaries, as the supplier can build diversified offer in terms of curriculum, based on an analysis of needs and beneficiaries may opt, as training needs. Training programs addresses to all categories of staff from the secondary education - teachers, staff management, guidance and control, auxiliary teaching staff.

It is important for every teacher to be informed of its responsibility to a continuous training, to accumulate 90 transferable professional credits following quality programs. Thus, if the beneficiaries are directors, inspectors, personnel management, guidance and control, they will opt for an accredited training program from the Category 1. Professional Development Programs, conf. Art. 244 paragraph (5), points a), b) and c) of Law 1/2011, respectively subcategory 1c) to acquire or develop leadership skills, guidance and control.

Teachers - teachers for primary, preschool teachers for different specializations can develop their skills in a different way or in specialty, following a program of category 1) professional development programs, conf. Art. 244 paragraph (5), points a), b) and c) of Law 1/2011 or subcategory a) updating and development of skills in the specialization appropriate for the teaching position occupied, as well in psycho-pedagogic and methodical domain; or complementary skills to be there programs in category; 2) Professional development programs consistent with the policies and strategies of the Ministry of

Education, Research, Youth and Sport, conf. Art. 244 (5) letters e) and f) of Law 1/2011 a). a). The acquisition of complementary skills which extends the range of activities that can be performed in the current work, such as: computer assisted teaching, foreign language teaching, educational counseling and career guidance, adult education and others and b) Development and upgrading of transversal competences on the interaction and communication with the social environment and pedagogical environment, taking responsibility for the organization, management and strategic performance improvement of the professional groups, and self-control and reflective analysis of their own work and others.

The third category - Modular programs conducted through non-disciplinary internships represents programs proposed by the continuing training providers that targets others types of skills than the ones from first and second categories, with an inovative curriculum proposed by each provider of continuous training.

Organised in four categories, the continuous training programs provide to the participants a diversified curricular offer, which is actual and suitable to their training needs. For the period 2014-2016 (the first trimester), the specialized commission for accreditation has accredited a number of 336 programs of continuing training. It must be noted the fact that for the first trimester of the year 2016, the number of continuing training programs (49) is significant in relation to the number of accredited programs in 2014 (167) and in 2015 (120).

If a teacher evolves in his didactic career by taking the exams for the didactic grades then they can follow the accredited programs of continuous training from the category 1-b *programs for the skills development for the evolution of the teaching career*. The benefits are multiplied in this case, the training activities are conducted by experts in the education sciences or in speciality, are allocated transferable professional credits, new skills are formed, and the premises for success are insured. In any stage of the teaching career, from the internship to the experience assured by the first didactic grade, any teacher from Romania can follow a flexible training system, diversified, adapted to their needs of training and professional development.

The accredited continuous training programs are organized, at the proposal of the Specialized Commission for Accreditation, on thematic domains in order to achieve a classification that operationalize the training programs categories provided by *The methodology for accreditation of training providers and the programs they provide*, approved by OMECTS 5564/2011.

In Romania, the training market it has liberalized based on the principle of competition, but also of equality of chances, so currently we record accredited providers both from public and private sector. The Continuing Education Department manages the National Register of training providers in Romania, a public document which brings together all accredited training providers. Thus, in 2016, the document brings together a number of 154 accredited providers, both public education and private sector. The main categories of accredited providers are teacher training institutes, the number of 38 universities, 17 associations, NGOs, companies, 40 private sectors. The accredited training providers offer various attractive programs in line with the training needs of teachers.

The continuous training system from Romania meet quality requirements, ensuring internal consistency on a national quality management system in terms of legal, institutional and operational objectified in a series of principles aimed at:

- "Strategies and procedures for quality assurance;
- Procedures for initiating, monitoring and periodic review of programs and activities;
- Objective and transparent procedures for assessing learning outcomes;
- Procedures for periodic teaching staff evaluation;
- The accessibility at adequate learning resources;
- Regularly updated database systematically related to internal quality assurance;
- Transparency of public interest information on study programs and, where appropriate, certificates, diplomas and qualifications;
- Functionality of education quality assurance structures, according to the law "(Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 regarding the approval of the Law of quality education, art. 10).

Actually, in the case of performing the didactic action, a motivating factor for change is the range of various education improvement activities for development of career of teacher (lectures, assistances, seminars, discussions). Recent researches have demonstrated that the individualization of style represents the most important step of the continuous formation process. This individualization has two phases, that is: establishing a personal style and assessment of strengths and drawbacks deriving from using this style. On grounds of this interpretative perspective we consider that every educator elaborates his educational style according to a personal approach in interpreting information on what good teaching means. (Tudor, 2013)

2.5. Perspectives of the Continuous Training in Romania

And in the future tense, for the period 2030 - 2035, education will be a national priority. The priorities of education and training are reflected in a number of strategic documents and operational measures to structure a competitive, quality, relevant and functional system for its beneficiaries.

- The strategy "Romania educated" national project of the Romanian President, consisted of three stages for the period 2016 - 2018, the Presidential Administration and the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, as well as public institutions under the coordination or subordinated to it, but also with educational institutions in private sector in Romania, aims "relocation of the society values, developing a culture of success based on performance, labor, talent, honesty and integrity" (<http://www.presidency.ro/ro / commitments / Romania-educated>) converted subsequently into country targets for 2030;

- The strategy "Development of Romania in the next 20 years" initiated by the Romanian Academy, proposes building an performant education system internationally recognized for 2035, based axiological on "trust, flexibility, diversity, excellence, fairness, transparency, wellbeing / welfare (well-being) "(Vlad IV, eds., 2015, p. 19). "The teaching profession will become one of the most popular and respected on the labor market and will be in the top three as attractive professions in the public sector" (Ibid, p. 25).

- Operational measures for 2016-2020, the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, through the Department of Continuing Education:

- Revision of the legal framework for training system of teachers in secondary education;

-Approving professional standards of training for staff through OM 4476/2016 and by the OM. 4477/2016 for the auxiliary teachers, aimed at training and developing professional skills on categories, units and levels of competence;

-The experience into the teaching profession, the development and completion of professional portfolio, according to art. 10 of finalizing the methodology of education, by OM. no. 5087/2016;

-Development of complementary and transversal skills for the teaching career;

-Diversification of the thematic areas of training programs for the integrated learning, creative, personal development, new education, equal opportunities etc.;

-Expanding retraining programs for the teaching career, in the training offer as many universities and departments;

-Approving flexible evolutionary routes for the teaching career.

3. Conclusions

The transformation of the educational system and training to performance standards and international demands, regaining the prestige of the teaching profession, investment in human resources in education are strategic goals of a sustainable and educated Romania for 2030-2035.

The mainspring is the continuing training system. Imperfect currently adjusted and improved for the future and implemented step by step, will ensure the success of Romanian education and society.

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