EURYDICE

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIMECOMPULSORY EDUCATION

ROMANIA

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 6 and 16. It covers 4 years of primary education *(şcoala primară)* and 6 years of lower secondary education (4 years of *gimnaziu* and either 2 years of comprehensive (academic oriented) education in *liceu* – the lower cycle, or 2 years of vocational (occupation oriented) education in *şcoala de arte şi meserii* (arts and trades school). At the age of 16, those who finish the lower cycle of *liceu* may continue their studies in the different pathways in these schools, at upper secondary level. Those in *şcoala de arte şi meserii* must complete one year of upper secondary vocational education in order to move on to *liceu* and continue at the same level.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The information, guidance and counselling services offered by institutions under the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth are governed mainly by the Education Act (adopted in 1995 and modified subsequently). Those under the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities are governed by the 1998 law establishing the National Employment Agency. In Romania, the Education Act defines the educational ideal as the free, comprehensive and harmonious development of a human being, with an autonomous and creative personality. Vocational guidance is governed by this ideal, and some of its main objectives are the following:

- provision of relevant information and facilitation of access to data related to various education and training opportunities, both at national and international level;
- promotion of transnational professional mobility and the European dimension of education and training;
- integration of European standards, norms and good practices within the Romanian context;
- synchronisation of various activities carried out by the institutions actively involved in vocational guidance, counselling and training.

A set of quantitative quality criteria (number of people who receive counselling or testing, amount of information material produced, etc.) and qualitative quality criteria (user satisfaction, use of ICT, etc.) to evaluate the results of information, guidance and counselling services was elaborated by the community of counsellors.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth is responsible for the establishment of educational psychology assistance centres at regional level as well as educational psychology assistance offices in schools. These services are aimed at all young people in

the education system and are coordinated by the County School Inspectorates. The Institute of Educational Science has an educational and vocational guidance department, whose mission is to provide a methodological master plan to the guidance and counselling network of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

The National Employment Agency manages the network of information and career counselling centres which offers its services to young people and adults seeking employment, the unemployed, etc.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

The national curriculum provides for educational and vocational guidance activities to be offered in primary and secondary education, through a distinct subject named Counselling and Guidance. This subject is included in the common core curriculum for all of compulsory education, covering mainly educational aspects in primary education, and both educational and vocational aspects in secondary education.

The framework objectives defined for Counselling and Guidance are the following:

- development of a positive attitude towards oneself as unique and valuable person;
- development of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to interpersonal aspects;
- development of skills necessary to use various types of information in the learning process;
- development of skills necessary in career exploration and planning;
- practice of management skills related to a quality lifestyle.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Schools are encouraged to establish partnerships with companies and other institutions at local level in order to contribute to the development of local communities and to familiarise pupils with the professional world.

After the first four years of general lower secondary education *(gimnaziu)*, pupils must continue with two more years of lower secondary education in another institution. Those attending either the technological branch of secondary school *(Liceu)* or the Arts and Trades School *(Şcoala de Arte şi Meserii)* participate – for a period of 3 weeks for the former and 10 weeks for the latter – in traineeships and work placements in public or private companies. These activities are based on the specific syllabi approved by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

Information and career counselling centres, under the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities provide information about the professional world and organise meetings with pupils in secondary education (ISCED 2 and ISCED 3), following the request of the school psychologist.

Visits organised by schools in companies and other institutions also contribute to the familiarisation of pupils with the professional world.

Graduates of compulsory education receive a personal portfolio for further education, which contains the skills acquired during compulsory schooling, including those obtained as a result of practical activities, carried out in school workshops or in work placements.

Guidance services at school

The teacher/tutor, in cooperation with parents and the school psychologist, is responsible for organising and implementing activities related to guidance for pupils on the basis of curriculum guidelines and according to the age and characteristics of pupils. During the hours devoted to guidance at lower secondary level, in particular for pupils in the last years of the level of education concerned, specific activities are organised (debates and chances to meet representatives of schools or local employers, visits to different institutions, skill testing, etc.).

In each primary or secondary school with more than 800 pupils, the school's educational psychology assistance unit may be organised according to needs and available resources. Schools with less than 800 pupils may call upon these units in other schools. The counsellors who work there provide pupils with counselling in the area of educational psychology, individually or in groups, based on tests of aptitudes, personal skills inventory, decision-making techniques, techniques for career planning and development, and analyses of occupational profiles. They also provide counselling to teachers and parents.

Guidance services outside school

The educational psychology assistance centres *(Centre Județene de Asistență Psihopedagogică)*, organised at regional level under county school inspectorates, have the same responsibilities in terms of guidance as assistance units in schools. In cooperation with schools and the local communities, they implement educational and vocational guidance services for pupils, organise the information and documentation activities on the subject, etc.

In the framework of the national employment agency, the information and vocational counselling centres as well as the career counselling centres provide young people with information and advice on careers and work placements. Some of the main activities carried out by these centres are the following: guidance in choosing a professional career, provision of information on training alternatives, assistance in career planning and the elaboration of an action plan and its implementation. Generally, these guidance services are provided during the meetings organised by the representatives of these centres and pupils, through individual or group counselling sessions.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

Initial teacher training includes educational psychology counselling as an optional subject, among other subjects such as education for gifted pupils, education of pupils with special needs, class management, ICT in education, etc.

The majority of staff who work in school units and educational psychology assistance centres are psychologists, teachers, sociologists and social workers, and have the same

status as teachers. When persons specialised in vocational guidance are not available in schools, teacher/tutors are responsible for the respective subject. In order to ensure the quality of this guidance, these teachers must undergo 40 hours per year of training, organised by Teachers' Resources Centres, in five-day sessions. The training is provided by specialist trainers and has the support of the Institute of Educational Sciences, in Bucharest. Generally, in-service teacher training is very decentralised and the proposed courses may include modules related to guidance, depending on the needs identified at county level.

Staff working in educational psychology centres have generally completed a guidance and counselling as well as public policies training programme with specialisation modules in vocational guidance, leading to a master's degree (2 years) at the University of Bucharest. Another university proposes training in preparation for a master's degree in counselling psychology.

The staff in national employment agency centres are generally sociologists, economists and engineers, as well as psychologists, teachers and social workers. Some staff members have completed a specific career guidance programme (master's level) offered in the framework of an internal project at the centres.

Practitioners have a certain degree of autonomy in measuring or evaluating their own activities in the framework of the evaluation of guidance services. The tools used are intended to guide them and provide them with feedback.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

At institutional level, the administration council, which, along with representatives of school staff, includes representatives of parents, local public authorities and employers, and makes important decisions related to school administration. Parent councils are also consulted by the school management concerning various important aspects, including educational and vocational guidance.

Consultative councils and local committees for social partnerships in VET development act at county level for the development of educational services, qualifications and specialisations provided.

At national level, the National Federation of Parents' Associations is consulted by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth in relation to the major decisions affecting education.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

A Ministry of Education, Research and Youth portal (www.portal.edu.ro) provides information on school networks at all levels of education, admissions procedures, etc., and provides specialised information bulletins.

Every year, the county school inspectorates publish a brochure on schools and their profiles, the programmes offered, etc.

Each school organises its own 'information point' in libraries or in counsellors' offices.

The information and vocational counselling centres of the National Employment Agency develop databases containing information on careers, training and schools, legislation, etc. They also provide different online tests (skills, personality, etc.).

Internet references

www.ise.ro

www.capp.ise.ro

www.go.ise.ro

www.euroguidance.ise.ro

Sources

1. Thematic overview (CEDEFOP)
2. Country report (CEDEFOP)
3. Guidance policies in the knowledge society. Trends, challenges and responses across Europe. A Cedefop synthesis report. Ronald G. Sultana. Cedefop Panorama series; 85. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004.
4. Eurybase; Eurydice.