

# I. PRESCHOOL, PRIMARY, LOWER SECONDARY AND UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Academic year (2015-2016)**

**(Statistics, data source: National Bureau of Statistics)**

- 1. Early-childhood and preschool education** is aimed to ensure social and school integration of children by developing creative skills and ensuring their physiological and intellectual potential growth.

The preschool education is provided for children of 3-6 (7) years old in preschool institutions of different types (state and private) with programs varying in terms of functioning forms, in day-care institutions and community centers, and complying with the educational standards.

We have today 1453 day-care institutions with 12.431 employees, (administrators - 1370, educators - 9946 and others - 1115) looking after 147 733 children enrolled in the preschool programs.

## **Development objectives:**

- Renovation and increase of the number of preschool institutions in rural area,
- Enhancement of quality in initial and in-service training of educators,
- Allocation of financial means to provide preschool institutions with the necessary teaching material and equipment.

## **2. Primary education, lower secondary and upper secondary education**

The primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education includes the following: *Primary education – 4 years, lower secondary education – 5 years and upper secondary education – 3 years*. The primary and secondary education is provided by 1323 pre-university institutions (16 of them are private) for 333, 4 thousand pupils (with 2 % less than in the previous year). The compulsory education is until the age of 18.

In the academic year 2015 – 2016, in the institutions of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education were working about 29,6 thousand persons (with 3,9% less than in the previous year). About 57,9% from the total number of teachers have a work experience of more than 20 years and only 12,3% are under 30.

## **Objectives of development of the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education:**

- Ensure the access to quality education for all school-aged children;

- Provide all pupils in primary education with free-of-charge textbooks and warm meals, and organize out-of-school activities;
- Develop and implement the concept of „Child-Friendly School” and reduction of the school drop-out rates;
- Implementation of the rural school renovation program and supply with didactic materials and necessary equipment;
- Optimization of school network by means of reorganization of schools into lyceums and gymnasiums;
- In-service training of teaching staff and ICT integration into teaching and learning evaluation processes;
- Approximation to the European standards of the framework study plan for the upper secondary education.

### **3. Residential education**

Nowadays, 17 institutions with 1033 children represent the child-care residential system.

The residential institutions take care of and educate orphans and children left without the parental care as well as children with physical, sensorial and mental disabilities.

### **4. Out-of-school education**

Out-of-school education includes activities complementary to the basic educational process organized within specialized schools and aims at developing among pupils the creative thinking in the field of sciences, arts, sports, tourism, etc., as well as leisure organization. The out-of-school education aims to fulfill the following **objectives**:

- Develop and use at its highest, the physical, intellectual, emotional and volitional potential of pupils;
- Develop the sense of dignity and self-respect as well as tolerance to human differences;
- Promotion of national and general human values.

### **5. Evaluation in the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education**

In the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education are organized national final tests. These tests are developed by the Evaluation and Examination Agency. All the candidates sit for exams in the same range of subjects, but varying in terms of the language of instruction and the graduation profile; all candidates are in equal organizational conditions, their works being equally considered when correcting and evaluating as well as communicating the results.

## II. TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The technical and vocational education and training system is organized in three levels:

- a) secondary technical and vocational training programs (ISCED level 3);
- b) post-secondary technical and vocational training programs (ISCED level 4);
- c) post-secondary non-tertiary technical and vocational training programs (ISCED level 5).

### 1. Secondary technical vocational education and training

The secondary vocational education is part of the education system in the Republic of Moldova and it aims to educate and train qualified specialists in all the fields of national economy.

The reformation process of the education system has as a main goal to enhance the viability and competitiveness of the secondary vocational education system responsive to the current and future labor market needs.

As to the educational policy and legal framework, the **priorities of the secondary vocational education** are:

- Modernization of the Vocational Education and Training system according to the provisions of the Copenhagen Process and the labor market needs;
- Update of the *Crafts Nomenclature* according to the economic needs of the country by adding new professions and systemizing the existing ones;
- Development of a new *Concept of VET system*;
- Revision of the content and development of the *National Framework of Qualifications and Occupational Standards*;
- Modernization of structure and optimization of institutional network;
- Attracting economic agents and other stakeholders in the process of planning, delivering and assessing educational services;
- Diversification and consolidation of financial resources.

#### ***The network of secondary technical vocational education institutions***

Currently, there are 42 secondary technical vocational education institutions in the country. In these institutions are working 1854 teachers (with 11,5 % less than in the previous year). About 16 098 pupils are studying at 75 specialties covering 10 occupational fields. Out of these 16 098 pupils, for 96, 4% the studies are free-of charge and for about 3, 6 % are contract-based. In the

academic year 2015 – 2016, 1854 persons were involved in the activity of secondary technical vocational education institutions: managerial staff – 166, teaching staff – 1688 persons.

The current secondary vocational education system is composed of four fundamental components: general education, theoretical vocational education, practical vocational education (school laboratories and internships) and education in a production environment.

Envisaging improvement of the secondary vocational education, the Ministry of Education with the assistance of external donors, implements several projects:

- CONSEPT project „Strengthening the Technical Vocational Education in Moldova, 2008-2014” of the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED);
- European Training Foundation (ETF) projects (2000-2014),
- ADA project (2004-2013) implemented by the Austrian Organization KulturKontakt;
- project of InWEnt/GIZ (2007-2013);
- memorandum signed between the Koblenz Chamber of Crafts and the Moldovan Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Project MEEETA „Training in the field of entrepreneurship and employment on the labor market” (2009-2013), of the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED);
- AquaProf Project “VET school as a training provider for the water and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova” implemented by the Institute for Professional Capacity Building and financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation (2010-2013);

## **2. Post-secondary vocational education, post –secondary non – tertiary vocational education and training**

According to the new structure of the educational system, in Republic of Moldova there are 42 colleges (four of them are private). In these institutions are studying around 30,428 thousand students: 16 127 are financed from the state budget and 14 301 are studying on a contract base. In the academic year 2015 – 2016, in the post – secondary vocational education were involved 2 373 people: teachers – 84, 4%, vocational – instructors – 2, 2%, methodologists – 1, 2% and auxiliary teaching staff – 333 persons. Colleges prepare labor force for the national economic and social sectors.

Depending on field and specialty, the education lasts 2-5 years. After the obligatory studies, the students precede with the free-choice lyceum courses and optionally pass the baccalaureate exam at the end of the third year of study.

As to the ISCED scale, the studies provided by colleges correspond to the IV level of education.

The colleges provide vocational education in 79 specialties covering 29 fields of national economy: pedagogy, social assistance, music, arts, medicine, pharmacy, economy, ICT, electronics and technology, energetics, transportation, electronics and communication, technologies, constructions, agriculture, ecology, services, etc.

The college graduates can either get employed or continue their studies at higher education institutions.

In 2015, were created five Centers of Excellence that offer training programs for the level 3, 4, 5 ISCED.

### **Current priorities:**

1. Modernization of education process basing on a larger use of ICTs in the process of teaching;
2. Introduction of the competences-based teaching process;
3. Implementation of the system of Transferable Credits and development of projects within the National Qualification Framework;
4. Inclusion of the entrepreneurial competences into the teaching process;
5. Approximation of the college education to the provisions of the Copenhagen Process and the labor market needs.

### **III. HIGHER EDUCATION**

Currently, there are 32 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the Republic of Moldova, 18 of them being state institutions (2 providing master's degree education only) and 12 - private ones. At the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016, the total number of students was 81 669 thousand persons, 66 938 - enrolled in institutions financed from the state budget and 14 731 - enrolled in private HEI.

The distribution of students by higher education cycles is the following: 62 809 – I cycle, licentiate degree; 14 272 – II cycle, master degree; 3854 – university degree in medicine and pharmacy and 734 students – integrated studies.

#### *The enrollment*

In the academic year 2015-2016, 17,7 thousand students were enrolled in the I cycle, including integrated university studies, medicine and pharmacy, and 6,9 thousand students - in the cycle II, master studies.

In January 2015 the number of foreign students studying at Moldovan universities counted around 3970 thousand people, coming from Israel (47,58 %), Ukraine (4,13 %), Russia (2,19 %), Turkey (4 %), Romania (31,58 %), Syria (1,4 %), India – 0,9 %, other countries – about 8 % etc.

#### *Teaching Staff and Institutional Equipment*

The teaching process in higher education institutions is provided by 5,3 thousand persons (core personnel), which is 1,2% less comparing to the year 2014/2015. The women's rate out of the total number of teaching staff constitutes 52,9 %. In HEI, the number of personnel having scientific degree is 2,7 thousand people (about 50,0%) of total number of personnel), including 2.3 thousand PhDs and about 0,4 thousands habilitated PhDs.

#### *Republic of Moldova and Bologna Process*

In May 2005 in Bergen, Norway, the Republic of Moldova joined the Bologna Process. Following this accession, the reformation and modernization process is aimed at improvement of the legal framework of the higher education, restructuring higher education according to the cycles, implementation of the master's degree programs according to a new formula, modernization and adjustment of the university curricula to the market economy needs, implementation of the academic evaluation system, accreditation of institutions, promotion of new assessment strategies in the process of organization and teaching, implementation of the European Transferable Credits System, etc. Envisaging approximation of the qualifications offered by the national higher education to the European standards, the *Nomenclature of fields and specialties* for higher education was approved and modified according to the ISCED and EuroSTAT. In order to ensure a due level of quality, transferability, transparency and qualifications' recognition at national and international level, the *National Qualification Framework* for higher education was approved in December 2010 and provides for an efficient social partnership.

#### *The system of transferable credits*

All the professions taught at the higher education institutions, both the cycle I and the cycle II are based on the European Transferable Credits System.

Transferable credits measure the work load provided for a course/academic discipline within a conventional time unit.

#### *Quality Assurance in Higher Education*

The management of quality in higher education shall be ensured:

- a) at national level – by the Ministry of Education and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Professional Education

- b) at institutional level – by internal structures for quality assurance. The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Professional Education is an administrative authority of national interest, with legal personality, autonomous to the Government, independent in its decisions and organization, and funded from the state budget and own revenues. The Agency develops, according to the European standards, its own methodology of assessment and accreditation of the institutions providing professional training programs.

### *Diploma*

At the end of each cycle or study level, the following documents are issued:

- Cycle I – Licentiate’s degree diploma;
- Cycle II – Master’s degree diploma;
- Cycle III- doctoral’s degree diploma.

Since 2005, all the students graduating from the higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova are awarded with a free-of-charge and mandatory *Diploma Supplement*, in Romanian and English, which model and content was highly appreciated by the experts of CoE (Council of Europe).

### *Social Dimension*

Special quota is allocated for students from vulnerable families to pursue their studies covered from the budget, as well as free-of-charge dormitories, allowances and social scholarships.

Higher education students (around 57 % of them) benefit from different categories of *scholarships* allocated by the state, including excellence scholarships such as: the Republican Scholarship (1320 Lei per month) – 12 students, the President’s Scholarship (1200 Lei per month) – 10 students, the Governmental Scholarship (1100 Lei per month) – 30 students.

## **IV. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**

The priorities of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova at international level are set up in the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and EU, signed in 2014.

In this context, and in order to facilitate the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Education promotes, within its competence field, a constructive dialog with the European Commission and EU member states, as well as with international and regional organizations such as: Council of Europe, UN specialized organizations, AUF, BSEC, Central European Initiative and Regional Cooperation Council.

Cooperation with the European Union is being promoted by the implementation of projects and programs within the framework of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership, the Platform 4 “Contacts between people” of Eastern Partnership and the Priority Area 9 of European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) “Investing in People and Skills”.

Since 2014, the Moldovan higher education institutions benefit from the support of the European Commission within the **Erasmus+ Program**. Until now, in the framework of Erasmus+ Programme, Moldovan HEIs benefited from 7 Jean Monnet projects, 3 Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education projects, more than 25 Credit Mobility projects which foresee about 250 ME-UE mobilities for students and university staff for the academic year 2015-2016. Also, during the period 1994-2013 Moldovan HEIs benefited and have implemented more than 80 TEMPUS projects, which have had a significant role in modernization, reforming and restructuring the entire higher education system.

ETwinning is an other EU Programme, which is focused on general education and is implementing in Moldova and in other EaP countries. Currently on the eTwinning national portal are registered: 172 teachers, 88 schools, 226 projects.

As well, Moldova is actively participating in regional programs as ACES, CEEPUS, and Pestalozzi, all these programmes are promoting the academic mobility, teachers training, intercultural dialog between young people and professional development.

The priorities of the Ministry of Education in the field of higher education are focused on the implementation of Bologna Process, to which we are part since 2005. In this aspect, our current concerns are related to Quality Assurance, the implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications and the promotion of the social dimension in higher education. Since 2014, Moldova became Governmental member of European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and during January-June 2016, Moldova will co-chair with Netherlands the presidency of Bologna Follow-up Group.

The Ministry of Education manages the implementation of about 70 international agreements in



the field of education. These agreements meant to promote academic mobility, commonly implement education and research projects, update and reform the national education system according to the European standards, assure recognition of study documents, etc.

Annually, about 6.000 citizens of the Republic of Moldova are able to pursue their studies abroad based on collaboration agreements.

In the last years, the Ministry of Education has put forth considerable efforts to diversify international collaboration by signing new agreements with the EU member states, such as: Poland, Belgium, Greece, Latvia, Romania, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria etc.