

1) What are the main challenges for your country in terms of employability? (eg Is graduate unemployment a problem? Are there restrictions on access to certain jobs? Is there a careers and guidance service?) What would help you most as an output from this working group?

In 2008 Romania will have the first generation of Bachelor graduates according to the Bologna cycles. Until now the higher education graduates followed the former long or short university study programs. In consequence, the employability of this new type of Bachelors was not tested until now. At the beginning of the reforms, the employers did not consider sufficient a length of 3 years for university study programs, but this could be considered a reaction to the reform. The employability is not an issue of length of a program; it is about the content of the program and about its relevance on the labor market. Also a major concern of the Romanian employers is the practical aspect of a higher education graduate training which is often considered insufficient.

The working group could involve employers' representatives and an output of its work could be some examples (positive as well as negative) from the countries having already the experience of Bachelor graduates on the labor market. Also it will be interesting to have examples from all countries regarding the measures aimed to increase the graduates' employability.

2) Is there a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers? If so, at what level does this take place – national, regional, institutional etc? What sort of issues does it cover?

In Romania there is a **National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and University Partnership with Economic and Social Environment**.

Since 2001, the founding year of this agency, its main role was in the area of university partnership with economic and social environment. This role was extended in 2005, when the agency became also the national authority for national qualifications framework in higher education.

This agency is subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and has 4 regional centres in Cluj Napoca, Galați, Timișoara and Iași.

If the dialogue at national level is more formal, the partnerships between universities and socio-economic environment are put into practice at regional or institutional level. It is the university which is responsible for the way in which it develops its entrepreneurial profile by providing good study programs which respond to the needs of the labor market or by participating in joint research programs.

Through regional consortia organized at regional level and composed by social partners, preuniversity schools and higher education institutions, were elaborated 8 Regional Action Plans in view of early anticipation of vocational training needs and enhancing the role of higher education in regional development.

3) Can you provide two examples of good practice in your country in relation to any of the themes to be covered by the report on employability?

Romania has tried to find innovative solutions in order to facilitate the transition from university studies to employment.

Concerning good practice examples, we have to mention the following:

- **The scholarships awarded by private economic agents/companies** to students, according to the interest these companies have in the respective field of study (medicine, economics, law etc.);
- **The inclusion of a mandatory traineeship in each undergraduate study program** as a way to ease the transition of students to the status of employee by getting them used to a working environment and to the demands of the labor market;
- **Fiscal incentives for the employer of a higher education young graduate**, guaranteed by law: exemption from the contribution to unemployment assurance for the respective employees for 12 months and the receipt of 1.5 minimum salaries as decided at national level each month for a period of 1 year.