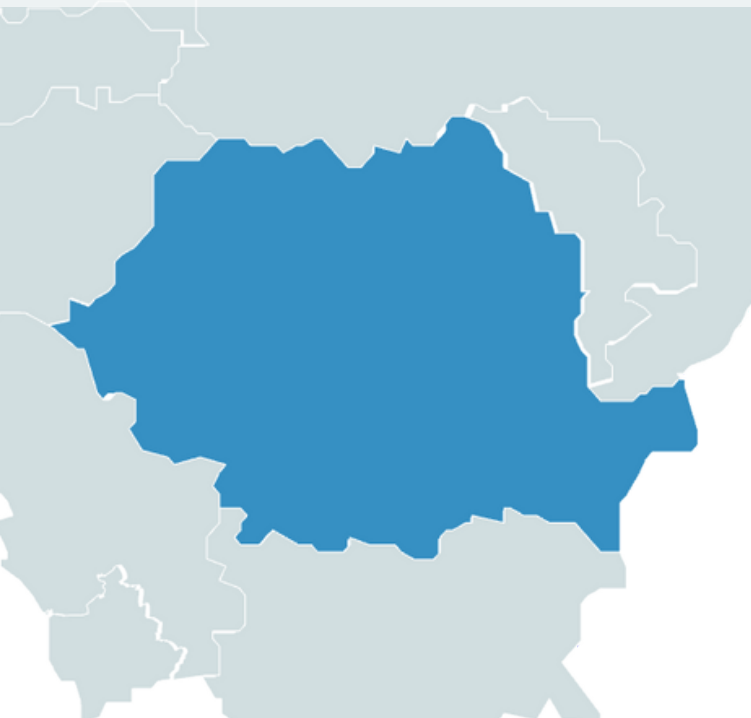


# Romania



**24.9%** Population aged 25-34 with a tertiary degree <sup>a</sup>

**1.2%** Percentage of immigrant stock (% population) <sup>b</sup>

**23.4%** Population below the poverty line <sup>c</sup>

**18%** Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) <sup>d</sup>

**Average TIMSS/PIRLS scores (4th grade) <sup>e</sup>**  
Center point: 500

<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>

**Average PISA scores (10th grade) <sup>f</sup>**  
OECD average

<b>428</b> 487	<b>430</b> 489	<b>426</b> 489
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>

**3.3%** public spending in education as a % of GDP <sup>g</sup>

**29.4** billions allocated in NPRR <sup>h</sup>

19		<b>Upper secondary school</b>
18		
17	<b>Compulsory schooling</b>	General (44 %) Vocational (56 %)
16		
15		<b>Lower secondary school (Common track)</b>
14		
13		
12	<b>Primary school (Common track)</b>	
11		
10		
9		<b>Pre-school</b>
8		
7		
6		
5		
4		
3		

## General features

### **Educational system**

Compulsory education lasts 12 years and comprises the last year of kindergarten, primary education, lower secondary education and the first 2 years of the upper secondary education<sup>119</sup>. Education is mainly public, with only 1% of pupils enrolled in private schools.<sup>120</sup> In 2020 the government prolonged compulsory education from 12 to 14 years, adding as compulsory the last year of kindergarten, as well as the 11th and 12th grade<sup>121</sup>. The current minister of education plans on further prolonging compulsory school to 16 years<sup>122</sup>. The official language of instruction is Romanian, except for the case of ethnic minorities, where the mother tongue is the language of instruction. Students follow the same core curriculum in primary and lower secondary school, and are asked to choose a specific track when they are 15 years old. Secondary schools offer three main tracks (i) general education, (ii) technical/technological education and (iii) vocational education. Immigrant stock accounts for only 1.2% of the overall population, and immigrants' main countries of birth are Moldova (40%), Italy (11%) and Spain (9%), while Moldova, Viet Nam and Turkey were the top three nationalities of newcomers in 2018.<sup>123</sup> The rate of early school leavers is higher when compared to the EU average (15.3% versus 10.2% in 2019), while the percentage of people with tertiary educational attainment is much lower than the EU average (25.8% compared to 40.5%). The percentage of youth not in employment nor in education and training is significantly higher than the EU average (18% versus roughly 13%).

### **Governance and funding**

The Ministry of Education is in charge of the strategy and implementation of educational policies. Public education is free for everybody. Overall, educational spending remains still among the lowest in EU, but in 2019, government expenditure in education increased significantly (almost 21% in real terms). This increase was driven by a large pay raise for teachers.

## Performance

The percentage of people who reached basic skills is low (only 59% and 53% of students attained at least Level 2 proficiency in reading and maths respectively, compared to the OECD average of 77% and 76%<sup>124</sup>) as well as the percentage of top performers (in reading, only 1% of students are top performers, compared to an average of 9% in other OECD countries, while in maths, there are 3% of top performers, compared to an OECD average of 11%). Also in science, students under performed when compared to the OECD average<sup>125</sup>.

Since the first participation to PISA, Romania displayed an upward trend, especially in reading. However, this trend reversed, returning closer to 2016 levels. Specifically, the mean performance in reading and science, after having increased from the first year of participation (2006), slightly decreased since 2012, although not significantly. The performance in math in the last edition (2018) was significantly lower than the one in the edition before (2015).

The gender gap in reading is in favor of girls (34 points more), in line with the other participant countries, but similar to the OECD average (30 points). Girls and boys performed similarly in maths and in science as well.

Socio-economic status explained a higher portion of the variation in performance when compared to the OECD average: respectively 19% of the variation in maths and 16% of the variation in science compared to the OECD average of 13% and 14%. Socio-economically advantaged students outperformed disadvantaged ones by 109 score points, a larger number than the OECD average of 89<sup>126</sup>, but 9% (a number closer to the OECD average of 11 %) of them was able to score in the top quartile for reading. Among high-achieving students, a high percentage (25%) of disadvantaged ones expected not to complete tertiary education, compared to roughly 3% of advantaged students.

Absenteeism was higher than OECD average: 50% of students missed a day of school and 58% arrived late in the preceding two weeks of the PISA test. Socio-economic differences are reflected by the school climate: in the PISA assessment 34% of students said they were bullied in the last month,

<sup>119</sup><https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/romania/overview>

<sup>120</sup>UNESCO Data, 2019

<sup>121</sup><https://bittv.info/14-ani-de-scoala-obligatoriu-incepand-din-toamna-reguli-pentru-inscrierea-la-clasa-pregatitoare/>

<sup>122</sup><https://www.edupedu.ro/ministrul-educatiei-grupa-mare-la-gradinita-devine-obligatorie-altminteri-nu-mai-poti-fi-inscris-la-pregatitoare/>

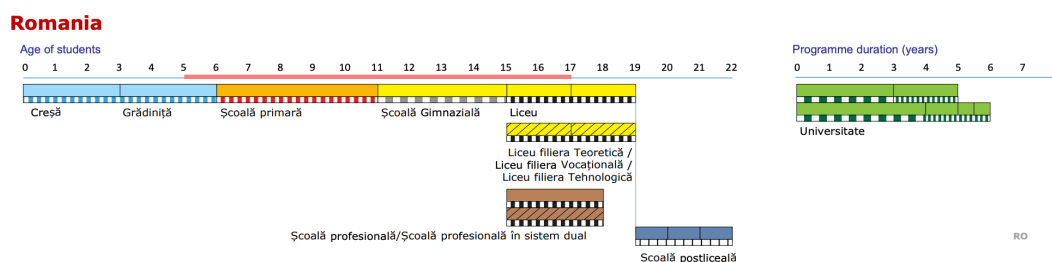
<sup>123</sup><https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/f8c87bfe-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/f8c87bfe-en>

<sup>124</sup>PISA 2018, Romania Country Note

<sup>125</sup>56% of students in Romania attained Level 2 or higher in science (OECD average: 78%) Source: PISA 2018, Romania Country Note

<sup>126</sup>PISA 2018, Romania Country Note

Figure 1.9: Educational system in Romania



Source: The Structure of the European Education Systems 2021/22, Eurydice. European Commission

a much higher percentage than the EU average of 22.1%. Much more disadvantaged students reported being a victim of bullying (39%) than advantaged ones (26.7%). Bullying seemed to have had severe repercussions on performance, since victims of bullying had a lower score on average of 40 points, equivalent to more or less a year of schooling.

In terms of aspirations, more girls than boys expected to work in the healthcare sector, and far less in the ICT sector (2% versus 14%). Among high-achieving students in mathematics and science, 11% of girls expected to work in an engineering or science job, compared to 13% of their male counterpart. 33% of girls wanted to work in the health-related sector (compared to less than 10% of boys) and only 2% of girls expected to work in an ICT related job (compared to 14% of boys).

## Key policy challenges

**Despite the significant progress in the past few years, Romania still has a low share of students that manage to achieve basic competencies at the end of the schooling period,** and the share of people with secondary education attainment is still low, given the large share of students who drop out. The levels of functional literacy in Romania are among the lowest in EU and the share of 15-years old not enrolled in education is high (20 %).

**The average level of digital literacy in Romania is still quite low:** in 2020, only 57% of people aged 16-19 had at least basic digital skills. Some efforts were made to improve both skills and infrastructure. For instance, in 2015, the government set up a national strategy with the aim of promoting and including ICT in education (however, this

was not accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation plan, and therefore, the evidence on its effectiveness is very scarce) and in 2017 it made ICT a compulsory subject at school.<sup>127</sup> The capacity to use digital technology is especially poor in rural areas, given the low number of qualified teachers and worse infrastructure. Given the limited accumulation of digital skills, the COVID-19 posed a serious challenge for Romanian students: a large proportion could not be engaged in remote learning, and disadvantaged students were the ones who suffered more from the school closure. According to a teacher survey conducted by the National Centre for Policy and Evaluation in Education in 2020, only 69% of students in urban areas and 58% in rural areas participated to the classes<sup>128</sup>.

**During the next academic year, Romania will face increasing challenges in order to offer quality of education to refugee children in their schools.** According to the United Nations, Romania, together with Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, Moldavia and Slovakia, is hosting the highest number of Ukrainian refugees since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

## Recently enacted policies and investments

**To promote equity and inclusion in education, the President started in 2016 "Educated Romania":** a multi-year and multi-phase project<sup>129</sup> with four public policy briefs collecting examples of best practices on (i) teaching careers, (ii) educational management, (iii) fairness, (iv) early education.<sup>130</sup>

**During the period of distance learning, Romania launched a program to provide disadvantaged students with digital devices, so that**

<sup>127</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/countries/romania.html>

<sup>128</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018\\_CN\\_ROU.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_ROU.pdf)

<sup>129</sup> with the funding of the European Union Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSS) and in cooperation with the OECD <https://www.presidency.ro/en/commitments/educated-romania>

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.romaniaeducata.eu/>

<sup>131</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/coronavirus-response/react-eu/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/coronavirus-response/react-eu/)

**they could follow online classes.** The program turned out to be very challenging, and therefore, also received the support of REACT-EU<sup>131</sup>.

**Around 10% of the 29.4 billions in the Recovery and Resilience Plan in Romania is dedicated to education.** The Plan will support the priority areas lined out in the Educated Romania Report and will cover all levels of education. The plan

touches multiple areas: from governance in education to teacher training. Some of the objectives are (i) to increase digitalization and digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas, (ii) to increase the quality of vocational education and training, (iii) to improve early childhood education and reduce early school leaving<sup>132</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup><https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/en/romania.html>