

INTEGRATION OF YOUNG NEETS ON THE LABOR MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The worst effect that continuous bullying can cause is dropping out of school. And these children are turning into young NEETs: young people outside the education, employment or training systems. Based on suffering, self-distrust reaches adults who find it difficult to find a job and integrate socially without frustration. Both in the European Union and individually in the countries of the European Union, the largest subcategory in the NEETs group is unfortunately made up of young unemployed.; also, in Romania, among the young people integrated on the labor market (NEETs), there are young people, children, adolescents, who dropped out of school too early, young people who are part of the category of people with disabilities, respectively young people who come from vulnerable backgrounds; of the young NEETs, some are those who do not choose to be in this category (those mentioned above, chronic diseases, poverty, etc.), but in the category of NEETs there are also young people who choose not to work, do not want to integrate on the labor market; In conclusion, it can be said that young NEETs are an inhomogeneous category, which makes it difficult to intervene at the stratum of public policies in the absence of specific profiles, related to each sectary. For this grouping, a series of actions must be considered, both at the level of Romania and at the level of the European Union. Thus, there is a comparative advantage in order to find solutions in terms of integrating young people who fail to pursue or complete a form of education, those who do not work or those who are not in personal and professional development programs. The paper is made up of three chapters and presents both approaches to the literature and the analysis of the evolution of NEETs in the European Union and in Romania. The first chapter focuses on theoretical concepts about what "NEETs" mean, as well as the literature. The second chapter captures the analysis of the situation of young NEETS in the European Union, and the third part focuses on young NEETs in Romania, measures implemented so far, but also a series of proposals. At the same time, the paper will end with the area of proposals for the strategy to reduce the NEETs rate in Romania and conclusions.

KEYWORDS: *infrastructure, GDP, poverty, school dropout, unemployment, young NEETs.*

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1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEETS CONCEPT

In Romania, the concern for young people outside the education, employment or training systems (NEETs) is relatively recent and has come in response to European policies in support of this category, strongly affected by the economic crisis of recent years. Although since 2010 there has been a discussion at EU level about the serious problem of high youth unemployment, about youth guarantees, Romania has acted only at the last moment, under EU pressure, the issue of NEETs appearing late as concern in public debates at national layer.

NEET youth - this concept was popularized to define young people aged 15-24 (the age group according to the European standard, targeted by EU policies), who are not integrated into any form

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of employment, education or coaching (definition implemented by Eurostat). The need for an indicator to include young people who were not in any form of employment, education or training first appeared in the UK in the late 1980s in response to the adoption of new ways of estimating the prevalence of youth susceptibility in the labor market. The term NEET was formally introduced in public policy in the UK in 1999 with the government's "Bridging the gap" report. The term NEETs spread rapidly outside the United Kingdom, so that in the early 2000s, equivalent definitions were adopted in most EU Member States. After the 2000s, organizations such as the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and the European Commission implemented unitary definitions of NEETs, in order to make possible comparisons between zones.

In this perspective, NEET has been introduced as a key statistical indicator at European level, along with other indicators describing the social situation and in particular the employment situation of young people. In order to have an additional indicator for monitoring the situation of young people in the Europe 2020 Strategy and to be able to make comparisons between states, the Employment Committee (EMCO) has agreed on a definition and methodology for a standardized indicator for measuring the NEET population in EU Member States. The main NEET indicator (produced by Eurostat) was used in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and covers the 15-24 age group, but is also available for the 15-29, 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 age groups; for further analysis, the indicator is available and disaggregated by: sex, age groups, occupational status and level of education.

Surrounded by young NEETs, both at European and national level, the young unemployed are the best characterized sectary; also, in Romania, in the category of young NEET have been find young people who dropped out or left school early, young people with disabilities, chronic diseases or young people who left care institutions, generally people belonging to vulnerable groups, whose assimilation into the labor market it is often done with difficulty, in the absence of specific measures; a special category is expressed by young people who choose not to be employed / employed, in their case the NEET status being assumed voluntarily; In closure, that young NEETs represent an inhomogeneous category, which makes it difficult to intervene at the level of public policies in the absence of specific profiles, related to each subcategory (Mitulescu et al., 2016).

2. YOUNG NEETS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

2.1 The evolution of young NEETs from 2013 to the present; measures proposed and implemented at EU level

A recent article in FP Romania magazine talks about "young people from nowhere" and emphasizes why it should be a topic of interest to the general public. (Ștefan & Volintiru, 2015). From Eurostat and Eurofound sources in 2014-2015 resulted over 14 million young people who were included in the NEETs category. These young people are not only a wasted source of labor, but they also generate additional costs, namely 1.2% of EU GDP in 2014, in the form of social assistance. At the same time, this category of the population does not contribute taxes to the state budget, not being employed, and its prospects are low, without education or training. (Eurofound, 2012)

"The exclusion of young people from economic activities generates vicious spirals of degradation" say Clara Volintiru and George Ștefan in the article Young people and troublemakers. Why the expression unsettling? That expression is ideal in the context in which this vulnerable group is not neutral at the level of a society or economy, but rather a priority that must be taken into account in creating any strategy for governing and developing a country. And not only are unproductive "investments" made with them, but how much they can generate other negative effects around them, such as adopting antisocial behaviors, bad habits, and the damage they can cause in the community in which they live. Of course, here is talking about examples and exceptions, but it is good not to forget to mention some of those who are employed as young NEETs and who still want to be integrated into the labor market, but do not know how or where / to whom to call. Is it a deficit in communication between citizens and state institutions or do young people simply not know where

to find out? It was decided to answer these questions during the paper, perhaps by approaching the source of the problem. A resolved effect will never be the long-term solution, versus identifying the cause and remedying it.

In addition, youth unemployment has detrimental long-term consequences for the economy, society and the people concerned, as it involves an increased risk of future unemployment (as a result of deteriorating skills and lack of motivation to appear after a period of time). in long-term unemployment and inactivity) and a risk of poverty. In 2014, at the level of the European Union, a total number of 7.5 million young people fell into the category of NEETs (Curtea de Conturi Europeana, 2015), a figure comparable to the population of Bulgaria (7.2 million in 2015).

At EU level, a phenomenon has been identified, not understood by some critics, but agreed by most Member States that it must be a priority in shaping directives; it's about the "Peter Pan" (Ștefan & Volintiru, 2015) phenomenon. Similar to the character who did not want to grow up and did so in such a way as to remain locked in his own childhood universe, it is believed that these young people, between 15 and 24 years old, becoming adults, refuse to grow up, to assume responsibilities. Worse is the refusal to follow a straight and continuous line; here can be mentioned school dropout, an effect that continues to perpetuate.

In terms of a number of negative effects, extremist groups and organizations that are taking shape in the European space and beyond can also be discussed. This problem is starting to turn from a barrier of state economic development to a problem of national and international security. The concerns of young people become different from creating a better future and ensuring their own security, as they become interests that affect the stability and wealth of other individuals and territories.

The European Commission identifies a number of elements of interest in addressing the situation of young people not integrated into a form of education, the labor market or their professional development, in the report "Together for Europe's youth A call to action to combat youth unemployment", which aims at connection from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

During the recent financial crisis, through the collaboration of Member States, in addition to the austerity actions discussed to remedy the situation at the time, it was inherent to create a long-term strategy to encourage the development of key skills for young people in particular, but also to avoid / solving the entry into the spiral associated with unemployment.

From the mentioned report, in the period 2014-2020, a series of actions were concluded, as follows:

- a) application of the youth guarantee;
- b) investing in young people over the European Social Fund;
- c) accelerating the implementation of the "Jobs for Youth" initiative;
- d) supporting labor mobility within the EU through EURES;
- e) taking measures to facilitate the transition from school to working life by stimulating the supply of high-quality apprenticeships and traineeships and by finding solutions to skills shortages;
- f) accelerating reforms in order to achieve a true European long-term labor market;
- g) taking measures to support job creation in the immediate future, especially by SMEs, as well as encouraging the employment of young people.

Thus, related to sub-item c) accelerating the implementation of the "Jobs for young people" initiative, it also refers to the topic addressed in this paper.

According to the directives offered by the European Commission, through the article "Together for Europe's youth", in order to solve unemployment, a phenomenon included under the NEET umbrella, approximately 6 billion euros from the European budget are dedicated to the implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" program.

Returning to the directives outlined by the European Commission, the financial support offered to the Member States is addressed to the regions with an unemployment rate of over 25%, in order not to waste the related amounts. (Mascherini, Salvatore, Meierkord & Jungblut, 2012)

2.2 Measures to integrate NEETs into the labor market

In the report presented by the European Commission it is mentioned eloquent examples from other countries, examples of results obtained through action teams, models that could be adopted by other states with the same problem.

Since 2013, 9,500 young people have been identified as part of a vulnerable group such as NEETs and have taken part in actions implemented in Spain, with funding of over 286 million euros, actions such as vocational reorientation workshops or workshop-type schools. For about 142,000 young people, grants have been awarded to companies that have hired them since then, but the new strategy also aimed to encourage entrepreneurship, in addition to another 100 measures that sought to combat unemployment.

In Portugal, a notable initiative in 2013 is "Impulso jovem", which was supposed to benefit 4,500 SMEs by the end of 2015 and 90,000 young people, respectively. Of the allocated funds, some were redirected to finance internships in key sectors, but also to reimburse contributions for the employment of individuals aged 18 to 30, thus being a guiding model in the European strategy found by the end of 2020. (European Commission, 2013)

2.3 Performance indicators of EU states. The relationship between GDP / capita and the rate of young NEETs

In the graphs below are extracted representative countries from the economic submodels of the European Union as follows; from the Nordic submodel, which proved to be efficient, which generated both social equity and macroeconomic efficiency (Burghelea, Ene, & Uzlău, 2013). I chose Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands; The United Kingdom (despite current events regarding the exit from the euro area) is a representative state for the Anglo-Saxon submodel, as a reflection of the well-being of the individual, but also as a model of efficiency of the private system; also France, Germany, Austria, countries belonging to the continental model, focused on low social benefits and declining employment, with high unemployment rates, but less flexibility for workers; if it is believed of a rigid labor market. Also, with a reduced intervention of the state is discussed the southern model, where countries were taken as landmarks such as: Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece; Finally, a submodel called "Catching-up" (Burghelea, Ene, & Uzlău, 2013), a submodel in which there are still significant differences in human welfare, including Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, but not least Romania, a country taken individually as a case study in the next part.

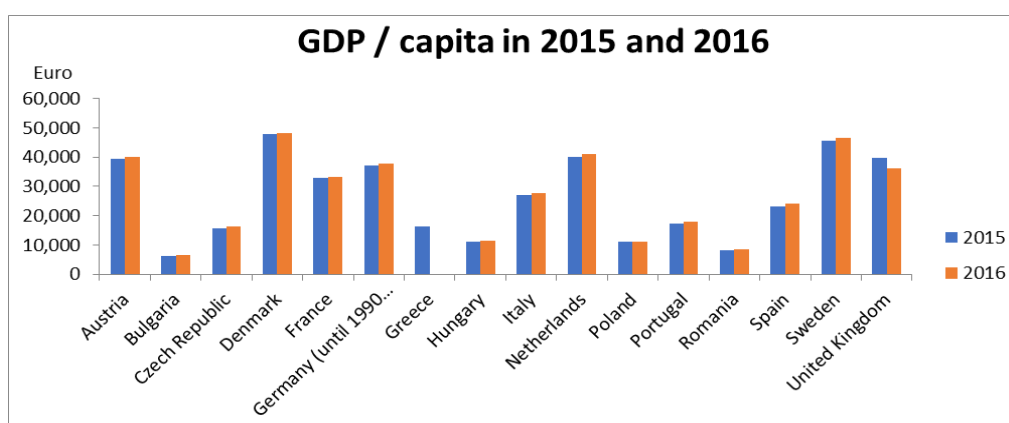


Figure 1. GDP / inhabitant in 2015 and 2016

Source: Eurostat, author calculations

It is note that, among the countries with the lowest GDP / capita in 2016, Bulgaria (6,600 euros / inhabitant) is in first place, followed by Romania (8,600 euros / inhabitant) and Hungary (11,500 euros / inhabitant).

On the other hand, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark - taken as benchmarks of the Nordic submodel, which in recent years has proved its efficiency in terms of welfare, low unemployment. Also, the countries with the highest index in 2016, respectively 40,900 euros / inhabitant in the Netherlands, 46,600 euros / inhabitant in Sweden, and in Denmark 48,300 euros / inhabitant. It is noted that the GDP / place gap is large between the Nordic countries and those still in development or, in fact, countries trying to keep up with the other EU members.

The latest official statistics on the ratio of young NEETs at European level, according to Eures, can be found with data provided from 2015. Looking identical to the previous model, the two extremes in which countries are ranked, with a high or low rate, probably not coincidentally, and in the case of the rate of young NEETs, the highest is in Bulgaria, the country with the lowest GDP level among the states taken as an example in the EU area. This is followed by Italy, Romania ranking third with the highest level of young NEETs, young people who are not even employed in the labor market, in a form of education or training.

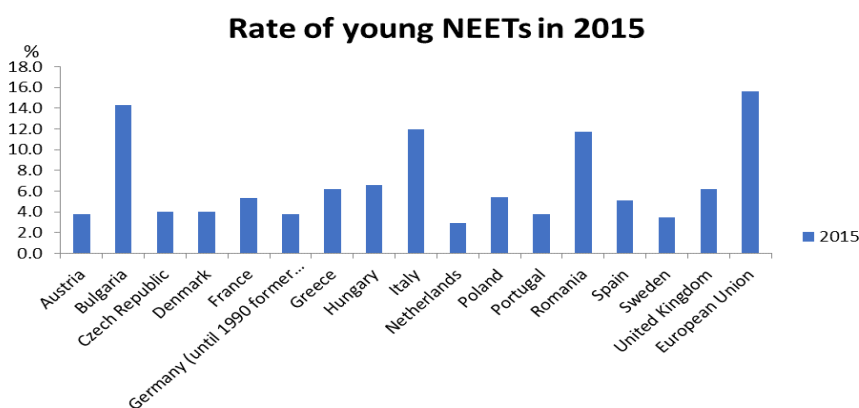


Figure 2. Rate of young NEETs in 2015

Source: Eurostat, author calculations

In the top of the countries with the low NEETs index in 2015 is the Netherlands, a country with a very high GDP level, followed by Austria, Portugal and Germany.

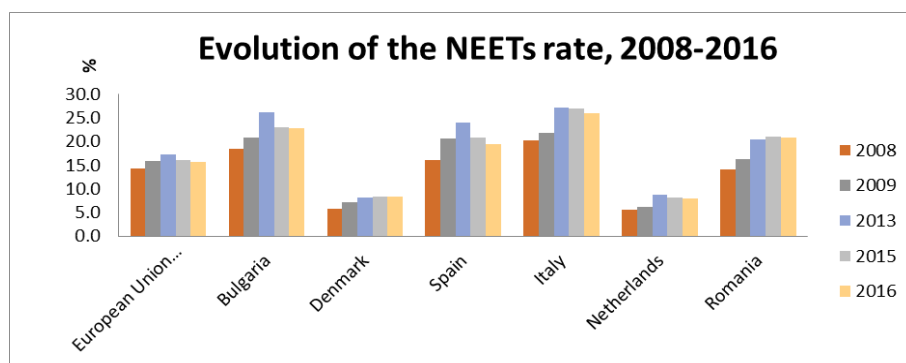


Figure 3. Evolution of the NEETs rate, 2008-2016

Source: Eurostat

If compared the two situations and the figures for 2015, is deduced a link between the level of Gross Domestic Product of a country in the European Union and the rate of young NEETs. The relationship between the two is indirect.

The higher the GDP tends, the lower the share of NEETs in general. Of course, the cause of the NEETs phenomenon is not only related to this macroeconomic index, but also to the depth of the factors that make up the expenditures made by households, investment expenditures.

In particular, in countries whose main priorities are education, school dropouts are close to zero, and the unemployment rate is relatively low and implicitly that of young NEETs.

3. ANALYSIS OF YOUNG NEETS IN ROMANIA. FROM DATA TO MEASURES

Among the graduates of higher education, the highest employment rate was registered, the number of employees being increasing compared to the previous year. Unemployment mainly affected middle or elementary school graduates, a percentage of about 7.6%, while for higher education graduates is identified an unemployment rate of 3.1%.

In the context of Romania, the average often does not reflect the reality itself, because the difference from one region to another differs.

In the center of the country, perhaps surprisingly some would say, from 2011 to 2015 there are fluctuations in the rate of young NEETs, but with growth trends, being the area of the country with the highest index in this regard, 28.2% in 2015. On the other hand, the North-East region, with the NEETs index of 10.4% in 2015, agnate to the National Institute of Statistics, is the area in Romania where a permanent improvement can be observed from 2011 until now.

The data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 2016 shows that in Romania is discussed about 400,000 young people employed in NEETs, of which 16% are also in the category of people with disabilities, mentioned among young people at high risk of exclusion social. Out of the total number of young people not integrated in an educational or work form, only 15% are registered with the National Employment Agency (INS, 2014).

Compared to young people who manage to graduate from higher education, those who do not pursue this career path are at least three times more likely to enter the NEET category, and young people with serious health problems or young people with disabilities are exposed to 40% more to be unintegrated in the labor market.

If the data were cumulated and applied in Romania, the figure shows more than worrying, speaking of about half of young people aged 14-25 who would become / are inactive on the labor market, without taking into account other categories that do not generate constant income from work performed (eg. pensioners) (Novak & Voinea, 2015).

From the analysis made by the Romanian state for the adoption and implementation of the directive related to combating unemployment, statistics of the Public Employment Service SPO (National Employment Agency), completed in 2016, it is observed that approx. 70% of the young people who are registered are high school graduates, 20% are higher education graduates, less than 5% are people with disabilities and less than 1% belong to the gypsies minority (most of them were identified through programs implemented by PES eg employment caravan, awareness campaigns organized in partnership with local public authorities) (Government of Romania, 2017).

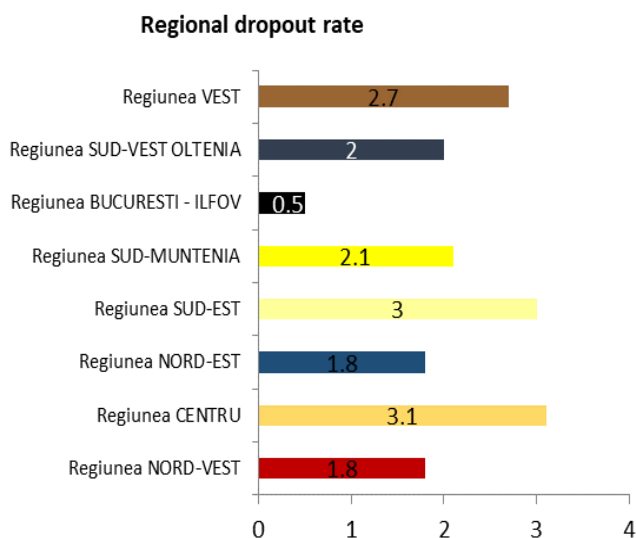


Figure 4. Regional dropout rate

Source: INSSE, author calculations

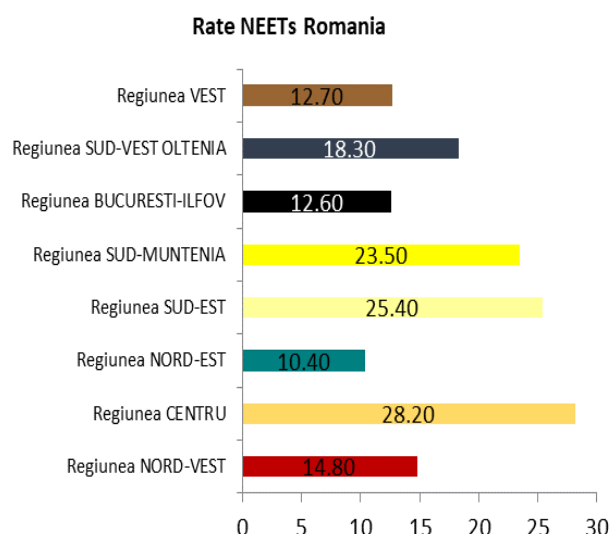


Figure 5. Rate NEETs in Romania

Source: INSSE, author calculations

Discussing elements adopted at national level to meet the NEET effect, is listed from the paper cited above: subsidies offered to employers who will provide jobs to the NEET category, stimulating mobility in the areas provided by the current National Mobility Plan, granting bonuses for young people who do not receive unemployment and are employed full time for more than 3 months. All these aspects do not only aim at decreasing the percentage of young people not integrated in the labor market or in a form of education, but also encourage the improvement of skills through formal or non-formal methods.

Continuing to discuss economic or social issues that may influence the quota of young people not integrated into the labor display or in a form of education or training, but also issues following which will be concluded a series of measures, look comparatively regionally school dropout rate, unemployment rate and that of young NEETs, as well as the level of poverty in the developing regions of the countries.

In 2015, according to the data found in the database of the National Institute of Statistics, the lowest dropout rate is in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, more precisely 0.5, followed by the North-West region (1.8) and South-West Oltenia (2).

As previously mentioned that the region with the highest rate of young NEETs is the Center region, the same statement can be made. In 2015, especially in Sibiu, in the center of the country, the dropout rate exceeds 3%, followed by the South-East and West region.

Of course, customizing at the county level, the media does not exactly reflect the real situation of school dropout.

As it appears from the latest data of INSSE, 2015, Sibiu, Tulcea and Mehedinți register a school dropout between 5.6 and 6.7%, and Bihor, Ghiurgiu and Sălaj, being the counties with the lowest dropout times of the educational system.

At the same time, an important connection can be made, between the poverty level, segmented at regional level, as outlined in the previous examples, associated with the unemployment rate in Romania, data incorporated according to the National Institute of Statistics in 2016.

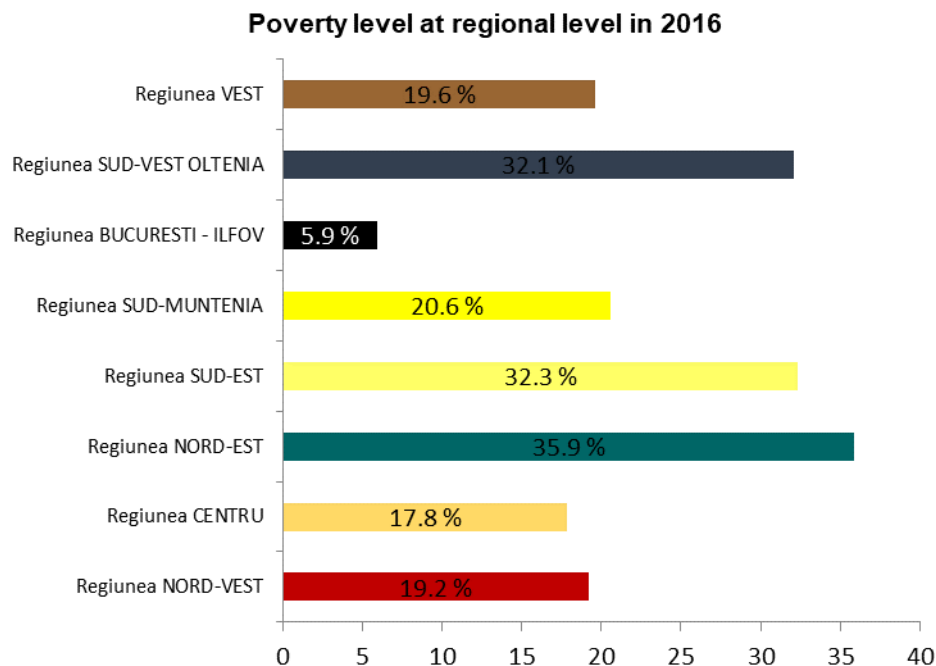


Figure 4. Poverty level at regional level in 2016

Source: Eurostat, author calculations

As it was understood in the previous examples, the fact that not in all cases the media reflects the relevance of each area, discussed even by gender, rural or urban environment and age categories, we can outline certain directions following these data approximations. Because a direct link has been created between early school leaving and the NEET youth rate, a similar relationship is found in terms of poverty level at the regional level, but also the unemployment rate. of proposals that come to solve certain causes that can be deduced at a first analysis of information.

Investing in education would facilitate access to school for young people, whether we are talking about disadvantaged cases, from environments that are not conducive to the harmonious development of children or without an average financial situation. A solution model can be in three directions.

First of all, a transportation settlement system for students can be implemented. Often, those who come from smaller territories, where even the education system does not allow them to complete a higher cycle, are forced to commute, thus involving additional costs for families. In a study conducted by me, together with other colleagues of mine in 2014, out of 3500 students who answered application questionnaires in Sălaj County, 64% considered that transport and other aspects related to infrastructure determine them, when there is at least one other factor, to give up what education means.

Secondly, by facilitating the "Teach for Romania" program, encouraging well-trained people in corporations, and not only, to experience both themselves and those who will benefit from an education otherwise, to be aware at the micro level of the situation with which Romania is facing progress, perspectives, but also integration on the labor market. At the same time, through the inspiration and added value that these models would bring among students, it could be an element that would prevent school dropout.

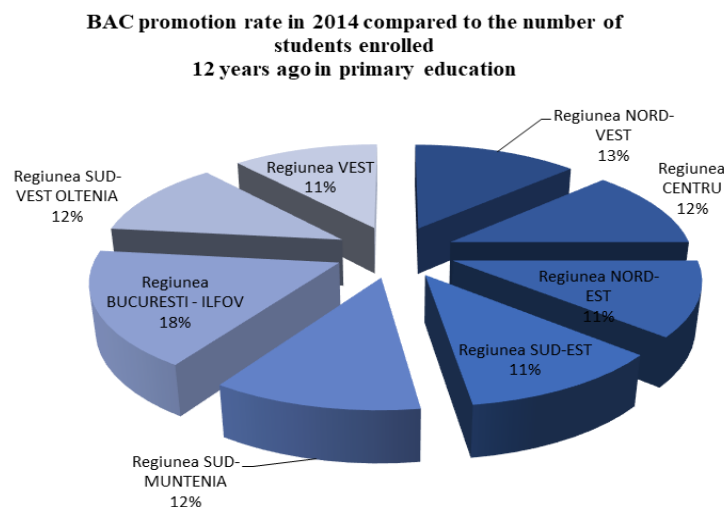


Figure 5. BAC promotion rate in 2014 compared to the number of students enrolled
 Source: Eurostat, author calculations

In the same questionnaires mentioned earlier, the main problem that was extracted after the interpretation of the data, the one faced by high school students from Sălaj County, the research was extended later and at national level was school dropout.

And the third direction in which the change of the education system could start (besides updating the school curriculum, the cohesion between it and the labor market, but also the integration of the non-formal system in education), the typology of dual education would be an alternative.

Out of 2,198,312 students enrolled in 2002 in the primary education system, only 118,313 reach the Baccalaureate exam. The question is: what happened to the other students along the way? The answer comes immediately, either in the direction of dropping out of school or in the direction of not being promoted; thus the possibility of integration on the labor market is lower, and the share of young NEETs increases. Thus, only 5.38% of those enrolled in the first grade arrive 12 years later to take the Baccalaureate.

An alternative may be a different kind of education. The term “dual education” is extensively used as a comprehensive term, referring to the fact that guidance and learning in VET is characterized by “duality” from two points of view: the duality of learning spaces (schools / VET providers and VET companies). training), who share the responsibility for providing theoretical and practical schooling; and the duality of the actors involved, who share responsibility for VET policies and practices. (Nogueira, 2014)

The dual character of learning spaces underlies the definitions used in European and international literature. Correspondent to UNESCO (Terminology of Technical and Vocational education) "the dual education system is called 'dual' because it combines apprenticeship in a company and vocational education in a vocational school in a single course." Within the company, the apprentice benefits from practical training, which is completed by theoretical training at the vocational school. According to Cedefop, dual education refers to "periods when learning or training in an educational association or training center is combined with learning or training in the structure".

Cedefop also refers to dual education as alternate training, stressing that the term "dual education" can be used as a synonym for "alternate training", "apprenticeship programs" or "on-the-job learning". There are, however, a number of small but compelling differences between these terms, as they differ in terms of the two aspects mentioned above. Due to their pedagogical and economic ability, apprenticeship and other similar programs are currently in the attention of both decision-makers and researchers. The current problematic situation of young people in the labor market requires solutions that support the changeover from school to work. In general, there are high hopes

for the development of apprenticeship and on-the-job learning programs. (European Commission, 2017)

At the level of Romania, the legislation on dual education was adopted in 2016, and the first generation of students enrolled in this program is the one from the 2016/2017 school year. In this sense, we are waiting for the analysis of the evolution of this program to see the effects created in the economy.

While supply in the labor market is provided by individuals, and demand by companies, we cannot always discuss a balance between the two or talk about a meeting of them, as was the study of the supply and demand of goods and services, at which time the market was formed.

Also, households, individuals, social groups, regardless of religion, backgrounds or other aspects that differentiate us need income through which to meet their needs.

Thus, if we talk about young NEETs, although it is not a single alternative for entering the labor market, the degree of regional activity of enterprises manages to contribute to the change of direction. Here we will add the public environment, state intervention and even foreign investors. Therefore, encouraging the employment of young people who are not already qualified or have no vocational training is another solution for young NEETs.

Another measure aims to create infrastructure in disadvantaged areas, thus leading to attracting companies; implicitly, a greater number of jobs would be created, which would lead to a decrease in the number of young NEETs.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, it is estimated that young Europeans between the ages of 15 and 24, NEETs generate a cost (represented by unemployment benefits, loss of income and uncollected taxes) of about 153 billion euros (around 1.2% of EU GDP) per year. In addition, youth unemployment has detrimental long-term consequences for the economy, society and data subjects, as it involves an increased risk of future unemployment (as a result of deteriorating skills and lack of motivation to appear after a period of time), in prolonged unemployment and inactivity) and a risk of poverty. In 2014, a total of 7.5 million young people fell into the category of NEETs.

Among the countries with the lowest level of GDP / inhabitant in 2016, on the first place is Bulgaria (6,600 euro / inhabitant), followed by Romania (8,600 euro / inhabitant) and Hungary (11,500 euro / inhabitant). On the other hand, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark - taken as benchmarks of the Nordic submodel, which in recent years has proved its efficiency in terms of welfare, low unemployment, Gross Domestic Product per capita and so on - concluded that are the countries with the highest index in 2016, respectively 40,900 euros / inhabitant in the Netherlands, 46,600 euros / inhabitant in Sweden, and in Denmark 48,300 euros / inhabitant. In Romania it can discuss about 400,000 young people employed by NEETs, according to the INS, of which 16% are also in the category of people with disabilities, mentioned among young people with a high risk of social exclusion.

Solutions implemented at EU level to reduce NEETs include NEETS training programs, fiscal relaxation for them (fiscal incentives for their employment) and flexibility in the labor market. If until a few years ago, employment contracts only targeted the "full-time" work schedule and the employment of only graduates (either of secondary / higher education / or even without studies depending on the specifics of the job), currently it can discuss the encouragement of volunteering as work experience (Volunteering Law 78/2014), individual employment contracts with part-time program, internship and internship programs, paid or unpaid.

Among the factors that change the ratio of young NEETs are school dropout, unemployment, GDP, poverty level, and as solutions that could be implemented are listed them in education, but also in infrastructure and social welfare. I believe that the reduction of young NEETs in Romania can be

achieved only by reducing the percentage of illiterates in the country, by reducing the standard of living of the population, but also by information campaigns about the role of education in disadvantaged communities in Romania.

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