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The 18th meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, hybrid format, 25-26 May 2023

Update on the latest national developments from the 3rd High Level Conference of Education and Environment Ministers in Nicosia, October 2022

- Policies, actions, programmes-

Strategic framework for green education at national level:

- “Educated Romania” Programme;
- National Strategy on Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023-2030 (approved by Government Decision no. 59/2023).
- National Reform and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - €3.6 billion investment in education for a green, digital and fairer society (12% of the €29.2 billion total).

The National Strategy for Environmental Education and Climate Change 2023 - 2030, adopted by GD no. 59/2023, is the first strategic document adopted in Romania dedicated to this field, which includes objectives and measures that refer to formal and non-formal education, human resources, teacher training, investments, open educational resources, partnerships. The development of this strategy is a recommendation of the Report "Climate Change and Environment Education in Sustainable Schools" published by the Presidential Administration in June 2022 as part of the project *Educated Romania*. The Ministry of the Environment, Water and Forests was directly involved in the process of developing the new policy, which, following extensive consultation with associations, communities of parents and local authorities, resulted in a policy document covering four areas of action:

1. Implementing an Education Programme on Climate and Environment;
2. Solutions for educational resources;
3. Infrastructure for sustainable schools;
4. Human resources involved in climate change and environmental education.

By 'climate change and environmental education' we mean the type of education that promotes sustainable lifestyles through the development of eco-social skills. This type of education aims to familiarise young people with the environmental and socio-economic problems caused by climate change and how to improve the response to them. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness on climate change and environmental issues, so that

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children can be both the bearers of the message to their families and communities and a direct stakeholder in actions to halt environmental degradation.

Actions taken at national level in the field of environmental education and green transition:

A. Green competences/environmental competences have been introduced in to the key competences framework for primary and lower secondary education, through the amendment of the National Education Act 1/2011. In the medium term, elements of the education and climate curriculum will be integrated in a cross-curricular manner for all study years. In terms of digital resources, approx. 5000 open educational resources have been produced for primary and secondary schools, with a very wide range of subjects coverage. Within the CRED 2017-2023 project, **new study subjects**, dedicated to education on climate change adaptation and environmental protection were developed:

- *Education for sustainable development, 8th grade* is a subject that is part of the curriculum at the schools decision.
- Starting with the school year 2022-2023, the optional subject "*Introduction to Machine Learning*" is introduced in the curriculum at the school's decision for secondary education (11th and 12th grade).

Green Week National Education Programme

A national climate change and environment education programme is the main provision of the Strategy; it is designed in a flexible way, in order to allow teachers and students to use the available tools and to integrate the benefits of their school location/context.

The "Green Week" programme is a national programme of activities lasting 5 consecutive days, approved by OM no. 3629/02.02.2023 on the methodology for organising the "Green Week" programme.

The aim of the programme is to support students, teachers and schools in implementing climate change and environmental activities. The Green Week Programme is planned according to the decision of each school/educational unit. The Green Week Programme contributes to the achievement of STEAM educational objectives and the development of inter- and trans- disciplinary approach on skills, and to the development of environmentally responsible behaviours.

Educational activities are diverse and can take place in different contexts: outdoor lessons, debates, role plays, photography, scenario building, documentaries, experiments, live libraries, theatre forums, legislative drama, community projects, volunteering, expeditions and trips to nature parks and protected areas. Schools cooperate with NGOs and the parents community and local institutions involved in the field.

National Platform “Green Week”

The Green Week programme is supported by a useful digital tool for teachers and students - the national Green Week Platform (<https://saptamanaverde.edu.ro/>), which contains open educational resources, information and activity ideas/suggestions. This platform was launched in February 2023, by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Code for Romania Association.

The online platform enables teachers to be creative, to become innovators of educational content, to share information and best practices on environmental education, with all learners, teachers and educational communities. The resources and activities available through the platform have been proposed by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests and the Ministry of Education, as well as by organisations with expertise in environmental and climate education. The content covers a wide area of interest: protected natural areas, meteorology, natural disasters, opportunities for cooperation with NGOs/other stakeholders.

Funding through the National Reform and Resilience Plan

The Ministry of Education provides funding through the National Reform and Resilience Plan (PNRR) for several programmes that support the green and digital transition in education and training, including:

- The construction and development of a pilot network of green schools - a national programme for the rehabilitation/construction of buildings with a total area of 300,000 m².

The concept and framework methodology on "green schools" was adopted by OM no. 4147/2022, according to which schools can acquire the certification of "green school" based on a set of criteria. These measures aim to develop appropriate infrastructure, curricula and teaching pedagogy; the programme aims to construct new buildings or rehabilitate others.

- The National Programme "Electric minibuses for pupils" aims to improve transport conditions in disadvantaged areas by providing energy-efficient minibuses for school transport.

B. Digital skills are part of the graduate's training profile. In line with the education policy document *Benchmarks for designing, updating and evaluating the National Curriculum* (approved by OM no. 3239/2021), digital competences (elementary, functional, developed levels) are defined on the basis of the European descriptor of key competences.

Romania is part of the group of five EU Member States, along with Austria, Finland, France, and Spain, participating in the **piloting of a European certificate for digital skills**.

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Funding through the National Reform and Resilience Plan

In the post-pandemic context, actions funded by the PNRR contribute to the strengthening of the legislative framework (approval of the digital competences framework of the education professional by OM no. 4.150 / 2022), the development of in-service training of teachers, and integrating the digital component and mentoring in the training process.

An important component of the funding covers measures to improve the digital infrastructure of schools through measures that have already been contracted and/or are in implementation phase, or in tender:

- Provide digital equipment and technology resources for at least 1100 Smart Labs in schools. Complex STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) classrooms will be created in high schools and school clubs for all curriculum areas, in order to develop advanced digital skills.
- Development of 10 regional consortia and establishment of 10 integrated vocational campuses for dual education. Each newly built campus will be suitably equipped for digitised workshops, based on a digitisation concept adapted to the profile of high schools and technical colleges.
- Digitization of 63 higher education institutions by equipping them with digital e-learning and administrative devices and platforms, for the training for new skills to be acquired by students and academics, and for innovation and continuous updating of study programmes.