

Ursu, Ana

**Conference Paper**

## Study on continuing vocational training for rural activities

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

The Research Institute for Agriculture Economy and Rural Development (ICEADR), Bucharest

*Suggested Citation:* Ursu, Ana (2023) : Study on continuing vocational training for rural activities, In: Rodino, Steliana Dragomir, Vili (Ed.): Agrarian Economy and Rural Development - Trends and Challenges. International Symposium. 14th Edition, The Research Institute for Agricultural Economy and Rural Development (ICEADR), Bucharest, pp. 108-115

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/301769>

**Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:**

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

**Terms of use:**

*Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.*

*You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.*

*If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.*

# STUDY ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR RURAL ACTIVITIES

URSU ANA

THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE ECONOMY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Corresponding author e-mail: ursu.ana@iceadr.ro

**Abstract:** *The study aims to analyze the modalities of vocational training in rural areas in order to identify systematic contents that are relevant to define the perception of the general role of continuing vocational training in the economic and social development of rural areas, the functions of continuing vocational training in the complex process of transformation of the agri-food economy, and the position of vocational training in Romania. For the study, the qualitative analysis method was used to establish the terms of the concept of continuing vocational training, to identify other researches that have investigated continuing vocational training of adults, to identify priority areas of analysis for capturing training needs for rural activities. The results highlight that lifelong learning should be addressed as an objective need, especially in the field of agriculture, leading to increased labour productivity, reduced vulnerability and not necessarily job creation.*

**Keywords:** *vocational training, agriculture, productivity, skills, occupational standard*

**JEL classification:** I20, I25, J20, J24, J43, O52, Q10, R10

## INTRODUCTION

The rural environment refers to the practice of agricultural activities (crop farming: field crops, vegetables, fruit, vineyards, etc.; animal husbandry: livestock farming) and non-agricultural activities (industry, crafts, rural trade, etc.).

From an economic perspective, agricultural activities are predominant in rural areas compared to non-agricultural activities. The existence of a relevant percentage of inactive people in rural areas compared to the employed population, the low level of education in rural areas compared to urban areas, and the existence of unemployed people in rural areas in higher numbers than in urban areas, demonstrate that rural business environment has a low capacity to create jobs, *although rural areas are not lacking in resources*. (Project POSDRU/135/5.2/S/129054, 2015).

Structural transformation processes in the economy due to the health crisis, the energy crisis, climate change, changes in the labour market (ageing population, changes in supply chains, freedom of movement of labour), etc., also require transformations in the development of skills to adapt to these challenges. (Council of the European Union, 2021)

For the present study we will address continuing vocational training of adults for specific agricultural activities, due to the role that agriculture has in providing agricultural goods and services to the population, in the economy and the role it plays towards the environment. "*Societal, technological, digital, economic and environmental challenges*" require a "*high number of professional transitions*" (Council of the European Union, 2021).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The approach to the theme of continuing vocational training of adults aims to promote vocational education and training for maintaining and developing competitiveness in rural Romania, but also to highlight the need for vocational training of adults in agriculture and rural areas due to

societal, economic, climate change and other challenges, in order to ensure "sustainable competitiveness, social equity and resilience" (European Commission, (2021).

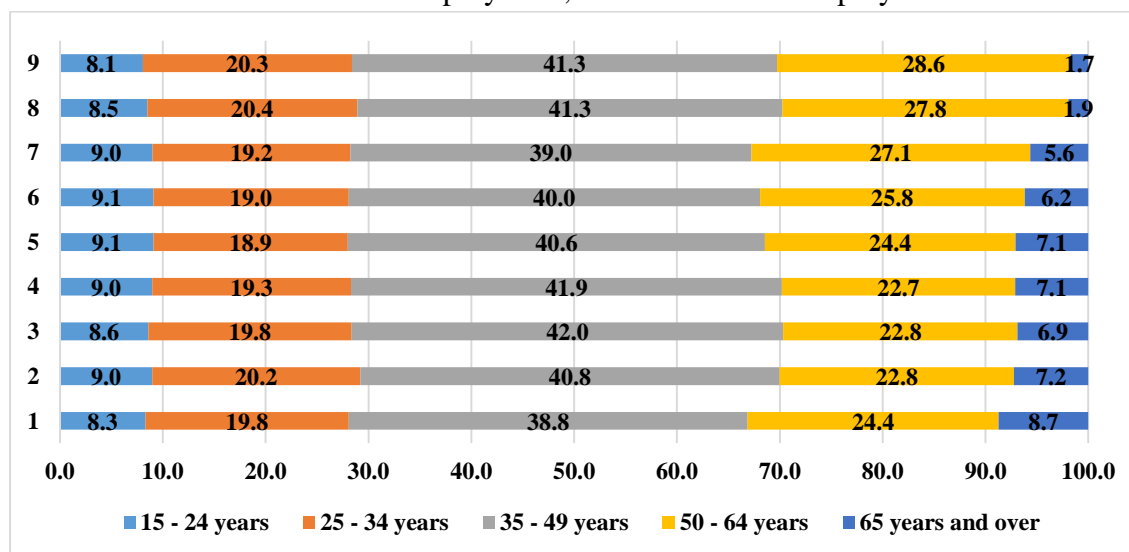
For the present research we will use as research methods quantitative analysis of EUROSTAT statistical data to highlight the participation of the Romanian population in education and training compared to other EU-27 countries; INS statistical data to reveal the importance and necessity of vocational training for those working in agriculture through the calculation of income indicators, etc. The analysis starts from the relevance of some context indicators for the period 2014-2022, in order to justify the approach undertaken in this paper.

For the topic addressed, information available from studies, European documents, legislation, strategies, etc. was used.

## RESULTS AND DISSCUSION

The rural environment in which about 46% of Romania's population lives is increasingly becoming a priority for raising education levels. Romania's rural areas have substantial gaps to make up in the field of adult vocational training compared to the European Union countries. The fact that we achieve only 25% of the European average level of agricultural factor income (income from agricultural factors in relation to annual work units (AWU)) is also due to the deficient vocational training of those now working in agriculture.

**The socio-economic context: employment, education and unemployment in rural areas**



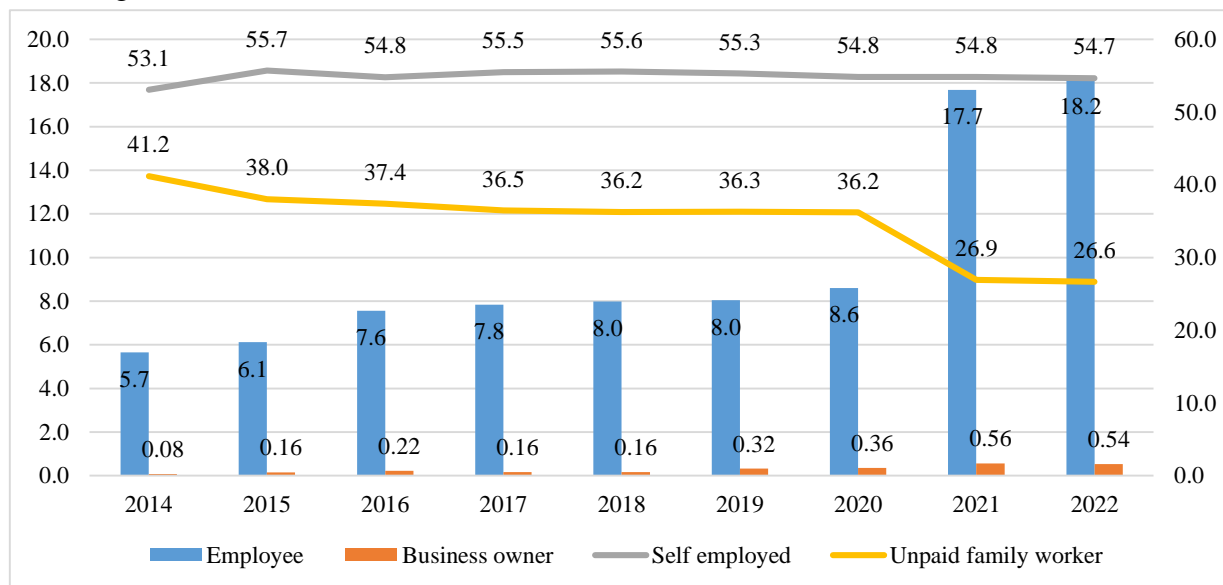
**Figure 1. Employed population by age group in rural areas (%)**

Source: INSSE, Tempo-online data, AMIGO - Employed population by age group and residence background, (Tempo\_AMG110T\_23\_5\_2023)

**Occupied population by age group in rural areas during 2014-2022:** the occupied population in rural areas decreased by 746 thousand people (-18.9% in 2022 compared to 2014), and the changes in the age group structure are as follows:

- age group 15-24 years: reduced by 60 thousand people, (-18.3%);
- age group 25-34: reduced by 130 thousand persons (-16.7%);
- age group 35-49 years: decreased by 238 thousand persons, (-15.5%);
- age group 50-64 years: decreased by 28 thousand persons, (-2.9%);
- age group 65 and over: reduced by 290 thousand persons, (-84,4%).

In this age group in 2021 compared to 2020 the population decreased by 153436 persons (-71,4%). Figure 1.

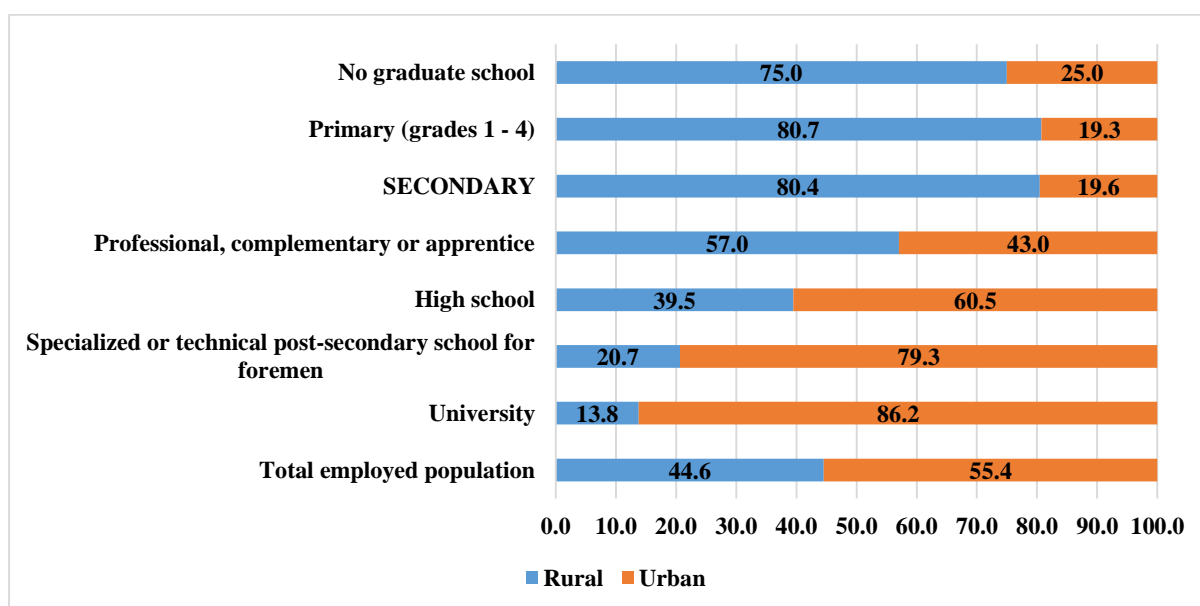


**Figure 2. Population employed by occupation by occupational status in rural areas (%)**

Source: INSSE, Tempo-online data, AMIGO - Population employed by activity, by occupational status and residence background, (Tempo\_AMG110T\_23\_5\_2023)

**Rural population employed in agriculture by occupational status** in 2022 compared to 2014: the changes that occur in the structure of the employed population are as follows:

The rural population employed in agriculture decreased by 1526 thousand persons (-66.0%). The structure of the rural population employed in agriculture is made up of employees, their number increasing by 12 thousand (+9.2%), an increase of 2 thousand persons (+120%) in the category of employers, a decrease of 797 thousand (-65%) in the category of own-account workers and a decrease of 743 thousand persons (-78%) in the category of unpaid family workers. Figure 2



**Figure 3. Employed population by occupation group, education level and residence background, average 2014-2021 (%)**

Source: INSSE, Tempo-online data, AMIGO - Employed population by occupation, education level and residence background, (Tempo\_AMG110T\_23\_5\_2023)

**Education level in rural areas:** the rural employed population for the period 2014-2022 is on average 44.6%. Compared to urban areas, in rural areas 75% of the employed population has no schooling, 80.7% has completed primary school, 80.4% secondary school and 57% of the employed population has completed vocational or apprenticeship school. As the level of education increases, the proportion of the rural employed population participating in education decreases. In this respect 39.5% of the population graduated from secondary school, 20.7% from post-secondary education and about 13.8% of those with tertiary education, employed in rural areas. Figure 3.

**Income from agricultural factors:** compared to the EU-27 average, the income of agricultural factors per annual work unit (AWA), for the period 2014-2022, was on average 4983 Euro compared to 18576 Euro as the EU-27 average, with Romania ranking last compared to the other countries. Income from agricultural factors is the income generated by agriculture, which is used to remunerate borrowed/rented factors of production (capital, wages and land rents) and own factors of production (own labour, capital and land). (European Commission, 2022).

**Unemployment in rural areas:** according to ANOFM data on 30 September 2023 the number of unemployed registered in rural areas was 161248 people of which 73387 women and 87861 men, compared to urban areas where out of a total of 68041 people 37893 were women and 30148 men. ANOFM has proposed for 2023 the organization of 1849 vocational training programs. Vocational training programs are organized for the unemployed, programs for key skills (literacy and numeracy, digital skills), etc. Training programs are organized for the following occupations: commercial worker, digital skills for using information technology as a learning and knowledge tool, security agent, cook's assistant, data entry, processing and validation operator, green spaces caretaker, human resources inspector/reporter, barber, communication skills in Romanian, cook, manicurist, baker, baker, baker, maid, maid, cleaning woman, etc. (ANOFM, 2023).

**Participation in education and training:** Compared to the EU-27 countries, in Romania participation in education and training is 7.6 percentage points lower than the EU-27 average (1.9% in Romania compared to 9.5% in the EU-27). In Romania the participation rate of women in training is lower than that of men, compared to the other EU countries. The participation rate of women is, on average, 10.3% compared to the participation rate of men of 8.7%. Figure 5 and Figure 6.

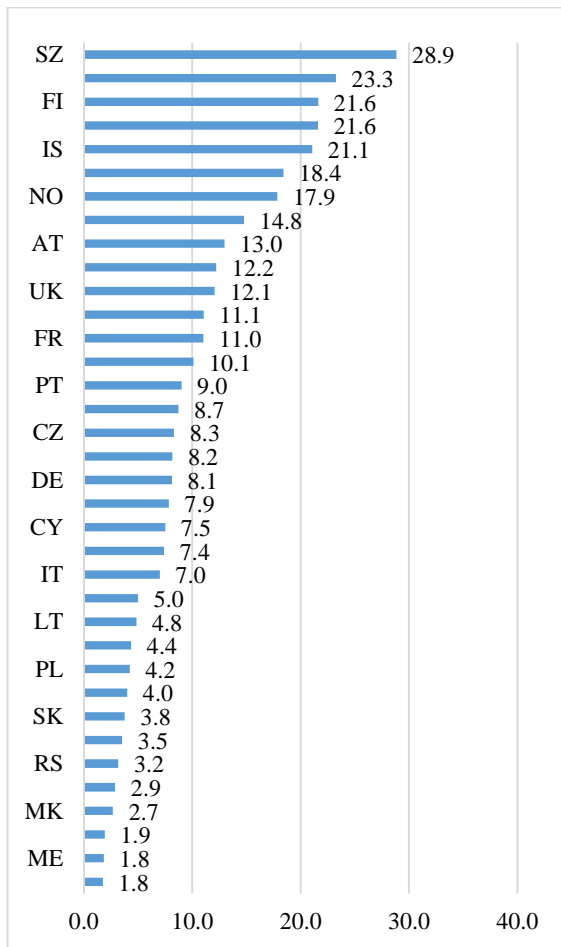
Romania (1.9%) and Bulgaria (1.9%) have the lowest participation rates in education and training compared to the other EU-27 countries. Significant participation rates in education and training, for the age group 25-64, are found in Denmark (28.5%), Switzerland (28.5%), Sweden (28.3%), Finland (25.6%), Iceland (25.1%), Norway (19.4%), the Netherlands (19.4%), Austria (14.2%), France (12.6%), Spain (11.2%), etc. Figure 5 and Figure 6.

In the project *"Models for encouraging investment in continuing vocational training at firm level"*, carried out by the National Institute for Scientific Research in Labour and Social Protection, a number of factors are identified which explain the development of vocational training. According to the study, the determining factors for the evolution of vocational training in Romania are: the level of economic development, technological and competitiveness developments, the level of skill shortages and gaps, the existing cultural model, the legal and institutional framework, etc. (INCSMPS, 2014).

### **European and national policies**

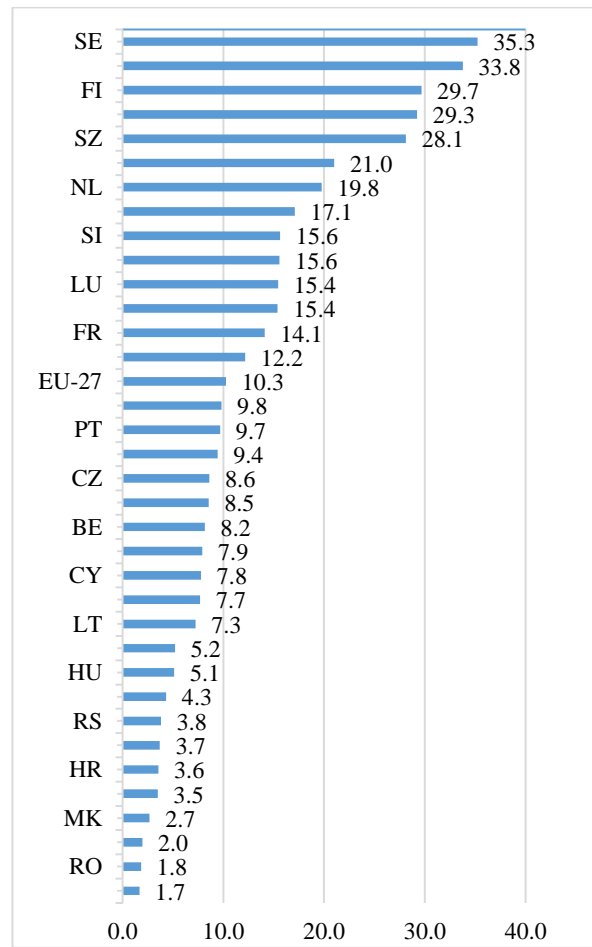
The European Commission defines the European Education Area through six components which relate to quality of education and training, inclusion, the double digital and green transition, teachers and trainers, higher education and the geopolitical dimension (2021-2030), and as targets it states that *"by 2025 at least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning activities*

in the last 12 months. Romania has set a target that 17.4% of adults should have been involved in learning activities in the last 12 months, which is 3 times higher than in 2016" (European Commission, 2023).



**Figure 5. Education and training participation rate of men, 25-64 years (%), average 2007-2022**

Source: EUROSTAT, Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and age [TRNG\_LFSE\_01\_\_custom\_6779398] (accessed 26/04/2023 23:00)



**Figure 6. Education and training participation rate of women, 25-64 years (%), average 2007-2022**

Source: EUROSTAT, Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and age [TRNG\_LFSE\_01\_\_custom\_6779398] (accessed 26/04/2023 23:00)

In the National Strategy for the professional training of adults, a project developed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, is established a level of participation in the lifelong learning process of 12% until the end of 2027 (compared to 5.9% in present), increasing the adult participation rate throughout life by "intensifying and improving formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities". (MMSS, 2023).

The main institutions with a role in the implementation of the National Employment Strategy for Agriculture, with a focus on green transition, digitalization, modernization of work activity, promotion of lifelong learning, increasing the resilience of the workforce to risk situations are: the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity (MMSS), the Ministry of National Education (MEC), the National Authority for Qualifications (ANC), Ministry of Agriculture (MADR), National Agency for Employment (ANOFM), Sectoral Committees (SC) Social Partners (SP), etc. (MMSS, 2023).

**Systematic contents:** Continuing education and adult education are forms of lifelong learning, as stipulated by the Romanian National Education Law. The terms found in various publications, legislative documents, etc., defining adult education are basic education, lifelong learning, continuing education, etc. (National Education Law, 1/2011; European Commission, 2023).

The need for vocational training for agricultural activities is due to the place of agriculture in the economy and in the European Union; due to the development of science and technology, which has led to a number of necessary changes in the professional skills of farmers ("*digital transition*"); due to the diversification of agricultural products and activities; due to the modernization of the agricultural sector, the processing and marketing sectors for agricultural products; development of entrepreneurship, market-oriented business, which requires economic, management and marketing skills in agriculture; sustainable land management and environmental protection; application of environmentally friendly technologies and use of renewable energy, ("*transition to an environmentally sustainable, circular and climate neutral economy*") etc. (Council of the European Union, 2021)

Active and inactive people in rural areas, who practice agriculture, vegetable growing, fruit growing, wine growing, animal husbandry, etc., have acquired knowledge in the family, at work or by learning from others (internet). Their assessment and certification can be based on occupational standards.

Agriculture, fish farming and fishing includes 32 occupations for which the following occupational standards exist: farmer, organic field crop farmer, agricultural combine, agricultural business manager, livestock production farmer, horticultural production farmer, vegetable production farmer, vegetable grower, qualified irrigation worker, agri-tourism farm worker, agricultural mechanic, large crop farm mechanic, farm mechanic in animal husbandry, farm machinery mechanic, agricultural tractor driver, agribusiness consultant, technical consultant in cereal, technical plant and fodder production, vine grower, fish worker, vegetable grower, fruit grower, agro-zootechnical farm manager, cattle breeder, pig breeder, poultry breeder, beekeeper, sheep farmer, etc. (ANC, 2023). In the period 2014-2023, for occupations in agriculture, the standard for the occupation "Crop and livestock farmer" has been updated, and the measures foreseen in the "*National Employment Strategy 2021-2027*" specific to both agriculture and the rural environment refer to "*developing and updating occupational standards in line with new technological changes and the digital agenda*", and to "*reducing employment in subsistence agriculture and facilitating the relocation of this human resource to non-agricultural activities*". (MMSS, 2023).

**Training modalities:** in accordance with Ordinance no. 129/2000 on vocational training of adults, art. 8, paragraph 2 and paragraph 3, supplemented by Law 167 of 2013, vocational training of adults (organized in forms other than those specific to the national education system), includes: *initial vocational training* (provides the necessary preparation for acquiring the minimum professional skills required for obtaining a job) and *continuing vocational training* (is subsequent to initial training and provides adults with either the development of professional skills already acquired or the acquisition of new skills).

Vocational training is carried out for: induction, qualification/requalification, further training/specialization, and the skills acquired are obtained *formally* (by completing an organized programme), *non-formally* (by doing a specific activity at work or by self-training) or *informally* (non-institutionalized training methods: family, company or professional environment, etc.). (Ordonata nr. 129/2000 privind formarea profesională a adulților, art. 8, alin. 2 și alin 3, completata de Legea 167 din 2013.

**The functions of vocational training:** vocational training promotes personality development, orients the adult towards a new way of solving problems, ensures the acquisition of skills and abilities for adaptability to challenges, educates, cultivates individual skills and interests to participate actively in society, etc. (Natalia Luta, 2018).

**Occupational standard:** the occupational standard (OS) is the document that specifies the competences and the quality level associated with the results of the specific activities of an occupation (ORDER No. 3712/1.721/2018 of 21 May 2018).

The occupational standard is structured according to the labour market requirements and the requirements for vocational education and training and includes the plan and the theoretical and practical education and training programme for quality assurance of the system. The development of the SO is carried out in accordance with the International Standard of Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08), the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR), as well as the European Classification of Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), documents in which the main tasks and responsibilities specific to an occupation are specified, (ORDER no. 6.250/2.156/2022).

## CONCLUSIONS

Adult vocational training in rural areas is necessary due to the challenges faced by society, the economy and the environment. The adaptation of the agricultural worker to the "technological changes", to the "green transition and digitization" requires theoretical training and training with a predominantly practical content, to stimulate and train professional competences in order to carry out the activities required in the workplace, "at the quality level specified in the occupational standard".

Considering the socio-economic context, revealed by the evolution of the population employed in rural areas, the rural population employed in agriculture, the level of education, the degree of participation in training, etc., the income from agricultural factors, etc., we consider that for the agricultural worker training must have a character of improvement or specialization, in order to stimulate and train professional skills to deal with unforeseen situations that may arise during the production process.

Agriculture is a knowledge-based activity, it is the application of the results of agricultural research to improve production and income through appropriate training of agricultural workers. In this context, the aim is to increase productivity and reduce vulnerability rather than to create jobs. The professional training of adults for activities specific to agriculture is pursued through the extension services within MADR, which are appropriately connected to research (for example "Sectoral Strategy in the field of agriculture and food production", developed and implemented by MADR, etc.). (MADR, 2023).

For the period 2021-2027, the National Employment Strategy provides for measures, both for updating occupational standards in accordance with new technological changes and the digital agenda, as well as measures for reducing employment in subsistence agriculture and facilitating human resources for non- agricultural. (MMSS, 2023).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ANOFM, (2023). National Employment Agency, The total number of registered unemployed and the unemployment rate by country and by county on September 30, 2023. [https://www.anofm.ro/upload2/ANOFM/27866/Tabele\\_septembrie\\_2023.pdf](https://www.anofm.ro/upload2/ANOFM/27866/Tabele_septembrie_2023.pdf) (access 17 November 2023)



2. ANOFM, (2023). Report on the stage of the realization of the professional training plan on 30.09.2023, Directorate of Labor Market Analysis, Employment and Vocational Training Programs of the Workforce, [https://www.anofm.ro/upload2/ANOFM/27652/Raport\\_formare\\_-\\_septembrie\\_2023.pdf](https://www.anofm.ro/upload2/ANOFM/27652/Raport_formare_-_septembrie_2023.pdf) (accesat 17 noiembrie 2023)
3. ANOFM, (2023). The National Strategy for Employment 2021—2027 and the Action Plan for the period 2021—2027 for the implementation of the National Strategy for Employment 2021—2027), Official Gazette of Romania, Part I,Nr. 559 bis/31.V.2021); [http://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM\\_2021-2027.pdf2023](http://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM_2021-2027.pdf2023))
4. ANC (2023). National Authority for Qualifications, Occupational Standards, <http://www.anc.edu.ro/>, (accessed November 12,
5. Council of the European Union, (2021). Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training with a view to the realization and further development of the European education area (2021-2030) (2021/C 66/01). Strategic Priority 2: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all: Strategic Priority 5: Supporting the green and digital transition in and through education and training, (accessed November 10, 2023)), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/ALL/>. (accessed November 10, 2023)
6. European Commission, (2022). Common Agricultural Policy: Key graphs & figures, October 2022, [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/cap-expenditure-graph4\\_en.pdf](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/cap-expenditure-graph4_en.pdf)
7. European Commission, (2021). European Education Area, Quality Education and training for all, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/ro/education-levels/vocational-education-and-training/about-vocational-education-and-training> (access 17 nov 2023)
8. European Commission, (2023). European Education Area, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/ro/education-levels/adult-learning>. (accessed 10 nov. 2023)
9. European Commission, Organization of the education system and its structure, <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/ro/national-education-systems/romania/organizarea-sistemului-de-educatie-si-structura-sa>, (accessed 10 November 2023)
10. INCSMPS, (2014). The National Institute for Scientific Research in the field of Labor and Social Protection, Models for encouraging investment in continuous professional training at company level".[https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/ProiectePrograma\\_/2015-proiect-modele-incurajare-inv-fpc-FI-1.pdf](https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/ProiectePrograma_/2015-proiect-modele-incurajare-inv-fpc-FI-1.pdf) (access 17 november2023)
11. Luta N., (2018). Professional development of personnel employed in the social system. Theory and practice of public administration, page 528-531. (accessed November 14, 2023) [https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag\\_file/528-531.pdf](https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/528-531.pdf)
12. MMSS, (2023). Ministerul Muncii si Solidaritatii Sociale, *Strategia Nationala pentru Ocuparea Fortei de Munca 2021-2027* [https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM_2021-2027.pdf)
13. National Education Law 1/2011, Law 53/2003, Education and professional training of adults;
14. Ordinance no. 129/2000 on professional training of adults, art. 8, para. 2 and paragraph 3, supplemented by Law 167 of 2013.
15. ORDER No. 3712/1.721/2018 of May 21, 2018 regarding the approval of the Methodology for the development, validation, approval and management of occupational standards and the occupational standard model. Annex 1: METHODOLOGY for elaboration, validation, approval and management of occupational standards, [https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2018/O1721-2018\\_standarde\\_occupationale.pdf](https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2018/O1721-2018_standarde_occupationale.pdf) (accessed November 14, 2023)
16. ORDIN nr. 6.250/2.156/2022 for the approval of the Methodology for the development, validation, approval and management of occupational standards, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/268549>
17. MADR, (2023). Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Strategy for Research-Development and Innovation in the agri-food field in the medium and long term, 2014-2020/2020-2030, <https://www.madr.ro/docs/cercetare/strategia-cercetare-inovare.pdf>
18. Project POSDRU/135/5.2/S/129054, (2015). Federatia AGROSTAR, 2007-2013, The benefits of professional training, [http://www.federatiaagrostar.ro/52/images/materiale/beneficiile\\_formarii\\_profesionale.pdf](http://www.federatiaagrostar.ro/52/images/materiale/beneficiile_formarii_profesionale.pdf), (accessed November 10, 2023)