



## Education and Labor Market in Albania and European Union: Achievements and Challenges

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Received: 2 June 2021 / Accepted: 10 July 2021 / Published: 15 July 2021  
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### Abstract

*"Education is not just a preparation for life, he is life itself"*  
Agim Vuniqi

The education system in Albania since the post-1990 period has undergone numerous reforms, with the aim of keeping pace with developments in this field with the European Union countries. These reforms have not always proved successful and applicable to the conditions of Albania. Consequently, nowadays we face an education system that generally succeeds in preparing young generations for the labor market, but lacks a proper match of labor supply and demand. Adequate development of education in Albania for a workforce that suits the needs of the market constitutes the primary condition towards maximum productivity. Given Albania's pre-accession status in the European Union, it is important that the workforce must ensure competitiveness with the European market. On the other hand, some of the European Commission's recommendations express the need for a higher education law with quality functioning institutions, greater development of higher education curriculum and improved access to youth inclusion in vocational education development. As well as the education system, which will be treated in this research, the labor market in the European Union is also highly diversified, with member states designing and implementing various policies to promote employment and increase the productivity of local industries over the years. Within the labor market policies, some of them can be listed that apply across EU member states: training, employment incentives, employment support and rehabilitation, direct job creation, incentives to start up ups; social care for the unemployed, early retirement, etc.

**Keywords:** Education system, Vocational education, Employment, Labor market, Competition

### 1. Introduction

The Republic of Albania (hereinafter Albania) is located in Southeast Europe and in 2016 had a total population of 2,886,026 inhabitants, of which 1.461326 are males and 1.424.700 females<sup>1</sup>. Albania ranks 136th in the world by population<sup>2</sup>. According to the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), 42,922 inhabitants have left Albania and in the same year the number of emigrants in the country was 25,846 inhabitants<sup>3</sup>.

Although Albania has a rich history and culture, under the communist regime for more than the second half of the 20th century, it became one of the poorest and most isolated countries in Europe. Since the fall of communism in 1990, Albania has made steady progress in establishing democratic political institutions and a market economy.

1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2016*, New York, USA, 2016, pp. 203.

2 Ibid.

3 INSTAT, *Vjetari statistikor 2017 (më tej: Vjetari statistikor 2017 ...)*, botim i Institutit të Statistikave, Tiranë: "Media - Print sh.p.k.", 2017, f. 50. Arsimi.

[INSTAT, *Statistical Yearbook 2017, (hereinafter: Statistical Yearbook 2017 ...)*, Publication of the Institute of Statistics, Tirana: "Media - Print sh.p.k.", 2017, p. 50. Education.

"Albania is a parliamentary democracy established under the Constitution that was renewed in 1998. The country is a member of many multilateral organizations, including, but not limited to, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations (UN), including UNESCO, the World Bank (WB), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Albania is considered a non-member partner country in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Albania applied for a candidate country in the European Union (EU) in 2009 and gained the status of official candidate country in the EU in June 2014. This was an important critical point for a country that just two decades ago was one of the poorest, most isolated European states that had just emerged from communist rule (see European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2014). [...] More than 82.6% of the Albanian population is of Albanian ethnic origin. Greeks make up 0.9% of the total population, while another 1% belong to various ethnic groups, including Aromanians, Roma, Macedonians, Balkan Egyptians, Montenegrins and "others" with the remaining 15.5% classified as "undefined". The official language is Albanian, spoken by 98.8% of the population. Other major languages spoken include Greek, Macedonian, Romani, Aromanian, Turkish, Italian and Serbo-Croatian. Religious affiliation is as follows: 56.7% Muslims, 10% Catholics, 6.8% Orthodox Christians, 2.5% Atheists, 2.1% Bektashis, 5.7% belonging to "others" and 16.2% classified as "unspecified"<sup>4</sup>.

Albania as a candidate country for membership in the European Union (EU) has step by step undertaken reforms in the public sector, including the field of education, as required for the opening of negotiations for EU accession. It is important that the reform of education according to the best world experiences has had a positive impact on the promotion of democratic citizenship and the development of the necessary skills and competencies for the sustainable economic development of Albania.

Probably more than all other institutions, schools are places of identity creation. Over the last decades, schools have changed their role from accurately reproducing subjects to fostering the growth and development of critical thinking and digital competencies for participation in Albania's society and economy and beyond.

Schools, as the main institutions that provide teaching, are responsible for providing a quality education. This means that they are entrusted with the most valuable source of a nation - the power of the brain. The future development of a country depends on the quality of education it offers to prepare the future workforce. Therefore, it is very important that schools fulfill their mission of preparing the new generation with the right skills for the job market and for life in general.

Such a future-oriented educational policy, we think, can not remain an isolated factor in politics, but should be seen as a fundamental priority task. In this context, the educational policy of the Albanian state, currently, aims to keep pace with developments in this field with the countries of the European Union.

Immediate development of education in Albania for a workforce that adapts to the needs of the market is the primary condition towards maximum productivity. Given the position of Albania's pre-accession period to the European Union, it is crucial that the workforce ensure competitiveness of skills with the European market.

Such a priority necessarily requires skilled workers for all levels of the labor market. On the other hand, all young people - depending on their talents and abilities - should have the opportunity to integrate into a functional and effective labor market.

Currently, we are faced with an education system that is failing to prepare the new generations for the labor market, where there is no proper matching of labor supply and demand. This means that an increasingly private and profit-oriented education offer inevitably and clearly leads to large deficits in the labor market. The consequences are on the one hand a very high youth unemployment and few chances for a (re) entry into the labor market for the elderly who have been unemployed, on the other hand, a growing shortage of skilled labor - both in the academic and non-academic sectors of the economy. To this is added an urban-rural gap with continuous growth and an increased migration tendency.

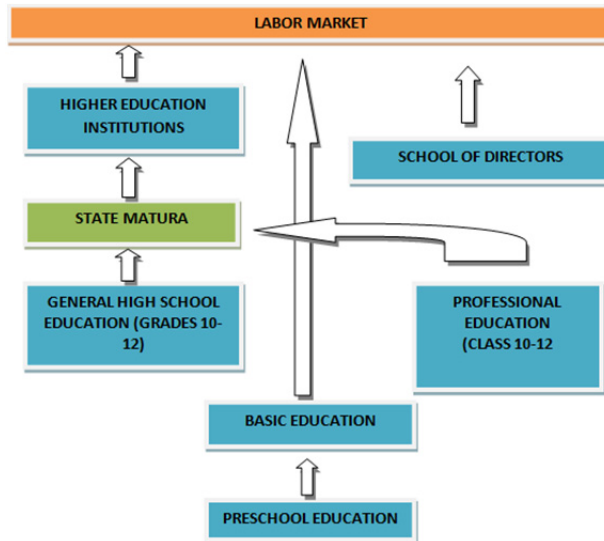
World experience has shown that such phenomena are limited only through an integral concept, which combines the content and offerings of education with the current and future needs of a strategically oriented economic development. This requires a new model of labor market policy as a bridge between education and the economy, which continuously through competent professional counseling and certain training programs ensures that offers for qualifications are adapted to the needs of a modern economy.

The education system in the Republic of Albania is structured according to the following scheme, with the main goal of interconnecting and providing qualified labor force for the labor market.

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, *Albania: Education Policy Review; Issues and Recommendations (Extended Report)*, This is the Extended Report of the Albania Education Policy Review conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in cooperation with the Institute of Educational Development (IED) of Albania, Paris, August 2017, pP. 23-24.

Figure 1:



The treatment of issues within the limits allowed by a scientific article is done by combining chronological and probabilistic careers. Conceived in three issues, the process is analyzed in all its progress from 2012 to 2016. At the epicenter of developments in these years are these issues, as follows:

**Issue 1** provides a summary of the legal framework in the Republic of Albania that has been used to conduct the study. The main components are detailed: the Constitution of Albania, the law on Pre-University Education, the law on Higher Education and Scientific Research, the law on Vocational Education and Training and the law on the Albanian Qualifications Framework. **Issue 2** presents a comprehensive overview of the most important statistical indicators for the period 2012-2016. **Issue 3** discusses the priorities of Albanian education and school, depending on the labor market trends in Albania and the EU. In the end, the conclusions are drawn and the message for the future is outlined.

## 2. The Legal Framework Governing the Education System, Vocational Training and Scientific Qualification

Education remains the most important investment a person can make for his / her future and the opportunities in an individual's life depend on the quality of his / her education. Schools, as the main institutions that provide teaching, are responsible for providing a quality education. This means that they are entrusted with the most valuable source of a nation - the power of the brain. Time has shown that the future development of a country depends on the quality of education it offers to prepare the future workforce. Therefore, it is very important that schools fulfill their mission of preparing the new generation with the right skills for the job market and for life in general.

We think that these facts are enough to promote mechanisms for an effective management of education which should guarantee a quality provision of education to young people, able to meet the demands of the labor market in the country, but also the policies of the European Union. (EU). Many education systems in the world have made great efforts in developing mechanisms to ensure and improve the quality of education.

Experience and the present have shown that the focus on service delivery has driven a number of school-level related reforms, implemented according to the levels of the education system at the same time, including the decentralization of education and the increase of school autonomy.

These priorities have been accompanied by a voluminous work of the relevant institutions for the construction of a new school documentation, plans, programs and texts. In this regard, the education system in Albania is no exception.

In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MASR) has undertaken several reforms related to school autonomy, which coincide with the respective basic directions announced in the National Education Strategy. Despite the changed reforms, individuals and interest groups still turn their attention to *the education system in a country*

that is being reoriented to the needs offered by the external labor market rather than the country.

A concern that arises is: "Does the current legislation meet the quality standards in education required by the European Union "and the" Labor Market "in Albania and in the European Higher Education Area (HEAL) and beyond"? These and others are some of the questions that we think should be the subject of an analytical analysis in the first place, according to the concepts and practices deriving from UNESCO and the relevant specialized structures of the Council of Europe (EC), by specialists and by managers of different levels of representation of pre-university and university education institutions throughout our country, especially since their development in the European Education Area (EEA) has already been outlined.

Certainly this has left its direct traces in the concrete work of the school, where confusion and confusion, lack of a new mentality of the teacher, not in harmony with contemporary practices of the teaching process, have led to many problems, to the indifference of students and students towards school institutions in the country and in increasing the level of interest to be educated abroad.

However, there is no doubt that the progress of schools and the reforms from time to time according to the level of education, led to the drafting of the legal framework of the Republic of Albania and the educational legislation in particular.

"A law is not judged in itself by its articles, - said the head of the Venice Commission, Gianni Buquicchio, - but by public expectation, by the standards that inspire it, by its impact, implementation and concrete impact on the state and society"<sup>5</sup>. This statement is also valid for the analysis of issues related to laws on education at all levels, vocational training and scientific qualification in the Republic of Albania.

Let us focus more specifically on those laws that have been accompanied by adequate policies, which deal with education and the labor market:

## 2.1 Constitution of the Republic of Albania

Existing legislation declares education in Albania "a national priority. The mission of education is the spiritual emancipation, material progress and social development of the individual. The support of education in the most valuable traditions and achievements of our national school as well as in ratified international agreements and treaties from the Republic of Albania, constitutes another functional principle"<sup>6</sup>.

The basic principles on which the education system and vocational training in the Republic of Albania are based, are defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, approved in 1998, (amended by Law No. 9675, dated 13.1.2007; Law No. 9904, dated 21.4.2008). In Article 57, point 1 is quoted: "Everyone has the right to education"<sup>7</sup>. Given

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\* Gianni Buquicchio was born in Born, Bari, Italy, on November 19, 1948. He defended his doctorate in law at the University of Bari in 1968, where he taught public international law until 1971. He joined the Council of Europe in 1971. During his professional career (1971-2009), he was responsible for a number of intergovernmental committees dealing with administrative law, international law, free movement of persons, data protection, etc. He contributed to the harmonization of European law by preparing a large number of international treaties and recommendations. He was also responsible for the Conferences of European Ministers of Justice and for the Legal Adviser and the Council of Europe Treaty Office. He contributed to the successful establishment (1990) and development of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) by ensuring the conception and follow-up of projects related to constitutional reform and the establishment of democratic institutions within Europe and beyond. In late 2009, he resigned from the Council of Europe and was elected President of the Venice Commission. He was re-elected President in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. It is "Doctor Honoris Causa" of Pavol Jozef Safárik University in Košice, Slovakia (10.04.2013), of the University of Bucharest, Romania (15.10.2013), of the European University of Tirana, Albania (26.01.2015), of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Rumania (30.04.2015.) [Taken from: Council of Europe, "Gianni Buquicchio", në: Venice Commission Web Forms, p = cv\_1376. Material published in web site: [https://www.venice.coe.int/WebForms/pages/?p=cv\\_1376](https://www.venice.coe.int/WebForms/pages/?p=cv_1376)]

<sup>6</sup> Xhezair Zaganjori, Aurela Anastasi dhe Eralda Çani (Methasani), Shteti i së drejtës në Kushtetutën e Republikës së Shqipërisë (më tej: Shteti i së drejtës ...), botim Fondacionit "Konrad Adenauer", Tiranë: "Adelprint", 2011, f. 19. Shih: Arsim Bajrami, Historia e konstitucionalizmit shqiptar 1912-2012, Botime të veçanta CXXXIX, Libri 48, botim i Seksionit të Shkencave Shoqërore në Akademinë e Shkencave dhe e Arteve të Kosovës, Shkup: "Focus Print", 2014, f. 136-137.

<sup>7</sup> Xhezair Zaganjori, Aurela Anastasi dhe Eralda Çani (Methasani), The Rule of Law in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania (hereinafter: Te Rule of Law ...), Published by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Tirana: "Adelprint", 2011, f. 19. See: Arsim Bajrami, History of Albanian constitutionalism 1912-2012, Special editions CXXXIX, Book 48, publication of the Section of Social Sciences at the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo, Skopje: "Focus Print", 2014, pp. 136-137.

<sup>8</sup> Kushtetuta e Republikës së Shqipërisë, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", Maj 2009, f. 24. Kreu IV: Liritë dhe të drejtat ekonomike, sociale dhe kulturore, Neni 57, pika 1. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

that the Government of Albania is committed to integration into the European Union and has legal obligations which arise from a number of international acts signed by it, there is a need to include in this article the term "compulsory education", "education of general secondary" and "vocational secondary education". Article 57, points 3, 4 and 5 states: "Compulsory education is determined by law; General public secondary education is open to all; Vocational and higher secondary education may be conditioned by aptitude criteria"<sup>8</sup>.

The spirit on which the legal framework of the education system is built is precisely the spirit of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and those of national minorities. Thus, the citizens of the Republic of Albania enjoy equal rights to be educated at all levels of education, regardless of social status, nationality, language, sex, religion, race, political beliefs, health status and economic level. [...] "Creating opportunities for national minorities to develop their mother tongue and culture, and at the same time to integrate and participate in the life of the country, constitutes another fundamental principle expressed in law."<sup>9</sup> Fundamental human rights and freedoms are at the core of the entire Albanian education system.

## 2.2 Law on Pre-University Education

Law 69/2012 "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania" (amended by Law No. 56/2015; by Law No. 48/2018, dated 23.7.2018 "On some additions and amendments to Law No. 69/2012 "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania") structures the levels 0-4 of ISCED (International Standards for the Classification of Education which are approved by UNESCO) in Albania.

Regarding this period of individual development, pre-university education aims to create conditions and opportunities for students to: a) build and develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required by a democratic society; b) to develop independently and comprehensively; c) to contribute to the construction and personal well-being of the Albanian society and to face in a constructive way the challenges of life"<sup>10</sup>. In pre-university education, "students: a) cultivate personal, national identity and cultural affiliation; b) acquire general cultural and civic values; c) develop in intellectual, ethical, physical, social and aesthetic aspects; d) develop responsibility for themselves, to others, to society and to the environment; d) are trained for life and work, in different social and cultural contexts; dh) are trained to learn throughout life; e) develop the spirit of entrepreneurship; ë) use new technologies"<sup>11</sup>.

In support of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the principles and provisions for access to education are of great importance in relation to the law, where high priority is given to the inclusion of all groups of the population of Albania in pre-university education. The law also divides the competencies and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and identifies the competencies of other relevant bodies. Thus, the pre-university system is organized according to the respective levels of ISCED and the main phases of the National Curriculum Framework.

## 2.3 Law on Higher Education and Scientific Research

Law no. 15/2015, dated 27.7.2015 "On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in the Republic of Albania" forms the comprehensive legal basis, which aims to: a) to determine the role of the state in higher education; b) to determine the mission, the main objectives of higher education and scientific research, the rules of

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[Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", May 2009, p. 24. Chapter IV: Economic, social and cultural freedoms and rights, Article 57, point 1. Material published on the web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

8 Po aty, Neni 57, pika 4 dhe 6.

[Ibid., Article 57, points 4 and 6.]

9 Xh. Zaganjori, A. Anastasi dhe E. Çani (Methasani), *Shteti i së drejtës ...*, f. 136-137.

[Xhezair Zaganjori, Aurela Anastasi and Eralda Çani (Methasani), *The Rule of Law ...*, pp. 136-137.

10 Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 105, 23 qershor 2015, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2015, f. 5666-5668. Ligji Nr. 56/2015, datë 25.8.2015 "Për disa ndryshime në Ligjin Nr. 69/2012 "Për sistemin arsimor parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë". Neni 3. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

[Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 105, June 23, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2015, pp. 5666-5668. Law No. 56/2015, dated 25.8.2015 "On Some Changes in the Law No. 69/2012" On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania ". Article 3. Material published on the web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

11 [Ibid., pp. 5666-5667.]

establishment, organization, management, administration, financing and closure of higher education institutions; c) to create a unified system of higher education, scientific research in higher education institutions, contemporary and competitive innovation in the European space of higher education; ç) to establish sustainable quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions, in accordance with European standards; d) to establish higher education on a stable financial basis, creating the possibility for the use of legal sources of financing; dh) to guarantee equal opportunities, on the basis of merit, for all individuals who want to pursue studies in higher education; e) to base the higher education system on the principle of free competition between higher education institutions, academic staff and students"<sup>12</sup>.

The structure of the teaching credits that the student must achieve for diplomas of the respective levels is based on the European Credit Transfer System and the European Qualifications Framework<sup>13</sup>. From the relevant institutions for the formation and successful implementation of policies for higher education, the law identifies the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MASR)** as the primary institution for the development of plans, authorization, distribution of funds, etc.; **Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAL)**<sup>\*</sup> as the only institution in Albania that controls and evaluates the quality of higher education, based on state quality standards and relevant quality standards and guidelines in the European and international Higher Education Area; as well as the Accreditation Board, as a collegial decision-making body, which accredits higher education institutions and study programs, established through this law<sup>14</sup>.

Law no. 80/2015, also sets out the provisions for licensing of private entities of pre-university and university education.

#### 2.4 Law on Vocational Education and Training

Law no. 15/2017, dated 16.2.2017 "On Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania" establishes the basic principles, structure, organization and administration of vocational education and training (VET) in the Republic of Albania, based on the cooperation of state and governmental institutions with social partners and other actors in the field of vocational education and training.

This law aims to: "a) create and develop a unified VET system to respond to socio-economic and technological changes, in full compliance with the needs of the domestic and global labor market; b) establish sustainable quality assurance and quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education institutions, in line with European Union standards; c) to modernize the VET system, making it a more effective and efficient mechanism for increasing the pace of development of the Albanian economy and society, ensuring its compatibility with the education system and the labor market; ç) to guarantee equal opportunities for all individuals who want to study at VET"<sup>15</sup>.

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12 Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 164, 21 shtator 2015, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2015, f. 11449-11450. Ligji Nr. 15/2015, datë 27.7.2015 "Për arsimin e lartë dhe kërkimin shkencor në institucionet e arsimit të lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë". Neni 1. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al) [Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, Nr. 164, September 21, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2015, pp. 11449-11450. Law No. 15/2015, dated 27.7.2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania". Article 1. Material published on the website: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]

13 Jani Sota, *High Education in Post-Communist Albania 1992-2013 - With a Foreword by Prof.Ph.D. Antonello Biagini (hereinafter: High Education in Post-Communist Albania ...)*, Berlin: "LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing", 2019, p. 89.

\* The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education was established by decision of the Council of Ministers no. 109, dated 15.02.2017 (amended by Decision No. 562, dated 31.07.2019), from the reorganization of the Public Agency of Higher Education which was established by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 303, dated 01.07.1999 and in support of Law no. 80/2015, on higher education and scientific research. Relying on state quality standards and relevant quality standards and guidelines in the European and international Higher Education Area. ASCAL is independent, impartial and transparent in the conduct of its business. ASCAL conducts preliminary quality assessment for HEIs, their units and study programs of all three cycles within their licensing as well as external evaluation within institutional accreditation and study programs. The Agency also conducts analytical and comparative evaluations of HEIs, programs and fields of study. [...] In order to fulfill its mission, ASCAL, in addition to the legal acts in force, also relies on the Quality Code as well as its internal regulations. (Taken from: ASCAL, "Misioni dhe Veprimtaria", in: Rreth nesh, f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <https://www.ascal.al/sq/rreth-nesh/misioni-dhe-veprimtaria>) [Taken from: ASCAL, "Mission and Activity", in: About us, p. 1. Material published on the web site: <https://www.ascal.al/sq/rreth-nesh/misioni-dhe-veprimtaria>]

14 J. Sota, *High Education in Post-Communist Albania ...*, p. 126.

<sup>15</sup> Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 43, 9 mars 2017, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2017, f. 2779. Ligji Nr. 15/2017, datë 16.2.2002 "Për Arsimin dhe Formimin Profesional në Republikën e Shqipërisë". Neni 1, pika 1. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

This law guarantees the right expressed in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania for lifelong education and vocational training, "in accordance with the level of development of science and technology, with the demands of the constantly changing labor market, as well as with the culture national tradition; development of necessary personal and professional competencies, as well as other diversified habits and competencies, reflecting the special preferences and needs of employers to ensure social welfare and economic development; ensuring international compliance of certification documents issued"<sup>16</sup>.

The law also structures the provisions of relevant institutions, whether public or private institutions qualified for vocational education and training. The structure of institutions and provisions for vocational education and training according to the law reflects the scope of VET towards the development of competencies depending on career and market needs.

#### 2.4.1 Law on the albanian qualifications framework

The main purpose of Law no. 10247, dated 4.3.2010 "On the Albanian Qualifications Framework" is "the establishment of the Albanian Qualifications Framework (hereinafter SCC), for the development, recognition and award of qualifications in the Republic of Albania, based on the standards of knowledge, skills and competencies, to be achieved by pupils/students/students"<sup>17</sup>. Which means that the qualifications framework at the national level is designed based on criteria and requirements that comply with the European Qualifications Framework.

The purpose of this law is to determine the structure, objectives, functions and areas, where the ACC extends its jurisdiction, as well as the organization and direction of the ACC, in cooperation with the relevant ministries, various central government institutions or local and non-profit organizations, operating for the development, provision and use of qualifications<sup>18</sup>.

#### 2.4.2 Law on Local Self-Government

Law No. 139/2015, dated 17.12.2015 "On Local Self-Government" significantly increased the role of *local government units*\* in Albania, giving them a number of new functions. The most important of them is the responsibility for financing and managing preschool educational institutions<sup>19</sup>.

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[Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 43, March 9, 2017, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2017, p. 2779. Law No. 15/2017, dated 16.2.2002 "On Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania". Article 1, point 1. Material published on the web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]  
16 Po aty. Neni 3. [Ibid. Article 3.]

17 Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 34, 2 prill 2010, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2010, f. 1261. Ligji Nr. 10247/2010, datë 4.3.2010 "Për Kornizën Shqiptare të Kualifikimit". Neni 1. Material i botuar në web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

[Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 34, April 2, 2010, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2010, p. 1261. Law No. 10247/2010, dated 4.3.2010 "On the Albanian Qualification Framework". Article 1. Material published on the web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]

18 Po aty. Neni 2. [Ibid. Article 3.]

\* The units of local self-government are the municipalities and regions, which realize local self-government in the Republic of Albania. The municipality is the basic unit of local self-government and represents an administrative-territorial unit and community of inhabitants.

[...] The county is a unit of the second level of local self-government. The region represents an administrative-territorial unit, consisting of several municipalities with geographical, traditional, economic, social and common interests. The boundaries of the county coincide with the boundaries of the municipalities that make it up. The center of the county is located in one of the municipalities included in it. [Taken from: "Neni 5 i Ligjit Nr. 139/2015, datë 17.12.2015 "Për vetëqeverisjen vendore", në: Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 249, 31 dhjetor 2015, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", f. 16964/] [Taken from: "Article 5 of Law No. 139/2015, dated 17.12.2015 "On local self-government", in: Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 249, December 31, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publication, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2015, p. 16964.]

19 Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 249, 31 dhjetor 2015, botim i Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2015, f. 16963. Ligji Nr. 139/2015, datë 17.12.2015 "Për vetëqeverisjen vendore". Neni 1. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

[Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 249, 31 December 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2015, p. 16963. Law No. 139/2015, dated 17.12.2015 "On local self-government". Article 1. Material published on the web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]

The law specifies the responsibilities and competencies that Albanian municipalities have in education. Thus, the municipalities have full and exclusive competencies, insofar as they belong to the local interest, while respecting the standards set according to the legislation in force regarding the "administration and regulation of the preschool education system in kindergartens and kindergartens"<sup>20</sup>. In addition to the competencies, the law provides for the responsibility "for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of educational buildings of the pre-university school system, with the exception of vocational schools" by the municipalities<sup>21</sup>.

In addition to the above-mentioned laws, there are various administrative instructions in force through which the implementation of laws for all school categories of the education system in Albania is done. Considering that the harmonization of national legislation with that of the EU is among the key issues of the Albanian state for the education of young people and their professional training as well as scientific qualification.

The *European Reform Agenda (ERA)* prioritizes three key areas: good governance and the rule of law, competitiveness and investment climate, and education and employment. For the third area of this document, education and culture, are defined the medium and immediate priorities reflected in the "*Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2020*"<sup>22</sup>, "*National Strategy for Higher Education (SKALA)*" and "*National Action Plan for Youth 2015-2020*"<sup>23</sup>. This important document presents the vision for the education we want for Albanian children and youth, as well as outlines the way for its fulfillment, by fulfilling the strategic priorities we have set for this sector. It meets the unfulfilled objectives of the strategy for the period 2009-2013 and clarifies and supports the process of improving the education system.

The Strategy document sets out the milestones for achieving change in the education sector. It does not include the development of vocational education, as its strategy has been previously developed by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (2013 - 15.05.2017), and from 24 September 2017, depending on the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE). The document sets out the national educational priorities for the period in question and thus constitutes a comprehensive platform within which institutional actors and stakeholders can contribute.

It is important that the drafted Strategy agrees with the main trends in the development of education in Europe and in the world. As such, it aims to: improve the quality of education for all; identify key activities and plan necessary budgets; to facilitate cooperation between government agencies, our partners and other groups interested in education, in terms of the scope of activities and investments in education, within the framework of a unified framework of conception, planning and financing<sup>24</sup>.

### 3. Research-Based and Data-Oriented Policy Development

There is a strong and positive relationship between educational level, individuals skills and labor market outcomes. This report is recognized in Albania and is reflected in the diverse reforms that have involved primary / secondary and secondary education, launched in the last decade. These reforms include curriculum reforms; increased teacher training; enabled more equitable distribution of resources between regions; improving learning conditions (classrooms with fewer students and less need for many school shifts); increasing the average salary of teachers; as well as reviewing the

20 Po aty, f. 16969. Neni 5, pika 12.

[Ibid, p. 16969. Article 5, point 12]

21 Jani Sota, *Pre-University Education in Post-Comunist Albania 1992-2013 - With a Foreword by Prof.PhD. Antonello Biagini (hereinafter: Pre-University Education in Post-Comunist Albania)*, Berlin: "LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing", 2018, pp. 26-27.

22 Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 2, 19 janar 2016, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2016, f. 15-58. Për miratimin e "Strategjisë së Zhvillimit të Arsimit Parauniversitar për periudhën 2014-2020". Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)

[Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 2, 19 January 2016, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2016, pp. 15-58. For the approval of the "Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education for the Period 2014-2020". Material published on the website: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]

23 Ministria e Mirëqenies Sociale dhe Rinisë, *Plani Kombëtar i Veprimit për Rininë 2015-2020, Miratuar me Vendim të Këshillit të Ministrave Nr. 383, datë 6 maj 2015, Tiranë, 2015, f. 1-99.*

[Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, *National Action Plan for Youth 2015-2020, Approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 383, dated May 6, 2015, Tirana, 2015, pp. 1-99.*]

24 Pëllumb Karameta, "Strategjia e reformimit të arsimit", në: *Shekulli Online, pjesë e grupit "Unipress sh.p.k"*, Tiranë, publikuar më 23 shkurt 2015 nga Elmaz Gorica. Material i botuar në faqen web site: <http://shekulli.com.al/strategjia-e-reformimit-te-arsimit/>

[Pëllumb Karameta, "Education Reform Strategy", in: *Shekulli Online, part of the group "Unipress sh.p.k"*, Tirana, published on February 23, 2015 by Elmaz Gorica. Material published on the web site: <http://shekulli.com.al/strategjia-e-reformimit-te-arsimit/>]



content and administration of exams at the end of secondary education.

In higher education the focus has been on implementing the Bologna process, increasing the number of students attending higher education and introducing short-cycle programs, pre-degree programs at regional universities.

Forms of education in educational institutions in Albania are full-time education, part-time education and distance education. Since 2008, full-time basic education is compulsory for all children who are Albanian citizens residing in the country from the age of 6 to the age of 16, with the exception of the cases provided in this law<sup>25</sup>. It consists of 9 years of basic education, of which Primary education consists of 5 classes and lower secondary education of 4 classes<sup>26</sup>. Students who have reached the age of 17 and have not completed full-time basic education are eligible to enroll in part-time basic education schools<sup>27</sup>. The types of upper secondary education are: gymnasium (general secondary education); vocational secondary education, which is divided into lower technical and higher; and oriented secondary education (art, sports, foreign language and pedagogical schools)<sup>28</sup>.

From 2009-2010, vocational education operates at three levels, providing students with general and vocational training (theoretical and practical), as well as preparing them for work and further education. 2-year programs at the first level aim at training semi-skilled workers. Students receive the basic vocational training certificate and can enter the labor market or continue their studies at the next level. At level II, one year, technicians are trained and students are provided with a vocational training certificate. Level III, which lasts another school year, paved the way for students to higher education. At the end of this level, students take the professional practice exam and the State Matura exam.

The tertiary education system in Albania is aligned with the Bologna Declaration and contains a three-year bachelor's degree, followed by a 1-2 year Master and three years of doctoral studies. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Sports undertook a comprehensive reform in the higher education sector starting with the evaluation of universities and the review of the legal framework.

Considering the great importance of the national education system as a service sector which will equip future Albanian citizens with the necessary knowledge, sufficient skills and skills, educated and committed to realize the national economic and development plan of the country - naturally there is a need to create a reliable database according to educational levels.

Data and statistical indicators for education are summarized in this paper, divided according to educational levels and progress in years (2012-2016) which in addition to writing and methodological, also contain tables and graphs to make this paper understandable. Thanks to the considerable number of indicators and data, the *Statistical Yearbooks* published by the Institute of Statistics in Tirana and the *Annual Statistical Reports* of the Ministry of Education remain the most important sources in our research work. They are undoubtedly instruments that orient this work in the multitude of data that are produced, instruments that enable the fulfillment of the ever-increasing demands for information of our society.

Without deviating from the topic of this paper, for the school year 2016-2017 compared to the first four years: the number of kindergartens in public and private education increased by 2%, which were mainly kindergartens with mixed groups, accompanied by this even with the increase in the number of children; the number of 9-year public schools in the school year has decreased by 7%; the number of secondary schools at this level of education also decreased by 1.5%. The decrease in the number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at this level of education is evidenced in 2016-2017 by 7%, thus reaching the number 32.

<sup>25</sup> Ligji Nr. 69/2012, datë 25.8.2015 "Për sistemin arsimor parauniversitar në Republikën e Shqipërisë" (Ndryshuar me Ligj, Nr. 56/2015, dt. 28.05.2015, në: Fletore Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 105 datë 23.06.2015) dhe aktet nënligjore në zbatim të tij, f. 18. Kreu III - Nivelet e arsimit parauniversitar. Neni 22 - Arsimi bazë, pika 4.

[Law No. 69/2012, dated 25.8.2015 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania" (Amended by Law, No. 56/2015, dated 28.05.2015, in: Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 105 dated 23.06.2015) and bylaws in its implementation, p. 18. Chapter III - Levels of Pre-University Education. Article 22 - Basic Education, point 4.]

<sup>26</sup> Po aty, f. 17-18, pika 2.

[Ibid., pp. 17-18, point 12.]

<sup>27</sup> Po aty, pika 4.

[Ibid., point 4.]

<sup>28</sup> Po aty, f. 18. Neni 24 - Llojet e arsimit të mesëm të lartë, pika 1.

[Ibid., p. 18. Article 24 - Types of upper secondary education, point 1.]

**Table 1: Educational institutions according to levels of education**

School / Academic Year	2012 -2013		2013 -2014		2014 -2015		2015 -2016		2016 -2017	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Kindergarten	1.778	133	1.773	127	1.751	106	1.773	124	1.831	133
Middle school	1.346	126	1.337	127	1.372	121	1.284	120	1.249	121
High school	385	126	386	126	381	116	381	119	380	124
Higher Education Institutions	14	44	14	44	14	27	12	23	12	22

Albanian education during the five years (2012/2013 - 2016/2017) has continued its decline by turning into non-mass education. Thus, according to data and statistical indicators for education, "gross report (GER)"\* of those enrolled in primary education for the school year 2016-2017 is 104% and in the upper cycle of 9-year education is 96.7%, while students in secondary education is 94.7%<sup>29</sup>. In the same year, "the net ratio of those enrolled in primary education is 97.5% and in the upper cycle of basic education 86.8%. Students enrolled in secondary education is 77.1%"<sup>30</sup>. The majority of students in secondary education are high school students of 79.4%<sup>31</sup>.

This performance is presented in the following tables:

**Table 2: Gross enrollment ratio by level of education**

ISCED Levels	School / Academic Year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
0	Children in kindergartens	79,5	80,1	82,3	83,3	81,5
1	Pupils in the elementary	99,8	102,7	103,7	103,0	104,0
2	Pupils in the upper cycle of basic education	103,1	101,7	102,2	100,6	96,7
3	Pupils in secondary education	95,5	100,0	96,2	93,2	94,7
6+7+8	Students in higher education	63,1	64,1	60,5	56,8	56,0
0 - 8	Total enrolled in education	86,6	87,8	86,6	84,3	83,6

**Table 3: Raporti neto i regjistrimit sipas niveleve të arsimit**

ISCED Levels	School / Academic Year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
0	Children in kindergartens	73,4	73,5	75,4	76,9	77,7
1	Pupils in the elementary	91,8	95,8	96,2	96,0	97,5
2	Pupils in the upper cycle of basic education	91,5	91,0	91,4	89,7	86,8
3	Pupils in secondary education	70,3	76,1	75,6	74,7	77,1

In the school year 2016-2017, the number of students in pre-university education marked a continuous decrease in absolute value. In the same year, the number of students in secondary education has decreased by 17.7%, compared to 2012-2013, students in vocational education show an increase of 4.1%<sup>32</sup>. The decrease in the number of students in absolute value follows the decrease in the population of the age group belonging to pre-university education. Among students enrolled in 9-year education, girls occupy 47.4%<sup>33</sup>.

The structure of students in secondary education has changed over the years in favor of vocational education.

\* Gross enrollment ratio (GER) is the number of enrollees in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population, corresponding to the same level of education. [Authors note]

<sup>29</sup> Po aty, f. 49.

[Ibid., p. 49.]

<sup>30</sup> Po aty.

[Ibid.]

<sup>31</sup> INSTAT, Statistika të regjistrimeve në arsim 2017-2018 (më tej: Statistika të regjistrimeve ...), f. 2. Material i publikuar nga Instituti i Statistikave në web site: [www.instat.gov.al](http://www.instat.gov.al)

[INSTAT, Statistics of Enrollment in Education 2017-2018 (hereinafter: Statistics of Enrollment ...), p. 2. Material published by the Institute of Statistics on the web site: [www.instat.gov.al](http://www.instat.gov.al)]

<sup>32</sup> Po aty, f. 44.

[Ibid., p. 44.]

<sup>33</sup> INSTAT, Statistika të regjistrimeve ..., f. 2. Material i publikuar nga Instituti i Statistikave në web site: [www.instat.gov.al](http://www.instat.gov.al) [INSTAT, Registration Statistics ..., p. 2. Material published by the Institute of Statistics on the web site: [www.instat.gov.al](http://www.instat.gov.al)]

Also, "graduates of vocational secondary education (VET) in 2016, have increased 1.6 times compared to 2012"<sup>34</sup>.

**Figure 2: Distribution of vocational schools and vocational training centers**



If we refer to the data of the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) for 2016, the number of students enrolled in AMP has marked an increase of 3.3% compared to the previous four years, and position Albania close to the average of developed countries. In the EU, vocational schools are generally a second choice, especially for students who have not been able to enroll in gymnasiums. In an effort to improve quality in vocational schools, the AMP system has undergone ongoing reforms related to curriculum review, business communication, teacher training and more. However, efforts to improve the quality and adaptation of education to market needs have not been sufficient and these shortcomings are affecting students' employment opportunities. In order not to fall into repetition, it will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs of this paper.

Not deviating from the topic in question, despite the relatively good enrollment rate at all three levels of education, the situation assessments made by MASR and studies by UNICEF indicate that school dropout continues, and the phenomenon of residence is present. of children outside the education system. Such a situation has shown that approximately 35.7% of peers do not receive or have not received secondary education in Albania. According to data and statistical indicators of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY) for 2012, it results that "the proportion of people who left school earlier in Albania (eg young people aged 18-24 with at least lower secondary education), was approximately the rate recorded in the EU (31.6% and 17%, respectively)"<sup>35</sup>.

**Table 4: Pupils and students enrolled in education**

ISCED Levels	School / Academic Year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
1 - 8	<b>Total:</b>	<b>719.509</b>	<b>704.782</b>	<b>665.994</b>	<b>622.156</b>	<b>596.624</b>
	<b>In the 9-year Education</b>					
1	In elementary school	198.897	195.720	188.371	179.564	174.836
2	In the upper cycle of basic education	191.940	181.354	175.037	163.935	153.264
3	<b>In Secondary Education</b>	<b>154.425</b>	<b>151.937</b>	<b>140.042</b>	<b>130.380</b>	<b>127.114</b>
	In high school	130.137	124.619	112.775	104.952	101.995
	In professional schools	24.288	273.18	272.67	25.428	25.119
4	In post-secondary education not higher	1.686	1.952	2.017	1.521	1.803
6+7+8	<b>In High Education</b>	<b>172.561</b>	<b>173.819</b>	<b>16.0527</b>	<b>146.756</b>	<b>139.607</b>

From the careful analysis of measuring instruments from Eastern European countries, I want to draw attention to the fact

34 INSTAT, *Vjetari statistikor 2017*, f. 44. [INSTAT, *Statistical Yearbook 2017*, p. 44.]

35 MMSR, *Strategjia Kombëtare për Punësim ...*, f. 21. [MoSWY, *National Employment Strategy ...*, p. 21.]

that, "the enrollment rate at all levels is still lower than the average recorded in Eastern European countries"<sup>36</sup>.

**Table 5: Gross census reports in Eastern Europe, for 2016**

United	Preschool (ISCED 0)	Primary/Elementary (ISCED 1)	Or Secondary (ISCED 2-3)	On Tertiary (ISCED 5-6)
Albania	57,5	85,9	90,9	43,9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17,3	90,4	89,3	38,1
Bulgaria	794	102,5	88,8	56,9
Croatia	61,3	93,0	95,7	54,1
Czech Republic	108,4	105,7	90,3	63,5
Macedonia (FYR)	25,4	90,0	83,7	38,6
Montenegro	40,2	118,8	96,7	47,6
Poland	71,1	98,6	97,0	72,3
Romania	79,0	95,9	97,1	58,8
Serbia	53,1	94,8	91,4	50,7
Slovak Republic	91,0	101,0	90,3	54,8
Slovenia	89,7	98,4	97,3	89,6
<b>Average Eastern Europe</b>	<b>65,1</b>	<b>99,0</b>	<b>92,5</b>	<b>56,8</b>

Particularly high is the interest in pursuing higher education, which reaches the largest number of enrolled students in 2013 with 24.5% more than in 2016<sup>37</sup>. The increase in the number of students is evident in all universities and higher, in the University of Tirana 32%, in the Agricultural University 30%, in the University of Durrës 27%, in the University of Vlora 20% and in all other universities with an increase of about 10%.

After 2013, the main directions in which higher education aims to develop, is the demand for high quality universities, oriented towards scientific research, especially abroad. The suspension of the activity of some private institutions that did not offer the required quality, was also the reason for the reduction of the number of students in the last two years taken in the study.

The student/teacher<sup>38</sup> ratio is another indirect measure of the quality of the education system. It shows the imputation of the number of children, students in relation to human resources in public education in the full-time system according to educational levels as presented in the following table:

**Table 6: Student to teacher ratio**

ISCED Levels	School / Academic year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
	<b>In public education</b>					
1	Pupils in elementary	19,4	19,1	18,9	18,3	18,2
2	Pupils in the upper cycle of basic education	13,2	12,6	12,2	11,1	10,4
3	Pupils in secondary education	17,7	17	16,2	15	14,4
	<b>In non-public education</b>					
1	Pupils in elementary	15,4	16	15,3	16,4	15,1
2	Pupils in the upper cycle of basic education	8,7	8,8	8,3	7,8	7,6
3	Pupils in secondary education	8,9	9,7	9,1	8,2	9

The table shows that the student-to-teacher ratio from September 2012 to June 2017 has gradually decreased in mass: 18.2 in primary education, 10.4 in the 9-year upper secondary school cycle, and 14.4 for primary schools. medium. Courses in private educational institutions are: 15.1 in primary, 7.6 in upper secondary education, and 9 in secondary education<sup>38</sup>.

Following the changes in the pre-university education system made about 8 years ago, initiatives to ensure the

<sup>36</sup> Po aty. [Ibid.]

<sup>37</sup> INSTAT, Vjetari statistikor 2016-2017 ..., f. 24. [INSTAT, Statistical Yearbook 2016-2017 ..., p. 24.]

<sup>\*</sup> Student-to-teacher ratio is the ratio of the number of students enrolled in a given level of education to the number of students in the same level. [Authors note]

<sup>38</sup> Po aty. [Ibid.]

quality of services provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MSRS) and the General Directorate of Pre-University Education (DPAP)<sup>39</sup> oriented a new essential philosophy, which was not about policy making and control, but about monitoring, aiming at improving the system and human capacities in teaching according to pre-university education levels where the strengths and weaknesses of the situation are identified achievements and shortcomings of the education service and, at the same time, has proposed concrete measures in the framework of the reform of this sector, related to the pace of decentralization of responsibilities and decision-making authority, from the central to the local level in this sector, are currently not satisfactory. We think that this policy has important implications not only for MASR, but for all stakeholders, in terms of increasing quality, efficiency of educational services and labor market policies.

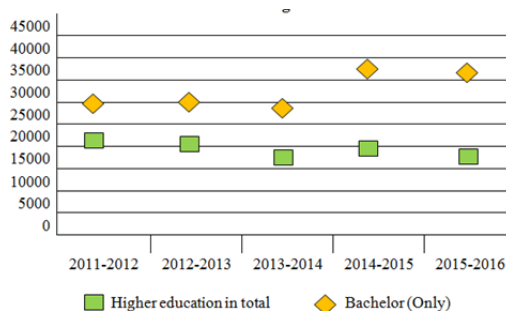
**Table 7: Graduated according to the educational levels of pre-university education**

		Number				
ISCED Levels	School / Academic year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
	<b>Graduates in Education:</b>					
2	Middle school	50.380	47.819	44.139	44.001	43.084
3	Secondary school	40.927	45.899	35.254	39.629	38.583
	Professional (Only)	28.44	4.322	3.136	4.702	5.369
4	After high school not higher	242	145	164	125	335

Given the fact that the Albanian government seeks to develop the country with the capacity to integrate it into the EU and other neighboring countries, it is highly necessary to develop national indicators based on increasing responsibility for qualification according to the requirements of the market economy. and the EU, but which require a fundamental conceptual change on HEIs, which in turn should focus on branches where employment requirements are greatest or provide lifelong learning opportunities.

From this point of view, we think that an important indicator in higher education is the number of graduates in undergraduate programs (Bachelor). But in our analysis, we are only dwelling on some data and statistical indicators, highlighting some key moments, in different periods taken in the study for graduates in higher education. Based on them, this picture will be outlined:

**Graph 1: Graduates in higher education**



As can be seen from 2016, 59.2% of graduate students in higher education graduate. The remaining 40% consists mainly of those who graduate in the second cycle study programs (Master) and a small percentage in the third cycle study program (Doctorate)<sup>39</sup>.

From the comparison of graduates in higher education during the period 2012-2016, between broad fields of study, it results that the largest number of them, belongs to the field of social sciences, business and law. The second place is occupied by the field of health and welfare, however the number of graduates in this field is 1/3 of those in the field of social in 2016, which goes up to 2/5 in 2015 and 2016. Natural sciences and engineering, still hold not very high values among graduates, however have an increase of 1.2% compared to 2012 and 2016<sup>40</sup>.

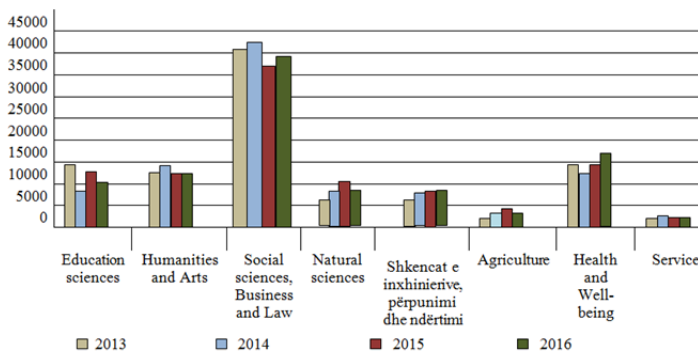
<sup>39</sup> Po aty, f. 44 [Ibid., p. 44.]

<sup>40</sup> Po aty, f. 45. [Ibid., p. 45.]

**Table 8: Graduates in higher education according to fields of study**

Fields of Study	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
Education sciences	32,797	13349	15426	13654	11236
Humanities and Arts	9,490	21219	20801	17588	17095
Social sciences, Business and Law	51,624	67823	66117	52551	53760
Natural sciences	11,585	15598	15133	20033	14630
Engineering Sciences, Processing and Construction	15,002	17997	18391	18728	18005
Agriculture	11,159	9987	9039	10171	8383
Health and Well-being	20,522	24267	25667	22780	21387
Service	5,147	2321	3245	5022	2250
Unknown	1,637				
<b>Total</b>	<b>158963</b>	<b>172561</b>	<b>173819</b>	<b>160527</b>	<b>146746</b>

**Graph 2: Graduates by fields of study**



Another important indicator in education is the ratio of pupils and students per 1,000 inhabitants. In this process, however, statistical indicators, as instruments that guide readers and interest groups, contribute, not only to reach accurate and final conclusions, but mostly to outline some phenomena and trends.

But if you refer to the data above, regarding the number of pupils and students per 1,000 inhabitants, after 2012 it turns out that this ratio is declining for several reasons. One of the main factors is that Albanian students, but also students, often prefer to study abroad. The aging of the population in Albania is another factor that affects the reduction of the number of pupils and students attending school institutions in our country.

**Table 9: Number of pupils and students per 1,000 inhabitants**

School / Academic year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
Pupplis per 1.000 inhabitants	188	183	174	164	158
Students per 1.000 inhabitants	59	60	55	51	49

Analyzing the indicators above, it turns out that this ratio is declining for several reasons. One of the main factors is that Albanian students, but also students, often prefer to study abroad. The aging of the population in Albania is another factor that affects the reduction of the number of pupils and students attending school institutions in our country.

Examining the positive / negative sides and limitations of any data on the levels of the education system in Albania, we think that efficiency and effectiveness can be increased through careful implementation of interdisciplinary capacities for primary education teachers and at least competencies up to two disciplines. teaching for secondary school teachers about which much has been spoken and written by experienced specialists, methodologists and teachers. These actions may reduce the total number of teachers, but will help improve the teacher-student ratio and make the Albanian education system comparable to that of the countries in the region. But to achieve this, we think it is necessary to study the needs for human resources of the country, in accordance with development strategies as well as the study of resilient

forms of the education system, in order to meet these needs. Of course, this requires the opinion of everyone who has the ability, but also the desire to contribute to such an important issue for the country. The university education system is the one that most obviously shocks and tempts us in the debates related to the conceptual change in the creation and development of human resources. More specifically, we want to say that those HEIs that do not offer study programs in accordance with national priorities, do not keep pace with the development and have instability in their institutional development should be reduced.

Throughout the period 2012-2016, the number of teachers involved in public and non-public education by level of education has been increasing for 9-year and high schools, compared to HEIs. This trend corresponds to the largest number of students in 9-year education. There are a total of 24,866 teachers who make up 21.5% of the employed population of the Republic of Albania and 1.4% of employees in the public sector.

**Table 10: Stafi mësimdhënës**

School / Academic year	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2014 -2015	2015 -2016	2016 -2017
Teacher in the 9-year education	25263	205051	24777	25007	24866
Teachers in secondary education	8610	8606	8671	8942	9042
Effective teaching body in higher education	4683	4904	4626	4609	4325

But, meanwhile the number of teachers in higher education after an increase until 2013, had a downward trend during the period 2014-2016, reaching at the end of this period the lowest value of 2012 with 82.7% (Tab . 10). The significant decrease in the number of students in public and non-public education has been accompanied by a decrease in the number of professors reaching the figure of 284 and constitutes a 65.6% decrease compared to a year ago (2015).

The number of female lecturers occupies 46.3% of the total number of lecturers when the average of the OCED countries of this report is 36.1%. Taking into account the number of external lecturers, the average student / lecturer ratio for the academic year 2016-2017 is 11.3.

It is important that at the beginning of each academic year, HEIs, through coordinators, provide information to the AMS on the academic staff for the academic year, possible departures and recruitments, possible structural changes, active and inactive programs, students attending studies for this year academic in any study program etc. The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAL) compares the data in accordance with the standards and criteria for quality assurance and for some institutions has requested additional information or data correction. Case by case analyzes are sent to the head of ASCAL and the Accreditation Board.

For a further concretization of the national priorities of higher education: *Diplomas with professional value according to the offer of the labor market*, MASR has recently reviewed the conditions for licensing universities in our country. After 2015, the instructions of the Ministry of Education generally contain stricter criteria for licensing HEIs, which require that entities licensed in higher education must open branches and programs related to the labor market. This requires stakeholders to identify how the proposed program fits into national employment policies.

Based on the new way of conception and functioning of higher education, always focusing on the licensing of HEIs, without intending to develop a general analysis, we will try to dwell more on those aspects and mutual institutional relations. , which have the greatest impact on the implementation of the new law of 2015 in higher education institutions, their reorganization and study programs in accordance with the labor market in Albania.

Based on the documentation of the time, always based on Law 80/2015, it turns out that the evaluation within the licensing of new study programs of HEIs, is the competence of the ministry responsible for higher education. Due to the fact that the years 2016 and 2017 coincide not only with the transitional period of implementation of the new law, but also with the consolidation of the units responsible for this process in MASR such as ASCAL, which is directly committed to the implementation of this process.

Referring to the data, "although the evaluations within the licensing have decreased significantly compared to other years, ASCAL in 2016 has conducted 23 evaluation processes within the licensing, of which 9 are for the opening of study programs in public HEIs and 14 for opening programs in private HEIs, and in 2017 ASCAL conducted 16 evaluation processes within the licensing, 14 from private HEIs and 2 from public HEIs"<sup>41</sup>.

41 Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë (ASCAL), Raport informimi aktiviteti i Institucioneve të Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë për periudhën 2016-2017, Tiranë: Shkurt 2018, f. 22.[Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAL), Information Report on the Activity of Quality Assurance Institutions in Higher Education for the Period 2016-2017, Tirana: February 2018, p. 22.]

While the decision-making is the responsibility of the Minister responsible for higher education, the Accreditation Board (Accreditation Council, year 2016) has forwarded the relevant decisions in the form of a recommendation for the opening or not of these programs. Thus, "out of 114 programs evaluated, 109 were evaluated positively and 5 negatively, recommending on a case-by-case basis the opening or not of these programs"<sup>42</sup>.

Regarding the accreditation of study programs, this process has proceeded normally despite the commitment of ASCAL with the accreditation of institutions. It is worth noting that even during this period, ASCAL has conducted accreditation or re-accreditation processes of programs in non-public institutions of higher education. A total of 79 accreditation procedures were conducted in 2016 and 73 in 2017<sup>43</sup>.

Since the evaluation process takes time, we must say that there are other evaluation procedures that are under development and will be completed after 2017. The goal is for the education system in Albania to be linked to national priorities to keep pace with the times and to be reoriented to the needs offered by the labor market in our country rather than the foreign market.

Finally we would like to dwell briefly on the main factor - private education. It is beyond any doubt that the private education sector grew rapidly after the dissolution of the communist regime and the beginning of the market economy in Albania. At the turn of the millennium, private preschool education providers were negligible at 0.2. This changed rapidly and the latest statistics in the country show that private pre-school education accounts for 8.4% of the total number of pre-school institutions and about 6% of the total number of children enrolled in pre-school education<sup>44</sup>. At the level of basic education, private schools make up 8.5% of the total number of schools and provide educational services for 7.2% of the total number of students<sup>45</sup>.

In general, education in private institutions seems to present a number of advantages for students in Albania. Among them are the most convenient schedule, classes with a smaller number of students and pre-arranged transportation. Also, some private schools are attractive to students due to the infrastructure provided and the chosen capacity of the teaching staff. They have well-equipped ICT laboratories and well-trained teachers<sup>46</sup> as well as laboratories of other subjects. The tuition fee ranges from 50-80 € to 200-300 € per month<sup>47</sup>, which has important implications for equality, especially between rural and urban communities.

Pursuant to Law 69/2012 "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania"<sup>48</sup> and related bylaws, "upon obtaining a license, private schools have rights and obligations almost identical to those of public schools". Essentially, this means that the same level of control used for public schools can be applied to private schools. In addition, similarly to higher education institutions, if necessary, the government may choose "to use licensing, regulation and inspection to prevent the private education sector from expanding beyond dimensions that can guarantee quality"<sup>49</sup>.

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42 Po aty.[Ibid.]

43 Po aty.[Ibid.]

44 UNESCO, *Shqipëria. Analiza e Politikës Arsimore: Çështje dhe Rekomandime (Raporti i zgjeruar), botim i Seksionit të Politikës Arsimore (ED/PLS/EDP), Paris, Gusht 2017, f. 41. Shih edhe: J. Sota, Pre-University Education in Post-Communist Albania ..., p. 192.*

[UNESCO, Albania. *Education Policy Analysis: Issues and Recommendations (Extended Report), Publication of the Education Policy Section (ED / PLS / EDP), Paris, August 2017, p. 41. See also: J. Sota, Pre-University Education in Post-Communist Albania ..., p. 192.]*

45 *Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit (MAS), Urdhër 363, datë 16.09.2014 për përcaktimin e nivelit arsimor të mësuesit në institucionet publike të arsimit parauniversitar, f. 14-15. Material i publikuar në web site: [http://www.klasavirtuale.com/uploads/2/9/3/5/29359071/percaktimi\\_i\\_nivelit\\_arsimor\\_te\\_mesuesve\\_urdheri\\_363\\_i\\_mas.pdf](http://www.klasavirtuale.com/uploads/2/9/3/5/29359071/percaktimi_i_nivelit_arsimor_te_mesuesve_urdheri_363_i_mas.pdf) (Aksesuar më 12 October 2015.)*[Ministry of Education and Sports (MES), Order 363, dated 16.09.2014 On Determining the Educational Level of Teachers in Public Institutions of Pre-University Education, pp. 14-15. Material published on the web site: [http://www.klasavirtuale.com/uploads/2/9/3/5/29359071/percaktimi\\_i\\_nivelit\\_arsimor\\_te\\_mesuesve\\_urdheri\\_363\\_i\\_mas.pdf](http://www.klasavirtuale.com/uploads/2/9/3/5/29359071/percaktimi_i_nivelit_arsimor_te_mesuesve_urdheri_363_i_mas.pdf) (Accessed 12 October 2015.)]

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 *Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 87, 26 korrik 2012, botimi Qendër së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Publikimeve Zyrtare", 2012, f. 4402-4426. Ligji Nr. 69, datë 21.6.2012 "Për arsimin e lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë". 24 nene. Material i botuar në faqen web site: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al) [Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 87, July 26, 2012, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2012, pp. 4402-4426. Law No. 69, dated 21.6.2012 "On higher education in the Republic of Albania". 24 nene. Material published on the website: [www.qpz.gov.al](http://www.qpz.gov.al)]*

49 *Council of Europe, Project Against Corruption in Albania. Underpinning Integrity in the Albanian Education System: Compilation of PACA Outputs. Albania: "Maluka Printing House", 2012, p. 159.*



#### 4. The Labor Market Situation in Albania in the Period 2012-2016

However, what was clarified above is only one side of the coin. It should be noted that there are several factors that can significantly affect. Employment statistics between 2012-2016, as a structural indicator reflect the structure of labor markets and the continuity of the business cycle in Albania. They are an important indicator in the social and economic aspect - the main source for drafting many policies of the Albanian government that influence the drafting of strategies for the expansion and improvement of the education system, focusing on branches that provide greater employment in the labor market.

Labor market needs analysis and investing in human capital skills that meets market demand is an essential mechanism for economic growth and development. The great contribution of human capital can only be appreciated when the economy is able to make good use of its resources. In this respect the labor market is efficient when the labor supply meets the demand.

A special feature of the labor market in Albania is the consistently high unemployment rate, which is associated with low levels of job creation. The low unemployment rate hinders long-term economic growth as long-term unemployed workers risk losing their skills and knowledge, which makes their future employment challenging. As a result, a vicious circle of poverty and low economic growth is created<sup>50</sup>.

Let us dwell more specifically on those data and statistical indicators related to the labor market situation in Albania for the period between 2012-2016. On the basis of the performance of employment indicators we can judge objectively on the situation of the economy, but also with the follow-up to show significant differences by gender, age and educational level.

The data of the "Labor Force Survey 2016" show that about two thirds of the population belong to the working age group (15-64 years) and this category of labor force is expected to grow rapidly in the next ten years. New labor market demographically characterized by strong labor supply. Statistics show that about 35 to 40 thousand young people have entered working age each year during the period 2012-2016<sup>51</sup>. However, the labor force readiness rate which indicates the percentage of persons of working age who are either employed or actively looking for work is very low. The statistics of 2016 show that the labor force participation rate in Albania is 48.7%.

The labor force participation rate is quite low in Albania compared to other European countries that have a participation rate of 71.8%. Compared to the region, Albania also has the lowest rate. In the Western Balkans, the turnout is between 60 and 64%, with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also has a low turnout of 44.1%<sup>52</sup>.

The remaining 51.3% of the working age population are economically inactive, including students, housewives, able-bodied but able-bodied age groups, and individuals who are not actively seeking work. Although inactive labor is not counted as labor supply, it is important to consider because it can have a major impact on labor supply in the future. The longer they remain out of the labor market, the more individuals' abilities fade and their future employment opportunities are negatively affected, which in turn affects the economy in the longer term.

**Table 11: Employment rate by gender and age group**

Gender and Age Group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.140.097</b>	<b>1.023.688</b>	<b>1.037.061</b>	<b>1.086.612</b>	<b>1.157.177</b>
15 - 29	229.666	198.886	198.929	205.355	211.461
30 - 64	873.704	790.892	807.146	85.444	908.506
64 +	43.426	33.909	30.986	30.813	37.210
15 - 64	1.096.111	986.779	1.006.075	1.055.799	1.119.967
<b>Men</b>	<b>637.119</b>	<b>562.887</b>	<b>585.679</b>	<b>620.612</b>	<b>650.201</b>
15 - 29	136.093	115.204	118.726	129.678	126.322
30 - 64	473.225	424.899	446.325	470.137	498.115
64 +	27.801	22.784	20.628	20.789	25.764
15 - 64	609.318	540.103	565.051	599.815	624.437
<b>Females</b>	<b>502.977</b>	<b>460.801</b>	<b>451.382</b>	<b>466.000</b>	<b>506.976</b>

50 A. E., Hanushek & D. D. (2000) Kimko, "Schooling, Labor-Force Quality, and the Growth of Nations", in: *The American Review*, Vol. 90, No. 5, pp. 1184-1208.

51 *Ibid.*

52 *Ibid.*

Gender and Age Group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
15 - 29	86.874	83.682	80.203	75.678	85.139
30 - 64	400.479	365.993	360.821	380.307	410.391
64 +	15.625	11.125	10.358	10.015	11.446
15 - 64	487.352	449.675	441.024	455.985	495.530

Throughout the period 2012-2016, show that the employment rate for the age group 15-64 years, after a decrease from 55.9% in 2012 to 49.9% in 2013, had an increasing trend throughout the period 2014- 2016, reaching the end of this period the value of 2012 with 59.9% (Tab. 12).

**Table 12: Employment rate by gender and age group**

Gender and Age Group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,6</b>	<b>44,1</b>	<b>44,3</b>	<b>46,2</b>	<b>48,7</b>
15 - 29	34,5	28,2	28,2	29,8	32,4
30 - 64	66,4	61,8	62,7	65,2	67,2
64 +	13,0	10,1	8,9	8,6	10,1
15 - 64	55,9	49,9	50,5	52,9	55,9
<b>Men</b>	<b>55,9</b>	<b>50,7</b>	<b>51,4</b>	<b>53,3</b>	<b>54,7</b>
15 - 29	38,8	33,7	33,0	35,8	36,3
30 - 64	75,4	70,8	72,7	74,8	75,4
64 +	17,4	13,6	12,4	12,0	14,3
15 - 64	62,2	57,3	58,0	60,5	61,9
<b>Females</b>	<b>43,5</b>	<b>38,0</b>	<b>37,6</b>	<b>39,2</b>	<b>42,8</b>
15 - 29	29,4	23,0	23,3	23,1	28,0
30 - 64	58,3	53,9	53,6	56,3	59,3
64 +	15.625	6,6	5,7	5,3	6,0
15 - 64	487.352	43,1	43,4	45,5	49,7

As seen from Tab. 12, employment rates vary considerably according to the highest level of education. Thus for the population aged 15-64, the employment rate is significantly higher for persons with education and those with vocational secondary education and this is observed during the period under study (Tab. 13).

**Table 13: Employment rate by gender and educational level**

Gender and Educational Level	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total (15 - 64)</b>	<b>55,9</b>	<b>49,9</b>	<b>50,5</b>	<b>52,9</b>	<b>55,9</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	52,7	45,3	46,7	50,2	52,5
Secondary professional	71,9	68,7	64,5	63,8	64,5
General secondary	50,7	43,0	44,5	47,1	52,3
High	67,1	67,1	66,5	64,4	66,6
<b>Men (15 - 64)</b>	<b>62,2</b>	<b>57,3</b>	<b>58,0</b>	<b>60,5</b>	<b>61,9</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	57,2	51,8	53,0	55,5	57,2
Secondary professional	76,6	76,4	75,0	72,8	71,2
General secondary	60,4	52,2	53,4	57,9	62,1
High	71,7	70,6	70,6	71,4	69,4
<b>Females (15 - 64)</b>	<b>49,6</b>	<b>43,1</b>	<b>43,4</b>	<b>45,5</b>	<b>49,7</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	48,7	40,1	41,3	45,3	48,3
Secondary professional	64,0	56,8	48,2	51,2	54,9
General secondary	40,4	33,7	34,7	34,9	40,3
High	62,9	64,2	63,1	58,9	64,4

Based on the above data we conclude that in 2016 the employment indicator for persons with higher education marked the value 66.6%, for employees with higher vocational education 64.5%, for those with education up to 8 / 9 years 52.3% and for those with different general secondary education is 52.3%.

In terms of employment by occupational group, 50.7% of employees aged 15 and over work as "Employees of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Crafts" in 2016, followed by the groups of "Clerks, Sales Employees and services" and "Managers, professionals and technicians" with 17.8% and 17.7% respectively in 2016. Employees in the groups "Equipment and machinery assembly workers" and "Elementary occupations" occupy a low percentage with respectively 7.4% and 6.1% of workers aged 15 and over in 2016 (Tab. 10).

**Table 14: Employment rate by gender and occupation group**

Gender and Group-occupations	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.140.097</b>	<b>1.023.688</b>	<b>1.037.061</b>	<b>1.086.612</b>	<b>1.157.177</b>
Manager, Professionals and Technicians	13,6	16,5	17,7	17,3	17,7
Clerks, Sales and service employees	18,0	17,8	16,3	17,9	17,8
Employees of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Handicrafts	58,6	56,5	53,5	52,4	50,7
Equipment and Machinery Assembly Workers	6,0	5,5	6,4	6,5	7,4
Elementary professions	3,4	3,1	5,6	5,2	6,1
Armed forces	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,6	0,4
<b>Men</b>	<b>637.119</b>	<b>562.887</b>	<b>585.679</b>	<b>620.612</b>	<b>650.201</b>
Manager, Professionals and Technicians	12,0	14,2	15,6	14,2	15,3
Clerks, Sales and service employees	20,3	20,2	17,9	19,8	19,1
Employees of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Handicrafts	55,6	54,9	53,2	53,2	51,5
Equipment and Machinery Assembly Workers	8,5	6,8	7,3	7,1	8,2
Elementary professions	3,0	3,2	5,3	4,8	5,3
Armed forces	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,9	0,6
<b>Females</b>	<b>502.977</b>	<b>460.801</b>	<b>451.382</b>	<b>466.000</b>	<b>506.976</b>
Manager, Professionals and Technicians	15,7	19,4	20,4	21,5	20,8
Clerks, Sales and service employees	15,0	14,8	14,2	51,2	16,0
Employees of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Handicrafts	62,5	58,6	53,6	5,8	49,6
Equipment and Machinery Assembly Workers	2,8	4,0	5,2	5,8	6,4
Elementary professions	3,8	2,9	6,2	5,8	7,0
Armed forces	...	...	...	...	0,1

Labor market statistics are also very important for the drafting of employment policies in the Republic of Albania, without detaching it from the problems related to the graduation of young people according to educational levels. An essential indicator is the unemployment rate, ie the share of the unemployed who are considered an active force.

Current unemployment statistics in Albania, first in the five-year period 2012-2016, provide a dynamic picture of the situation of the unemployed in the labor market. Thus, "in 2012 is marked the lowest value of the unemployment rate with 13.8% for the age group of the population 15-64 years. After 2012, the unemployment rate has an increasing trend marking the highest value in "in 2014, by 17.9%. While in 2016 there is a decrease of this indicator by 1.9 percentage points compared to 2015, marking the value of 15.6%"<sup>53</sup>.

**Table 15: Unemployment by gender and age group**

Gender and age group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>175.703</b>	<b>194.043</b>	<b>219.797</b>	<b>223.864</b>	<b>207.770</b>
15 - 29	78.494	74.447	95.922	102.025	86.148
30 - 64	97.107	119.059	123.440	121.506	120.995
15 - 64	175.602	193.506	219.362	223.531	207.143
<b>Men</b>	<b>109.188</b>	<b>121.874</b>	<b>138.851</b>	<b>127.770</b>	<b>122.805</b>
15 - 29	53.953	48.656	65.721	61.843	53.396
30 - 64	55.134	72.682	72.771	65.594	68.978
15 - 64	109.087	121.337	138.492	127.437	122.374
<b>Females</b>	<b>66.515</b>	<b>72.169</b>	<b>80.946</b>	<b>96.094</b>	<b>84.965</b>
15 - 29	24.541	25.791	30.202	40.182	32.752

<sup>53</sup> Po aty, f. 59.[*ibid.*, p. 59.]

Gender and age group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
30 - 64	41.973	46.377	50.669	55.912	52.017
15 - 64	66.515	72.169	80.870	96.094	84.769

**Table 16: Unemployment by gender and age group**

% to the economically inactive population

Gender and age group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>11,8</b>	<b>10,0</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>7,2</b>
15 - 29	7,0	11,8	11,1	9,1	7,4
30 - 64	16,2	21,2	17,7	15,5	14,4
15 - 64	11,6	16,1	14,2	12,1	10,7
<b>Men</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>12,7</b>	<b>11,5</b>	<b>10,0</b>	<b>9,4</b>
15 - 29	7,2	13,8	13,5	11,9	9,3
30 - 64	20,7	28,4	25,3	22,8	24,8
15 - 64	12,3	19,2	17,6	15,7	14,9
<b>Females</b>	<b>8,1</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>9,1</b>	<b>7,2</b>	<b>5,7</b>
15 - 29	6,7	10,4	9,3	6,9	5,6
30 - 64	14,4	18,4	14,9	12,7	10,2
15 - 64	11,1	14,5	12,3	10,0	8,1

Unemployment rates vary by educational level. As shown in Table 16, the highest unemployment rate is among persons without education (73.9%) and the lowest among persons with higher education (19%). In the years 2012-2016, the unemployment rate for the 15-64 age group, continues to be higher for people with general secondary education. It marks the value of 18.9% in 2016 for this category. For the same population it is observed that there is a significant difference between the unemployment rate for persons with general secondary education and those with vocational secondary education throughout the period 2012-2016. This difference in 2016 is 4.0% more for the unemployed with general secondary education compared to those with vocational secondary education (Tab. 17).

**Table 17: Unemployment rate by gender and educational level**

Gender and education level	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total (15 - 64)</b>	<b>13,8</b>	<b>16,4</b>	<b>17,9</b>	<b>17,5</b>	<b>15,6</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	12,3	14,8	15,1	14,0	13,3
Secondary professional	10,6	11,8	13,6	14,8	14,9
General secondary	17,5	23,2	25,2	23,2	18,9
High	16,2	15,0	17,3	19,2	17,1
<b>Men (15 - 64)</b>	<b>15,2</b>	<b>18,3</b>	<b>19,7</b>	<b>17,5</b>	<b>16,4</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	15,2	18,3	18,7	16,1	15,5
Secondary professional	10,4	12,2	13,0	13,4	15,4
General secondary	19,3	25,0	26,4	22,0	18,2
High	12,6	13,6	16,1	16,6	16,5
<b>Females (15 - 64)</b>	<b>12,0</b>	<b>13,8</b>	<b>15,5</b>	<b>17,4</b>	<b>14,6</b>
Up to 8/9 years old	9,0	10,9	10,8	11,6	48,3
Secondary professional	10,9	11,2	15,0	17,4	14,1
General secondary	14,7	20,3	23,0	25,5	20,3
High	19,6	16,2	18,3	21,6	17,6

According to the data in the table above, in terms of the category of unemployed with higher education, the unemployment rate in 2016 decreased by 2.1% compared to 2015<sup>54</sup>. This decrease in the unemployment rate is more noticeable among women, by 4% compared to 2015. Although having a degree increases the likelihood of employment, the transition period from school to the labor market is still challenging. For graduates, as the data show that 34.1% of

<sup>54</sup> INSTA, Anketa e Forcave të Punës ..., f. 12. [INSTA, Labor Force Survey ..., p. 12.]

persons with higher education degrees do not have the necessary skills required by the labor market or do not want to be employed.

In 2016, the unemployment rate for men with higher education is 16.5%, while for women 17.6%. Also in this year, for women with higher education the unemployment rate has decreased by 4% compared to 2015, and for those with vocational education this indicator has decreased by 3.3%. The large difference in the unemployment rate between individuals with higher education and those with lower level of education explains the great interest of young people to pursue higher education. In 2016, the unemployment rate for men with higher education is 16.5%, while for women 17.6%. Also in this year, for women with higher education the unemployment rate has decreased by 4% compared to 2015, and for those with vocational education this indicator has decreased by 3.3%. The large difference in the unemployment rate between individuals with higher education and those with lower level of education explains the great interest of young people to pursue higher education.

The presence of inefficiency in the labor market is further supported by the high level of long-term unemployment. This labor market indicator shows the percentage of the labor force that has been unemployed for more than 12 months. Although the long-term unemployment rate has dropped from 77.1% in 2012 to 66.6% in 2016<sup>55</sup>, this rate is still quite high compared to other countries in the region. The high and continuous long-term unemployment rate shows the structural nature of unemployment in Albania. Individuals affected by this risk lose their skills, lose motivation to look for work, and potentially leave the job market completely in the longer term. We think that this phenomenon is explained by the lack of opportunities for individuals to find work. They feel discouraged from looking for work or even investing in their skills, knowing that such investment will not provide them with an economic return.

Moreover, the shift to social values, which has occurred in recent years, also contributes to the choice of professions by individuals. Young people are increasingly turning to academic professions that offer social prestige; if they lack the financial resources, skills or motivation to pursue higher education, they are disconnected from the labor market. These social ideas explain the lack of individuals or groups of individuals involved in agriculture, despite the reality that 46.3% of the population lives in rural areas. The rural population is usually considered an asset to a country's economy because they are the future workers who theoretically contribute to growth / development. However, inefficient and weak economies, such as Albania, do not provide opportunities for young people to reach their full potential. Hence, it is essential that the country addresses this issue and prevent further harmful economic effects

Great importance should be given not only to the identification of a particular group, which includes young people who are neither employed nor attending education or any training for the 15-29 age group, but also to care for it. transferred to the position of educator at school institutions or training courses. During the years 2012-2019, it turns out that "on average three in ten young people aged 15-29 are part of this group. In 2016 young people who do not work and are not in education or training make up 30% of young people. Note that the percentage of women not in employment, education or training among women of this age is higher than the equivalent percentage for men (32.9% and 27.5% respectively)"<sup>56</sup>.

All the above statistics, data and statistics help us to reflect not only the structure of labor markets, depending on the follow-up of the business cycle, but also the suitability of education to market needs for the period under study. They also provide information on the labor market, show the movements in employment and unemployment by professions or groups of professions, as well as show the number of graduates from training institutions in the labor market.

Analyzing labor market needs and investing in human capital skills that meets market demand is undoubtedly an essential mechanism for economic growth and development. The great contribution of human capital can only be appreciated when the economy is able to make good use of its resources. In this regard, *the data show that we have inconsistencies between directions and profiles, branches and curricula offered by school institutions and HEIs and labor market requirements in Albania, throughout the years 2012-2016. Why did this happen?*

As a key reason for the mismatch of supply and demand in the labor market, in addition to the lack of a clear national vision and strategy, non-consultation of businesses during the design of curricula and syllabi have played a negative role. But, it is not enough just to evaluate and design curricula and programs, but the quality of these programs is also important. Program evaluation often helps to understand what really needs to be improved if a program fails or does not deliver the expected results. It may happen that the education programs are very good but they just do not fit properly with the context and this is one of the reasons why some education programs fail. Which means that even school institutions, especially vocational schools and our universities have not yet managed to properly and institutionally

<sup>55</sup> INSTAT, *Vjetari statistikor 2016-2017* ..., f. 64. [INSTAT, *Statistical Yearbook 2016-2017* ..., p. 64.]

<sup>56</sup> *Po aty, f. 61. [Ibid., p. 61.]*

involve stakeholders from the economy and society in the design of curricula for postgraduate studies (master and doctorate).

According to Prof.dr. Bajram Hysa, "unemployment of graduates is completely fatal for our future. Here we should mention the phenomenon of increasing the number of graduates in some special branches, where employment opportunities are low. Meanwhile in vital sectors of the country there are shortages "Deficit in education. Deficits in education, during the long years of multiple transition, have deepened social and cultural inequalities, and with them social problems, mainly unemployment"<sup>57</sup>.

Undoubtedly, at this point, their burden of responsibility should be shared by both educational institutions and businesses that do not make a real contribution in this regard. All these are real and indisputable evidence to evaluate the planning of education according to school levels as well as to judge on the adequacy of quality standards and training programs. Better planning of education at all levels, vocational training and scientific qualification we think would contribute to improving the adequacy of supply and demand for work, but, would help reduce the number of unemployed through the matching of jobseekers with employers.

When listing the factors that play a role and determine for ensuring the effectiveness of HEIs and the professional training of students, we must single out the cooperative factor education-labor market. Jan Peeters's statement that "an effective system of education is now required, open to the development of modern technology and to facilitate the employment, work and social life of the beneficiaries, today and in the future, being in compliance with the EU system"<sup>58</sup>. His reasoning is supplemented by the fact that for years the non-positive experience that has characterized our education system with staying away from business continues to be present. Second, this process has not enabled the creation of a balance between the supply of the curriculum according to educational levels and the demand of the labor market. To this is added an urban-rural gap with continuous growth and an increased migration tendency. Which means that the education system in Albania is being reoriented to the needs offered by the foreign labor market rather than the country.

Today, the challenge for quality education and valuable professional diplomas lies in finding new ways to provide the highest quality education for as many students as possible, in increasing the comprehensive cooperation of central and local institutions, enterprises and businesses, other development partners, the public, etc., to seek and adapt the connection of the educational level and qualification with the needs of the market economy in the country and the adaptation to the needs of the countries of the region and beyond. On the contrary, "if the adults and young people entering the labor market do not have the skills, such a thing is a great obstacle to the development of the economy"<sup>59</sup>. Which would mean that the professional value of diplomas should be increased and curricula based on competencies and curricula should be realistically evaluated according to educational levels.

The experience of developed countries has shown that "the parties cooperate with the aim of raising the level of education, vocational training and scientific qualification, as well as policies for youth and youth work, as a way to promote skills development, employment, social inclusion and economic development in Albania. "One of the priorities for our education system is to achieve the quality standards of its institutions and programs in line with the objectives of the Bologna Process and Declaration and to respond to the challenges of the future"<sup>60</sup>.

In this context, where MASR has already recently reviewed the conditions for accreditation, certification, creation of standards, improvement of the curriculum and the establishment and approval of procedures for their implementation, should be in the center of attention for all institutions of the system. vocational education and training and teacher education specialists, to enable adaptation to market demands; reflecting technological developments and new demands for professions that are already very dynamic; evaluation of public-private partnership, etc., as a key element of quality

57 Bajram Hysa, "Prioritete kombëtarë të arsimit të lartë: diploma me vlerë profesionale sipas ofertës së tregut të punës" (më tej: "Prioritete kombëtarë të arsimit të lartë ..."), në: *Telegraf, gazetë e përditshme e pavarur, Tiranë, 28 Janar, 2020, f. 6.*

[Bajram Hysa, "National Priorities of Higher Education: Diplomas of Professional Value According to the Labor Market Offer" (hereinafter: "National Priorities of Higher Education ..."), in: *Telegraf, Independent daily newspaper, Tirana, 28 January, 2020, p. 6.*]

58 Jan Peeters, *Quality of ECE Services in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, Main Report: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29754.59843, Publisher by Vernieuwing in de Basisvoorzieningen vdor Joonge Kinderen (vbjk), Gent, Belgium, p. 6.*  
Material i publikuar në web site:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310605215\\_UNICEF\\_report\\_Quality\\_of\\_ECE\\_Services\\_in\\_Albania\\_Bosnia\\_and\\_Herzegovina\\_Kosovo\\_and\\_Montenegro](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310605215_UNICEF_report_Quality_of_ECE_Services_in_Albania_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_Kosovo_and_Montenegro)

59 B. Hysa, "Prioritete kombëtarë të arsimit të lartë ...", f. 6.

[B. Hysa, "National Priorities of Higher Education ...", p. 6.]

60 J. Sota, *High Education in Post-Communist Albania ...*, p. 173.

development of education in Albania.

This new way of conceiving and functioning of school institutions and HEIs in our country, we think will be an open debate between specialists in the field of education, teaching, individuals, interest groups, etc., on how to is it processed for graduates to be professionally skilled and respond to labor market demands?

In this process, however, it is important to understand that *without an open-minded management system of schools, vocational education and training centers and HEIs, it will be impossible to address and solve many problems, which have slowing down progress in both the quantitative and qualitative direction of the education system in Albania.*

## 5. Conclusions

In the paragraphs above we expressed the importance of integrating education, vocational training and scientific qualification to adapt it to the new needs in the process of lifelong learning and the labor market by evaluating the reforms undertaken by the Albanian government, on performance of HEIs in Albania, through continuous improvement and promoting efficient experiences in its comprehensive development.

The issues of this treatment reflect the most contemporary opinion, the needs for a better education and at the same time the trend of Albania's integration in the EU in the field of pre-university and university education, where the opinions given are undoubtedly based on respecting the national interest.

An important role is played by the policies of the Albanian government to realize decentralization and increase the autonomy of schools and HEIs in accordance with the demands of the labor market. The level of education, professional and scientific qualification affects the labor market and are qualitative indicators of the level of knowledge and skills needed to prepare the most qualified specialists for each sector of social activity, as a necessary condition for economic development, growth of welfare, enabling the sustainable development of the country's economy, for today and for future generations.

The latest reforms and strategies in education need to be fully implemented and supported in order to make measurable improvements on issues related to impartiality, efficiency, quality, access and inclusion in education. These key aspects in the education sector in Albania have been analyzed and placed in a broader and comparative context with the countries of the European Union.

The main message of this paper is: *Promoting reforms in changing the mentality of non-evaluation of education, vocational training and scientific qualification, motivation of young people and individuals to evaluate" tedious, unrewarding, unpopular professions ", to obtain valuable professional diplomas and to complete labor market demands with well-qualified employees .*

Without claiming an exhaustive treatment and convinced that further studies will enrich the achievements so far, we think that this paper will serve to fill a gap in the genuine studies in this field. We hope for its hospitality both from those directly related to the education and upbringing of the younger generations, and from a wider circle of readers.

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