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**The European Master Program in Adapted Physical Activity-
Comparative study “ Adapted Physical Activity”:**

**EDUCATION, SPORT,REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH IN
ROMANIA**

1. Short history of Romania, including Dracula

Separated from the Balkan Peninsula to the south by the Danube River, with a population of about 23 million, Romania shares borders today with Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine, and Moldova. Its southeastern frontier follows the Black Sea. The Romanian people descended from the ancient Romans and the Dacians, an ancient Thracian tribe native to the land now called Romania. The majority of Romania's citizens are ethnic Romanians, but there are also many minorities. Hungarians, Saxons, and Gypsies are the largest ethnic minority groups. Most Romanians follow the Christian Orthodox religion, even through the Communist years when religious practice was outlawed.

Romania in its present form has been in existence only since 1859, but can trace its history to the era around 2000 B.C.E. Over its four thousand years, Romania's geographical location between western Europe and the East has forced its citizens to defend their land through almost continual wars, invasions, occupations, oppressions, and massacres. For more than 50 years following World War II, Romania was ruled by a succession of Communist leaders. From 1965 to 1989, the Romanians were subjected to arguably the worst despotic regime among the Soviet Bloc countries: that of Nicolae Ceausescu who, along with his wife Elena, destroyed historical villages and buildings, confiscated essentially everything of value, and literally stole the food from his own people. The Ceausescus were overthrown during a violent revolution in December 1989, and executed shortly thereafter. Questions still linger about whether the revolution was instigated and orchestrated by forces in Moscow...or by Ceausescu's own henchmen.

Vlad Dracula, the historical Dracula, was a Wallachian prince who ruled Romania from 1456 to 1462. He was not a vampire; tales of these mythical creatures have persisted in folklore for centuries, and they were popularized by author Bram Stoker in the late 1800s. During the fifteenth century, the Turks conquered most of what is now the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe, spreading Byzantine culture throughout the vast Ottoman Empire that it ruled. Vlad Dracula repelled the invading armies by impaling his Turkish enemies on spikes, earning him the sobriquet Vlad Tepes, or Vlad the Impaler.

(Perhaps this inspired Stoker to kill his vampires in a similar manner.) Because of their fear of Vlad, the Turks did not press for sovereign control of the region and allowed Romania to function as a suzerainty. This gives some explanation why Romanians speak a Latin-based language to this day -- unlike their Slavic neighbours. It was also Vlad Dracula who founded the city of Bucuresti, now the capital of Romania.

2. Governmental departments for persons with disabilities

Today different governmental departments covered the assistance for people with disabilities:

- State Secretary for Persons with Handicap (SSPH),
- The National Agency for the Protection of Child's Right, Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of National Education.

Persons with disabilities are institutionalised in institutions belonging to all of these ministries. However, no accurate data existed regarding the total number of disabled persons in Romania because those disabled persons who are institutionalised in locations belonging to the Ministry of Health do not have expert commission certificates and they are not registered at SSPH.

There are a few community-based services starting at the initiative of NGOs. The organizations members of the Romanian League of Organizations for Persons with Mental handicap (the national parents organization) have started nine centres: eight for children and one for adults. All of them are public-private partnerships between the State Secretariat for Persons with Handicap, the Ministry of Education, local authorities and NGOs. The idea of public-private partnership is valuable to us because we believe that this is the only way possible to reform the system. These examples of good practice were developed only in some areas of the country, with:

- -The existence of a strong local parents organization
- -Substantial support from foreign organizations, both in know-how and material
- -Good cooperation with local authorities

This reform could aim to:

- Elaborate an overall social protection policy, effective in providing support to families and preventing institutionalisation of people with disabilities
- Restructuring of the residential care institutions
- Strength and diversify services for people with disabilities
- Define the role of different government agencies and to improve the cooperation between them in the best interest of the persons with disabilities and with respect to their human rights.
- To design National basic quality care standards for services for people with disability. These standards should be designed in cooperation with NGOs and European experts and they have to be respected by all state and private institutions and services.
- To assess all the institutions and services based on these national quality care standards

Part of this general reform, restructuring of the residential care institutions should aim:

- To establish the objectives and responsibilities for each institution
- To establish the criteria for admission in these institutions with respect to the human rights of the persons with disabilities
- To elaborate a basic quality care standard for each institution
- To change the management style in these institutions according to the latest trends in international disability policy. The medical approach has to be replaced with a multidisciplinary one, focusing on the improvement of the quality of life of residents.
- To initiate professional training for personnel in institutions

The European Union has established, as a condition for the acceptance of Romania in the EU, the improvement of life of institutionalised children. This has a positive effect, because the Government is very keen to fulfil the demands of the European Union and

they are working in the improvement of conditions in institutions for children. Most of the institutions for children have been transferred to the National Agency for Child protection and the Government has approved a strategy of creating small units instead of big institution. The World Bank has special programs for the reform of institutions for children.

In the state institutions there were 22,100 persons with different disabilities institutionalised in the whole country. There were 2000 young persons 18 years or older who were in institutions for children, because they don't have anywhere to go. There are 18,900 adults institutionalised in 114 institutions.

3.School education:

Primary education lasts for four years. It is followed by four years of lower secondary education leading to the Certificat de Capacitate. Upper secondary school education is organized as a second cycle of education (grades 9 through 12 or 9 through 13). Graduates obtain the Diploma de Bacalaureat which gives access to higher education.

Higher education:

Higher education in Romania is offered in both public and private higher education institutions. These include universities, academies, politechnics, institutes and colleges, organized in specialized departments. In accordance with its objectives, university education comprises: short university education carried out in university colleges (3 years), long university education (duration 4 to 6 years) and postgraduate university education (duration 1 to 2 years). Public higher education institutions are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research. University autonomy is fully guaranteed. Private higher education is an alternative to public education. It is subject to an accreditation process. Accredited private institutions may obtain state support.

4.ELITE SPORT

The diversification of the activities of the persons with handicap, as well as the increase of the volume of information and of the relations with the specialized international organizations led to the creation of specific structures and system of competitions, in full accordance with the provisions of the Declaration adopted, through the Resolution of December 9, 1975, by the UNO General Assembly concerning the protection of the persons with handicap. Several delegations of Romanian sportsmen participated in time to several international sports competitions.

Sports for visually impaired

The first participation of the Romanian representatives to an international competition was to the world chess championship for blind people, in 1966, where a blind from Romania won the 5th prize. At the edition from 1977 of the World Games for Blind People, where more than 1500 sportsmen from 32 countries participated, the Romanian sportsmen won 3 gold medals.

After 1963, when the Organization of the Blind people became a national organization, within the organization have been created sections of physical culture and sports and teams, associations and sections, by type of sport have been organized at the countrywide branches level. There were organized competitions and championships of chess, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, bowling, weight lifting, rowing, and roll ball.

Sports for physically disabled

The Disabled Persons' football team in Romania boasts the gold medal got at the Paralympics held in Madrid in 1992, as well as the world title they got in Holland, in 1994.

Danube Paralympic Cup July 17 - 19, 2003 Galati, Romania

80 participants from all over Romania participated in this event. This year marked the first time that Fishing and Bowling were included as exhibition events in this National Competition. The fishing competition was held in the Monks Canal and judging was based on how many fish were caught. The Lamont Centre received 5th place in the fishing competition as well as an overall competition finish of 5th place.

The National Championships of Table Tennis took place on July 18th and the Lamont Centre won 7 National champions in the singles and doubles. A wonderful achievement.

Sports for deaf

In 1977, Romania hosted the Deaflympics in Bucharest. This was the first event of this kind in Romania, followed by the participation of the Romanian representatives at several competitions abroad.

Sports for different disabilities

"Cross-Country for Europe" was a competition organized on the occasion of the European Year for People with Disabilities by the Romanian Federation of Sports for the Disabled and the National Authority for Disabled People of Bucharest. 300 people participated and the running distance was 3 km. The competition was organized by gender, disability, and age groups: 12-15; 16-18; 19+.

- Lane 1 (participants with physical disabilities, including wheelchair users);
- Lane 2 (participants with hearing and speech impairments);
- Lane 3 (Participants with mental disability).

5. REHABILITATION

Concepts of recovery/recuperation, rehabilitation, habilitation

Rehabilitation refers to a process designed to offer the disabled people the opportunity to reach physical, psychical and social adequate functional levels, by giving them the instruments to change the life toward a greater level of independence.

The **recuperation** term, specific to Romania, has in essence an equivalent significance, relying more on the social and medical component.

There is a tendency to use as a couple the notions of **habilitation-rehabilitation**, first one referring to those functions that cannot be recuperated anymore. In exchange, through compensation mechanisms, new abilities may be formed for a social and professional integration.

The concept of **special educational demands** was introduced in the UNESCO terminology in the '90s. The notion designates those demands or special needs for education, deviated or not from a deficiency, which are supplementary but also complementary to general educational objectives. . The concept of **equal chances** represents the result through which different society and environmental systems, as services, activities, information and documentation are at everyone's disposal, in particularly at the disabled people's disposal.

The concept of **equalizing the chances** (creating equal opportunities) is the process through which different social and environmental systems (infrastructure, services, informational activities, documentaries) become accessible to everyone and especially to handicapped people.

The concept of **support services** refers to those services that insure the independence of the disabled person in the day-to-day life, as well as the exercising of his/her rights (assistance mechanisms, interpretation services, personal assistant, community-care services).

Special protection includes the totality of actions taken by the society in order to diminish or even eliminate the consequences that the deficiency causing the handicap (considered as a social factor of risk) has on the life standard of the disabled person.

There is a wish that the terms of: **invalid, irretrievable, unable/incapable of work should not be used anymore** to characterize disabled persons, as these terms do not reflect the reality and bring prejudice to human dignity.

6.RESEARCH ON “APA”

There were two main aims of the work at national level:

- To raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities to full and equal enjoyment of their rights through promotion of APA concept
- To implement the concept of APA among undergraduate and postgraduate PE and PT professionals.

Organisational approach and structure

THENAPA is represented at national level by FUKO, who is part of FRAK –Romanian Federation for Physical Therapy (Kinesitherapy).FRSK is constituted of three associations representing the main historical regions of the country:

- FUKO- University Foundation for Physical Therapy Oradea, partly representing Transilvania;
- “Muntenia” Association from Bucharest, representing the southern region of Romania;
- “Moldavia” Association from Iasi, representing Moldavia.

FUKO has tight connections with the other two associations within the National Federation.

Methodology, tools and technology used

- All PE Faculties included in their basic formation curricula PT basic courses, including APA knowledge.
 - Within the Teacher Training Department of the University of Oradea, the initial professional education for all students, regardless their profile comprises orthopedagogical courses
 - Initial PT training includes coaching in sports for disabled people; the first book about coaching in sports for disabled people appeared in Romania in 2000
- FUKO was involved in TINC program, aiming to support the Implementation of the

National Child-Care Policies in the Bihor County-Romania. This program tends to train and to support the workers, the authorities, the services and the volunteers,involved in the improvement of the working-conditions of the children and of the youngsters with disabilities and/or suffering from social exclusion in the Bihor County.FUKO has had permanent contacts with the Local Directorate for Protection ofChildren Rights and with local Department for Handicapped People.

Achievements

- The biggest achievement of THENAPA at national level is the APA Master Programme, going-on at the University of Oradea. The annually number of graduates would be the tool to monitor this activity. They have been trained and have had direct contact with the activity of protection of the rights of the persons with special needs.
- APA Master Program (four semesters), going-on at theUniversity of Oradea. Every year graduates 20 students
- TINC program for the training of professionists overall Bihor county working with children with special educational needs.
- Five articles about APA were published in the annual scientific publication of the University of Oradea in years: 2000, 20001, 2002
- At the II-nd Romanian National Physiotherapy Congress- Mamaia 2000 the first workshop on APA was organized.
- At the III Romanian National Physiotherapy Congress-Slanic-Moldova inv2002, 18 articles and scientific researches on APAwere presented.
- The first “Foundation of Sports for HandicappedPeople” set-up under the umbrella of the University of Oradea in 2001, has won a European Union project on integration of disabled people through sport.
- At the moment FRAK together with the University of Oradea are developing a basic educational program for Occupational Therapist,a profession that doesn’t exist in our country. This idea was promoted through the THENAPA strategy.
- There is a tradition by now to celebrate the “Day ofhandicapped people”every year, together by children and their parents, at the disabled childrensetting in Oradea “Casa Minunată”. A film was realizedon this occasion two years ago that was presented on the

occasion of the THENAPA meeting in Porto. This film, joint with the THENAPA and DEUAPA report and with other materials, including the integration CD, have been of great help in disseminating the APA concept in Romania.

- Recently, we became coordinators of a new Socrates Project "Interculturality in deaf education" with participation of students and teaching staff from several universities in Europe: Oradea, Gent, Kokola, Kortrijk, Parma.

- During the three THENAPA project years, we have had many successful international contacts with University of Lahti from Finland, Nice in France Gyor in Hungary, where our students attended APA courses.

Considering the following:

- we have had a lot of difficulties in making our selves understood and heard by the authorities

- we have had a lot of difficulties in obtaining financial support the wide range of the achievements of the THENAPA project at the national level in Romania,

we would like to emphasize the necessity of continuing the development of an APA based European Union thematic network.

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