

FOREIGN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE MEDICINE AND PHARMACY HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA (1975-1989)

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Abstract

After 1948 the Romanian higher education entered a period of important developments, controlled by the communist regime, which meant that higher education institutions autonomy was severely obstructed, while political purges affected the teaching staff and students alike. Nevertheless, new types of higher education were introduced and new institutions of higher education and specializations were established. The number of students and graduates increased accordingly. Also, after 1975, the number of foreign students in Romanian higher education registered a significant increase mainly in medicine and pharmacy. More than half of foreign students attracted by the Romanian higher education were studying medicine and pharmacy. Many interesting aspects of this situation are presented in this article: reasons for this attraction, statistics of total number of students, number of freshmen, number of graduates and the contribution of each institution of medicine and pharmacy higher education in attracting the foreign students.

Keywords: communism, statistics, higher education, foreign students

During the communist regime, Romania underwent many changes. One of the domain of activities with important developments was the system of higher education. Although the political influence and propaganda were realities of the higher education after 1948, new university centers were developed, new types of higher education, institutions and specializations were founded, infrastructure and teaching methods were modernized

Although higher education, as a main way of creating specialised working force for social and economical needs [1], was an important aspect of the communist regime, it is not a subject too well researched, with many aspects left to be discovered, presented and analyzed [2,3]. The situation of foreign students is one of such examples.

Foreign students were attracted by the Romanian higher education, but it was only starting with 1975 that their number started to steadily increase. The main reasons for this situation were the following: the Romanian authorities

wanting to attract foreign students in exchange of currency (from tuition fees), the low level of tuition fees and living cost in Romania and the prestige of the higher education system (the quality of education and the existence of some rare and prestigious types of higher education, like oil and gas).

An important question arises: what was the main type of higher education in attracting the foreign students? The answer may have been known, the medicine and pharmacy higher education (MPHE), but a proper argumentation still lacks [4]. Another important contribution of this article is that it covers the period after 1975, since most of the published works for MPHE are before this period [5-10]. In this paper I will employ statistical methods in order to demonstrate that medicine and pharmacy was the leading type of higher education in attracting foreign students in Romania. The statistical data analysed are unpublished and are collected from the Archive of National Institute for Statistics and other archival sources [11-13]. Three main statistical indicators are being used for the period 1975-1989: the total number of foreign students enlisted, the number of freshmen and of graduates, all at country level

Manuscript received: 27.11.2015

Received in revised form: 04.02.2016

Accepted: 08.02.2016

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and for the MPHE.

The number of foreign students enlisted

One of the most important indicators for the MPHE is the number of foreign students. In the analyzed period, the minimum number of foreign students in the higher education system, including medicine and pharmacy was recorded in 1975, while the maximum number of foreign students in MPHE was reached in 1982, when 8177 students were enrolled, one year before the highest number of foreign students in Romania: 16962. On average, there were 5739 foreign students enrolled in MPHE meaning more than 52% of the foreign students coming for studies in Romania were attending MPHE.

When calculating the proportion of the foreign students from MPHE in the total number of foreign students from Romania, an increasing and continuous trend is easily traceable for the 15 years analyzed, from as low as 34.2% in 1975 to as high as 74.9% in 1989. This trend is even more important after 1982, when the share of foreign students in the total students enlisted in the Romanian higher education was starting to decrease.

Another important aspect to be emphasized is that the great majority of foreign students coming to MPHE in Romania were male students. On average 81.7% of foreign students entering MPHE were male, consistent with the fact that in the entire higher education, 85.4% of the foreign students were male

Table I. Number of students enrolled.

| Year | Students enrolled | | | |
|------|-------------------|----------|------------|--------------------|
| | Romania | Romanian | Foreigners | Foreigners in MPHE |
| 1975 | 164567 | 159596 | 4971 | 1698 |
| 1976 | 174888 | 168211 | 6677 | 2574 |
| 1977 | 182337 | 172970 | 9367 | 3709 |
| 1978 | 190560 | 178778 | 11782 | 5172 |
| 1979 | 192546 | 178108 | 14438 | 6473 |
| 1980 | 192769 | 176881 | 15888 | 7436 |
| 1981 | 190903 | 173941 | 16962 | 7987 |
| 1982 | 181081 | 164830 | 16251 | 8377 |
| 1983 | 174042 | 159234 | 14808 | 8084 |
| 1984 | 166328 | 153260 | 13068 | 7519 |
| 1985 | 159798 | 149024 | 10774 | 6772 |
| 1986 | 157174 | 148277 | 8897 | 5786 |
| 1987 | 157041 | 149979 | 7062 | 4884 |
| 1988 | 159465 | 152962 | 6503 | 4829 |
| 1989 | 164507 | 157838 | 6669 | 4994 |

The number of freshmen enlisted

Another important indicator is the total number of foreign freshmen. On average, there were 1438 foreign freshmen in MPHE and 3219 in the entire higher education

(almost 50% of all the freshmen between 1975-1989 were enrolled in MPHE). Most foreign freshmen were registered in the year 1977 (2110 students), while in the entire higher education there were 4985 freshmen in 1980. In the analyzed period, the years 1975, 1986 and 1987 were the only ones with under 1000 freshmen registered.

The freshmen from MPHE amounted to a maximum of 74% (1988) from all the registered freshmen in the higher education, and as low as 34% in 1981. Foreign freshmen were representing 8% of all freshmen in Romanian higher education.

Table II. Number of freshmen enlisted.

| Year | Freshmen | | | |
|------|----------|----------|------------|--------------------|
| | Romania | Romanian | Foreigners | Foreigners in MPHE |
| 1975 | 43760 | 41105 | 2655 | 972 |
| 1976 | 47645 | 44346 | 3299 | 1205 |
| 1977 | 45791 | 41573 | 4218 | 2110 |
| 1978 | 47445 | 43050 | 4395 | 1757 |
| 1979 | 15431 | 40484 | 4947 | 1907 |
| 1980 | 46096 | 41111 | 4985 | 1918 |
| 1981 | 43414 | 38475 | 4939 | 1709 |
| 1982 | 36426 | 31908 | 4518 | 1941 |
| 1983 | 35426 | 31844 | 3582 | 1646 |
| 1984 | 35206 | 32218 | 2988 | 1451 |
| 1985 | 33961 | 31918 | 2043 | 1147 |
| 1986 | 32597 | 31237 | 1360 | 862 |
| 1987 | 33314 | 32091 | 1223 | 805 |
| 1988 | 35034 | 33684 | 1350 | 1001 |
| 1989 | 35270 | 33486 | 1784 | 1139 |

The number of graduates

For the situation of graduates the available data was for the period 1974-1988. On average, there were 1572 graduates in the higher education and 700 in MPHE (up to 1249 in 1985 from a minimum of 61 graduates in 1975). In the Romanian higher education there were 7 years with over 2000 foreign graduates (1981-1988) and six years with more than 1000 foreign graduates of MPHE (1982 to 1987), which shows an almost perfect overlapping proving that MPHE in the 1980s was the most important type of higher education from the point of view of foreign graduates.

On average almost 5% of the total number of graduates of higher education in Romania were foreign graduates, and 38% of them studied in MPHE (maximum 64.1% in 1988, and no less than 17.7% in 1975). During 1982-1989, over 50% of graduates came from MPHE. Basically, in the 1980s the prestige of Romanian higher education in terms of foreign graduates was provided by MPHE.

Table III. Total number of graduates.

| Year | Graduates | | | |
|------|-----------|----------|------------|--------------------|
| | Romania | Romanian | Foreigners | Foreigners in MPHE |
| 1974 | 28899 | 28554 | 345 | 61 |
| 1975 | 30839 | 30480 | 359 | 65 |
| 1976 | 32507 | 32098 | 409 | 81 |
| 1977 | 33909 | 33324 | 585 | 125 |
| 1978 | 35329 | 34494 | 835 | 209 |
| 1979 | 37834 | 36718 | 1116 | 349 |
| 1980 | 38615 | 36954 | 1661 | 612 |
| 1981 | 39049 | 36700 | 2349 | 966 |
| 1982 | 35876 | 33445 | 2431 | 1138 |
| 1983 | 37011 | 34552 | 2459 | 1214 |
| 1984 | 33669 | 31318 | 2351 | 1241 |
| 1985 | 30643 | 28351 | 2292 | 1249 |
| 1986 | 28122 | 25886 | 2236 | 1176 |
| 1987 | 28894 | 26278 | 2616 | 1021 |
| 1988 | 27620 | 26077 | 1543 | 989 |

Institutions of MPHE and their number of students

During communism, MPHE functioned in the structure of two types of institutions: general and specific. Among those specific there were two types: Institutes of Medicine and Institutes of Medicine and Pharmacy (medical and pharmaceutical). In Timisoara, and for a brief period also in Iasi, there was only an Institute of Medicine. In Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iasi and Târgu Mures functioned Institutes of Medicine and Pharmacy. In addition to these institutions, in 1970 a Faculty of General Medicine (Medicină Generală), later Faculty of Medicine, was established at the University of Craiova. The University of Craiova was the only institution that hosted medicine education outside specific institutions.

Let us mention that all these institutioes were active not only in the most important higher education centers, but they also had a location important for the regional health care system, taking into account the role of dispersion and simultaneously, regional attraction of specialized staff.

The most important institution for MPHE in terms of attracting foreign students, was the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy from Bucharest, which had enrolled an average of 1872 students, followed by the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj-Napoca with its 1117 students, Institute Medicine and Pharmacy of Iași registering 1096 students, Institute of Medicine of Timișoara with 984 students and the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Craiova with 650 students. In the period under review, the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Târgu Mures did not attract foreign

students except for two years in 1975 and 1976, when there were 83 and respectively, 236 foreign students recorded.

The year 1981 was the most important in attracting foreign students for the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy of Bucharest: there were 2640 foreign students registered. For the other institutions the corresponding indicator was also attained in the 1980s: in 1981 in Cluj-Napoca (1760 foreign students), in 1982 in Iasi (1606), in 1983 in Craiova (1037) and in 1985 in Timisoara (1349). Worth to point out is that between 1979 and 1985 over 2000 foreign students were registered each year in MPHE in Bucharest.

As for the number of foreign freshmen, the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy from Bucharest attracted on average 392 students (maximum 540 in 1984), Cluj-Napoca 303 (maximum 552 in 1978), Iasi 287 (maximum 365 in 1979), Craiova 198 (maximum 338 in 1983) and Timisoara 196 (maximum 273 in 1981 and 1982).

We can easily observe the general trend of the increased number of foreign students in all institutions from 1975 to the beginning of 1980, followed by a decrease and then a new increase for the last two years of communism.

Another interesting aspect is the number of foreign students attracted by MPHE compared to those of the higher education centers in which they are based. Thus, in Bucharest, the most important centre of higher education in the country, 46.47% of foreign students were enrolled in MPHE, lower than in Timisoara which had 57.76%. The same value was 61.30% for Iași, 65.51% for Cluj-Napoca, but much lower than for Craiova, where foreign students were in an impressive share of 92.80%.

The situation was not so much changed regarding the proportion of foreign freshmen in MPHE from the total number of foreign freshmen: 41.34% in Bucharest, 46.07% in Timisoara, 61.73% in Iași, 62.21% in Cluj-Napoca and again a big share in Craiova, 90%.

We also have a situation of the countries of origin for the foreign students in MPHE, but only for the year 1988/1989. A Top 10 of such countries is the following: 1155 foreign students came from Greece, 966 from Syria, 913 from Israel, 480 from Jordan, 466 from Iran, 336 from Germany (Federal Republic), 324 from Sudan, 260 from Lebanon, 171 from Yemen and 141 from Yugoslavia [14]. Like most of the examples mentioned, many other countries of origin for the foreign students were from the African continent and oil-rich Arab countries, in the context of good political and economical cooperation with Romania.

Among the faculties of MPHE, Faculty of Medicine attracted more foreign students than the other faculties, followed by the Faculty of Dentistry and the Faculty of Pharmacy. For example, at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest the situation between 1975-1989 was the following: on average 1164 foreign students were enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine, 25 at the Department of Pediatrics, 602 in the Faculty of Dentistry, 89 in the Faculty of Pharmacy and 21 in the Faculty of Military

Medicine. For a close view on the statistics regarding the total number of foreign students at a faculty level, three

tables were prepared, one for each of the most important faculties in MPHE: medicine, dentistry and pharmacy.

Table IV. Total number of foreign students at the faculties of medicine in Romania.

| Year | Bucharest | Cluj-Napoca | Iasi | Timisoara | Craiova |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|---------|
| 1975 | 415 | 284 | 152 | 200 | - |
| 1976 | 601 | 418 | 350 | 247 | - |
| 1977 | 911 | 666 | 485 | 510 | 3 |
| 1978 | 1154 | 1032 | 622 | 700 | 3 |
| 1979 | 1396 | 1221 | 834 | 855 | 5 |
| 1980 | 1663 | 1280 | 1017 | 901 | 64 |
| 1981 | 1702 | 1267 | 1014 | 995 | 89 |
| 1982 | 1622 | 1256 | 1094 | 965 | 115 |
| 1983 | 1514 | 1123 | 1003 | 904 | 100 |
| 1984 | 1518 | 946 | 902 | 758 | 134 |
| 1985 | 1374 | 711 | 799 | 850 | 157 |
| 1986 | 1048 | 564 | 697 | 1229 | 98 |
| 1987 | 930 | 428 | 650 | 901 | 118 |
| 1988 | 828 | 375 | 699 | 1041 | 129 |
| 1989 | 789 | 321 | 1423 | 1063 | 500 |
| Average 1975-1985 | 1261 | 928 | 752 | 717 | 74 |

Regarding the data in the last table, the following mentions need to be made: the faculty of medicine was merged with dentistry in Timisoara starting with 1986 and also that under the faculty of medicine, different specializations could be covered (medicine, dentistry, pediatrics) like in Craiova. In order to counter the changes in the structure while assessing in the long term the number

of foreign students in MPHE faculties, we have presented all the data, but made calculations for an average corresponding to 1975-1985, a period safe from 'statistical noise'.

The statistical data from this table and also from the followings, show almost in every centre of MPHE an increase in the number of students in the last two years of communism, after the 'fall' from 1987.

Table V. Total number of foreign students at the faculties of dentistry in Romania.

| Year | Bucharest | Cluj-Napoca | Iasi | Timisoara |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|
| 1975 | 137 | 88 | 22 | 29 |
| 1976 | 185 | 138 | 33 | 43 |
| 1977 | 307 | 139 | 57 | 75 |
| 1978 | 429 | 217 | 118 | 120 |
| 1979 | 604 | 260 | 182 | 170 |
| 1980 | 660 | 306 | 246 | 205 |
| 1981 | 753 | 379 | 305 | 282 |
| 1982 | 871 | 397 | 445 | 342 |
| 1983 | 910 | 417 | 437 | 437 |
| 1984 | 867 | 403 | 461 | 439 |
| 1985 | 812 | 331 | 362 | 499 |
| 1986 | 782 | 332 | 488 | 1229 |
| 1987 | 689 | 235 | 479 | 901 |
| 1988 | 622 | 231 | 699 | 1041 |
| 1989 | 603 | 248 | 774 | 1063 |
| Average 1975-1985 | 594 | 280 | 243 | 240 |

When assessing the data from the table above, it is important, again, to note the changes in the structure of faculties of MPHE: starting with 1986, the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Faculty of Dentistry were merged in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca, while in Timisoara, as already mentioned, dentistry was merged with medicine, and in Iasi with the Faculty of Pharmacy. These notes are important also for understanding the data in the following table:

When re-focusing on the national level from the local level, the importance of MPHE in attracting foreign students in the Romanian higher education is easy to demonstrate.

Table VI. Total number of foreign students at the faculties of pharmacy in Romania.

| Year | Bucharest | Cluj-Napoca | Iasi |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|------|
| 1975 | 28 | 15 | 12 |
| 1976 | 31 | 24 | 5 |
| 1977 | 39 | 46 | 9 |
| 1978 | 78 | 49 | 7 |
| 1979 | 104 | 59 | 6 |
| 1980 | 114 | 107 | 23 |
| 1981 | 132 | 114 | 15 |
| 1982 | 136 | 101 | 7 |
| 1983 | 120 | 74 | 8 |
| 1984 | 107 | 62 | 8 |
| 1985 | 96 | 38 | 13 |
| 1986 | 782 | 332 | 488 |
| 1987 | 689 | 235 | 479 |
| 1988 | 622 | 231 | 699 |
| 1989 | 603 | 248 | 774 |
| Average 1975-1985 | 90 | 63 | 10 |

Conclusions

After 1948, the development of higher education was at all levels important, including attracting foreign students. The most successful type of higher education in this regard was MPHE. Regarding the main reasons which led to this situation we mention the low tuition fees and cost of living in Romania, the need for currency of the Romanian state, especially in the 1980s and the prestige of Romanian higher education.

Maximum number of foreign students enrolled in higher education was achieved in 1981, 16962 foreign students and for MPHE in 1982, 8177 foreign students. On average, there were 5739 foreign students enrolled in MPHE meaning that more than 52% of the foreign students in Romania were attending MPHE, all based on a continuously increasing trend during the 15 years analysed.

As for the gender representation, on average 81.7%

of foreign students entering MHPE were male, consistent with the fact that in the entire higher education, 85.4% of the foreign students were male.

On average, there were 1438 foreign freshmen in MPHE and 3219 in the entire higher education (almost 50% of all the freshmen between 1975-1989 were enrolled in MPHE), while 700 were graduates of MPHE (1572 graduates were in the Romanian higher education). On average almost 5% of the total number of graduates of higher education in Romania were foreign graduates and 38% of them studied in MPHE.

The most important institution of MPHE was the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest, both structurally and statistically. On average, Bucharest attracted 1872 foreign students, followed by its counterparts in Cluj-Napoca (1117) and Iasi (1096).

In terms of attracting foreign students in the Romanian higher education, Craiova amounted an impressive proportion of over 90% of the enrolled foreign students in MPHE, with important shares also for other centers of MPHE. In Bucharest, the most important higher education centre of the country, over 46% of foreign students were included in MPHE, highlighting once again the leading role of this type of higher education in attracting foreign students in Romania.

MPHE was the most important type of Romanian higher education in terms of attraction of foreign students. As new documents will be available, new analyses on the issues already highlighted in this article will contribute to a better knowledge of the development of Romanian higher education and MPHE in the communist period.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0476.

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