

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ON THE LABOR MARKET

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Abstract

This scientific endeavor the issue of human resource development within organizations is addressed. The theoretical aspect of the problem is reflected in the paper through the contributions of researchers concerned with human resource development. Thus, several opinions and arguments of the researchers regarding the human resource development are presented. This allowed the author to analyze, theoretically, the human resource development at the national and organizational level. Nationally, human resource development is seen as an objective that contributes to the well-being of people, while at the organizational level - as an activity that ensures the organizations performance.

Methodologically, the human resource development at the European Union level was analyzed based on statistical data provided by EUROSTAT. In this context, the information provided by the Labour Force Survey applied annually in all EU Member States was analyzed, as well as the information provided by the Continuing Vocational Training Survey applied within the organizations at an interval of 5 years. This allowed us to analyzed a lot of indicators reflecting the human resource development in organizations from EU Member States.

Key words: human resource, human resource development, organizational performance, training program, continuous vocational training.

JEL Classification: J44; L25; M53.

1. Introduction

In a knowledge-based economy, organizational performance and competitiveness are largely determined by the value of employees' professional knowledge and skills. It is known that human resources can generate new knowledge for the organization, propelling it to a higher level compared to competing organizations. Thus, the difference in value between organizations is made by the human resources endowed with the baggage of knowledge and skills that any organization needs at a given time. In order to ensure the desired performance, any organization must invest in employees, by offering various vocational training programs, to increase their value. Trained employees, in turn, will create greater added value for the organization. Or, in order to become competitive, organizations must invest not only in quality products and services, but also in human resources, which can make those products and services competitive, with an increased value [7].

Recognition of the importance of human resource development has been strongly influenced by increased global competition, as well as the relative success of economies such as Japan, Germany and Sweden, where investments in employee development are highlighted [4]. Even though many top managers say that employees are the most important value for the organization, both long-term and short-term decisions are made based on the evaluation of financial results. Under the current conditions, top managers who believe in the importance of human resources must be able to show, objectively, how the investment in the organization's employees can be measured, developed and capitalized for a desired return [15]. The same authors argue that the need to treat human resources as a capital investment has never been more crucial, especially as downsizing, restructuring, outsourcing and other approaches to reducing human resources have become the norm to meet current economic challenges. Given the economic pressures faced by most organizations, their senior managers must find the "middle ground" that would allow the allocation of financial resources for human resources training and development. However, the human resource

development is necessary for maintaining and developing both the capabilities of individual employees and the organization as a whole.

Currently, organizations face pressing challenges and opportunities, many of which have important implications for human resource development. Some common trends include: dealing with an aging and, in many cases, cross-cultural workforce; the retraining of displaced personnel; a new generation entering the workforce with different motivations, expectations, and learning approaches; access to rapidly emerging technologies that can accelerate or distract from employee development; the need to develop an adaptive, flexible workforce that can adjust to changes [25].

In the knowledge-based economy, when professional knowledge and skills is changing rapidly and greater, investments in human resources must have a permanent, by being able to increase their volume from year to year. Moreover, the ongoing nature of investments in human resource development within organizations is also determined by the implementation of lifelong learning. Or, lifelong learning is a continuous process of flexible learning opportunities, linking learning and skills acquired in formal institutions with the development of skills in non-formal and informal contexts, especially on the job. There are several factors that contribute to the growing importance of lifelong learning in the 21st century both inside and outside the European Union. Economically, they include:

- increasing global competition;
- increased demand for labour with a higher qualification level;
- rapid technological changes.

Although, lifelong learning leads to increased levels of professional skills, which justifies investments in human resource development, some organizations don't participate in this process. In Romania, only 40% of large organizations have shown their willingness to provide training programs for employee professional development. This indicator is lower than that registered in the European Union, which was 58% for the same type of organizations [29].

2. Literature review

Learning is the process by which a person acquires and develops knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviors and attitudes, and development means the growth or realizations of a person's ability and potential through the provision of learning and educational experiences [2]. Learning and development activities make a major contribution to the successful achievement of the organization's objectives. The beneficiaries of investments in learning and development are all stakeholders of the organization.

Human resource development at the societal level

Many authors make a connection between human resource development and societal development, being analyzed from three perspectives. First, the roles and impact of organizations in society are shown. Thus, Garavan and McGuire highlighted the positive impact of organizations on society [12]. The growing interest in corporate social responsibility or corporate sustainability in human resource development has been the focus of several researchers [11]; [22]. Many researchers have found that organizational responsibilities are not just about profit, but about a broader social agenda, such as: commitment to individuals, ethical behavior, awareness of the efficient use of scarce resources, and economic and social development [8]; [10]; [23]. Secondly, human resource development is regarded as a contributing goal people's welfare in all areas of life. This perspective comes from a philosophical discourse of human development as a guiding value of human resource development [15] or from a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependence of all global forces influencing human resource development practices [16]. Thirdly, human resource development is a prerogative not only organizations, but dealt with at national or even global. Nationally, human resource development should be addressed by developing and implementing a national policy to improve the welfare of its citizens. Globally, human resource

development highlights patterns of uneven economic and social development, revealing visible disparities between countries. At the same time, Redington (2005) argues that human resource development, globally, addresses issues such as human rights or respect for cultural differences [24].

Human resource development at the organizational level

A large number of researchers have analyzed human resource development at the organizational level. Thus, several researchers analyzed the impact of human resource development on organizational performance. Benabou, examining the impact of different training programs on the economic and financial performance of 50 Canadian organizations, found that, in most cases, a well-designed training program can help improve organizational performance and the return on investment in such programs is very high [4]. Likewise, Birdi et al., in their longitudinal study of 308 companies, found that extensive vocational training generated a gain of almost 6% of value added per employee [2]. At the same time, research conducted by Aragon and Valle on the impact of training on managers' performance has established that organizations that allocate financial resources for manager training achieve better results and that intensive training intensive training helps to improve performance [14]; [20].

Some authors approach human resource development as a strategic activity. Harrison defines the strategic development of human resources as an idea resulting from a clear vision of the capacity and potential of employees, framed in the overall strategy of the organization [13]. However, Armstrong mentions that the strategic development of human resources deals with ensuring learning, development and training opportunities for employees, designed to improve individual, team and organizational performance [2].

Several researchers have investigated the connection between human resource development and corporate social responsibility. Ardichvili (2013), Garavan and McGuire (2010) have demonstrated the role of human resource development to support corporate social responsibility, sustainability and ethics in organizations [1]; [12]. The authors examined several learning and development approaches such as leadership development, training and cultural change efforts, through which human resource development can support corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and ethical goals in organizations. At the same time, while some authors have analyzed the need to include various stakeholders, negotiation of power relations and provide equal opportunities in learning and development [6]; [11], others have focused on human development, including topics such as health, education and social justice [14]; [15].

Regardless of the role of human resource development within the organization, there are several factors that influence this activity, namely: technologies, economic and financial considerations, globalization, equal opportunities, the change in the content of work organization etc. Technologies have a direct bearing on the future of work, which has led some researchers to study the effects of technologies on the content of work [17], and Bell and Kozlowski have analyzed competence requirements as a result of changing content [26]. Economic and financial considerations, on the one hand and limiting budgets, on the other hand, have led to changes in business and economy. In this context, Cappelli (2012) noted that the pressure to reduce costs and economic constraints lead to the replacement of employees with automated equipment, while being a premise for employers to invest in training employees whose professional skills do not meet the requirements of the new technologies [26]. Like other factors, globalization has an influence on human resource development. To be effective in a global environment, organizations must rely on virtual human resource development [19], as well as on virtual teams and team learning [28]. At the same time, research in the field shows that the global expansion of organizations doesn't necessarily lead to improved employee productivity and increased employment [18]. Promoting equality and diversity in labor relations has implications for human resource development content. Thus, while some researchers have been concerned with the transition of veterans from military to civilian careers (Minnis, 2017), others - the identification of disability as a form of diversity to be addressed

by human resource development [21]. Regarding the factor related to the change in the content of work organization, intervention strategies have been identified that take into account both demographic changes in the workforce and the nature of the career [16]. Ways to develop the workforce skills needed to cope with technological advances have also been analyzed [29].

Applied methodology

In order to evaluate the human resource development at organizational level, we referred to the Labor Force Survey and the Continuing Vocational Training Survey carried out at the European Union level. Thus, several statistical indicators from the Labor Force Survey, which is carried out annually in all EU Member States, were analyzed, as well as some indicators from the Continuing Vocational Training Survey, which is carried out every 5 years, the latest information being from 2015.

The first indicator analyzed in this paper relates to labor force participation in the training process reflected in the Labor Force Survey (Table 1). The category of adults includes all persons aged 18 years and over.

Table no. 1. Adult participation rate in training in the period 2010-2019, %

Countries	Adults participation rate in continuous vocational training in the last four weeks					
	2010		2015		2019	
	Total	From 25 to 64 years	Total	From 25 to 64 years	Total	From 25 to 64 years
EU – 28	14.3	7.8	16.2	10.1	16.8	10.8
Austria	18.8	13.8	19.7	14.4	19.3	14.7
Belgium	14.2	7.4	13.8	6.9	15.5	8.2
Bulgaria	7.9	1.6	7.9	2.0	7.7	2.0
Czech Republic	14.9	7.8	14.5	8.5	13.6	8.1
Cyprus	12.7	8.1	12.3	7.5	10.2	5.9
Croatia	9.1	3.0	9.9	3.1	9.4	3.5
Denmark	37.6	322.7	37.4	31.5	31.1	25.3
Estonia	18.8	11.0	18.1	12.4	24.8	20.2
Finland	28.1	23.0	29.8	25.4	33.1	29.0
France	11.9	5.0	24.3	18.6	25.3	19.5
Germany	14.3	7.8	14.8	8.1	14.9	8.2
Greece	9.4	3.3	9.7	3.3	10.6	3.9
Ireland	12.3	7.1	12.0	6.5	19.0	12.6
Italy	11.4	6.2	12.6	7.3	13.5	8.1
Latvia	13.3	5.4	11.5	5.7	13.0	7.4
Lithuania	14.2	4.4	13.7	5.8	13.8	7.0
Luxemburg	21.1	13.5	25.4	18.0	24.7	19.1
Malta	11.6	6.2	12.5	7.4	16.5	11.9
Great Britain	24.0	20.1	20.1	15.7	19.0	14.8
Netherlands	24.2	17.0	26.3	18.9	27.0	19.5
Poland	13.9	5.2	10.6	3.5	10.6	4.8
Portugal	11.3	5.7	15.6	9.7	16.5	10.5
Romania	8.2	1.4	6.6	1.3	7.0	1.3
Slovakia	11.3	3.1	10.0	3.1	9.9	3.6
Slovenia	23.9	16.4	18.4	11.9	17.1	11.2
Spain	16.1	11.2	15.6	9.9	16.4	1.6
Sweden	30.2	24.7	34.2	29.4	38.6	34.3
Hungary	10.8	3.0	13.5	7.1	11.4	5.8

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

According to Table 1, the participation rate of adults in vocational training programs at the EU level has been increasing over the last 10 years, from 14.3% (2010) to 16.8% (2019). At the same time, we find that while in some countries this indicator has increased, in others it has seen a

decrease. There has been an obvious increase in this indicator in countries such as France, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Ireland, Portugal and Netherlands. Countries where this indicator has decreased, obviously, we can mention: Great Britain, Denmark and Poland. Even though in Denmark, the participation rate of adults in vocational training programs has been decreasing by about 6.5 p.p., it remains quite high compared to that recorded in other Member States.

Taking into account the fact that most of the population aged 18-24 is in the process of training, we analyzed the participation rate of adults aged 25-64 in the process of continuous training. Analyzing the data in Table 1, we notice that this indicator is lower in all EU Member States, which is also natural. It differs from country to country and we cannot take into account a certain rule.

Given the fact that the category of adults includes both employed and jobseekers or the unemployed, in Table 2 we have analyzed the rate participation in training of people who have a job.

Table no. 2. Employees participation rate in training programs in the period 2010-2019, %

Countries	Employees participation rate in continuous vocational training in the last four weeks					
	2010		2015		2019	
	Total	From 25 to 64 years	Total	From 25 to 64 years	Total	From 25 to 64 years
EU – 28	11.3	8.8	13.7	11.4	14.3	11.9
Austria	17.6	14.8	18.4	15.3	18.3	15.5
Belgium	8.4	7.7	7.3	6.6	9.7	8.1
Bulgaria	2.5	1.3	2.5	1.4	2.2	1.5
Czech Republic	9.8	9.2	10.8	10.2	9.9	9.2
Cyprus	10.6	9.5	9.5	8.5	7.3	6.2
Croatia	2.9	2.5	3.5	2.8	4.2	3.7
Denmark	38.2	34.0	37.4	33.0	30.3	25.8
Estonia	15.7	13.3	15.8	13.8	24.5	22.4
Finland	28.7	26.3	30.5	28.5	33.4	31.3
France	7.6	5.4	23.1	21.2	23.9	22.0
Germany	12.6	8.0	12.6	7.9	12.6	7.9
Greece	4.5	3.7	4.6	3.8	5.4	4.2
Ireland	10.1	6.9	8.6	5.7	17.2	13.2
Italy	6.6	6.3	7.8	7.6	9.1	8.7
Latvia	8.2	5.8	8.2	6.4	9.9	7.8
Lithuania	7.1	5.1	9.2	7.2	10.7	8.3
Luxemburg	15.7	14.6	21.8	20.2	22.2	20.8
Malta	9.8	7.9	11.0	9.4	16.8	14.8
Great Britain	25.4	23.0	20.9	18.2	20.0	17.5
Netherlands	25.9	19.7	28.0	21.7	28.4	21.8
Poland	10.1	7.2	6.2	4.6	7.6	6.1
Portugal	6.2	5.7	11.3	10.5	12.1	11.2
Romania	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.4
Slovakia	4.0	3.4	4.0	3.5	4.4	4.1
Slovenia	22.8	19.7	16.1	13.7	14.7	12.5
Spain	13.2	12.0	12.0	10.9	12.5	11.2
Sweden	26.5	24.4	31.5	29.6	36.3	34.4
Hungary	3.3	2.8	9.6	9.2	7.3	6.7

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

As shown in Table 2, as in the case of adults, the same trend is maintained in terms of the participation rate in training of persons employed, during the analyzed period. The situation presented is characteristic both for all employed persons aged 18 and over, as well as for those aged 25-64. Training programs in which employees participate may be provided by the organizations in which they operate or by other organizations, public or private, that provide such services. Thus,

the costs for training programs can be covered either by employees, or by the organizations in which they operate, or by the state.

However, the organization contribution to the professional development of employees should not be underestimated. In order to ensure their competitive advantage and achieve the predetermined performance, organizations are aware of the need to invest financial resources in the professional development of employees. According to the Continuing Vocational Training Survey, conducted in EU Member States, most organizations are concerned with the professional development of employees, giving them the necessary support. (Figure 1).

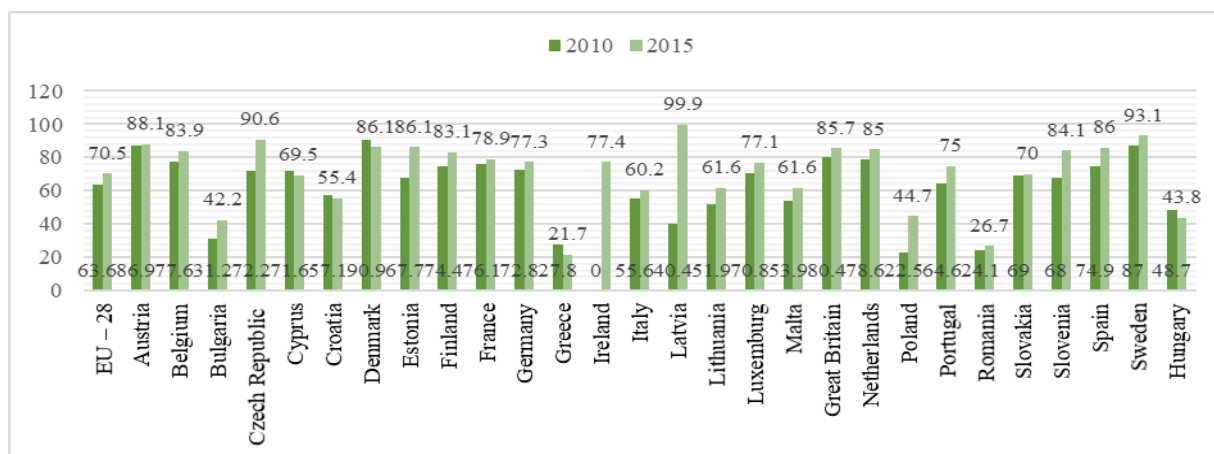


Figure 1. Share of organizations that provide continuing vocational training, %

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

According to Figure 1, the vast majority of organizations provide continuing education to employees, in a proportion of over 60% of all organizations. However, in the organizations from the eastern countries, EU members, the share of organizations providing continuing vocational training was lower in 2015 (Greece - 21.7%, Romania - 26.7%, Bulgaria - 42.2%; Hungary - 43.8% and Poland - 44.7%). Similarly, we can find that, unlike in 2010, the share of organizations that provided continuing vocational training increased in 2015, in most EU Member States, with the exception of Greece, Hungary. Although there has been a decrease of the share of organizations providing continuing education in Denmark, this indicator is quite high compared to other EU Member States.

For the present scientific endeavor, we aimed to analyze the contribution of organizations to continuous vocational training depending on their size (Figures 2, 3 and 4). Figure 2 shows the share of large-sized organizations (250 or more employees) that provide continuous vocational training in their total.

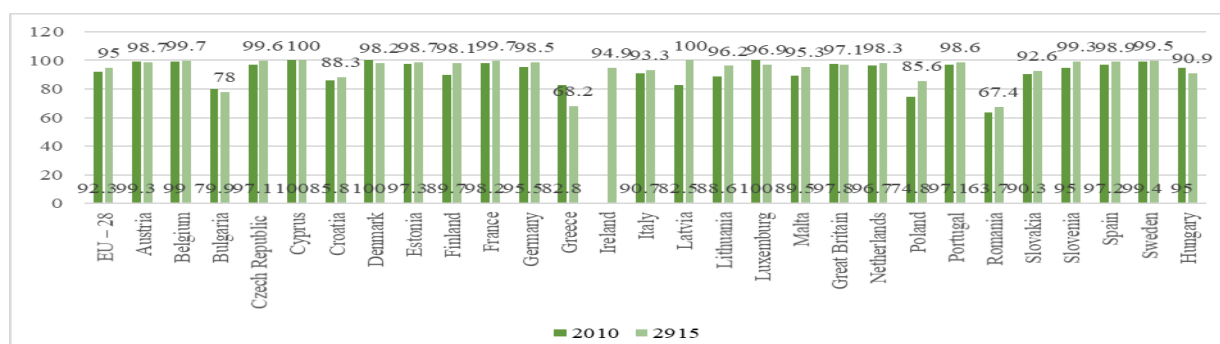


Figure 2. Share of large-sized organizations providing vocational training in all organizations in the same category, %

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

Figure 2 shows that in most EU Member States, the share of large-sized organizations providing continuous vocational training during the year is over 90%, except for Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia and Poland. Similarly, we find that this indicator was increasing in 2015 compared to 2010, with the exception of Greece, Hungary, and Bulgaria.

Medium-sized organizations (50-249 employees) represent the second category of organizations analyzed (Figure 3). Although their share is lower, compared to that of large-sized organizations, we notice, and in this case, the interest of management organizations in the continuous vocational training of employees.

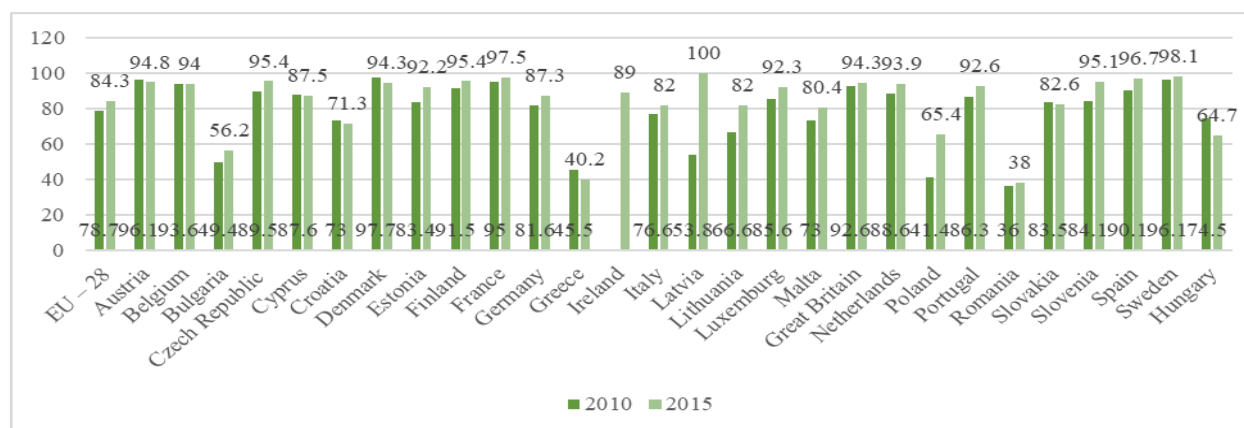


Figure 3. Share of medium-sized organizations providing vocational training in all organizations in the same category, %

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

Although their share is lower, compared to that of large-sized organizations, we notice, and in this case, the interest of management organizations in the continuous vocational training of employees. In some EU Member States, the share of this indicator is comparable to that of large-sized organizations, exceeding 90% (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Latvia, Sweden and Spain). On the opposite pole, there are Romania and Greece in which the share of this indicator does not exceed 40%, which results that only 2 out of 5 medium-sized organizations offered continuous vocational training programs in 2015.

Regarding small-sized organizations (10-49 employees), we notice a decrease in their share participating in continuous vocational training, compared with the other two categories.

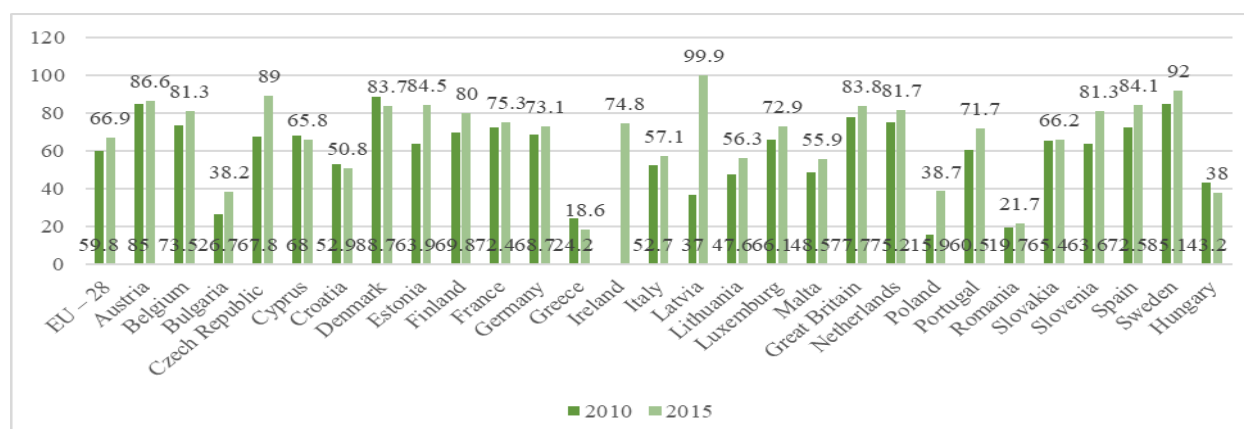


Figure 4. Share of small-sized organizations providing vocational training in all organizations in the same category, %

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

The participation of small-sized organizations in continuous vocational training, in a smaller number, can be determined both by the lack of adequate infrastructure for this purpose, as well as lower financial possibilities. Nevertheless, this indicator remains at a level comparable to that for large and medium-sized organizations in countries such as Latvia and Sweden. Compared to 2010, this indicator increased in 2015 in most EU Member States, with the exception of Greece, Croatia and Hungary where it decreased.

It is important to analyze not only the organizations providing continuing vocational training programs, but also the number of employees receiving training. Table 3 shows the share of employees, beneficiaries of continuing vocational training programs, by categories of organizations.

Table no. 3. Share of employees receiving continuous vocational training, %

Countries	2010			2015		
	Large-sized organizations	Medium-sized organizations	Small-sized organizations	Large-sized organizations	Medium-sized organizations	Small-sized organizations
EU – 28	48.8	34.4	25.0	52.3	37.9	29.9
Austria	38.2	33.2	26.4	54.9	41.2	35.3
Belgium	61.5	51.0	34.5	59.2	56.3	41.5
Bulgaria	43.6	15.9	8.5	40.0	21.9	15.7
Czech Republic	69.8	60.1	46.5	84.9	84.1	80.9
Cyprus	60/8	30.9	23.5	51.9	32.2	21.7
Croatia	26.9	18.8	19.2	40.2	21.2	16.0
Denmark	36.5	39.5	35.8	41.8	31.2	25.4
Estonia	41.0	31.4	21.8	47.5	27.8	21.2
Finland	48.0	31.9	32.2	48.9	41.7	37.6
France	55.6	41.9	26.7	62.3	40.8	27.4
Germany	44.4	35.4	28.1	41.8	33.6	31.9
Greece	30.9	11.3	6.9	36.7	14.7	4.6
Ireland	;	;	;	62.9	43.8	33.2
Italy	53.9	31.8	21.2	63.1	42.9	28.4
Latvia	38.8	22.4	14.2	41.6	25.6	15.7
Lithuania	28.3	16.6	11.0	38.3	24.1	14.4
Luxemburg	68.9	44.0	33.5	76.7	62.1	36.8
Malta	59.8	32.6	14.6	52.8	34.2	18.9
Great Britain	33.1	28.3	24.9	29.9	32.2	30.3
Netherlands	44.6	35.2	29.0	44.2	41.1	34.1
Poland	48.1	20.7	8.8	55.4	26.0	15.1
Portugal	51.7	41.8	26.6	61.4	44.9	32.9
Romania	28.4	11.0	5.9	32.6	13.7	8.8
Slovakia	53.8	43.6	28.3	66.8	52.1	42.5
Slovenia	60.4	36.3	24.5	72.0	54.0	42.8
Spain	60.6	44.9	35.3	69.0	50.1	38.9
Sweden	52.7	47.9	39.9	55.3	52.7	46.9
Hungary	27.8	14.6	10.8	27.4	14.6	10.6

Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the EUROSTAT data.

Analyzing the information in Table 3, we can see that at EU level, in the period 2010-2015, the share of employees who received vocational training programs increased by 3.5 pp, both in the case of large and medium-sized organizations. At the same time, we notice a decrease in the given indicator, by 4.9 pp. - in the case of small-sized organizations. The most obvious increases in the share of employees who received vocational training programs, in all three categories of organizations, were registered in Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. In 2015, the share of employees,

beneficiaries of vocational training programs, was over 50% in the large-sized organizations from 14 EU Member States. This shows that employees of these organizations participate in a vocational training program, at least every two years. In the case of medium-sized organizations, only in seven EU Member States did more than 50% of employees receive vocational training programs, during 2015 (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). As far as small-sized organizations are concerned, this situation is only valid for the Czech Republic. 80.9% of employees of small-sized organizations received vocational training programs in 2015. This proves that almost every employee has benefited from a continuing vocational training program. The same situation is characteristic for large and medium-sized organizations in the Czech Republic.

4. Conclusions

Human resource development is an activity that increasingly concerns both decision makers in government institutions and top managers of organizations, regardless of their size. By offering vocational training programs, the state wants to reduce the number of unemployed, re-employing them. As a result, the state's financial burden is diminishing. By implementing employee professional development policies and programs, organizations aim to increase their competitive advantage and achieve organizational goals. Although the development of human resources involves certain expenses that organizations have to incur, most of the time, they have been recovered over time, by improving certain economic and financial indicators. Also, given the speed with which technologies and information are changing, organizations' concern for human resource development will become even more intense to meet new challenges.

At the European Union level, the human resource development activity is monitored by the continuous application of the Labour Force Survey and the Continuing Vocational Training Survey, applied within organizations every 5 years. The contribution of EU Member States' organizations to human resources development is demonstrated by the statistical data provided by EUROSTAT, which show that their number is growing year by year. Likewise, the share of employees, beneficiaries of continuous vocational training programs, is increasing. At the same time, we notice a certain discrepancy between some EU member states, in terms of the number of employees who have received continuous vocational training in different categories of organizations: large, medium and small.

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