

**Question for written answer E-004242/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Higher education reform

We note that the number of universities in Europe is growing. According to the Commission, 35 % of jobs sought in the European market require higher education. Furthermore, the Commission maintains that only 26 % of workers are university graduates, well below the corresponding levels in the United States, Japan and Canada.

In its new strategy for modernising higher education, the Commission identifies reforms that need to be adopted by national governments to create skilled graduates who are able to contribute to job creation, economic growth and innovation. The most important objectives are to improve the quality of education and increase the number of students.

However, higher education systems differ from country to country — and some produce better results than others. In Romania, the top priority is not to increase the number of students but to improve the quality of education and adapt to the needs of the labour market. Romania should aspire to a European higher education.

Can the Commission state how the new strategy for modernising higher education will succeed in eliminating the gap between high-performing university systems and those, like Romania, aspiring to such a status?