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**Author**

DECA, Ligia

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**Abstract**

Higher education systems in Central and Eastern Europe have faced numerous challenges in their transitions following the collapse of totalitarian regimes in 1989?1990. Romania, as a country that is representative of the specificities of this particular region, as well as a relatively new member of the European Union, is a privileged site for understanding how external pressures influenced policy changes in light of its openness to European reintegration. By focusing on three phases of policy change corresponding broadly to three major legal transformations, this paper will observe when, why and by whom the international influences were strategically used in Romanian public discourse on higher education reform. Finally, a balance sheet will be drawn across the two decades of higher education reforms in Romania, which is meant to provide insights into wider problematics of reform, Europeanization and internationalization in situations of transition and peripherality.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)