

## Chess to be taught in Romanian schools as optional subject



Starting next academic year, chess will be taught in Romania as an optional subject. Over 50,000 primary school students will participate in the initial phase of the pilot project.

By September, professional coaches will train over 3,000 teachers to prepare the children who opt for the course.

Already, coaches at a chess academy in Bucharest instruct 800 children every year who wish to play chess competitively. Parents spend at least RON 200 (EUR 40) monthly for their children's training. In Romania, only a few schools offer such courses.

"Chess has always been a popular sport in Romania, but the government has not always supported it," said Alecsandu Oțetea, president of the Chess Academy, in a statement for ProTV.

According to Vlad Ardeleanu, head of the Romanian Chess Federation, the project will provide chess training to teachers for the first time.

"Teachers wondered if they could teach this optional subject since they had not played chess until then. They will learn everything they need to know to use chess as a tool in education step by step, starting with logical games on chessboards," he added.

Playing chess comes with some advantages. "We are not just discussing advantages in accelerating cognition, mathematical calculation, and logic. I would like to highlight the advantages of developing a child's personality. We live in a world of speed and lack of attention, and one of the main problems of children is related to concentration. You must constantly scroll on social media, but chess is a strong antidote to this phenomenon. Chess gives you a certain rigour, has limits and rules, and this understanding that there are rules they cannot break is installed in the children's subconscious," said Vlad Ardeleanu.

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