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## **Romania: 2.4 million students go back to school. Mgr. Perca (Bucharest), “return to school, a source of hope”**

In Romania, the second school term has begun in Romania, and on 8<sup>th</sup> February the students of nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools and gymnasium have resumed their face-to-face classes, after three months of remote teaching. Universities, instead, will still hold their courses on online platforms. About 14% of the teaching staff have already received the first dose of the vaccine, and in the schools everyone is obliged to keep at a safe distance and properly wear a face mask. Over 10 thousand educational facilities are working in a “green scenario”, i.e. fully; 6,583 in a “yellow scenario”, with students of nurseries, primary schools and gymnasium only; and about 1,000 in a red scenario, with nursery and primary school students only. Therefore, over 2.4 million students out of a total of 3 million have gone back to school. Approximately 60 schools, however, will keep on holding their courses online, because they cannot ensure lessons to be held in safe conditions. The Rumanian authorities have provided schools with rapid tests that they can use when some of their students or teachers show symptoms of Coronavirus infection. The decision to reopen the schools has been welcomed by the Roman-Catholic archbishop of Bucharest Aurel Perc?, president of the Romanian Episcopal Conference and national director of teaching. “The pandemic is still an open wound and schools have suffered a lot. Returning to the normality of going to school, being physically there, is therefore a source of joy and hope”, said the archbishop, who called everyone to act responsibly and adhere to the health regulations, so that schooling can continue safely and healthily. In addition, mgr. Perc? placed emphasis on the importance of an integral education of young people and expressed the hope that, now that schools have been reopened, catechesis in the parishes may be resumed as well.

Valentina Bombelli