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USING THE OECD CAREER GUIDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES

FINAL REPORT

BULGARIA

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## CONTENTS

1. Overview  
2. Key goals, influences, issues and initiatives  
3. Policy instruments for steering services  
4. The roles of the stakeholders  
5. Targeting and access  
6. Staffing  
7. Delivery settings  
8. Delivery methods  
9. Career information  
10. Financing  
11. Assuring quality  
12. The evidence base

**Annexes**
1. OVERVIEW

Here we would like a brief overview of arrangements for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

1.1 Please provide a brief (no more than one page) overview of national arrangements for career information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

In answering this please describe the principal service providers, and indicate the extent to which the provision of career information, guidance and counselling overlaps with or is integrated with other services. Indicate how responsibility both for managing and for funding information, guidance and counselling services is divided: between different Ministries (for example Education and Labour); between different levels of government; and between governments and other providers. If possible, include as an Annex the contact details and homepages of key players and main providers of services. (Note: questions that allow more detailed descriptions of services can be found elsewhere in the questionnaire).

Only elements of advisory and counselling services existed in Bulgaria till 1990, all relevant activities being inherent to the educational system although some traditions can be traced to the beginning of the last century. The vocational guidance and consultancy in Bulgaria has traditions since the beginning of the last century. At the end of 70s was created a National Centre for Vocational Qualification. Until its closing in 1992 this Centre dealt with re-qualification of adults and initial vocational qualification of employed people and lay-offs. At that time the role of vocational guidance was played by so called Labour Inspectorate.

After 1990 the Ministry of Education and Science started more active work in this direction. A Centre for Vocational Guidance was established with the Ministry in Sofia. Its main activities were the development of adapted tests as well as the creation of information system covering the vocational schools and vocational colleges in the country. A network of 28 Pedagogical Consulting Offices was created related to the regional administrative governing bodies and covering the whole country. The activities of these offices were closely linked to the activity of the Vocational Guidance Center. Unfortunately, these offices were closed down in 2000.

In 1994 the former National Employment Service, now functioning under the name of Employment Agency, and its regional and local branches – the Labour offices – set up a specialized system for vocational guidance for unemployed and all other persons who need these kind of services, following a German model. Nowadays, in the Republic of Bulgaria the services for information, guidance and counselling of youth and adults are mainly provided in the framework of the Employment Agency system, executive Agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

The legislative basis for carrying out the activities in this field is the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ which revises the previous Law on Unemployment Protection and Employment Incentives /1998/. Since 25 March 2003 an amended Employment Promotion Act has been in force (State Gazette, number 26, 21.03.2003.).

Career information, guidance and counselling services are provided by the Labour offices, territorial units of the Employment Agency, through their structural units-sections "Services for employment". There unemployed and job seekers of all ages are offered information about vacancies in the local labour market, requirements of employers, specific characteristics of the work activity; guidance and counselling about the opportunities for broadening their chances in the labour market through qualification and re-qualification courses etc. "Job clubs" were established to the Labour offices. The unemployed and job seekers are offered information about actual and perspective occupations as a part of the main services. Specialized units, providing information, guidance and counselling services are the Centers for Vocational Information /CVI/. They also are structural sections of the Labour offices (information-consultancy units, functioning within the Labour Office Directorates structures)
and are established as a result of a joint programme of Employment Agency of Bulgaria and Federal Agency of Employment of Republic of Germany. The services are mainly directed to helping school students. Free access to the services offered by CVI have also parents, university students, unemployed, occupied seeking another job, as well as, employers, teachers, specialists in the field of career guidance.

By this moment Employment Agency (EA) system consists of 115 territorial divisions to some of which there have been established and have been functioning information consultancy unit “Job club” – their number up to now is 37.

The information offered to the clients can be grouped in the following main directions: characteristics of occupations and crafts – main work activities; physic, psychological and personal requirements; opportunities for education and training; perspectives for realization in the labour market, including opportunities for self employment etc.; educational, training and qualification institutions and courses in Bulgaria and abroad; vacancies on the territory of the Labour office; actual situation and tendencies in the local and national labour market etc.

The information is provided in different kinds of printed materials, video films and multimedia products.

The information and methodical providing of the services in the Employment Agency system is carried out by department “Information and Publishing Center”. Information and Counselling Center was established to the Regional employment service in Sofia. It provides services to job seekers/unemployed, students, employees, pensioners/ and employers, concerning organization of small and family business, career development, job placement, solving psychological problems in the process of job seeking etc.

To the Labour offices in the towns of Sofia, Stara Zagora and Russe Centers for development of abilities are functioning. They provide information, guidance and counselling services for individuals with physical disabilities.

The provision of vocational information and guidance services within the system of education is unsatisfactory. According to the Vocational Education and Training Act 1999/ information, guidance and counselling services has to be provided for school students, unemployed and others by Vocational information and career guidance centres. According to the Transitional and Concluding Provisions of this Law the Minister of Education and Science had to either transform the then existing 28 Pedagogical Consulting Offices into such Centres, or to close down them with the idea of establishing them anew. But by this moment, due to different reasons, these Centres, aimed as institutions in the framework of the vocational education and training system, have not been established.

At present elements of activities for providing career information and counselling are carried out in the secondary education system by pedagogical advisors, mainly in connection with choice of occupation and vocational school or higher school/university. Besides, at the beginning of 2000, under the Ministry of Education and Science, 13 regional centers for educational services and qualifications were opened, seeking to provide services to pupils, parents and teachers. These were established as pilot units within the framework of the “School for everyone” PHARE project and presented various models of school drop-out prevention, reintegration into the educational system, vocational training provision, vocational information and counseling, training of teachers in contemporary training and communication methods.

Center for career development is functioning in Sofia University. It is specialized in providing career information and counselling to high school and university students. In Sofia there is a Labour office, which is a specialized unit for high school and university students too.

The activities connected with providing the services in the field of career guidance in the public sector are funded by the state budget and are offered to the clients free of charge. The private sector in providing of information, guidance and counselling services is underdeveloped yet.

1 The last amendment to the Vocational Education and Training Act is published in State gazette, number 29, 31.03.2003.
2. KEY GOALS, INFLUENCES, ISSUES AND INITIATIVE

Here we would like you to provide information about the broad goals for information, guidance and counselling services, about the influences that are shaping these services, about the key issues in their organisation, management and delivery, and about important recent initiatives.

2.1 What are the key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please describe differences in objectives and goals that might exist between Ministries. Where a legislative basis exists for these objectives and goals, please provide details.

The key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling services are connected with helping youth and adults to make career decisions and choices which to guarantee their successful realization in the labour market. The activities in this field are carried out on the basis of the Employment Promotion Act (EPA)/2001/, which revises the previous Law on Unemployment Protection and Employment Incentives(1998).

According to it all citizens above the age of 16 - unemployed and employed looking for jobs have the right to vocational information and counselling. It is provided in the context of the mediatory services for employment, offered by the Labour offices. The vocational information and counselling is directed to helping clients to choose appropriate course for qualification and re-qualification, so as to make their chances for finding a job or a better job higher. In addition also students, including those who want to work, also have the right of these services during their spare time provided that they abide the laws. Even before the amendments to the EPA the students were the great part of the clients of the Labour Office Directorates in connection with the vocational guidance and consultancy.

The services, provided by the Centers for vocational information (VGC)/structural units of the Labour offices/ and also by specialists from the territorial divisions of the Employment Agency (EA) are mainly oriented to helping clients in choice of occupation and of vocational school, higher school or university and to manage their career development. Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of EA the vocational guidance and consultancy is one of the main functions of the Labour Office Directorates. In each territorial division of the EA there is a unit or a specialist who performs activities in the field of vocational guidance, information and consultancy. In Article 65, paragraph 1 of the EPA these activities are defined as “mandatory” for primary vocation education and re-qualification training.

The legislative basis of the activities in vocational guidance includes also the Vocational Education and Training Act /1999/. According to it vocational guidance is a part of vocational education and training system. It should provide information, counselling and advising to school students and unemployed, as well as, to others about choice of occupation and career development. This Law envisages establishment of Centers for information and career guidance. By now these Centers were not established due to different reasons. Substantial merit of this Law is the fact that it defines the functions not only of Ministry of Education and Science but also of all other Ministries, of Communities administration and of the Social Partners, related to vocational education and training of human resources in Bulgaria. The legislative regulation of the co-ordination of their activities will no doubt contribute to increasing the quality of information, guidance and counselling services.

2.2 What are the major social, educational and labour market influences that are currently shaping national policies for information, guidance and counselling services?

The major social, educational and labour market influences that are currently shaping national policies for information, guidance and counselling services can be grouped as follows:
− structural changes in economy – increasing of the private sector, dying out of some occupations and crafts and in some cases of whole branches and rise of new ones;
− changes in the qualification requirements due to the technological development, increasing of competition in the labour market, globalization and the broad goal for integration of the country in EU;
− the necessity to set the educational and qualification standards and technologies in conformity with European achievements in this field;
− the necessity to set the educational and qualification market in conformity with the actual situation and the tendencies in the development of the labour market.

2.3 What are the most important issues facing policy makers in your country in the organisation, management and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services?

The most important issues facing policy makers in Bulgaria in the organization, management and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services can be grouped as follows;
− the necessity to make prognoses about the tendencies in the development of the local and national labour market in conditions of dynamic changes in economy;
− the necessity of planning and organization of vocational training and qualification market according to the labour market development;
− the necessity to achieve the European standards in the field of education and qualification of labour force.

2.4 Please describe any recent (last five years) initiatives and changes that are of particular significance for the organisation, management, funding, staffing, or delivery of information, guidance and counselling services.

For example you might like to describe initiatives such as: government reports that have recommended new approaches or new priorities, new methods and philosophies of providing services (for example within the context of lifelong learning), new or proposed legislation and regulations, new or upgraded services or the down-sizing or elimination of existing services, changed priorities for access to services, changed responsibilities between agencies for the provision of services, new education and training requirements for staff, initiatives to engage citizens in the planning and delivery of services, changes in the involvement of the private sector, technological developments that have made a real difference to the ways in which services are delivered and/or accessed

Important steps were undertaken to realize the Vocational Education and Training Act /1999/, most important of which are:
− Establishment of National Agency for Vocational Education and Training /NAVET/. It is a specialized public body for accreditation of activities in vocational education and training system, as well as, for co-ordination of institutions and organizations related to vocational education, training and guidance.
The Agency’s Managing Board includes:
● 8 representatives of different Ministries - of Education and Science; of Labour and Social Policy; of Transport and Communications; of Regional Development and Public Works; of Agriculture and Forestry; of Health;
● 8 representatives of employers organizations;
● 8 representatives of employees organizations on national level.
The Vocational Education and Training Act envisages changes in management, organization and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services. The NAVET accredits institutions in the vocational education and training system, issues and withdraws licenses for provision of vocational training and/or career guidance; generates and maintains a register of the vocational training centres and the vocational information and career guidance centers. This Law regulates the relations between Employment Agency and NAVET. The services in the field of vocational guidance should be a part of the whole vocational education and training system and will be delivered by Centers for information and career guidance. By this time these Centers were not established and the services in the field of career development are provided mainly by the Employment Agency system.

- Under the management of NAVET National List of occupations for vocational education and training /2001/ was developed and government educational requirements for acquiring of qualification for the occupations, included in the List are in a process of development. Besides Criteria and Procedure for licensing of the Centers for information and career guidance were approved (2000).

- In 2001 education in specialty “Consultant in vocational development” started in Institute for Postgraduate Studies at University of National and World Economy in the framework of a joint project of Employment Agency /Republic of Bulgaria/ and Federal Employment Agency /Republic of Germany/. The term of education is a year and a half. It is a post graduate qualification course for specialists from Employment Agency with higher education. In the near future education for master degree will be organized.

3. POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR STEERING SERVICES

Here we wish to know about the key policy instruments that are used to steer information, guidance and counselling services, and about how policy goals are translated into service delivery.

3.1 How important is legislation in steering information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please briefly describe the main pieces of legislation that directly affect information, guidance and counselling services. More complete details and examples can be provided in an Annex.

By this moment information, guidance and counselling services are delivered on the basis of the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ which revises previous Law on Unemployment Protection and Employment Incentives /1998/. According to it Labour offices of the Employment Agency provide career information, guidance and counselling to job seekers above the age of 16 in the context of mediatory services for employment aimed at helping clients to find a job or a better job.

The mediatory services include:

1) information and counseling about:
   a) the rights and obligations of the job seekers according this Law; b) vacancies, requirements of the employers, opportunities to use stimuli for gaining employment etc.; c) opportunities for motivation and qualification training; d) opportunities for change of occupation or work in another town and village;

2) orientation to appropriate job;

3) psychological counselling;

4) information about conditions and rules for work in another countries according Intergovernmental Agreements;

5) arrangements for including in motivation and qualification training – offering information about occupations and counselling aimed at helping clients to choose appropriate course.
The Vocational Education and Training Act, passed in 1999 envisages that information, guidance and counselling should be provided for school students, unemployed and others by Centers for information and career guidance.

The Law defines the main objectives of the vocational education and training in the context of incessant vocational training. The vocational education and training system includes vocational guidance, vocational training and vocational education. Vocational guidance ensures information, counselling and advising of school students, unemployed and others about the choice of occupation and career development. The Law envisages establishment of Centers for information and career guidance – government, community or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation and foreign. These Centers were not by this moment established. According to the Law they will be institutions in the framework of the vocational education and training system.

The main merit of the Law is that it regulates and defines the functions, responsibilities and the ways for joint actions of all Ministries, of Communities administration and of the Social partners related to vocational education and training.

### 3.2 What other instruments are normally used for the political steering of information, guidance and counselling services and to monitor implementation?

For example you might like to describe the use of instruments such as outcomes targets, mandatory or voluntary service quality standards, mandatory or voluntary competency standards and qualification standards for staff, competitive tendering for services and the like.

According to the legislative base different documents were developed:

− Regulations for the structure and activities of Employment Agency and its territorial units, including Labour offices;
− Interior regulations for organization of activities carried out by Labour offices, including provision of information, guidance and counselling services;
− Instructions and guiding materials concerning the technology of service provision;
− Interior requirements for competencies of staff defined in the job descriptions for the different positions in Labour offices.

The staff in the Labour offices is obliged periodically to work out reports on activities realized in providing different kinds of services, including information, guidance and counselling ones. The reports are worked out in a definite structure, which makes possible gathering of qualitative and quantitative information. The information is summarized on national level. On this basis conclusions and evaluations are made with respect to the actual situation, as well as, with respect to the necessary arrangements for development and improvement of service provision. If necessary, proposals for normative regulations concerning solving of important practical problems are worked out and presented to the attention of corresponding inferior institutions.

### 3.3 Please describe how government regulation, funding and provision of information, guidance and counselling services are related to one another. Is the same (government) body typically responsible for all three, or are they carried out by separate agencies?

During the last years the only government body, responsible for regulation, funding and provision of information, guidance and counselling services is the Employment Agency, which is executive agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. It is established on the basis of the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) with the aim to realize the government policy in the field of encouragement of employment, protection of the labour market, vocational information
and counselling, vocational and motivation training of unemployed and employed individuals, as well as, for carrying out mediatory activity for information and job-placement.

To the executive director of the Employment Agency a Council is established that consists of deputies of the representative organizations of employers and of employees on national level. The services in the field of vocational guidance are provided by the Labour offices, territorial units of the Employment Agency in the process of provision of mediatory services aimed at helping clients to find a job or a better job, including orientation to appropriate qualification and re-qualification courses.

Specialized units for providing of career information, guidance and counselling are the Centers for vocational information, which are structures of the Labour offices.

The Employment Agency activities, including these in the field of vocational guidance are funded by the state budget on the basis of the Law for the state budget.

3.4 What mechanisms, if any, exist for co-ordinating information, guidance and counselling services: between different Ministries; between different levels of government; between governments and other parties such as employers, trade unions, the private sector, and community groups; between services for youth and for adults; and between the different agencies that provide services? What barriers exist to co-ordination of services and to networking among providers?

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ Council for encouragement of employment is functioning as a permanent body for cooperation and counselling in the process of development of employment policy, including the policy in providing of information, guidance and counselling services. It includes equal number of representatives of government, organizations of employers and of employees. Depending on the problems under discussion representatives of non-government organizations are invited to take part in the meetings.

On regional level 28 Commissions of employment are functioning /covering the whole territory of the country/, including representatives of regional and Communities administration; territorial structures of Employment Agency, of Ministries and other government institutions; regional structures of the representative organizations of employers and employees; branch organizations; non-government organizations, carrying out activities related to the problems of employment and qualification training; other territorial structures.

To the Labour offices Councils for cooperation were built up. These Councils are obliged to carry out control over realization of policies in the field of employment, including the policies in the field of information, guidance and counseling services provision. The Councils include representatives of: Employment Agency territorial structures; territorial structures of Ministry of education and science; of Community administration and organizations of employers and employees.

The legislative basis for regulation of the relations between the service providers and all parties in the labour market does not define in details their duties for providing actual career information.

Nevertheless on national level the Employment Agency developed the practice of exchange of information concerning educational and qualification market with Ministry of education and science, representative organizations of employers, branch organization etc.

In some regions good relationships and initiatives have been realized on local level by the Centers for vocational information and local structures of Ministry of education, as well as, with the participation of local organizations of employers.

The connection with private providers of services is mainly expressed in the fact that Employment Agency and National Agency for Vocational Education and Training are responsible for licensing of their activities.
3.5 What barriers exist to co-ordination of services and to networking among providers?

Substantial barrier is the fact that there are not specialized units for school students. Services for school students are provided mainly in Employment Agency system by the Centers for vocational information /CVI/ together with the services for adults. Besides this, the number of these Centers is not enough to cover the whole territory of the country.

CVI have good experience in planning, organization and delivery of information and guidance services. They have unified information base /printed materials for occupations, video films, multimedia products/, as well as, technology for servicing clients, individually and in groups.

So, increasing the number of CVI and legislative regulation of their relations with local structures of Ministry of Education and Science will be a serious prerequisite for better co-ordination of services and for networking among providers.

4. THE ROLES OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Here we wish to know about the roles played some key stakeholders other than government Ministries -- such as employer organisations and trade unions – in information, guidance and counselling services.

4.1 What role do employer organisations play in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

For example by participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies; by contributing to common funds for information, guidance and counselling services; through providing employee leave to take part in career guidance; or through participation in programme management committees.

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/, deputies of the representative employer organizations on national level are members of the Council to the executive Director of the Employment Agency. Representatives of employers organizations are members of regional Commissions of employment as well as of local Councils for cooperation to the Labour offices.

In this way they take part in realization of the policy for encouragement of employment, which in the sense of this Law includes providing information, guidance and counselling services.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act /1999/ deputies of representative organizations of employers on national level are members of the Managing Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. In this way they participate in realization of the policy in vocational education and training, which in the sense of this Law includes vocational guidance.

4.2 What initiatives do employer organisations take to help provide information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: involvement in career information programmes in schools and tertiary education; the provision of guidance and counselling; organising careers fairs and exhibitions; or the production of career information.

On local level there are examples of participation of employers in initiatives, organized by the Centers for vocational information, for presenting the conditions, requirements etc. for practicing of different occupations, as well as, in organization of careers fairs and exhibitions.
4.3 Does employer involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

*In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.*

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**Trade Unions**

4.4 Do trade unions play a role in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

*For example through participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies, or in programme management committees.*

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ deputies of the representative organizations of employees on national level are members of the Council to the executive Director of the Employment Agency. Representatives of employees organizations are members of Regional Commissions of employment as well as of local Councils for cooperation to the Labour offices.

In this way they take part in realization of the policy for encouragement of employment, which in the sense of this Law includes providing information, guidance and counselling services.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act /1999/ deputies of representative organizations of employees on national level are members of the Managing Board of National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. In this way they participate in realization of the policy in vocational education and training, which in the sense of this Law includes vocational guidance.

4.5 What initiatives do trade unions take in providing information, guidance and counselling services?

*For example involvement in career information programmes in schools; providing guidance and counselling; or producing career information. Here also describe any initiatives taken by trade unions to provide information, guidance and counselling services to their own members.*

According to the Law on for Employment /2001/ trade unions are involved in cases of mass lay-offs. In these cases the employers are obliged to inform the Employment Agency that they are going to dismiss employees, 30 days before the date of dismissal.

Copy of the letter is sent to:

– community administration;
– representatives of the employees in the enterprise;
– territorial structure of the National Insurance Institute.
After receiving the letter, groups are formed, including representative of the employer, representatives of the employees organizations in the enterprise, representative of the Employment Agency and representative of the Community administration. These groups are obliged to work out project for the necessary arrangements, directed to:

- mediation for job-placement;
- qualification training, which is preceded by providing career information, guidance and counselling;
- self employment through organizing own business;
- alternative forms of employment.

The projects are discussed and confirmed by the Regional Commission for employment and they are submitted for funding under conditions and rules defined in the Regulations for applying of this Law.

Information for initiatives of trade unions on local level concerning providing of information, guidance and counselling services is not available.

### 4.6 Does trade union involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

*In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.*

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**Other Stakeholders**

### 4.7 Please describe ways in which policies encourage other stakeholders -- such as parents, associations of students, alumni, community organisations, educational institutions or the end-users of services -- to play a role in information, guidance and counselling services.

*For example through roles that are expressed in legislation; through policies to contract service provision to non-government organisations; through membership of advisory bodies; through membership of programme management committees.*

The only specialized units for providing information, guidance and counselling services are Centers for vocational information (CVI), structural, sections of the Labour offices. They have been functioning since 1995 and are 15 stationary and 1 mobile. In fact CVI are units for self-information of clients of all ages about variety of questions, concerning career and educational or qualification choices and career development. Annually they plan their activity in organizing group forms for information and counselling. The annual plans are developed on the basis of established contacts with local vocational secondary schools, high schools and universities. Their representatives are engaged in two directions -- for giving information to the CVI staff about current changes, concerning education and training; for presenting to interested groups of clients information about occupations and specialties, they are offering education, specific elements of curriculum, opportunities to continue education, realization of their alumni in the labour market, forms for post graduate qualifications, specializations etc.
Apart from the Vocational Information Centers to the territorial divisions of EA vocational information, guidance and consultancy services (pursuant to EPA), although in limited range, have been delivered also by natural and/or legal persons registered under the Bulgarian legislation.

Local educational and training institutions, local branch organizations participate in already traditional fairs of occupations and fairs of vocational secondary schools, high schools and universities.

The contacts and activities, described here are not especially defined in a legislative document. They are carried out in the general context of the activities on local level in the field of assisting individuals to manage their careers in the conditions of a dynamic and not yet entirely formed labour market.

5. TARGETING AND ACCESS

Here we want to know about priorities for access to information, guidance and counselling services. This section also asks about how services are provided for adults.

5.1 Please describe any priorities or target groups for information, guidance and counselling services, including how priority needs are established.

For example target groups might include: school students; young people; adults; unemployed people; those receiving social welfare benefits; tertiary education students; employees; refugees and members of ethnic minorities.

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ career information and counselling services are provided for all individuals above the age of 16, no matter of their nationality, sex, sexual orientation, race, age, political and religions convictions, membership in trade unions and other social organizations and movements, marital, social and financial status and physical or psychic disorders.

By the present moment the main target groups that were outlined in the course of practice in providing information, guidance and counselling services are as follows:

− school students – choice of occupation, speciality, vocational school, higher school or university;
− school students belonging to specific target groups: with special educational needs – deviant behaviour, school drop-outs; with prominent abilities in the field of pictorial arts, music, sports; with special educational needs – with chronic diseases, physical disabilities and sensory disorders, mentally retarded; students;
− high school/university students – planning of career development concerning choice of course for specialization, master degree programme, post graduate qualification course;
− individuals who have dropped out of school after the age of 16, and have not completed a level of education and vocational qualifications till the age of 29;
− disadvantaged groups or groups with specific needs;
− unemployed youth and adults – short-term or long-term unemployed, choice of appropriate direction and a corresponding course for qualification and re-qualification;
− employees – in case of necessity or individual intention to change job, choice of a course for additional qualification aimed at increasing of their competitive power in the labour market;
− parents – less as a target group, but rather using those services in connection with assisting the choice of their children of occupation and secondary school, high school or university.
The target groups are established on the basis of annual researches of personal characteristics of clients in the units, offering these kind of services in the Employment Agency system – Labour offices and Centers for vocational information.

5.2 How are any such priorities or targets expressed?

For example give details of any legislation that provides rights or entitlements to services for particular groups.

The legislative basis for providing services to the main target groups defined in point 5.1 includes:

− The Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/. According to it information, guidance and counselling services are provided to clients by the Labour offices in the context of the mediatory services for employment and by the specialized units - Centers for vocational information. The Centers are functioning for 8 years.

− The Vocational Education and Training Act /1999/. It envisages building up of a network of Centers for information and career guidance for school students, unemployed and others, as institutions of vocational education and training system. Since its passing this Law is under realization step by step. Substantial results were achieved in the direction of development of government educational requirements for acquiring qualification under the management of National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and with the participation of all institutions and organizations related to the problem.

Until this time the Centers for information and career guidance were not established and in practice the services in the field of vocational guidance are provided mainly by the territorial structures of the Employment Agency.

5.3 Where such priorities exist, what active steps are taken to ensure that access to services is possible for target groups?

For example “one-stop-shops”; drop-in services that do not require appointments; telephone help-lines; use of community organisations for service delivery; targeted advertising.

The main steps that are taken in this direction are as follows:

− targeted advertising – development and dissemination of materials, addressing the needs of the different target groups;
− programmes on national and local TV and radio channels;
− thematic group sessions on problems, that are announced in advance before broad public;
− thematic group sessions in schools and enterprises;
− fairs of occupations and fairs of secondary schools, high schools, universities and employers’ stock markets
− Internet centers through which the aim groups have an access to vocational information, guidance and consultancy services

All the steps mentioned above are taken after study of the specific needs of the different target groups.
5.4 Typically, are different methods used to provide services for different target groups?

The methods used to provide services differ depending mainly on specific situation of the client or the group /the kind of the choice or decision that has to be assisted/ and the degree of rationalization of personal needs and claims. These specify the scope and contents of career information, guidance and counselling services. For unemployed, who do not have clear plans for the future, career guidance services are provided by the psychologist in the Labour office. For this activity special methods are developed.

5.5 Do examples exist in which individuals are required to take part in guidance and counselling?

For example to continue to receive social security benefits or pensions; or to avoid expulsion from school.

According to the Law for encouragement of employment the including of employees and of unemployed in courses for initial qualification and re-qualification, organized by Employment Agency, is obligatory preceded by vocational information, guidance and counselling.

5.6 Do policies for information, guidance and counselling services favour:

- A comprehensive approach (so that services are universally accessible and meet a wide range of needs); or
- A targeted approach that favours those in greatest need; or
- Both of these approaches.

Policies for information, guidance and counselling services in Bulgaria favour both of the approaches.

5.7 Please describe the major gaps, if any, in the provision of information, guidance and counselling services. Are there any groups whose needs appear to be met less effectively than others?

For the 8 years of their functioning the Centers for vocational information /CVI/ in the Employment Agency system gained much experience in providing services for their clients. They have well-developed unified information basis and successful practice in gathering local information. The researches, carried out annually by the department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency, show that the services provided by CVI meet at a high degree the needs of different groups of clients.

The problem is that the number of CVI is not sufficient to cover the whole territory of the country. A step to solve this problem is the building up of a mobile CVI, which is positioned in different towns for a period of 1 or 2 years.

Services for adults

5.8 Please describe how information, guidance and counselling services are organised and provided for adults in your country.

For example: which agencies (educational institutions, community organisation, the public employment service) typically provide services for adults; are these different from the agencies that provide services for youth; how are different agencies co-ordinated; what priority do services for adults have compared to services for youth; what recent initiatives have been taken to provide services to adults.
Services for adults are typically provided by the Labour offices: in the context of the mediatory services for employment and by the specialized units for vocational guidance – Centers for vocational information. The main aim is to assist adults – unemployed and employees – in increasing of their competitive power in the labour market.

6. STAFFING

Here we wish to know about the types of staff that provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country, and about their qualifications and competencies.

In answering this section, please describe differences between staff in the different settings in which information, guidance and counselling services are provided: for example schools, tertiary education, community organisations, public employment services.

6.1 What types or categories of staff are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country?

For example information librarian, classroom careers teacher, school counsellor, public employment service counsellor.

The staff in the Labour offices of the Employment Agency providing information, guidance and counselling services are specialists with higher education – bachelor or master degree in economic, humanitarian or technical sciences – appointed on positions according to the Regulations for application of the Unified classifier of positions in administration.

Pedagogical advisors in secondary schools, providing elements of information, guidance and counselling services, are specialists with higher education – bachelor or master degree in psychology, pedagogy or sociology.

6.2 What is the best information that can be provided on the number of staff, by type or category, who are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please indicate if information on their age, gender and equity group structure is available.

It is difficult to point out the exact total number of staff, engaged in providing these services. In the Labour offices, the specialists are engaged to provide other services, not only information, guidance and counselling ones.

It is known for certain that in the Employment Agency system the number of specialists with higher education, directly engaged in the field of information, guidance and counselling is 50. 30 of them work in the Centers for vocational information and 20 in the department “Information and Publishing Center” of the Employment Agency. Most of the specialists are women.

In public secondary school system there is a rule for appointment of 1 pedagogical advisor for servicing of 500 school students. As a result, there are cases when 1 pedagogical advisor provides services to students in two schools. The number of pedagogical advisors is 500.
6.3 What education and training qualifications are the different types or categories of career information, guidance and counselling staff required to have? (Where qualifications are required, please indicate whether it is government or a professional association that requires them, and describe relevant professional licensing bodies).

For example teaching qualifications, university degrees in psychology, special diplomas in guidance and counselling, post-graduate qualifications, completion of in-service courses and so on. Please describe the length of the education and training and the type of qualification that it leads to. Please describe any differences in requirements between the different settings in which services are provided.

There are no special education and training qualifications that the staff, providing career information, guidance and counselling is required to have. This is so because there is not special education in the higher educational system that ensures education and qualification in the field of educational career guidance. There are only separate subjects, concerning theory and practice of career guidance in the course of university education in specialties “psychology”, “pedagogy” and “social activities”.

In 2001 postgraduate qualification course in specialty “consultant in vocational development” with duration year and a half was organized in Institute for Postgraduate Studies at University of National and World Economy. In it specialists form the Employment Agency system were included. Education for master degree in the same specialty will start in the near future. These activities are carried out in the frame of a joint project of Employment Agency in Bulgaria and Federal Agency of Employment in Germany.

6.4 What, typically, are the types of competencies (or knowledge and skills) that these different types or categories of workers are required to have?

For example communication skills, group facilitation skills, individual and group assessment skills, labour market knowledge, knowledge of career development theory.

Competencies that the staff of the Employment Agency engaged with providing of information, guidance and counselling services are required to have are defined in the job descriptions for the different positions. They include: knowledge of the world of occupations, knowledge of career development theory, labour market knowledge, communication skills, organizing skills.

6.5 How are the competencies or knowledge and skills required of those who provide information, guidance and counselling changing, and why? What is being done to meet these changing knowledge and skill needs?

The needs of knowledge and skills of those who provide information, guidance and counselling services change mainly because they have to work in a dynamic situation – changes in economy, concerning dying out of occupations and origin of new ones; changes in the legislation concerning employment and unemployment and so on.

The skills for establishing contacts are of growing importance, due to the necessity of gathering more information and keep information basis of service providing units actual as well as to establish contacts and to organize joint actions with different local institutions and organizations. These contacts and relations are not regulated legislatively so at the present moment they depend on the skills and persistence of those who are obliged to provide information, guidance and counselling services.

To meet the changes in the knowledge and skill needs the human resource development department of Employment Agency organizes different forms for qualification of the staff. They are conducted in various forms:
− Working meetings are organized for identification of the problems in the practice of service provision and discussion of ways for their solving and defining the necessary activities to be carried out;
− Methodical materials concerning solving of different practical problems are developed and disseminated among the staff.

### 6.6 What opportunities exist for information, guidance and counselling service staff to update their knowledge and skills?

For example: Do industrial agreements allow time for recurrent education and skills upgrading? What time, and what programmes, do government agencies provide for the purpose? What recurrent education and skills upgrading courses are provided by tertiary institutions?

The opportunities for the staff in the Employment Agency are these, mentioned in point 6.5, as well as, short-term seminars on themes concerning theoretical or practical problems in the field of career development and dissemination of materials about successful practices in other countries.

The activities for updating of staff qualification are planned and organized on the basis of periodical studies of the needs in this direction.

### 6.7 Please describe any policies that exist to systematically make use of groups such as alumni, parents and local employers in delivering services.

For example by acting as mentors, or by visiting classes to provide information on careers.

Centers for vocational information engage local employers and alumni of different secondary vocational schools, high schools or universities to take part in group sessions. Employers present information and answer questions concerning opportunities for realization of different occupations in local enterprises, work conditions etc. Alumni describe the course of education in local schools and their work experience after graduation.

### 7. DELIVERY SETTINGS

Here we would like to know about the delivery of services in different settings.

#### Schools

### 7.1 Are separate career education lessons a normal part of the school curriculum? If so, for each school grade, please indicate whether or not such lessons are required and the mandatory number of hours per year.

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There are no separate career education lessons as a normal part of the school curriculum. In lower- and upper-secondary schools (from 5 to 12 grade) there are “hours of the class teacher” – 1 hour per week. During part of these hours problems concerning choice of occupation and career development are discussed.
The contents of a separate school subject for career education is in a process of development. At the present moment there is no available information about the grade at which this kind of education is going to start and the number of hours per year.

### 7.2 If separate career education lessons are not provided, are policies in place to integrate career education into other subjects? Details can be provided in an Annex.

There are no organized systematic activities in this direction. If there are some cases of integration of career education into other subjects they are results of decision of some textbook authors or of some teachers.

### 7.3 Are periods of work experience required as part of the secondary school curriculum? For each school grade please indicate whether or not such experience is required, and how many hours per year are required.

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There are no organized systematic activities in this direction in the general secondary education. There are no rules and requirements. Where there are examples of organizing work experience for school students they are result of initiatives of school directors and teachers.

### 7.4 What other types of career information, guidance and counselling services are typically provided for school students (that is, apart from career education lessons and work experience)?

For example careers fairs; personal counselling; access to career libraries; alumni programmes; parent involvement programmes; internet or computer-based programmes.

Pedagogical advisors in schools provide information and counselling about educational opportunities after 7 and 8 grade and after completion of educational and assist school students in rationalization of their vocational interests and attitudes on the basis of especially developed for the purpose methods.

There are 13 regional centres for educational services and qualifications, functioning under the Ministry of Education and Science, seeking to provide services to pupils, parents and teachers. These were established as pilot units within the framework of the “School for everyone” PHARE project and presented various models of school drop-out prevention, reintegration into the educational system, vocational training provision, vocational information and counseling, training of teachers in contemporary training and communication methods.

Besides, school students have a free access to the CVI services.

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1. This refers to periods that students are required to spend in workplaces in order to assist their career decision making and in order to understand the world of work. It does not refer to those periods of workplace experience that are included in vocational education programmes in order to allow students to develop or practice the work-related skills and competencies included within the vocational education curriculum.
The public employment service

7.5 What information, guidance and counselling services are provided by the public employment service?

For example: what is the relative balance between career and job information services and guidance and counselling; what types of clients typically seek and receive assistance; how are these services related to overall national labour market and employment policies?

In regions where there are Centers for vocational information services are provided for:

- school students and parents - assistance in choice of occupation, specialty and corresponding vocational school, high school or university;
- high school and university students - assistance in choice of specialization, master degree programme, post graduate qualification course;
- unemployed and employees - assistance in choice of a direction for initial or additional qualification or re-qualification

The clients have a free access to the information base of the Centers which includes printed materials, video films and multimedia products, containing information about:

- characteristics of occupations;
- secondary and high schools and universities;
- labour market;
- opportunities for self employment through organizing of own business;
- vacancies etc.

For the clients of the Centers the following group forms for information and counselling are organized:

- thematic meetings on questions of interest to group members;
- meetings with professionals practicing different occupations.

The Labour offices provide career information, guidance and counselling in the context of mediatory services for employment which include providing career information, as well as, job information with the aim to help job seekers increase their chances in the labour market.

Information and Counselling Center was established to the Regional employment service in Sofia. It provides services to job seekers /unemployed, students, employees, pensioners/ and employers concerning organization of small and family business, career development, job placement, solving psychological problems in the process of job seeking etc.

To the Labour offices in the towns of Sofia, Stara Zagora and Russe Centers for development of abilities are functioning. They provide information, guidance and counselling services for individuals with physical disabilities.

Tertiary education

In answering this section, please separately describe services in university-level tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 levels 5A and 6) and in non-university-level tertiary institutions - such as community colleges and polytechnics (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 5B).

If applicable, also describe services in post-secondary non-tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 4) and in institutions offering continuing education or further education and training programmes.
7.6 Please describe information, guidance and counselling services that are provided within tertiary education.

For example: Are they a normal and standard service within tertiary institutions or are they only provided in some institutions? Are they normally provided separately from or together with personal and study counselling services? Are they normally provided separately from or together with job placement and graduate recruitment services?

In Sofia University, the oldest university in Bulgaria, Consultant Center for career development was established as a structural unit of Labour office “University students labour”. Its goal is to provide information, guidance and counselling services to high school and university students in order to help them manage their career. This Center provides services for the students of all high schools and universities in Sofia/the capital of Bulgaria/.

In the other regions of the country where there are Centers for vocational information high school and university students have opportunity to use services offered by them.

In high schools and universities there is a practice of organizing meetings at the beginning of education aimed at presenting to the students detailed information about the course of education, main subjects, opportunities for specialization, master programmes etc.

The private (for-profit) sector

7.7 What is known about career guidance and counselling services provided by the private (for-profit) sector: such as management consultants, outplacement services or private practitioners?

For example describe their client base, the level of their fees, the sorts of services that they provide, and what is known about growth in these services over time.

The private sector in the field of providing information, guidance and counselling services is not yet properly developed. There are private employment services but their activities are connected only with offering job information. They are not very popular and information about their client base or level of fees is not available.

Besides there are private training organizations, which offer information about the courses, they organize.

7.8 Please describe any steps that governments have taken to try to encourage private (for-profit) organisations to provide guidance and counselling services or to regulate the ways in which such services are provided.

For example by providing vouchers that can be used to purchase services; by changing legislation; by contracting out services; by setting staff qualification levels; by regulating fees that can be charged.

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA), organizations that want to provide for-profit employment services are licensed by the Employment Agency. By the present moment there are 112 private organizations licensed to carry out mediation for job placement in Bulgaria and 103 private organizations licensed to carry out mediation for job placement in other countries on the basis of Intergovernmental Agreements.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, organizations that want to provide for-profit vocational education and training services, as well as, career guidance services are licensed the National Agency of Vocational Education and Training. By this time there are not private organizations for vocational guidance, licensed or in a procedure for licensing.

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2. Section 8 asks about the role played by the private sector in producing educational and occupational information for use in information, guidance and counselling services.
Other organisations

7.9 What role do other organisations -- for example in the community sector -- play in providing information, guidance and counselling services? What types of clients do they serve? What types of needs do they attempt to meet?

“Open society” fund provides in its offices and on its web site information about opportunities for higher education, specialization and post graduate education abroad. In 1999 a National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance was established as an accompanying measure of the “Leonardo da Vinci” programme. The Bulgarian Centre takes part in the network of about 50 centres that work on the basis of a contract with, or as a part of, the Leonardo da Vinci Programme’s national co-ordination units. Their main objective is to supply information about the opportunities for education or work in Europe to vocational advisors and indirectly to the young people. The Bulgarian Centre is a unit within the Human Resource Development Centre based in Sofia.

7.10 Have governments attempted to increase their role (for example by contracting out services)? If so, why? Have they attempted to regulate the ways in which they provide services?

There is not available information.

8. DELIVERY METHODS

Here we would like to know about delivery methods, including the ways in which they are influenced by government policies.

8.1 Career information, guidance and counselling services can be delivered in a variety of ways. In the last five years, how have these been influenced by government policies? (These might be policies to improve the use of resources, policies to increase access, policies to better meet client needs, policies to encourage equity, or other types of policies. To guide your answer, a list of some of the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are delivered is given below in bullets).

- Batteries of psychological tests
- Telephone information, guidance and counselling
- CD-ROM-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Internet-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Careers fairs and exhibitions
- Educational experiences such as transition years
- Organised workplace experience or community experience
- Group guidance and counselling sessions
- Individual face-to-face interviews
- The systematic use of community members such as employers, parents or alumni: for example as sources of career information or as mentors and role models
- Career information libraries
- Paper – and – pencil self assessment techniques: for example the Holland Self Directed Search

The main ways used to deliver information, guidance and counselling services are as follows:

- Career information libraries – such libraries are established in the Centers for vocational information of the Labour offices. They contain career information in printed materials, video films and multimedia products. The information is of two types – on
national level /developed in unified structure of contents and published on national level and disseminated in the units of the Employment agency/ and on local level / gathered and generalized by the specialists in the local units/. The access to the career information libraries is free for the Labour offices clients, as well as, school students and to all individuals who need career information. The visitors are assisted and counselled by the specialists in the process of use of the information materials and products. Some of the materials are used only in the libraries and some like leaflets and folders the clients can take and read at home. Usually, materials of the second type contain brief information about occupations – main work activities, work environment, requirements, opportunities for education and training, opportunities for realization in the labour market;

- Group guidance and counselling sessions which are usually organized in the “Job clubs”, and Centers for vocational information for clients with similar needs. In some cases group sessions for providing career information are held in schools;

- Individual face-to-face interviews are used for defining the client situation and the corresponding needs of career information and counselling;

- Employers from local enterprises, representatives of local secondary schools, higher schools or universities are invited to group sessions to present career information;

- Visits to local enterprises are organized for school students to get impression of real work activities and work environment;

- Paper-and-pencil self-assessment techniques are applied to clients, mainly school students and job seekers, without qualification;

- Internet-based job-search packages are at the disposal of clients in the Labour offices;

- Annually careers fairs and exhibitions are organized on national and local levels;

- Career information is presented in programmes of local TV and radio channels, as well as in the press.

The policy of the Employment Agency for the last years is directed mainly to:

- Enriching of the information basis of the units providing services with respect to contents and kinds of the information materials and products with accent on video films and CD-ROM-based and Internet-based packages, policies to improve and diversify the resources used;

- Increasing the number of the specialized units providing services in the field of career development in the context of life long learning, i.e. policies to improve the access to the services.

The achievements in these directions are encouraging but there is much to be done in the future, mainly with respect to ensuring finds for building up and functioning of more units for providing information, guidance and counselling services, so as to cover the whole territory of the country.

8.2 Please describe any recent or current initiatives to develop Internet-based information, guidance and counselling services.

The only specialized unit in Bulgaria that develops, publishes and disseminates career information, department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency, has recently developed:

- a section in its web site containing brief information materials about 440 occupations with the possibility to print the materials that are interesting to the user. The section contains also information about the units of the Employment Agency, providing information, guidance and counselling services;

- a model assisting the use of the information materials and products, developed by the Center, according to the individual clients needs. It is CD-ROM-based. The clients
needs of career information are defined in interactive mode with the help of psychological instruments especially developed for the aims of the product. As a result the client receives a list of occupations about which he is advised to use different kinds of information materials in the process of choosing occupation, specialty and corresponding secondary vocational school, higher school or university, or qualification course.

In the near future the software realization of the product will be ready. It will be tested and disseminated in the units of Employment Agency. The product will be installed in the web site of the Center too.

The NRCVG has contributed a lot recently to the development of Internet-based information on guidance and counselling by creating data-bases of the vocational schools in Bulgaria, e-Directory to the web sites of all Bulgarian universities, ESTIA page (a portal providing information about learning and employment opportunities throughout Europe). At present it is responsible for the Bulgarian contribution to the new initiative of the European commission - the European portal of job and learning opportunities (Ploteus). Ploteus is expected to become one of the most powerful search engines in the European vocational guidance virtual space and Bulgaria will be fully involved in its preparation and exploitation.

8.3 Can examples be provided of the use of screening tools to match client needs or client type to the type of service provided? If such screening tools exist, please describe the reasons for developing them, and describe where they are used.

The department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency developed an information system which is functioning in the Centers for vocational information. It registers:
- personal characteristics of clients visiting the Centers – age, sex, educational status, work status;
- types of information materials and products used by the clients;
- themes of the group sessions as well as the number of the organized group sessions;
- types of information interesting for the clients but missing in the available information base.

The Center annually summarizes the data and develops analyses, which are published and disseminated in the Employment Agency system.

Researches are carried out periodically by the Center on different problems concerning the needs of: enrichment of the information basis; improvement of methodical providing; updating the qualification of staff in the Centers for vocational information and the “Job clubs”.

The results of researches are basis for planning the activities with respect to development of new career information materials and products and the necessary methodical materials for the staff providing information, guidance and counselling services in the Employment Agency systems.

9. CAREER INFORMATION

Here we wish to know about the educational and occupational information that is used in information, guidance and counselling services.

9.1 What is the public sector’s role in producing career information?

For example indicate which Ministries are responsible for its production; how it is produced; whether it is produced on a national level or at the regional/provincial/state level. Also indicate if governments legislate to control how information is classified, distributed or stored.
The department “Information and Publishing Center” /IPC/ of Employment Agency is responsible for development of information materials and products for vocational guidance, as well as, for their publishing and distribution in the Employment Agency system.

IPC develops information materials and products for occupations included in the National Classification of occupations. For the development of every type of information materials and products procedures and methodical requirements are worked out. According to them the information files detailed printed information materials for occupations and information sheets are developed by professionals in the corresponding field chosen by competition and engaged on contract basis. They develop the information internals files (brief descriptions of occupation) sheets in consistence with the methodical requirements concerning the structure and contents of these types of materials and work together with the experts of IPC who are responsible for accurate fulfillment of the requirements. The developed information files and information sheets are reviewed by two professionals, also are engaged by contracts, and are approved by Specialized Council to the Employment Agency. The approved materials are published and distributed in the Employment Agency system.

Video films and multimedia products for vocational guidance are developed in similar way.

IPC experts develop leaflets and folders for perspective occupations and crafts or for groups of occupations depending on the needs of practice.

Employment Agency publishes every year an edition “Labour market”, presenting data generalized on national level and on regional level, concerning actual situation for the current year, analyses and conclusions about dynamics and tendencies of development. The edition is distributed in the Employment Agency system and among interested institutions and organizations. On local level information is gathered by the of Centers for vocational information on the basis of contacts with educational and training institutions, local structures of Ministry of education and science, local structures of branch organizations, employers etc. It is classified and developed in corresponding printed materials, which are part of the information bases of the Centers.

In order to provide actual career information IPC developed Procedure and Methodical requirements for actualization of the information files and information sheets already developed.

9.2 What forms does career information typically take?

For example: printed guides containing information on a large number of jobs and courses; individual leaflets or information sheets; CD-ROMs; Internet-based services.

The information base for providing information, guidance and counselling services in Employment Agency system include the following main types of information materials and products:

- printed materials for occupations – information files /detailed information about occupations in unified structure/; information sheets /brief descriptions in unified structure/; individual leaflets and folders for separate occupations and crafts and for groups of occupations;
- printed materials for public and private secondary schools, high schools and universities, training institutions and organizations;
- video films for occupations and concerning different problems of career development;
- multimedia products for occupations;
- Internet-based information about opportunities for education, training re-qualification, specialization, postgraduate qualification in Bulgaria and abroad;
- Internet-based information about vacancies and requirements of employers, actualized two times a week;
- Printed information of the labour market development;
- Guides of secondary schools, high schools and universities etc.;
- Lists of organizations and firms offering qualification training.

9.3 Typically, which client groups is it aimed at?

For example school students; public employment service clients; tertiary students; the general public.

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) /2001/ career information and counselling services are provided for all individuals above the age of 16, no matter of their nationality, sex, sexual orientation, race, age, political and religions convictions, membership in trade unions and other social organizations and movements, marital, social and financial status and physical or psychic disorders.

By the present moment the main target groups that were outlined in the course of practice in providing information, guidance and conselling services are as follows:

- school students – choice of occupation, specialty, vocational school, higher school or university;
- high school/university students – planning of career development concerning choice of course for specialization, master degree programme, post graduate qualification course;
- unemployed youth and adults – choice of appropriate direction and a corresponding course for qualification and re-qualification;
- employees – in case of necessity or individual intention to change job, choice of a course for additional qualification aimed at increasing of their competitive power in the labour market;
- parents – in connection with assisting the choice of their children of occupation and secondary school, high school or university.

The target groups are established on the basis annual researches of personal characteristics of clients in the units, offering these kind of services in the Employment Agency system – Labour offices and Centers for vocational information.

9.4 What methods are used to gather it?

The department “Information and Publishing Center” /IPC/ of the Employment Agency gathers the information necessary for the development of the materials and products for career guidance by means of:

- researches concerning actual and perspective occupations and crafts on local, regional and national level of the labour market. The information is gathered through the Labour offices;
- generalization and analysis of data from the information system in the Centers for vocational information concerning personal characteristics of client as well as preferred types of information materials and products;
- expert assessment of professionals in different occupational fields. They are chosen by competition and engaged on contract basis by IPC for the development of information files and information sheets for occupations;
- IPC experts gather information about educational and training institutions, tendencies in the development of labour market, changes in the legislative basis concerning the problems of unemployment and employment, education and training etc.
### 9.5 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is accurate and timely.

Leading aim of “Information and Publishing Center” (IPC) of Employment Agency in the development of information materials and products for career guidance is to provide actual and reliable information presented in intelligible form.

In order to ensure accuracy and actuality of information IPC developed Procedure and Methodical requirements for actualization of the information materials already developed on the basis of assessment of relatively stable and dynamic information included in them. According to these documents IPC experts periodically review the information and make the necessary corrections. The actualized information as published and distributed in the units of the Employment Agency.

### 9.6 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is user-friendly and oriented to user needs.

- When a new type of information product is developed by department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency it is tested with representatives of the corresponding target group and is evaluated by experts. The aim is to gather in advance evidence whether it is user-friendly and meets user needs. If necessary, corresponding corrections are made and after that the products published and implemented in the units providing information, guidance and counseling services.

- Current information is gathered about personal characteristics of clients in the Centers for vocational information, their needs of career information, the degree they are satisfied with the available information materials and products, their preferences to different types of information materials and products. This data is analyzed annually and conclusions are drawn about the directions for enrichment of the information basis of the Centers with respect to quality and quantity of information as well as to the types of the information materials and products.

### 9.7 How is it typically distributed?

*For example through career information centres; through public libraries; through community organisations; to schools and tertiary institutions.*

The information materials and products are distributed in the units of the Employment Agency system, providing career information, guidance and counselling services – Labour offices, Centers for vocational information, “Job clubs”.

In the web site of department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency there is an actual list of all materials and products that are published. There the information sheets for occupations /brief descriptions of occupations/ can be used directly.

### 9.8 What role does the private (both for-profit and not-for-profit) sector play in providing career information?

*For example: What is known about the size and nature of the market for privately published guides to jobs or to tertiary education? What examples can be provided of privately funded career information web sites? Are there examples of the mass media taking an active role in providing career information?*
- “Open Education” of “Open Society Fund” developed and published a Guide, including brief descriptions of occupations. In the offices of “Open Society Fund” information about opportunities for education, specialization and post graduate qualification is provided;
- Private secondary and high schools publish every year Guides, including information about specialties in the school, school curriculum, specific methods of organization of education process, procedures for application, diplomas, opportunities to continue education, some private schools have web sites;
- Some private organizations develop and publish materials assisting self-preparation for entrance tests or examinations for secondary or high schools;
- Some private local TV and radio channels have programmes providing career information.

9.9 Have governments tried to increase the role of the private sector in providing career information?

For example by contracting out the production of material.

The private sector in providing career information in the country is still not yet developed.

There are private employment services but their activities are connected only with offering job information. They are not very popular and information about their client base or level of fees is not available.

Besides there are private training organizations, which offer information about the courses, they organize.

9.10 Please describe the ways in which labour market data is typically included in career information.

For example through inclusion of data on unemployment rates and earnings; through the inclusion of data on regional variation in employment and unemployment for particular occupations; through inclusion of the results of graduate employment and course satisfaction surveys.

Information about the labour market in Bulgaria is gathered, processed and published by National Institute of Statistics and Employment Agency. The information contains qualitative and quantitative data about actual situation and tendencies in the development of the labour market.

Information and Publishing Center of the Employment Agency uses the mentioned information in the process of development of the information materials and products through inclusion of: qualitative data about the risk of unemployment for a given occupation; data about earnings showing how many times salary for a given occupation is bigger than the minimum salary for the country.

10. FINANCING

Here we wish to know about: the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are funded; the ways in which costs are shared; and the financial resources devoted to information, guidance and counselling services.

10.1 What method(s) do governments use to fund information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: direct service provision; contracting out/tendering; public-private partnerships. If possible indicate the percentage of total government funding of information, guidance and counselling services that flows through each of these methods.
Information, guidance and counselling services in the public sector are funded by the state budget.

The funds for this kind of services in the Employment Agency system are included in the total funds for providing of the complex services for employment. In accordance with VETA (Article 59, paragraph 1), these services could be also financed by municipalities' budgets, private revenues, national and international programs, etc.

10.2 Are individuals required to meet some of the costs of government information, guidance and counselling services? If so, what sorts of clients are asked to pay, and what is the typical level of fees charged?

The individuals use information, guidance and counselling services provided by the Employment Agency and in the public educational system, free of charge.

10.3 Please describe what cost and expenditure data is available to government and to stakeholders -- for example on the relative costs of different delivery methods, or the cost of achieving particular outcomes, or the costs of providing services to particular types of clients -- when making policies for information, guidance and counselling services. Describe the ways in which this information is used, providing specific examples if possible.

It is difficult to provide detailed and exact information on this question. This is due to different reasons. On one hand, the costs and expenditures for providing information, guidance and counselling services are not defined separately. They are included in the total expenditures for providing the whole complex of employment services, delivered by the Labour offices. On the other hand, the expenditures for the employment services, as a whole, do not cover all real financial needs of the Labour offices due to the restrictions connected with the functioning of Currency Board in Bulgaria, as well as, the Agreement concluded between the government and International Monetary Fund.

Nevertheless the main lines, into which the budget for information, guidance and counselling services is broken down, are given below:

- costs of the specialized units, providing information, guidance and counselling services;
- expenditures for the development of the information base for providing services (information materials and products), including expenditures for engagement of working teams by contracts and for publishing of the developed materials and products;
- expenditures for qualification of staff;
- staff costs;
- expenditures for providing services for disadvantaged groups;
- expenditures for organization of career fairs and exhibitions, for targeted advertising of information, guidance and counselling services etc.;
- expenditures for conferences, seminars, working meetings for exchange of experience.
10.4 Please provide the best available estimates of the cost (most recent year) to governments of providing information, guidance and counselling services.

In answering this, where possible provide information on the ways in which this cost is divided between different Ministries and between different levels of government. Where possible, provide information on trends in costs over time. Where possible break costs down by type: e.g. staff costs; information production costs; capital and equipment costs.

In answering this, it might be helpful to include an Annex describing the problems that are involved in providing expenditure and cost data for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

There is not available information on this question. It is impossible to give exact data, because the costs of information, guidance and counselling services are included in the total costs of other more complex activities and services. In the Employment Agency system they are included in the total costs of services for employment. In the educational system they are included also in the costs of other more complex activities.

The expenditures of department “Information and Publishing Center” of Employment Agency for production of information materials and products for vocational guidance during 2001 are 297,578 BGL.

10.5 Please provide an indication of the statutory salaries of information, guidance and counselling service workers. As a base, take the case of guidance officers/counsellors with a guidance or counselling qualification at ISCED-97 level 5 (i.e. a university degree or equivalent) and indicate:

- The starting salary for those with the minimum required training
- The salary after 15 years’ experience
- The number of years from the starting salary to the top salary
- Where available, please provide equivalent information for other categories of guidance and counselling workers

The salaries of information, guidance and counselling workers in Employment Agency system are defined depending on the job position. The job positions are fixed according to the Regulations for application of the Unified classifier of the positions in administration.

The basic salaries of the staff, providing services, vary from 200 to 290 BGL, depending on the job position. According to the existing legislation, to the basic salaries are added sums, calculated depending on the length of service. There are not interior rules that regulate transition from a lower job position to a higher one.

The basic salary of pedagogical advisors in secondary schools at the present moment is 169 BGL.

11. ASSURING QUALITY

Here we wish to know about the ways that the quality of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated, maintained and enhanced.

11.1 Please describe the steps that governments take to maintain and increase the quality of information, guidance and counselling services.

Substantial step for increasing the quality of information, guidance and counselling services is the Vocational Education and Training Act, passed in 1999.

For the realization of the Law the following important steps were undertaken:
− National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) was established as a specialized government body for accreditation and licensing of activities in the vocational education and training system as well as for co-ordination of institutions related to vocational training, education and guidance. The managing Council includes 8 representatives of Ministries, 8 representatives of employers organizations and 8 representatives of employees organizations on national level.

− Under the management of NAVET List of occupations for vocational education was worked out /2001/. Wide range of activities was realized in the field of working out of government educational requirements for acquiring qualification for occupations, included in the List.

− Criteria and Procedure for licensing of Centers for information and career guidance were approved /2002/. By the present moment Centers of this kind were not established due to different reasons, between which financial problems play important role.

11.2 Do standards exist for the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services? How and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?

In fact there are no standards.

In the Employment Agency system there are requirements concerning:

− development of information materials and products – Procedures for development of different types of information materials and products; Methodical requirements to the structure and contents of different types of information materials and products; Procedures and Methodical requirements for actualization of information in the materials and products used for vocational guidance. These documents were worked out by Information and Publishing Center of the Employment Agency and approved by a specialized Council of the Agency.

− technology of providing information, guidance and counselling services – instructions, rules, guidelines. A relative department of Employment Agency develops these materials.

In the educational system there are requirements concerning the activities that pedagogical advisors are obliged to carry out in schools in providing information, guidance and counselling services. They are defined in the job description, worked out by Ministry of education and science.

National Institute of Education developed for the last years:

− materials for teachers and pedagogical advisors in secondary schools concerning their activities in the field of vocational guidance of school students;

− edition “Introduction in vocational counseling”, including theoretical as well as practical problems.

11.3 Do standards exist for the competencies required by information, guidance and counselling services staff? If so, how and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?

The Department in Employment Agency, responsible for staff qualification worked out requirements concerning competences of the staff, including that in the Labour offices, providing services. The accents are on communication skills and organization skills due to the

3. Please provide details in an Annex.
necessary of current gathering, systematization and delivering of various information. The requirements to the competencies of the staff are defined in job descriptions.

There is no available information about requirements to competencies of pedagogical advisors in schools.

11.4 Are there formal requirements, for example expressed in regulations or legislation, for the education and training qualifications required by information, guidance and counselling staff?  

The requirements to the staff, providing information, guidance and counselling services are defined in the job description. They are developed on the basis of detailed description of the staff duties for the different job positions, according to the existing legislation, regulations, interior rules and instructions for service provision.

11.5 Do guidelines exist on information quality standards to help groups such as tertiary institutions, industry associations and individual enterprises produce career information?  

There is no available information on this question.

11.6 Please provide details of any professional groups, bodies or associations of information, guidance and counselling services workers in your country.  

In answering this please describe the extent to which such professional groups, bodies or associations: work to raise standards of professional practice, for example through the professional development and recurrent education of their members; are actively involved in lobbying governments on professional issues, for example relating to service quality; and have an industrial role to improve the employment conditions of their members.

There is no information about professional groups, bodies or associations of information, guidance and counselling services workers.

An Association of practical psychologists has been established in the recent years. Its members are psychologists, working in schools, enterprises, firms etc., or are private practitioners.

11.7 Please describe any ways in which career information, guidance and counselling professionals are involved in the development of policy: for example through formal roles for professional associations; or through providing feedback to service providers.

Career information, guidance and counselling professionals are involved in the development of policy mainly through providing feedback about service provision. They are also engaged in the development of analyses, prognoses, and normative documents. Besides they work out periodically reports on the activities, they are carrying out, and are asked to give opinions concerning different questions of service provision.

Organization of working meetings of professionals is a practice in the Employment Agency system. As a result of the discussions proposals, concerning solving of practical problems, are formulated to the attention of inferior institutions and organizations.
12. THE EVIDENCE BASE

Here we wish to know about the ways in which the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated and supported by data and research evidence. In answering this section please refer in particular to national evidence where this is available, rather than to studies conducted in other countries.

12.1 What information is available about the extent to which information, guidance and counselling services are used? What is known about differences in levels of use and access as a function of factors such as: socio-economic status or family background; geographical location; gender; age; educational level; and levels of disadvantage? Do regular national statistical collections monitor access? Have access and usage levels changed over time?

In the Employment Agency system the available information about the access to information, guidance and counselling services is in the following aspects:

– In the context of activities for vocational qualification of unemployed, which according to the Law for encouragement of employment obligatory include information, guidance and counselling services.

During 2001 the number of those who completed different forms of training increases in comparison with 2000 as follows:

- courses for additional qualification - 10 180 unemployed, two times more;
- courses for re-qualification - 4 366 job seekers, with 2,2% more;
- courses for initial qualification completed 1 925 unemployed, with 73% more.

10 148 from those who completed qualification training got jobs. The ratio between men and women who completed qualification courses is 35,1:64,9.

With respect to the age of those who completed qualification training for the last 2 years there is a tendency the highest to be the shares of youth to the age of 24 and of unemployed young people to the age of 29.

With respect to the educational structure of the unemployed who completed qualification training during 2000 and 2001 the situation is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>secondary vocational education</td>
<td>47,4%</td>
<td>38,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary general education</td>
<td>14,5%</td>
<td>14,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education</td>
<td>19,9%</td>
<td>18,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic education and lower</td>
<td>18,3%</td>
<td>28,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of unemployed who used vocational guidance services during 2000 for choosing of a direction for qualification training together with the clients who used the services of the Centers for Vocational information and “Job” clubs is 107 847, with 10,3% less in comparison with 2000.

The Information and Publishing Center of Employment Agency carries out annual researches on the personal characteristics of the clients in the Centers for vocational information.

For the last years the situation is as follows:

- total number of clients:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 756</td>
<td>14 440</td>
<td>11 965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• distribution of clients in age groups (in %):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 18 years of age</td>
<td>61.94</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-25 years of age</td>
<td>19.09</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-40 years of age</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 40</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• distribution of clients with respect to education status (in %):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>primary education</td>
<td>35.54</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic education</td>
<td>28.55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocational education</td>
<td>16.46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary general education</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college education</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• distribution of clients with respect to work status (in %):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work status</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>school students</td>
<td>64.03</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school/university students</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employees</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>23.70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• distribution of clients with respect to gender (in %):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>45.91</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>54.09</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data included here is from “Labour Market 2001”, edition of Employment Agency and from annual analyses of personal characteristics of clients in Centers for vocational information.

12.2 How is the level of community need and demand for information, guidance and counselling services established (for example by use of surveys, rates of service usage, waiting lists)? What is known about the expectations that clients have of services?

Employment Agency gathers information about clients needs and demands concerning information, guidance and counselling services on local level through its territorial structures – Labour offices. This kind of information is included in the periodical reports worked out by the Labour offices.

The department “Information and Publishing Center” carries out every year researches on personal characteristics of clients of the Centers for vocational information (mentioned in point 12.1), as well as, periodical researches on the needs of clients concerning types of information and types of information materials and products.

The analysis of the available data shows that the main needs concern information about: occupations that are perspective with respect to gaining employment in the actual situation and near future development of the labour market in the country, as well as, in other
countries; opportunities for qualification and additional qualification corresponding to the demands of the labour market.

12.3 What criteria are normally used to judge the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services?

The criteria are of two main types:

− subjective – satisfaction of the clients with respect to the scope of the services and quality of service provision;
− objective – clients realization on educational qualification and labour markets.

12.4 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) studies that have been conducted of:

− The costs of providing information, guidance and counselling services.
− How costs vary as a function of the type of service delivered and the characteristics of clients.
− How the outcomes or benefits of information, guidance and counselling services relate to their costs.
− How the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services are related to the type of service provided and the characteristics of clients.

There is no available information about studies of this type.

12.5 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) initiatives or pilot projects that have been designed to provide insight into: the impact of careers services on individuals’ career choices; the ability to use career information; the impact of services upon employers; the impact of services upon the development of a learning society.

There is not available information on this question.

Annex

Initiatives and projects developed in the last years in the field of vocational guidance

National Institute of Education developed:

− Research project “The Model: Secondary school – Employers – instrument for vocational realization and realization on the labour market”. Main aims of the project were: providing information for of youth, completing secondary school, about opportunities contributing to successful realization on the labour market; establishment of permanent relations of mutual benefit between secondary schools and employers organizations; motivation of students to complete education and acquire occupation, specialty and qualification; assistance for successful career start of youth from
disadvantaged groups – orphans, chronically ill, from socially vulnerable families, from different ethnic and religions communities. The Model includes the following forms for helping of successful transition from secondary school to the start of career development:

− Club “Career”;
− days of career;
− training for development of social skills and techniques for communication with employers, preparation for interview and participation in competition; for preparation of documents for job application etc.;
− actual information about employers, periodically updated and at the disposal of users;
− effective connection with the alumni of the school for registering their realization on the labour market. Pilot implementation of the Model was carried out in 9 secondary schools in 3 towns. The results of the experiment are encouraging and give enough reasons for its implementation in other schools;
− Pilot project on Leonardo da Vinci Programme “Relationships between high school/university and employers”.

Project products: “Guide for high school/university students”, including information about 560 employers institutions and organizations, “Handbook for counsellors” and “Book with reports of partners”. In University of Forestry Consultant Center “Career” was established.

Foundation “Civil education” developed a pilot project on Leonardo da Vinci Programme “Career guidance for individuals from disadvantaged groups – youth with perception disorders”.

For individuals with eyesight disorders audio products were developed and for those with hearing disorders video products were developed. Other project products: “Handbook for counselling in career guidance”, “Choice of career path” – practical manual for school students.

Information and Publishing Center of Employment Agency is a partner in a pilot project “Guide to the world of occupations” (2000-2003) on Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The aim of the project is to develop multimedia product, providing career information and guidance in interactive mode. The product will have modules for: secondary school and high schools/university students; unemployed and job seekers; individuals with health problems.

- PHARE projects in which vocational training is included. It is preceded by vocational information, guidance and consultancy elements in the cases when primary education and requalification training is envisaged (PHARE 2000,2001,2002).

12.6 Do any national research centres specialise in career information, guidance and counselling services? Do they specialise in evaluative and policy studies: or do they mainly focus upon guidance techniques and methods?

The Center for vocational education, training and career guidance of the National Institute of Education is specialized in development of conceptions, research activities, development of methodical materials and tools in the field of career guidance in educational system.

12.7 How useful have governments found the work of research centres in developing policy for information, guidance and counselling services?

Important fact in this respect is that the researchers from the Center for vocational education, training and career guidance of National Institute of Education are engaged in the process of
development of policies in the field of career guidance in educational system, as well as, for the development of normative documents.

12.8 Have governments taken steps to increase the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services through support for relevant research centres? Has such support been on the basis of individual commissioned studies, or are more on-going forms of support used?

Increasing of evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services is considered as important and necessary. But due to financial problems it is impossible to make substantial steps in this direction at the present period of transition to market economy. Up to this moment financial support is given for periodical studies for gathering data concerning service provision and for research work concerning solving of important problems in the practice of career guidance.
Chapter 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Aim and Scope of the Act

Art. 1. (1) This Act shall regulate the social relations as to:
1. Ensuring the right of citizens to vocational education and training according to their personal interests and abilities;
2. Satisfying the demand for skilled labour competitive on the labour market;
3. Providing conditions for the functioning and development of the vocational education and training system based on co-operation between its institutions, the executive power and local government, and the social partners.

(2) This Act shall regulate the organisation, institutions, management and funding of the system of vocational education and training.

(3) Primary and secondary school education, acquired respectively at the vocational schools and the vocational secondary schools shall be subject to the regulations of the Public Education Act and the state education requirements unless there are provisions in this Act to the contrary.

Aim of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 2. The system of vocational education and training shall train citizens for a career in the economy and in other sectors of public life by creating conditions for acquiring vocational qualification and its continuous upgrading.

Objectives of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 3. The main objectives of the vocational education and training system shall be:
1. Acquiring of vocational qualification;
2. Continuous upgrading of the vocational qualification;
3. Setting of a motivation system for realisation in the civil society;
4. Amassment of general knowledge on the basis of the national and universal human values.

Structure of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 4. The system of vocational education and training shall include career guidance, vocational training and vocational education.

Essence of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 5. (1) Career guidance shall provide information, consultations and advice to students, unemployed and any other persons as to the choice of a vocation and career development.

(2) Vocational training shall ensure the acquisition of qualification for a vocation or part thereof, as well as the upgrading of that qualification. Under conditions stipulated by this Act and the Public Education Act,
vocational training shall also provide completion of primary education or grades of secondary education. Vocational training shall include:
1. initial vocational training - acquisition of initial qualification in a vocation or part thereof;
2. continuing vocational training – improvement of competencies acquired in a vocation or part thereof.

(3) Vocational education shall ensure the acquisition of the general education minimum valid for secondary education and the acquisition of qualification in a vocation.

Chapter 2
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS TO THE ORGANISATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Part 1

Vocations and Levels of Vocational Qualification

Art. 6. (1) Career guidance, vocational training and vocational education shall be provided for vocations and specialties in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training.

(2) The List under para 1 shall be endorsed by the Minister of Education and Science in co-ordination with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, as well as with the relevant branch ministers and representatives of the organisations of employers and of workers and employees nationwide.

Structural Components of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 7. The structural components of the List under Art.6 para 1 are vocation and speciality.

Classification Characteristics of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 8. (1) The vocations and specialities shall be classified into vocational areas, levels of education and levels of vocational qualification.

(2) The levels of vocational qualification, acquired under this Act, shall be Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4.

(3) In order to acquire the qualification levels, the following shall be required:
1. for Level 1 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving routine activities performed under routine conditions;
2. for Level 2 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a range of complex activities performed in changing conditions;
3. for Level 3 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a range of complex activities performed in changing conditions, as well as responsibilities for the performance of others;
4. For Level 4 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a wide range of complex activities performed in changing conditions, as well as managerial responsibilities for the performance of others and for allocation of resources.

(4) The entry minimum education level to acquire the relevant vocational qualification levels shall be:
1. For Level 1 – completed 6th grade;
2. For Level 2 and Level 3 – completed 7th grade or primary education;
3. For Level 4 – completed secondary education.

(5) The exit education level to acquire the relevant vocational qualification levels shall be:
1. For Level 1:
a) primary education – for pupils;
b) primary education or completed 6th or 7th grade for persons who are 16 years of age and older.
2. For Level 2 – completed 10th or 11th grade, eligibility to sit for National Matriculation Exams to complete secondary education or completed secondary education.
3. For Level 3 – secondary education or eligibility to sit for National Matriculation Exams to complete secondary education.

Part 2
Terms and Procedure for Acquiring Vocational Qualification

Training for Acquisition of Vocational Qualification

Art. 9. (1) The right to provide training for the acquisition of vocational qualification shall be granted to:
1. vocational schools, vocational secondary schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centres;
2. junior secondary schools and primary schools, secondary comprehensive schools and special-purpose schools in individual classes, if they meet the conditions posed by state education requirements.

(2) Training for the acquisition of vocational qualification can be provided by ministries, municipalities, workers’ and employers’ organisations and individual employers.

(3) The acquisition of vocational qualification can be carried out on the basis of individual tuition.

Programmes for Acquisition of Vocational Qualification

Art. 10. (1) The acquisition of vocational qualification in the system of vocational education and training shall be regulated by programmes.

(2) The programmes under para 1 determine the age and entry educational and qualification level of the candidates, as well as the contents and duration of vocational education and training.

(3) The programmes under para 1 shall be as follows:
1. Programmes A for initial vocational education for acquiring Level 1 of vocational qualification;
2. Programmes B for initial vocational training for acquiring Level 2 of vocational qualification;
3. Programmes C for vocational training for acquiring Level 2 or Level 3 of vocational qualification;
4. Programmes D for vocational training for acquiring Level 4 of vocational qualification;
5. Programmes E for initial vocational training for acquiring qualification in a part of a vocation;
6. Programmes F for continuing vocational training for updating or expanding a vocational qualification already acquired and also for obtaining Level 1, 2 and 3 of vocational qualification.

Programmes for Students

Art. 11. The programmes for the training of students shall be as follows:
1. Programmes A for students who have completed at least 6th grade, with duration of up to 3 years;
2. Programmes B for students who have completed primary education or a grade from the secondary education, with duration of up to 4 years;
3. Programmes C for students who have completed primary education, with duration of 4 years, and with duration of 5 or 6 years for students who have completed primary education or with completed 7th grade;
4. Programmes E for students who have completed primary education or a grade from the secondary education, with duration of up to 1 year.

Programmes for Persons Who Are 16 Years of Age and Older

Art. 12. The programmes addressed to persons who are 16 years of age and older shall be as follows:
1. Programmes A for persons who have completed at least 6th grade, with duration of up to 1 year;
2. Programmes B for persons who have completed a grade from secondary education or secondary education, with duration of 1 year;
3. Programmes D for persons who have completed secondary education, with duration of up to 2 years;
4. Programmes E with a duration determined by the specific vocational training documentation;
5. Programmes F with a duration determined by the specific vocational training documentation.

Content of the Programmes
Art. 13. (1) The Programmes under Art.10 para 3, subparas 1,2,3 and 4, shall be specified for each vocation from the List in Art.6 para 1, by the state education requirements for obtaining qualification in a vocation.

(2) The content of the Programmes under Art.10 para 3, subparas 5 and 6 shall be determined by the specific documentation for vocational training.

(3) The documentation under para 2 shall be developed by the training institution or by the customer who has demanded vocational training, whereas, when a level of vocational qualification is acquired, this documentation shall comply with the state education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Requirements to the Candidates
Art. 14. (1) The requirements to the candidates willing to join the vocational education and training programmes shall concern the age threshold, health status, entrance education level and entrance qualification level.

(2) The candidate’s age threshold shall be 13 when he or she applies to a school and 16 when training is provided by other training institutions.

(3) The candidate shall present a medical certificate to certify that the vocation he or she applies to be trained in is compatible with his/ her health status. The requirements shall be laid down in an Ordinance of the Minister of Health after co-ordination with the Minister of Education and Science.

(4) The entrance education level of the candidate shall be a completed grade of primary or secondary education or a completed level of education required for the obtaining of the respective vocational qualification level.

(5) The entrance qualification level of the candidate shall be the obtained vocational qualification level required for enrollment in Programme F.

Admission of Candidates
Art. 15. The admission procedure for the candidates shall be decided by the training institution in compliance with the requirements under Art. 14.

Part 3
Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process

Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process in Vocational Education
Art. 16. (1) The forms of training, the organisational forms and the school time dedicated to Programmes C shall comply with the Public Education Act and the Public Education Act Enabling Regulations.

(2) The organisation of the teaching and learning process for each vocation in the List in Art. 6, para 1 shall be determined by the state education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process in Vocational Training
Art. 17. (1) The forms of training, organisational forms and the class time dedicated to Programmes A, B and E for students shall comply with the Public Education Act and the Public Education Act Enabling Regulations.
(2) The organisational form for Programmes A, B, D, E, and F for persons who are 16 years old and older shall be a qualification course. The forms of training, the class time and the number of the trainees in the course shall be decided by the training institution. They can be agreed on with the client who has demanded vocational training.

(3) The organisation of the teaching and learning process in Programmes A, B and D shall be determined by the state education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation or by the documentation under Art.13 para 2 with respect to Programmes E and F.

Chapter 3

INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Institutions

Art. 18. The institutions within the vocational education and training system shall be:
1. vocational schools;
2. vocational secondary schools;
3. vocational colleges;
4. vocational training centres;
5. vocational information and career guidance centres;
6. train the trainers centres;
7. The National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Vocational Schools, Vocational Secondary Schools and Vocational Colleges

Art. 19. (1) The vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges shall be state-run, municipal and private, Bulgarian with foreign participation, and foreign, and these shall be opened, transformed and closed down following the procedure provided in the Public Education Act.

(2) Vocational schools shall provide initial vocational training for Level 1 and Level 2 of vocational qualification and for qualification in a part of a vocation with duration of up to 4 years. These institutions shall be open to students who have completed at least the 6th grade. Also vocational schools shall be free to conduct vocational training provided they meet the state education requirements.

(3) Vocational secondary schools shall provide vocational training for Level 2 of vocational qualification with duration of 4 years or for Level 3 of vocational qualification with duration of 5 or 6 years. These institutions shall be open to students who have completed primary education or 7th grade. Vocational secondary schools shall be free to provide vocational training for Level 1, Level 2, and level 4 of vocational qualification and for qualification in part of a vocation. Vocational training for Level 4 of vocational qualification shall be conducted only if the vocational secondary schools meet the state education requirements.

(4) Vocational colleges shall provide vocational training for Level 4 of vocational qualification with duration of up to 2 years. These institutions shall be open to persons who have completed secondary education.

Vocational Training Centres

Art. 20. Vocational training centres shall provide vocational training to persons who are 16 years of age and older.

Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres

Art. 21. The vocational information and career guidance centres shall advise students, unemployed and other persons.

Status of the Vocational Training Centres and the Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres
Art. 22 (1) The vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres shall be state-run, municipal or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation and foreign.

(2) The state-run and municipal centres shall be legal entities holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(3) The private centres shall be sole trader companies or legal entities set up as as commercial companies, cooperatives, partnerships or foundations holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(4) The Bulgarian vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres with foreign participation shall be partnerships of Bulgarian and foreign physical and/or legal entities registered in the Republic of Bulgaria and holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(5) The foreign vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres shall be foreign legal entities that act in the Republic of Bulgaria pursuant to international agreements and that hold a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(6) The license to provide vocational training or career guidance shall be issued by the National Vocational Education and Training Agency. The documents required by the Enabling Regulations of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall be attached to the application by which license is requested.

(7) Within two months of the date of submission of the application the National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall issue or reject the license and explain the reasons for the rejection.

(8) The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall have the power to withdraw a license it has issued for vocational training or career guidance in any of the following events:
1. The centre fails to start operating within 12 months of the date of license issuing;
2. The centre fails to observe the state education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation;
3. The centre provides vocational training or career guidance in a manner that disagrees with the license it holds.

Train the Trainers Centres

Art. 23. (1) The train the trainers centres shall be state-run or municipal service units within the public education system and shall be opened, transformed and closed down in accordance with the procedure provided in the Public Education Act.

(2) The train the trainers centres shall update and expand the competence of the teachers and other persons who provide vocational training.

Chapter 4

STATE EDUCATION REQUIREMENT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Part 1

General provisions

Content of the State education requirement for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 24. The State education requirement for vocational education and training pursuant to Art. 16, para 6 of the Public Education Act shall regulate the organisation of vocational education and training and the structure and content of the vocational education and training programmes in vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges.
Admission in Vocational Schools, Vocational Secondary Schools and Vocational Colleges

Art. 25. (1) The state-run and municipal schools shall organise their activities in line with a State Admission Plan by Vocations adopted every school year.

(2) The state-run schools shall propose a State Admission Plan by Vocations to the Minister of Education and Science through the Inspectorates of Education.

(3) The municipal schools in conjunction with the municipality shall propose a State Admission Plan by Vocations to the Minister of Education and Science through the Inspectorates of Education.

(4) The Inspectorates of Education shall agree the propositions in paras 2 and 3 with the Regional Employment Offices and with the Regional Employers Bodies.

(5) The Minister of Education and Science shall approve the State Admission Plan by Vocations and coordinate the state-run schools component of the Plan with the relevant branch ministers.

(6) Private schools, Bulgarian schools with foreign participation and foreign vocational schools shall draw up their admission plans by themselves.

Organisation of Vocational Training after Completion of Secondary Education

Art. 26. (1) State-run and municipal schools shall be free to provide vocational training to persons who have completed secondary education provided that the vocational training is financially supported by legal or physical entities.

(2) The organisation, provision, material and financial support of vocational training shall be subject to a contract between the school director and the person who finances the training.

Part 2
Vocational Education and Vocational Training Content

Structure and Content of the Programmes for Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 27. (1) The structure of the vocational education programmes shall include general education training, compulsory vocational training – general, sector-oriented and job-specific, compulsory foreign language training with a focus on the specialty and optional courses that are compulsory elective and noncompulsory elective.

(2) General education training shall provide the minimum required for secondary education.

(3) General compulsory vocational training shall be standardised for all occupational areas and take into account their specifics. It shall include theory classes and practicals – practical training.

(4) Sector-oriented compulsory vocational training shall be standardised for all vocations in the occupational area and take into account the specifics of each vocation. It includes theory classes and practicals – practical training.

(5) Job-specific compulsory vocational training shall include theory classes and practicals - on-the-job training.

(6) General education training shall conform to the State education requirement of level of education, general education minimum and curriculum.
(7) Compulsory vocational training, compulsory foreign language training with a focus on the specialty and optional courses that are compulsory elective and noncompulsory elective shall conform to the State education requirements of the acquisition of qualification in a vocation.

(8) The number of school hours for the compulsory vocational training shall be at least 1.5 times the number of school hours for general education training.

(9) At least half of the school hours for compulsory vocational training shall be reserved for practical training.

Structure and Content of the Vocational Training Programmes

Art. 28. (1) The structure of the vocational training programmes shall include:
1. general education training; compulsory vocational training; optional training for the programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification with completion of primary education or a grade of secondary education;
2. compulsory and optional vocational training for the programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification.

(2) The compulsory vocational training shall include theory classes and practical training.

(3) For the compulsory vocational training the number of school hours for practical training shall be at least 1.5 times the number of school hours for theory classes.

(4) The general education training shall be in compliance with the State education requirement of the level of education, the general education minimum and the curriculum.

(5) The compulsory vocational training and the optional training shall comply with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Part 3
Practical Training

Types of Practical Training

Art. 29. The practical training shall be organised as training practice and work placement.

Places for Conducting Practical Training

Art. 30. (1) Practical training shall take place in:
1. training facilities and workshops at the schools;
2. training facilities and workshops of similar schools or vocational training centres in the Republic of Bulgaria or abroad;
3. enterprises owned by legal or physical entities;
4. training facilities and workshops within the enterprises.

(2) The training facilities and workshops shall be equipped in accordance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

(3) In the places where practical training is conducted, conditions shall be secured to meet the State education requirement for safe conditions of education, training and work.

Organisation of Practical Training

Art. 31. (1) Practical training shall be conducted as training, training-production and production-training activities.

(2) Schools shall conclude contracts for conducting practical training at the places under Art. 30, para 1, subparas 2, 3 and 4.
(3) Schools shall be free to organise independently and/or in co-operation with legal or physical entities the manufacturing of products and provision of services while adhering to the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation or the documentation for vocational training of the school or of the client who has demanded vocational training.

Part 4
Vocational Education and Vocational Training
for Persons with Special Education Needs

Vocational Education and Vocational Training Programmes
for Persons with Special Education Needs

Art. 32. (1) Vocational education and training shall be provided for persons with special education needs according to programmes adapted to their health condition or social status.

(2) Persons suffering from chronic diseases and physical handicaps may be trained under programmes for vocational education or for vocational training in vocations or parts of vocations the training and practice of which suit their health status.

(3) Persons suffering from sensory troubles may be trained under programmes for vocational education or vocational training in vocations or parts of vocations the training and practice of which suit their health status.

(4) Mentally handicapped children may be trained under programmes for vocational training in part of a vocation or in a vocation for acquiring Level 1 of vocational qualification.

(5) Children with deviant behaviour may be trained under programmes for vocational education or vocational training in a vocation or part of a vocation.

(6) Prisoners may be trained under programmes for vocational training in a vocation or part of a vocation.

(7) Children from social institutions shall be given an opportunity for training under programmes for vocational education and vocational training.

(8) The vocations under paras 2, 3 and 4 shall be determined by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health, those under para 5, by the Ministry of Education and Science, and those under para 6, by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Justice and European Legal Eurointegration.

(9) In each class of the vocational schools and the vocational secondary schools shall be admitted up to 5 students suffering from chronic diseases, physical handicaps or sensory troubles and children from social institutions.

Chapter 5
COMPLETION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Completion of Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 33. (1) Vocational education shall be completed by sitting for the following examinations:
1. National Matriculation Examinations for completion of secondary education in compliance with the State education requirement for the level of education, general educational minimum and the curriculum;
(2) Vocational training under Programmes A, B and D shall be completed sitting for examinations for acquiring vocational qualification - theory of the vocation and practice of the vocation.

(3) Passing the examinations for acquiring vocational qualification shall complete vocational training under Programmes E and F. National examinations shall be held when a level of vocational qualification is acquired.

Organisation and Content of the Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification

Art. 34. (1) Upon the completion of Programmes A, B, C and D, the organisation of the examinations shall be designed in compliance with the State education requirement for the assessment system, and their content - in compliance with the State education requirement for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

(2) Upon the completion of Programmes E and F, the organisation and content of the examinations shall be decided by the training institution following agreement with representatives of the employers and workers, and when a level of vocational qualification is acquired, these shall also conform with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Vocational Qualification Examination Panels

Art. 35. (1) The members of the examination panels shall include equal quotas of representatives of the training institution, of the employers and of the workers.

(2) The representatives of the training institution shall be teachers or other persons who provide vocational training.

(3) The representatives of the employers must have qualification in the respective vocational field and those of the workers must have qualification and not less than 4 years of experience in the respective vocation.

(4) The examination panels shall be appointed by the head of the training institution.

(5) In the event of the employers’ or workers’ organisations not nominating examination panel representatives, the head of the training institution shall fill the vacancies in the panel with members who he or she has selected.

Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification in Vocational Education

Art. 36. (1) The examination in the theory of the vocation shall be conducted according to standardised national assignments.

(2) The examination in the practice of the vocation shall be conducted by the school’s assignments upon coordination with representatives of the employers and workers. The assessment of vocational competencies shall be carried out according to standardised national criteria.

Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification in Vocational Training

Art. 37. (1) The examinations for acquiring a qualification level in a vocation shall follow the procedure under Art. 36.

(2) The examinations for acquiring qualification in part of a vocation, as well as for updating or extending the vocational qualification shall be conducted along assignments set by the training institution upon coordination with the representatives of the employers and workers.

Certification of Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 38. (1) The completed vocational education shall be certified by:
1. a diploma for completed secondary education;
2. a certificate for vocational qualification;
3. a certificate of competence issued for vocations whose performance requires a licence of competence.
(2) The completed vocational training with acquiring a level of vocational qualification shall be certified by:
1. a certificate for primary education or a document for completed grade of primary or secondary education;
2. a certificate for vocational qualification;
3. a certificate of competence issued for vocations whose performance requires a licence of competence.

(3) The completed vocational training for acquiring qualification in part of a vocation, for updating or extending vocational qualification shall be certified by a certificate for vocational training.

(4) The content of the documents under paras 1 and 2 shall to conform with the State educational requirement for documents for the national education system and for acquiring qualification in a vocation, and under para 3 – with the State educational requirement for documents for the national education system and the specific documentation under Art. 13 para 2.

(5) The conditions and procedure to issue a certificate of competence shall be laid down in ordinances of the Minister of Education and Science unless a statutory act provides otherwise.

The Right to Issue Vocational Qualification Certificates

Art. 39. The right to issue vocational qualification certificates under Art. 38 shall rest with the vocational schools, vocational secondary schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centres. Schools under Art. 9 para 1 subpara 2 shall also hold the right to issue vocational qualification certificates.

Certification of Acquired Vocational Competencies of Persons Who Have Been Trained Outside the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 40. (1) Persons trained in the mode as set in Art. 9 paras 2 and 3 can obtain the documents under Art. 38 para 2 subpara 2 and para 3, providing they have not less than 6 months of working experience in the vocation or have attended practical training the duration of which is determined by the training institution.

(2) In order to obtain a document under Art. 38 para 2, subpara 2 it is required to have the completed education or completed grade that are necessary for acquiring the respective vocational qualification level.

(3) The persons under para 1 shall sign a contract with a training institution for holding examinations under Art. 37, and if necessary, for attending practical training.

Chapter 6

MANAGEMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Part 1

National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Status of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Art. 41. (1) A National Vocational Education and Training Agency affiliated to the Council of Ministers with headquarters in Sofia shall be established as a legal entity and shall be supported by the state budget.

(2) The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall be a state body for accreditation and licensing of activities in the vocational education and training system and also for coordination of institutions involved in career guidance and in vocational education and training.

(3) The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall operate in accordance with this Act and in line with Regulations that have been endorsed by the Council of Ministers.
Functions of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Art. 42. The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall:
1. accredit institutions in the vocational education and training system upon request of the training institution or of the Minister of Education and Science, or upon decision of its Managing Board;
2. develop and approve criteria for accreditation in compliance with this Act and with the State education requirements;
3. develop and approve the specific accreditation procedures and the related documentation;
4. issue and withdraw licences for provision of vocational training and/or career guidance;
5. draft and propose to the Minister of Education and Science:
   a) the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
   b) the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in vocations;
   c) the State education requirements for the documents within the public education system and for the assessment system in the component concerning vocational education and training;
   d) the national assignments and the standardised criteria for the national examinations for acquiring vocational qualification;
6. express opinion and substantiated proposals to the Minister of Education and Science on amendments to the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act, with regard to institutions in the vocational education and training system;
7. assign research projects and their implementation in the area of the vocational education, training and in career guidance;
8. coordinate the development of strategies for vocational education and training promotion and upgrading;
9. contribute the international recognition of the vocational education and vocational training certificates;
10. generate and maintain a register of the vocational training centres and the vocational information and career guidance centres.

Managing and Executive Bodies

Art. 43. (1) The managing bodies of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall be the Managing Board and its Chairperson.

2) The Managing Board shall set up expert committees to perform its functions.

Members of the Managing Board

Art. 44. (1) The Managing Board shall be composed of a Chairperson and 24 members:
1. eight members representing ministries;
2. eight members representing organisations of employers;
3. eight members representing organisations of workers and employees nationwide.

2) The members under para 1 shall be nominated in the procedure provided for in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

3) The Prime Minister shall appoint the Chairperson of the Managing Board on a motion from the Minister of Education and Science.

4) The Chairperson of the Managing Board shall hold a university degree and have at least 5-year experience in the vocational education and training system.

Term of Office of the Managing Board

Art. 45. (1) The term of office of the Chairperson and of the members of the Managing Board shall be four years. A person shall not be a member of the Managing Board for more than two successive terms.

2) Half of the membership of the Managing Board shall be renewed on a quota basis every 2 years.
A member of the Managing Board may be released before the end of the term of office when:
1. there is a written proposal from the institutions pursuant to Art. 44 para 1;
2. he or she systematically fails to meet his or her obligations;
3. he or she is unable to meet his or her obligations for more than 6 months;
4. the member requests so in writing.

The decision to release a member under para 3, subparas 2 and 3 shall be passed with a simple majority of all the Board members.

A new member shall fill the vacancy in the Managing Board following the procedure provided for in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

The term of office of newly elected member nominated under para 5 shall expire when the released member’s term of office expires.

Organisation of the Activity of the Managing Board

Art. 46. (1) The Managing Board shall meet at least once in every three months. Meetings shall be deemed valid if attended by at least two thirds of its members.

(2) The resolutions of the Managing Board shall be passed by show of hands and with simple majority of all Board members.

Functions of the Managing Board

Art. 47. The Managing Board shall:
1. make decisions on initiating accreditation procedures upon request of the training institution or the Minister of Education and Science, or on a motion from a member of the Managing Board;
2. make decisions on initiating licensing procedures;
3. set up expert committees in vocational areas and an expert committee in career guidance, appoint the members of the committees and allocate the assignments;
4. make decisions on accreditation or licensing on the basis of the reports of expert committees;
5. inform the Ministry of Education and Science about the licensed vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres as well as about the accredited institutions within the vocational education and training system;
6. submit proposals to the Ministry of Education and Science for development and improvement of the vocational education and training system as well as for updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 of the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
7. draft Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Chairman of the Managing Board

Art. 48. (1) The Chairman of the Managing Board shall also be the Chairman of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

(2) The Chairman of the Managing Board shall:
1. represent the National Vocational Education and Training Agency;
2. manage the activities of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency;
3. convene and chair the meetings of the Managing Board;
4. conclude, revise and terminate the contracts of employment of the staff at the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Expert committees

Art. 49. (1) The expert committees shall be established in vocational areas included in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training as well as in career guidance.
An expert committee shall consist of 9 members, including:
1. one representative of each of the following: the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the respective branch ministry;
2. three members representing organisations of employers from the respective branch;
3. three members from the branch trade unions of the workers and employees in the respective branch.

The expert committees shall:
1. prepare reports to the Managing Board with proposals for accreditation of institutions within the vocational education and training system and for licensing vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres;
2. participate in drawing up and updating the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in vocations from the respective vocational area as well as the State education requirements for the documents in the public education system and for the assessment system in the component concerning vocational education and training;
3. participate in drafting and updating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. give opinion to the Managing Board on updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 of the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
5. draw up and propose to the Managing Board national assignments and standardised criteria for the national examinations for acquiring vocational qualification.

The nomination procedure of members under para 2 and the organisation of the expert committees' activities shall be stipulated in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Information Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Art. 50. The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall publish a newsletter containing:
1. criteria, procedures and documentation for vocational education and training quality accreditation of institutions within the vocational education and training system;
2. criteria and requirements for licensing vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres;
3. the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. the State Admission Plan by Vocations for every school year;
5. accredited institutions in the vocational education and training system from the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
6. information on the vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres entered in the Directory as per Art. 42 para 10.

Part 2
Functions of the Ministries, Municipalities and Social Partners Bearing on Vocational Education and Training

Functions of the Ministry of Education and Science

Art. 51. (1) The Ministry of Education and Science shall implement the state policy in the field of vocational education and training by:
1. approving the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. endorsing the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 of the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. endorsing the State Admission Plan for the state-run and municipal schools;
5. ensuring conditions for meeting the State education requirements for the vocational education and training system;
6. approving training programmes in the vocational education and training system;
7. organising career guidance;
8. specifying, on its own or jointly with the relevant competent ministry, the vocations for persons with special education needs;
9. allocating the approved budget resources for vocational education and training and exercising control over their spending;
10. analysing the results and efficiency of the vocational education and training;
11. designating its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert committees of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

(2) The Inspectorates of Education with the Ministry of Education and Science shall pursue the state policy in the field of vocational education and training in the respective region by:
1. coordinating the interaction of the schools, the vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres with the Regional Employment Offices and Labour Offices, the Regional Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorates, the local self-government bodies and the regional structures of the social partners;
2. coordinating the schools’ proposals concerning the State Admission Plan;
3. participating in the organisation of the examinations for acquiring vocational qualification.

Functions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Art. 52. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy shall be involved in pursing the state policy in the field of vocational education and training by:
1. identifying the needs of vocational education and training by analysing the trends of the labour market development;
2. participating in the development, coordination and updating of the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in vocations;
3. participating in the coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. determining the requirements for healthy and safe working conditions in practical training and controlling that these are observed through the Regional Labour Inspectorates;
5. taking part in the coordination of the State Admission Plan for the schools through the Regional Employment Offices;
6. participating in the organisation of career guidance;
7. designating its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert committees of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Functions of the Ministry of Health

Art. 53. The Ministry of Health shall:
1. take part in the coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
2. identify the chronic diseases and physical handicaps counter-indicative for the vocational education and training in the vocations included in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. identify, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science, the vocations where the vocational education and vocational training is appropriate to the health condition of the students suffering from chronic diseases and physical handicaps, sensory troubles or mental deficiency;
4. identify the requirements for healthy conditions in the practical training and the hygienic and physiological requirements to the weekly timetables, and control that they are observed through the bodies of the State Sanitary Control;
5. designate its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert committee of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Functions of the Branch Ministries

Art. 54. The branch ministries shall:
1. participate in the development, coordination and updating of the National Educational Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. participate in the drafting, coordinating and updating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. propose updating of the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. take part in the coordination of the State Admission Plan for schools;
5. allocate the funds approved in their budget for the purposes of vocational education and vocational training and control their spending;
6. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the Expert committee for Career Guidance of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency under the conditions and procedures provided for in the Agency’s Regulations.

Functions of the Municipalities

Art. 55. Municipalities shall participate in policy development in the field of vocational education and training in the municipality with regard to:
1. the demand for work force;
2. career guidance to students, unemployed and other persons;
3. updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 of the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. the allocation of the funds approved in their budget for the purposes of vocational education and vocational training and career guidance and the control over their spending;
5. the development of the infrastructure of schools, vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres through funds from the municipal budgets;
6. determination of the State Admission Plan for the schools.

Functions of the Employers’ Organisations

Art. 56. The employers’ organisations shall:
1. participate in drafting, updating and coordinating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
2. propose updating of the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
3. participate in the development, coordination and updating of the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
4. participate in the organisation and conducting of examinations for acquiring vocational qualification and nominate members of the examination panels;
5. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert committees of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Functions of the Organisations Representing the Workers and Employees Nationwide

Art. 57. The organisations representing the workers and employees nationwide shall:
1. participate in updating the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. take part in the development, updating and coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the Expert committee for Career Guidance of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.

Functions of the Branch Trade Unions

Art. 58. The branch trade unions shall:
1. protect the interests of trainees before the employers on the issues related to the employment and social security during the practical training in the enterprises;
2. take part in organising and conducting the examinations for acquiring vocational qualification and nominate members of the examination panels;
3. designate their own representatives to the expert committees in vocational areas of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency.
Chapter 7

FUNDING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND CAREER GUIDANCE

Sources of Financing

Art. 59. (1) The state-run and municipal schools, vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres, and train the trainers centres shall be funded by:
1. the state budget;
2. the budgets of the municipalities;
3. sponsorships, donations, testaments;
4. self-generated income;
5. national and international programmes.

(2) The subsidy from the state budget and the budgets of the municipalities shall provide funds for:
1. the costs of vocational education and training in the state-run and municipal schools;
2. administrative and financial support to the state-run and municipal vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres, as well as to the train the trainers centres;
3. the costs of career guidance in the state-run and municipal vocational information and career guidance centres;
4. the costs of the qualification of the persons providing retraining of trainers in the train the trainers centres;

(3) The vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres and the train the trainers centres shall also be financed by the Professional Training and Unemployment Fund.

(4) The state-run and municipal institutions in the system of vocational education and training shall draft a budget.

(5) The self-generated income shall be used to maintain and develop the infrastructure. State budget subsidies and municipal subsidies shall not be reduced providing there is earned income.

(6) The vocational colleges and vocational training centres shall collect tuition fees from legal and physical entities.

(7) The state-run and municipal vocational information and career guidance centres shall also be financed through additional activities that are subject to their regulations.

Funding of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Art. 60. (1) The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall be financed by funds from the state budget, self-generated income, sponsorships, donations, testaments, etc.

(2) The National Vocational Education and Training Agency shall collect fees to issue licenses for vocational training and career guidance on the basis of a tariff approved by the Council of Ministers.

(3) The costs for the accreditation procedures shall be paid to the National Vocational Education and Training Agency by the customers under conditions and in a procedure described in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency

Funding of Vocational Training outside the State education requirements

Art. 61. Funding of vocational training outside the State education requirements and funding of practical training under Art. 40 para 1, organised in the state-run and municipal schools and vocational training centres, shall be provided by fees paid by legal and physical entities in accordance with the concluded contracts.

Practical Training Abroad
Art. 62. The practical training abroad, organised by state-run and municipal schools and vocational training centres shall be funded by the respective school or centre on the basis of a contract concluded with foreign vocational education and training institutions.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. In this Act the following terms shall be as defined below:
1. “occupational area” is a cluster of vocations in a sector of the economy defined in the National Classification of Sectors or in another sector of public life conforming to the respective area of education in line with the International Standard Classification of Education;
2. “vocation” is a type of working activity for which vocational education and vocational training is organised;
3. “part of a vocation” is a specified working activity within a vocation for which training can be organised;
4. “specialty” is an individually specified working activity within a certain vocation;
5. “vocational qualification” is qualification in a vocation or part of a vocation which combines a set of vocational competencies and the general education knowledge and skills that are needed to acquire them;
6. “vocational competencies” are abilities that the person has acquired on the basis of the accumulated knowledge and skills that help come up with initiatives, be fit for teamwork and competently to exercise a vocation in line with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in a vocation;
7. “level of vocational qualification” is the scope and content of vocational competencies and the general education knowledge and skills that are needed to acquire them;
8. “deviant behaviour” is behaviour that violates public norms and is subject to moral censure and legal sanction;
9. “accreditation” is the recognition of the compliance of the activity and quality of career guidance and vocational training and education with the State education requirements;
10. “competence” is the recognized possession of the compulsory amount of vocational competencies that qualify to practice specific jobs.

§ 2. The List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training shall incorporate, among others, the List referred to in Art. 42 para 6 of the Public Education Act.

§ 3. This Act shall be enforced in the training institutions that are run by the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and Ministry of Transport unless their articles of incorporation and the provisions of the special laws relating to their organization and activities provide otherwise.

TRANSITIONAL AND CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

§ 4. The Council of Ministers at a motion of the Minister of Education and Science shall approve Regulations on the Activity of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency and decide on the number of its full time staff within 6 months of this Act’s entry into force.

§ 5. Within a year of this Act’s entry into force, the Minister of Education and Science at a motion of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency and upon coordination with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, shall transform the existing Pedagogical Consulting Offices and Vocational Information Centres into Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres, or shall close them down.

§ 6. The Minister of Education and Science, in the span of time until the beginning of 2000/2001 school year, shall enumerate by an ordinance the state-run and municipal vocational schools, vocational high schools and vocational colleges in compliance with the requirements of Art.18. The Ordinance shall be published in the State Gazette.
§ 7. Pending the approval of the State education requirements for acquisition of qualification in vocations, the curricula and syllabi on the respective vocations and specialties endorsed by the Minister of Education and Science shall apply.

§ 8. Half of the Managing Board members in the National Vocational Education and Training Agency during the first term of office shall be replaced by four representatives from the quotas of the organisations of employers and organisations of workers and employees nationwide subject to lots casting and by four representatives from the ministries’ quota.

§ 9. The following amendments shall be made in the Public Education Act (promulgated in the State Gazette, No 86 of 1991, amended, No 90 of 1996 and Nos 36, 124 and 153 of 1998), in Art. 6, para 1 subparas 7 and 8:

“7. vocational high schools – from the 8th or 9th grade to the 12th or 13th grade;
8. vocational schools – from the 7th or 8th grade, duration of training up to 3 years, from the 9th grade – duration of training up to 4 years, and vocational colleges after completion of secondary education – duration of training up to 2 years.”


§ 11. The enforcement of this Act shall be assigned to the Minister of Education and Science.

This Act was passed by the 38th National Assembly on July 15, 1999 and the Great Seal of the National Assembly is affixed to it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:

IVAN KOURTEV
EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION ACT


it. 11, s. 1, № 225a

Chapter One
GENERAL

Art. 1. This Act shall govern the public sphere of:
1. The promotion and support of employment;
2. The professional provision of information and consulting, and of training for the acquisition of professional qualification by unemployed and employed persons;
3. The intermediation for the provision of information on, and for the employment of Bulgarian nationals in foreign countries, as well as for the employment of Bulgarian and foreign nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Art. 2. When carrying out the rights and obligations under this Act, no direct or indirect discrimination, privileges or restrictions shall be allowed based on either ethnicity, origin, gender, sexual orientation, race, colour of the skin, age, political or religious affiliations, membership in trade unions and other public organizations and movements, family, social or property status, or on the availability of mental and physical disorders.

Art. 3. The Government shall carry out its employment policy in cooperation with, and after consulting the representative organizations of the employers, and of the workers and employees, as well as with representatives of other non-profit legal entities.

Chapter Two
BODIES ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT

Section I
Central Government bodies engaged in employment

Art. 4. (1) The Council of Ministers shall determine the Government policy with respect to employment.
(2) After proposal of the Minister of labour and social policy, the Council of Ministers shall approve of an annual National Employment Action Plan.
(3) (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) After harmonization with the National Council for Promotion of Employment, and after expiry of the first six months of the financial year, the Minister of labour and social policy shall be entitled to relocate the funds, which have remained unabsorbed, from some of the regions and/or programmes and measures, to other regions and/or programmes and measures, which are capable to absorb extra funds.

Art. 5. (1) The bodies of the Executive power shall create conditions for the promotion of the employment of Bulgarian nationals willing to, and capable of being employed, who, availing of their rights granted pursuant to this Act, are active in seeking jobs.
(2) The bodies of the Executive power shall implement the policy for promotion of employment and for training for the acquisition of professional qualification of the persons exterior to the National system of secondary and higher education.

Art. 6. (1) The Minister of labour and social policy shall develop, coordinate, and implement the Government policy for promotion of the employment of unemployed persons, and for training for the acquisition of professional qualification by unemployed and employed persons, and shall also secure protective measures for the National labour market.
(2) The Ministry of labour and social policy, jointly with other ministries and with the social partners, shall develop a National Employment Action Plan on an annual basis.

Art. 7. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) An Employment Agency shall be established with the Minister of labour and social policy with view to the implementation of the Government policy for promotion of employment, for protection of the labour market, for professional provision of information and consulting, for vocational and motivation training of unemployed and employed persons, as well as for performance of intermediation services for employment.
(2) The Employment Agency shall have the status of an Executive Agency – a secondary disposer of loans from the state budget subordinate to the Minister of labour and social policy, and shall be a legal entity having its domicile in Sofia.

(3) The Employment Agency shall be represented and managed by its Executive Director.
(4) The activities of the Executive Director of the Employment Agency shall be assisted by a Council attended by representatives of the organizations of employers, and of the workers and employees, which have representative status at the national level.
(5) The activities, organizational structure and number of the personnel of the Employment Agency, and the number and territorial scope of its sub-divisions shall be determined in its Statutory Rules adopted by the Council of Ministers on proposal of the Minister of labour and social policy.

Art. 8. (1) A National Council for Promotion of Employment shall be established with the Minister of labour and social policy, as a permanent body for cooperation and consultancy in the development of the policy for employment.
(2) The National Council for Promotion of Employment shall be formed of equal number of representatives determined by the Council of Ministers, by the organizations of employers, and of workers and employees, which have representative status at the national level.

(3) The National Council for Promotion of Employment may resolve that also representatives of other non-profit legal entities are invited to attend its sessions.

(4) The National Council for Promotion of Employment shall be chaired by the Minister of labour and social policy or by an official specially authorized by the Minister.

(5) The National Council for Promotion of Employment shall adopt Rules for its organization and proceedings.

(6) The National Council for Promotion of Employment shall:
1. Discuss, and give opinions on the development and implementation of employment policies corresponding to the National Employment Action Plan;
2. From time to time become informed with the data about the state of the labour market and about the efficiency of the measures and programmes applied for the promotion of employment;
3. Make proposals to the Ministry of labour and social policy for the development of draft legislation, measures and programmes for the promotion of employment;
4. Discuss, and give opinions on draft legislation, related to the labour market;
5. Discuss the drafts of, and give opinions on the agreements of the Ministry of labour and social policy with other ministries, government institutions, and non-profit legal entities related to their common action on the issues of employment.

(7) The Ministry of labour and social policy shall provide all organization and technical support for the activities of the National Council for Promotion of Employment.

Section II
Regional employment bodies

Art. 9. (1) The Government policy for employment and for training aimed at the acquisition of professional qualification in the separate regions shall be carried out by the district administrations, and by the bodies of the local government, jointly with the territorial sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, and with the territorial sub-divisions of ministries, organizations, and the social partners.

(2) Permanent or Temporary Employment Commissions shall be created by resolutions of the Council for Regional Development with the Council of Ministers, and by resolution of the District Councils for Regional Development.

(3) The District Governor, or a representative of the District Administration authorised by the District Governor shall chair the Employment Commissions with the District Councils for Regional Development.

(4) The Rules for the Statute and Activities of the Employment Commissions shall be approved by the District Councils for Regional Development.

(5) The Employment Commissions with the District Councils for Regional Development shall include representatives of the following organizations:
1. The District Administration and the municipalities on the territory of the District;
2. The territorial sub-divisions of the Employment Agency;
3. Ministries and other government institutions;
4. The district structures of the organizations of employers, and of the workers and employees, which have representative status at the national level;
5. Industrial branches and branch organizations;
6. The non-profit legal entities in the region, the activity of which is related to the issues of employment and training aiming at the acquisition of professional qualification;
7. Other territorial structures.

Art. 10. When carrying out its activity, the Employment Commission at the District Councils for Regional Development shall comply with the priorities of:
1. The National Economic Development Plan;
2. The National Regional Development Plan;
3. The National Employment Action Plan;
4. The District Development Plan;
5. The municipal strategies and development plans.

Art. 11. (1) All organization and technical support of the Employment Commissions with the District Councils for Regional Development shall be carried out under the conditions and in the manner stipulated in the Rules for the Organization and Activities of the Council for Regional Development with the Council of Ministers, and of the District Councils for Regional Development.

(2) The members of the commissions under art. 9 shall not receive remuneration for their attending sessions.

Art. 12. (1) Councils for Cooperation shall be established with the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, which shall carry out direct supervision and control over the implementation of the employment policy.

(2) The Councils for Cooperation shall be attended by 9 members, inclusive of one representative of each of the following: the respective sub-division of the Employment Agency, the territorial structure of the Ministry of education and science and of the respective municipality; and three representatives of each of the following: the organizations of
employers, and of the workers and employees, which have representative status at the national level.

(3) By resolution of the Councils for Cooperation, representatives of other non-profit legal entities may also be
invited to attend their sessions.

(4) The Councils for Cooperation shall elect their chairpersons from their members for a term of one year,
based on the principle of rotation.

(5) The Councils for Cooperation shall adopt Rules for their organization and activities.

Art. 13. The District Governors shall secure the coordination of the national and local interests concerning the
issues of employment and the development and implementation of district plans for regional development and for
reduction of unemployment, and shall carry out combined action with the bodies of local government and the local
administration.

Chapter Three

FUNDING OF THE ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Art. 14. (1) The funding of the measures and programmes of active employment policy, approved by the
Council of Ministers, shall be secured on an annual basis, by means of the Act for the State Budget of the Republic of
Bulgaria.

(2) The funding of the active employment policy shall be carried out on grounds of approved requests of the
Ministry of labour and social policy, under the conditions and in the manner determined with the Rules for Administration
of this Act.

Art. 15. The Employment Agency shall administer the following income:

1. Fees under art. 28, para. 6;
2. Fees for permissions for the performance of free-lance activities;
3. Proceeds from advertising, information and publishing activities.

Art. 16. The active policy funds shall be spent for the following:

1. Programmes and measures for training aiming at the acquisition of professional qualification, motivation training and literacy courses for unemployed and employed persons;
2. Programmes and measures for maintenance and promotion of employment;
3. Programmes and measures encouraging the unemployed persons to start self-employment;
4. Protection of the domestic labour market, and execution of international agreements for the exchange of workforce, under which the Republic of Bulgaria is party;
5. The development of national, branch and regional programmes for employment and training aiming at the acquisition of professional qualification;
6. Implementation of projects for the social integration of risk groups at the labour market;
7. Advertising, information and publishing activities, related to employment, unemployment and training aiming at the acquisition of professional qualification;
8. Research of the labour market, as well as for the collection, processing and distribution of information about the labour market and assessment of the effect of the implemented measures and programmes of the active policy;
9. Funding the activities of the vocational training centres established by virtue of inter-governmental agreements after a Bill of the Council of Ministers;
10. Transportation and accommodation costs, and scholarships for the duration of the training of unemployed persons;
11. Other costs for enhancement of employment, if provided for in a Bill of the Council of Ministers.

Chapter Four

RIGHTS И OBLIGATIONS HA THE PERSONS SEEKING JOBS, AND OF THE EMPLOYERS

Section I

General

Art. 17. (1) The persons, who are active in the seek of jobs, shall be entitled to avail of the following under this
Act:

1. Information for the vacant jobs announced;
2. Information for the programmes and measures for maintenance and promotion of employment;
3. Intermediation for provision of information and employment;
4. Professional provision of information, consulting, and orientation;
5. Vocational and motivation training;
6. Enrolment in programmes and measures for employment;
7. Scholarships for training for the acquisition of professional qualification.

(2) Under this Act employers shall be entitled to avail of the following:

1. Information about the persons, who are active in the seek of jobs;
2. Information about programmes and measures for maintenance and promotion of employment;
3. Intermediation for the employment of workforce;
4. Enrolment in programmes and measures for employment;
5. Preferences and bonuses related to their maintenance and/or enhancement of employment;
6. Bonuses for training for the acquisition of professional qualification and/or probation.
The conditions and manner of provision of the services under para. 1 and 2 above shall be determined in the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Section II
Registration. Rights and obligations of the persons, who are active in the seek of jobs

Art. 18. (1) Any and all Bulgarian nationals, who are active in the seek of jobs, may become registered with the territorial sub-division of the Employment Agency.

(2) The persons active in the seek of jobs shall be registered in one of the following groups:
1. Unemployed;
2. Employed persons, who wish to change their jobs;
3. Students, who wish to work in their free time;
4. Retired persons.

(3) The rights under this Chapter may also be exercised by:
1. Foreigners granted permission for permanent residence in the Republic of Bulgaria;
2. The persons who have been granted asylum;
3. (amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The persons who have been granted the status of a refugee, or humanitarian status;
4. The persons envisioned in an international treaty, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party.

(4) Registration shall be made under permanent or present address. The conditions and manner of registration shall be provided for in the Rules for Administration of this Act.

(5) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Upon his/her registration, the person shall declare his/her status under para. 2. The person shall notify the sub-division of the Employment Agency about any change in the circumstances declared within a 7-day term after such change.

(6) The registration of the persons under para. 2 and 3 shall be certified in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Art. 19. (1) (Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) An action plan and schedule of visits shall be prepared for each unemployed person registered.

(2) The persons, who are active in the seek of jobs, shall be entitled to avail of the rights under art. 17, para. 1, as follows:
1. The unemployed persons – of the rights under it. 1 to 7;
2. The employed persons, who wish to change their jobs, and the students, who wish to work in their free time - of the rights under it. 1, 3 and 4;
3. The retired persons - of the rights under it. 1 and 3.

Art. 20. (1) The persons registered as active in the seek of jobs shall undertake to fulfil the recommendations of the labour intermediary, and to comply with the actions, terms and schedule of visits determined.

(2) In case of a written invitation served by sub-division of the Employment Agency, the person, who is active in the seek of jobs, shall mandatory show at the respective sub-division of the Employment Agency on the designated day and time.

(3) Registration shall be terminated, in case the person seeking job:
1. Fails to fulfil the recommendations of the labour intermediary or does not comply with the actions, terms and schedule of visits, envisioned in the action plan;
2. Fails to show on the day and time designated in the written invitation served by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, or within a term of 3 business days after such date;
3. Fails to comply with the schedule determined for his/her visits at the sub-division of the Employment Agency;
4. Changes his/her permanent address without notifying the sub-division of the Employment Agency thereof;
5. Changes his/her request at his/her free will;

(4) The registration of the unemployed persons shall also be terminated in the cases designated hereunder:
1. In case the person becomes employed and socially secured, or subject to social security in the manner prescribed in art. 4 of the Mandatory Social Security Code;
2. Acquire pension rights for socially secured length of service and old age, or for professional pension for early retirement;
3. Fail to fulfil the requirements of art. 18, para 5, sentence two.

(5) The person shall be entitled to follow-on registration only after the expiry of 12 months after termination of his/her previous registration.

(6) The registration terminated on grounds of para 3, it. 1, 2 and 3, or para 4, it. 3 shall be reinstated, provided that evidence is presented about available good reasons for the failure to comply with the designated requirements.

Art. 21. (1) Registrations shall be terminated and reinstated by resolution of the head of the sub-division of the Employment Agency.

(2) The resolutions under para 1 may be appealed in Court following the manner prescribed in the Administrative Procedure Act.

(3) The Employment Agency shall provide to the National Social Security Institute information about the resolutions taken under para 1.
Section III
Rights and obligations of the employers
(2) Employers shall be entitled to announce in the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency the following:
1. Their vacant positions;
2. Their needs for training aiming at professional qualification of the persons hired, and their own capacity to organize such training.
(3) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Within a term of 7 business days, the employers shall undertake to inform the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency about the following:
1. The vacancies announced, which were occupied or closed;
2. (new - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The persons employed, who have been referred by the Employment Agency;
3. (previous it. 2 - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The unemployed persons, who refused to accept the proposed suitable jobs;
4. (previous it. 3 - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Their refusal to employ the persons seeking jobs, who have been referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency.
(4) Employers shall file requests for training aiming at the acquisition of professional qualification of their hired personnel, as well as for their needs of workforce, broken down by types of specialties, under the conditions and in the manner determined with the Rules for Administration of this Act.
(5) Employers shall be entitled to make their own selection of the persons seeking jobs recommended by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, as well as request the Employment Agency to make its own selection in accordance with their request filed in advance.
(6) Foreign employers shall be entitled to use the intermediation services of the Employment Agency following the manner determined by the Council of Ministers.
Art. 23. When announcing their vacancies, employers shall not be entitled to establish any conditions based on the gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, and health status of the applicants. Exceptions shall only be allowed with respect to the gender, age, and deteriorated work-ability, provided that because of the nature of their jobs, the gender, respectively the age or health status of the applicant present a material requirement for the job offered.

Chapter Five
PROCEEDINGS FOR PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND CONSULTING IN CASE OF MASS LAY-OFFS
Art. 24. (1) (Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers shall notify, in writing and 30 days before the date of lay-offs, at the latest, the sub-division of the Employment Agency and the representatives of the workers and employees in the enterprises about their envisioned mass lay-offs.
(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The sub-divisions of the Employment Agency shall send copies of the notice under para 1 to:
1. The municipal administration;
2. The territorial sub-division of the National Social Security Institute;
3. The territorial sub-division of the "Chief Inspection of Labour" Executive Agency;
(3) The notice under para. 1 shall contain all necessary information regarding mass lay-offs envisioned, inclusive of the following: the reasons for the planned lay-offs; the number and category of the workers and employees who are going to be dismissed; the period, through which the lay-offs shall be effected; the criteria envisioned for the selection of the workers and employees to be dismissed, as well as regarding the preliminary consultancy carried out with the representatives of the workers and employees.
Art. 25. (1) After receipt of the notice under art. 24, teams shall be formed consisting of a representative of the employer, representatives of the organizations of the workers and employees of the enterprise, a representative of the sub-division of the Employment Agency, and a representative of the municipal administration.
(2) The teams under para 1 shall prepare projects for the measures necessary and targeted at:
1. Intermediation for employment;
2. Training for the acquisition of professional qualification;
3. Start-up of an independent economic activity;
4. Alternative programmes for employment.
(3) The projects under para 2 shall be presented for approval by the Regional Employment Commission, and based on such projects applications for funding shall be filed under the conditions and in the manner determined with the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Chapter Six
EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION
Section I
Intermediation Services
Art. 26. The Intermediation services for employment shall include the following:
1. Provision of information and consulting to persons seeking jobs, and to employers;
2. Psychological support of the persons seeking jobs;
3. Referral to suitable programmes and measures for employment;
4. Referral to vocational and/or motivation training;
5. Referral to, and assistance for employment, inclusive in other town or city in this country or in other
countries;
6. Services for the start-up of independent economic activity.

Art. 27. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The employers and the persons, who seek jobs shall be entitled to
receive intermediation services for employment.
(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The intermediation services for employment shall be organized and provided by:
1. The Employment Agency;
2. Natural persons and/or legal entities, the controlling interest in which is over 50% Bulgarian, and which are
registered under the Bulgarian laws.
(3) The Employment Agency shall provide intermediation services:
1. Free of charge - for the employment of Bulgarian nationals, and of the persons under art. 18, para 3;
2. Free of charge - for the employment of Bulgarian nationals abroad, as well as of foreigners in this country, in
execution of international treaties to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party;
3. Based on agreements with foreign employers and with licensed intermediation agencies, which shall
reimburse the costs of intermediation, and with similar foreign institutions for the employment of Bulgarian nationals in
other countries.

Art. 28. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) The persons and entities under art. 27, para 2, it. 2 shall perform
their intermediation activities for the employment in the Republic of Bulgaria, in other countries, and of sailors, after their
registration with the Employment Agency.
(2) The intermediation activities for employment carried out by the persons under art. 27, para 2, it. 2, shall
include the provision of any or all of the intermediation services under art. 26, it. 1, 2, 4 and 5.
(3) For their performance of the activity under para 2, the persons under art. 27, para 2, it. 2 shall enter an
intermediation agreement with:
1. The persons seeking jobs;
2. The employers, inclusive of ship-owners (operators), the workers seeking employment, and the employees.
(4) The intermediation agreements entered with foreign employers, inclusive ship-owners (operators), shall
be registered with the Employment Agency.
(5) The Minister of labour and social policy or his/her authorised official shall issue the certificate of registration
for the performance of intermediation activities for employment.
(6) The persons and entities under art. 27, para 2, it. 2 shall pay out a fee, the amount of which shall be
determined in a tariff of the Council of Ministers, in consideration of the following:
1. Registration for carrying out of intermediation activities for employment in the Republic of Bulgaria;
2. Registration for carrying out of intermediation activities for employment in other countries, and for
employment of sailors;
3. Registration of intermediation agreements with foreign employers, inclusive ship-owners (operators).
(7) The intermediation activities for employment carried out by the persons and entities under art. 27, para 2, it.
2, may also be performed as a paid service.
(8) The Council of Ministers shall determine in an Ordinance the following:
1. The conditions and manner for performance of intermediation activities for employment;
2. The conditions and manner for registration of the persons and entities under art. 27, para 2, it. 2 for carrying
out intermediation activities, as well as for the rejection and termination thereof;
3. The highest allowable amount of the price of the intermediation service provided, to be paid out by the
persons settled with a job;
4. The mandatory requirements for the content of the intermediation agreements.

Art. 29. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) Natural persons and/or legal entities carrying out intermediation
activity without registration may become registered only after expiry of 3 years from the effect of the penal decree
imposing administrative penalty under art. 81, para 1.
(2) Natural persons and/or legal entities, whose registration for performance of intermediation activities has
been terminated, may become registered anew only after expiry of 3 years from the date of effect of the act of
termination thereof.

Section II
Planning of programmes and measures for employment promotion
Art. 30. (1) The programmes and measures for promotion of employment under this Act shall be implemented
after approval thereof by the National Council for Promotion of Employment and by the Regional Employment
Commissions, and after they have been financially supported with the budget for the respective year.
(2) The Ministry of labour and social policy shall, on an annual basis, present plans for financial support of the
implementation of the programmes and measures for employment, the respective funds to be included in the Act for the
State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria of the Ministry of finance.
(3) The Employment Agency, on an annual basis, and in compliance with the procedures for development of the
draft budget for the respective year, shall present to the Ministry of labour and social policy a proposal for the
programmes and measures for employment, which shall be implemented during the year planned.
(4) The Minister of labour and social policy, on an annual basis, shall approve of the plan of the Employment
Agency, and shall secure the funding thereof.
(5) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The conditions and the manner of availing of the preferences for
implementation of programmes and measures shall be determined with the Rules for Administration of this Act.
(6) (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).
(7) (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).
(8) The members of the Employment Commissions and of the Councils for Cooperation with the sub-divisions of
the Employment Agency shall control and supervise the process of implementation of the programmes and measures.
Art. 30a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) Funds shall be provided with view to the implementation of the
programmes and measures for promotion of employment, designated for the following:
1. Labour remunerations;
2. Additional remunerations in the minimum amounts, established by the Labour Code and the other norms
related to its administration;
3. Remunerations for basic paid annual leave under art. 155 of the Labour Code;
4. Contributions on account of the employer due for the "Pensions" Fund, the "Labour Accidents and Industrial
Diseases" Fund, the "General Diseases and Motherhood" Fund, on the amount of gross labour remuneration paid out,
but not less than the minimum amount of the social security income under art. 6, para 3 of the Mandatory Social
Security Code, as well as for the funds for the Mandatory Additional Pension Funds and the National Health Insurance
Fund;
5. Contributions on account of the employer due for the "Unemployment" Fund on the amount of labour
remuneration paid out but not less than the minimum amount of the social security income under art. 6, para 3 of the
Mandatory Social Security Code;
6. Money compensations under art. 40, para 4 of the Mandatory Social Security Code;
7. Training for the acquisition of professional qualification, motivation training, and literacy courses training;
8. Promotion of the territorial mobility of the unemployed persons, registered with the sub-divisions of the
Employment Agency;
9. Scholarship, transportation and accommodation costs of the participants in literacy courses or in the training
for the acquisition of professional qualification (for the duration of the training only); transportation and accommodation
costs of the participants in motivation training;
10. Interest on loans granted under the guarantee facilities of the Ministry of labour and social policy aiming at
borrowing money to persons with deteriorated work-ability, for their start-up and development of economic activity and
opening of new jobs;
11. The costs of hired advisory services and other auxiliary services used by the persons under art. 47, para 1,
within the range and limits of the amounts determined pursuant to the Rules for Administration of this Act;
12. Loans for qualification in the subject of economic activity and/or the management thereof, under an
approved business plan under art. 47, para 1;
13. Additional funds for the employment of another unemployed family member not entitled to financial
compensation under art. 47, para 4;
14. Costs incurred for the cultivating of arable lands, for seeds and sowing materials, for fertilizers and plant
protection materials, under an approved business plan for agricultural activity.
(2) According to their designation, the funds under para. 1 shall be allocated among the employers, the
unemployed persons and training organizations, as follows:
1. Under it. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 - to the employer, who hired the unemployed person, referred to by the sub-
divisions of the Employment Agency;
2. Under it. 7 - to the training organization and to the employer who implemented the training;
3. Under it. 8 and 9 - to unemployed persons, registered with the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency;
4. Under it. 10 - to persons with deteriorated work-ability, who were granted loans under the guarantee facilities
of the Ministry of labour and social policy;
5. Under it. 11 and 12 - to unemployed persons, registered with the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency
and entitled to financial compensation, who receive a lump sum under art. 47;
6. Under it. 13 - to the persons, who receive a lump sum under art. 47, para 1, and pursuant to art. 47, para 4
secure employment under an approved business plan of another unemployed family member not entitled to financial
compensation;
7. Under it. 14 - to unemployed persons after approval by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency of a
business plan for agricultural activity.
(3) The National Employment Action Plan shall determine, on an annual basis, the funds under para 1 as well
as the amount thereof to be allocated under the separate programmes and measures for promotion of employment.
Art. 30b. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) The funds under art. 30a shall be provided based on agreement
entered between the territorial sub-division of the Employment Agency, and the following parties:
1. The unemployed person;
2. The employer;
3. The training organization.
(2) The agreement under para 1 shall mandatory designate the following:
1. The type of the programme or measure for promotion of employment;
2. The effective term of the agreement;
3. The designation and amount of the funds provided;
4. The liability of the parties in case of failure to perform under the agreement.
(3) The funds provided in the manner of para 1 shall be used according to their designation by the employer, by the unemployed person, and by the training organization.

Art. 30a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) In addition to their approved number of personnel, the Government bodies and other budget organizations shall be entitled to enter labour agreements with persons, referred by the subdivisions of the Employment Agency under programmes for employment, however, only within the framework of the National Employment Action Plan.
(2) For each person employed under para 1 above, the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency shall transfer the funds under art. 30a, para 1, to a separate budget account of the respective Government body or organization.

Art. 31. (1) (Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The Council of Ministers, the Ministry of labour and social policy, and the Employment Agency, other ministries, as well as other government institutions or district administrations, and the social partners, may developed and propose for funding and implementation programmes for the enhancement of employment, related to the priorities of the National Economic Development Plan, the National Regional Development Plan, and the National Employment Action Plan, as well as programmes for employment, literacy courses, and vocational training of groups of unequal standing at the labour market.
(2) The institutions responsible for the development and implementation of the programmes for employment shall be:
1. With respect to national programmes - the Ministry of labour and social policy and the Employment Agency;
2. With respect to branch programmes - the respective branch ministries (structures) jointly with the branch trade unions, branch chambers, the Ministry of labour and social policy, and the Employment Agency;
3. With respect to regional programmes - the Commissions for Employment with the District Councils.
(3) (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The Employment Commissions with the District Councils for Regional Development shall propose to the Ministry of labour and social policy regional programmes for literacy courses, vocational training and/or for employment in activities, which are in the public benefit.
(4) (Previous para 3 - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The programmes under para 1 above, funded by the Ministry of labour and social policy, shall be approved by the Minister of labour and social policy under the conditions and in the manner determined with the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Art. 32. (1) The Employment Commissions with the District Councils for Regional Development shall organize the implementation of short- or mid-term programmes for the development of employment.
(2) (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).

Art. 33. (1) The regional employment programmes shall specify the targets, priorities and instruments for implementation of the Government policy in the area of employment. These shall consist of measures and projects harmonized with the priorities of the National Economic Development Plan, the National Regional Development Plan, and the National Employment Action Plan.
(2) The regional employment programmes shall include all projects for enhancement of employment, broken down by the government priorities valid for the territory of the respective District, as well as the municipal projects and projects of other legal entities, already approved by the Employment Commission.
(3) The regional employment programmes shall be developed on an annual basis, and thereafter shall be proposed for harmonization under the conditions and in the manner determined with the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Section III
Employment of young people
(Title amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003)

Art. 34. (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).
Art. 35. (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).
Art. 36. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) For each new job opened, for which was hired an unemployed person until the age of 29 years, referred to by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for the time such person remained employed, however, for 12 months at the longest.
(2) For each new job opened, for which was hired an unemployed person until the age of 29 years with deteriorated work-ability, or a young person from a social care facility, who has accomplished his/her education and was referred to by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for the time such person remained employed, however, for 12 months at the longest.

Art. 37. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each new job opened, at which was hired an unemployed person, whose registration has been maintained for at least 12 months, and who was referred to by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for the time such
person remained employed, however, for 12 months at the longest.


Art. 40. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) The Employment Agency, jointly with the companies for employment of unemployed persons, shall develop and implement projects and programmes for employment, which are in the public benefit, of both national and regional scope. The companies for employment of unemployed persons shall apply with the Ministry of labour and social policy for funding of their projects and programmes.

(2) The Companies under para. 1 shall be registered under the effective laws, their main scope of activity including “securing employment for unemployed persons, registered with the territorial sub-divisions of the Employment Agency”.

(3) For each unemployed person hired under a labour agreement, and referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency under projects and programmes under para. 1 above, the amounts shall be provided pursuant to art. 30a, para. 2 for the actual time served within the term of the labour agreement, however, for 12 months at the longest.

Art. 41. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each job opened for training for the acquisition of professional qualification and/or for probation, at which an unemployed person was hired until the age of 29, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the term of the training and/or probation of the person admitted, however, for 6 months at the longest.

Section IV
Programmes and measures for transition from passive to active measures

Art. 42. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The unemployed persons, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency and employed for a term of at least 6 months out of the borders of their place of permanent residence, shall be reimbursed, as a lump sum, with the amount of the transportation costs pursuant to art. 30a, para 2.

(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The unemployed persons referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency to a specific employer for their employment out of the borders of the respective town or village, shall be reimbursed, on a monthly basis, with the amounts of the transportation costs pursuant to art. 30a, para 2.

Art. 43. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each new job opened, at which were hired unemployed persons, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 above, for the time such persons remained employed, however, for 12 months at the longest.

(2) The persons under para 1 shall be registered unemployed, who have been granted financial compensation for unemployment for 5 months, at the longest.

(3) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The funds under para 1 shall be provided for a term of 12 months, at the longest, for two persons occupying a single job, provided that the average number of the personnel on the payroll becomes increased.

(4) (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).

(5) The employers shall be entitled to carry out training for the acquisition of professional qualification, within the framework of part-time jobs, by designating a training organization, or by carrying out the training alone, within the scope of the maximum amount determined for the funds for training a single person.

Section V
Training programmes and measures

(Article amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003)

Art. 44. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers who secure maintenance and enhancement of the qualification of their hired workers and employees, shall be entitled to apply for the provision of the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, however, for maximum half of the amount of the funds determined for training of a single person.

Art. 45. (1) Employers shall be entitled to hire unemployed persons, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, for training and employment at the respective positions, for the time such persons are under training.

(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each job under para 1, at which was hired an unemployed person, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for the time such person remained employed, however, for 6 months at the longest.

Art. 46. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each position opened for probation and/or apprenticeship, at which was hired an unemployed person, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for the term of probation and/or apprenticeship, however, for 6 months at the longest.

Section VI
Entrepreneurship Promotion

Art. 47. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The person or persons who are unemployed and entitled to financial compensation, and who wish to start, alone or together, economic activity for production of goods and/or rendering of services, shall be provided, on account of the "Unemployment" Fund, with lump-sum amounts after approval of
his/her/their business plan by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, and after request by the person(s) to the sub-
division of the Employment Agency, stating his/her/their wish to receive a lump sum instead of financial compensation
or dole for unemployment, under the conditions and in the manner of the Mandatory Social Security Code.

(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Right to the lump sum under para 1 shall have the persons who comply with
the requirements for granting of financial compensation under the conditions and in the manner of the Mandatory Social
Security Code.

(3) (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).

(4) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The persons who have received the lump sum under para 1, and who secure
employment under an approved business plan of another unemployed family member not entitled to financial
compensation for unemployment, shall be provided with the additional funds pursuant to art. 30a, para 2.
Art. 48. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, the persons who have received the lump
sum under art. 47, para 1, may be provided with additional funds in the form of a loan for their qualification in the subject
of economic activity and/or in the management thereof, after an approved project under art. 47, para 1.
Art. 48a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The persons, who have received a loan under the "Micro-credits
Guarantee Fund" Project, shall be entitled to use the services for training for the acquisition of professional qualification
in the manner determined by the Rules for Administration of this Act.
Art. 49. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, the persons under art. 47 may be
reimbursed with theirs costs incurred for hired advisory services.
Art. 49a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) After approval by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency of their
business plan for agricultural activity, the unemployed persons may be reimbursed with the costs envisioned in their
business plan pursuant to art. 30a, para 1, it. 14.
(2) After an approved project by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, the persons under para 1 shall be
provided with the additional amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the acquisition of professional qualification in their
subject of activity and/or management thereof.

Section VII
Programmes and measures for opening of new jobs
Art. 50. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The employers - small enterprises, registered under the effective laws,
shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2 for a term of 12 months, with respect to the first five jobs
opened, at which such employers hired unemployed persons, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment
Agency.
Art. 51. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each new job opened, at which an unemployed person was hired
part-time, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts
pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, however, for 12 months at the longest.

Section VIII
Programmes and measures securing equal opportunities for risk groups through their social & economic
integration at the labour market
Art. 52. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) For each new job opened, at which were hired unemployed persons,
whose work-ability is in permanent deterioration, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers
shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the time such person remained employed, however,
for 12 months at the longest.
(2) For each new job opened for temporary, seasonal or part-time employment, at which were hired
unemployed persons with permanently deteriorated work-ability, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment
Agency, employers shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the time such person remained
employed, however, for 6 months at the longest.
Art. 53. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each new job opened, at which were hired unemployed persons -
deserted parents (adoptive parents) and/or mothers (adoptive mothers) of children until the age of 3, referred to by the
sub-divisions of the Employment Agency for full- or part-time jobs, employers shall be provided with the amounts
pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the time such persons remained employed, however, for 12 months at the longest.
Art. 54. (Revoked - OG, iss. 26 of 2003).
Art. 55. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) (1) For each new job opened, at which were hired unemployed persons,
who have served their term of imprisonment and were referred by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency within a
term not longer than 12 months from their discharge from the place they served their penalty, employers shall
be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the time such persons remained employed, however, for
12 months at the longest.
(2) Employers shall be entitled to carry out training for the acquisition of professional qualification, by
designating a training organization or by performing the training within the scope of the funds under art. 30a, para 1, it.
7.
Art. 55a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For each new job opened, at which were hired unemployed women over
the age of 50 and men over the age of 55, referred to by the sub-divisions of the Employment Agency, employers shall
be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for the time such persons remained employed, however, for
12 months at the longest.
Employment Agency, at each job opened under art. 36, 37, 43, 50, 51, art. 52, para 1, art. 53, 55 and 55a, only if they secure employment to unemployed persons, referred to by the Employment Agency, for an additional period equal to the period of subsidy. Additional period and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Conditions and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Entitled to avail of the promotion measures under this Act. Conditions and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements.

Employment protection and maintenance
Art. 56. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Only employers, who have no outstanding public obligations shall be entitled to avail of the promotion measures under this Act.

(2) The employers shall avail of the promotion measures under art. 36, 37, 43, 50, 51, art. 52, para 1, art. 53, 55 and 55a, only if they secure employment to unemployed persons, referred to by the Employment Agency, for an additional period equal to the period of subsidy. Additional period and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Conditions and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements.

Employment protection and maintenance
Art. 56. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Only employers, who have no outstanding public obligations shall be entitled to avail of the promotion measures under this Act.

(2) The employers shall avail of the promotion measures under art. 36, 37, 43, 50, 51, art. 52, para 1, art. 53, 55 and 55a, only if they secure employment to unemployed persons, referred to by the Employment Agency, for an additional period equal to the period of subsidy. Additional period and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Conditions and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements.

(3) The subsequent employment shall be allowed of more than one unemployed persons, referred to by the Employment Agency, at each job opened under art. 36, 37, 43, 50, 51, art. 52, para 1, art. 53, 55 and 55a, under the conditions and in the manner established by the Rules for Administration of this Act. The opening of jobs under art. 36, para 1, art. 37, 43, 50, 51, 53, 55 and 55a shall only be subsidized in case employment is secured over the average number of the personnel on the payroll for the last 6 months. Employers who have not maintained the jobs pursuant to para 2, shall reimburse the amounts they received with the legal interest thereon, unless the Rules for Administration of this Act provide else.

(6) The labour and social security relations of the unemployed persons hired by an employer, who has availed of the preferences due from the implementation of the programmes and measures for the promotion of employment, shall be settled under the conditions of the Bulgarian labour and social security laws. Such persons shall be hired under labour agreements.

Art. 57. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers who maintain the jobs of the persons in cases where the amount of their operations becomes less, or their operations cease for over 15 business days, shall be entitled to apply for, and be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30 para 2, for each such person and for the time such person remained employed, however, for 2 months, at the longest.

(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers who maintain the employment of the persons under para. 1, and who enrol them in training for the acquisition of professional qualification, shall be provided with the amounts pursuant to art. 30a, para 2, for each such person, and for the time such person was engaged in training.

(3) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The funding of the maximum amount of training costs under para 2 shall be secure, only provided that employers maintain the employment of the persons under para 1 for 12 months at least.

Chapter Seven
TRAINING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

Section I
Training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adults
Art. 58. The Ministry of labour and social policy, jointly with the Ministry of education and science:
1. Shall develop and coordinate at the national level the policy and strategies for training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adults, both unemployed and employed;
2. Shall organize and manage the National system for training for the acquisition of professional qualification of unemployed and employed persons;
3. Shall make surveys, analyses, and projections about the state, development, and needs from training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adult people.

Art. 59. (1) A National Consultative Council for Professional Qualification of the Workforce shall be established with the Minister of labour and social policy, which shall be attended by the representatives of ministries, agencies, commissions, by the representative organizations of the employers, and of the workers and employees, acknowledged at the national level, as well as by other non-profit legal entities.

Chair of the National Consultative Council for Professional Qualification of the Workforce shall be the Deputy-minister of labour and social policy, and its Vice-chair shall be the Deputy-minister of education and science.

(3) The National Consultative Council for Professional Qualification of the Workforce shall:
1. Harmonize the development of a national policy and strategies for training for the acquisition of professional qualification of unemployed and employed persons;
2. Coordinate and control at the national level the mutual action between the representative organizations of the employers, and the workers and employees, related to life-long education;
3. Harmonize the needs from training for the acquisition of professional qualification.

Art. 60. In addition to the institutions under art. 58, the activities related to the training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adults, shall also be performed by:
1. The Employment Agency;
2. The National Agency for Professional Education and Training;
3. The vocational training centres;
4. Other institutions designated in an Act or other Bill of the Council of Ministers.

Art. 61. The National, regional, and special programmes for training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adults, both unemployed and employed, shall be developed and implemented with view to the maintenance and development of such employment.

Art. 62. (1) The training for the acquisition of professional qualification of adults, both unemployed and employed, shall be implemented in compliance with the approved annual plan under art. 30, para 4.
The training for the acquisition of professional qualification, and the motivation training of adults shall be carried out by the vocational training centres licensed in compliance with the effective regulations, under the conditions and in the manner determined by the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Section II
Training for the acquisition of professional qualification by adults, organized by the Employment Agency

Art. 63. (1) The Employment Agency shall organize training for the acquisition of professional qualification according to the needs of the labour market, the requirements of employers, and the approved plan under art. 30, para 4, for the following persons:
   1. Unemployed persons;
   2. (amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The persons under art. 48 and 48a;
   3. (amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The workers and employees of micro- and small enterprises, who for the last 3 months have been employed under labour agreements with their last employer;
   4. Workers and employees, the requirements for the professional qualification of which have changed because of specific changes in production;
   5. The persons under art. 57, para 2.
(2) The Employment Agency shall also organize motivation training for the unemployed persons, for their active seeking of jobs and adaptation to the market conditions.

Art. 64. The Employment Agency shall organize training for:
   1. Initial professional qualification for persons, who lack such qualification;
   2. Additional qualification;
   3. Re-qualification.

Art. 65. (1) The enrolment of the workers and employees, as well as of the unemployed, in training for initial professional qualification, or for re-qualification, organized by the Employment Agency, shall mandatory be preceded by professional orientation, and provision of information and consulting.
(2) The terms, conditions, and the manner of organization of professional orientation, provision of information and consulting shall be determined by the Rules for Administration of this Act.

Art. 66. (1) The training for the acquisition of professional qualification of the persons, as stipulated under art. 63, para 1, it. 1, 2 and 5, and the motivation training, as stipulated under art. 63, para 2, organized by the Employment Agency, shall be funded under the conditions and in the manner determined by Ordinance of the Council of Ministers.
(2) The training for the acquisition of professional qualification by the workers and employees, as stipulated under art. 63, para 1, it. 3 and 4, organized jointly by the Employment Agency and by the employers, shall be funded under the conditions and in the manner determined by Ordinance of the Council of Ministers.
(3) The unemployed persons under art. 63, para 1, it. 1, who participate in training for the acquisition of professional qualification, shall be granted scholarships under the conditions and in the manner determined by Ordinance of the Council of Ministers.

Chapter Eight
EMPLOYMENT OF BULGARIAN NATIONALS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND OF FOREIGN NATIONALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Art. 67. Pursuant to this Act, Bulgarian nationals shall be entitled to be employed in any other country, in accordance with its national laws and/or under the conditions and in the manner governed by an international treaty for the exchange of workforce, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party, provided that such Bulgarian nationals:
   1. (amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Enter an agreement with an employer from the respective country through an intermediary as meant in art. 27, para 2 and art. 28, para 1;
   2. Are sent to work under an agreement with a Bulgarian employer.

Art. 68. The Employment Agency shall cooperate with the public offices of foreign countries, which are responsible for the supervision of the conditions for employment, through the exchange of information about the following:
   1. The national labour laws and the laws for employment of foreigners;
   2. The Bulgarian nationals hired on the territory of the respective country, and the nationals of the respective country hired on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria;
   3. Established infringements of the conditions and manner for employment;
   4. Established cases of illegal performance of labour activities of Bulgarian nationals on the territory of the respective foreign country, and of nationals of the respective foreign country on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Art. 69. (1) Bulgarian employers and intermediaries under art. 67 shall not be entitled to negotiate for Bulgarian nationals such conditions of labour and remunerations, which are less favourable than the minimum conditions stipulated in the national laws of the hosting country.
(2) The mutual relations between the Bulgarian nationals and the natural persons and legal entities – “intermediaries” under art. 28, para 1, though which employment in another country is secured, shall be settled in an intermediation agreement.

Art. 70. (1) A foreigner shall be entitled to work under a labour agreement, or when sent out on a business trip within the scope of the provision of services on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, after receipt of a Work Permit in
compliance with the requirements determined by a Bill of the Council of Ministers, or in an international treaty, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party.

(2) (Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The Permit under para 1 shall be issued by the Employment Agency on request of a domestic employer or of the domestic person receiving a foreigner sent out on a business trip.

(3) (Amend. - OG, iss. 54 of 2002, iss. 26 of 2003) No Permit shall be required for the employment of foreigners residing permanently in the Republic of Bulgaria, or of foreigners, who have been granted asylum, the status of a refugee, or a humanitarian status, or in other cases envisioned in a National Act or in an international treaty, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party.

(4) The conditions and the manner of admission in the Republic of Bulgaria of foreigners sent out on business trips within the scope of the provision of services shall be settled in an Ordinance of the Council of Ministers.

Art. 71. Work Permits for foreigners shall only be issued for the occupation of positions, with respect to which the law does not set a mandatory requirement for Bulgarian nationality, and only:
1. According to the state, development, and public interests at the National labour market;
2. Provided that for the immediately precedent 12 months the total number of foreigners employed by the domestic employer does not exceed 10 percent of the average number of the people on the payroll, hired under labour agreements, who are Bulgarian nationals and/or foreigners, who have been granted asylum or acknowledged the status of refugee;
3. Provided that the labour conditions and payment terms proposed are not less favourable compared to the conditions for Bulgarian nationals in the respective category of labour;
4. Provided that the remuneration of labour shall secure the funds necessary to support living in this country, according to the amounts established by a Bill of the Council of Ministers.

Art. 72. (1) The Work Permits shall be issued for a term not longer than 1 year.

(2) The term under para 1 may be extended, provided that the conditions for initial issuance have not dropped out.

(3) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For the issuance, or for an extension of a Work Permit of a foreigner, the domestic employer shall pay a fee in the amount of Leva 600.

(4) (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The fee under para. 3 shall also be paid by the domestic person receiving a foreigner sent out on a business trip.

(5) (Previous para. 4 - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) With respect to seasonal jobs lasting up to 6 months per calendar year, and with respect to the positions of secondary or high school teachers, the fee shall be Leva 300.

(6) (Previous para. 5, Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) For the re-issuance of a Work Permit for reason of its loss, damage or destroyal of documents, a fee shall be paid in the amount of Leva 200.

Art. 73. The labour and social security relations of foreigners hired on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria by domestic employers shall be settled under the conditions of the Bulgarian labour and social security laws.

Art. 74. (1) The conditions and manner of issuance, rejection and repeal of work permits, as well as for exemption from work permits of foreigners; the types of work permits; the allowable total duration of the employment, as well as the exceptions provided in art. 70, para 1 and art. 71, it. 1 and 2, shall be determined by Ordinance of the Council of Ministers.

(2) The Minister of labour and social policy shall give instructions for the implementation of international treaties in the area of employment, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is party, unless such international treaties provide else.

Chapter Nine
CONTROL И ADMINISTRATIVE AND PENAL LIABILITY

Section I
Control

Art. 75. (1) The Minister of labour and social policy shall exercise overall control on the adherence to this Act, as well as with other norms in the area of employment and unemployment.

(2) The specialized control activities shall be carried out by the "Chief Inspection of Labour" Executive Agency with the Minister of labour and social policy.

Art. 76. (1) The controlling bodies shall be entitled to:
1. Access at all times to the sites where the job is performed or the profession is exercised;
2. (amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Request from the inspected persons written explanations and data, as well as submission of certified copies of all necessary documents and information pieces;
3. Receive the necessary information directly from the workers, employees, and unemployed persons.

(2) All employers, officials, workers, employees, and unemployed persons shall undertake to cooperate with the controlling bodies in the execution of their functions.

(3) The controlling bodies shall undertake:
1. To timely inspect the received calls for infringements;
2. Not to share with the public any information, which is government confidential, institution confidential, or commercial secret, which information they have become aware of in relation to their exercise of control;
3. Not to use the information received in their own benefit or in other persons' benefit;
4. To keep the confidentiality of the source whereof they received the call for infringement.

Art. 77. The employers, workers and employees, the organizations of employers, and of the workers and
employees, as well as the persons seeking jobs, shall be entitled to address the "Chief Inspection of Labour" Executive Agency for any infringement committed of this Act, and/or of international treaties in the area of employment, which have become enforced for the Republic of Bulgaria.

Art. 78. (1) The "Chief Inspection of Labour" Executive Agency shall have the authority to apply the following compulsory administrative measures:
1. To give compulsory instructions to employers and officials, for ceasing the infringements of this Act;
2. To cease the execution of the illegal resolutions and/or orders of employers or officials in the area of the employment of labour under this Act.
(2) (Suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The compulsory administrative measures under para. 1 may be appealed in the manner of the Administrative Procedure Act, which appeal shall not cease the execution thereof.

Section II
Administrative and penal liability
Art. 79. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) The natural persons and/or legal entities, which fail to comply with a mandatory prescription of the controlling bodies under art. 78, para 1, it. 1, shall be imposed a fine, respectively a property sanction in the maximum amount of Leva 1000, and in cases of repeated infringement - in the maximum amount of Leva 2000.
(2) Employers, officials, unemployed persons or natural person, who, against the law, obstruct the controlling bodies in the performance of their duties, shall be imposed a fine, respectively a property sanction, in the maximum amount of Leva 1000, if not subject to graver penalty.
(3) (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Officials or employers, who fail to comply with a compulsory administrative measure under art. 78, para 1, it. 2 of the controlling bodies under this Act, shall be imposed a fine, respectively a property sanction, in the maximum amount of Leva 1000, and for each repeated infringement - in the maximum amount of Leva 2000.
(4) (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Officials, who fail to terminate the registration of an unemployed person, provided that the grounds are in place for this under art. 20, para 3 and 4, shall be imposed a fine in the amount of Leva 200 to 500.

Art. 80. Employers who, without good grоunds, reject to employ an unemployed person referred to by the subdivision of the Employment Agency, whose work-ability has been permanently deteriorated, within the scope of the norms determined under art. 315 of the Labour Code, shall be imposed a fine or a property sanction in the maximum amount of Leva 1000, for each case of rejection.

Art. 81. (1) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Natural persons and/or legal entities carrying out intermediation activities and providing services without registration, shall be imposed a fine, respectively a property sanction, in the amount of Leva 5,000; in case of repeated infringement - in the amount of Leva 5000 to 10,000, and in the amount of Leva 10,000 to 20,000, for each next repeated infringement.
(2) (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Natural persons and/or legal entities, carrying out intermediation activities and providing services in infringement of the requirements for carrying out of such activities, shall be imposed a fine, respectively a property sanction, in the maximum amount of Leva 2,500, and in case of repeated infringement - in the maximum amount of Leva 5,000.

Art. 82. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers, who have hired under a labour agreement a foreigner not granted Work Permit, or domestic persons who have received a foreigner sent out on a business trip without a Work Permit, as well as foreigners performing labour activities without a Work Permit, shall be imposed a fine or a property sanction in the amounts determined under art. 48 of the Act for Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria, unless subject to graver penalty.

Art. 83. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) Employers who make mass lay-offs without serving an advance notice and before expiry of the term under art. 24, para 1, shall be imposed a fine or a property sanction in the amount of Leva 200, for each person laid-off.

Art. 84. Employers and unemployed persons, who use the targeted funds provided thereto under Chapters Six and Seven above with a designation different from the one assigned, shall be imposed a fine or a property sanction in twice the amount of their unauthorised spending.

Art. 85. (1) All infringements shall be established by means of deeds compiled by the Government controlling bodies.
(2) All penal decrees shall be issued by the head of the respective controlling body, or by the officials authorised thereby, in accordance with the institutional belonging of the persons compiling such deeds.
(3) The establishment of the infringements, the issuance, appeal and execution of the penal decrees shall follow the manner of the Administrative Infringements and Penalties Act.
(4) The amount of collected imposed fines and property sanctions shall be administered by the Ministry of labour and social policy.

Art. 86. Upon the establishment of infringements of the law containing data about crimes committed, the controlling bodies shall notify the Prosecutor's Office as soon as practicable.

ADDITIONAL PROVISION
§ 1. In the meaning of this Act:
1. "Unemployed" shall mean every person who is not employed but is active in the seek of jobs, and ready to start working within a two-week term from being notified by the sub-division of the Employment Agency.

2. "Permanently unemployed" shall mean an unemployed persons whose registration with the sub-division of the Employment Agency has been maintained without any interruption for no less than 12 months.

3. "Persons, who are active in the seek of jobs" shall mean each person, which has not rejected any meetings with employers, organized by the sub-division of the Employment Agency, and has also alone visited employers with the purpose of becoming employed.

4. "Suitable jobs" shall mean such jobs, which correspond with the education and qualification of the person, as well as with his/her health condition, age, and gender, provided that the latter present a condition for the due performance of their jobs, and provided that such jobs are offered in the same town or city job, or within a distance of 30 km therefrom, provided that there is suitable public transport available.

4a. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Groups of unequal standing at the labour market" shall mean the groups of unemployed persons, whose competitiveness at the labour market is lower, and which group consists of the following: unemployed young people; unemployed young people whose work-ability is in permanent deterioration; unemployed young people from social-care facilities, who have accomplished their education; permanently unemployed persons;

5. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Activities of public interest" or "activities in the public benefit" shall mean the activities related to public services provided to the community and households; public works performed in the towns/villages and industrial zones, the sanitation of lands, industrial regions, buildings, etc.; the maintenance and preservation of municipal and state properties; the preservation of the environment; the maintenance and protection of cultural monuments and the provision of social services.

6. (Amend. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Persons outside of the system of the National secondary and higher education" shall mean all persons in the age group of capable of working, who are not students in the system of the National education (vocational schools, professional secondary schools and colleges), and at higher school.

7. "Training for initial professional qualification" shall mean the training, under which initial qualification is acquired in a profession.

8. "Continuous professional training" shall mean training for the perfection (update, upgrade, or extension of the scope) of already acquired professional qualification following an initial vocational training, as well as for re-qualification.

9. (Amend. and suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Mass lay-offs" shall mean lay-offs under art. 328, para 1, it. 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Labour Code effected by the employer for one or more reasons not related to the personality of the respective workers, where the number of such lay-offs within a period of 30 days is the following:

   a) 10 persons at least in enterprises, where the staff employed on the payroll during the month precedent to such mass lay-off accounts for over 20 and less then 100 workers and employees;

   b) 10 percent at least of the number of workers and employees in enterprises, where the staff employed on the payroll during the month precedent to such mass lay-off accounts for over a minimum of 100 but not over 300 workers and employees;

   c) 30 persons at least in enterprises, where the staff employed on the payroll during the month precedent to such mass lay-off accounts for a minimum of 300 or more workers and employees.

10. "Repeated" shall mean an infringement, committed within the term of one year from the entry into effect of the penal decree, by which the infringing person was punished for an infringement of the same type.

11. "Hired advisory services" shall mean consultancy in management and/or for carrying out of surveys, provided by natural persons or legal entities registered under the Bulgarian laws, for due consideration or free of charge.

12. "Social partners" shall mean representatives of the organizations of employers, and of the workers and employees acknowledged as representative at the national level, as well as of other non-profit legal entities, who take part in the social cooperation on, and related to the implementation of this Act.

13. "Employees' Premium" shall mean the funds provided to employers, who enter agreements concerning programmes and measures for the maintenance and promotion of employment under this Act.

14. "Domestic employers" shall mean employers registered under the Bulgarian laws.

15. "Auxiliary services" shall mean expert administrative, legal, and financial services, information services, advisory and training services, assisting the performance of independent economic activities.

16. "Risk groups" shall mean the portion of unemployed persons, who live, or are endangered of falling in a state of social isolation or poverty.

17. "Orphans" shall mean the minor children, either one or both parents of whose are deceased.

18. "Adult Person" shall mean each person in, and above the age of work-ability.

19. "Direct discrimination" shall mean the discrimination, where in a comparable situation some workers and employees are treated, have been treated, or would have been treated more favourably than others, related to whichever of the criteria under art. 2.

20. "Indirect discrimination" shall mean the discrimination, where permissions seemingly allowable by this Act
undertake to make their activities comply with this Act within a term of 3 months from its effective date.

Ordinance for the Terms, Conditions and Manner of Carrying Out Intermediation Activities for Provision of Information and Consulting, and for Employment on grounds of the

term of their validity.


provisions of the Act for Protection of Unemployed Persons and for Promotion of Employment (Promulgated OG, iss. 28.  (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Seasonal employment" shall mean employment, which only provides jobs during certain periods of the calendar year, and depending on the natural conditions and climate.

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

§ 2. (1) The Employment Agency with the Minister of labour and social policy, which is established hereunder, shall be legal successor to the National Employment Office, and shall assume the assets and liabilities of the National Employment Office.

(2) All labour relations with the workers и the employees of the National Employment Office shall be settled under the conditions and in the manner of art. 123 of the Labour Code.

§ 3. The financial control on the activities of the Employment Agency shall be carried out by the National Office of Public Audit, and by the bodies of the public internal financial control.

§ 4. The National Statistics Institute shall observe the households with concern to the employment and unemployment of workforce, following methods approved jointly with the Minister of labour and social policy.


§ 6. (1) The certificates issued for performance of intermediation activities for the provision of information and consulting, and for employment on grounds of the Ordinance for the Terms, Conditions and Manner of Carrying Out Intermediation Activities for Provision of Information and Consulting, and for Employment, approved by force of Decree №103 of the Council of Ministers of 1998 (Promulgated OG, iss. 55 of 1998; amend. iss. 5 of 1999), shall preserve the term of their validity.

(2) After expiry of the term of validity of the certificates under para. 1, the natural persons and legal entities shall file new requests following the conditions and manner stipulated in this Act.

(3) The natural persons and legal entities, who have already received permission for the performance of intermediation activities for the provision of information and consulting, and for employment on grounds of the Ordinance for the Terms, Conditions and Manner of Carrying Out Intermediation Activities for Provision of Information and Consulting, and for Employment, approved by force of Decree №103 of the Council of Ministers of 1998, shall undertake to make their activities comply with this Act within a term of 3 months from its effective date.

§ 7. The following amendments shall be made in the Act for Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the performance of labour rights and obligations are used, however, these are applied (with view of the criteria under art. 2) in a manner, which actually and as a matter of fact places some workers and employees in conditions less favourable, or privileged, as compared to others. The differences or preferences grounded in the qualification requirements for performance of certain jobs, as well as the special protection of some workers and employees (underage, pregnant and mothers of new-born children, disabled persons, persons moved to other jobs for reason of their health, and the like) shall not be deemed discrimination.

21. "Deserted mothers (adoptive mothers)" shall mean:

a) Mothers, who at the time of childbirth are not in a state of legal matrimony; widows, who gave childbirth later than the expiry of ten months after the death of their spouse; divorced women, who gave childbirth later than the expiry of ten months after the effective date of the Court resolution, which sanctioned the divorce of the spouses;

b) Adoptive mothers, who at the time of adoption of the child are not in a state of legal matrimony;

c) Deserted mothers (adoptive mothers) shall NOT be deemed those, who receive adjudicated amounts for alimony of their child, or who live in the same household with their child’s father, or who are in a state of legal matrimony with a person different from their child’s father.

22. "Probation" shall mean the employment at a particular job for the acquisition or for the enhancement of qualification, through the development of skills and the enhancement of experience.

23. "Apprenticeship" shall mean the training at a particular job combined with alternate training within the National system of education.

24. "Motivation training" shall mean training aiming to stimulate, and to refer the individuals for training for the acquisition of professional qualification and/or employment through the acquisition of knowledge and skills assisting their orientation in the labour market, their seek and election of training or employment.

25. "Literacy courses" shall mean the process of training for acquisition of knowledge and skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, and basic knowledge in the field of arts and sciences.

26. "For Good Reason" shall mean: arrest on part of an official government body; appearance with the Court or with another government body; participation in military practise or re-qualification, disease, etc., all of which certified by official paper, and with respect to which the head of the sub-division of the Employment Agency has been notified in due time.

27. (Amend. and suppl. - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Good Reasons to refuse the employment of unemployed persons with permanently deteriorated work-ability, referred to by the sub-division of the Employment Agency" shall be in place, when such referral is above the norm determined by art. 315 of the Labour Code, or when the working conditions for the job announced do not correspond to the prescriptions of the health authority, which made the work-ability expertise.

28. (New - OG, iss. 26 of 2003) "Seasonal employment" shall mean employment, which only provides jobs during certain periods of the calendar year, and depending on the natural conditions and climate.
1. In art. 24, para 1:
   a) Item 1 shall be amended as follows:
      "1. Who wish to work under a labour agreement after permission by the bodies of the Ministry of labour and
      social policy";
   b) Item 15 shall be amended as follows:
      "15. Who wish to carry out free-lance activities after permission of the bodies of the Ministry of labour and social
      policy in compliance with c art. 24a;";
   a) A new it. 16 shall be added:
      "16. Who wish to carry out activities as non-profit legal entities after permission of the Ministry of Justice, under
      terms and conditions, and in the manner determined by Ordinance of the Minister of Justice, harmonized with the
      Minister of the Interior."
2. Article 24a shall be amended as follows:
   "Art. 24a. (1) A foreigner who wishes to reside permanently on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria with the
   purpose of carrying out free-lance activities, may be granted a visa or a permanent residence permission, provided that
   such foreigner meets the established legal requirements for entry and residence in this country, and also provided that
   such foreigner presents with the diplomatic and consular bureaus, respectively before the offices carrying out
   administrative control of foreigners, the following documents:
   1. A (sample) Request;
   2. Permission for carrying out free-lance activities.
   (2) The permissions for carrying out free-lance activities shall be issued by the bodies of the Ministry of labour
   and social policy.
   (3) The conditions and manner of issuance, rejection and divesting of permissions for carrying out free lance
   activities by foreigners shall be determined by Ordinance issued by the Minister of labour and social policy, and
   harmonized with the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Finance.
   (4) No visas shall be issued for permanent residence with the purpose of performance of free-lance activities to
   foreigner in the cases designated in art. 24, para 1, it. 1 to 13, and it. 16.
   (5) Foreigners who meet the established legal requirements for performance of the respective free-lance
   activities shall be relieved from the issuance of permission, if so provided in an international treaty, to which the
   Republic of Bulgaria is party."
3. In art. 48a, para 1, the words "art. 24a or under" shall be added after the phrase "fails to fulfil his/her
   obligations under".
4. In art. 53, para 1, the words "art. 24a and under" shall be added after the words "and in cases under".
5. It. 9 of § 1 of the additional provisions shall be amended as follows:
   "9. "Free-lance activity" shall mean any and all economic activities, with the exception of the activities under art.
   24, para 1, it. 2 and 11, which are carried out with view to the specific quality of a given person, without any relations
   with any employer."
§ 8. (1) The Council of Ministers shall adopt the Rules for administration of this Act within a 6-month term from
the effective date of this Act.
(2) The norms established by Bills concerning the implementation of the provisions of the Act for Protection of
Unemployed Persons and for Promotion of Employment, which provisions are revoked by force of § 5 above, shall
remain effective, provided that they do not contradict the provisions of this Act.
§ 9. This Act shall enter effect on January 1, 2002.
BACKGROUND
The preparatory measures for the establishment of the National Resource Center for Vocational Guidance - Bulgaria (NRCVG) started in September 1998 under the framework of "Leonardo da Vinci" Programme.

OBJECTIVES
The role of the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) is to answer questions from vocational advisors and thus indirectly the questions of young people about opportunities for studying, vocational training or finding a job both at home and abroad. At present in Europe there are about 50 NRCVGs working on the basis of a contract with, or as a part of, the Leonardo da Vinci Programme's national co-ordination units. They are organised into network and exchange information via a variety of channels. These give partners access to national databases and support many innovative activities in the areas of education, vocational training and work experience.

The Centre’s aim is to unite all forms of vocational guidance and bridge vocational guidance in the sector of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Education and Science. The NRCVG contributes to the co-operation in the area of vocational education and training, which presumes the necessity of bringing the appropriate skills of our human resources, through special training, up to such level so that the presence of young people in vocational training and young workers from abroad on workplaces in Bulgaria and vice versa will become a normal practice.

ACTIVITIES
The NRCVG's objective is to contribute to the development of advisory practice in Bulgaria and improve the quality of information on vocational training and guidance in the EU countries.

The NRCVG's main activities include:

- Connection of existing databases and extension of information exchange between participating countries;
- Increasing the involvement of enterprises and social partners in vocational guidance activities;
- Transnational co-operation in improving vocational guidance systems;
- Implementation of transnational projects aimed at preparing vocational advisors and development of the European dimension in vocational guidance.

Since October 1999 the NRCVG participates as partner in the ESTIA project. ESTIA started as a 3-year pilot project within the framework of the "Leonardo da Vinci" programme and this year was multiplied for the pre-accession countries. The project aims to facilitate mobility within Europe by:

- Increasing the availability of current and suitable information about education, work and the labor market in Europe;
- Increasing the opportunities for guidance counselors and other experts to build their own networks;
Increasing the competence of guidance counselors and other experts in the use of IT for guidance;

Increasing the intercultural skills of guidance counselors and other experts.

NRCVG Bulgaria together with the other resource centres from the network is working on the creation of a European Internet Portal for promoting the possibilities for mobility of young people who search study or work opportunities abroad. The Portal is financed by the European Commission - Directorate General Education and Culture and is supposed to be launched by the end of year 2002.

Another major activity of the Centre is the cooperation on transparency of vocational qualifications. The aim is promoting mobility of individuals by making qualifications and learning visible. For the purpose representatives of the social partners, employers’ organisations and vocational guidance counsellors from all EU Countries and the Member States worked out a sample European Curriculum Vitae. NRCVG Bulgaria will distribute this European CV to all universities, human resource centres and relevant organisations in vocational education and training system in the country.

STRUCTURE

NRCVG Bulgaria is part of the Human Resource Development Center that operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Science and Culture and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.
Information and Publishing Center (IPC) is a department of Employment Agency in the Republic of Bulgaria. It develops, publishes and disseminates printed information materials, video films and multimedia products for vocational guidance. The information materials and products are worked out on the basis of own methods and for actual and perspective occupations in the country. They provide from information and methodical point of view the activities of the territorial, as well as, the information and counseling units of the Employment Agency (122 Employment offices, 15 Centers for occupational information, 40 Job clubs). The materials and products, developed by the Center provide actual and intelligible information about:

- different occupations and specialties;
- opportunities for education, qualification, additional qualification and requalification in different occupation and specialties in Bulgaria and abroad;
- labour market.

IPC has by the present moment developed printed information materials for 430 occupations, 110 video films and 90 multimedia products. Special information and counselling multimedia products for unemployed and employers were realized, representing the normative documents on the problems of employment and unemployment, as well as the services offered by the Employment Agency in this respect.

Important direction in IPC activities is carrying out theoretical and empirical researches. In 2001 “Terminological minimum on vocational guidance and employment” was published. A number of researches and analyses were carried out on personal characteristics of clients and the needs, concerning the information base, methodical providing and staff’s qualification in the information and counseling units of Employment Agency.

In the frame of its structure IPC established a Center for vocational information for secondary school and high school students, unemployed and job seekers.

IPC is well acquainted with and utilizes the experience of some member states of EU (Germany, France, United Kingdom) in the field of career information, guidance and counselling. It has acquired theoretical and practical experience in cooperation with partners from different countries.

Since 1 of November 2001 IPC is a partner from Bulgaria in a pilot project “Guide to the World of Occupations” on Leonardo da Vinci Programme. During 2002 it submitted the following project proposals:

- “Occupational informing and counselling /Bulgaria – Italy/” on Leonardo da Vinci Programme, measure Mobility. The project was approved for funding.
- “National operative classifier of occupations and the industrial arts” on Phare Programme.
- “Model for coordination of activities in vocational guidance on local level” on Joint Actions of Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth Programmes.

Information and Publishing Center is well staffed, has a good technical basis and a wide network of business contacts.