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Bulgaria

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

2008

eKnowVet – Thematic Overviews



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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Bulgaria. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities
4. Initial vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing - investment in human resources
11. European and international dimensions, towards an open area of lifelong learning

This overview has been updated in 2008 and its reference year is 2007. The latest versions can be viewed from October 2009 onwards at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY	6
0101 - Political And Socio-Cultural/Economic Context.....	6
0102 - Population And Demographics.....	6
0103 - Economy And Labour Market Indicators	7
0104 - Educational Attainment Of Population.....	10
02 POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES	12
0201 - Objectives And Priorities	12
03 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	17
0301 - Legislative Framework For Vocational Education And Training.....	17
0302 - Institutional Framework: IVET	18
0303 - Institutional Framework: CVET.....	18
04 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	19
0401 - Background To The Ivet System And Diagram.....	20
0402 - Ivet At Lower Secondary Level.....	26
0403 - Ivet At Upper Secondary Education (School-Based And Alternance).....	31
0404 - Apprenticeship Training.....	39
0405 - Other Youth Programmes And Alternative Pathways	40
0406 - Vocational Education And Training At Post-Secondary (Non Tertiary) Level	40
0407 - Vocational Education And Training At Tertiary Level	42
05 CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS	44
0501 - Background Information On Continuing Vocational Education And Training	44
0502 - Publicly Promoted Cvet For All.....	44
0503 - Training For Unemployed People And Others Vulnerable To Exclusion In The Labour Market	46
0504 - Cvet At The Initiative Of Enterprises Or Social Partners	47
0505 - Cvet At The Initiative Of The Individual	48

06 TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS	49
0601 - Types Of Teachers And Trainers In Vet.....	49
0602 - Types Of Teachers And Trainers In Ivet	51
0603 - Types Of Teachers And Trainers In Cvet.....	52
07 SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY	53
0701 - Mechanisms For The Anticipation Of Skill Needs	53
0702 - Bridging Pathways And New Educational Partnerships	53
0703 - Renewal Of Curricula	53
08 ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING	54
0801 - Accumulating, Accrediting And Validating Formal Learning.....	54
0802 - Accumulating, Accrediting And Validating Non-Formal/Informal Learning	54
0803 - Impact Of Eu Policy Cooperation	54
0804 - Facilitating Eu Mobility.....	54
09 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT	55
0901 - Strategy And Provision.....	55
0902 - Target Groups And Modes Of Delivery	55
0903 - Guidance And Counselling Personnel.....	59
10 FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES	61
1001 - Background Information Concerning Financing Arrangements For Training	61
1002 - Funding For Initial Vocational Education And Training	61
1003 - Funding For Continuing Vocational Education And Training, And Adult Learning ..	61
1004 - Funding For Training For Unemployed People And Other Groups Excluded From The Labour Market.....	62
1005 - Perspectives And Issues: From Funding To Investing In Human Resources	62
11 EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING	63
1101 - National Strategies Related To Policy Priorities, Programmes And Initiatives At Eu Level ...	63
1102 - Impact Of Europeanisation/Internationalisation On Education And Training	64
1103 - Authors, Sources And Bibliography.....	64

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic, the president is the head of state. It is situated in the South-Eastern part of Europe and constitutes the east territories of the Balkan peninsula. The territory of the country consists of a total of 111,001.9 square kilometres, including 63,764.8 square kilometres of agricultural areas, 37,157.5 square kilometres of forests and 4,603.4 square kilometres of populated area as well as other urban territories (Source: The Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Territorial balance of the Republic of Bulgaria as of 31.12.2000). The population totals 7,640,238 people as of December 31, 2007. Population in towns amounts to 70.7% of the total population in the country. There are 7 towns with a population of over 100,000 citizens. More than 1.1 million people live in the capital Sofia. Population density equals 68.9 persons per square km.

The country has been divided into six planning regions – North-West, South Central, North-East, South-West, South-Central and South-East and 28 administrative- territorial districts and 264 municipalities. The district is the administrative-territorial unit for the implementation of regional policy, for state management at local level as well as for achieving conformity between national and local interests. Each district consists of a number of neighbouring municipalities, which are self governed locally.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Bulgaria has been constantly decreasing since 1990. At the end of 2007 it equalled 7,640 thousand and during the 1990-2007 period it has decreased by 1,029 thousand. Decrease in number is the result of the negative natural population growth (deaths are greater in number than births) and of the foreign migration processes. The absolute number and relative share of the population at school age is also decreasing. For the 2002-2007 period the biggest decrease in number can be seen with the population at school age 7-14 which decreased from 690 thousand to 538 thousand. The number of the population aged 15-18 is also decreasing, which, in turn, affects the number of students at secondary vocational schools. During the next 8 years, the number of persons of this age group is also expected to decrease by an average of 12 thousand per year, leading to a total decrease of 248 thousand people by 2016.

The negative natural population growth and the foreign migration in the 1990's have caused great changes in the age structure of the population. These changes result in increasing the share of older age groups and decreasing the share of children and young people.

Parallel to the constant decrease in number of the population as a whole, as well as the share of people at school age, during the past few years certain positive trends of the demographic development could also be witnessed as a result of the political and economic stabilization: increase of the birth rate, decrease of children mortality, decrease of the scale of foreign migration, etc. For example, the birth coefficient for 1000 persons has increased from 8.6 in 2001 to 9.8 in 2007, whereas child mortality has been reduced from 14.4 to 9.2 per 1000 persons.

Forecast data show that the ageing process of the population will continue during the next twenty years. Relative share of the population age 0-24 is expected to decrease.

Table 1 - Population -forecast data					
AGE	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
TOTAL	7,584,414	7,476,430	7,214,857	6,952,832	6,690,556
0-24	1,981,273	1,903,619	1,717,126	1,620,420	1,561,840
RELATIVE SHARE%	26.1	25.5	23.8	23.3	23.3
25-59	3,793,349	3,732,815	3,630,393	3,437,855	3,214,690
RELATIVE SHARE %	50.0	49.9	50.3	49.4	48.0
60+	1,809,792	1,839,996	1,867,338	1,894,557	1,914,026
RELATIVE SHARE %	23.9	24.6	25.9	27.2	28.6

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Being a full member of the EC since January 1, 2007 Bulgaria joined the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy. Great and stable economic growth had been achieved. For the 2002 - 2007 period the gross domestic product (GDP) had grown virtually by over 5% per year. In 2007 the tempo of growth equaled 6.2%. In 2007 direct foreign investments amounted to about 3 billion Euro. After rather modest increases in previous years, employment growth picked up significantly in 2006 and 2007 it was 61.7%. The rate of unemployment was also low 6.9%.

Table 1 - Main economy and labour market indicators		
INDICATOR		2007
REAL GROWTH OF GDP PER YEAR	%	6.2
DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENT	Million Euro	6,108.9
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION	Number	3,447.9
RATE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (15 – 64 YEARS OF AGE)	%	66.3
EMPLOYED POPULATION	Number	3,208.8
RATE OF EMPLOYMENT	%	61.7
RELATIVE SHARE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR AS COMPARED TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS	%	7.5
RELATIVE SHARE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS IN INDUSTRY AS COMPARED TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS	%	35.5
RELATIVE SHARE OF THE EMPLOYED PERSONS IN THE SERVICE SECTOR AS COMPARED TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS	%	55.2
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF MEN (15-64 YEARS OF AGE)	%	66
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF WOMEN (15-64 YEARS OF AGE)	%	57.6
UNEMPLOYED PERSONS	Number	240.2
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE - TOTAL	%	6.9
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF ADULTS (55-64 YEARS OF AGE)	%	42.6
LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING (25-64 YEARS OF AGE)	%	1.3
SHARE OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS	%	16.6
SHARE OF PEOPLE AT THE AGE OF 22 WHO HAVE COMPLETED SECONDARY EDUCATION	%	85.1
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF YOUNG PEOPLE (15-24 YEARS OF AGE)	%	24.5
SHARE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS WITH PART- TIME JOBS	%	1.6
LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY FOR 1 EMPLOYED PERSON (?? 27 = 100)	%	35.7
RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE (15 – 24 YEARS OF AGE)	%	19.1
RATE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT - (15 AND OVER)	%	4.1
PERCENTAGE (OF GDP) OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING	%	4.5

Table 2 - Percentage (of GDP) expenditure on education and training	
2002	4.6%
2003	4.7%
2004	4.7%
2005	4.5%
2006	4.4%

Expenditure on education as part of the GDP (gross domestic product) in 2002-2006 has decreased to a certain extent. However, by taking into account the annual decrease of the number of students, it can be concluded that the expenditure per student, has in fact increased.

Table 3 - Public spending on education and training as a percentage of total public expenditure	
2002	10.6%
2003	10.7%
2004	10.9%
2005	10.9%
2006	10.6%
2007	9.9%

*Data source- NSI, Statistical yearbook, 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007 and NSI, Finance statistics for 2007

State expenditure on education in absolute figures increases every year, though its relative share of total state budget has in fact decreased. For example for 2003 state expenditure equalled 1,504,681 thousand BGN, in 2005 it was 1,814,829 thousand BGN and in 2006- 1,941,108 thousand and in 2007- 2,179,214 thousand BGN. These expenditures are intended for use in the public sector of pre-school and school education (1-12 grade), as well as the higher education.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

The achieved educational level of the population characterizes, as a whole, the quality of the human resources in our country. During the 1995 - 2007 period the educational structure of the population age 25 - 64 has improved.

	TOTAL	PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 0-2)		UPPER SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 3-4)		TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED LEVELS 5-6)	
		TOTAL (1,000)	%	TOTAL (1,000)	%	TOTAL (1,000)	%
EU27 (2007)	268,116	77,859	29	125,857	47	62,688	23
BG-1995*	4,387	1,696	39	1,937	44	754	17
BG-2000*	4,368	1,438	33	2,127	49	803	18
BG-2007	4,180	943	23	2,302	55	935	22

Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; Date of extraction: 27/05/2008

*Source: National Statistical Institute, Labour Force Survey; Second quarter

The relative share of the population with higher education (college or university) has increased from 17 % in 1995 to 22 % in 2007, whereas the percentage of the population with secondary education has increased by 11 percent – from 44% to 55%. At the same time the relative share of persons with primary and lower level of education has decreased from 39 to 23 %. This means that 77% of the population in the most active of age (25 - 64) has graduated either from secondary or higher education, which is a good prerequisite for faster economic prosperity.

According to the latest population census as of 1 March 2001, Bulgarians are among the largest ethnic groups among the age group 25-64. Their educational attainment is higher than the other ethnic groups: 23.5 % are with higher education, 53.0% have secondary education, 20.7% - with primary and only 0.4% is illiterate.

Within the Turkish ethnic group more that a half - 53.0% have primary education, 23.7% have secondary education and 2.7% have higher education. The relative share of the illiterate among the Turkish ethnic group among the age group of 25 - 64 is 3.5%.

The lowest educational attainment is registered among the Roma ethnic group. Among the age group of 25 – 64 of the people of Roma origin, persons with higher education are rare – only 7.2%; people with primary education - 44.9%; people with pre-school education - 27.4%. 7.8 % and 12.7% are illiterate. From the data, we can conclude that the education and training of the people of Roma origin is one of the greatest challenges for the educational and social policy in Bulgaria.

When comparing the educational structures of the different EC countries and Bulgaria we can see that the level of the “human capital” of our country is a little above the average. 29% of the population in the EC, age 25 – 64 have a primary or lower level of education (2007), while the corresponding percentage for Bulgaria is 23%. An average of 47 % of the people from EC countries have completed secondary education level, whereas the corresponding percent for our country is 55%. However these qualitative features are not sufficient to provide us with a full view of the picture of the human capital, because the quality of the secondary and of the higher education in the country is not good enough according to most specialists.

On the other hand, for some years now there has been a constant process of early school leaving even in primary education grades (1-4), and which is more apparent in grades 5-8. During the 2006/2007 school year, 2.9% of the students have dropped out from primary grades and 4.2% from pre-secondary school grades. This still happens, although according to the Bulgarian law, education is compulsory till the age of 16. Some of the students do not continue their education after graduating from primary school (8-th grade), others drop out of secondary school. According to a survey of the labour force from 2007, the result is that 16.6% of the young people age 18-24 do not finish secondary school and do not take part in any form of education or training.

Table 2 - Early school leavers: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU (27 COUNTRIES)	17.1	16.6	15.9	15.5	15.2	14.8
EU (25 COUNTRIES)	16.6	16.1	15.4	15.1	15	14.5
BULGARIA	21	22.4	21.4	20	18	16.6

Source of Data: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey; Date of extraction: 29 May 2008

However we should not underestimate the fact that the percentage of people who have not completed secondary education or who do not study has been decreasing constantly during the past few years, which shows the desire and wish of the prevailing number of young people to receive the necessary education. This trend is shown in the table above. The share of young people age 18-24 who have not graduated from secondary education has decreased from 21% in 2002 to 16.6% in 2007, i.e. by 4.4 %. During the same period the average percent for the EU27 countries has decreased at a slower pace by 2.3 %.

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Changes in the economic and social infrastructure of the country caused the need for stricter requirements for the qualification and adaptation of the labour force, adequate to the dynamically changing labour market. This has led to the implementation of legal and political initiatives to reform the Bulgarian system for vocational education and qualification in the country as part of the preparation of the country for the accession to the EU.

In 1999 the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA). The Act regulates the organization, institutions, administration and financing of the system for vocational education and training in Bulgaria.

According to the VET Act the main objectives of the policies in vocational education and training are related to: ensuring the citizen's right to vocational education and training in line with their personal interests and capabilities; developing partnership and cooperation between the VET institutions, national and local authorities, and social partners; preparation of a qualified and competitive labour force, adequate to the current labour market needs.

In 2006 the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the National program for the development of school education and pre-school preparation 2006-2015. It defines the following national priorities in the development process of Bulgarian education: equal access to education and quality education. The achievement of these goals is related to policies for the development of the school net and the provision of the necessary conditions and equipment; qualified staff; education for children with special education needs; acquisition of a profession and professional competencies in accordance with the students' individual needs; successful realization in a professional and personal context.

Political priorities in the development of vocational education and training in our country in the country are defined by the challenges, followed by the European strategies, policies and practices for the development of a dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy. Leading documents in that respect include the Lisbon Strategy till 2010, the lifelong learning concept, the Education and Training 2010 Programme, the European Employment Strategy.

In 2004 the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the National Strategy for Continuing Education 2005-2010, which defines the main national priorities in the development of continuing education and training in the context of lifelong learning. The strategic objective of Bulgaria is to develop and improve conditions for the acquisition, enhancement and development of vocational qualifications of the labour force in order to improve its employability, professional career and individual development. In order to fulfill the main objective and support the social-economic development of Bulgaria, the following main priorities have been defined:

- improving the access to continuing education and training;
- improving the effectiveness of interaction between the institutions, engaged in vocational training;

- provision of high quality continuing education and training;
- increase of investment in continuing education and training;
- scientific provision of continuing education and training.

The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2008-2013 has been adopted by the Council of Ministers on 30.10.2008 in accordance with the Integrated directions for Growth and Employment (2005-2008) of the EU Council, paragraph 3 Increase of investment in the human capital through better education and training, as well as in accordance with directions No. 7, 23 and 24. The Strategy aims to combine the efforts of all institutions and citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria for the development of conditions and realization of the process of lifelong learning, so that every citizen can develop to a full extent his/her personal and vocational knowledge and skills and improve his/her wellbeing and contribute to the competitiveness of the national economy by: improving people's capacity to adapt to the economic and social changes and encouraging participation in different forms of lifelong learning for career and personal development. Concrete aims directed towards the reaching the average level for the European Union with regard to:

- decreasing the share of early drop outs;
- increasing the share of students completing secondary education;
- increasing the share of population age 25-64, participating in lifelong learning.

The Strategy was adopted at the end of October, 2008.

In the context of the European Strategy on Growth and Employment, the Council of Ministers adopted a National Reform Program 2007-2009. One of the key challenges in the field of education and training is the "improvement of the quality of the human capital by better access to quality education and training (including lifelong learning) in order to improve productiveness and achieve better correspondence between skills and labour market needs". The Program also covers the new trends and priorities for the development of education, including VET, higher education, science and scientific research.

NEW TRENDS FOR VET

- decreasing the number of school drop-outs and re-integrating them in the education system;
- developing a modern and effective system for external evaluation of secondary education;
- developing vocational education and training in accordance with the labour market needs;
- developing different types of lifelong learning;
- enhancing the quality and effectiveness of higher education;
- developing continuing vocational training.

MEASURES ADDRESSING THESE TRENDS AND PRIORITIES

Amendments to the Regulations

- The changes in the Vocational Education and Training Act are directed towards improving access to adult vocational training. A new entry and exit minimal education level for the acquisition of the first vocational qualification level (e.g. completed initial stage of primary education or successful graduation from a literacy course of people older than 16 according to the Employment Promotion Act – EPA);
- The Vocational Education and Training Act regulates all conditions for the acquisition of a qualification and right to practice the regulated professions, including the recognition of the right to practice a regulated profession on the basis of the vocational qualification, acquired in a foreign country (member state of the EC or another country);

The List of Regulated Professions has been approved.

Introduction of a Common Standard for Funding the Secondary Education System; the Introduction of the System for Delegated Budgets; Program Funding of School Education

Since January 1, 2008 the common standard for financing has been increased by average of 1,157 BGN with the approval of social partners. The Decision of the Council of Ministers of 16.09.2008 introduced changes in the standard for financial support per student; depending on the type of the studied profession, the financial support is between 1,132 and 2,825 BGN per student. The average financial support per student is expected to exceed 1,400 BGN.

Since January 1, 2008 all state and municipal schools introduce the system of delegated budgets. According to the negotiations with the social partners the Act on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria gives schools the right to have extra income once the expenditures have been made in the budget for the next year.

The Council of Ministers has approved the following national programs: Optimization of the School Net, Modernization of the School Equipment, The School - a Territory of the Student, Qualification, ICT at School, Energy effectiveness, Better inclusion of children and students from compulsory school age, Differentiated Remuneration.

In 2008 the funding for national programs as compared to 2007 has increased by 221 million BGN, which is nearly by 30 %.

In 2008 within the framework of the program for Modernization of the Vocational Education and Training, vocational gymnasia in the country will be refurbished and provided with new equipment. The total amount of state investment is 5 million. BGN.

Implementing the Components of the National System for Internal Assessment

During the 2007/2008 school year, state matriculation exams have been organized for all students, graduating from the twelfth grade. In accordance with the Higher Education Act 41 schools from the country have adopted matriculation as an entry to higher education.

During the 2007/2008 school year, state qualification exams have been organized for the acquisition of a vocational qualification according to the common National Exam Programs, approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The National Exam Programs for the organization of state exams for the acquisition of third vocational qualification level for the 2008/2009 school year are currently being elaborated.

Providing Free Access to School Learning Content

Till 2007/2008 school year the state provided books and other study materials for students from state and municipal schools from first till fourth grade (initial stage). The Decision of the Council of Ministers from January, 2008 for the 2008/2009 school year free books and study materials will be provided to all students till Seventh grade (primary level), including students from private schools.

Developing electronic study courses in general education subjects and publishing them on the national education portal. The process continues with funds from the Human Resource Development Operative Program.

Developing electronic learning content for a profession subject. In 2007/2008 2 electronic study courses for a profession were nominated. A competition for 10 electronic study courses for vocational preparation was announced for 2008/2009 school year. Financial resources are provided in accordance with the National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Training 2005-2010.

Information and Communication Technologies at School

More than 98% of the schools in the country have access to high speed internet. Schools with more than 300 students have been supplied with new computers. Two hundred and twenty vocational gymnasias in the country have been equipped with computer rooms and specialized software.

Implementation of a New Learning Documentation, Bringing Learning Content for Vocational Preparation Up To Date, Qualification of Teachers

Within the framework of the Qualification program training was organized in ICT, entrepreneurship, new techniques and technologies, as well as training of 1151 teachers in a foreign language for professional purposes.

As part of a joint project The Labour market of MES and the American Agency for International Development, in 2007 and 2008 training in career consultation was organized for 1000 school pedagogic counselors and teachers.

IMPROVING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The National Calendar for Extracurricular activities in the field of vocational training for 2007/2008 school year has been approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Municipal, regional and national competitions in 15 vocational areas were organised. This activity continues throughout 2008/2009 school year.

BRINGING THE NECESSITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CLOSER TO THE REAL LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

Social dialogue between educational institutions and the business sector concerning the issues of planning the vocational education and training in accordance with the local labour market needs has been activated. Training for the acquisition of first level of vocational qualification has increased considerably. There are more opportunities for evening and extra-mural classes.

OPTIMIZATION OF THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL NET

Based on the analysis of the vocational school net in 2007 six vocational gymnasias have been closed, 22 have been transformed by a merger, 3 have passed over to municipal and other 4 to MES funding. The number of vocational schools has decreased from 433 during 2003/2004 school year to 418 in 2007. Undersized and merged classes has decreased from 908 during 2003/2004 school year to 43 in 2007/2008.

DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE FORMS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

In order to keep children at school and to provide more opportunities for the acquisition of a vocational qualification, the admission percentage to state schools after sixth, seventh and eighth grade for professions from first level vocational qualification grows every year. Opportunities for the acquisition of vocational education and qualification for people older than 16 years of age through evening and extra-mural classes have doubled.

VALIDATING VOCATIONAL COMPETENCIES, ACQUIRED THROUGH NON-FORMAL AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

A model framework for validation has been developed jointly with the social partners and is about to be tested for three professions by the end of the year.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

A workgroup with representatives from different institutions has been set up; it will analyze the status of qualifications in Bulgaria in accordance with the indicators of the European Qualification Framework. The timetable for the workgroup activities has also been approved- a correspondence model has been elaborated and the first version of the analysis is complete.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Main acts which regulate the legal framework for vocational education and training in the Republic of Bulgaria:

- Public Education Act – PEA (1991) – regulates the structure, functions and administration of national education;
- Vocational Education and Training Act – VETA (1999) – provides the legislative framework of initial and continuing vocational education and training;
- Act on the Level of Education, Minimal General Educational Requirements and the Curriculum (1999) – defines the conditions and rules for the completion of education level;
- Higher Education Act – HEA(1991) – regulates the structure, functions, administration and funding of higher education;
- Employment Promotion Act – EPA (2001) – defines the transition from passive social support to active labour market policies in order to enhance employability and improve the qualification of the labour force;
- Public Crafts Act –PCA (2001) – regulates the conditions and rules for crafts training;

Recognition of Vocational Qualification Act – RVQA(2008) – regulates the conditions and rules for the recognition of vocational qualifications, acquired in other member states or third countries in order to gain access and practice regulated professions.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS IN THE VET SYSTEM

In 2006 a collective agreement was signed between national employers' organisations in the field of education and the Ministry of Education and Science regarding the following issues: labour, social security and social relations, and standards of living, which have not been regulated in the Labour Code or in any other legal acts.

Another important document for social cooperation is the Pact for economic and social development of Bulgaria till 2009, signed by the Government and national employers' organisations and trade unions. The main objective inherent in the Pact is: Implementing an active employment policy and human resource development and modernization of the education system. The main implementation measures envisaged include:

- developing an effective system for career guidance, adequate to the personal needs and fully correspondent to the requirements of the labour market;
- updating/revising the requirements for the acquisition of a vocational qualification for all professions, as well as the curricula, the program and the national exam programs, to increase quality and relevance of VET;
- development of a system for objective assessment of the quality of VET;
- implementation of a system for validation of qualification and knowledge, skills and vocational competencies, acquired through non-formal or individual learning;
- adopting common criteria for the provision of high quality training;
- examining the prospects for tax stimuli for employers and workers, who invest in human capital.

0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

At national level:

- The Council of Ministers –defines the state policy in the field of education and employment;
- Ministry of Education and Science – implements the state policy in the field of vocational education and training;
- Ministry of Culture – implements the state policy in art schools;
- Ministry of Agriculture and food – participates in the implementation of the state policy and funding of agriculture and food-processing schools;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy –participates in the implementation of the state policy in the field of employment and qualification of the work force;
- Branch ministries– support the implementation of the state policy in the field of vocational education and training.

National Agency for Vocational Education and Training – issues licenses in the system for vocational education and training and coordinates the institutions, engaged with career guidance, education and training.

At regional and local level:

- District and municipal administrations, regional education inspectorates, regional employment offices, labour offices, vocational gymnasia, centres for vocational training- implement the state policy at regional and local level.
- Social partners;
- National and regional employers' and workers' organizations - participate in the administration and implementation of vocational education and training; take part in the drafting and approval of the List of VET professions and the state education requirements; participate in the state exams organised for the acquisition of a vocational qualification, etc.

Non-government organizations

Non-government organizations, scientific and research organizations, etc.- support the system for vocational qualification and training and lifelong learning by carrying out surveys and analysis, information activities, popularization and dissemination of education, training and studying opportunities.

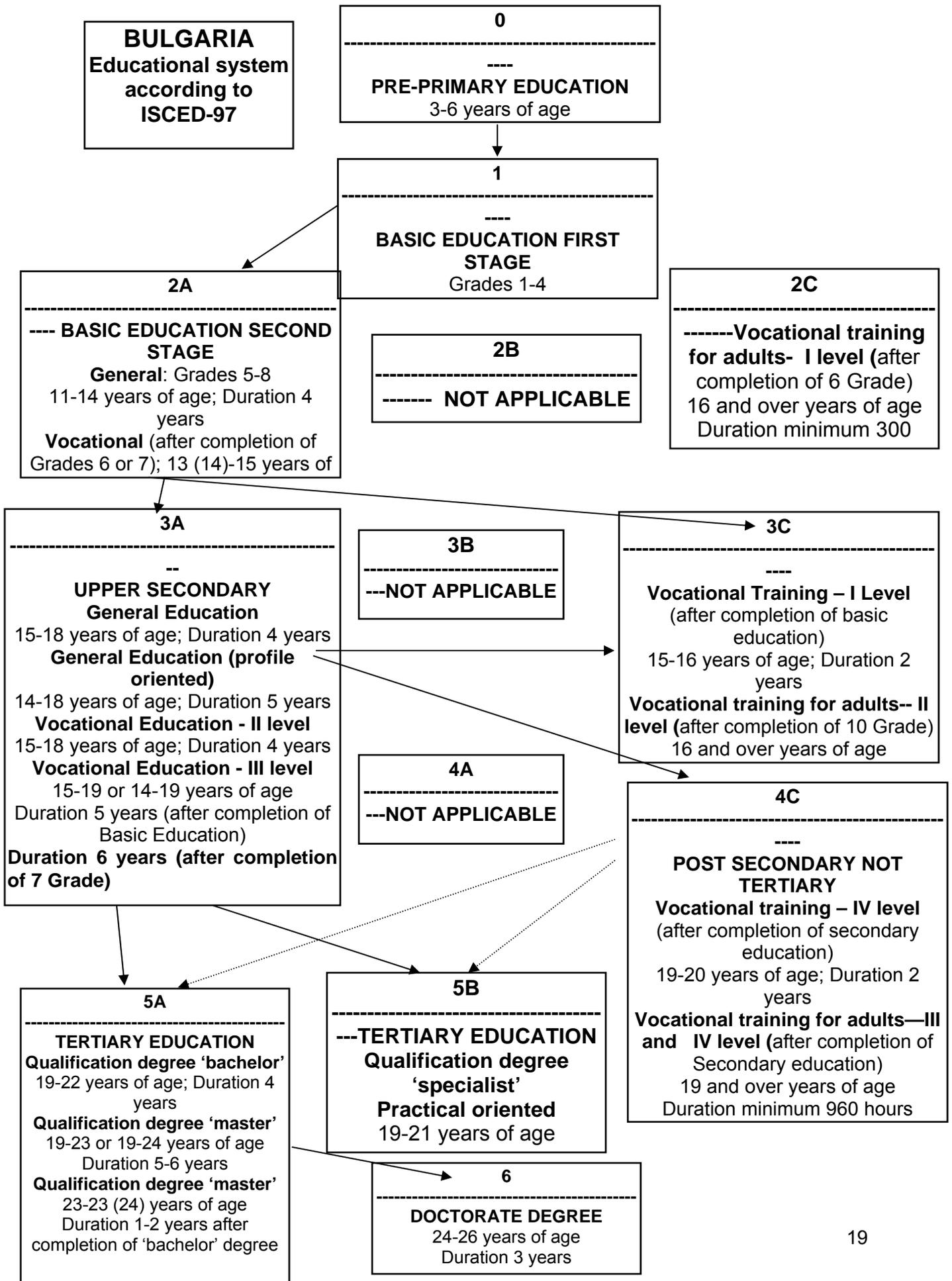
0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

Institutional Farmework for CVET is identical as described in chapter above at the level of policy decisions.

Difference between IVET and CVET system is related only to type of providers. IVET providers are VET schools while CVET is provided by VET centres after passing licensing procedures managed by National Agency for Vocational Education and Science.

VET schools also may apply for provision of CVET and may provide both IVET and CVET if they have the licence from the National Agency for Vocational Education and Science.

Figure 1. Education system according to ISCED-97



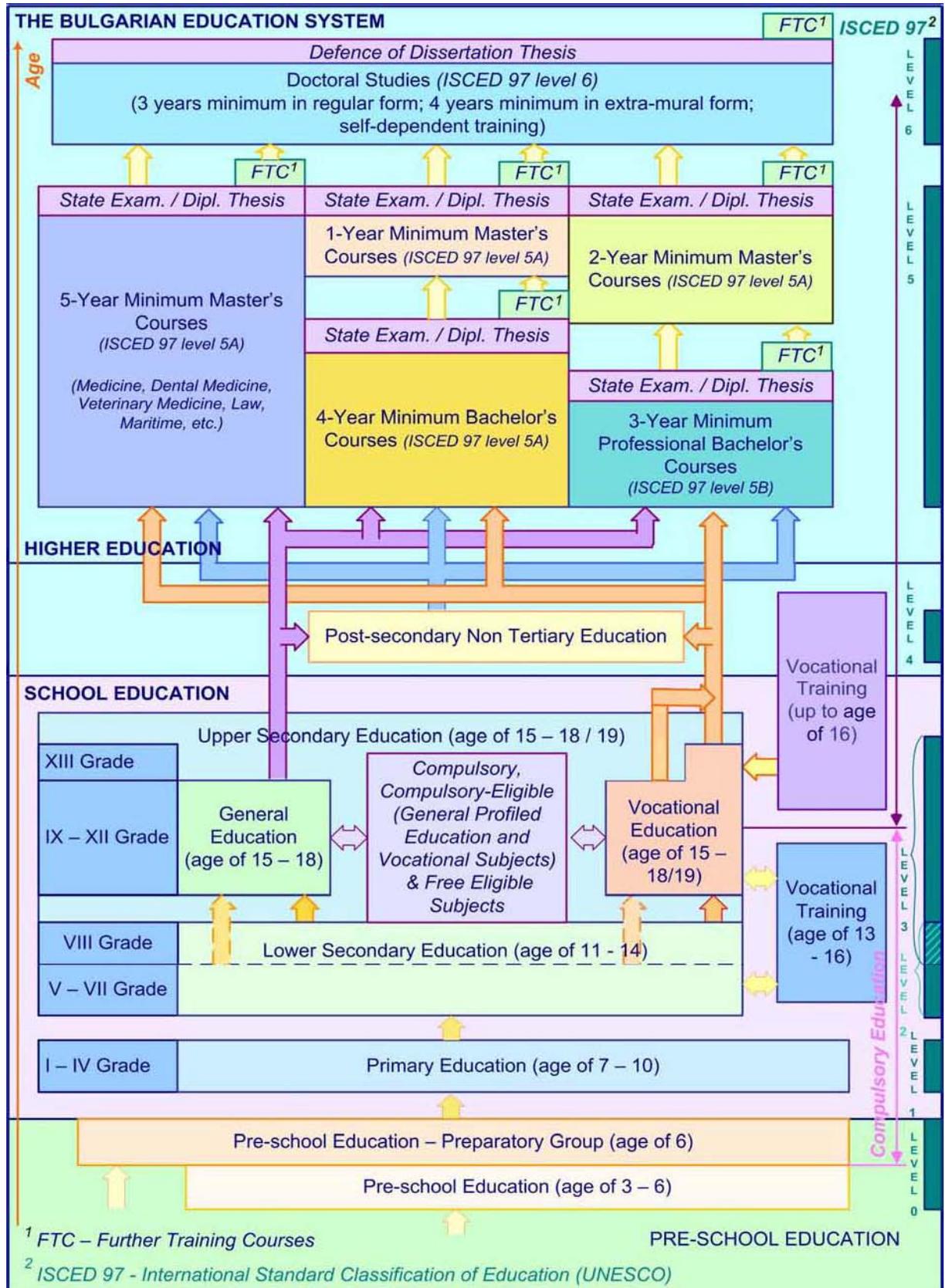
04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

The organization, institutions, administration and funding of the vocational education and training system is regulated by the Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA). The Act regulates the right to provision of vocational education and training, satisfaction of labour market needs and securing the necessary conditions for the functioning and development of the VET system. For what concerns the acquisition of a vocational qualification and graduation from primary and/or secondary education, this process is defined in the Public Education Act, the Act on Educational Degree, General Education Minimum and Curriculum, as well as in the state educational requirements.

STRUCTURE OF THE IVET SYSTEM

Figure 2. Structure of the IVET system



The structure, functioning and administration of the public education system of the Republic of Bulgaria is defined by the Public Education Act. The public education system includes kindergartens, schools and supporting units. Compulsory school age is 16.

According to the educational levels, school education can be divided into primary and secondary, while according to content it is general and vocational.

Primary education is realized in two stages: pre-primary – from first till fourth grade and lower secondary - from fifth till eighth grade. Students who have completed the initial stage of primary education receive a certificate for the completion of fourth grade, while the completion of primary education is certified by the Certificate for the completion of primary education. The Certificate for the completion of primary education is received after completion of eighth grade.

Secondary level is realized during one stage – the gymnasium stage, which lasts for four years (IX– XII grade). Secondary education level is acquired after the completion of twelfth grade and successful passing of two matriculation exams: in Bulgarian language and Literature and a school subject from compulsory general preparation at student's choice. If they want students can stand for a third matriculation exam, which can be either for a school subject, forming the general education minimum, as well as for subject from the vocational preparation course.

General education guarantees that the minimum general education is learnt.

Vocational education guarantees that the minimum state educational is learnt and that a vocational qualification in a profession is acquired according to the state educational requirements, while the vocational training guarantees the acquisition of a qualification in a profession.

Curricula, according to which students are taught encompasses three types of preparation- compulsory, elective and optional.

General education preparation is compulsory both in general education schools and vocational schools and gymnasias; every citizen should have the right to progress. The minimum state education is the basis for the compulsory educational preparation. Compulsory preparation guarantees that the minimum general education is attained. The minimum general education is attained when the common learning content, common to all general education and vocational schools and gymnasias, is learnt.

Elective preparation provides additional training. At general education schools this additional preparation involves subjects from the cultural-education fields from the general education preparation. At vocational schools and gymnasias the elective preparation provides vocational training for the acquisition of a qualification in a profession or specialties from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training.

One of the main differences between general education and vocational education is the content of the elective preparation. In the general education system, accent is put on general education subjects- Bulgarian Language and Literature, foreign languages. Mathematics, Informatics, Public Science, Natural Science, Physical Education, Sport, etc. Students from the vocational education system undergo the elective preparation (theory and practice), so that they acquire a vocational qualification level.

Optional preparation provides training in fields, which are proposed by the school and chosen by the students. Optional preparation is not compulsory for the students.

In order to acquire vocational education, apart from the two matriculation exams students from vocational gymnasia have to sit for two state exams in vocational qualification, i.e. they complete their vocational education course by sitting:

- State leaving exams for the completion of secondary education according to the Act on Educational Degree, General Education Minimum and Curriculum;
- State exams for the acquisition of a vocational qualification – theory and practice in the profession.

The acquired general secondary education is certified with a diploma for completed secondary education. Completed vocational education is certified with:

- secondary education diploma;
- vocational qualification certificate;
- certificate, certifying the right to practice a profession (if there is such a requirement), including regulated professions.

The vocational education component of IVET leads to the acquisition of a qualification in a profession, as well as to the mastering of the minimum general education for secondary education. The vocational training component of IVET leads to the acquisition of initial qualification in a profession or part of a profession. When certain conditions are present in the legislative framework, vocational education can guarantee the completion of primary education or certain grades from secondary education.

IVET is organized in professions and specialties, regulated by the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. The List is approved by the Minister of Education and Science in cooperation with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, the relevant branch ministers and the representative organizations of employers, workers and employees at national level.

Professions and specialties from the List are classified according to two distinctive marks - vocational areas and level of vocational qualification. The second one- the level of vocational qualification mark is related to the level of education. This fact determines the age at which IVET can begin.

Depending on the complexity of the acquired vocational qualification professions are divided into four levels. First level of a vocational qualification requires the acquisition of vocational competencies to practice occupations involving routine activities performed under invariable conditions. Practicing occupations from second level of vocational qualification requires the acquisition of vocational competencies, which involve a range of complex activities performed under variable conditions. In order to practice occupations from third level of vocational qualification, apart from the requirements for second level, trainees should also acquire competencies, related to supervising the work of others. The highest- fourth level of vocational qualification includes occupations involving a range of complex activities performed under variable conditions, as well as to managing the performance of others and allocating resources.

The acquisition of a vocational qualification in a profession or occupation from all four levels involves certain entry requirements, which are related to the minimum entry educational level, as well as certain age requirements.

The minimum education level, required for the students to sign up for first level of vocational qualification is the completion of sixth grade, while the exit level is the completion of primary education - eighth grade. This is why students can start their initial vocational education and training once they are 13 years of age.

For persons, who have become 16 years of age, i.e. who no longer belong to the compulsory age group for school education (adults), the entry minimum education level and the exit education level for the acquisition of first level of vocational qualification is the completion of pre-primary education level (fourth grade) or successful completion of a literacy course in accordance with the Employment Promotion Act.

Requirements for the enrolment in training for occupations from the second and third level of vocational education include the completion of seventh grade or primary education, eighth grade. Second degree vocational qualification is awarded upon successful completion of tenth or eleventh grade; upon successful completion of twelfth grade with the right to stand for state matriculation exams in order to graduate from upper secondary school; and upon upper secondary education completion. The last two conditions/requirements apply also for the exit education level for third vocational qualification level as well.

Training in professions from fourth level of vocational qualification is organized for pupils who have completed their upper secondary education.

Institutions providing initial vocational training include:

- vocational school and gymnasia;
- art schools;
- vocational colleges;
- vocational training centres.

Vocational schools carry out initial vocational training for the acquisition of first and second degree of vocational qualification and/or qualification on part of a profession. Training at vocational schools lasts for 4 years and training begins after sixth grade, i.e. when students are at the age of 13. This is the earliest age when IVET can begin. Vocational schools also train people 16 and older for the acquisition of first and second vocational qualification degree or qualification on part of a profession.

Vocational gymnasia carry out vocational education for the acquisition of second and/or third degree of vocational qualification. Training for the acquisition of second degree vocational qualification lasts for 4 years and is complete after successful graduation from twelfth grade. The duration of the training for third vocational degree is 5 years— from ninth till thirteenth grade. Students are enrolled at vocational gymnasia after completion of primary education or seventh grade. Typical age of the students is 14-19 years old.

Apart from vocational training, vocational gymnasia can also provide vocational training for the acquisition of first, second and third qualification degree or in part of a profession

for persons, who no longer belong to the compulsory school age group, i.e. who are 16 years of age and older (by order of the Minister of Education and Science).

Art schools provide vocational training for the acquisition of third vocational qualification degree in professions and specialties from the Arts education area or from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. Training takes place after the completion of primary education or a grade from the upper secondary education level and lasts for 4 years.

Vocational colleges carry out vocational education and training for the acquisition of fourth vocational degree. Persons who have completed their upper secondary education can be admitted to vocational colleges. Depending on whether initial vocational training or continuing vocational training is organized for trainees, training duration is up to two years.

Vocational training centres organize training of persons 16 years of age or older. The acquisition of a vocational qualification in the system for vocational education and training is regulated by Framework programs, approved by the Minister of Education and Science in 2003. These programs define the age and entry education and qualification level, as well as the content and duration of the vocational education and training.

The framework programs are:

1. Programs A for initial vocational training with the acquisition of first degree of vocational qualification;
2. Programs B for initial vocational training with the acquisition of second degree of vocational qualification;
3. Programs C for vocational education with the acquisition of second or third degree of vocational qualification;
4. Programs D for vocational education with the acquisition of fourth degree of vocational qualification;
5. Programs E for initial vocational training with the acquisition of qualification on part of profession;
6. Programs F for continuing vocational training for updating or enhancing the acquired vocational qualification, as well as for the acquisition of first, second or third degree of vocational qualification.

Vocational gymnasias are the most popular among the institutions, providing IVET. The fact that they bring together two important conditions for future realization of young people- the acquisition of a vocational qualification and the completion of secondary education, make the vocational gymnasias the most popular IVET institution among students and parents. The data for 2007 - 8 school year supports this statement:

- the distribution of the 503 IVET institutions is the following:
 - vocational gymnasias – 449;
 - vocational colleges – 28;
 - art schools – 21;
 - vocational schools– 5;

There are also 646 vocational training centres.

- A total of 179,566 students from institutions for IVET have been distributed as follows:

- Vocational gymnasias – 168,610 students;

- Art schools – 4,107 students;

- Vocational colleges – 4,020 students;

- Vocational schools – 2,829 students.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Students from lower secondary education level of education can be trained in different training programs within **Framework Program A**.

The aim of the **Framework Program A** is to regulate the terms and conditions for the acquisition of the first degree of vocational qualification for students at lower secondary level and persons aged 16. All requirements in the **Framework Program A** for vocational training of students are in accordance with the regulations governing school education, namely: Vocational Education and Training Act, Public Education Act, Act on the Level of Education, Minimal General Educational Requirements and the Curriculum, Regulations for implementing the Public Education Act, State educational requirements for the acquisition of vocational qualification, State educational requirement for the system of assessment, State educational requirement for the documents in the public education system, Regulation for the allocation of teaching time to reach a general education minimum in classes, stages and degrees of education, Regulation for determining the number of pupils and children in classes and groups in schools, kindergartens and servicing units.

The **Framework program A**, specified for each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training is intended to develop curricula and training programs for institutions entitled to carry out training for the acquisition of such vocational qualifications. These institutions are vocational schools and vocational gymnasias, as well as lower secondary, primary, secondary general, special and sports schools, gymnasias and particular classes in profiled secondary schools in virtue of the order of the Minister of Education and Science in case they meet the conditions, stated in the State Educational Requirements. Training for adults within Framework Program A can also be organized by vocational training centres.

Typical age of trainees, which undergo IVET at lower secondary level is 13 – 16 years of age. In the system for vocational education and training students should be 13 years of age in order to become candidates for training within **Framework Program A**. Apart from the minimum age requirement, **Framework Program A** also includes requirements regarding the health status and the entry education level of candidates.

Health status of the candidates is certified with a health certificate, which should prove that that the candidates are physically fit for the professions they opt for.

The duration of the different training versions within **Framework program A** depends on the ratio between required minimal entry education level and achieved exit education-qualification level.

There are five versions of **Framework Program A** - 1, A2, A3, A4 and A5.

Programs A1, A2, A3 and A5 are versions of **Framework Program A** designed for students. Program A4 is for persons aged 16 and over.

Version A1 is a program for vocational training for students, who have successfully completed sixth grade. Training continues for three years, during which there is compulsory general education, compulsory vocational and optional preparation. School education is organized in consecutive grades - seventh, eighth and tenth grade.

The exit education level, which should be achieved at the end of the training within **Framework Program A** – version **A1** is primary education and first degree of vocational qualification.

General education preparation provides the achievement of the general education minimum for the acquisition of primary education, while the vocational preparation guarantees the necessary training for the acquisition of first degree vocational qualification.

The ratio between the number of classes for general preparation and vocational training is 5:1.

In accordance with the requirements of the Vocational Education and Training Act school classes for theoretical and practical training from the compulsory vocational preparation are divided into common, branch and specific preparation for the profession. At least 40 % of the total number of classes for compulsory vocational training involves practical training- educational practice and practical activity. Work placement is organized according to a schedule, approved by the head teacher of the school in accordance with concrete conditions for its realization.

Classes for work placement, envisaged in **Framework program A- version A1**, are about 30 % of the total number of classes for practical training.

Vocational training takes place mostly at the school. Theoretical preparation takes place entirely at the vocational school, while work placement is usually a combination between training at the school and at enterprises. The most popular practice is when practical training takes place at the practical training facilities of the school, while work placements are usually organized at enterprises. As a result the ratio between training in a profession at school (theory and practical training) and training through work placements at enterprises is 7.6 : 1. In some cases when there are certain conditions present- such as practical training facilities at the enterprise and agreements between the school and the company, the entire work placement could be carried out outside the school. Then the ratio between training in a profession at school (theory in the profession) and training at enterprises (practical training and work placements) is 1.5 : 1. The latter ration between vocational training at school and practical training at enterprises can vary from 1.5:1 to 7.6:1 for **Framework Program A**– version A1. The statistics is different for each training organization depending on the specificities of the region.

Version A2 is a program for vocational training for students, who have successfully completed seventh grade. Training continues for two years, during which there is compulsory general education, compulsory vocational and optional preparation.

School education is organized in consecutive grades - eighth and ninth grade.

The exit education level, which should be achieved at the end of the training within **Framework Program A – version A2** is primary education and first degree of vocational qualification.

The ratio between the number of classes for general preparation and vocational training is 4.4 : 1.

It is obligatory by law that at least 40 % of the total number of classes for compulsory vocational preparation is for practical training – educational practice and work placements, which is also the case for program A2.

About 36 % of the total number of classes within program **A2** for compulsory vocational training involves practical training.

The ratio between training classes in a profession at school (theory and practical training) and training through work placements at enterprises is 5.9 : 1. In case there are conditions for realization of the entire practical training (educational practice and work placements) at the enterprises in the region, the ratio is 1.5 : 1. This latter ratio between vocational training at school and practical training at enterprises can vary from 1.5:1 to 5.9:1 for Framework Program A – version A2. The statistics for each training institution is different depending on the specifics of the region.

Version A3 is a program for vocational training for students, who have successfully completed eighth grade. Training continues for up to one year, during which there is compulsory general education, compulsory vocational and optional preparation.

School education is organized in one school year - ninth grade.

Vocational training within this program can last for up to two years for professions when a certificates for legal capacity to practice the profession is needed.

The exit education level, which should be achieved at the end of the training within **Framework Program A – version A3** is primary education or completed ninth grade and first degree vocational qualification.

The ratio between the number of classes in general education and vocational training is 2.9 : 1.

It is obligatory by law that at least 40 % of the total number of classes for compulsory vocational preparation are for practical training – educational practice and work placements.

Classes dedicated to work placements within Program **A3** are about 48 % of the total number of classes for practical training.

The ratio between training classes in a profession at school (theory and practical training) and training through work placements at enterprises is 4.2 : 1. In case there are conditions for realization of the entire practical training (educational practice and work placements) at the enterprises in the region, the ratio is 1.5 : 1. This latter ratio between vocational training at school and practical training at enterprises can vary from 1.5:1 to 4.2:1 for Framework Program A – version **A3**. The statistics for each training institution is different depending on the specifics of the region.

Version A5 is a program for vocational training of students, who have completed eighth grade of a school for children with mental deficiency. Training lasts for two years, during which there is general education and compulsory vocational preparation.

School training is organized in two consecutive years.

The exit educational-qualification level, which should be achieved by the end of training within **Framework Program A - version A5** is completed tenth grade of the school for children with mental deficiency and first degree vocational qualification.

Vocational training in Framework program A concludes by taking the following examinations for acquiring vocational qualification:

- Theory in the profession;
- Practice in the profession.

State exams in profession theory and practice are organized in accordance with national exam programs, which are approved by the Minister of Education and Science and for art schools - by the Minister of Culture.

The organization of the exams is also defined in the state education requirement for the assessment system while their content depends on the state education requirements for the acquisition of a qualification in a profession.

- secondary education grade;
- certificate for vocational qualification.

Students who have completed initial vocational training within versions of **Framework Program A** are mostly students at lower secondary level. The acquired educational qualification level grants them the right to enter the labour market. They can continue their education, so that they acquire second qualification degree within **Framework Program B** or third vocational degree within **Framework Program C** for the same or another profession in case they meet the requirements for the entry education level. They can also improve and enhance the acquired vocational qualification through training within **Framework program F** and/ or acquire qualification on part of another profession within **Framework Program E**. Last but not least, persons who have completed an initial training course within Framework Program A can continue their training in order to acquire a upper secondary education diploma.

Programs for carrying out initial vocational training at lower secondary stage of primary level of education are presented in the table in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Framework Program A for initial vocational training

TRAINING PROGRAMMES	MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING	MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL ENTRY LEVEL	DURATION OF TRAINING	OUTGOING LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING	RATIO BETWEEN PRACTICAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
FRAMEWORK PROGRAM A FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING								
VERSION A 1	Age 13 (for pupils)	Completed VI grade	3 (three) years	Primary education and first degree of vocational qualification.	5 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,3	7,6 : 1
VERSION A 2	Age 13 (for pupils)	Completed VII grade	2 (two) years	Primary education and first degree of vocational qualification.	4,4 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,36	5,9 : 1
VERSION A 3	Age 13 (for pupils)	Completed VIII grade	Up to 1 (one) year	Primary education or completed IX grade and first degree of vocational qualification.	2,9 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,48	4,2 : 1
VERSION A 5	Age 13 (for pupils)	Completed VIII grade	2 (two) years	Completed tenth grade of a school for children with mental deficiency and first degree of vocational qualification.	Depending on the specifics of the target group and the organization of the training at the training institution			

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Initial vocational education and training at upper secondary level is regulated by Framework programs, approved by the Minister of Education and Science, which were approved in 2003. Programs for students include:

1. **Programs B** for initial vocational training with acquisition of second degree of vocational qualification;
2. **Programs C** for vocational training with acquisition of second or third degree of vocational qualification;
3. **Programs E** for initial vocational training with acquisition of qualification on part of profession.

FRAMEWORK PROGRAM B FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The aim of the Framework **program B** is to regulate the terms and conditions for the acquisition of second degree of vocational qualification in accordance with the regulations, governing general education and vocational education and training.

Framework **program B**, specified for each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training is intended to develop curricula and training programs for institutions entitled to carry out training for the acquisition of vocational qualification. These institutions are vocational schools and vocational gymnasias, as well as pre-secondary, primary, secondary general, special and sports schools, gymnasias and particular classes in profiled secondary schools in virtue of the order of the Minister of Education and Science in case they meet the conditions, stated in the State Educational Requirements. Training for adults within Framework Program B can also be organized by vocational training centres.

Typical age of trainees, which undergo IVET at upper secondary level of education is 13 – 19 years of age. In the system for vocational education and training students should be 13 years of age in order to become candidates for training within **Framework Program B**. Health status of the candidates is certified with a health certificate, which should prove that the candidates are physically fit for the professions they opt for.

Duration of the different training versions within **Framework Program B** depends on the ratio between: required minimal entry education level - achieved exit education-qualification level.

There are two versions of **Framework Program B** – B1 and B2.

Program B1 is the version of **Framework Program B** designed for students. Program B2 is designed for persons aged 16 and older. More information on the two versions – B1 and B2 - is available in [Annex 1](#) attached.

Framework Programs B for carrying out initial vocational training in the upper secondary level of education are also presented in a tabular form in Annex 2 below.

Annex 2: Framework Program B for initial vocational training

TRAINING PROGRAMMES	MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING	MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL ENTRY LEVEL	DURATION OF TRAINING	OUTGOING LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING	RATIO BETWEEN PRACTICAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
FRAMEWORK PROGRAM B FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING								
Version B 1	Age 13 (for students)	Completed primary education or completed grade in upper secondary school.	Up to 4 (four) years	Second degree vocational qualification and completed tenth and/or eleventh grade, acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certification or completed upper secondary education.	1,12 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,15	15,4 : 1
Version B 2	Age 16 (for adults)	Completed secondary education or completed grade in upper secondary school.	1 (one) year	Second degree of vocational qualification.	–	1 : 1	Depending on the specifics of the target group and the organization of the training at the training institution	

FRAMEWORK PROGRAM C FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Training in the versions of **Framework Program C** are the most popular in the system for vocational education and training of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The aim of Framework program C is to regulate the terms and conditions for the acquisition of second and third degree of vocational qualification for students and persons at age of 16 and over in accordance with the regulations, governing general education and vocational education and training.

Framework program C, specified for each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training is intended to develop curricula and training programs for institutions entitled to carry out training for the acquisition of vocational qualification. These institutions are vocational schools and gymnasia, art school as well as secondary general and sports schools, gymnasia and particular classes in profiled secondary schools in virtue of the order of the Minister of Education and Science in case they meet the conditions, stated in the State Educational Requirements.

Typical age of trainees, which undergo IVET at upper secondary level is 13 – 19 years of age. In the system for vocational education and training students should be 13 years of age in order to become candidates for training within **Framework Program C**. Apart from the minimum age requirement, **Framework Program C** also includes requirements regarding the health status and the entry education level of program candidates. Health status of the candidates is certified with a health certificate, which should prove that the candidates are physically fit for the professions they opt for.

Duration of the different training versions within **Framework program C** depends on the ratio between required minimal entry education level - achieved exit education and qualification level.

There are six versions of **Framework Program C**. Versions C1, C2, C3 and C4 are designed for students. Programs C5 and C6 are for people, aged 16 and over.

Information on the six versions of Program C can be found in [Annex 3](#) attached.

Vocational training within **Framework Program C** concludes by state exams for the acquisition of a vocational qualification in:

- theory in the profession;
- practice in the profession.

State exams in profession theory and practice are organized in accordance with national exam programs, which are approved by the Minister of Education and Science and for art schools - by the Minister of Culture.

The organization of the exams is also defined in the state education requirement for the assessment system while their content depends on the state education requirements for the acquisition of a qualification in a profession.

Completed vocational training within **Framework program C** is certified by:

- certificate for completed upper secondary school or diploma for completed upper secondary education;
- certificate for vocational qualification.
- Persons who have graduated their initial vocational training within versions of

Framework program C can:

- access the labour market;
- continue their training for updating and enhancing the acquired vocational qualification through training within Framework Program F;
- acquire vocational degree in another profession through training within **Framework Program A** or **Framework program B**;
- acquire vocational degree in part of another profession through training within Framework Program E;
- persons who have completed a upper secondary education grade can be trained for the acquisition of upper secondary education and/or the acquisition of second and/or third vocational qualification degree.
- In addition persons who have completed training in version C2 and C5 can:
- continue their education, so that they acquire third vocational degree by training within Framework program F in case they meet the entry requirements for educational and vocational level of the profession.

Framework Programs C for carrying out initial vocational training in the upper secondary level of education are also presented in a tabular form in Annex 4 below.

Annex 4: Framework Program C for initial vocational training

TRAINING PROGRAMMES	MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING	MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL ENTRY LEVEL	DURATION OF TRAINING	OUTGOING LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING	RATIO BETWEEN PRACTICAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
FRAMEWORK PROGRAM C FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING								
Version C 1	Age 13 (for students)	Completed VII grade	6 (six) years	Third degree vocational qualification and acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed upper secondary education.	1,01 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,18	13 : 1
Version C 2	Age 13 (for students)	Completed primary education	4 (four) years	Second degree vocational qualification and completed tenth or eleventh grade, acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed secondary education.	1,27 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,16	14 : 1
Version C 3	Age 13 (for students)	Completed primary education	5 (five) years	Third degree vocational qualification and acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed upper secondary education.	0,94 : 1	1,5 : 1	1 : 0,16	14 : 1

Annex 4 – continuation

TRAINING PROGRAMMES	MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING	MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL ENTRY LEVEL	DURATION OF TRAINING	OUTGOING LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING	RATIO BETWEEN PRACTICAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
FRAMEWORK PROGRAM C FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING								
Version C 4	Age 13 (for students)	Completed primary education or completed grade in secondary school (<i>for art schools</i>)	Up to 4 (four) years	Third degree vocational qualification and acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed upper secondary education.	1,01 : 1	1,5 : 1	Depending on the way training is organized at the training institution	
Version C 5	Age 16 (for adults)	Completed primary education	4 (four) years	Second degree vocational qualification and completed tenth or eleventh grade, acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed upper secondary education.	1,13 : 1	1 : 1	1 : 0,17	11,6 : 1
Version C 6	Age 16 (for adults)	Completed primary education	5 (five) years	Third degree vocational qualification and acquired right to stand for state matriculation exams for upper secondary education certificate or completed upper secondary education.	0,8 : 1	1 : 1	1 : 0,18	10,8 : 1

FRAMEWORK PROGRAM E FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The aim of the Framework Program E is to regulate the terms and conditions for the acquisition of first degree of vocational qualification for students and persons at age of 16 and over in accordance with the regulations, governing general education and vocational education and training.

The objectives of Framework Program E, which takes into consideration the specifics of each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training include the elaboration of curricula and syllabuses for the institutions, which are licensed to provide training for the acquisition of a vocational qualification. These institutions are vocational schools and vocational gymnasias, as well as lower secondary, primary, secondary general, special and sports schools, gymnasias and particular classes in profiled secondary schools in virtue of the order of the Minister of Education and Science in case they meet the conditions, stated in the State Educational Requirements. Training for adults within Framework Program E can also be organized by the centres for vocational training. Adult training within Framework Program E can be organized by centres for vocational training as well.

Minimum age when training within this program can begin at schools is:

- for vocational education and training of students- students should become 13 years of age during the year of they apply for the program;
- for adult vocational training– persons should have become 16 years of age.

Health status of the candidates is certified with a health certificate, which should prove that the candidates are physically fit for the professions they opt for.

There are two versions of **Framework Program E** – E1 and E2.

Program E1 is the version of **Framework Program E** designed for students. Program E2 is designed for people aged 16 and over.

Information on the two versions of Framework Program E can be found in [Annex 5](#) attached.

Framework Programs E, which involve initial vocational training for the acquisition of a qualification on part of a profession are presented also in tabular form in Annex 6 below.

Annex 6: Framework Program E for initial vocational training

TRAINING PROGRAMMES	MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING	MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL ENTRY LEVEL	DURATION OF TRAINING	OUTGOING LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING	RATIO BETWEEN PRACTICAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)	RATIO BETWEEN COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND WORK PLACEMENT (APPRENTICESHIP)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
FRAMEWORK PROGRAM E FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING								
Version E 1	Age 13 (for students)	Completed primary education or completed grade in upper secondary school.	Up to 1 (one) year	Acquisition of a qualification on part of profession.	-	1 : 1	At the discretion of the applicant training institution or training institution	
Version E 2	Age 16 (for adults)	Completed grade from primary or secondary education, completed educational degree or successful completion of a literacy course in accordance with the Employment Promotion Act	Defined in the relevant documentation	Acquisition of a qualification on part of profession.	-	1 : 1	At the discretion of the applicant institution or training institution	

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Within the system for vocational education and training in the Republic of Bulgaria, practical training is part of the whole vocational training process for professions from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training according to Art. 6, item 1 of the Vocational Education and Training Act.

Practical training is organized as training practice and work placement.

Vocational training can be organized at:

- schools' study and production facilities;
- study and production facilities of similar schools or centres for vocational training in the country or abroad;
- enterprises.

Standards for good quality practical training facilities for quality practical training are determined by the state educational requirement for the acquisition of qualification in a certain profession. Certain conditions have to be provided at the places for practical training according to the state educational requirements for safe conditions for training and work.

Practical training is realized through educational-training, educational-production and production-educational activities.

Work placement (apprenticeship) is an element of the whole process of vocational preparation and part of the practical training. Work placement is that part of the practical training in the profession when students execute educational-training, educational-production and production-educational activities at a real work place. This work placement (apprenticeship) can be realized both at the school and the enterprise. In cases when schools have organized production activities and service provision (individually and/or in cooperation with other legal bodies), the work placement can take place in school. Usually the work placement takes place in the enterprises of private or public bodies.

Duration (in terms of classes) of work placements is different depending on the framework program, within which the vocational training is organized and the degree of vocational training, which will be acquired when it is concluded. The volume of the work placement as part of the vocational preparation of different programs is indicated in the previous chapter.

Work placement takes part at different stages of the training in accordance with the relevant syllabuses. Vocational training concludes with work placement in the profession/specialty. Typical age of the apprentices is 17 – 19 for the professions from second and third degree of vocational qualification and for the professions from the first degree- 15 -16 years of age.

For professions and specialties, practiced in harmful and dangerous work conditions, practical training begins after the person has become 15 years of age. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science define the specific requirements for the practical training for these students.

In order to provide real work conditions each school has to sign a contract with the relevant enterprise. The contract should state the tasks of the company with regard to providing the students real work conditions, as well as tutoring during their work placement. The task of the school includes the elaboration of a program for the work placement, which is then presented to the company together with the criteria for the students' assessment. The school is also obliged to provide a teacher who will be responsible for the work placement and who will control the students, so that they show up at work on time and execute all tasks according to the instructions given. The contract also includes information on the duration of the work placement, the number of students for that time period, as well as the condition with regard to the remuneration of the students.

For each work placement the student is assessed in accordance with the criteria set by the teacher, responsible for the placement and by the tutor from the company.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Young people are one of the target groups for active policy employment; every year the National Employment Action Plan includes employment and training programs for them, such as the ICT training program for young people and the program for vocational training of early school leavers. Young people can also participate in motivational training, literacy training, as well as training of key competencies and vocational training. Not only is training free for the participants, but they also receive scholarships and are refunded for their travel and accommodation expenses. The objective is to improve employability of young people, provide subsidiary employment, placements and apprenticeships with different employers. Grants and loans for starting a business, as well as consultation and training of entrepreneurs can be provided through various types of projects. These are funded by the state budget and the Development of Human Resources Operational Program with the European Social Fund.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

The acquisition of the highest– fourth level degree of vocational qualification, is carried out at vocational colleges. Training is organized within Framework Program D for the acquisition of fourth degree of vocational qualification.

The aim of Framework program D is to regulate the terms and conditions for the acquisition of second and third degree of vocational qualification for students and persons at age of 16 and over. All requirements for Framework Program D for vocational education and training are in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Act for the acquisition of professions, the State Educational Requirements for the Assessment System and the State Educational Requirements for Documents in the System of Public Education.

The objectives of Framework program D, which takes into consideration the specificities of each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training include the elaboration of curricula and syllabuses for the institutions, which are licensed to provide such training. These institutions are vocational colleges, as well as vocational gymnasia in virtue of the order of the Minister of Education and Science in case they meet the conditions stated in the State Educational Requirements. As of 2008 there are 28 vocational colleges, which organize training within Framework Program D; currently vocational gymnasia do not provide such training.

Requirements for the candidates for training at vocational colleges concern their minimal age and health status. Trainees should be 16 years of age or older and their health status should be certified with a medical certificate, stating that they are fit for the profession they apply for.

The minimum entry level is the completed upper secondary education.

Training lasts for two years, during which time there is compulsory vocational and elective vocational preparation. Compulsory vocational preparation should be minimum 1200 classes; it includes theoretical and practical training. The number of classes for practical training is not smaller than the number of classes for theoretical training.

Training in compulsory vocational preparation is organized in accordance with curricula and syllabuses, approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The exit educational- qualification level, which should be achieved at the end of the training within Framework program D – version D1 is fourth vocational qualification degree.

The content of the training for the acquisition of the fourth degree vocational qualification is determined by the State educational Requirements for the acquisition of a profession, while the form of training is chosen by the training institution.

The target group for training at vocational colleges consists of young people, who have completed a general upper secondary education or a vocational training course, but have acquired a lower level of vocational qualification- second or third.

Vocational training concludes by state exams for the acquisition of a vocational qualification in:

- profession theory;
- profession practice.

State exams in profession theory and practice are organized in accordance with national exam programs, which are approved by the Minister of Education and Science and for art schools - by the Minister of Culture.

The organization of the exams is also defined in the state education requirement for the assessment system while their content depends on the state education requirements for the acquisition of a qualification in a profession.

Vocational education, completed at colleges is certified by a certificate for vocational qualification in accordance with the Ordinance 4 from 16.04.2003 of the Ministry of Education and Science.

People who have completed training within Framework Program D at vocational colleges can:

- access the labour market;
- enhance the acquired vocational qualification, as well to acquire first, second or third degree of vocational qualification in another profession through training within Framework Program F;
- acquire qualification for part of another profession through training within Framework Program E.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Higher education schools in the Republic of Bulgaria provide training following the completion of upper secondary education and can be classified as: universities, specialized higher education schools and colleges. Colleges are structures, which provide vocational higher education. They offer three-year training programs after the completion of upper secondary education and award the vocational Bachelor's qualification in a specific vocational area /ISCED'97 - 5B/. Graduated from colleges can continue their education in a Bachelor's degree course or two-year Master's programs in specialties from certain vocational areas according to the 3+2+3 scheme.

Student training in specialties from vocational areas is carried out in accordance with the Classifier for higher education fields and vocational areas, approved by the Council of Ministers by Decree No125/2002.

In 1995 a three-degree structure was introduced as a legal framework; it consists of the following degrees: Vocational Bachelor's, Bachelor's and Master's degree in accordance with the Framework for Qualifications of EHEA.

Persons, which have completed the shorter training cycle at colleges and have acquired the Vocational Bachelor's degree should have mastered the following: the theoretical knowledge of the basics of the vocational area, specialized and technological preparation in accordance with the college specialties; practical skills for the specialty in question; computer skills necessary for the specialty. Qualification profile, elaborated by the college should also include other knowledge, skills and competencies of importance for the specialty. Those who complete the training course acquire a minimum of 180 credits, 10 of which correspond to a successful passing of a state exam or presentation of the graduation paper.

According to state education requirements in order to receive a Bachelor's degree graduates should obtain the following: broad-scope preparation, basic skills, knowledge and competencies, related to the holistic image of the vocational area and specialty; they should have mastered broad-scope theoretical knowledge and practical skills; skills to adapt in accordance with the changing conditions during the realization of the specialties; they should also acquire skills to work individually or in a team. On this basis, the autonomous higher education schools add to the qualification profile of each specialty the necessary additional knowledge, skills and competencies. Students who complete the four-year training course are awarded at least 240 credit points, 10 of which correspond to a successful passing of a state exam or presentation of the graduation paper.

Also according to state education requirements in order to be awarded the Master's degree students who graduate should: have fundamental knowledge and thorough theoretical background in the field; they should have mastered the basics of scientific and research and/or creative work; they should be capable to adapt to social, economic and technological changes. On this basis the autonomous higher education schools add to the qualification profile of each specialty the necessary additional knowledge, skills and competencies. Students who acquire the Master's degree after the acquisition of a Bachelor's degree should have been awarded a minimum of 60 credit points from the syllabus, 15 of which corresponding to a successful passing of a state exam or presentation of the graduation paper. Specialties, which envisage training only for the acquisition of a Master's degree, are awarded a minimum of 300 credit points, 15 of which corresponding to a successful passing of a state exam or presented graduation paper.

Training concludes with state exams or graduation paper. Assessment is based on a six-grade scale ; the academic record and the European diploma supplement contain not only the grade from the six-grade scale, but also the corresponding grades from the ECTS scale, as follows: Excellent – A; Very Good – B; Good – C; Average – D,E; Poor – FX, F (no credits are accumulated).

For the educational and scientific Doctor's degree no credits are accumulated either. Training institutions themselves define the necessary requirements for each scientific area with regard to the exit education level, which should be in accordance with the received program accreditation.

Within the higher education system there is clear distribution and differentiation with regard to the requirements for curricula and syllabuses for every education-qualification degree. Training in a specialty is organized according to a curriculum, which covers compulsory, elective and facultative disciplines. Compulsory disciplines provide the background preparation in a chosen wide-scope specialty from the vocational area. The elective disciplines cover specific knowledge and skills from the specialty area. Facultative disciplines are an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in different scientific fields in accordance with the students' interests.

The ratio between compulsory, elective and facultative disciplines is defined in the curriculum of the specialty following the decision of the Faculty Council of the autonomous higher education school. The autonomous higher education schools are constantly making efforts to update and bring the current requirements in line with the qualitative and quantitative distribution of new knowledge, skills and competencies, relevant to every separate cycle. They have academic load and are in accordance with the labour market needs. The permanent aim is to achieve quality balance in the distribution of study hours of the different degree. Lecture courses in compulsory and elective disciplines are assigned to academic rank lecturers, while 30% of the lecture courses can be delegated to non academic rank lecturers, who have been awarded the Doctor's degree.

There is equal access to higher education; there is no need to undergo linking classes between the cycles. Training fee equals 30% of the normative funds per students.

There are no normative hindrances to the transition from first to second cycle. All those who have completed the Master's qualification degree have the right to continue their education in the third degree.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The following documents have been adopted in the field of employment policy, labour market and adult training, including continuing vocational training: Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted in 2004, an Updated Employment Strategy 2008 – 2015, the National Strategy for Continuing Training 2005 – 2010, the Strategy for Adult Training and National Employment Plans. The measures envisaged in these documents have been developed and put into practice annually since 2001. The state budget finances vocational guidance, motivational training, training for the acquisition of key competencies such as entrepreneurship, computer skills and foreign language learning, literacy training and vocational qualification for the unemployed.

A National Strategy for Lifelong Learning has been elaborated. The Strategy outlines the main priorities and specifies the activities for the development of lifelong learning in Bulgaria for the 2008 – 2013 period. Since 2008 apart from the vocational qualification and literacy training, the training of employed and unemployed persons for the acquisition of key competencies (computer skills, foreign language learning) is also financed by the state budget. With regard to this the group of institutions, providing adult training financed by the active employment policy is being expanded. Literacy training is organized by the Employment Agency and carried out by the schools, while the training for key competencies is realized by private or public bodies, registered according to the laws in force.

In order to encourage participation in lifelong learning funds from the Development of Human Resources Operational Program, funded by the European Social fund and the state budget, are also used. Besides this the job centres with the labour offices, the information and vocational guidance centres are also being reactivated.

The Employment Promotion Act makes it also possible to use funds from the active labour market policy to improve the quality of training, including actions related to assessment of the adult training providers, financing the training of adult trainers, elaboration and publishing of up-to-date education materials. The training is carried out by private training centres, public centres, schools, etc.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

In relation to continuing vocational training and lifelong learning of employed and unemployed persons the annual National Action Employment Plans include activities directed towards enhancement of human resources, ensuring quality education adequate to the labour market demands, improvement of access to training of disadvantaged groups on the labour market, development of different forms of lifelong learning. For the first time the number of unemployed and employed persons, which are to be trained during the year is nearly equal to the persons, for which subsidiary employment will be provided. The implementation of the National Action Employment Plan for 2008 will provide employment for 76 203, of which 74 703 with funds from the MLSP and at the same time 73 961 people will be trained. The considerable increase of the number of those trained will be realized by the use of funds from the Development of Human Resources Operational Program.

The greatest number of those included in training was enlisted in courses for computer operator, cook, applied financial and accounting specialist, hairdresser, qualified worker in bakery and confectionery, waiters and bartenders; foreign language learning is also provided.

The unemployed show interest to a number of programs- the computer training program for young people, the National Program for Literacy and Qualification of People from Roma origin, regional literacy, qualification and employment programs, programs for young school leavers, entrepreneurship training projects, training in the field of ICT, etc.

The measures, programs and projects implemented during the past few years aim at:

- improving opportunities for vocational training of the unemployed and employed persons for the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, corresponding to the new job requirements, as well as the contemporary technical and technological development;
- improving employability of unemployed persons with no education or qualification by literacy training, which is followed by training for a vocational qualification;
- providing training for unemployed and employed for the acquisition of key competencies (computer skills, learning a foreign language, team work communicative skills, etc.) to make them more flexible and adaptive to the changes and to low productive employment;
- motivational training for the acquisition of presentational skills, writing of a CV and a motivation letter, work with different information sources for job vacancies, etc.;
- ensuring smooth transition from education to training by providing placements and apprenticeships of unemployed persons in enterprises;
- developing of career guidance activities of employed and unemployed persons in relation to choosing the adequate training, finding and keeping the suitable job and career development;
- attracting new groups to training and subsidiary employment activities such as retired citizens, convicts, mothers with children age 3 to 5.

The role of private providers of vocational training is becoming more and more important for the provision of training for the unemployed; a total of 517 centres for continuing adult education were licensed by the end of 2007, most of which are situated in the capital Sofia—130 and the biggest cities- Plovdiv and Varna- 20. They have trained more than 50,000 unemployed and employed persons, mainly in the field of Business Management and Administration and Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, which are priorities for the country and at the same time attractive areas due to the lack of qualified staff. Next on the list are Motor vehicles, ships and aircrafts and Metal processing and machine building or more than 90 professions; the most people have been trained to work as cooks, welders, security guards, mechanics, builders, waiters-bartenders, tailors.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

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- providing training for unemployed and employed for the acquisition of key competencies (computer skills, learning a foreign language, team work communicative skills, etc.) to make them more flexible and adaptive to the changes and to low productive employment;
- motivational training for the acquisition of presentational skills, writing of a CV and a motivation letter, work with different information sources for job vacancies, etc.;
- ensuring smooth transition from education to training by providing placements and apprenticeships of unemployed persons in enterprises;
- developing of career guidance activities of employed and unemployed persons in relation to choosing the adequate training, finding and keeping the suitable job and career development;

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0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

Social dialogue, carried out within the Economic and Social Council (in 2005 the Council issued a statement on the problems of vocational education and training in Bulgaria), the National Council on the Encouragement of Employment, the National Consultative Committee on Vocational Qualification, the NAVET Steering Committee, the regional employment committees, the cooperation councils with the labour offices and the social partner organizations at branch and local level play an important part in the elaboration and implementation of the policy in the field of continuing adult education.

In 2004 vocational training for employed persons was organized by 14 199 enterprises or 26.8% from the total number of training institutions stated in the survey. The latter percent is quite inadequate; it varies greatly according to the size of the enterprise and the number of staff. The biggest share – 70 % - belongs to enterprises with more than 250 employees, whereas the lowest share – 18.5 %- is that of micro enterprises. The training consists mainly of instructions, not courses, workplace rotation, individual learning, etc. Only 14.2 % of the employed persons from the surveyed enterprises have been enlisted in trainings. It can be concluded that employers invest in staff only if they are certain that the investment is necessary and the resources used will be beneficial thanks to the higher productivity of staff, quality performance of new production and use of new technologies. The inadequate scope of the trained employees is determined by the fact that only one fifth of the enterprises have assessed staff qualification and skills, mainly the large ones. Only one fourth of the enterprise managers point out that the staff needed to acquire new skills.

Mainly managers and analytical specialists (managing staff) take part in the trainings. 52.1% of the enterprises have enlisted technical and qualification assistant staff in vocational training courses; the respective percent with low qualified workers is only 14.4%. One of the positive facts is that people from all groups are enlisted in courses- women, young unemployed persons (younger than 25 years of age); employed persons over the age of 50; employed persons with disabilities employed persons from different ethnic groups; employed persons at risk of losing their jobs; employed persons with no qualification and persons employed part time.

At the request of the employers in 2007 the Employment Agency organized the training of 6 000 employed persons (half of it is financed by the state budget and half by the employers) from different micro and medium enterprises, for which the vocational qualification requirements have been altered due to production changes, cession of

work activities or lower production volume. Training institutions are selected by competition or by employers themselves.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

For the time being there is no data available from the Adult Education Survey.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Public Education Act stresses the importance of the vocational preparation of the teacher: Art.39, item 1 "The teacher(educator) can be a citizen qualified to work as a teacher."; item 2 "Preparation of teachers is organized by the higher education system."; item 3 "Vocational training of students can be performed by persons who have completed their education in the relevant professional field."; item 4 "Teachers and head teachers are provided with the necessary conditions to improve their qualification."

There is no condition in the Higher Education Act regarding the acquiring the right to work as a teacher.

Acquiring the right to work as a teacher is not in fact training in a new specialty at the same higher education institution; it is carried out either during the training for the education-qualification level as a specialist /professional Bachelor, Bachelor or Master or as post-graduate studies after the completion of higher education.

Teacher qualifications can be attained as part of the relevant university programs with the acquisition of a Bachelor's or Master's degree and a certificate for vocational qualification "teacher".

The Ministry of Education and Science defines the requirements and the vocational qualification necessary in order to work as a teacher in a specialty from a vocational area according to the Classifier of the higher education fields and professional fields, adopted with a Decree of the Council of Ministers 125 from 2002.

In the IVET system teachers in a subject /subjects/ from the general education preparation can be persons, who have completed a higher education course and have been awarded a Master's or a Bachelor's degree in:

1. specialty from the vocational area, corresponding to the subject /subject/ and awarded vocational qualification "teacher";
2. specialty from a different vocational area and additional vocational qualification "teacher" in a subject /s.

People can become teachers in a subject (subjects) from the vocational training field, in art subjects at art schools, sport subjects at sports schools and in specialized classes once they complete their higher education course and are awarded Master's, Bachelor's or Professional Bachelor's degree in:

1. specialities from a vocational area, corresponding to the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training, taught at the school and additional qualification "teacher";
2. specialities from the vocational area, corresponding to the professions, taught at the school.

Foreign language in a profession is taught by persons, who have completed a higher education course with the acquisition of a education-qualification degree - Masters, Bachelor's or "expert" in:

1. a philological vocational field with a vocational qualification "teacher" in a foreign language;
2. a vocational direction, corresponding to the studied professions and additional

vocational qualification in a foreign language;

3. vocational direction, corresponding to the studied professions and a certificate for the language, Level B2 from the Common European Language Framework, issued after successful passing of an exam with a cultural institute or office with the embassy of the respective country or by a Bulgarian institution, licensed by foreign cultural institutes to organize international standard exams in the language, or a legalized document issued by a foreign higher education institution.

The main objectives of the Bulgarian education system include providing equal access to education and quality education for all. The fulfilment of this objective points out to the need to acquire key competencies. This process presents a challenge for the teacher as a key figure in the education process; this is why the image and the status of the teacher should be improved, as well as:

- Improving the qualification system based on the development of knowledge, skills and vocational competencies;
- Developing a system for monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the teachers' performance;
- Developing an information system for qualification activities;
- Developing a system for the evaluation of the qualification services provided;
- Implementing a career development system;
- Implementing a system of differentiated remuneration;
- Developing a system for teachers' motivation and stimulation.

Decision of the Council of Ministers 541 from August 7, 2007 concerning the National program for Differentiated Remuneration, which creates conditions for linking management and the labour assessment process in the system for school education and pre-school preparation. This program was revised by Decision of the Council of Ministers 339 from 26.05. 2008.

The new system for differentiated remuneration will be based on three pillars:

- System for career development of pedagogic staff on horizontal and vertical levels and differentiated main salary. The salary should depend on the knowledge, skills, competencies, defined by the professional standard;
- System for extra remuneration for the work results of pedagogic staff;
- System for external evaluation of the school activity, i.e. a rating system, which should take into consideration the knowledge, skills and competencies of students.

The 2008 Act on the Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria approved the allocation of funds financing a system of remunerating pedagogic staff for extra work and achieved results. The Act also supports the implementation of a system for their career development. The sources of financing are national, as well as community funds (i.e. European Social Fund).

Assessment of impact of the implementation of these programs was the reason for their continuation and expansion in 2008 and the coming years.

One of the main principles of the Public Education Act and the Regulations regarding the Implementation of the Public Education Act is the provision of conditions for the improvement of teachers' and director's qualification. Teachers have the right to receive information from the Director and the Regional Educational Inspectorates on the possibilities to improve their vocational qualification.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

A total of 6,806 teachers in different professional fields work in the system of school vocational education. Depending on their work hours as part of the curriculum, they are hired as theory or practice teachers. There are 4,569 teachers of theory, who can also teach practice classes. The rest of the teachers are hired as practice teachers, some of which can also work as teachers of theory. According to their education level, teachers in vocational preparation can be divided into the following groups:

- with acquired Master's degree – 4,850;
- with acquired Bachelor's degree – 396;
- with acquired vocational Bachelor's degree – 1,500;
- with a upper secondary education degree – 60.

Improving the vocational competence of pedagogic staff is generally realized in two directions:

ENHANCING QUALIFICATION THROUGH TRAINING:

- for current /maintaining/ qualification – enhancing methodical preparation, getting acquainted with the conditions and last developments in teaching;
- when the current State Education Requirements are altered or new ones are introduced;
- for the acquisition of new basic knowledge and skills in the field, which is taught.

This direction includes participation in training, organized and realized at school, regional and national levels. The National Pedagogic Centre with the MES and its regional structures, the Regional Education Inspectorates, as well as the municipal education structures organize and provide the forms and themes for teacher training in accordance with the national priorities and school plans, kindergartens and supporting units.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGIC STAFF THROUGH THE ACQUISITION OF PEDAGOGIC VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION DEGREES (VQD)

This direction consists of the regulated system for the acquisition of five VQD of vocational qualification. They are acquired according to certain conditions and rules, defined in Decree No5/29.12.1996 on the conditions for the enhancement of qualification of pedagogic staff in the public education system and the rules for the acquisition of VQD. The Decree defines the rules for the exam procedures, issued by the MES.

The acquisition of a higher VQD (from fifth to first) is related to remuneration. In that respect it can be concluded that upgrade of degrees is an acknowledgement of teachers' professional achievements and a potential for further development.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

Teachers from schools, higher education institutions and colleges are mainly employed to train unemployed and employed persons by the vocational training centres. Training is provided by different programs- Development of Human Resources Operational Program, the Leonardo da Vinci program, etc. Since 2008 the Employment Agency has been funding training of trainees with funds from the labour market active policy.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

In the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2008-2013) particular measures for improving key competences are set as follows:

- Raising awareness of the importance of key competences for individual development and social realization;
- Legal regulations defining measures for promoting key competences and defining standards in training and assessment of key competences;
- Targeted measures to develop basic skills and key competences;
- Regulated provision and standards developed in the field of key competences, including licensing or registration procedures. Elaborated mechanisms for the validation of key competences;
- Measuring achievements in key competences in quantitative and qualitative terms; regular analyses of achievements;
- Inclusion of key competences in the development of the National Qualification Framework.

One of main instruments for the development of ICT competences in informal way is provided by National Educational Portal (<http://www.e-edu.bg/>). The aim of this portal is to provide access to the process of school education using a modern tool. It will provide a breadth of possibilities to all participants in the education process – pupils, teachers, directors, parents. The site can be accessed by one million users simultaneously. The portal is already up and running and it is expected to form the basis of a national electronic knowledge network.

Training in entrepreneurship is one of the examples that make school life more attractive and help students to acquire employable skills. Pupils have the additional opportunity of free or compulsory elective studies to undergo training in entrepreneurial programs. The stimulation of entrepreneurial thinking, discovery and analysis of economic links and influences, mastering of key competences, e.g. team work skills, networking, language skills, as well as the application of foreign language skills, creates the conditions for pupils after graduation from vocational secondary schools to be mobile and flexible in their future employment and professional activities, and provides a basis for lifelong learning.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/INFORMAL LEARNING

The objective on the agenda in compliance with the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2008-2013) is to implement a system for knowledge and skill validation. The MES, MLSP, EA, NAVET , as well as some employers' organizations are the key actors in the process. In 2008 the changes in the Law on Encouragement of Employment concerning the new task of MLSP and MES are targeted to create the necessary conditions for the assessment and validation of adult knowledge and skills, acquired through non- formal training and individual learning.

Within the framework of project activities of the German company GOPA a model for the validation of competencies, acquired by non-formal and individual learning will be elaborated and tested with the help of international experts by March 2009. The activities include the creation of validation framework, definition of procedure elements and stages, accreditation criteria and organizations, which will be responsible for validating and drawing up of the necessary documentation.

In vocational education, the recognition of prior learning is limited to the use of Article 40 from the VET Act, which describes a procedure for certification of skills obtained by non-formal or informal learning, or in the workplace. In continuing vocational training, many vocational training centres have established their internal procedures for recognition of prior learning concerning single modules in their learning curricula, but this is not based on any national agreement.

0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Services for vocational career consulting and guidance are an important part of the lifelong learning policy; they help people make informed professional decisions, successfully realize their potential by having a satisfying career and contribute for the development of a knowledge society.

In Bulgaria career guidance and counselling services have become popular during the past few years. There is a great variety of activities and services to choose from, all of which directed towards the needs of the different users. The main providers of such services include: the National Employment Agency through the use of the labour offices all around the country; private consultation centres and agencies; career centres with universities, pedagogic counsellors in secondary and vocational schools. Career guidance and human resource development activities at the place of work are organized at institutions, organizations and companies. There are also career guidance centres and consultants with different companies and non-government organizations, whose initiatives are also directed towards career development and guidance.

The education sector has been providing career guidance services for the past few years now - mainly through the career centres at universities and the pedagogic counsellors at the schools, who train more than 500 children. As a whole career guidance services are not integrated into the curricula, except for the vocational schools, where there is a limited number of compulsory production practice classes (60 for the 11-th grade and 90 for the 12-th grade). Special classes on the topic of career consultation are envisaged; they will be held as part of the hours in class and will be taught by the pedagogic counsellors or the class teachers.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Main users of career guidance services include the following target groups:

- Students and graduating young specialists;
- Employed persons in need of retraining and raise of qualification;
- Persons who have suffered job cuts due to restructuring of the sector or shutting down of enterprises (for example army officers dismissed from the army and other);
- Unemployed persons with no education or vocational qualification;
- Permanently unemployed persons.

The main types of services are targeted towards supporting the clients in defining their interests and capabilities, enhancing competitiveness and employability – making decisions in relation to the choice of education, training and professions at the beginning of their work life, as well as in relation to the development and acquisition of competencies and career management at every stage of life. The following activities are offered: information and counselling, consultation, assessment of competencies, tutoring, legal advice, decision making training, and acquisition of career management skills.

Career guidance services of students at secondary and vocational schools are carried out by the pedagogic counsellors. Their activities identify interests and preferences, provide advice on the choice of education and profession, as well as inform them of the educational potential of the region; cooperate with parents, other institutions and employers. The latter services are yet to be developed since the pedagogic counsellors underwent specialized training in 2008. General education schools rarely have classes for the accumulation of work experience, whereas for schools from the vocational education and training system such classes are compulsory. It is important to make summer placements and work practice popular among the students.

Services for early career guidance and choice of a profession are also provided by the Employment Agency through its offices at national level. Career guidance, including “self-service” information is done through specialized **information materials and products**: short description of professions (updated in 2006 and published on the Employment Agency website), informational packages, videos and multimedia products on professions, which describe the content of the profession, the work conditions, the skills the worker should possess, as well as to how one can begin to practice it.

There are special initiatives, directed towards the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and improvement of competitiveness and employability of students. The Career Club project was launched as a pilot phase in three schools in Sofia with the objective of motivating children to learn and to be more active in school life; assisting students in the process of career consultation and personal development. Students learn more about the work life, the different professions, as well as their own interests, skills and potentials with the help of various activities- competitions, quizzes, plain air events, interactive games and other school initiatives such as the Carnival of Professions, getting acquainted with different professions, career development classes, etc. The project aims at introducing such and other activities as curricular and extracurricular types of learning, which will help to systematically integrate career education into the curriculum of secondary schools.

The In Search of Work project of the Training Firms Centre at different vocational schools in the country aims at assisting the accumulation of practical skills and competencies through real work placements at different Bulgarian companies. The initiatives of Junior Achievement Bulgaria for the enhancement of the entrepreneurial and business skills of students by the creation of study firms have already become a tradition.

There are also a number of **websites**, which can help with the choice of a career or education, such as www.kakvidastanem.bg. The site includes descriptions of different professions and specialized courses, which offer the necessary preparation and competencies, as well as the universities and colleges, which offer such courses.

Every year different university cities organize the educational exhibitions, at which the higher education schools present their programs, specialized courses and education conditions.

Career guidance for students is offered by the **university career centres**. Since 2005 as a result of the Labour Market project of the USAID, the Business Foundation for Education and JobTiger a net of 34 university career centres in all larger towns in Bulgaria has been developed. Specialists trained by the GCDF international program work at these centres.

Career centres at universities provide free services for students, future students and young graduates and alumni. Due to the limited capacity of the centres, where 1-2 career consultants provide services for thousands of students, the emphasis is on short services. These include: providing information on vacant job and placement positions, on the labour market (employers, salaries, requirements for job positions, expectations of the candidates, trends in the development of the professions, etc.). Events such as company presentations, career days at universities, placement programmes are organized, as well as finding candidates by request of the employers and other services, which are usually financed by the employers. Career centres offer group and individual trainings for the development of employment skills- interpersonal competencies, career planning, searching and applying for a job, etc. Longer individual consultations for career choice and planning are much rarer. For these consultations non-formal techniques for the evaluation of interests, motivation, attitudes and needs are used, which are preferred by the less experienced career consultants and which they are most often advised to use. Recently career centres have begun to issue different materials, as well as to work on European projects, directed to the career development of young people with the support of employers and other partners.

A trend can be witnessed in the development of career centres- setting up of **branches at faculty level**, which focus on the needs of the concrete profile of the young specialists. For example, at Sofia University students from the different faculties of philosophy, mathematics, pedagogy and business management have quite different needs and career development.

As a whole career centres have no outside clients apart from candidate - students. Only one of the career centres, the Interuniversity Centre for Career Development with the UNWE has considerable experience in providing career guidance services for clients with special needs- young people with physical disabilities. The Alumni club in the Business Management Faculty supports the graduating students by providing in good time career guidance through practical preparation in social, business, leadership and other specific professional skills.

One of the most important events in the field of career guidance is the annual **Career Forum**, organized by JobTiger in university towns all over the country. The Forum has been organized every year since 2002; it covered 8 towns, where employers can meet with students and young specialists and present them with the possibilities to find work and placement. The event is extremely popular due to the fact that the placements make it possible for students to put into practice their theoretical knowledge, to test their interests in the studied field, as well as to get to know different companies, which can later offer them places to work. Information on the student placement programs is available on www.Staj.bg.

During the past few years the mobility for training and vocational placement within the **Erasmus** sector program in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Program, offered by specialized units within the universities, have become quite popular. The program makes it possible for young people to study for a whole semester in a European university or to acquire skills, while working for organizations in the EC. A special site was created to popularize the student placements and mobility within the Erasmus program www.ErasmusHouse.eu. Student placements also assist the young people in getting acquainted with the working world and the accumulation of skills.

In 2008 as a result of an initiative of Business Foundation for Education based on Hewitt methodology, the first **National Survey on the Vocational Orientation of Students in Bulgaria** was organized, which covered 12,000 respondents. The initiative

will become an annual event and according to the plan for 2009 it will include students from schools as well.

Unemployed persons with different profiles can use from a variety of services, offered by the **Employment Agency (EA)** and its territorial units- the Labour Offices situated all over the country. The Employment Agency is the most important provider of career guidance services, information and vocational training. Specialists working at the Labour Offices (many of which are psychologists) are very experienced in providing services for different target groups. Labour Offices provide the following (individual and group) career guidance services:

- Career guidance – assisting people by: helping them choose the right profession (specialty), level of qualification - initial vocational training or retraining, and the ways to acquire the chosen qualification. Consultation consists of providing information and giving advice in accordance with the labour market conditions and potential, as well as the requirements for the chosen profession;
- Career **information** assisting people by: informing them of the specifics of the professions, the conditions and requirements for the acquisition of the professions in question, the status and trends in the application and development of professions of regional and national importance, personal requirements for employability; opportunities for vocational training and raise of qualifications, potential for professional realization on the labour market.

Career guidance services offered by **private agencies for the selection of staff and human resource development** provide consultation regarding the choice of professions or further education; individual trainings for the development of specific skills (coaching); group trainings and seminars for career planning and development. Some of these agencies are registered with the Employment Agency for the provision of intermediary activities of providing jobs in or outside the country. The services they offer also include the use of different formal techniques and tools for assessment, which requires the presence of a skilful consultant with a psychological education, who has undergone the necessary training and is licensed to use the test in question.

Consultancy companies, using ICT-based instruments and services, such as www.MAPP.bg and others are becoming more and more popular.

There are a number of bigger **job search internet sites**, for example www.JobTiger.bg, which publishes not only job and placement offers, but also information on the labour market, remunerations for the different spheres (and regions), advice for those who search for a job, etc. The site www.Karieri.bg is also very popular; it includes up-to-date news, articles, specialized information and advice for human resources managers, a forum on the labour market issues and career development, etc.

Career services for employed persons is most often related to the policy of the organization in question, which is realized through its human resources development department. Companies offer different types of practical training for the integration into work of trainees, young and recently hired specialists, as well as for the acquisition of basic and specialized competencies, career development and consideration of personal roles with regard to career development.

Vocational qualification services are offered by a great number of centres, licensed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). The organization trains both unemployed and employed persons, who wish to improve their qualification. The Bulgarian - German Centres for Vocational Training of Adults in

Pleven, Pazardzik and Stara Zagora have a very good reputation. They organize long-term and short-term module courses, based on the so called dual system. Each of the centres is licensed by NAVET for the organization and carrying out of qualification courses in some professions. BGCVT supply an extra element in the Bulgarian system for vocational education and training by giving predominantly practical orientation to the training they offer.

Services for specific groups – services offered to young people at risk (with deviant behaviour, school leavers, young people without parents) and young people with special education needs, ex-prisoners; immigrants; women on maternity leave and people with disabilities – are limited and are being offered only as different project initiatives. Securing access to useful information to clients with different needs is still poorly developed. There is a number of sites, connected to career guidance and development, which offer useful advice and material, some of which are developed within the framework of different projects; these materials cover topics such as gender mainstreaming, equal opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs, representatives from ethnic groups, etc. As a whole these initiatives are sporadic and have no long-term effect.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Specialists working in the field of career consultation and development in Bulgaria are university graduates, mainly in the humanities (psychology, pedagogy, social sciences), though this is not a formal condition. There is also a large number of consultants who have diplomas in economy, organization of labour, human resource management, business management, etc.

Specialized training for career consultants has been offered since by Business Foundation for Education and JobTiger – based on the international program for certification of career consultants Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF). The program is implemented in 40 different states around the world. The methodology provides competencies in a number of spheres- theoretical models for career development, evaluation, provision of assistance to the clients, working with clients from specific cultural and social groups and with people with special needs, action planning, training the clients, implementation of programs for career development, ethic standards in consultation. Training consists of 120 classes and it includes practical training, individual preparation and work on a concrete case.

Until today more than 1,000 career specialists have been trained, of which 800 are pedagogic counsellors at secondary and vocational schools from different parts of the country, 100 career consultants from university career centres and about 100 human resource specialists from different business organizations, state institutions and the non-government sector.

Within the above program, the National Pedagogic Centre with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) provides training for pedagogic counsellors in secondary and vocational schools, which are responsible for providing career guidance services to students. As a result of the joint project with the Business Foundation for Education in 2006 a total of 15 methodologists were trained, which will train pedagogic counsellors from all over Bulgaria in career consultation. Thanks to this initiative, 800 pedagogic counsellors have been trained till September 2008; the plan for the period till the end of 2009 is to include a 1,000 more. Training is based on the international program for the certification of career consultants Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF).

There are a number of specialized master's programs, which provide preparation for career consultants:

- Master's program for career development at the Pedagogical Faculty with the Rousse University (since 2005);
- Renewed master's program on Qualification and Redirection of the Labour Force and a postgraduate program on Career guidance and Consultation with the Pedagogical Faculty at Sofia University, both of which were launched in 2008;
- Master's program on career development is also in preparation at the biggest private university in the Bulgaria- the New Bulgarian University.

All the universities cover the GCDF program methodology as a practical component of the training, which also makes it possible for the graduates to receive an international certificate with the diploma they receive.

The GCDF program has stimulated the development of the career consultant profession in Bulgaria, which has founded its Association in 2007. Its main goals include the recognition of the profession, the development of an Ethics Code of consultants and among all - providing services with better quality, covering all clients in need. The National Board of Career Consultants (NBCC – Bulgaria) also supports the process by assisting the working professionals in maintaining the level of competencies and skills through training and projects.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Trends in the development of continuing vocational training and the challenges related to the accession to the European Union point out to the need to increase greatly the funds spent on training. Implementation of objectives and national priorities, inherent to the Lifelong Learning Strategy and the Updated Employment Strategy 2008 – 2015 require substantial financial resources. It is also necessary to increase substantially the resources, invested by employers in order to sustain and improve the vocational qualification of the employed labour force in enterprises. The program oriented approach for the use of funds from the state budget facilitates the good use the financial resources at hand in order to improve the quality of the labour force. The inflow of international funds will continue to be extremely beneficial for the provision of finances for vocational training. For the 2002-2008 period the following funding sources have been used for continuing vocational training:

- Resources from the state budget distributed among the responsible institutions, district and municipal administrations;
- PHARE Economic and Social Cohesion Program;
- EC Structural Funds (since 2007);
- international sources;
- employers' funds including the implementation of cooperation schemes between small and medium enterprises and the joint use of financial resources for the provision of vocational qualification training;
- income of vocational training providers;
- personal resources for the development of the individual labour force;
- other resources of municipalities, local judicial bodies, non-government organizations, etc.;
- sponsorship, grants, etc.

The Human Resources Development Operational Program (2007-2013) provides Bulgaria with an extra tool for the funding of policies, directed towards the development of human resources in the field of education and training, the labour market and social cohesion.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2008-2013) sets several objectives as follows:

- Improving the legislative framework so as to remove all barriers to making LLL a reality and encouraging participation of different social groups in LLL activities;
- Building new and effective coordination structures with defined responsibilities at national and regional levels;
- Creating diverse formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities corresponding to changes in the labour market;
- Establishing a transparent system to recognize all learning achievements, agreed by appropriate authorities, in knowledge, skills, competencies, including those in non-formal education and training;
- Introducing a credit system for accumulation of learning and individualizing each individual's personal and professional profile as well as assuring learners' and workers' mobility;
- Moving from centrally-organised schemes to decentralized ones, offering new effective coordination structures and activities for what regards the organisation of training, quality assurance, validation agreements, lifelong guidance, information provision, etc.;
- Establishing a rational financing system as an instrument for assuring efficiency and quality of initial and continuing education and training with shared and balanced responsibility between the state, employers and learners.

The achievement of these main objectives is based on several common principles:

- good understanding of the need to create a LLL culture in society among all relevant institutions, including social partners and other stakeholders, and establishing appropriate levels of cooperation between them;
- consultations and open dialogue between all institutions and bodies responsible for implementation of approved measures and tasks;
- adjustment of policy reforms in education and training towards learners' needs by setting achievable and measurable steps;
- market economy and competitiveness will be fostered as a principal instrument in developing quality learning opportunities;
- implementation of all planned measures is underpinned by appropriate financial commitments.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

1103 - AUTHORS, SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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